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Church Handbook of Instructions

Book 1

Stake Presidencies and Bishoprics

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Contents

Introduction

The Lord admonished, "Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence" (D&C 107:99; see also D&C 105:10).

Church leaders should seek personal revelation to help them learn and fulfill the duties of their callings.

Studying the scriptures and the teachings of latter-day prophets will also help leaders learn their duties. The Lord has admonished leaders to treasure up in their minds continually the words of God so they will be receptive to the influence of the Spirit (see D&C 84:85).

Leaders also learn their duties by studying the instructions in Church handbooks. These instructions can facilitate revelation if they are used to provide an understanding of principles, policies, and procedures to apply when seeking the guidance of the Spirit.

Introduction to the *Church Handbook of Instructions*

To reduce and simplify information on Church administration, most handbooks and other instructions have been consolidated into the *Church Handbook of Instructions*, which consists of two books:

- *Book 1: Stake Presidencies and Bishoprics*. This book is similar to the former *General Handbook of Instructions*. For the most part it includes information that only stake presidencies and bishoprics need. However, other stake and ward leaders may have access to this information as needed for reference.
- *Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders.* This book provides instructions for administering priesthood quorums and auxiliaries. It also provides instructions on Church programs, activities, leadership, and selected policies. This publication is bound as a single book for stake presidencies, bishoprics, high priests group leaders, elders quorum presidents, and auxiliary presidents. Individual sections are published for leaders who do not need the entire book.
- **Superseded Publications**

As of 1 January 1999, the *Church Handbook of Instructions* supersedes the following publications, which should be discarded:

- *General Handbook of Instructions*
- *1991 Supplement to the 1989 General Handbook of Instructions*
- *Melchizedek Priesthood Leadership Handbook*
- *Aaronic Priesthood Leadership Handbook*
- *Stake Mission Handbook*
- *Temple and Family History Leadership Handbook*
- *Relief Society Handbook*
- *Young Women Leadership Handbook*
- *Primary Handbook*
- *Primary Handbook Supplement*
- *Sunday School Handbook*
- *Activities Committee Handbook*
- *Church Music Handbook*
- *Stake and Ward Clerk Handbook*
- *Public Affairs Handbook*
- *Member Progress Reporting Instructions*
- *Instructions for Priesthood Leaders of Single Members*
- *Instructions for Priesthood Leaders on the Church Educational System*
- *Instructions for Priesthood Leaders on Institutes Of Religion*
- *Instructions for Priesthood Leaders on Military Relations*
- *Instructions for Priesthood Leaders on Physical Facilities (United States and Canada)*
- *Instructions for Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders on Sports and Recreation Activities*
- *Instructions for Priesthood Leaders on Church Magazines*

- *Instructions for Priesthood Leaders and Librarians about Meetinghouse Libraries*
- *Instructions for Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders on Primary*
- *Instructions for Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders on Sunday School*
- *Instructions for Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders on Teacher Development*
- *Gospel Literacy Guidelines for Priesthood and Relief Society Leaders*
- *Helping Unwed Birth Parents: A Guide for Ecclesiastical Leaders*
- *Bulletin issues preceding 1999 (except the March 1993 Special Bulletin)*
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Although the information in *Providing in the Lord's Way: A Leader's Guide to Welfare* is included in the *Church Handbook of Instructions*, it will continue to be published as a separate document.

Updates and Supplements to Instructions

Occasionally the information in the *Church Handbook of Instructions* will be updated or supplemented through the Bulletin, Notices, and other correspondence from the First Presidency, Quorum of the Twelve, and Presiding Bishopric. When this occurs, leaders should write the change in their copies of the handbooks. Leaders should keep handbooks and these supplementary materials together.

Questions about Instructions

Leaders who have questions about information in the *Church Handbook of Instructions*, or about issues that are not addressed, should direct the questions to their immediate presiding authority.

Application in Branches, Districts, and Missions

Unless the context shows otherwise, the terms bishop and bishopric in the *Church Handbook of Instructions* refer also to branch presidents and branch presidencies. The terms stake president and stake presidency refer also to district presidents and district presidencies. References to wards and stakes usually apply also to branches, districts, and missions.

Branch, district, and mission presidents should follow these instructions as far as they are applicable. A mission president should have the approval of his Area Presidency if he believes he needs to modify the application of these instructions in his mission.

Distribution of *Book 1*

Book 1: Stake Presidencies and Bishoprics should be distributed as follows:

- General Authorities, Area Authority Seventies, general Church department heads, general auxiliary presidencies, directors for temporal affairs (1 copy each)
- Temple presidency (4 copies)
- Stake presidency (5 copies)
- Bishopric (4 copies)
- Mission presidency (3 copies)
- District presidency (5 copies)
- Branch presidency (3 copies)
- *Book1* has been prepared solely for use by general and local Church officers to administer the affairs of the Church. The entire book should not be duplicated. However, the stake president or bishop may authorize portions to be duplicated for high councilors and others as needed.

When Church officers who have a copy of *Book 1* are released, they should give the copy promptly to their successor or to their presiding authority.

List of Items Referenced

The *Church Handbook of Instructions* refers to many other Church-produced materials, such as forms, manuals, and certificates. An alphabetical list of the materials that are referenced in this handbook is provided below. If item numbers have been assigned, they are provided below rather than in the text of this handbook. Most of these materials are available through Church distribution centers.

Aaronic Priesthood Record and Certificate form (35857)

A Guide to Quality Seminary Graduation Exercises (32372)

A Member's Guide to Temple and Family History Work (34697)

Annual Tithing Status Report

A Parent's Guide (31125)

Application to the First Presidency form (35789)

Baptism Record form (35919)

Bishop's Order for Commodities forms (33585 and 31422)

Caring for the Needy videocassette (part of Essentials of Welfare, 53045)

Certificate of Appointment (33120)

Child Blessing Record and Certificate form (35856)

Church Educational System Publications Catalog (item number varies by year)

Church Name and Logotype Guidelines for Local Units (33654)

Confidential Report on Proposed Temple Ordinance Workers form (34449)

Confirmation Record/Baptism and Confirmation Certificate form (35920)

Directory of General Authorities and Officers

Endowed from on High: Temple Preparation Seminar Teacher's Manual (35322)

Family Home Evening Resource Book (31106)

For the Strength of Youth (pamphlet 34285; card 34287)

Gospel Principles (31110)

A Guide to Quality Seminary Graduation Exercises (32372)

Identification and Prevention of Suicidal Behavior (32253)

Identification tag for LDS military members (33118)

Information and Suggestions for Patriarchs (31257)

Instructions for Clothing the Dead Who Have Received Their Endowments (31461)

Instructions for Making Temple Clothing (31460)

LDS identification tag (for members in the military; 33118)

Limited-Use Recommend (32602)

Meetinghouse Artwork Brochure (34826)

Melchizedek Priesthood Record and Certificate form (35858)

Member Progress Report-Stake / District (34903)

Member Progress Report-Ward / Branch (34902)

A Member's Guide to Temple and Family History Work (34697)

Military scripture set (31197)

Missionary Recommendation forms packet (31957)

Missionary Health-Dental Record

Missionary Personal Insurance Information form

Missionary Recommendation form

Missionary Resume' for Couples and Single Women

Missionary Tuberculosis Screening Report form (31966)

Needs and Resources Analysis form (32290)

New Patriarch Recommendation form (31674)

Officers Sustained (Branch in Mission) form (32303)

Officers Sustained (District) form (32301)

Officers Sustained (Stake) form (32300)

Officers Sustained (Ward/ Branch in Stake) form (32302)

A Parent's Guide (31125)

Patriarchal Blessing Recommend (31-017)

Performance Contract form (33811)

Personal Progress book (31491)

Preventing and Responding to Child Abuse (35665)

Preventing and Responding to Spouse Abuse (35869)

Providing in the Lord's Way: A Leader's Guide to Welfare (32296)

Recommendation for New Bishop form (31747)

Recommendation for New Counselor to Stake President form (31746)

Recommendation for Part-Time Church-Service Missionary form (35813)

Recommend for Living Ordinances (32601)

Recommend to Perform an Ordinance form (32595)

Report of Administrative Action form (32427)

Report of Church Disciplinary Action form (33493)

Request for Contact form (32387)

Request for Ordinance Information form (32388)

Request for Supplemental Financial Assistance for Full-time Missionary form (31964)

1 - General, Area, and Regional Administration

General Church Administration

First Presidency

The President of the Church is the prophet, seer, and revelator. As the senior apostle and president of the Melchizedek Priesthood, he presides over the entire Church (see D&C 107:8, 65-67, 91-92). He is the only person on earth who may use (or authorize another person to use) the keys of the priesthood for governing the entire Church (see D&C 43:1-4; 81:2; 132:7). He is also the only person on earth who is authorized to receive revelation for the entire Church (see D&C 28:2; 132:7).

The President's counselors are also prophets, seers, and revelators. The President and his counselors form a Quorum of the First Presidency of the Church (see D&C 107:22).

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles are "special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world" (D&C 107:23). They act under the direction of the First Presidency "to build up the church, and regulate all the affairs of the same in all nations" (D&C 107:33). They "open the door [to the nations] by the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ" (D&C 107:35).

The Twelve direct the calling of stake patriarchs (see D&C 107:39). They also "ordain and set in order all the other officers of the church" (D&C 107:58).

Along with the First Presidency, the Twelve are prophets, seers, and revelators and hold the keys of the kingdom of God on earth (see D&C 27:12-13; 110:11-16; 112:30-32).

Quorums of the Seventy

Members of the Quorums of the Seventy are "called to preach the gospel, and to be especial witnesses unto the Gentiles and in all the world" (D&C 107:25). They work "under the direction of the Twelve ... in building up the church and regulating all the affairs of the same in all nations" (D&C 107:34). In their quorums, the Seventy are presided over by the Presidents of the Seventy (see D&C 107:93-94).

Those who are called to the First and Second Quorums of the Seventy are designated General Authorities with jurisdiction throughout the Church. Those who are called to other Quorums of the Seventy are designated Area Authority Seventies with

jurisdiction limited to the areas in which they are assigned. Area Authority Seventies are assigned to quorums according to geographic location.

Presiding Bishopric

The Presiding Bishopric is the presidency of the Aaronic Priesthood of the Church (see D&C 107:15). Under the direction of the First Presidency, the Presiding Bishopric administers the temporal affairs of the Church (see D&C 107:68).

Area Administration

An area is the largest geographic division of the Church.

Area Presidency

The First Presidency assigns an Area Presidency to preside over each area under the direction of the First Presidency and the Twelve. Area Presidents are assigned from the First or Second Quorum of the Seventy. Their counselors may be assigned from any Quorum of the Seventy.

Area Authority Seventies

Area Authority Seventies serve under the direction of the Quorum of the Twelve, the Presidents of the Seventy, and the Area Presidency where they are assigned. Like other Seventies, they may be assigned to preside at stake conferences, create and reorganize stakes, set apart stake presidencies, and ordain and set apart bishops. They also may serve on area councils and as counselors in Area Presidencies. In addition, they may be assigned to tour missions and assist with training in stakes, missions, and districts. They may be given other responsibilities as needed.

Regional Administration

Areas of the Church are divided into regions *for welfare purposes only.* When creating or restructuring welfare regions, Area Presidencies obtain the concurrence of the Presiding Bishopric and the General Welfare Executive Committee.

Area Presidencies organize a regional welfare committee for each welfare region. The composition and responsibilities of this committee are outlined on pages 5l-52.

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2. Stake Administration

Purpose and Organization of a Stake

Most geographic areas of the Church are divided into stakes. A stake normally is composed of five to twelve wards and branches. The term *stake* comes from the prophecies of Isaiah, who described latter-day Zion as a tent or tabernacle that would be held secure by stakes (see Isaiah 33:20; 54:2). The stakes of Zion are like the stakes of a large tent that hold it secure so it protects all who enter.

The purpose of a stake is to be "a defense, and ... a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out ... upon the whole earth" (D&C 115:6). Stakes are gathering places where Church members can serve and strengthen each other, become unified, and receive gospel ordinances and instruction.

Stake Presidency

The stake president holds the priesthood keys to preside over the stake and direct the work of the Church in the stake. He and his counselors minister to stake members in love, helping "bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1-.39).

The stake president has four principal responsibilities in presiding over a stake:

1. He is the presiding high priest,
2. He is a common judge.
3. He directs the Church welfare program and operations.
4. He oversees finances, records, reports, and properties.

These responsibilities are outlined in this section. The stake president and his counselors should seek the Lord's guidance in fulfilling them.

The stake president should delegate many assignments to his counselors, high councilors, the stake executive secretary, the stake clerk, and assistant stake clerks. This allows him to concentrate on duties that he alone should ordinarily do.

If the stake president is absent, ill, or otherwise unable to perform his duties, a counselor may act in his place temporarily except as noted in this handbook. The counselor is to consult with the Area President if he has questions about acting for the stake president.

Presiding High Priest

The stake president has the following responsibilities as the presiding high priest in the stake. His counselors assist him.

Teach the Gospel

Members of the stake presidency are teachers. They teach the gospel in meetings, classes, and interviews. They also bear their testimonies often.

The stake president and his counselors base their teaching on the scriptures and the words of the latter-day prophets (see D&C 42:12; 52:9). They teach with power and by the Spirit, strengthening members' faith in the Savior and their commitment to obey His commandments (see D&C 42:14; 43:15).

Members of the stake presidency oversee others who teach the gospel in the stake. They ensure that teaching is effective and doctrinally correct. They also encourage members to study, teach, and live the gospel in the home.

For more information about teaching, see pages 300-306 in *Book* 2.

Instruct Leaders

Members of the stake presidency instruct leaders in doctrines, responsibilities, policies, and procedures. This instruction should inspire leaders to grow spiritually and seek the Lord's guidance in fulfilling their callings.

Resources for instructing leaders include the scriptures, teachings of the latter-day prophets, Church handbooks, and other Church-produced training materials.

Oversee Efforts to Accomplish the Mission of the Church

Missionary Work (Proclaiming the Gospel). Members of the stake presidency have the following responsibilities for missionary work:

They set an example by finding and preparing people for the missionaries to teach and by fellowshipping new members. They also encourage members to participate in these efforts.

They ensure that the doctrines, principles, and blessings relating to missionary work are taught regularly in stake and ward meetings.

They organize and oversee the stake mission (see pages 245-46 in *Book 2*).

The stake president interviews, recommends, and sets apart full-time missionaries. He also interviews and releases them at the completion of their missions. (See pages 79-89.)

The stake president meets regularly with the full-time mission president to coordinate the work of the stake mission and full-time missionaries. This includes determining the assistance that full-time missionaries will give in activation efforts. If necessary, stake presidents and mission presidents may assign their counselors to represent them in this meeting.

