

Introduction:

I had visited another ward with my family because a very good friend, who had been a member of the church for less than three years, was conducting the sacrament meeting as a member of the bishopric of that ward, as well as speaking during the meeting. Admittedly, as I listened to him I was very content to know that after years of friendship he was a member of the church, and indeed was strong enough in the church that he could function in a leadership capacity. As he spoke I noticed certain phrases and words that he used that were not common usage in the church, and in fact more closely related to his religious experience before joining the church. That was a passing observation on my part, and was not on my mind as we were talking after the meeting. However, he mentioned it afterward, relating how he was trying so hard to fit in with the church, but knowing he was missing some things. He observed that someone should put together a list of words and usages in the church. That thought provided the germ for me, and I embarked on this effort. As with many such things, only time will tell if I will carry it through to a useful conclusion, but in the meantime I am enjoying it.

In no way should this be considered authoritative. Much more than propounding doctrine I am simply trying to give an idea of words, terms, and usages that are common in the church. This is based on my experience, and so may not be universal. If you notice something that you find unusual, or feel some omission, feel free to let me know.

19 June 2006

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Aaronic Priesthood | Named after Moses' brother, the Aaronic Priesthood is the “lesser” or “preparatory” priesthood. Typically conferred on young men at the age of twelve, it includes the offices of deacon, teacher, and priest for the young men. The bishop is the president of the Aaronic priesthood, and in fact “bishop” is also an office in the Aaronic priesthood. |
| Activity Committee | A committee in the ward, usually consisting of 2-6 people, who plan the social activities for the whole ward. |
| Adam-ondi-ahman | A site in Daviess County, Missouri where Adam dwelt after being ejected from the Garden of Eden, and the place where Adam will preside over a gathering of the patriarchs of all the ages in one of the wrapping-up scenes of the earth's history. |
| Apostasy | A falling away from the truth. One of the central points of the first vision that Joseph Smith had was that the truth of the gospel had been lost through apostasy, and had to be restored. However, we also speak of individual apostasy, wherein a person falls from the church. |

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Apostle | A member of the top governing council of the church. Apostle is an office in the Melchizedek priesthood, and the only holders of that office are the members of the first presidency and the quorum of the twelve. The latter is more fully called “The Quorum of the 12 Apostles”, but because of the sacredness of the term “apostle” the briefer form is frequently used. Apostles are called for life, so only on the death of a current apostle is a new one called. |
| Articles of Faith | In response to a request for information for a newspaper article Joseph Smith wrote down some declarations of belief, which have become known as “The Articles of Faith.” They deal with many topics, including God, the atonement, priesthood, scriptures and general life. However, they are not an exhaustive declaration of our beliefs. Most children are encouraged to memorize them during their Primary years. |
| Atonement | Belief in the Atonement, that monumental act when Christ took upon him the sins of all God's children and paid the price for them, is the central belief of Christianity. The restored gospel preaches that this atonement is not only for the inhabitants of this earth, but of all the worlds which God has created. The restored gospel also teaches that the benefits of the atonement are not bounded by time or location, so they are available to those who lived before Christ and those who have never received his gospel, as long as they do receive it when it is offered to them. Thus the restored gospel proclaims the atonement to be much more universal than many Christian church understand. |
| Auxiliary | We typically distinguish between the priesthood (the priesthood quorums and groups in a ward) and the auxiliaries, which include the Relief Society, Sunday School, Primary, Young Men and Young Women. This distinction is also frequently used at the stake level. |
| Baptism | Always performed by immersion after the age of eight, and must be performed by a Melchizedek priesthood holder or a priest in the Aaronic priesthood. Not only is infant baptism not practiced in the church, it is considered to be against God's will, as baptism is a covenant, and must be entered into by one who understands the nature of the covenant. |
| Bearing Testimony | Where many churches will speak of “witnessing” when expressing their belief to others, the usual term in the church is “bearing your testimony.” |
| Beehives | Name for the Young Womens class of 12 and 13 year old girls. The name has reference to the beehive which is a sign of industry. |
| Bible | The church officially uses the King James version of the Bible as one of the |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| | standard works. It is the word of God, but must be used in concert with the other standard works in order to understand the fullness of the gospel. |
| Bishop | A man called to lead a ward. Bishop is an office in the Aaronic priesthood, but the position of bishop of a ward requires that the individual first be a high priest (except in the case of a descendant of Aaron). Once called as a bishop of a ward the high priest is then ordained a bishop. Although he may later be released as a bishop of a ward, he ever after holds the office of bishop, and by tradition may continue to be referred to as “Bishop <family name>”, although this is not required. |
| Bishop's Storehouse | A Bishop's Storehouse is a building or facility where goods and services are provided to those in need of church welfare. The bishop in charge of the bishop's storehouse is not usually the bishop of a ward; he is dedicated to the work of the storehouse. |
| Body | The physical body is considered an integral part of the Plan of Salvation, and will be part of our eternal existence after our resurrection. The restored gospel teaches that the body is a treasured gift and is to be cared for and kept sacred. |
| Book of Mormon | The book from which the Church takes its nickname. It is a religious history of the Lord's people on the American continent from about 600B.C. to about 400A.D. It is similar to the Bible in this aspect, and is treated as equal to the Bible in terms of scriptural worth and authority. |
| Blacks | The Church has been accused of racism, especially because up until 1978 black men were not allowed to hold the priesthood. This proscription came from the time of Joseph Smith, and was reversed only when President Kimball received a revelation on the subject. There are relatively few black members of the church, but the doctrine of the gospel preaches specifically against any form of racism. |
| Block Schedule | Up until about 1980 there were three separate meetings on Sunday – Priesthood (early morning) for the brethren, Sunday school later in the morning, then Sacrament Meeting in the afternoon or early evening. With the introduction of the block schedule all Sunday meetings have been consolidated into one three hour block. The block may run with Sacrament meeting first or last, and Sunday School is always in the middle. In the usual case Sacrament Meeting runs for the first hour and ten minutes, then there is a 10-minute transition into Sunday School which lasts 40 minutes, then a five minute transition into Priesthood/Relief Society/Young Women. Primary runs concurrent with Sunday School and the other meetings. Curiously, although the meetings run different lengths, each section is referred to as an “hour.” So Sacrament meeting is the |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| | <p>first hour, Sunday School the second, and the third hour has the different meetings. Attendance at church went up considerably with the introduction of the block schedule, but I don't know if that trend has continued.</p> |
| Branch | <p>When there are not enough members, or not enough leadership, to create a ward, a branch can be organized instead. A branch is led by a branch presidency (president and two councilors) each of whom is typically referred to as “President <family name>”. The members of the branch presidency need only hold the Melchizedek priesthood; there may be no high priests in a branch. Where there is no organized stake there can be no wards, and branches in a mission may be rather larger and stronger than branches in a stake.</p> |
| Brethren, the | <p>The general authorities of the church. When referring to other male members locally we typically use the word “brothers,” although sometimes “brethren” is used in this context as well.</p> |
| Brigham Young | <p>Second prophet and president of the church. He was the president of the Quorum of the twelve when Joseph was martyred, and led the church in that capacity for about 2 years before being sustained as the prophet. He led the exodus from Nauvoo to Salt Lake City, and directed the church there (as well as being territorial governor) for over 40 years. Much of the organization of the church as we know it today is due to the work of Brigham Young.</p> |
| Brother and Sister | <p>Because we are all sons and daughters of God, and because we are all partakers of a common covenant, we typically refer to each other in the church as “Brother <family name>” and “Sister <family name>”. This is such a common practice that even using first names may sound unusual, and “Mister” or “Mrs.” would undoubtedly be out of place.</p> |
| Call | <p>This refers specifically to an assignment from the church hierarchy to a responsibility within the church. Most typically “calls” are encountered within a ward or stake, and are issued by the bishop and his councilors in the former and by the stake presidency and high council in the latter. Quorum and group leaders may make assignments, but not calls. Auxiliary leaders submit names of individuals for callings within their organizations, but have no other direct input into callings.</p> |
| Calling and Election Made Sure | <p>A phrase based on the teachings of Paul indicating a moment at which an individual is assured that they have endured and served to the point that they will enter into the Celestial Kingdom and dwell with God and Christ eternally. Although in broad terms this should be the goal of every member of the church, it is little discussed and little understood, nor is it necessarily an expected nor</p> |

