

importance of being “born again.” Unlike many of these, Latter-day Saints do not believe this experience alone is sufficient for SALVATION. Instead, the process of spiritual rebirth signals to Latter-day Saints the beginning of a new life abounding with faith, grace, and good works. Only by ENDURING TO THE END may the individual return to the presence of God. Those who receive the ordinance of baptism and are faithful in keeping the commandments may enjoy the constant presence of the Holy Ghost who, like fire, will act as a sanctifier, and will witness to the hearts of the righteous that their sins are forgiven, imparting hope for eternal life.

Persons who have experienced this mighty change manifest attitudinal and behavioral changes. Feeling their hearts riveted to the Lord, their obedience extends beyond performance of duty. President Harold B. LEE taught, “Conversion must mean more than just being a ‘card-carrying’ member of the Church with a tithing receipt, a membership card, a temple recommend, etc. It means to overcome the tendencies to criticize and to strive continually to improve inward weaknesses and not merely the outward appearances” (*Ensign*, June 1971, p. 8). Latter-day Saints believe that individuals who are truly born of God gladly give a life of service to their fellow beings—they share the gospel message, sacrifice their own time, energy, and resources for the benefit of others, and in general hold high the light of Christ, being faithful to all the commandments.

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BRANCH, BRANCH PRESIDENT

A branch is generally the smallest organized congregation of the Church (normally fewer than two hundred members). At first, local Latter-day Saint congregations were known as “churches” (D&C 24:3; 26:1). Soon these units were more commonly called “branches” (D&C 72:23; 107:39), reflecting the manner in which they were formed—members sharing the gospel and creating new congregations in neighboring communities.

As the Church has grown, STAKES, composed of several large congregations known as WARDS,

are formed in centers of strength. In MISSION areas, DISTRICTS are composed of smaller congregations known as branches. Branches may also be found in stakes, typically in outlying communities where a smaller number of Church members can support only a less complete organization. In recent years a new kind of branch has emerged. In large urban centers an increasing number of ethnic minorities, isolated from the majority because of language and too small as a group to form a ward, have been organized as a branch. Furthermore, the Church has outlined programs that may be followed by isolated families or groups that are too small to form even a branch.

A branch is headed by a branch president, whereas a WARD is presided over by a BISHOP. Unlike the bishop, who must hold the office of HIGH PRIEST, the branch president need not be a high priest, but must be an ELDER in the MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD. The branch president and his two counselors have responsibilities similar to, and function like, a BISHOPRIC.

In the United States in 1990 there were 72 missions, 1,112 stakes, 7,750 wards, and 1,286 branches. Elsewhere there were 156 missions, 627 stakes, 2,786 wards, and 4,483 branches (*Ensign* 20 [May 1990]:22; *Deseret News 1991–1992*; Church Almanac, p. 94).

RICHARD O. COWAN

BRIGHAM YOUNG COLLEGE

President Brigham YOUNG founded Brigham Young College (BYC) in Logan, Utah, on July 24, 1877, just two years after he founded Brigham Young Academy (Brigham Young University from 1903) in Provo, Utah. Established to train the youth of the Church in northern Utah, southern Idaho, and western Wyoming, BYC had nearly 40,000 students in its forty-nine years of operation (1877–1926). At first a normal school primarily preparing elementary teachers (1877–1894), it then inaugurated college courses and for fifteen years granted bachelors’ degrees (1894–1909). During its final period (1910–1926), the school operated as a high school and junior college. With the Church Board of Education decision to discontinue its schools except Brigham Young University, Brigham Young College closed its doors in May 1926; gave its library to Utah State Agricultural College,