The stake president and full-time mission president determine whether and to what extent Church members should provide meals for missionaries and rent parts of their homes to missionaries. The stake president recommends the number and location of full-time missionaries to be assigned within the stake. At the mission president's request, the stake president may interview or counsel specific missionaries He also may conduct baptismal interviews of converts in special cases when requested by the mission president. For more information, see pages 26 and 85.

Spiritual and Temporal Welfare (Perfecting the Saints). Each member of the stake presidency should set an example in spiritual welfare by praying, serving, keeping covenants, and striving for virtue and holiness in his own life (see D&C 38:24; Moroni 10:32-33). The stake presidency sets the spiritual tone in the stake.

One of the stake presidency's most important responsibilities is helping members build spiritual strength. The stake presidency should pray continually to know how to do this. Suggestions include teaching and testifying of the gospel, teaching members to pray and study the scriptures, emphasizing the importance of the family, helping members prepare to receive all essential ordinances and keep the associated covenants, providing opportunities to serve, making meetings edifying, and showing love by ministering to members individually.

Members of the stake presidency set an example in temporal welfare by striving to become self-reliant and by caring for the poor and needy. They also encourage members in these efforts.

Members of the stake presidency teach stake, ward, and quorum leaders their welfare responsibilities. The stake president takes special care to instruct bishops in the principles and policies of administering welfare assistance. As part of his monthly interview with each bishop, the stake president inquires about the welfare of individual ward members and discusses the use of fast offerings and the welfare assistance given to members.

Members of the stake presidency ensure that the doctrines, principles, and blessings relating to welfare are taught regularly in stake and ward meetings. For information about welfare doctrines and principles, see pages 255-58 in *Book 2*. For information about the stake presidency's responsibilities to direct the Church welfare program and operations, see pages 7-9 in this book. This information is also available in *Providing in the Lord's Way: A Leader's Guide to Welfare*.

Temple and Family History Work (Redeeming the Dead). Members of the stake presidency oversee temple and family history work in the stake. They also set an example in doing this work, including regular temple attendance where circumstances allow.

They help members prepare to receive their own temple ordinances. They also encourage members to identify their kindred dead and provide temple ordinances for them.

They ensure that the doctrines, principles, and blessings relating to temple and family history work are taught regularly in stake and ward meetings.

They interview stake members for temple recommends. They also teach bishoprics how to conduct these interviews and issue recommends.

They determine whether a stake Family History Center (TM) is needed and whether the stake should participate in family record extraction. Where these are approved, members of the stake presidency ensure that they are properly staffed and supervised.

For more information, see pages 65-77 in this book and pages 261-70 in *Book 2*.

Preside over the Melchizedek Priesthood

Members of the stake presidency have the following responsibilities in presiding over the Melchizedek Priesthood in the stake:

1. Serve as the presidency of the stake high priests quorum; the stake president is the quorum president (see page 163 in *Book 2*).
2. Oversee elders quorums (see page 163 in *Book 2*).
3. Oversee ordinations to the offices of elder and high priest (see pages 31-33 in this book).
4. Preside over the stake priesthood executive committee and the stake Melchizedek Priesthood committee (see pages 315-16 in *Book 2*).

5. Oversee home teaching in the stake (see pages 168-70 in *Book 2*).
6. Oversee efforts to minister to new and less-active members (see pages 307-10 in *Book 2*).

Oversee the Aaronic Priesthood and Young Women

Members of the stake presidency have the following, responsibilities in overseeing the Aaronic Priesthood and young women in the stake:

1. Preside over the stake Aaronic Priesthood committee and the stake Aaronic

Priesthood-Young Women committee (see page 316 in *Book 2*).
2. Oversee the stake Young Men and Young Women organizations.
3. Instruct bishoprics in their responsibilities for Aaronic Priesthood holders and young women.
For more information, see pages 178-79 and 214-15 in *Book 2*.

Direct the High Council

See page 9.
Preside over Stake Committees and Councils

The stake president presides over the stake priesthood executive committee, stake council, stake welfare committee, and stake Melchizedek Priesthood committee.

The stake president usually assigns one of his counselors to preside over the stake Aaronic Priesthood committee, stake Aaronic Priesthood-Young Women committee, and stake committee for single members. The stake president or an assigned counselor is chairman of the stake public affairs council.

For information about these committees and councils, see pages 315-17 in *Book 2*.

Conduct Stake Business

The stake president conducts stake business with General Authorities and Area Authority Seventies and receives counsel and instructions from them. He also oversees the goals and plans for each part of stake activity. When needed, he recommends the creation, division, or changing of boundaries of stakes and wards (see pages 143-46).

Oversee Callings and Releases

See pages 37-49.
Oversee Stake Auxiliaries and Programs

The stake presidency oversees the stake auxiliary organizations:

Relief Society (see page 194 in *Book 2*)
Young Men (see pages 178-79 in *Book 2*)
Young Women (see pages 214-15 in *Book 2*)
Primary (see pages 229-30 in *Book 2*)
Sunday School (see page 241 in *Book 2*)
The stake president oversees the stake Relief Society. He assigns his counselors to oversee the other auxiliaries under his direction. He also assigns a high councilor to be an adviser to each auxiliary presidency (this is optional for the Relief Society).

The stake presidency ensures that the following Church programs are implemented in the stake and, if necessary, adapted to local circumstances, The stake president usually assigns primary responsibility for each program to one of his counselors. He also assigns a high councilor to help oversee each program (except Church magazines and military relations).

Activities committee (see pages 271-76 in *Book 2*)
Church education (see pages 113-18 in this book)
Church magazines and Church News (see pages 283-84 in *Book 2*)
Family history (see pages 261-70 in *Book 2*)
Meetinghouse library (see pages 285-88 in *Book 2*)
Military relations (see pages 119-22 in this book)
Music (see pages 289-94 in *Book 2*)

Physical facilities (see pages 141-42 in this book)
Scouting (where authorized; see the Scouting Handbook)
Single members (see pages 109-12 in this book)
Teacher improvement (see pages 305-6 in *Book 2*)
Welfare (see pages 255-60 in *Book 2*)
Preside over Stake Meetings

The stake presidency plans the stake meetings listed on pages 52-54 in this book and pages 315-17 in *Book 2*. The stake president presides at these meetings unless a General Authority or Area Authority Seventy attends. The stake president's counselors may conduct these meetings and may preside if the stake president is absent.

Page 5

Oversee the Stake Patriarch

The stake president presides over the stake patriarch and should develop a close relationship with him. Guidelines for calling, ordaining, instructing and overseeing the stake patriarch are provided in the following paragraphs. For information about patriarchal blessings, see pages 34-35 and the booklet *Information and Suggestions for Patriarchs*.

Calling, Sustaining, and Ordaining a Stake Patriarch. The Quorum of the Twelve directs the calling of stake patriarchs (see D&C 107:39). To recommend a man to be called as a stake patriarch, the stake president completes a New Patriarch Recommendation form and submits it to the Quorum of the Twelve. In making this recommendation, he should fast and pray for the Spirit to direct him. The recommendation should be approved by his counselors.

A man whom the stake president recommends as stake patriarch should be a worthy Melchizedek Priesthood holder. He should be mature in the gospel and the Church, a worthy patriarch in his own home, and sensitive to guidance from the Spirit. He should have received his own patriarchal blessing, and normally he should be age 55 or older.

If the Quorum of the Twelve approves the recommendation, the stake president may be authorized to interview and call the patriarch, present his name for a sustaining vote at the next stake conference or stake general priesthood meeting, and ordain him. Because the calling of patriarch is an office of the Melchizedek Priesthood, a patriarch is ordained, not set apart. A stake president may not assign a counselor to ordain a patriarch.

Calling a Second Stake Patriarch. The Quorum of the Twelve normally does not approve calling a second patriarch for a stake unless the present patriarch is unable to give the number of blessings requested or has been given nonfunctioning status. Nor does the Quorum of the Twelve normally approve an additional patriarch simply because a stake is geographically large or includes members who do not speak the majority language. If a stake includes members who speak different languages, bishops and stake presidencies may authorize them to go to a patriarch in a nearby stake who can give the blessing in the member's own language.

Instructing a Newly Called Stake Patriarch. The stake president instructs a newly called patriarch in the sacred, revelatory nature of the office before the patriarch begins giving blessings. The stake president carefully reviews with him the instructions in *Information and Suggestions for Patriarchs*.

Supervising the Work of the Stake Patriarch. The stake president supervises the work of the stake patriarch as outlined in *Information and Suggestions for Patriarchs.* He interviews the patriarch at least twice each year. He reviews blessings the patriarch has given. He also discusses the patriarch's feelings about the work, the welfare of his family, and any other matters on which the patriarch seeks or needs counsel.

The stake president ensures that copies of transcribed blessings are given promptly to recipients. He also ensures that the originals of all blessings are sent to the Church Historical Department at least every two years.

Nonfunctioning Status for a Patriarch. The call of a patriarch is for a lifetime, so he is not released. However, he may be given nonfunctioning status, excusing him from giving blessings.

If a patriarch is incapacitated by age or illness, as determined by the stake president or the patriarch, the stake president writes a recommendation to the Quorum of the Twelve that the patriarch be given nonfunctioning status. If the Twelve approve the recommendation, the stake president does not have the patriarch's name presented for a sustaining vote at the next stake conference when Church officers are sustained. The stake president notifies bishops and branch presidents not to send members to that patriarch. He also ensures that all the blessings the patriarch has given are sent to the recipients and to the Church Historical Department.

A patriarch is also given nonfunctioning status if he leaves to serve a mission, is absent from his home for other reasons, moves to a different stake, or is approved to be called to a position of Church administration (see "Patriarchs Who Are Called to Another Church Position" on page 7). In such circumstances, the stake president sends written notification to the Quorum of the Twelve and follows the instructions in the previous paragraph.

A patriarch who has been given nonfunctioning status may continue to give patriarchal blessings to his lineal descendants if he is able to do so. These blessings should be processed as if he were still a functioning patriarch.

Returning a Patriarch to Functioning Status. To return a patriarch to functioning status, the stake president interviews him carefully and sends a written recommendation to the Quorum of the Twelve. If the Twelve approve the recommendation, the stake president has the patriarch presented for a sustaining vote at a stake conference or stake general priesthood meeting.

Patriarchs Who Move to a Different Stake. When a patriarch moves to a different stake, he should contact his new stake president. If the stake president wants him to serve as a patriarch in the new stake, he contacts the patriarch's former stake president to confirm the patriarch's worthiness and past service. The new stake president then follows the procedure in the preceding paragraph.

If the stake president decides not to recommend having the patriarch serve in the new stake, the patriarch is given nonfunctioning status as explained on page 6.

Patriarchs Who Are Called to Another Church Position. A patriarch may not be called to serve in a position of Church administration, such as bishop, high councilor, or stake president, unless the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve approve the call. Such a request is rarely approved. If it is approved, the patriarch is given nonfunctioning status as explained on page 6.

Direct Public Affairs Efforts

The stake presidency directs public affairs efforts in the stake. Members of the stake presidency also have primary responsibility for the Church's good standing in the community and for relationships with civic and community leaders. The stake president serves as the primary Church spokesman to the news media on matters that pertain to the stake.

The stake president or an assigned counselor organizes and oversees the stake public affairs council. The stake president may also be designated by the Area Presidency to be chairman of a multistake or national public affairs council.

For more information, see pages 295-98 in *Book 2*.

Perform Civil Marriages

The stake president may perform civil marriages where legally authorized by local government authority (see pages 71-72). He may not assign this to a counselor.

Respond to Accidents and Other Serious Situations

The stake president should be notified promptly of any injuries, illnesses, accidents, and property damage that occur on Church property or are the result of something that happened during a Church-sponsored activity in the stake. In these situations he should follow the instructions on pages 276-77 in *Book 2*.

Refer Legal Matters

See page 151.

Common judge

As a common judge, the stake president conducts worthiness interviews (see page 19), counsels stake members (see pages 21-22), and administers Church discipline (see pages 91-107). He also may be asked to certify the worthiness of Church employees (see page 148).

Direct the Church Welfare Program and Operations

Oversee Welfare Assistance in Special Circumstances

Welfare assistance is usually administered by bishops. However, the stake president oversees assistance in the following circumstances.

Fast-Offering Expenditures That Exceed Contributions. When fast-offering expenditures will exceed contributions in a ward, the bishop and stake president counsel together to make sure that the bishop and ward members correctly understand and apply principles of self-reliance and providing for the poor and needy. Procedures for obtaining additional fast offerings from the Church are outlined in instructions sent to stake and ward financial clerks.

Surplus Fast Offerings. Procedures for remitting surplus fast offerings to the Church are outlined in instructions sent to stake and ward financial clerks.

Medical Expenses That Exceed $1,000. If a needy member's medical expenses that will be paid by the Church are expected to exceed $1,000, the stake president's approval is required before the bishop may commit to pay health care providers. If a needy member's medical expenses to be paid by the Church are expected to exceed $5,000, the stake president contacts the Area Presidency for instructions.

Welfare Assistance for Bishops and Stake Presidents. When a bishop or members of his immediate family need welfare assistance, he reviews the needs and proposed assistance with the stake president. The bishop and stake president both sign the bishop's order forms used to obtain the assistance. If fast offering funds are used, the stake president reviews the bills that the fast offerings will pay. A similar procedure is followed when obtaining help for the bishop or his immediate family through LDS Social Services where it exists. A bishop should not expend fast-offering funds or sign a bishop's order for Church welfare assistance for himself or immediate family members without the approval and signature of the stake president.

When a stake president or members of his immediate family need welfare assistance, he contacts the bishop of the ward in which he resides. The bishop follows the principles and guidelines governing welfare assistance as he would for any other Church member.

Preside over the Stake Welfare Committee

See pages 315-16 in *Book 2*.
Organize the Stake Bishops' Welfare Council
See page 54.
Participate in the Regional Welfare Committee
See pages 51-52.
Be the Agent Stake President for Welfare Operations

The Area Presidency assigns an agent stake president to each storehouse, cannery, employment center, production project, and Deseret Industries. This stake president oversees meetings where full-time employees report on the operation. This assignment usually changes every three to five years.

All stakes in the welfare region, not just the agent stake, may be called on to provide volunteer labor to these welfare operations. These efforts are coordinated in regional welfare committee meetings (see pages 51-52).

Organize an Agent Stake Operating Committee

When a stake president is assigned to oversee a Church welfare operation, he organizes an agent stake operating committee composed of himself, the stake bishops' welfare council chairman, the stake Relief Society president, the manager of the operation, and other specialists as needed. This committee meets regularly to provide priesthood guidance and support to the operation manager, ensure that the operation serves needy members appropriately, and coordinate volunteer labor.

Prepare for and Respond to Emergencies

The stake president directs the stake welfare committee in preparing a stake emergency response plan. This plan should be coordinated with similar plans in the welfare region and community. Area Presidencies provide guidelines for preparing the plan.