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| | required part of mortality. |
| Celestial Kingdom | The Doctrine and Covenants teaches us that after we are resurrected we will be assigned to one of three heavens, or kingdoms of glory. Of these three the Celestial Kingdom is the highest, and is the dwelling place of God the Father and Jesus Christ. Interestingly, all of the commandments we have are designed to get us to the Celestial Kingdom; we really know little about the requirements for entrance to the other kingdoms. |
| Children's Friend | Before 1970, the Church magazine for Primary-aged children. It was published monthly. |
| Church Court | See “Disciplinary Council.” |
| Commandments | In the church “the commandments” tends to be a rather amorphous mass of instructions regarding how to live. Certainly, far more than the 10 commandments are included. For want of a formal definition, frequently we refer to those items which are included in a temple recommend interview, although even that is only an approximation. It is important to keep in mind Joseph Smith's observation “I teach them correct principles and they govern themselves”. The guidelines for commandments such as Word of Wisdom, tithing, fast offering, Sabbath observance, etc., are given in scripture with bare additional information, and then members are held responsible for interpreting and living them correctly. A bishop (or branch president) has responsibility for maintaining worthiness in the church, and has the authority to hold a member's observance to be inadequate. However, in practice, observance of commandments is a very individual affair. |
| Common Consent | All callings in the church are to be affirmed under the law of Common Consent. This is typically done by a vote of the appropriate congregation, traditionally by asking that “all those who are in favor may manifest it by raising the right hand (brief pause), all those who are opposed may manifest by the same token.” It is extremely rare that anyone votes to oppose – personally, I have never seen it happen. Typically the only reason why someone would vote negatively would be if they believe they have some information about the individual that the calling authority could not have known. |
| Community of Christ | The church that was formerly known as “The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints”, the largest splinter group off of the Mormon Church. It was formed after the main body of the Church left Nauvoo, and the Prophet Joseph Smith's descendants were almost all members of this church. For many years this church used both the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and |

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| | <p>Covenants as scripture, although they rejected the revelation on plural marriage as not originating with Joseph Smith. Somewhere around the late 1980's the church started aligning itself more with “mainstream” Christian churches, and has progressively deemphasized the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants. They still are strongly loyal to the Prophet Joseph, but no longer are very different from most other Protestant churches.</p> |
| Conference | <p>Twice a year (the first Saturday and Sunday of April and October) the Church holds its general conference, which originates from the Conference Center in Salt Lake City and is broadcast all over the world by radio, TV, satellite, and the internet. Also, each stake has a semi-annual conference, which may be attended by a General Authority or simply held under the direction of the Stake Presidency. Finally, each ward has an annual ward conference, which is held under the direction of the bishopric and Stake Presidency.</p> |
| Conference Center | <p>A large assembly hall built primarily to house the semi-annual General Conferences of the church. It holds around 22,000 people in its principle hall, and there are a number of smaller halls and theaters in the building. When it was built the Church News published a drawing of how the main hall is big enough to enclose a 747 airliner – it is a big hall.</p> |
| Confirmation | <p>After a person is baptized a member of the church he or she is then confirmed by a Melchizedek priesthood bearer, usually accompanied by one or more other Melchizedek priesthood bearers. The confirmation is actually the formal step for being a member of the church, and also includes the conferral of the Gift of the Holy Ghost.</p> |
| Councilors | <p>Each presidency in the church includes two councilors, which usually are referred to as first and second councilor. The Relief Society used to prefer “Spiritual Living” and “Homemaking” councilors, but that terminology changed somewhere in the late 1980's. A bishop also has two councilors. It varies somewhat by organization and personality of the presidency (or bishopric) how much difference there really is between first and second councilors. However, especially within a bishopric, the practical difference may be quite large, but most members outside of the bishopric itself may not even be aware of the distinction. There is no doctrinal or standard practice of “promotion” from second councilor to first councilor when the latter is released, but it does seem to be more traditional in some areas than others.</p> |
| Covenant | <p>A promise entered into by God and man. All blessings in the gospel are predicated on one or more covenants, so the making and keeping of covenants is</p> |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| | a central characteristic of the Church of Jesus Christ. |
| David O. McKay | Ninth president of the Church, he was president up until I was 8 years old, and always personified to me what a prophet should look like. He oversaw the period when the Church first seriously emerged from its exile in Utah to start to become a world-wide church. |
| Deacon | An office in the Aaronic priesthood. Worthy young men are ordained deacons on or immediately after their twelfth birthday. There should be twelve deacons in a quorum; if there are more than twelve deacons in a ward there should be enough quorums to have no more than twelve members in each. |
| Death | As a Christian religion the church teaches the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the physical body. Therefore death is seen as an integral part of the Plan of Salvation, and although not sought, its onset is not to be understood as a terrible misfortune, either. |
| Deseret | The record of Ether in the Book of Mormon refers to “deseret, which being interpreted, is a honey bee”. The early saints in our dispensation adopted the honey bee as a symbol of industry, and the state of Utah was originally conceived by Brigham Young as the state of Deseret, which was much larger than the current state. |
| Disciplinary Council | <p>Formerly called a “church court,” when a member has committed a sufficiently serious transgression to call in question their standing as a member of the church a disciplinary council is convened. For a Melchizedek Priesthood bearer when excommunication is unlikely, or for any other member, a Bishop's Council is held, wherein the Bishop and his councilors judge the seriousness of the situation and what the outcome should be. If a Melchizedek Priesthood bearer may be excommunicated then a Stake President's council is held, which includes the Stake Presidency and the High Council.</p> <p>Although the results of a disciplinary council sound rather dire, and although the deliberations of the council may be quite difficult, the underlying motive is love, and so except in some cases where the transgressor is impenitent and/or belligerent the council is a very deeply spiritual experience, and the ultimate goals are to safe guard the church and to aid the repentance process.</p> |
| Dispensation | When the gospel is restored to the earth by revelation the period that follows is called a dispensation. There were dispensations of the gospel given to Adam, Enoch, Moses, and many others. The “Dispensation of the Fullness of Times”, referred to by Paul, began with the First Vision of Joseph Smith. All previous |

