ing sacred COVENANTS, and receiving PRIESTHOOD
blessings, and inspired counsel that provide
guidance through mortality and prepare the recipient
for eternity. These ordinances are often marked by informal celebrations with family and friends.

The family as a unit of both religious worship and eternal association is celebrated by many
Latter-day Saints in daily activities and weekly FAMILY HOME EVENINGS. The daily activities may
consist of scripture study, gospel discussion, prayers, or singing activities held usually at the begin-
ing or ending of the day. Family home evening generally occupies one night a week. It is designed
to strengthen the bonds of family members through a wide variety of spiritual, social, educational,
and recreational activities, and thus it augments involvement in traditional holidays such as Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, and Mother's Day. Extended LDS families often participate on a
larger scale with periodic family reunions.

The identity of Latter-day Saints as 'modern
Israel" finds its most exuberant expression in
PIONEER DAY. This annual celebration commemo-
rates the entrance of the first LDS PIONEERS into
the Salt Lake Valley on July 24, 1847. For Latter-
day Saints, this commemoration has come to sym-
bolize the establishment of a divinely ordained
"promised land" in the American West.

Since 1849, Pioneer Day has given Latter-day
Saints an excellent opportunity to express their identity as a covenant people. In the context of
devotionals, parades, dances, sporting events,
banquets, and a host of other activities, Mormons
review the manifestation of God's hand in the
course of their history, the creation and sustaining
of their mode of life, and the religious dimension of
their continuing associations. Although the focus of
Pioneer Day is Salt Lake City and the Mormon
West, Latter-day Saints throughout the Church
memorialize their religious heritage on July 24
with celebrations appropriate to their particular
settings and circumstances.

The LDS identification of the Church as the
living KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH finds its greatest cultural and religious expression at general conferences. These semiannual gatherings in
April and October have been observed by Church leaders and members alike almost since the
ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH ON APRIL 6, 1830.
The conferences are currently held on the first
Sunday of April and October, plus the preceding
Saturday. The months symbolically mark the
changing of the seasons between winter and sum-
mer, and April is also usually the month when
Easter comes, commemorating the resurrection of
Jesus Christ.

General conference unites the divine authority,
organization, doctrine, and spiritual resources
of the Church. The salient symbols include the archi-
tecture of TEMPLE SQUARE, the hierarchical
seating of Church leadership from the FIRST
PRESIDENCY through the QUORUM OF THE
TWELVE APOSTLES, the quorums of the SEVENTY,
and the leading men and women of the AUXILIARY
ORGANIZATIONS; the use of the scriptures and revel-
ation in the addresses given; the expression of
both diversity and solidarity by the gathered
Church membership representing many nations in
their sustaining the leadership; and reports herald-
ing significant growth in the rapidly expanding
Church membership.

The general conferences also serve as major
occasions of personal pilgrimages for thousands of
Latter-day Saints to travel to Salt Lake City in
April or October. It is likewise an occasion of vic-
arious involvement for millions of others who follow
the conference sessions through various telecommu-
nications media. In addition, the conference pro-
ceedings are later printed and distributed. As a
result, the general conferences have become an
extremely important collective spiritual experience
for Latter-day Saints throughout the world.

Through general conferences, and on a
smaller scale through the weekly congregational
worship services of individual WARDS and STAKES,
Latter-day Saints renew and celebrate their mem-
bership in the organization that they recognize as
the kingdom of God on earth.

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CELESTIAL KINGDOM

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches of three degrees of glory in the
AFTERLIFE—the celestial, terrestrial, and teles-
tial. Jesus alluded to these when he said, "In my Father's house are many mansions" (John 14:2). Paul likened them to the sun, moon, and stars, with the highest or celestial being typical of the sun (1 Cor. 15:40–41; cf. D&C 76:50–98). The celestial kingdom was seen in vision by John the Revelator, Paul, and the Prophet Joseph Smith (Rev. 4:6; 2 Cor. 12:2; TPJS, pp. 106–107). This earth in its "sanctified, immortal, and eternal state" will become a celestial sphere (D&C 88:19–20; 130:9).

Celestial glory comes to those "who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, ... and who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true" (D&C 76:51–53). Within the celestial glory are three levels, and to obtain the highest requires a temple marriage or sealing.

Inhabitants of the highest celestial degree inherit "thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers," and dwell with God and Jesus Christ forever (D&C 76:54–70; 132:19–20).

[See also Degrees of Glory; Celestial Kingdom; Terrestrial Kingdom.]

Susan Easton Black

CELIBACY

Celibacy, the deliberate renunciation of marriage, is foreign to LDS life. Like other forms of ascetic withdrawal, it may deprive the participant of crucial life experiences. Spiritual maturity and exaltation in the highest degree of the Celestial Kingdom require marriage (D&C 131:2–3).

The norm of Latter-day Saint teaching and practice is for individuals to marry, procreate, and foster righteous living in their families as indicated in the scriptures. "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. 1:28). "Marriage is honourable in all" (Heb. 13:4). "Whoso forbiddeth to marry is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God unto man" (D&C 49:15). Those who are unable to marry in a temple in mortality through no fault of their own will receive compensatory blessings later (D&C 137:5–8).

The practice of celibacy was not widespread among the Christian clergy until centuries after the death of the apostles. "Forbidding to marry" was, for Paul, a sign of apostasy (1 Tim. 4:3). Because ancient and modern revelation endorses marriage and because most religious leaders in the Old and New Testaments were married, Latter-day Saints reject attempts to interpret the Bible as advocating celibacy.

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Dillon K. Inouye

CENSORSHIP

See: Confidential Records

CENTENNIAL OBSERVANCES

The historical consciousness of Latter-day Saints in the twentieth century has been richly expressed in the celebration of centennial anniversaries of important foundational events. Building on the elaborate jubilee (fifty-year) celebrations in 1880 of the Organization of the Church and in 1897 of the beginnings of the LDS colonization in the American West, the Church ushered in the twentieth century in 1905 with the centenary of the birth of the Prophet Joseph Smith. For this occasion, President Joseph F. Smith led a group of Church leaders and Smith family members to Sharon, Vermont, Joseph Smith's birthplace, and dedicated a memorial cottage and large granite obelisk to his memory. Many LDS congregations held local observances.

The Joseph Smith Memorial became one of the first historical sites of the Church. Following its dedication, the Smith company visited a number of other Mormon historic sites. This tour confirmed a growing interest by Latter-day Saints in preserving their past through the restoration of such historical sites in later commemorations.

Another major centenary was celebrated on September 22, 1927, when President Heber J. Grant conducted a devotional on the hill Cumorah at the approximate location where Joseph Smith received the gold plates of the Book of Mormon from the angel Moroni one hundred years earlier (see Moroni, visitations of). On