During an emergency, the stake presidency receives reports from the bishops on the condition of Church members and Church property. The stake presidency then reports to the Area Presidency,

During an emergency, Church leaders should make the services of the Church available to civil authorities. Church leaders also should take independent action in behalf of Church members as needed.

Assign a Bishop to Assist Transients

Where there are two or more wards in the vicinity, the stake president may appoint one bishop to handle all requests from transients. This helps avoid duplication and confusion.

Provide Support to Members in Prisons, Hospitals, and Other Institutions

Stake presidents are encouraged to provide support to members in prisons, hospitals, and other institutions within their boundaries. They should do so within priesthood channels and according to the guidelines established by the Church and the institutions.

The stake president determines the support that is to be provided at each institution. He also supervises the support, assisted by other local priesthood leaders. If the stake needs help providing service to institutions within its boundaries, the Area Presidency may assign a nearby stake or stakes to assist.

The stake president or an assigned bishop may call a priesthood holder to oversee the support that is given to members at these institutions. In prisons, men should be called to work with male inmates, and at least two men, two women, or a husband and wife should be called to work with female inmates.

Worship services for members in prisons, hospitals, and other institutions may be simplified as necessary to meet the needs of those involved. Services usually follow the same format as sacrament meeting except that the sacrament is not administered to inmates in prisons. As an exception to Church policy, when services are held in prisons, inmates may participate by offering prayers or giving talks regardless of their religious affiliation or standing in the Church.

Other support that may be given to members in these institutions includes counseling, home teaching, visiting teaching, Sunday School classes, family

home evening, seminary or institute classes, and other special programs.

For more information, stake presidents may contact the Priesthood Department at Church headquarters (telephone 1-801-240-2134 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2134).

Keep Needs and Assistance Confidential

The stake president should keep

confidential the needs of Members and

the help that is provided.

Oversee Finances, Records, Reports, and Properties

See pages 123-42.

High Council

The stake presidency calls twelve high priests to form the stake high council (see D&C 102:1). Elders may be considered to serve on the high council but must first be ordained high priests. (District councils may be composed of elders and high priests.) The stake presidency may call military chaplains who live in the stake to serve as high councilors.

Under the direction of the stake presidency, high councilors help oversee the work of the Church in the stake. They have advisory and administrative responsibilities as described below:

1. Represent the stake presidency in high priests groups, elders quorums, wards, and branches. Serve as advisers to stake auxiliary presidencies and the stake mission presidency. Help oversee temple and family history work and the Church programs listed on page 5.
2. Serve on the stake priesthood executive committee, stake council, and stake welfare committee. Serve on the stake Melchizedek Priesthood committee or stake Aaronic Priesthood committee as assigned.
3. Participate in stake disciplinary councils.

These responsibilities are explained in detail on pages 163-64 in *Book 2*.

The high council does not meet unless a member of the stake presidency is present.

Stake Executive Secretary

The stake president or an assigned counselor calls and sets apart a stake executive secretary. He should hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and be worthy to have a temple recommend.

The executive secretary is an assistant to the stake presidency. He meets with the stake presidency and prepares meeting agendas as instructed. He also attends meetings of the stake priesthood executive committee, stake council, and stake welfare committee.

He coordinates stake business between the stake presidency and high council. He also schedules appointments for the stake presidency. He distributes copies of the *Bulletin* and other Church publications and correspondence promptly.

He reviews the status of home teaching in the stake with the stake presidency.

He coordinates the Church magazine subscription efforts in the stake (see page 284 in *Book 2*).

He advises the stake presidency of members who are entering or already in military service. Under the direction of the stake presidency, he coordinates preservice Church orientation in the stake.

He instructs ward executive secretaries as requested by the stake president or by bishops.

Stake Clerk

The stake president or an assigned counselor calls and sets apart a stake clerk. The stake clerk should hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and be worthy to have a temple recommend. He should be an honest and careful record keeper and a capable teacher and administrator. He also should be qualified to handle financial matters.

The tenure of stake clerks should be sufficient for them to learn their duties and magnify their callings. Stake clerks do not need to be released when a stake presidency is reorganized.

The stake clerk's responsibilities are outlined on pages 123-24 and 133.

Assistant Stake Clerks

The stake president or an assigned counselor may call and set apart one or more assistant stake clerks. These clerks should hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and be worthy to have a temple recommend. The stake presidency may assign them to each part of stake record keeping, such as financial records, member progress reporting, and historical records. Assistant stake clerks who are assigned to financial records should be qualified to handle financial matters.

The responsibilities of assistant stake clerks are outlined on pages 124-25 and 133.

3. Ward Administration

Purpose and Organization of a Ward

During His mortal ministry, the Savior organized His Church and established congregations of believers. Members of His Church met together to worship, learn the gospel, and serve and strengthen each other.

As in the ancient Church, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are organized into congregations. Large congregations are called wards. Small congregations are called branches. The purpose of these congregations is to help a people .come unto Christ, and be perfected in him" (Moroni 10:32).

Bishopric

The bishop holds the priesthood keys to preside over a ward and direct the work of the Church in the ward. He and his counselors minister to ward members in love, helping "bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

The bishop has five principal responsibilities in presiding over a ward:

1. He is president of the Aaronic Priesthood.
2. He is the presiding high priest.
3. He is a common judge.
4. He administers the Church welfare program.
5. He oversees finances, records, and the use and security of the meetinghouse.

These responsibilities are outlined in this section. The bishop and his counselors should seek the Lord's guidance in fulfilling them.

The bishop should delegate many assignments to his counselors, the ward executive secretary, the ward clerk, assistant ward clerks, and quorum and auxiliary leaders. This allows him to concentrate on duties that he alone should ordinarily do.

If the bishop is absent, ill, or otherwise unable to perform his duties, a counselor may act in his place temporarily except as noted in this handbook. The counselor is to consult with the stake president if he has questions about acting for the bishop.

Presidency of the Aaronic Priesthood

The bishopric is the presidency of the Aaronic Priesthood in the ward (D&C 107:15). The bishop is also president of the priests quorum in the ward (see D&C 107:87-88). The bishopric should study passages in the scriptures and instructions in the handbooks that pertain to the Aaronic Priesthood. The bishop and his counselors have similar responsibilities for young women in the ward as they have for Aaronic Priesthood holders.

Members of the bishopric watch over and nurture young men and young women in the ward. They help Aaronic Priesthood holders accomplish the purposes of the Aaronic Priesthood (see pages 177-78 in *Book 2*). They help young women live the Young Women values and standards of personal worthiness (see pages 211-12 in *Book 2*).

The bishopric oversees Aaronic Priesthood quorums and Young Women classes. The bishopric also oversees the ward Young Men and Young Women organizations. The bishop presides over the ward Aaronic Priesthood committee and bishopric youth committee.

For more information, see pages 180-81 and 216-17 in *Book 2*.

Presiding High Priest

The bishop has the following responsibilities as the presiding high priest in the ward. His counselors assist him.

Teach the Gospel

Members of the bishopric are teachers. They teach the gospel in meetings, classes, and interviews. They also bear their testimonies often.

Members of the bishopric base their teaching on the scriptures and the words of the latter-day prophets (see D&C 42:12; 52:9). They teach with power and by the Spirit, strengthening members' faith in the Savior and their commitment to obey His commandments (see D&C 42:14; 43:15).

The bishop and his counselors oversee and support others who teach the gospel in the ward. They ensure that teaching is effective and doctrinally correct. They also encourage members to study, teach, and live the gospel in the home.

For more information about teaching, see pages 300-306 in *Book 2*.

Instruct Leaders

Members of the bishopric instruct leaders in doctrines, responsibilities, policies, and procedures. This

instruction should inspire leaders to grow spiritually and seek the Lord's guidance in fulfilling their callings.

Resources for instructing leaders include the scriptures, teachings of the latter-day prophets, Church handbooks, and other Church-produced training materials.

Oversee Efforts to Accomplish the Mission of the

Church

Missionary Work (Proclaiming the Gospel). Members of the bishopric have the following responsibilities for missionary work:

They set an example by finding and preparing people for the missionaries to teach and by fellowshipping new members. They also encourage members to participate in these efforts.

They ensure that the doctrines, principles, and blessings relating to missionary work are taught regularly in ward meetings and classes.

They help prospective full-time missionaries prepare to serve missions, particularly young men. The bishop interviews and recommends worthy ward members to serve as full-time missionaries (see pages 79-89).

They direct the efforts of the ward mission leader as a member of the priesthood executive committee (see page 247 in *Book 2*). They receive regular reports from him on efforts to find and prepare people to be taught the gospel. They also receive reports on the teaching, fellowshipping, retention, and activation efforts of stake missionaries and full-time missionaries serving in the ward.

They oversee the assistance that full-time missionaries give in activation efforts.

They meet investigators who are being taught and keep informed of their progress. A member of the bishopric should attend each baptism.

They oversee efforts to minister to new members in the ward. These responsibilities are outlined on pages 307-10 in *Book 2*.

Spiritual and Temporal Welfare (Perfecting the Saints). Each member of the bishopric should set an example in spiritual welfare by praying, serving, keeping covenants, and striving for virtue and holiness in his own life (see D&C 38:24; Moroni 10:32-33). The bishopric sets the spiritual tone in the ward.

One of the bishopric's most important responsibilities is helping members build spiritual strength. The bishopric should pray continually to know how to do this. Suggestions include teaching and testifying of the gospel, teaching members to pray and study the scriptures, emphasizing the importance of the family, helping members prepare to receive all essential ordinances and keep the associated covenants, providing opportunities to serve, making meetings edifying, and showing love by ministering to members individually.

Members of the bishopric set an example in temporal welfare by striving to become self-reliant and by caring for the poor and needy. They also encourage members in these efforts.

Members of the bishopric teach priesthood and auxiliary leaders their welfare responsibilities. They also ensure that the doctrines, principles, and blessings relating to welfare are taught regularly in ward meetings. For information about these doctrines and principles, see pages 255-60 in *Book 2*. For information about the bishopric's responsibilities to administer the Church welfare program, see pages 14-17 in this book. This information is also available in *Providing in the Lord's Way: A Leader's Guide to Welfare.*

Temple and Family History Work (Redeeming the Dead). Members of the bishopric oversee temple and family history work in the ward. They also set an example in doing this work, including regular temple attendance where circumstances allow.

They help members prepare to receive their own temple ordinances. They also encourage members to identify their kindred dead and provide temple ordinances for them.

They ensure that the doctrines, principles, and blessings relating to temple and family history work are taught regularly in ward meetings and classes.

They interview ward members for temple recommends. They also help new members, less-active members, and endowed members who have not renewed their recommends for an extended time prepare to go to a temple. The bishop organizes regular temple preparation seminars for these members.

For more information, see pages 65-77 in this book and pages 261-70 in *Book 2*.

Coordinate the Work of the Melchizedek Priesthood

The bishop and his counselors work closely with the elders quorum president and high priests group leader in watching over quorum and group members, building strength in the quorum and group, and ensuring that the work of the priesthood is accomplished.

Members of the bishopric oversee home teaching in the ward (see pages 168-70 in *Book 2*).

They oversee efforts to minister to new members and less-active members (see pages 307-10 in *Book 2*).

At least quarterly the bishop holds priesthood interviews with the elders quorum president and high priests group leader (see page 19).

Preside over Ward Committees and Councils

The bishop presides over the ward priesthood executive committee, ward council, ward welfare committee, ward Aaronic Priesthood committee, and bishopric youth committee. The bishop usually assigns one of his counselors to preside over the ward committee for single members. For information about these committees and councils, see pages 317-19 in *Book 2*.

Conduct Ward Business

The bishop conducts ward business with the stake presidency and receives counsel and instructions from presiding authorities. He also oversees the goals and plans for each part of ward activity.

Oversee Callings and Releases

See pages 37-49.
Oversee the Performance of Ordinances and Blessings

The bishop oversees the administration of the sacrament, blessing of children, baptism of eight-year-old members of record, confirmation, and ordination to Aaronic Priesthood offices.

The bishop usually initiates recommendations to the stake presidency for brethren to be ordained elders or high priests (see page 31). These ordinations are performed under the direction of the stake president.

Instructions for performing ordinances and blessings are outlined on pages 23-35.

Oversee Ward Auxiliaries and Programs

The bishopric oversees the ward auxiliary organizations:

Relief Society (see page 196 in *Book 2*)
Young Men (see pages 180-81 in *Book 2*)
Young Women (see pages 216-17 in *Book 2*)
Primary (see pages 230-31 in *Book 2*)
Sunday School (see pages 241-42 in *Book 2*)
The bishop oversees the ward Relief Society. He assigns his counselors to oversee the other auxiliaries under his direction.

The bishopric ensures that the following Church programs are implemented in the ward and, if necessary, adapted to local circumstances. The bishop usually assigns primary responsibility for each program to one of his counselors:

Activities committee (see pages 271-76 in *Book 2*)
Church education (see pages 113-18 in this book)
Church magazines and Church News (see pages 283-84 in *Book 2*)
Family history (see pages 261-70 in *Book 2*)
Meetinghouse library (see pages 285-88 in *Book 2*)
Military relations (see pages 119-22 in this book)
Music (see pages 289-94 in *Book 2*)
Physical facilities (see pages 141-42 in this book)
Scouting (where authorized; see the Scouting Handbook)
Single members (see pages 109-12 in this book)
Teacher improvement (see pages 305-6 in *Book 2*)
Preside over Ward Meetings

The bishopric plans the ward meetings listed on pages 54-57 in this book and pages 317-19 in *Book 2*. The bishop presides at these meetings unless a member of the stake presidency, a General Authority, or an Area Authority Seventy attends. The bishop's counselors may conduct these meetings and may preside if the bishop is absent.

Perform Civil Marriages

The bishop may perform civil marriages where legally authorized by local government authority (see pages 71-72). He may not assign this to a counselor.

Conduct Funeral and Burial Services

The bishop, or an assigned counselor in his absence, conducts funeral and burial services for ward members and for others as requested (see pages 57-59).

Respond to Accidents and Other Serious Situations

The bishop should be notified promptly of any injuries, illnesses, accidents, and property damage that occur on Church property or are the result of something that happened during a Church-sponsored

activity in the ward. The bishop should notify the stake president. Additional instructions are provided on pages 276-77 in *Book 2*.

Refer Legal Matters

See page 151.

Common judge

"[The bishop is] to be a judge in Israel, to do the business of the church, to sit in judgment upon transgressors upon testimony as it shall be laid before him according to the laws, by the assistance of his counselors, whom he has chosen or will choose among the elders of the church.

"This is the duty of a bishop....

"Thus shall he be a judge, even a common judge among the inhabitants of Zion" (D&C 107:72-74).

As a common judge, the bishop conducts worthiness interviews (see pages 19-21), counsels ward members (see pages 21-22), and administers Church discipline (see pages 91-107). He also may be asked to certify the worthiness of Church employees (see page 148).