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| | dispensations have ended in apostasy; by revelation we know that this one will not, but will culminate in the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. |
| Doctrine and Covenants | Often D&C, especially when written. The book is a compilation of revelations mostly given to Joseph Smith, but with a few from his successors. Each revelation is called a “section” (instead of chapters, as in the other standard works). There are also two “Official Proclamations.” It is considered equal to the Bible in terms of scriptural worth and authority. |
| Elder | An office in the Melchizedek priesthood, typically the one given when the priesthood is conferred. Interestingly, only full time missionaries and general authorities of the church are called “elder” as a title. |
| Ephraim | Youngest son of Joseph, son of Jacob. In their patriarchal blessings many members find that they are of the tribe of Ephraim. |
| Endowment | One of the ordinances for which we go to the temple is the endowment. In it we are endowed with knowledge and blessings from God. The ceremony is actually presented largely through the medium of a movie, and takes about an hour and twenty minutes. |
| Ensign | The official magazine of the Church, it is published monthly and contains messages from the Prophet and other church leaders, as well as carrying the talks from the semi-annual General Conferences. |
| Eternal Life | Eternal life is God's life, so it means living forever in the presence of God and Jesus Christ. This is the ultimate goal of the gospel, to bring us to eternal life. |
| Exaltation | Synonymous with Eternal Life. |
| Ezra Taft Benson | Fourteenth president of the Church, well known outside the Church for being secretary of the Treasury under Eisenhower. He was noted for his unyielding patriotism to the United States, to the point where some non-US citizens were offended (even inside the Church). However, his presidency is most noted for his emphasis on studying the Book of Mormon, and for a landmark talk on “pride” which was read for him (he being too feeble) in a general conference. |
| Family | It is worth noting that the family is the basic unit of the church, and its importance is central to church doctrine. Eternal life includes the whole human race being linked into one family with Adam and Eve as our common progenitors. The concept that families are eternal is essential to an understanding of the church. |
| Family History | This includes genealogical research, but also includes knowing as much as possible about one's family and its story. During the millennium we will |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| | complete the work of linking the entire human race into one family, going back to Adam and Eve. |
| Family Home Evening | Every Monday night is set aside for Family Home Evening – there are no church meetings scheduled, and members are even discouraged from calling others on Monday. Years ago there was a lesson manual for FHE (as it is sometimes known). About 20 years ago that was replaced with a resource manual which gives ideas for FHE. So things are very unstructured, but it is a time for the family to be together, to share testimonies and fun, and above all, strengthen the family. |
| Family Preparedness | Encompasses the plans and encouragement of the church for the members to be prepared for any emergency. This is especially associated with food storage, as the members of the church are encouraged to have a 1-year supply of food and clothing on hand for their families at all times. It is anyone's guess how widely this is followed, I think I have about 6 months worth of food in the basement right now – we are a little low. |
| Far West, Missouri | Designated by the Lord as the “Center Stake of Zion”, this is where a temple will be built in the latter days, and where the Lord will come at the time of his Second Coming. Although the Saints under Joseph Smith purchased the lot where the temple is to be built, it fell from their hands when they left Missouri because of persecution. |
| Fast Meeting | Also (and perhaps more correctly) Fast and Testimony Meeting. Toward the conclusion of the fast the members hold Fast and Testimony Meeting, which is actually a standard sacrament meeting except that, instead of assigned speakers, any member in good standing may bear their testimony. There is very little structure to a testimony in this setting, although the church leadership has encouraged us to concentrate on testimony of the Atonement, the Restoration, and the truthfulness of this work. |
| Fast Offering | Part of fasting includes giving the money that would have been spent on food to the church as a fast offering. There is little agreement in practice about what this means. However, President Kimball specifically suggested that we give “much more” than the cost of two meals, and many members give over 10 times as much as one would reasonably expect to spend on the skipped meals. Note, however, that there is no formal requirement to give more, and there is no formal accounting as to whether one is paying “a full fast offering” as there is for a “full tithe.” |
| Fast Sunday | Church members are expected to fast, or go without food or drink, for 24 hours |

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| | <p>once each month. Early in church history the first Thursday of the month was designated for the fast, but since pioneer times that has moved to the first Sunday of the month. There seems to be a wide variation among members about how long that fast actually lasts (two meals or 24 hours are commonly used rules), when it starts (usually after the midday or evening meal on Saturday), and how it is broken (some prepare a sumptuous meal, some do so very modestly). The church has given little formal guidance on these issues. The money that would have been spent on the food not eaten is to be donated to the church as a fast offering. In the scriptures the concept of fasting is rarely separate from praying, and we are told that an effective fast includes prayer.</p> |
| First Presidency, the | <p>The president of the church is sustained as a prophet, seer, and revelator, and the only person on earth authorized to command the whole church and exercise all priesthood keys. He and his two councilors form the quorum of the first presidency, more commonly just the first presidency. They are the ultimate authority in the church on all doctrinal and policy matters. Any dissent from their direction is understood to be apostasy from the church.</p> |
| First Vision, the | <p>When Joseph Smith prayed as a teenage boy and saw God the Father and Jesus Christ. This happened early in 1820.</p> |
| Friend | <p>The Church magazine for Primary-aged children. It is published monthly.</p> |
| Genealogy | <p>The Church is widely known for its genealogical resources, in the form of local genealogy libraries, the large library in Salt Lake, and now extensive resources available on the internet. The reason for all this is that the family is the basic unit of the Church, and we have a responsibility to search out our ancestors and perform temple work for them.</p> |
| General Authorities | <p>Those who hold callings of responsibility at a church-wide level. This is usually understood to include the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve, the Quorums of the Seventy, and the presiding bishopric. Until the early 1970's there were assistants to the Quorum of the Twelve and only the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.</p> |
| General Conference | <p>A semi-annual event in Salt Lake City, it is intended to be a time when the whole Church can receive instruction from the Church leadership. There are 5 public sessions – general sessions at 10:00 and 2:00 on Saturday and Sunday, and a Priesthood session Saturday evening at 6:00. This conference is broadcast all over the world by radio, television, satellite, and internet. Up until 2000 it was always held in the Tabernacle on Temple Square, since 2000 it has been held in the Conference Center just north of Temple Square.</p> |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| George Albert Smith | Eighth president of the Church. |
| Gordon B. Hinckley | Fifteenth president of the Church, has overseen the building of nearly 100 temples and incredible growth in Church membership. |
| Handcarts | One of the challenges faced by the Church as converts emigrated from Europe and the Eastern United States to Utah was the expense of moving people across the continent. Brigham Young had the idea of using handcarts – wagons that could carry up to 1000 pounds and be pulled by one or two people – to cross the Plains. Altogether there were some 10,000 pioneers who transported their goods in handcarts to go to Salt Lake City. The trip across the plains frequently included various forms of hardship, but the Martin and Willie handcart companies left from Omaha too late in the season, with poorly built handcarts and a larger percentage of elderly people than was usual. They encountered early blizzards in Wyoming after having discarded their winter clothes to reduce weight, and as a consequence about 200 people of the 1200 in the companies died in Wyoming. The trials they faced, along with the huge rescue effort put together from Salt Lake when Brigham Young learned of their plight, have become important parts of the Church traditions about pioneers going to Utah. |
| Harold B. Lee | Eleventh president of the Church. Although he was president for only a short time (about 2 years) he is remembered for his work on establishing the Church's welfare program. |
| Haun's Mill | Haun's Mill, named for Jacob Haun, was a Mormon settlement in Missouri. In 1838, as a consequence of a number of provocations and misunderstandings from both the Mormon settlers and the local Missourians, a group of about 240 mobsters attacked the settlement, which was defended by about 40 men. The buildings were inadequate as protection, and the Mormons were vastly outnumbered. The final death toll was 17 Mormons; however, some of the dead included children who were found hiding, which has lent a sense of horror to the whole affair. One of my ancestors, Austin Hammer, was among those killed. The Haun's Mill Massacre has persisted as a symbol of the viciousness of the hatreds aroused in the Missouri era, and unfortunately contributed indirectly to the Mountain Meadows Massacre. |
| Heber J. Grant | Seventh president of the Church. |
| Hell | In many ways the best definition of Hell is living forever outside of the presence of God and Christ. In this sense any eternal reward outside of the Celestial Kingdom is hell. The Telestial kingdom most closely resembles the sectarian |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| | concept of hell in its conditions and inhabitants, except that it is not the abode of Lucifer and his angels. |
| High Council | A group of 12 high priests called to help administer the affairs of a stake. Each is typically assigned a ward or branch which they should visit regularly, at which they serve as the contacts for the stake presidency. By tradition high councilors, when they meet together, will sit by seniority based on the amount of time since they were called. However, there is no actual significance to this seniority. Although frequently referred to as “high councilmen” this usage is technically incorrect. |
| High Council Speaker | Members of the high council are generally assigned to speak in specific wards one Sunday out of the month during sacrament meeting. The topics are usually assigned by the stake presidency. Depending on the stake presidency and, to a lesser extent, the bishop, the high councilor may have anywhere from 20 to 50 minutes to speak. Since high councilors are called based on issues other than ability to speak, high council speakers are one of the richest sources of humor in the church, typically revolving around the dryness of their talks. Curiously, the two times I have heard bona fide false doctrine taught over the pulpit it was from high council speakers. |
| High Priest | An office in the Melchizedek Priesthood, High Priests are responsible for most of the administrative positions in a stake (Stake presidency, high council, bishoprics must be high priests). |
| Holy Ghost | The third member of the Godhead, he has postponed receiving a physical body so that he can operate directly as a spirit upon our spirits. When a person is baptized in the church he or she also receives the Gift of the Holy Ghost, which is the right to have the company of that God always and receive revelation from him, as long as the individual lives in such a way to make the Holy Spirit comfortable in his or her presence. This Gift of the Holy Ghost is the biggest factor in making members of the church truly followers of Christ. |
| Howard W. Hunter | Fourteenth president of the Church. He served as president for only about nine months, but is remembered for his emphasis on the temple as the grand symbol of our membership. |
| Hymns | The Church hymns are treasured, but not considered to be on the same level as the scriptures in terms of authority. The Church Hymn Book contains about 350 hymns, and was last revised in about 1985. Emma Smith, the wife of Joseph Smith, was directed in a revelation (D&C 25) to prepare the first collection of hymns for the Church. |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Hyrum Smith | Brother to the Prophet Joseph Smith, and his close ally throughout life. He died in Carthage Jail moments before Joseph did. |
| Improvement Era | Prior to 1970, the official Church magazine. It was published monthly. |
| Initiatories | The temple endowment ceremony is actually made up of three distinct phases. The last two are combined in when members usually call “the endowment,” but the first phase, which is the preparatory or “initiator” phase of the endowment is done separately when we officiate in the temple for those who are dead. |
| Inspiration | Any operation which comes from a divine source is properly called “inspiration.” Because every member of the church has received the gift of the Holy Ghost after baptism, all members should be able to receive inspiration. All church callings should be fulfilled under the power of inspiration. Generally members of the church do not expect to receive open revelation (a voice or vision from a celestial being), but all matters in the church should be subject to inspiration, not to the individual preference of the individuals holding the callings. However, there are a wide range of people and personalities in the church, so I frequently refer to issues being according to preference. However, the correct determinant should be inspiration. |
| Inspired Version of the Bible | Joseph Smith was working on a revision of the Bible up to the time of his death. Rather than being based on ancient texts it was based on the King James Bible along with inspired additions which he received through revelation. Although Joseph never considered the work completed, it is a very useful reference for clarification of many biblical passages. With the version of the Bible published by the church in 1980 references to the “Joseph Smith Translation” (or JST) were included in the footnotes to the Bible. |
| Instructor | Before 1970 this was a Church magazine published monthly. I do not remember in what it was different from the Improvement Era. |
| Immortality | In simple terms immortality simply means living forever, which is a free gift because of Christ's death and resurrection. However, the word is also frequently used as a synonym for eternal life, which is life in the Celestial Kingdom, which requires accepting the atonement of Christ for entrance. |
| Israel | Israel in the Bible is the covenant people of the Lord. In the Church we learn that all those who make a covenant with the Lord are part of the house of Israel or to be adopted into the house of Israel. So the promises to the Israelites in all the scriptures belong also to the members of the Church. |
| Jackson County, | Designated as “the Center Stake of Zion”, it was a gathering place for the Church |

