

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



Edited by
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*The History, Scripture, Doctrine, and Procedure
of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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President Spencer W. Kimball escorts Milli Cody [Garrett], "Miss Indian BYU" for 1974–1975 to a campus reception. Courtesy Doug Martin.

dian communities. In 1989, American Indian Services was transferred from BYU to the Lehi Foundation, which continues this activity.

In 1975, George P. Lee, a full-blooded Navajo and an early ISPS participant, was appointed as a General Authority. He was the first Indian to achieve this status and served faithfully for more than ten years. Elder Lee became convinced that the Church was neglecting its mission to the Lamanites, and when he voiced strong disapproval of Church leaders, he was excommunicated in 1989.

The Church has always had a strong commitment to preaching the gospel to Native Americans and assisting individuals, families, communities, and tribes to improve their education, health, and religious well-being. Programs vary from time to

time as conditions and needs change, but the underlying beliefs and goodwill of Latter-day Saints toward these people remain firm and vibrant.

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BRUCE A. CHADWICK
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NATURAL MAN

The phrase "natural man" is understood by Latter-day Saints to be an unrepentant person; it does not imply that mortals are by nature depraved or evil, but only that they are in a fallen condition. Natural man describes persons who are "without God in the world, and they have gone contrary to the nature of God" (Alma 41:11). The Lord declared to Joseph SMITH: "Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning; and God having redeemed man from the fall, men became again, in their infant state, innocent before God" (D&C 93:38).

The ATONEMENT of Christ does not automatically free mankind from a fallen condition, although it does guarantee all a physical resurrection. Rather, it makes possible for men and women to escape the condition of natural man by accepting the Atonement and nurturing the LIGHT OF CHRIST within them. King BENJAMIN was told by an angel that "the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam." But a person can "put off the natural man" by yielding to "the enticings of the Holy Spirit," and can become "a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, . . . [by becoming] as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love" (Mosiah 3:19). The phrase natural man, therefore, does not describe a condition that causes sin but a consequence of sin, of going against the commandments of God. As the prophet ABINADI taught, "he that persists in his

own carnal nature, and goes on in the ways of sin and rebellion against God, remaineth in his fallen state” (Mosiah 16:5). In such rebellion, one is left without excuse. As explained by SAMUEL THE LAMANITE:

Whosoever doeth iniquity, doeth it unto himself; for behold, ye are free; ye are permitted to act for yourselves; for behold, God hath given unto you a knowledge and he hath made you free. He hath given unto you that ye might know good from evil, and he hath given unto you that ye might choose life or death [Hel. 14:30–31; *see also* AGENCY].

The apostle PAUL speaks of the natural man as being in a state incapable of understanding spiritual truth. “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14). Moreover, the natural man “walk[s] according to the course of this world, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind” (Eph. 2:2–3).

Because the natural man is unrepentant and indulgent, one must overcome this condition through repentance and submission to the Spirit of God. President Brigham YOUNG stated that God “has placed us on the earth to prove ourselves, to govern, control, educate and sanctify ourselves, body and spirit” (*JD* 10:2, in *Discourses of Brigham Young*, ed. J. Widtsoe, p. 57, Salt Lake City, 1971). Parley P. Pratt, an apostle, explains how the Holy Ghost aids in the process:

[It] increases, enlarges, expands and purifies all the natural passions and affections; and adapts them, by the gift of wisdom, to their lawful use. It inspires, develops, cultivates and matures all the fine-toned sympathies, joys, tastes, kindred feelings and affections of our nature [*Key to the Science of Theology*, 10th ed., p. 101, Salt Lake City, 1973].

Repentance is manifested as “[yielding] to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, . . . [being] willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father” (Mosiah 3:19). Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has pointed out that humility and selflessness develop a capacity for discipline and a control of natural appetites. This is a difficult process, which requires that “men and women of Christ magnify their callings without magnifying themselves” (p. 16).

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R. J. SNOW

NATURE, LAW OF

Rational inquiry into nature (*physis*) was for Greek philosophers the way to know reality. The natural was originally radically distinguished from law (*nomos*), which identified merely human conventions. Thus, for example, it is natural for humans to speak, but it is not natural to speak Greek. Hence, law was not initially thought of by such philosophers as natural, though it was natural for humans to be governed by such conventions. Later the terms “nature” and “law” began to be linked to describe a prepolitical golden age without rules, contracts, property, or marriage. Understood in this way, “natural law,” after the decline from the golden age, did not provide the model for civil law, but instead identified a realm accessible to reason that transcends the world. Roman Catholic theologians eventually borrowed the expression “natural law” from pagan philosophy to ground a structured social ethic. Thomas Aquinas, in his Aristotelian restructuring of Christianity, distinguished four levels of law: eternal, divine, natural, and human. Eternal law, the mind of God and structure of reality, he held, is known both through revelation as divine law and through reason as natural law, and human law should strive to reflect the natural law.

Though Latter-day Saints sometimes speculate about the reasons for the positive law given through divine REVELATION and also about the moral sense of mankind (*see* ETHICS), a moral natural law is not clearly delineated in the LDS canon. Some suggest that rough equivalents for a moral natural law might be elicited from scripture. But theology, grounded in philosophical speculation, is typically seen as a competitor to divine revelation. Such speculation remains tentative and problematic. Hence, there is little talk of a moral natural law among Latter-day Saints.

LDS scriptures, rather than relying upon notions of a moral natural law, speak of God’s commandments, statutes, and ordinances, of God’s will