Administer the Church Welfare Program

The office of bishop carries with it a special mandate to care for the poor and needy (see D&C 84:112; 107:68). The bishop is assisted by Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society leaders, as well as home teachers and visiting teachers.

Seek Out the Needy

The bishop should know the temporal circumstances of ward members and ensure that needy members receive proper care. It is not enough to respond only when asked for help. To serve effectively, the bishop should seek out the poor, the needy, the single parent, the aged, the disabled, the fatherless, the widowed, and others who have special needs.

There are many ways for the bishop to identify needy ward members. One way is through promptings of the Spirit. The bishop should listen for the Spirit to prompt him to inquire about members well-being and to reveal undisclosed needs.

The bishop may also identify welfare needs during meetings of the ward priesthood executive committee, ward council, and ward welfare committee. Interviews with the elders quorum president, high priests group leader, and Relief Society president also help him identify welfare needs.

Home teachers and visiting teachers can also help identify welfare needs. they should inquire about the well-being of those whom they visit. When possible, they help meet these members' needs. They also report these needs to their priesthood or Relief Society leader, who reports them to the bishop.

Determine What Assistance to Render

Through the Church, the Lord has established a way to care for the poor and needy and help them regain their self-reliance. When Church members are doing all they can to provide for themselves but still cannot meet their basic needs, they first should turn to their families for help. When this is not sufficient, the Church stands ready to help.

To determine what welfare assistance to render, the bishop considers the causes of members' needs. He also evaluates what members have done and may do to provide for themselves and their families. If he feels that assistance is justified, he completes a Needs and Resources Analysis form. He then determines how much assistance to provide as Church welfare and when and how to provide it. Individual circumstances vary, so the bishop should seek guidance from the Lord for each situation.

When appropriate and without breaking confidences, the bishop may include the Relief Society president in determining what assistance to provide. He may assign her to visit members to assess their needs and suggest how to respond to them. This may include preparing an itemized fist of basic food and clothing needs. It also may include preparing a Bishop's Order for Commodities form for the bishop to review. The bishop's signature on this form authorizes service at a bishops' storehouse or purchases from a local vendor. The Relief Society president's role in making family needs visits is explained more fully on pages 208-9 in *Book 2*.

Render Assistance

The bishop is entrusted with the sacred responsibility of using Church funds and commodities to care for the poor and needy members of the ward. He provides welfare assistance to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Help members become self-reliant and stand independent of all welfare assistance, regardless of its source.
2. Help members become stronger spiritually and learn to provide for others.
3. Build integrity, self-respect, dignity, and soundness of character in each person who receives help.

The following guidelines will help the bishop provide appropriate welfare "assistance.

Draw upon the Lord's Storehouse. The Lord's storehouse includes the time, talents, skills, compassion, consecrated materials, and financial resources of faithful Church members. The bishop is the Lord's agent in using these resources to assist the poor and needy (see D&C 42:34). As he uses these resources to care for the needy in the Lord's way, both givers and receivers are blessed (see D&C 104:16; Acts 20:35).

1. *Fast offerings*. Fast offerings are a primary resource of the Lord's storehouse. The bishop uses fast offerings to provide necessities to needy members. With these funds the bishop may provide food, clothing, shelter, medical assistance, or other life-sustaining aid.

   It is preferred that the bishop give members commodities rather than cash. If necessary, he may buy the goods with fast offerings. Members then can use their own cash to pay their obligations. If members do not have cash to pay all of their immediate and essential obligations, the bishop normally makes payments directly to the provider of the goods or services.

In some circumstances the bishop may give cash directly to reliable, faithful members who are being assisted. They can use the cash to pay their obligations or make necessary purchases.

The bishop may not loan fast offerings to members, and members are not required to repay welfare assistance that they receive from the Church. When members are again in a position to do so, they should be encouraged to contribute generously to the fast-offering fund.

The bishop may not use fast offerings to pay off members' consumer debt or obligations incurred in business failures or speculative ventures.

For information about the law of the fast, see page 16. For information about gathering and accounting for fast offerings, see pages 134-35.

2. *Other ward resources*. In caring for the needy, the bishop also directs the use of ward resources other than fast offerings, including the time, talents, skills, compassion, and consecrated materials of ward members. He does this by directing the efforts of the ward welfare committee; by counseling, as appropriate, with quorum and Relief Society leaders; by asking families, home teachers, and visiting teachers to serve the needy in specific ways; and by using resources made available by the stake welfare committee.

3. *Other Church welfare resources*. in some parts of the world, the Church has established welfare operations. These include Church employment offices, Deseret Industries stores, storehouses, canneries, grain storage facilities, and a variety of commodity production projects. The Church also contracts with LDS Social Services to provide counseling, foster care, assistance to unwed parents, and adoption services to members.

Where these welfare operations and contracted services exist, they provide resources that bishops can use to help the poor and needy. If a bishop needs information about such resources in his area, he should contact the chairman of the stake bishops' welfare council or his stake president.

Give Temporary Help. Church assistance is normally given to meet temporary needs as members strive to become self-reliant. It is intended to help people help themselves and develop independence, not dependence. Even the disabled, aged, and others who may require long-term assistance should be given opportunities to do all they can to help themselves.

Assist with Necessities. The Church helps needy members by providing the goods and services they need to sustain life. The Church does not provide the means to maintain an affluent standard of living. Members who are temporarily unable to provide for themselves may need to alter their standard of living until they are self-reliant. They should not rely on Church welfare to insure them against temporary hardship or to allow them to continue their present standard of living without interruption.

Use Appropriate Resources in the Community. Members may use appropriate services in the community to meet their basic needs. These services may include hospitals, physicians, and other sources of medical care; job training and placement services; services for disabled persons; professional counselors or social workers; domestic violence centers; and alcohol or drug treatment services. The bishop should become familiar with the resources that are available in the community and teach members to maintain gospel standards while using such services.

When deciding what welfare assistance to give, the bishop determines whether members are receiving assistance from government or other sources. Bishops should be careful not to duplicate welfare assistance.

Help Needy Members Obtain Health Care. The bishop may arrange and pay for health care for needy ward members. In deciding whether the Church should

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pay for health care, he determines whether the car(is necessary based on sound medical advice (se("Medical and Health Practices" and "Self-Awareness Groups" on pages 156-57 for two restrictions on using fast-offering funds). He also determines whether family members are able and willing to assist. He also determines whether the member is fully using insurance, government, or other available benefits.

If the bishop feels that the Church should assist the needy member, he asks the health care providers if they will reduce their fees. He ensures that the Church promptly pays the medical expenses it has agreed to pay.

If a member's medical expenses that will be paid by the Church are likely to exceed $1,000, the bishop should follow the instructions on page 7.

Give Work Assignments to Members Who Receive Assistance

Work is a spiritual and temporal necessity. When members receive Church welfare assistance, the bishop gives them opportunities to work to the extent of their ability for the assistance they receive. When they work for assistance, they remain industrious, maintain self-respect, and increase their ability to be self-reliant.

The bishop strives to give work assignments that are meaningful. Ideally, needy members are given assignments that allow them to serve others. The bishop ensures that members are given the instruction they need to fulfill their assignments.

When giving a work assignment, the bishop asks the members to commit themselves to fulfilling it. if they are reluctant or refuse to work, he should help them understand that work assignments are given to bless them.

There are many creative ways to provide work opportunities. Bishops may include the ward welfare committee in compiling a list of such opportunities. Where local Church welfare operations exist, they may provide work opportunities and training for people who need Church assistance.

Administer Fast Offerings

Encourage Members to Live the Law of the Fast. The bishopric encourages ward members to fast each fast Sunday for two consecutive meals and to contribute a fast offering at least equal to the value of the food they would have eaten. If possible, members should give much more than the value of two meals. The bishopric teaches members that fasting and contributing fast offerings will bless their lives and the lives of the needy. These principles should be taught in priesthood quorum meetings, Relief Society and other auxiliary meetings, home visits, and sacrament meetings. The bishop teaches, these principles in temple recommend interviews and tithing settlement interviews.

Oversee the gathering and Accounting of Fast Offerings. See pages 134-35.

Use Fast Offerings to Render Assistance. See page 15.

Consult with the Stake President in Special Circumstances

Fast-Offering Expenditures That Exceed Contributions. See page 7

Medical Expenses That Exceed $1,000. See page 7.
Welfare Assistance for Bishops and Stake Presidents or Members of Their Immediate Families. See page 7
Preside over the Ward Welfare committee
See page 318 in *Book 2*.
Participate in the Stake Bishops' Welfare Council
See page 54.
Serve on the Stake Welfare Committee

The stake president assigns the bishop who is chairman of the stake bishops' welfare council to serve on the stake welfare committee. A suggested agenda for this committee's meetings is provided on pages 315-16 in *Book 2*.

Prepare for and Respond to Emergencies

The bishopric directs the ward welfare committee in preparing a ward emergency response plan. This plan should be coordinated with similar plans in the stake and community.

When emergencies arise, home teachers contact the families and individuals assigned to them, assessing their condition and needs. Home teachers report to the elders quorum presidency and high priests group leadership, who report to the bishop. The bishop then reports to the stake presidency the condition of members and Church property. This system may also be used to communicate messages from the stake presidency or bishopric.

During an emergency, Church leaders should make the services of the Church available to civil authorities. Church leaders also should take independent action in behalf of Church members as needed.

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Assist Transients

The bishop may assist members and others who are transients, but he should be discerning about the type and amount of assistance he gives. When possible, he contacts the bishop of the person's home ward before providing assistance. Where there are two or more wards in the vicinity, the stake president may appoint one bishop to handle all requests from transients. This helps avoid duplication and confusion.

Keep Needs and Assistance Confidential

The bishop should keep confidential the needs of members and the help that is provided. He should be careful not to embarrass members who need assistance. If he asks the Relief Society president or others to help, he shares only the information they need to fulfill their welfare duties. He also instructs them to maintain confidentiality. This helps safeguard the privacy and dignity of members who are being assisted.

Oversee Finances, Records, and the Use and

Security of the Meetinghouse

See pages 123-42.

Ward Executive Secretary

The bishop recommends and a member of the stake presidency or an assigned high councilor calls and sets apart a ward executive secretary. He should hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and be worthy to have a temple recommend.

The executive secretary is an assistant to the bishopric. He meets with the bishopric and prepares meeting agendas as instructed. He also attends meetings of the ward priesthood executive committee, ward council, and ward welfare committee.

He coordinates ward business between the bishopric and other leaders. He also schedules appointments for the bishopric. He distributes copies of the *Bulletin* and other Church publications and correspondence promptly.

He reviews the status of home teaching in the ward with the bishopric.

He coordinates the Church magazine subscription efforts in the ward (see page 284 in *Book 2*).

He assists with Church education matters, such as seminary and institute registration.

He keeps and circulates to the ward welfare committee a current list of the names and addresses of ward members who are in the military. He also informs the stake executive secretary when members plan to enter the military.

Ward Clerk

The bishop recommends and a member of the stake presidency or an assigned high councilor calls and sets apart a ward clerk. The ward clerk should hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and be worthy to have a temple recommend. He should be an honest and careful record keeper. He also should be qualified to handle financial matters.

The tenure of ward clerks should be sufficient for them to learn their duties and magnify their callings. Ward clerks do not need to be released when a bishopric is reorganized.

The ward clerk's responsibilities are outlined on pages 125 and 134.

Assistant Ward Clerks

The bishop may recommend and a member of the stake presidency or an assigned high councilor may call and set apart one or more assistant ward clerks. These clerks should hold the priesthood and be worthy to have a temple recommend. The bishopric may assign them to each part of ward record keeping, such as financial and membership records. Assistant ward clerks who are assigned to financial records should hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and be qualified to handle financial matters.

The responsibilities of assistant ward clerks are outlined on pages 125 and 134.

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4. Interviews and Counseling

Interviews

Each stake president and bishop is "a judge in Israel" (D&C 107:72). By this authority they conduct worthiness interviews and priesthood interviews as outlined in this section. They represent the Lord in conducting these interviews. Accordingly, they should seek to bless members and help them live the gospel of Jesus Christ.

General Instructions for Worthiness Interviews

Stake presidents, bishops, and (when authorized) their counselors conduct worthiness interviews as outlined in this section. They should prepare spiritually so they can be guided by the Spirit during these interviews. They also should seek the power of discernment. This is a spiritual gift that will help them discern truth, as well as a member's needs (see D&C 46:27-28).

Worthiness interviews should be private. For example, a husband and wife are interviewed separately for temple recommends.

Careful listening is important during worthiness interviews. The member of the stake presidency or bishopric should give full and sincere attention to the person being interviewed. The interviewer also makes sure that members understand the questions being asked. He sets aside enough time to conduct the interview in a dignified, unhurried manner.

General Instructions for Priesthood Interviews

Stake presidents, bishops, and their counselors regularly interview the priesthood leaders who report to them. One purpose of these interviews is to receive an accounting of the leader's responsibilities. Another purpose is to help the leader review progress, set goals, and make plans to accomplish them. Where applicable, budgets and expenditures are also reviewed during these interviews.

The person who conducts a priesthood interview should instruct, encourage, and inspire leaders in their efforts to fulfill their callings. He also should express gratitude and strengthen the leader in his personal and family life.

Interviews Conducted by the Stake President

The stake president conducts the following interviews with stake members:

1. For temple recommends (see pages 63-68).
2. For callings and releases as full-time missionaries (see pages 81, 87).
3. For callings to serve as counselors in the stake presidency, as patriarchs, and as bishops, when authorized (see pages 37-38).
4. For callings to serve as stake mission president, elders quorum presidents, and stake auxiliary presidents.

The stake president also holds a monthly priesthood interview with each bishop. He holds at least a semiannual priesthood interview with each patriarch (see page 6).

Interviews Conducted by the Stake President or His Counselors

The stake president or an assigned counselor conducts the following interviews with stake members. Before interviewing a person for any of the purposes listed below, the member of the stake presidency ensures that the person has been interviewed or cleared by the bishop. If a counselor encounters serious matters, such as transgressions that require confession, he should refer the member to the stake president without delay.

1. For temple recommends (see pages 65-68).
2. For ordination to the offices of elder or high priest (see pages 31-32).
3. For callings to serve in Church positions (see pages 37-49).
4. For an endorsement to enroll at a Church university or college (see page 117).

Members of the stake presidency also hold regular priesthood interviews with each elders quorum president and high priests group leader in the stake.

Interviews Conducted by the Bishop

The bishop conducts the following interviews with ward members:

1. For temple recommends (see pages 65-68).
2. For callings as full-time missionaries (see page 81).
3. For ordination to the offices of elder or high priest when authorized by the stake

presidency (see pages 31-32).
4. For annual tithing settlement (see page 134).