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Missouri | in Joseph Smith's day, but conflicts with the residents of the area soon resulted in the members leaving the area. The Lord said specifically that it was wickedness on the part of the Church which prevented them from keeping an inheritance there. The problems that occurred in Missouri dogged the Prophet the rest of his life, and culminated in his martyrdom. |
| John Taylor | Third president of the Church. John Taylor was a prominent citizen, and lent credibility to the young Church when he joined it. He was with the Prophet Joseph in Carthage jail when the latter was martyred. John Taylor walked with a cane the rest of his life as a consequence of the wounds he suffered in that attack. |
| Joseph F. Smith | Son of Hyrum Smith, and sixth president of the Church. He wrote many doctrinal works which have continued in use as reference books until the present time. |
| Joseph Fielding Smith | Son of Joseph F. Smith and tenth president of the Church. He was called to be an apostle by his father, which caused his father much soul searching. |
| Joseph Smith | The first president of the Church, and the Prophet of the restoration. The church was founded by him, and essentially no doctrines are taught in the Church which cannot be traced to him. His image is sometimes romanticized in the Church, but there are enough stories about him to recognize that he was a real person, with little formal education, but selected and schooled by God to bring forth his work in the latter days. Importantly, Mormons do not worship Joseph Smith. We hold him in the highest regard, and his record as a prophet goes beyond any other prophet in the history of the world. He first was called as a prophet in 1820 at the age of fourteen, and was killed by a mob at the age of 38. That he accomplished so much in that short time is in itself a testimony to his calling as God's prophet. The presidents of the Church claim their authority in a direct line from Joseph Smith. In fact, all priesthood authority in the Church can be traced to Joseph Smith. |
| Judah | Birthright son of Israel, and the father of those who are now called Jews. |
| Junior Sunday School | Prior to the introduction of the block program during Sunday School there was Junior Sunday School, which corresponded very closely to Sunday Primary meetings as they now occur. One big difference was that Junior Sunday School also had the blessing and passing of the sacrament, just as occurred in the Senior Sunday School. |
| Keeping | Common usage in the church is to say we must “keep the commandments” or “keep our covenants.” In both cases obedience is implied. |

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Kirtland, Ohio | One of the earliest gathering places for the Church after they left New York, the first temple of this dispensation was built there. The temple still stands, and is owned by the Community of Christ. |
| Lamanites | The Book of Mormon is the history of one people split into two nations – the Nephites (usually followers of the Lord) and the Lamanites (usually wicked). As the Nephites were annihilated in a great war at the end of the book, the Lamanites were the only surviving nation. They are the ancestors of at least some of the native peoples of the Americas. |
| Laurels | Young women from 16 to 18 years of age. |
| Lehi | Lehi was the first prophet mentioned in the Book of Mormon, and was the father of Nephi. Laman and Lemuel were also his sons, and became the ancestors of the Lamanites. |
| Liahona | A miraculous ball or “director” that guided Lehi's family after they left Jerusalem. It has become a symbol of guidance in the Church, and is the name of the Church's international magazines. |
| Library | Each church meeting house should have a library where materials for use in classes and other church meetings are available. Such materials include chalk, crayons, pencils, scriptures, pictures, videos, TVs, tape recorders, key boards, and copy machines. Usually one or two members of the ward or branch are called to work in the library. Members can also check out materials from the library to use in their homes, especially for Family Home Evening. |
| Line of Authority | The fact that priesthood authority comes in unbroken succession from the Savior is central to the claim of legitimacy of the church, so each bearer of the priesthood should know his line of authority, or the succession of men who were ordained before ordaining him. So when a man is ordained to the priesthood the person doing the ordaining should indicate by whom he was ordained, and so on back to the Savior, thus indicating the authenticity of the priesthood that the individual bears. |
| Lorenzo Snow | Fifth president of the Church, widely remembered for emphasizing the payment of tithes. |
| Magnify | When we talk of filling a calling righteously we say we are “magnifying” the calling. In the Old Testament the word was used ordinarily toward a person – to give them glory. In the church the verb is always used with callings or priesthood offices. |
| Manasseh | The second son of Joseph, son of Israel. Manasseh was Lehi's ancestor, and most |

