

bishopric will consult with the ward council and work for consensus in that group before taking action. Following the same pattern, the stake president consults with his counselors in the stake presidency and then with the high council. The First Presidency consults in this same way on matters of general Church policy and action in regular meetings with the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Unanimity is the ideal for all these decision processes because of the importance of UNITY in the Church: “If ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27). The three presiding quorums over the whole Church are of equal authority within their own spheres (D&C 107:22–26), but their decisions are of “the same power or validity” only when made “by the unanimous voice” of the quorum (D&C 107:27). Many important decisions take shape over what seem like long periods because achieving unanimity is highly valued by the quorums.

Because of the emphasis on divine and prophetic leadership and because of well-established norms and values in decision-making procedures, public dissent on a proposed calling or policy is unusual. There are, however, mechanisms for accommodating dissent. Normally, if one or more members find the proposed action objectionable, the dissenting member or members are asked to meet with the presiding officer privately to make known the reason for the question or objection. After considering the objections, presiding officers are free to pursue whatever decision they believe to be right.

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ROBERT E. QUINN

COMMUNION

Communion refers to partaking of the Lord’s Supper. The more common term among members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is

SACRAMENT (D&C 59:9). *Eucharistia* is the Greek term that meant “thanksgiving” among early Christians.

Partaking of the sacrament is the central act of worship and COVENANT renewal and resembles the simple commemorative meal described in the New Testament (cf. Matt. 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; Acts 2:42, 46). Postbiblical doctrines of transubstantiation (real presence) and of a “mere sign” are absent from the LDS teachings. All members of the Church, including unbaptized children, are encouraged to partake of the bread and water as emblems in remembrance of the body and blood of Jesus Christ (see D&C 27). The communion sought is a communion of spirit as envisioned in the SACRAMENT PRAYERS (Moro. 4–5; 3 Ne. 18; D&C 20:77, 79).

[See also Sacraments.]

PAUL B. PIXTON

COMMUNITY

For Latter-day Saints, community is an essential and eternal part of life in this world and in the world to come. From the time the Church was established (1830), its teachings have placed emphasis on principles of unity, cooperation, mutual assistance, and beautification of one’s surroundings. The community of believers envisioned by the Prophet Joseph SMITH continues today, based essentially on the principles he established. Changes, however, occurred as the Church moved to the Intermountain West, where Mormon towns and cities rose, and later as the Church spread to many parts of the world. As the Church has grown, the community embodied in the WARD has become a special focus of spiritual and social life among Church members, however small or isolated the congregation. Wherever Latter-day Saints find themselves, they form a community of believers based on human relationships that are expected to endure forever.

TEACHINGS OF JOSEPH SMITH AND BRIGHAM YOUNG. The advantages of village life described by Joseph Smith are an extension of life in a New England town. The Smiths brought to the frontier their New England background, emphasizing the importance of the community in providing education, mutual assistance, and political and economic organization. Joseph Smith’s ideas about the im-