5. For callings to serve as ward auxiliary presidents.
6. For baptism of eight-year-old children who are members of record (see page 26).
7. For 12-year-old children as they advance from Primary. (At the same time he interviews the boys to determine whether they are worthy and prepared to receive the Aaronic Priesthood. He interviews the girls in preparation for entering the Young Women program.)
8. For ordination to the offices of deacon, teacher, and priest.
9. For callings to serve as deacons or teachers quorum presidents and as his assistants in the priests quorum.
10. Annual interviews of all youth and semiannual interviews of priests and 16- and 17-year-old young women (see "Guidelines for Youth Interviews" on this page).
11. For an endorsement to enroll or continue attendance at a Church university or college (see page 117).
12. For patriarchal blessings (see pages 34-35).

At least quarterly the bishop also holds priesthood interviews with the elders quorum president and high priests group leader.

Interviews Conducted by the Bishop or His Counselors

The bishop or an assigned counselor conducts the following interviews with ward members. Only the bishop resolves concerns about chastity and associated moral matters in these interviews. If a counselor encounters serious matters, such as transgressions that require confession, he should refer the member to the bishop without delay.

1. For temple recommends (see pages 65-68).
2. For callings to serve in the ward, including counselors and secretaries in Aaronic Priesthood quorums and presidents, counselors, and secretaries of Young Women classes (see pages 37-49).
3. For youth (see "Guidelines for Youth Interviews" on this page).
4. For young single adults, single adults, and Students (usually annually, however, acting with inspiration and wisdom, the bishopric may adjust the frequency of these interviews).
3. For seminary or institute graduation.
6. For brethren who desire to act as voice in performing an ordinance in another ward but do not have a temple recommend. (If the person is worthy, the bishopric member fills out and signs a Recommend to Perform an Ordinance form.)
7. For members entering military service (see page 119).

Guidelines for Youth Interviews

The bishop interviews each young man and each young woman in the ward at least annually. He interviews each priest and each 16- and 17-year-old young woman at least twice annually.

In addition, six months after the annual interview with the bishop, counselors in the bishopric interview each young man and young woman who belong to the Aaronic Priesthood quorum and Young Women class the bishop has assigned them to oversee.

In large wards, bishops, acting with inspiration and wisdom, may adjust the frequency of interviews. Some youth may need added attention, while others may need less frequent interviews than are suggested, though all should be interviewed at least annually.

Interviews are excellent teaching opportunities and can be spiritual experiences for youth. Members of the bishopric should express love and listen carefully. They should encourage the young person to talk rather than doing most of the talking themselves.

Matters for discussion should include the growth of the young person's testimony of Heavenly Father, the mission and Atonement of Jesus Christ, and the restored gospel. The importance of sustaining the President of the Church and other general and local Church leaders should also be discussed.

Another matter for discussion should be the importance of obeying the commandments, particularly:

1. Praying regularly in private and with the family, studying the scriptures, honoring parents, and paying a full tithing.
2. Being modest in dress and action, refraining from any kind of sexual activity, and refraining from reading, listening to, or viewing pornographic material.
3. Obeying the Word of Wisdom and refraining from using illegal drugs and misusing other substances.
4. Refraining from using the name of the Lord in vain and from using vulgar expressions and other degrading language.
5. Attending priesthood and sacrament meetings,
participating in other Church meetings and activities and fulfilling assignments given by the priesthood quorum or Young Women class presidency
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The bishopric may want to refer to *For the Strength of Youth* during discussions about obeying the commandments.

While interviewing young men, the bishopric member gives special attention to their preparation for a full-time mission. He discusses being worthy, studying the gospel, building a testimony, and preparing financially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually Bishopric members should be sensitive to the circumstances under which young men are honorably excused from full-time missionary service (see pages 81-82).

The bishop and his counselors encourage young women to support young men in accepting mission calls. Young women of eligible age who desire to serve a mission may do so, but they should understand that it is optional (see page 80).

Members of the bishopric ensure that youth understand the blessings of temple covenants and temple marriage and the requirements for receiving these blessings.

When interviewing a young man for priesthood ordination, the bishop discusses the blessings of holding the Aaronic Priesthood and the duties of the office to which the person will be ordained, as revealed in Doctrine and Covenants 20:46-60 (see also pages 175-76 in *Book 2*). In all interviews with young men, the bishopric member emphasizes the importance of accomplishing the purposes of the Aaronic Priesthood. He evaluates each young man's progress and encourages him.

When interviewing a young woman, the bishopric member emphasizes the importance of incorporating the Young Women values and the standards of personal worthiness in her daily living (see pages 211-12 in *Book 2*). He also emphasizes the importance of completing the Personal Progress program. He evaluates the young woman's progress and encourages her.

When interviewing young men or young women of seminary age, the bishopric member emphasizes the importance of regular attendance at seminary and the blessings that come from active participation.

When discussing moral cleanliness, the bishop adapts the discussion to the understanding of the youth. He also ensures that the discussion does not arouse curiosity or experimentation.

Other Interviews

Interviews for Convert Baptisms

See page 26.

Interviews of Persons to Be Readmitted by Baptism

For instructions on interviewing persons who have been excommunicated and want to be readmitted by baptism, see pages 104-5.

For instructions on interviewing persons who have had their names removed from Church records and want to be readmitted by baptism, see page 130.

Counseling

As judges in Israel, stake presidents and bishops counsel stake and ward members who seek spiritual guidance, who have weighty personal problems, or who have committed serious transgressions. The stake president or bishop may not assign this to a counselor except in the most urgent cases when he is absent.

Church members should make a diligent effort, including earnest prayer and scripture study, to find solutions and answers themselves. If they still need help, they should counsel first with their bishop. If necessary, he refers them to the stake president. Local leaders should discourage members from calling, visiting, or writing to Church headquarters about personal matters.

The stake president and bishop are entitled to the discernment and inspiration necessary to be spiritual advisers and temporal counselors to ward members who need such help. They should prepare spiritually before counseling a member, seeking the power of discernment and the guidance of the Spirit. This guidance usually comes as impressions, thoughts, or feelings. The Spirit often prompts leaders to remember teachings from the scriptures and from latter-day prophets.

The stake president or bishop should schedule adequate time for appointments. Members should not feel that he is too busy and can devote only a few minutes to them. He also should help members feel comfortable as the appointment begins.

if the stake president or bishop does not feel prepared to counsel a member, he should schedule another appointment. Between appointments he should seek guidance through study, prayer, and, if necessary, fasting. He also may confer with his priesthood leader.

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The stake president or bishop should counsel members privately in his office. When meeting with a woman, he should ask a priesthood holder to be in an adjoining room, foyer, or hall. He should avoid circumstances that might be misunderstood.

The stake president or bishop should avoid making decisions for those he counsels. Instead, he helps them make their own decisions with the Lord's guidance. He also helps them analyze and resolve problems or questions in the context of the doctrines of the gospel and the plan of salvation.

When counseling, the stake president or bishop asks questions to help him understand the member's situation, though he should avoid unnecessary probing. Questions usually should bring out feelings and thoughts rather than *yes* or *no* replies. Members should do most of the talking.

While members talk, the stake president or bishop should listen carefully, giving full and sincere attention. Listening is vital in establishing confidence and trust. People often need someone they trust to listen to them as they work through their challenges and problems.

If a member has transgressed, the stake president or bishop firmly and lovingly helps him or her repent. He teaches that repentance includes having a broken heart and contrite spirit, recognizing and forsaking sin, seeking forgiveness, making restitution, and demonstrating a renewed commitment to keep the commandments. If necessary, he imposes informal Church discipline or initiates formal discipline. He should be familiar with the circumstances that may necessitate Church discipline and the procedures for initiating it.

When counseling members, the stake president and bishop help them take preventive action to resist temptations. For example, members who are courting, are having difficulty in their marriages, are separated or divorced, and are struggling with minor moral problems may be protected and strengthened by counseling designed to help them guard against transgression. Presiding officers need not wait for members to seek such help, but may call them in for counseling.

If a member needs professional counseling or therapy, the stake president or bishop should select or recommend a professional who will work in harmony with gospel teachings and principles. Leaders may work through LDS Social Services where it is available.

No priesthood officer is to counsel a person whom to marry. Nor should he counsel a person to divorce his or her spouse. Those decisions must originate and remain with the individual.

When a marriage ends in divorce, or if a husband and wife separate, they should always receive counseling from Church leaders. One or both may also need Church discipline if they have committed serious transgressions in connection with the divorce or separation.

The stake president or bishop may give a priesthood blessing if the member who is being counseled sincerely wants one.

Keeping Confidences

During and after their term of service in a calling, leaders must keep confidences about matters discussed when interviewing and counseling. A breach of confidence can damage trust, testimonies, and faith. A leader must not discuss confidential matters with others, including his counselors and wife, unless he receives consent from the person he is interviewing or counseling. If the bishop or a counselor in the stake presidency encounters matters that need to be discussed with the stake president, he should explain this to the member and refer the member to the stake president without delay.

Responding to Abuse

While interviewing or counseling a person, a priesthood leader may become aware of incidents of abuse of a child, spouse, or other person. Abuse cannot be tolerated in any form. Guidelines for responding to abuse are provided on pages 157-58.

5. Ordinances and Blessings

General Instructions

An ordinance is a sacred act, such as baptism, that is performed by the authority of the priesthood. The ordinances of baptism, confirmation, Melchizedek Priesthood ordination (for men), and the temple endowment and sealing are required for exaltation for all accountable persons. These are called the saving ordinances. As part of each saving ordinance, the recipient makes covenants with God.

Priesthood blessings are important for the blessing, comfort, and encouragement of God's children.

Brethren who perform ordinances and blessings should prepare themselves by living worthily and striving to be guided by the Holy Spirit. They should perform each ordinance and blessing in a dignified manner, making sure it meets the following requirements:

1. It should be performed in the name of Jesus Christ.
2. It should be performed by the authority of the priesthood.
3. It should be performed with any necessary procedures, such as using specified words or using consecrated oil.
4. It should be authorized by the presiding authority who holds the proper keys (normally the bishop or stake president), if necessary according to the instructions in this section.

   A priesthood leader who oversees an ordinance or blessing ensures that the person who performs it has the necessary priesthood authority, is worthy, and knows and follows the proper procedures. Leaders also seek to make the ordinance or blessing a reverent and spiritual experience.

When ordinances or blessings are performed in sacrament meeting, the bishop ensures that they are performed properly. To avoid embarrassing a priesthood holder, the bishop quietly corrects errors only if essential elements of the ordinance or blessing are incorrect.

Participation in Ordinances and Blessings

Only brethren who hold the necessary priesthood and are worthy may perform an ordinance or blessing or stand in the circle. Those who participate are usually limited to priesthood leaders, close family members, and close associates such as home teachers.

When several brethren participate in an ordinance or blessing, each one places his right hand lightly on the person's head (or under the baby being blessed) and his left hand on the shoulder of the brother to his left. Large numbers of brethren are discouraged from participating in a single ordinance or blessing.

Leaders encourage worthy fathers who hold the necessary priesthood to perform or participate in ordinances and blessings for their own children.

Family members are usually invited to attend when a person receives an ordinance or blessing.

Performing an Ordinance or Blessing in Another Ward

To act as voice when naming and blessing a child, baptizing or confirming a person, ordaining a person to a priesthood office, or dedicating a grave, a priesthood holder who is outside his own ward should show the presiding officer a current temple recommend or a Recommend to Perform an Ordinance form (obtained from his bishopric).

Teaching How to Perform Ordinances and Blessings

Priesthood leaders teach brethren how to perform ordinances and blessings. Leaders also help fathers be prepared and worthy to perform ordinances and blessings for family members.

Instructions for Ordinances and Blessings

In addition to this section, instructions for performing most ordinances and blessings are published in the "Melchizedek Priesthood" section of *Book 2*. Instructions for ordinances that Aaronic Priesthood holders may perform are also published in the "Aaronic Priesthood" section of *Book 2*.

Priesthood leaders should not produce or use publications that give instructions for ordinances, blessings, or prayers unless the First Presidency has authorized such publications.

Translating and Interpreting Ordinances and Blessings

If necessary, a bishop may ask a worthy priesthood holder to translate orally an ordinance or blessing into a language that the recipient understands.

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The bishop also may ask a worthy priesthood holder to interpret an ordinance or blessing if the recipient is hearing impaired.

Records of Ordinances

The complete date that the following ordinances were performed should be recorded on a person's membership record: baptism, confirmation, priesthood ordination, temple endowment, and temple sealing.

Recording the Words of Ordinances and Blessings

Patriarchal blessings are recorded and transcribed. The exact wording of other ordinances and blessings is not recorded in writing or by recording device. However, a family may record father's blessings.

Photographs and Video Recordings of Ordinances and Blessings

No one should take photographs, motion Pictures, or video recordings of priesthood ordinances or blessings or of baptismal services.

Ordinances for Adopted Children

After a legal adoption is final, adopted children receive ordinances in the surname of their adopting parents. An older child who is adopted and who has been baptized is not baptized again. The ward clerk changes the membership record to conform to the decree of adoption.

Ordinances for Persons Who Have Mental Disabilities

When contemplating ordinances for a person who has a mental disability, priesthood leaders and parents prayerfully consider the person's wishes and degree of understanding. Ordinances should not be withheld if the person is worthy, wants to receive them, and demonstrates an appropriate degree of responsibility and accountability. Living persons whose disabilities cause them to have the mental capacity of little children may not be accountable (see D&C 29:46-50). The saving ordinances do not need to be performed for these persons.

If leaders determine that a person should receive an ordinance, they help him or her understand and prepare for it.

For information about baptism for persons who have mental disabilities, see pages 26-27. For information about priesthood ordination, see page 33. For information about patriarchal blessings, see page 35.

For information about temple ordinances, see pages 67 (living members) and 76 (deceased persons). A bishop should consult with his stake president if he has questions about specific persons. The stake president may direct questions to the Office of the First Presidency if necessary.

Ordinances and Blessings Performed by and for Persons Who Have Physical Disabilities

Persons who have physical disabilities such as the loss of one or both arms, paraplegia, quadriplegia, or hearing impairment may perform and receive ordinances and blessings. Leaders make the necessary arrangements for these persons to participate in a way that their disabilities allow. If there are questions that local leaders cannot resolve, the stake president refers them to the Office of the First Presidency.

Persons who are hearing impaired may communicate through sign language when performing or receiving an ordinance or blessing. If an ordinance or blessing is performed under the direction of a presiding officer, he ensures that the recipient can understand it through an interpreter or by other means.

Procedure When an Ordinance Is Not Valid

Ordinances for Which There Is No Valid Record

An ordinance is not valid unless at least the correct year it was performed is recorded ^ on the membership record. If the date is missing or incorrect, the ordinance can be validated by the member showing the bishop the original certificate that was issued when the ordinance was performed. The bishop then asks a clerk to record this information on the membership record.