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| | native inhabitants of the Americas are of the tribe of Manasseh. |
| Melchizedek Priesthood | In the church there are two priesthoods, the Aaronic, which is “lesser” or “preparatory” and the Melchizedek, or greater priesthood. The latter has responsibility for all the administration of the church, as well as overseeing welfare, missionary, and family history or temple work in the church. The offices of the Melchizedek Priesthood include Elder, Seventy, High Priest, Patriarch, and Apostle. Each office tends to have different responsibilities and keys, but the entire authority of the Melchizedek priesthood is received when one is ordained an Elder. Formerly each ward had a group of seventies, but in the mid 1980's the practice of ordaining seventies was discontinued, and there are few in the church that now hold that office. Bishoprics, stake presidencies, and other more general church officers must be High Priests. |
| MIA | Mutual Improvement Association, formerly the weekday meeting for the young men and young women of the church. This meeting was renamed “Activity Night” in the 1970's, and has sometimes since been called “Mutual.” Most importantly, it is no longer a separate auxiliary. |
| Mia Maids | Young women from ages 14 to 16. The name comes from the old name of the youth organization, the MIA. The 'i' is long, so pronounced essentially the same as “Maya.” |
| Millennium | The period of one thousand years of peace beginning with the Second Coming of the Lord. Mormon's add but little to the millennial beliefs of Christians in general, except that we preach that the Millennium will be a period of intense and miraculous genealogy work to complete the task of linking all of humankind into one family going back to Adam and Eve. |
| Mission | All young men in the church are expected to serve a mission when they turn nineteen years old. The mission is not a requirement of church membership, but should be considered an obligation of membership. Young women may serve a mission at the age of 21, but they do not have the same obligation that the young men do. Couples whose children have left the home are also strongly encouraged to serve missions for the church. A mission involves a two-year (18-months for the young women) period of dedication to teaching the gospel. Preparing to serve a mission is a big part of a boy's life as he is growing, and after “submitting their papers” (turning in the missionary application) the excitement to find out where they will be called is huge. Missionaries may serve almost anywhere in the world. I went to Bolivia, my brother to South Dakota. There are missionaries in Salt Lake City, Utah. Because the ordinances of the |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| | <p>gospel are necessary for all, we teach to Christian and non-Christian alike. The missionary and his family normally bear the expense of the mission, although the ward and the church may help out in cases where there is a need. Since the mid-1980's families donate a fixed monthly amount to the ward, and the missionary receives funds in accordance with the needs of the area where he or she is serving. When I served my mission my family paid my expenses directly; so I needed an average of about \$90 per month, while my friends in Japan needed about \$300.</p> <p>The mission becomes such a defining experience in the life of a young person that it can affect everything they do in the church for the rest of their lives.</p> |
| Mission Field | <p>Until the last 40 years or so the vast majority of the members of the church lived in Utah, Idaho and Nevada. The custom became common of referring to areas outside of those states as “the mission field.” The term is less common now that the majority of the church members do not even reside in the United States and there are missionaries in Utah, but it still crops up from time to time.</p> |
| Mormon | <p>Why are we called “Mormons,” anyway? Mormon was a prophet who lived in the new world about 300 years after Christ's birth. To him fell the task of abridging all the records of the Nephites to create one history, as a consequence, the book was named after him – the Book of Mormon. Because the teachings of this book are so central to our church, we have been called after its name almost since the beginning of the church. Considering Mormon's valiant role as a prophet, historian, and warrior, it is no small thing to try to live up to that name.</p> |
| Mormon Tabernacle Choir | <p>From pioneer times a church choir was formed to provide music for conferences. They practice in the Tabernacle on Temple Square. Their weekly radio broadcast has originated from there since around 1940, although through 2005 and 2006 they have been using the Conference Center as the Tabernacle has been closed for earthquake renovation. As a performing group the choir is well known, and they are common fare in America for Christmas music, as well as often performing at Presidential Inaugurations of the presidents of the United States.</p> |
| Mortality | <p>This period of earth life, distinguished from “pre-mortal existence” (life with God before birth) and “immortality” (life after death, which will never end. Mortality was achieved through Adam and Eve's choice to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and is an integral part of the Plan of Salvation.</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Mountain Meadows Massacre</p> | <p>Some 120 people in a wagon train, going from Arkansas to the gold fields of California, were massacred in a most treacherous and brutal manner in a place called Mountain Meadows in southern Utah. That there was some involvement from Indians in the area and that the planning and execution of the plan was largely the work of local members of the Church seems clear. Beyond that, though, there is little that is clear. John D. Lee, a bishop and prominent member of the Church, was ultimately tried and executed for the crime. It is certain he did not act alone, and many have tried to trace the responsibility to Brigham Young. There is no evidence, however, to link President Young to the massacre. Still, it is an awful story from the Church's past. It helps some to understand the context in which it occurred – Johnson's Army was marching from the East to put down the “Mormon Rebellion,” the members of the Church had gone through a great religious revival, partially in preparation to defend themselves from Johnson's Army, and members of the wagon train boasted of having participated in the Haun's Mill Massacre or even in the murder of the Prophet Joseph. All this may help to understand, but cannot decrease the horror of the crime itself, as men, women and children (except for about 15 children too young to talk) were murdered in cold blood. The surviving children were adopted by local families, and some time later restored to their relatives in Arkansas.</p> |
| <p>Nauvoo</p> | <p>Also known as “The City of Joseph” or “The City Beautiful”, this gathering place for the saints in the state of Illinois for a time was the largest city in the state. The Nauvoo temple was the first temple of this dispensation constructed for the purpose of temple ordinances. The city, although ultimately the scene of persecution, murder and suffering as the Saints were driven out before moving to the Rocky Mountains, remains a symbol of a precious time in the history of the Church. Since about 1930 the Church has progressively bought and restored more and more of the property in and around Nauvoo. Shortly after 2000 the Nauvoo temple (the original having been destroyed by mobs and a tornado) was reconstructed. The exterior of the new temple is as close to the appearance of the original temple as possible, although there are only a very few photographs of poor quality from the original. The angel Moroni on the spire of the temple is now standing, where the original was shown flying. Nauvoo is a favorite destination of Mormon tourists. Joseph Smith and Hyrum are buried in the old city.</p> |
| <p>Nephi</p> | <p>The first person to write in the Book of Mormon. He was a great prophet, and was quite young when he began his religious career. He is frequently held up as an example of courage, faith, and obedience.</p> |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Nephites | The Book of Mormon recounts the history of one people split into two nations – the Nephites (usually followers of the Lord) and the Lamanites (usually unrighteous). |
| New Era | The Church magazine for the youth. It is published monthly. |
| Nursery | During the parts of the Sunday meeting block outside of the sacrament meeting the nursery is provided for children from 18 months of age to those who have turned three before the beginning of the year. Assignment to work in the nursery can mean that a person feels somewhat isolated from the rest of the ward, but it is also a marvelous opportunity to participate in the earliest religious instruction of children outside the home. |
| Opening Exercises | Meetings of Primary, Sunday School, Young Men, and Young Women frequently have “opening exercises” where everyone in the organization meets together for an opening prayer, perhaps a hymn, and announcements, before separating for classes. |
| Outer Darkness | The dwelling of Lucifer and his angels, as well as those who have known the testimony of the Holy Ghost and then have utterly rejected it. It is the only eternal destination which is not a kingdom of glory. It is generally felt that very few will be condemned to live there, yet we know that the third part of the hosts of heaven chose to live there instead of participating in the plan of salvation. |
| Palmyra, New York | The Prophet Joseph and his family lived in the area of Palmyra from his early boyhood, and the Church was originally organized with 6 members in the Peter Whitmer home there. |
| Patriarch | An office of the Melchizedek priesthood, but also a specific calling in a stake. The Patriarch is responsible for pronouncing Patriarchal Blessings, and is an important spiritual figure in a stake. |
| Patriarchal Blessing | Each stake has at least one patriarch, which is a man set apart to give blessings which give the lineage of the individual (that is, to which tribe of Israel the person belongs) and words of counsel from the Lord to the individual. Usually this blessing is received after a person is at least 14 years old, but there is no set age at which it is received, nor is it a mandatory thing. Each person is encouraged to receive the blessing so that they have their personal revelation from the Lord. |
| Pearl of Great Price | This small book of scripture includes a part of the life history of the Prophet Joseph Smith, as well as some excerpts from translations of the scriptures done by Joseph. It also contains the Articles of Faith. It is a very small book, but |

