

tures of different dispensations. CIRCUMCISION, for example, important in previous dispensations as a sign of a covenant, was not essential in later dispensations. Blood SACRIFICES required in Old Testament times to anticipate the Atonement were fulfilled in Christ, with new redemptive emblems of bread and wine being prescribed by Jesus. Latter-day Saints have a strong recognition of change and progress in sacred history. Personal growth and its implications for the development of a perfected Zion society are essential in LDS eschatology (see ETERNAL PROGRESSION). This view of progress is evidenced in the concept that the final dispensation builds upon previous ones and achieves the goals of all of them with the celestialization of the earth. The earth then will become a glorious residence for those of all dispensations who have been resurrected and perfected in Christ (D&C 88:17–26).

A definite priesthood line of authority is an essential component of the LDS understanding of dispensations. Thus, Moses and Elijah visited Peter, James, and John at the MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION to restore certain keys of authority, and as already noted, these and many other ancient prophets visited Joseph Smith to give him the same authority (see RESTORATION OF THE GOSPEL).

Although the Lord's Church in successive dispensations ceased to function on earth because of apostasy, the work of the Lord in each dispensation is open-ended, leading to the final dispensation. The Lord's work that was not completed in an earlier dispensation will continue into the final dispensation, which is appropriately called "the fulness of times." In this last dispensation, some ideals never before reached on the earth will be accomplished (i.e., GATHERING of Israel, the SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST, and the MILLENNIUM).

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## DISTRIBUTION CENTERS

In order to make standardized administrative and teaching materials available to its members, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has developed a system of distribution centers around the world. These distribute authorized Church literature and CURRICULUM materials to Church units, members, and officers in approximately one hundred languages. Such materials include scriptures, lesson manuals, teaching aids, handbooks, forms, reports, supplies, and video and cassette tapes.

The item in greatest demand is the Book of Mormon, with over four million copies distributed annually. Since 1989 the majority of these copies are in languages other than English. Some centers also coordinate local printing and distribution of Church magazines in their areas. Each center offers services geared to the particular proselytizing, teaching, and administrative needs of Church programs in its area. Some centers are equipped to print many of the materials they distribute, thus reducing the expense of shipping from Salt Lake City. Materials required in large quantities and hardbound books are often produced by commercial vendors. Wherever printed and regardless of language, all materials are uniform in their content.

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JOHN E. CARR

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## DISTRICT, DISTRICT PRESIDENT

A "district" is an ecclesiastical unit similar in function to a STAKE. Districts are found within missions in developing areas of the Church mostly outside the United States and Canada. Districts are meant to be transitional. Once membership in a district has grown to an average of 250–300 members per BRANCH, with 10 percent or more of these members holding the MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD, the district will normally be made into a stake and the qualifying branches within the district made into WARDS. Insofar as possible and practical, all