If the member cannot provide the certificate, a ward clerk can ask for a search of Church records (available only for records submitted before 1984) by completing a Request for Ordinance Information form.

If the information cannot be found in Church records, the bishop or clerk may try to verify the ordinance by obtaining the testimony of two witnesses. The two witnesses should:

1. Have been 10 years of age or older when the ordinance was performed.
2. Have seen and heard the ordinance.
3. Be Church members of record at the time they give their testimony.
4. Give their testimony in writing, stating either (*a*) the complete date the ordinance was performed or (*b*) the year it was performed and the person who performed it.
5. Sign their written testimony in the presence of a member of a bishopric or a higher Church authority.

If this testimony is obtained, the bishop may authorize a clerk to record or correct the date on the membership record.

If the ordinance is not verified by an original certificate, a search of Church records, or the testimony of witnesses, it must be performed again to be valid.

If the member has received other ordinances after having received an invalid ordinance, they must be ratified by the First Presidency to be valid. The stake president (or the bishop under his direction) may request ratification by sending a letter to the Office of the First Presidency.

Ordinances That Were Received out of Sequence

An ordinance is not valid if a person received it out of sequence. For example, the endowment of a male member is not valid if he received it before receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood. However, the First Presidency may ratify such an ordinance. To request ratification, the stake president (or the bishop under his direction) sends a letter to the Office of the First Presidency.

Ordinances That Were Performed before the Appropriate Age

An ordinance is not valid if it was performed before the appropriate age. For example, a baptism is not valid if it was performed before the person was eight. If no other ordinances have been received based on the invalid ordinance, it should be performed again. If other ordinances, such as priesthood ordination, have been received based on the invalid ordinance, those ordinances and the invalid ordinance must be ratified by the First Presidency to be valid. To request ratification, the stake president (or the bishop under his direction) sends a letter to the Office of the First Presidency.

Records of Ordinances That Were Performed Again

If an ordinance was performed again to become valid, a clerk records the date it was performed again on the membership record even if it will appear out of sequence with the dates of other ordinances on the membership record.

Naming and Blessing Children

General Guidelines

"Every member of the church of Christ having children is to bring them unto the elders before the church, who are to lay their hands upon them in the name of Jesus Christ, and bless them in his name" (D&C 20:70). In conformity with this revelation, only worthy Melchizedek Priesthood holders may participate in naming and blessing children. Priesthood leaders should inform members of this instruction before their children are named and blessed. While preserving the sacred nature of the blessing, leaders should make every reasonable effort to avoid embarrassment or offense to individuals or families.

Children normally should be named and blessed during fast and testimony meeting in the ward where the parents are members of record.

Babies Who Were Born out of Wedlock

Children who were born out of wedlock may be blessed during fast and testimony meeting. Or, if a family prefers, the bishop may authorize Melchizedek Priesthood holders to bless the child in the home, with a member of the bishopric presiding.

Babies Who Are Critically Ill

If a newborn infant is critically ill, a Melchizedek Priesthood holder may perform the naming and blessing in the hospital or at home without previous authorization from the bishop. A person who does this should notify the bishop promptly so necessary records can be made.

Babies with a Nonmember Parent

When either of a child's parents is a nonmember, the bishop should obtain verbal permission from both parents before the child is blessed. He explains that a membership record will be prepared for the child after the blessing. He also should tell them (1) that ward members will contact them periodically and (2) that when the child turns eight the bishop or the stake missionaries will visit them and propose that the child be baptized.

Instructions for Naming and Blessing a Child

When blessing a baby, Melchizedek Priesthood holders gather in a circle and place their hands under the baby. When blessing an older child, brethren place their hands lightly on the child's head. The person who gives the blessing:

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1. Addresses Heavenly Father.
2. States that the blessing is performed by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood.
3. Gives the child a name.
4. Gives a priesthood blessing as the Spirit directs.
5. Closes in the name of Jesus Christ.

Record and Certificate of Blessing

When a child is to be blessed, the parents complete the top portion of a Child Blessing Record and Certificate form. They return the completed form to a member of the bishopric. After a child is blessed ' the bishop ensures that the record and certificate are completed and distributed according to instructions with the form.

If a baby is born out of wedlock, the name on the membership record and certificate of blessing should match the name on the birth certificate or civil birth registry. If a birth certificate or civil birth registry does not exist, the naming conventions of the local culture are used.

Baptism

Under the direction of the presiding authority, children should be baptized on or as soon after their eighth birthday as reasonable. Converts should be baptized when they have met the qualifications on pages 252-33 in *Book 2*.

Preparing Children for Baptism

Bishops give special attention to seven-year-old children in the ward, ensuring that their parents, Primary leaders and teachers, and home teachers help them prepare for baptism. Melchizedek Priesthood leaders also encourage parents to teach and prepare their children for this ordinance. When children reach age eight, the bishop makes sure they have every opportunity to accept the gospel an be baptized.

Baptismal Interviews

A priesthood leader who is authorized to issue a Baptism Record form interviews each person before baptism. Instructions are provided in the Baptism Record book. The interviewer prepares himself to be guided by the Spirit and by the counsel in Doctrine and Covenants 20:37, 68-69.

Eight-Year-Old Children

The bishop interviews each eight-year-old child who is a member of record and has at least one member parent or guardian.

Converts

The full-time missionary district leader normally interviews prospective converts for baptism. The zone leader conducts the interview if the person was taught by the district leader.

Convert baptisms are defined as baptisms of (1) persons ages nine and older and (2) children age eight whose parents are both nonmembers. Former members who are readmitted by baptism after excommunication or name removal are not converts. Missionaries may not interview them for baptism.

Authorization of the mission president is required before a prospective convert may be baptized if the person:

1. Has submitted to, performed, encouraged, paid for, or arranged for an abortion.
2. Is cohabiting out of wedlock.
3. Has been convicted of a serious crime (baptism of a person who has committed murder requires the approval of the First Presidency, as explained on page 27).
4. Has committed a homosexual transgression.
5. Is considering or has undergone an elective transsexual operation (see page 27).

In these instances, the mission president conducts a searching interview and issues a Baptism Record form if he determines that the person has repented and is worthy. If necessary, the mission president may authorize one of his counselors, a member of the stake presidency, or the bishop to conduct this interview unless the candidate is cohabiting out of wedlock. A separate authorization from the mission president is required for each interview.

Each prospective convert should meet with the bishop before baptism. However, the bishop does not interview converts for baptism unless authorized by the mission president as explained in the preceding paragraph.

Persons Who May Not Be Accountable

Members who have mental disabilities and cannot knowingly repent may be considered by the bishop as not accountable. These persons need not be baptized, regardless of their age. They are "saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven" (D&C 137:10; see also -8 Moroni 8. 9-12).

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If a person later demonstrates an understanding of repentance and an appropriate degree of account ability and desire, he or she may be baptized. If a person was baptized but later becomes mentally disabled, the baptism is still valid.

For additional guidelines, see page 24. For information about the membership records of persons who may not be accountable, see page 128.

Minors

A minor child may be baptized only if the custodial parent(s) or legal guardian(s) consent and if local leaders have good reason to believe that the child understands the baptismal covenant and will make every effort to keep it through obedience to the gospel, including faithfully attending Church meetings.

Children Whose Parents Are Divorced

A child whose parents are divorced may be baptized if the parent(s) with legal custody gives permission. If the mother has custody and has remarried ' and if the child is not formally adopted but has assumed the surname of the stepfather, the child may be baptized in the name by which he or she will be known.

Children Whose Parents Have Been Excommunicated for Practicing Plural Marriage

Children of parents who have been excommunicated for practicing plural marriage must receive approval from the First Presidency to be baptized. The bishop may request this approval through the stake president when he is satisfied that the children (1) accept the teachings and doctrines of the Church and (2) repudiate the teachings that caused their parents' excommunication.

Persons Who Are Married

A married person is not baptized without the consent of his or her spouse.

Persons Who Have Been Excommunicated or Had Their Names Removed from Church Records

Persons who have been excommunicated may be readmitted into the Church by baptism. Instructions are provided on pages 104-6.

Persons who have had their names removed from Church membership records may be readmitted by baptism. Instructions are provided on pages 130-31.

Persons Who Have HIV Infection or AIDS

Persons with HIV infection or AIDS are treated as anyone else who expresses faith in God, repents, requests baptism, and is living the gospel of Jesus Christ (see Articles of Faith 1:1 and 1:4).

Persons Who Have Been Convicted of Crimes

Persons who have been convicted of crimes and seek baptism for the first time or baptism for readmission into the Church are not baptized until they complete their terms of imprisonment, parole, or probation resulting from their convictions (unless the First Presidency has granted an exception). They are encouraged to work closely with local priesthood leaders and to do everything they can to become worthy of baptism.

A person who has been convicted of, or who has confessed to, murder (even in private confessions to a priesthood leader) may not be baptized unless the First Presidency gives permission. The request for permission to baptize must include all pertinent details as determined during a personal interview by the mission president (if the person is seeking baptism for the first time) or bishop (if a former member is seeking readmission).

Persons Who Are Considering or Have Undergone a Transsexual Operation

Persons who are considering an elective transsexual operation should not be baptized. Persons who have already undergone an elective transsexual operation may be baptized if they are otherwise found worthy in an interview with the mission president or a priesthood leader he assigns. Such persons may not receive the priesthood or a temple recommend.

Baptismal Fonts

Missionaries coordinate their use of a baptismal font with the agent bishop or another person designated by the stake presidency. The schedule for using a font should permit missionaries to baptize once a week or more often, if necessary. However, missionaries should not expect to use a font at unreasonable times. No charge is made for using a baptismal font.

When a baptismal font is not available, any body of water that is safe may be used for a baptism if it is large enough to immerse the person and to permit the priesthood holder who performs the baptism to stand in the water with the person. Water is not dedicated for baptisms.

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Clothing for Baptism

A person who performs a baptism and a person who is baptized wear white clothing that does not appear transparent when it is wet. An endowed person wears the temple garment under this clothing while performing a baptism.

Local units should have baptismal clothing available and should not charge for its use. This clothing is purchased with budget allowance funds. The bishop may ask Relief Society sisters to clean and mend the clothing.

Baptismal Services

Baptismal services should be simple, brief, and spiritual. Normally, stake or ward leaders conduct monthly baptismal services for all eight-year-old children of record in the stake or ward. Members should not request special or individual times or prescribe the content of baptismal services.

A member of the stake presidency or bishopric presides over baptismal services for eight-year-old children of record. He may conduct the services or assign a member of the stake mission presidency or a ward mission leader to conduct them under his direction.

The ward mission leader usually plans and conducts baptismal services for converts. If a convert baptismal service involves more than one ward, a member of the stake mission presidency may plan and conduct it or ask a ward mission leader to do so. If ward or stake mission leaders are not available, full-time missionary district or zone leaders may plan and conduct the service. A member of the bishopric should attend.

Baptismal services for converts should be scheduled when it is convenient for them and when they have committed to be baptized. Baptisms should not normally be delayed past this date unless the investigators are not yet prepared. Baptisms of family members should not be delayed so the father can receive the priesthood and perform the baptisms himself.

The scheduling of baptismal services should be coordinated with ward leaders. If a service is scheduled on a Sunday, it should be held at a time that minimizes interference with regular Sunday meetings. Baptismal services should not be scheduled on Monday evenings.

People who may be invited to a baptismal service include the person's family members, other close relatives, close friends, priesthood leaders, home teachers, visiting teachers, auxiliary officers and teachers who will be working with the new member, and investigators who are being taught.

For further instructions about baptismal services, including an outline of what a service may include, see pages 253-54 in *Book 2*.

Witnesses of a Baptism

Two priests or Melchizedek Priesthood holders witness each baptism to make sure it is performed properly. The baptism must be repeated if the words are not spoken exactly as given in Doctrine and Covenants 20:73 or if part of a person's body or clothing was not immersed completely.

Instructions for Performing a Baptism

Under the direction of the presiding authority, a worthy priest or Melchizedek Priesthood holder may perform the ordinance of baptism. To do so, he:

1. Stands in the water with the person to be baptized.
2. (For convenience and safety) holds the person's right wrist with his left hand; the person being baptized holds the priesthood holder's left wrist with his or her left hand.
3. Raises his right arm to the square.
4. States the person's full name and says, "Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen"

(D&C 20:73).
5. Has the person hold his or her nose with the right hand (for convenience); then the priesthood holder places his right hand high on the person's back and immerses the person completely, including the person's clothing.
6. Helps the person come up out of the water.

Record of Baptism

After baptism, the bishop or full-time missionary who prepared the person ensures that the Baptism Record is distributed according to instructions on the form. After receiving a copy of this form, Church headquarters or the administration office sends a record of baptism to the ward. The record of baptism is replaced by a new or updated membership record after confirmation.

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Confirmation

General Guidelines

A person receives the ordinance of confirmation after he or she has been baptized (see D&C 20:41). A person is considered a member of the Church after the ordinances of baptism and confirmation are both completed (see John 3:5; D&C 33:11).

The bishop ensures that the confirmation is performed as soon as reasonable after baptism. Eight-year-old members of record may be confirmed at the baptismal service or in a fast and testimony meeting,

Converts may be confirmed in any sacrament meeting of the ward in which they reside. Converts are not confirmed at the baptismal service.

The bishop or one of his counselors participates in the confirmation. When missionary elders have taught a convert, the bishop may invite them to participate in the confirmation.

The bishop does not conduct a separate interview for confirmation.

Instructions for Performing a Confirmation

Under the direction of the bishopric, one or more Melchizedek Priesthood holders may participate in

this ordinance. They place their hands lightly on the person's head. Then the person who performs the

ordinance:

1. States the person's full name.
2. States that the ordinance is performed by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood.
3. Confirms the person a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
4. Bestows the gift of the Holy Ghost by saying, "Receive the Holy Ghost."
5. Gives a priesthood blessing as the Spirit directs.
6. Closes in the name of Jesus Christ.

Welcoming New Members

See page 127

Record of Confirmation and Certificate of Baptism and Confirmation

After a person is confirmed, the bishop ensures that the Confirmation Record/Baptism and

Confirmation Certificate is completed and distributed according to instructions with the form. After receiving

a copy of the form, Church headquarters or the administration office sends a new or updated member

ship record to the ward.

If a child's parents are divorced, his or her legal name, as defined by local law or custom, should be recorded on the membership record and the certificate.

Sacrament

General Guidelines

Church members meet on the Sabbath to worship God and partake of the sacrament (see D&C 20:75; 59:9). During this holy ordinance, they partake of bread and water in remembrance of the Savior's flesh and blood and to renew their baptismal covenants (see Matthew 26:26-28; Joseph Smith Translation, Mark 14:20-25; Luke 22:15-20; 3 Nephi 18; Moroni 6:6).