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| | contains many marvelous truths not found elsewhere in the scriptures, so its name is an accurate reflection of its nature. |
| Perpetual Education Fund | A program instituted by President Hinckley around the year 2000 in which members in poorer countries are given assistance, including financial, to obtain a better education and be able to rise out of poverty. Those who have been so helped are expected to pay back into the fund to provide for the education of others. It was intentionally modeled after the Perpetual Emigration Fund of Brigham Young, and has been very successful in assisting people and the rate of people paying back into it has been very good. |
| Perpetual Emigration Fund | A program instituted by Brigham Young to assist poor and needy church members to emigrate to the Salt Lake area. As these families arrived they were supposed to pay back into the fund so that it could be used to help others. However, due to the poor rate of payback the Fund was only a limited success. |
| Pioneers | From 1846 through the next 20 or so years many members left the Eastern United States and walked or rode in wagons to Salt Lake City, where the church was being built up. Because of the courage and determination those members displayed they have become a strong symbol of faith in the Lord. The image of pioneers is inextricably linked with covered wagons, handcarts, and women in bonnets. |
| Plan of Salvation | The Father's plan whereby each of us may become like him is called the Plan of Salvation. It includes us progressing from spirits in the presence of God, through mortality, then again as spirits after death, and finally as eternally embodied beings after the resurrection. The overarching factor that gives the Plan of Salvation meaning is the atonement of Jesus Christ. Without that pivotal act nothing in existence as we know it would have any purpose. |
| Prayer | In the church prayer is almost always a personal communication with God, so there is no set form or wording. The Lord's prayer from the sermon on the mount is understood to be a model, but not a prayer we would actually offer to communicate with God. The exceptions to the extemporaneous prayers include the sacramental prayers (given in Doctrine and Covenants section 20) and the baptismal prayer (from the same source). Prayer is given to us to allow us to communicate with God, and we are commanded to give thanks for all things and to ask for the things we desire. |
| Pre-existence | The common (if somewhat inaccurate) name for the pre-mortal existence. |
| Pre-mortal | All of us lived as spirits in the presence of our Heavenly Father and Jesus before coming to this mortal existence. That state is called the pre-mortal existence. It |

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Existence | had many pleasurable attributes, but in order to progress eternally we needed to acquire a body and the experiences of mortality. |
| Priest | An office of the Aaronic priesthood which holds the authority to baptize and administer the sacrament. Worthy young men are ordained priests at the age of 16 and generally remain in the priest's quorum until the age of 18. A full priest's quorum has 48 members. |
| Priesthood | The priesthood is the authority of God to work in his name. All worthy males from the age of 12 and up can hold the priesthood and participate in church administration and ordinances. The Aaronic priesthood is conferred at age twelve and the boy is given the office of deacon. The offices of teacher and priest follow at ages 14 and 16. After the age of 18 worthy young men can have conferred upon them the Melchizedek priesthood, which has the authority to administer in the church. Men generally hold the offices of Elder or High Priest in this priesthood. |
| Primary | The organization in the church for children 18 months to 12 years of age. Primary meetings are held on Sunday during the same time as Sunday school and Priesthood meetings. Usually a ward has a senior and junior primary as well as a nursery. The nursery is for ages 18 months to those who have not completed 3 years of age on Jan 1. Children join nursery when they turn 18 months, then all leave after Dec 31 when they have turned three. Nursery tends to be less structured than other parts of primary, and usually has 2 to 6 leaders. If a nursery gets much larger than 10 then the primary presidency may split it according to their personal preference. In the rest of primary the classes stay together, all members moving up on Dec 31. As children turn 12 then they move on to Young Men and Young women as appropriate. The younger classes are Sunbeams 3-5, then CTR 6 through 12. When I was in primary (1960's) there were names for each year, such as sunbeam, star, CTR Pilot, Top Pilot, and a host of others I don't remember. The last year of Primary was segregated by boys and girls, but that is long gone. Junior Primary includes 3-7 year olds, the rest are Senior Primary. Usually Senior Primary will meet in sharing time (talks, singing, and a group lesson) while the Junior Primary is in classes, and then vice-versa. With a very small Primary they may all share a schedule. Singing is a big part of Primary, and almost every member of the church who has been through Primary can still sing "Pop Corn Popping" with all the hand motions. |
| Prophet, the | All members of the first presidency and the quorum of the twelve are prophets, seers, and revelators. However, the president of the church is <i>the</i> prophet, seer, and revelator. This position has always been held by the senior apostle on the |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>earth, or the apostle who was ordained earliest among the living apostles. When the prophet dies the surviving apostles meet to select the next prophet and president of the church. Because through the 1980's until now (2006) the first councilor to the president of the church has also been the next most senior apostle, many have understood that the councilors in the first presidency are selected based on seniority, but this is not so. The prophet may call any worthy male to be a councilor, although that individual will then be ordained to the office of apostle if he does not already hold that position. At times within the last 50 years there have been as many as four councilors to the president; two is the usual, but not mandatory, number.</p> |
| Quorum | <p>A group of the priesthood is called a quorum – usually deacons, teachers, priests, or elders. Each of these quorums exists within a ward. The high priests' quorum includes all high priests in the stake, and the stake president is the president of the quorum. In a ward there is a high priests' group, with a group leader and two councilors.</p> |
| Release | <p>Callings are almost always for a finite, if not usually pre-defined, duration. At the end of the calling the individual is released, preferably by the same authority (or level of authority) that extended the calling. The exception is that the apostles and the first quorum of the seventy are called for life.</p> |
| Relief Society | <p>When the Relief Society was formed by the Prophet Joseph Smith in about 1835 it was literally a separate organization from the church, to which sisters paid dues and belonged to it as a club. Since then it has become a fully integrated portion of the church, but still exclusively for women above 18 years of age. The Relief Society president is a rather visible member of the ward, and works closely with the bishop to provide for the temporal welfare of the ward. With the introduction of the block program women who work in Young womens or Primary are not able to attend the Sunday Relief Society meetings, and may feel rather isolated from the other sisters. There is a meeting during the week, previously called Home Making meeting and now Family, Home and Education meeting. This has been held monthly, but I believe its frequency is dropping to once a quarter.</p> |
| Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints | <p>See “Community of Christ.”</p> |
| Sabbath Observance | <p>The church generally observes the Christian Sabbath, or Sunday, as the day of formal worship during the week. In countries where there is a prevailing</p> |