Under the direction of the bishopric, priesthood holders bless the sacrament and pass it to members of the congregation during each sacrament meeting. Aaronic Priesthood holders usually perform these duties. However, Melchizedek Priesthood holders may bless and pass the sacrament when there are not enough Aaronic Priesthood brethren or if the bishop occasionally invites them to do so.

Every priesthood holder who participates in this ordinance should understand that he is acting on behalf of the Lord. The bishopric encourages priesthood holders to ponder the Savior's Atonement as they prepare, bless, and pass the sacrament. The bishopric also ensures that priesthood holders have a reverent, dignified attitude as they participate in this ordinance.

Priesthood holders should wash their hands thoroughly with soap or a disposable towelette before preparing, blessing, or passing the sacrament. They should dress modestly and be well groomed and clean. Clothing or jewelry should not call attention to itself or distract members during this ordinance.

A priesthood holder who has committed a serious transgression should not prepare, bless, or pass the sacrament until he has repented and resolved the matter with his bishop.

Although the sacrament is for Church members, the bishopric should not announce that it will be passed to members only, and nothing should be done to prevent nonmembers from partaking of the sacrament.

Preparing the Sacrament

Worthy teachers, priests, and Melchizedek Priesthood holders may prepare the sacrament. Before the meeting begins, those who prepare the sacrament should make sure that bread trays with unbroken bread, water trays with cups filled with fresh water, and clean tablecloths are in place.

Sacrament tablecloths should be white, nontransparent, clean, and pressed. Sacrament trays should be kept clean. Sacrament trays and cups are available from Church distribution centers.

Blessing and Passing the Sacrament

Worthy priests and Melchizedek Priesthood holders may bless the sacrament. Worthy deacons, teachers, priests, and Melchizedek Priesthood holders may pass the sacrament.

As the congregation sings the sacrament hymn, the priesthood holders who will bless the sacrament reverently stand, remove the cloth that covers the bread trays, and break the bread into bite-sized pieces. When they finish breaking the bread, they should sit down and wait for the hymn to be completed. (Vocal solos or instrumental selections may not replace this hymn.)

Following the hymn, the person who blesses the bread kneels and offers the sacrament prayer for the bread (see D&C 20:77). The sacrament prayers were revealed by the Lord (see D&C 20:77,79; Moroni 4-5). The bishop makes sure they are spoken clearly, accurately, and with dignity. If the person who blesses the sacrament makes an error in the wording but corrects it himself, no further correction is required. If the person does not correct an error, the bishop indicates that he should repeat the prayer correctly. In doing so, the bishop should be careful to avoid causing embarrassment or distracting from the sacred nature of the ordinance.

After the prayer, deacons or other priesthood holders pass the bread to the congregation in a reverent and orderly manner. The presiding officer receives the sacrament first. The bishop (or a counselor in his absence) presides at the sacrament meeting unless a General Authority, Area Authority Seventy, or member of the stake presidency is sitting on the stand. A high councilor does not preside and does not receive the sacrament first.

When brethren finish passing the bread, they return the trays to the sacrament table. Those officiating at the sacrament table replace the cloth over the bread trays and uncover the water trays. The person who blesses the water kneels and offers the sacrament prayer for the water (see D&C 20:79), substituting the word *water* for *wine*.

After the prayer, deacons or other priesthood holders pass the water to the congregation. When they finish, they return the trays to the sacrament

table, wait for the officiators to cover the trays, then reverently take their seats.

Everyone who attends the meeting should be reverent during the entire ordinance of blessing and passing the sacrament. No music should be played during the prayer or while the sacrament is being passed.

Sacrament for Members Who Are Unable to Attend

See page 56.

Consecrating Oil

One or more Melchizedek Priesthood holders must consecrate olive oil before it is used to anoint the sick or afflicted. No other oil may be used. To do this, a priesthood holder:

1. Holds an open container of olive oil.
2. Addresses Heavenly Father.
3. States that he is acting by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood.
4. consecrates the oil (not the container) and sets it apart for anointing and blessing the sick and afflicted.
5. Closes in the name of Jesus Christ.

Members should not take consecrated oil internally or apply it on afflicted parts of the body

Administering to the Sick

Only Melchizedek Priesthood holders may administer to the sick or afflicted. Two or more of them normally do it together, but one may do it himself. If consecrated oil is not available, a blessing may nevertheless be given by the authority of the priesthood.

A father who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood should administer to sick members of his family. He may ask another Melchizedek Priesthood holder to assist him.

Brethren should administer to the sick at the request of the sick person or of someone who is vitally concerned so the blessing will be according to their faith (see D&C 24:13-14; 42:43-44, 48-52). Melchizedek Priesthood holders who visit hospitals should not solicit opportunities to administer to the sick.

If a person requests more than one blessing for the same illness, the priesthood holder need not anoint with oil after the first blessing. Instead, he gives a blessing by the laying on of hands and the authority of the priesthood.

Administering to the sick has two parts: (1) anointing with oil and (2) sealing the anointing.

Anointing with Oil

The anointing is done by one Melchizedek Priesthood holder. He:

1. Puts a small amount of consecrated oil on the person's head.
2. Places his hands lightly on the person's head and calls the person by his or her full name.
3. States that he is acting by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood.
4. States that he is anointing with consecrated oil.
5. Closes in the name of Jesus Christ.

Sealing the Anointing

Normally, two or more Melchizedek Priesthood holders place their hands lightly on the head of the person. The one who seals the anointing:

1. Calls the person by his or her full name.
2. States that he is acting by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood.
3. Seals the anointing.
4. Gives a priesthood blessing as the Spirit directs.
5. Closes in the name of Jesus Christ.

Conferring the Priesthood and Ordaining to an Office

Melchizedek Priesthood Offices

Stake President's and Bishop's Responsibilities

The stake president oversees the conferral of the

Melchizedek Priesthood and ordination to the offices of elder and high priest. However, the bishop usually initiates recommendations for these ordinations. With the approval of the stake presidency, the bishop interviews the member as instructed on the Melchizedek Priesthood Record and Certificate form.

After the bishop interviews the member, the stake

president or one of his counselors conducts a thorough, searching interview as instructed on the Melchizedek Priesthood Record and Certificate form. He also makes sure the member understands the oath and covenant of the priesthood and agrees to live by it (see D&C 84:33-44).

After the interview, the stake presidency asks the high council to sustain the decision to ordain the person. The stake presidency then presents the person for a sustaining vote in a general session of stake conference or in a stake general priesthood meeting (see D&C 20:65, 67; 26:2; 42:11). The person should stand while the congregation gives a sustaining vote. The member of the stake presidency may say:

"We propose that [name] receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and be ordained an elder [or we propose that (name) be ordained a high priest]. Those in favor may manifest it by the uplifted hand. [Pause briefly for the sustaining vote.] Those opposed, if any, may manifest it. [Pause briefly to allow for a dissenting vote, if any.]"

The person who is being presented should participate in the sustaining vote. If more than one person is being presented, they usually may be sustained as a group.

If a member in good standing gives a dissenting vote, a member of the stake presidency confers with him or her in private after the meeting. The officer determines whether the dissenting vote was based on knowledge that the person is guilty of conduct that should disqualify him from being ordained to the priesthood office.

Some brethren may need to be ordained before they can be presented in a general stake meeting. When this occurs, the member is presented in his ward sacrament meeting for a sustaining vote. His name is then presented in the next general stake meeting to ratify the ordination.

When the necessary interviews and approvals are completed, the ordination is performed according to the instructions on page 33.

Elders

Worthy brethren may receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and be ordained elders when they are at least 18 years old. However, because of individual circumstances, such as a young man's maturity, school graduation, and desire to continue with peer group associates, the bishop may allow a worthy 18-year-old to remain a priest for a period of time. By age 19, all brethren should be affiliated with the elders quorum as elders or prospective elders.

Before brethren ages 18 and older leave home for reasons such as school, employment, or military service, they should be ordained elders if they are worthy.

Recently baptized brethren ages 18 and older are ordained elders after they have served as priests, developed sufficient understanding of the gospel, and demonstrated their worthiness-
No specific time as a member is required.

High Priests

Brethren are ordained high priests when they are called to a stake presidency, high council, or bishopric or when otherwise determined by the stake president. However, bishops' counselors in student wards need not be ordained high priests.

Aaronic Priesthood Offices

Bishop's Responsibility

The bishop oversees the conferral of the Aaronic Priesthood and ordinations to the offices of deacon, teacher, and priest. Worthy brethren may be ordained at the following minimum ages:

Deacon, age 12

Teacher, age 14

Priest, age 16

The bishop personally interviews brethren who are to be ordained deacons, teachers, or priests to determine if they are worthy. Before interviewing a young man for priesthood ordination, the bishop obtains permission from the young man's parents or guardians.

If a member is found worthy in an interview, the bishop completes the top portion of the Aaronic Priesthood Record and Certificate form. He or one of his counselors presents the member in sacrament meeting for the sustaining vote of members (see D&C 20:65). This should follow the pattern for presenting brethren for Melchizedek Priesthood ordination (see page 31). If a member in good standing gives a dissenting vote, a member of the bishopric confers with him or her in private after the meeting.

After the sustaining vote, the ordination is performed by or under the direction of the bishop according to the instructions on page 33.

Young Men Whose Parents Are Divorced

A young man whose parents are divorced may be ordained to Aaronic Priesthood offices if the parent(s) with legal custody gives permission. If the mother has custody and has remarried, and if the young man is not formally adopted but has assumed the surname of, the stepfather, he may be ordained in the name by which he is known.

Recently Baptized Brethren

Brethren ages 12 and older who have recently been baptized should receive the Aaronic Priesthood and be ordained to the appropriate office within a reasonable period after their baptism and confirmation. Brethren ages 16 and older are ordained priests. Brethren ages 19 and older are also prospective elders (see the following heading).

Recently baptized brethren need to be interviewed by the bishop and sustained by a vote of ward members in a sacrament meeting before they are ordained to an Aaronic Priesthood office. Therefore, they are not ordained on the day they are baptized.

Baptisms of family members should not be delayed so the father can receive the priesthood and perform the baptisms himself.

Prospective Elders

A prospective elder is a male Church member, age 19 or older, who does not hold the Melchizedek Priesthood. Married brethren who are younger than 19 and do not hold the Melchizedek Priesthood are also prospective elders.

The bishop interviews prospective elders regularly and works closely with leaders in the elders quorum and high priests group to prepare prospective elders to advance in the priesthood. If a prospective elder is not already a priest, he should be ordained a priest as soon as he is worthy. He does not need to be ordained a deacon or teacher first. He may be ordained an elder when he has developed sufficient understanding of the gospel and demonstrated his worthiness.

For more information about prospective elders, see page 168 in *Book 2*.

Unusual Circumstances

Brethren Who Have Not Lived in the Same Ward for at Least One Year

If a member has not lived in the same ward continuously for at least one year, the bishop contacts

the prior bishop to certify the member's worthiness before approving him for Aaronic Priesthood ordination or recommending him for Melchizedek Priesthood ordination.

If a person is ordained while he is living away from home temporarily, and if his membership record is still in his home ward, the bishop of the ward where he is ordained advises the bishop of the home ward so the membership record can be updated. The certificate of ordination is prepared in the ward where the ordination is performed.

Brethren in Young Single Adult Wards, Single Adult Wards, and Student Wards

Worthy brethren ages 18 and older in young single adult wards, single adult wards, and student wards should be ordained elders. Brethren who are not ordained elders are affiliated with the elders quorum as prospective elders.

Military Servicemen in Isolated Areas

If a serviceman is at sea for an extended time, or if his duty station is in a war zone or is not within the boundaries of a stake or mission, usually he is ordained in the ward that has his membership record. In most cases this is the ward that supports the duty station.

As an exception, if it is not feasible for such a serviceman to be interviewed or ordained in the ward that has his membership record, his service member group leader may meet with him. If the group leader feels that the serviceman is ready to be ordained, he makes a written recommendation to the presiding officer of the Church unit that oversees the service member group. For ordination to Aaronic Priesthood offices, the presiding officer may authorize the group leader or a Latter-day Saint chaplain to interview the person and oversee the ordination. For ordination to the office of elder, the stake or mission president may authorize a Latter-day Saint chaplain to interview the person and oversee the ordination. AR ordinations should be sustained or ratified as explained in this section.

Brethren Who Have Mental Disabilities

Priesthood leaders decide whether brethren who have mental disabilities should receive the priesthood. If the member lives with parents or guardians, priesthood leaders consult with them. To be ordained, a member who has a mental disability should first demonstrate an appropriate degree of accountability and an understanding of responsibility. Priesthood holders who have such disabilities should be assisted so they can participate as fully as possible.

Brethren Who Have Been Readmitted by Baptism

For instructions about ordaining brethren who have been readmitted by baptism after being excommunicated or having their names removed from the membership records of the Church, see page 106.

Members Who Have Undergone a Transsexual Operation

Members who have undergone an elective transsexual operation may not receive the priesthood.

Instructions for Performing an Ordination

When the necessary interviews and approvals are completed:

1. The stake president (or someone under his direction) may ordain or authorize a worthy Melchizedek Priesthood holder to ordain the person to the office of elder. Only

Melchizedek Priesthood holders may stand in the circle.
2. The stake president (or someone under his direction) may ordain or authorize a worthy high priest to ordain the person to the office of high priest. Only high priests may stand in the circle.
3. The bishop (or a counselor under his direction) may ordain or authorize a worthy priest or Melchizedek Priesthood holder to ordain the person to the office of deacon, teacher, or priest. Only priests and Melchizedek Priesthood holders may stand in the circle.

To perform a priesthood ordination, one or more authorized priesthood holders place their hands lightly on the person's head. Then the priesthood holder who performs the ordination:

1. Calls the person by his full name.
2. States the authority by which the ordination is performed (Aaronic or Melchizedek Priesthood).
3. Confers the Aaronic or Melchizedek Priesthood, unless it has already been conferred.
4. Ordains the person to an office in the Aaronic or Melchizedek Priesthood and bestows the rights, powers, and authority of that office.
5. Gives a priesthood blessing as the Spirit directs.
6. Closes in the name of Jesus Christ.

Record and Certificate of Ordination

After a Melchizedek Priesthood ordination, the stake president ensures that the Melchizedek Priesthood Record and Certificate is completed and distributed according to instructions with the form.

After an Aaronic Priesthood ordination, the bishop ensures that the Aaronic Priesthood Record and Certificate is completed and distributed according to instructions with the form.

If a young man's parents are divorced, his legal name, as defined by local law or custom, is recorded on the Aaronic Priesthood ordination certificate.

Father's Blessings and Other Blessings of Comfort and Counsel

Father's blessings and other priesthood blessings are given to provide direction and comfort as guided by the Spirit.