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| | <p>Sabbath other than Sunday that day may be observed instead. Although Doctrine and Covenants Section 59 specifically mandates Sunday (“the Lord's day”) as the day of worship, the church feels that <i>a</i> day is more important than <i>which</i> day. Generally, any form of business (buying or selling) is deemed inappropriate, although buying medicine or working in essential areas such as law enforcement or medicine are considered acceptable. We are commanded to attend church (Sacrament and Priesthood) meetings, and highly encouraged to read and study scriptures, pray, and attend to family matters. The “day of rest” is understood to apply to resting from worldly concerns, many church callings absorb a lot of time on the Sabbath.</p> |
| <p>Sacrament</p> | <p>Although the term sacrament applies generically in religion to a number of sacred observances, in the church it is used almost exclusively for the sacrament of the Lord's supper, or the sharing of bread and water (formerly wine) in church on the sabbath. As a remembrance of the atonement of the Lord it is the most sacred moment in the church outside of the temple. Usually the bread and water for the sacrament are prepared by the young men of the Aaronic priesthood holding the office of teacher, blessed by the priests, and passed to the congregation by the deacons. The bread is broken during the singing of the sacrament hymn during Sacrament meeting, then it is blessed by the priests and passed to the congregation by the deacons. Later the water is blessed and passed. The prayers for the blessings are given in Doctrine and Covenants Section 20, and must be repeated verbatim. Since about the 1970's the practice has been that if the person giving the blessing makes a small error then corrects it there is no need to repeat the prayer. Prior to that any mistake required that the whole prayer be repeated. The bishop is responsible for assuring the correctness of the prayers. Members are encouraged, but not strictly required, to partake of the emblems of the sacrament with the right hand. The deacons are also encouraged, but not required, to handle the sacrament trays with their right hands. As sacred and important as the sacrament is, we are encouraged not to make it too ritualistic. The members are encouraged to be silent during the blessing and passing of the sacrament, although in a church where all members of the family are encouraged to attend church, including babies and small children, the degree of silence may be somewhat relative.</p> |
| <p>Salt Lake City</p> | <p>The headquarters of the Church are located in Salt Lake City, Utah. The General Conferences of the Church are held there, and it is to some extent the spiritual center of the Church. Interestingly enough this is a tradition only, because there is a doctrinal center of the church, which is Jackson County, Missouri. Although</p> |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| | there are relatively few members of the Church there now, during the Millennium that is where the Lord will establish his headquarters. |
| Scouting | The church is the largest institutional sponsor of Boy Scouting in the world, and each unit should have a Cub Pack, a Scout Troop, a Varsity Team, and an Explorer Post. Girl scouting is not included as a church organization. The scout units parallel the priesthood quorums of the Aaronic Priesthood, and Scouting and Priesthood are expected to go hand in hand. |
| Sealer | More correctly, a temple sealer, a bearer of the Melchizedek priesthood who has been given the sealing power to bind families together for eternity. All true Mormon weddings, or sealings, are performed in the temple by a sealer. |
| Sealings | Ordinances performed in the temple to create eternal families. The usage that can cause confusion is that sometimes members will have an assignment to go to the temple “to do sealings,” this simply means that they are going specifically to participate in these ordinances as proxies for dead persons. |
| Senior Missionaries | Although the bulk of the Church's missionary force is made up of nineteen to twenty one year old you men, and to a lesser extent twenty one to twenty three year old young women, there are also senior missionaries. They are generally retired couples who serve from 6 to 18 months. They have quite a bit more latitude than the younger missionaries, and can express preferences for where they will serve and what type of work they will do. |
| Setting Apart | After a person receives a calling they are usually “set apart” for the calling, which involves a blessing under the hands of the authority which extended the calling (usually a bishop or his councilor in a ward, and a member of the stake presidency or the high council in a stake). This is the formal conferral of the calling, and also usually includes words of blessing appropriate for magnifying the calling. |
| Seventy | An office in the Melchizedek priesthood, the seventies used to be responsible for managing the missionary work in a stake. Since about 1985 the Church has discontinued the practice of ordaining seventies. |
| Spencer W. Kimball | Twelfth president of the Church, he was president when I was called on my mission. He was strongly missionary minded, and oversaw a large expansion of the number of missionaries serving in the Church. |
| Sustaining Vote | See “Common Consent” |
| Stake | The next level of church organization above a ward, a stake typically consists of 6-12 wards or branches. A stake is administered by a stake presidency – a |

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| | <p>president and two councilors – each of whom must be a high priest. Each is typically referred to as “President <family name>”. By the way, the name “stake” comes from usages such as in Isaiah 54:2: “Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.”</p> |
| Stake Center | <p>One of the meeting houses in the stake is designated the Stake Center, and it is where the stake presidency has their offices, and there is usually a room dedicated to the use of the high council. Frequently many of the stake meetings are also held in the stake center.</p> |
| Stake Conference | <p>Twice yearly (usually about every six months) each stake in the church meets together in a stake conference. As recently as the mid-1970's there were four stake conferences per year, consisting of two meetings, or sessions, on Sunday. In 2006 a stake conference usually is composed of a Saturday afternoon meeting for church leaders at the stake and ward levels, a Saturday evening session for all adult (18+) members of the stake, and a Sunday morning session for all members of the stake. Each session is usually about two hours. Traditionally a stake conference was an occasion to receive the visit of a general authority. In the 1980's the general authority visit went to once a year. In 2005 there is little promise of a general authority visit at all. When a general authority is not present the stake presidency organizes and conducts the conference as they see fit, although frequently following guidelines from church headquarters. The stake conference meeting(s) take the place of normal Sunday meetings at the ward level.</p> |
| Standard Works | <p>The church uses four books – The Bible, The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and The Pearl of Great Price – as the official canon of scripture. All are the word of God, and are of equal authority.</p> |
| Stewardship | <p>Any church calling is understood to include a stewardship – that area over which the calling has authority. This is part of the hierarchical nature of the church, so a bishop has stewardship over all areas within the ward, but generally expects the presidencies and leaderships within the ward to exercise their stewardship within their areas of responsibility. Therefore, each member may fall within various stewardships, including their ward, their calling, and their group or quorum memberships.</p> |
| Sunday School | <p>Sunday School is similar to Sunday School in other churches, as near as I can tell. It is one of the three portions of the block meetings on Sunday, and usually has classes for the youth by age from 12 to 18 years, then Gospel Doctrine is the</p> |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| | <p>main adult class. There are a number of optional adult classes, including Gospel Principles (investigators and new members), Family History, Missionary Preparation, and Marriage Prep, and a class for married people (whose name escapes me). Some wards may separate Gospel Doctrine for youth, and “older” members. All classes study one of the standard works, with the lessons repeating every four years.</p> |
| Tabernacle | <p>Although many cities (especially in Utah) have an assembly hall called a tabernacle, <i>the</i> Tabernacle usually refers to the building on Temple Square. It was built during the time of Brigham Young, and housed the General Conferences of the Church until 2000. It holds about 8000 people in its main hall.</p> |
| Teacher | <p>Although there are teachers in all the classes of the Church, the term is also used for an office in the Aaronic priesthood. Worthy young men are ordained teachers at age 14, and have the authority to prepare the sacrament and serve as home teachers.</p> |
| Telestial Kingdom | <p>The lowest of the kingdoms of glory described as eternal rewards after this life. Although it is described as the home of murderers and wicked people, Joseph Smith also said that its glory was beyond anything we can imagine.</p> |
| Temple | <p>Temples are highly sacred places reserved for certain ordinances for the living and for the dead. They are not regular meeting houses, in fact, they are closed on Sundays. There are currently about 130 temples in the world, compared with 12 when I went on my mission. In the temple special instructions are given in an ordinance called the endowment, and families are sealed together for eternity. Properly speaking, there is no temple wedding, but a temple sealing. All of the ordinances of the temple can also be performed for a deceased person by a living person serving as a proxy. So an individual goes to the temple but a few times for his or her own ordinances, but can return as frequently as desired to perform the same work for others. Attendance at the temple is the culmination of all else that we do in the church, and is the best representation of heaven that we have here on earth. Because of the extremely sacred nature of what goes on in the temple we do not discuss in great detail outside of the temple what goes on there.</p> |
| Temple Preparation Classes | <p>Going to the temple requires a major commitment on the part of the attender; so much so that there is a course of lessons for those who are going to attend. The courses are not strictly necessary before going, but they can be very useful in underscoring the covenants and blessings of the temple.</p> |
| Temple | <p>In order to enter the temple a person must have a temple recommend. This is a</p> |

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Recommend | card signed by the bearer, a member of the bishopric, and a member of the stake presidency attesting to the person's worthiness to attend the temple. Before receiving the recommend the member must attend interviews with the bishopric and the stake presidency to answer questions about their worthiness. Up until about 2000 temple recommends had to be renewed annually, now they are good for two years. |
| Temple Square | The city block in Salt Lake City where the temple and Tabernacle are located. It is a popular tourist destination in Utah, although it was recently passed in popularity by Cabellas, a sporting goods store. Temple Square is a mission to itself, and young women from all nations are called to work there so that almost all visitors can be greeted in their native tongue. |
| Terrestrial Kingdom | The second level or kingdom of glory in the eternities. It is described as the home of those who rejected the gospel of Christ then later accepted it, but in practice we have little understanding as to the exact conditions for entrance therein. |
| Testimony | The word is used specifically to refer to those truths that one knows through the witness of the Holy Ghost. It properly refers to knowledge rather than belief. Although in a Fast and Testimony meeting you may hear many things mentioned during members' testimonies, what should always predominate is the concept of personal revelation. |
| Tithing | Section 119 of the Doctrine and Covenants specifies that members are to give "one tenth of their increase" to the church as tithing. Although most members have very specific ideas about what this means in their own lives, the church leadership has been very careful to avoid giving a more specific definition than this. In general, where an individual is earning a wage or a salary, this is widely understood to mean 10% of the gross income. Most pay tithing as they receive pay, but some pay it less frequently, generally at least annually. There seems to be most lively discussion about whether tithing is paid on money set aside for retirement (whether through taxation or voluntarily). |
| Titles | The use of certain titles in the church is so pervasive that they may be considered specific parts of Mormon Culture. All titles are generally used with the family name of the individual. Bishops are always called "bishop". Other members, especially adult members, are "brother" and "sister". Full time male missionaries and general authorities are "elder". Branch, mission, temple, and stake presidency members are "president". Note that there is no title for bishopric councilors. Less frequently, stake patriarchs are "patriarch" and elders |

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| | quorum presidents (usually not councilors) are “president.” Even less frequently, Relief Society and Primary presidents (not councilors) are “president.” Other presidents may sometimes receive the title. |
| Two-and-a-half-minute talks | In the dark ages of the church (up until about 1980) when there were separate meetings on Sundays, part of the opening exercises of Sunday School included talks. For reasons with which I am not familiar these were called two and a half minute talks, and were expected to last about that long. They were typically opportunities for the youth to learn to speak in church. |
| Unit | Generally, a ward, branch, or stake. Each unit has a unit number, which appear to be consecutively assigned as units are created. Unit numbers are usually 6 or 7 digits long. |
| Vision | A visual manifestation of an angel or other heavenly visitor. |
| Visiting Teaching | Sisters in the Relief Society are assigned to visit other sisters on a monthly basis. This is called visiting teaching. There is an outline of the visiting teaching message each month in the Ensign or Liahona. |
| Ward | Typically the smallest ecclesiastical grouping in the church, a ward meets together on Sundays, and is typically comprised of between 200-600 members (counting men, women, and children). A ward is led by a bishopric consisting of a bishop and two councilors, each of whom must be a high priest. The bishop is always referred to as “Bishop <family name>” but the councilors continue to be called “Brother <family name>”. Different individuals feel different levels of impropriety associated with calling members of a bishopric by their first names, although there is no actual doctrinal issue involved. Technically, “bishop” is an office of the Aaronic priesthood. Doctrinally, a descendant of Aaron may officiate as a bishop without holding the Melchizedek priesthood, and without councilors. In practical terms, however, bishops and their councilors are always high priests. In student wards (either at church schools or in an area with a high concentration of LDS students) the councilors may be elders. |
| Wilford Woodruff | Fourth president of the Church. |
| Word of Wisdom, the | One of the most widely known characteristics of church members is that we do not drink alcohol, smoke, or drink coffee. This is based on Section 89 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which the Lord names a “word of wisdom” and which, in common usage, is the Word of Wisdom. Most widely mentioned are the four main proscriptions – no coffee, tea, alcohol, or tobacco. The Word of Wisdom was first given as guidance, but was accepted by the church in the mid to late |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| | <p>1800's as a commandment. Interestingly, lack of observance was not harshly censured up until at least the 1940's. Since at least the 1970's it has been one of the questions in the temple recommend interview. The restriction on tea and coffee is perhaps the most interesting part of the Word of Wisdom. The Lord said “hot drinks” in the original revelation. However, unlike many commandments, this has been formally interpreted by the first presidency as coffee and tea, but not hot chocolate, etc. Further, tea is understood to mean the green or black tea plants, not (for example) cinnamon tea. However, many members go further, and assume the commandment has to do with caffeine. This leads to members feeling that Coca Cola is against the word of wisdom, or that decaffeinated coffee may be allowed. As far as formal interpretation goes, the only doctrinal issues are with coffee and tea (Coke is OK, decaf is not). Be prepared, however, for strident arguments in all directions in this area. The Word of Wisdom also has directions on things we should eat. Accompanied by some rather symbolic language, this has given rise to whole conflicting schools of thought on the Word of Wisdom, including some who feel that it mandates, or at least encourages, vegetarianism. As with so many things, I must point out that this is individual preference, not church doctrine. In fact, I personally would never drink Coke, but I would never condemn another member for drinking it.</p> |
| Young Women | <p>The church auxiliary for girls between the ages of 12 and 18. Ages 12 and 13 meet together as “Beehives¹”, 14 and 15 are “Mia Maids”, and 16 and 17 are “Laurels.”</p> |
| Young Women's Theme | <p>Each week the Young Women recite together the Young Women's Theme. It starts “We are daughters of our Heavenly Father, who loves us and we love him.” It is an amazingly profound and concise expression of conviction and purpose, and I have never been able to listen to it recited without feeling a spiritual confirmation of its validity.</p> |
| Zion | <p>“The Pure in Heart”, this the goal of any church group, to become Zion, or the people of the Lord. The term can also refer to a physical location, either Jerusalem, Jackson County Missouri, or the American Continents.</p> |

1 Reference to “Deseret”, as a symbol of industry.