A father who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood may give father's blessings to his children. These blessings may be especially helpful when children go to school, go on missions, get married, enter military service, or face special challenges. A family may record a father's blessing for family records, but it is not preserved in Church records. Parents should encourage their children to seek father's blessings in times of need.

Worthy Melchizedek Priesthood holders also may give blessings of comfort and counsel to other family members and to others who request them.

To give a father's blessing or other blessings of comfort and counsel, one or more worthy Melchizedek Priesthood holders place their hands lightly on the person's head. Then the priesthood holder who gives the blessing:

1. Calls the person by his or her full name.
2. States that the blessing is performed by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood.
3. Blesses the person as the Spirit directs.

4. Closes in the name of Jesus Christ.

Dedicating Graves

A person who dedicates a grave should hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and be authorized by the priesthood officer who conducts the service. To dedicate a grave, he:

1. Addresses Heavenly Father.
2. States that he is acting by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood.
3. Dedicates and consecrates the burial plot as the resting place for the body of the deceased.
4. (Where appropriate) prays that the place will be hallowed and protected until the Resurrection.
5. Asks the Lord to comfort the family and expresses thoughts as the Spirit directs.
6. Closes in the name of Jesus Christ.

If the family prefers, a graveside prayer rather than a dedicatory prayer may be offered, preferably by a Melchizedek Priesthood holder.

Setting Apart Officers and Teachers

See page 39.

Dedicating Homes

Church members may dedicate their homes as sacred edifices where the Holy Spirit can reside and where fan-Lily members can worship, find safety from the world, grow spiritually, and prepare for eternal family relationships. Homes need not be free of debt to be dedicated. Unlike Church buildings, homes are not consecrated to the Lord.

To dedicate a home, a family might gather and offer a prayer that includes the elements mentioned above and other words as the Spirit directs.

Patriarchal Blessings

Information about patriarchal blessings is provided in the following paragraphs, on pages 6-7 in this book, and in *Information and Suggestions for Patriarchs.*

Preparing for the Blessing

Every worthy, baptized member of the Church is entitled to and should receive a patriarchal blessing, which provides inspired direction from the Lord. Church leaders and parents are to encourage members to obtain their blessings.

The bishop interviews members who want to receive patriarchal blessings. If a member is worthy, the bishop issues and signs a Patriarchal Blessing Recommend. The recommend must also be signed by a member of the stake presidency if the blessing will be given by a patriarch who lives outside the member's stake (such authorization may be given only as outlined in "Giving Blessings to Members outside the Stake" on page 35). A member must take the signed recommend to the patriarch to receive a blessing.

When issuing a Patriarchal Blessing Recommend, the bishop ensures that the member is of sufficient age and maturity to understand the meaning and importance of the blessing. Ideally the member should be young enough that many of the important decisions in life are still ahead, though older adults should also be encouraged to receive their patriarchal blessings. Local priesthood leaders should not establish a minimum age for a member to receive a patriarchal blessing.

The bishop helps members understand the sacred nature of this blessing. He emphasizes the importance of being spiritually prepared to receive it.

A missionary should receive a patriarchal blessing before beginning missionary service.

A new convert should understand the basic doctrines of the Church before receiving a patriarchal blessing.

if a member has a mental disability, the bishop may issue a recommend only when, in consultation with the parents, he believes there is a sufficient level of understanding (see also page 24).

Receiving the Blessing

Members should go to the patriarch with a prayerful attitude and in Sunday attire. They may fast, but fasting is not required.

Each patriarchal blessing is sacred, confidential, and personal. Therefore, it is given in private except that a limited number of family members may be present.

Church members should not compare blessings and should not share them except with close family members. Patriarchal blessings should not be read in Church meetings or other public gatherings.

If a patriarchal blessing does not include a declaration of lineage, the patriarch may later give an addendum to declare lineage. An addendum becomes part of the original blessing and should be attached to it.

Giving Blessings to Members outside the Stake

A stake patriarch normally gives patriarchal blessings only to members in his stake. However, he may

give blessings to members outside of his stake in the following circumstances:

1. A patriarch may give patriarchal blessings to his own lineal descendants (children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren) wherever they live. The member must have a recommend signed by the bishop. If the patriarch lives in a different stake than the person receiving blessing, recommend must also be signed by a member of the stake presidency.
2. A member in a stake or mission that does not have a patriarch or where the patriarch is unable to give blessings may go to a patriarch in a nearby stake. The member's recommend must be signed by the bishop and a member of the stake presidency.
3. A member who speaks a language that is different from the language of the stake patriarch may go to a patriarch in a nearby stake to receive a blessing in his or her own language. The member must have a recommend signed by the bishop and a member of the stake presidency.

Blessings for Members Entering the Military

When worthy members of the Church enter military service, priesthood leaders encourage them to receive their patriarchal blessing before reporting for active duty. If it is not possible for a member to receive this blessing before leaving, he or she can receive it from a patriarch where the temporary duty station is located. To do this, the member presents a recommend from the bishop of his or her home ward to a member of the stake presidency where the temporary duty station is located. The member of the stake presidency then interviews the person and signs the recommend if he or she is worthy.

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Chart of Ordinations

Office: Patriarch

Recommended By: Stake presidency
Approved By: Quorum of the Twelve
Sustained By: Members in stake conference or stake general priesthood meeting
Interviewed and Ordained By: A member of the First Presidency or Twelve, or the stake president with written approval from the Quorum of the Twelve
Office: High priest
Recommended By: Bishop and stake presidency
Approved By: Stake presidency and high council
Sustained By: Members in stake conference or stake general priesthood meeting
Interviewed and Ordained By: Interviewed by the bishop and by the stake president or an assigned counselor; ordained under the direction of the stake president
Office: Elder
Recommended By: Bishop
Approved By: Stake presidency and high council
Sustained By: Members in stake conference or stake general priesthood meeting
Interviewed and Ordained By: Interviewed by the bishop and by the stake president or an assigned counselor; ordained under the direction of the stake president
Office: Bishop
Recommended By: Stake presidency
Approved By: First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve
Sustained By: Ward members
Interviewed and Ordained By: A General Authority or Area Authority Seventy, or the stake president with written approval from the First Presidency
Office: Priest, teacher, or deacon
Recommended By: Bishop
Approved By: Bishopric
Sustained By: Ward members
Interviewed and Ordained By: Interviewed by the bishop; ordained under the direction of the bishop
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Chart of Ordinations

Office	Recommended By	Approved By	Sustained By	Interviewed and Ordained By
High priest	Stake presidency	Quorum of the Twelve	Members in stake conference or stake general priesthood meeting	A member of the First Presidency or Twelve, or the stake president with written approval from the Quorum of

				the Twelve
Patriarch	Bishop and stake presidency	Stake presidency and high council	Members in stake conference or stake general priesthood meeting	Interviewed by the bishop and by the stake president or an assigned counselor; ordained under the direction of the stake president
Elder	Bishop	Stake presidency and high council	Members in stake conference or stake general priesthood meeting	Interviewed by the bishop and by the stake president or an assigned counselor; ordained under the direction of the stake president
Bishop	Stake presidency	First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve	Ward members	A General Authority or Area Authority Seventy, or the stake president with written approval from the First Presidency
Priest, teacher, or deacon	Bishop	Bishopric	Ward members	Interviewed by the bishop; ordained under the direction of the bishop

6. Callings and Releases

This section outlines the doctrines and procedures relating to callings and releases. A Chart of Callings is provided on pages 40-49, listing each Church calling and specifying who recommends a person, who approves the recommendation, who sustains the person, and who calls and sets apart the person. Callings that are listed on the chart are filled according to local needs and as members are available.

Doctrines of Callings and Releases

A person must be called of God to serve in the Church (see Articles of Faith 1:5). These callings come as the Holy Ghost inspires presiding officers to issue them. Releases from Church callings should also come by inspiration, except when a person's change of residence necessitates a release or when a calling is for a specific time period, such as full-time missionary service.

Members who are called to most Church positions should receive a sustaining vote before they begin serving. In the scriptures this is called "common consent" or being "appointed by the voice of the church" (D&C 26:2; 28:13; 38:34; 41:9). Members who are called to most Church positions should also be set apart before they begin serving (see D&C 42:11).

The Lord has instructed each person to "labor in his [or her] own calling" (D&C 84:109).

Members should magnify their callings by serving diligently (see D&C 84:33; 107:99).

Determining Whom to Call

General Guidelines

Church leaders call all willing members to Church positions. Members are richly blessed as they demonstrate their love for the Lord and for others by serving in Church callings.

Leaders seek the Spirit's guidance in determining whom to call. Leaders also consider the member's worthiness, ability, willingness to serve, and personal or family circumstances. Leaders try to ensure that the calling will benefit the people being served, the member, and the member's family

Although service in Church callings requires sacrifice, it should not compromise a member's ability to fulfill family responsibilities. If possible, a member is called to serve in only one calling, in addition to assignments as a home teacher or visiting teacher.

Leaders should keep information about proposed callings and releases confidential. Only those who need to know, such as an auxiliary president who oversees the person, are informed before the person is presented for a sustaining vote. A person who is being considered for a calling is not notified until the calling is issued.

When a calling will be extended by or under the direction of the stake president, the bishop should be consulted to determine whether the member is worthy and whether the calling would be appropriate. The stake presidency then asks the high council to sustain the decision to issue the calling, if necessary according to the Chart of Callings on pages 40-49.

When a sister will be called to a Church position, it may be desirable to confer with her husband first.

When a youth will be called to a Church position, the bishopric obtains approval from the parents or guardians before issuing the calling.

Leaders may extend a Church calling only after (1) a person's membership record is on file in the ward or (2) the bishop has contacted the member's previous bishop to determine that the member is worthy.

New Church members should be given appropriate callings as soon as possible.

Nonmembers may be called to some positions, such as organist, music director, and assistant Scout leaders. Nonmembers may not be called to teaching or administrative positions.

Stake Callings

The stake president is called by an assigned General Authority or Area Authority Seventy. The stake president recommends brethren to be called or released as counselors in the stake presidency. Instructions are provided on the Recommendation for New Counselor to Stake President form. The stake president may interview, call, and set apart a counselor, or release a counselor, after receiving written approval from the First Presidency.

Guidelines for calling stake patriarchs are provided on page 6.

The stake president oversees the calling of members who serve in other stake positions (see pages 40-42 in the Chart of Callings).

Ward Callings

The stake presidency recommends brethren to be called or released as bishops. Instructions are provided on the Recommendation for New Bishop form. The stake president may interview, call, ordain, and set apart a bishop, or release a bishop, after receiving written approval from the First Presidency. The stake president may not assign a counselor to do this.

The stake president oversees the calling of counselors in the bishopric, ward executive secretaries, ward clerks, assistant ward clerks, and ward mission leaders.

The bishop oversees other callings in the ward as shown on pages 43-47 in the Chart of Callings.

Elders Quorum and High Priests Group Callings

The stake president oversees the calling of elders quorum presidents and their counselors and of high priests group leaders and their assistants.

The elders quorum president and high priests group leader oversee the calling of quorum or group secretaries, instructors, and committee chairmen (see page 43). The bishop should give approval before brethren are called to these positions.

Extending a Calling

The Chart of Callings on pages 40-49 outlines who may extend each calling. After receiving the necessary approvals, an authorized leader conducts a personal interview to determine the member's worthiness and willingness to serve. If the member is worthy and willing, the leader extends the calling. The leader normally invites the spouse of a married person to be present and give support when the calling is extended.

A leader who extends a Church calling should explain its purpose, importance, and responsibilities. He also encourages the member to seek the Spirit of the Lord in fulfilling the calling. He tells the member the name of the person to whom he or she is directly accountable and emphasizes the need to support leaders. He also outlines the required meetings and describes the handbooks, manuals, and other supplies that are available to help the member. He may identify special concerns or challenges of the position and may invite the member to ask questions about the calling.

Sustaining Members in Church Callings

Members who are called to most Church positions should receive a sustaining vote before they begin serving. The Chart of Callings at the end of this section indicates whether a sustaining vote is needed and what congregation should give it.

The leader who oversaw the calling, or a priesthood officer he authorizes as outlined below, presents a person to the congregation for a sustaining vote:

1. A General Authority or Area Authority Seventy presents the names of a new stake president and his counselors to stake members. A stake president may present his counselors' names when the First Presidency authorizes him to do so.
2. A member of the stake presidency or a priesthood officer under their direction presents names to stake members for changes in other stake callings.
3. A member of the stake presidency presents the names of a new bishop and his counselors to ward members. A member of the stake presidency or a priesthood officer under their direction presents names to ward members for changes in the ward executive secretary, ward clerk, assistant ward clerks, and stake missionaries who belong to the ward (including the ward mission leader).

4. A member of the stake presidency or a priesthood officer under their direction presents names to elders quorum or high priests group members for changes in their leadership.
5. A member of the bishopric presents names to ward members for changes in ward organizations.
6. A member of the bishopric presents names to Aaronic Priesthood quorum members for changes in quorum leadership and to Young Women class members for changes in class presidencies.
7. A member of the elders quorum presidency or high priests group leadership presents names to quorum or group members for changes in secretaries, instructors, and committee chairmen.

When presenting a person for a sustaining vote, an authorized priesthood officer asks him or her to stand. The officer may say:

"[Name] has been called as [position], and we

propose that he [or she] be sustained. Those in favor may manifest it by the uplifted hand. [Pause briefly for the sustaining vote.] Those opposed, if any, may manifest it. [Pause briefly to allow for a dissenting vote, if any.]"

The person who is being presented should participate in the sustaining vote. if more than one person is being presented, they usually may be sustained as a group.

If a member in good standing gives a dissenting vote when someone is presented to be sustained, the presiding officer or another assigned priesthood officer confers with the dissenting member in private after the meeting. The officer determines whether the dissenting vote was based on knowledge that the person who was presented is guilty of conduct that should disqualify him or her from serving in the position. Dissenting votes from nonmembers need not be considered.

When, as an exception, new stake officers need to begin their service before the next stake conference or stake general priesthood meeting in which they would normally be sustained, they should be sustained in the sacrament meetings of the wards and branches of the stake. The person who conducts the sustaining also announces who was released from the position and asks the congregation to give an expression of thanks for the person's service.

Setting Apart Officers and Teachers

Members who are called to most Church positions should be set apart before they begin serving. The Chart of Callings at the end of this section indicates whether a setting apart is needed and who is authorized to perform it. Presidents are set apart before their counselors.

Under the direction of the presiding authority, one or more Melchizedek Priesthood holders, including a worthy father or husband, may participate in a setting apart. They place their hands lightly on the person's head. Then the priesthood holder who acts as voice:

1. Calls the person by his or her full name.
2. States that he is acting by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood.
3. Sets the person apart to the appropriate office in a stake, ward, quorum, high priests group, or class.
4. Confers keys on those who are entitled to receive them. (In stakes and wards, only stake presidents, bishops, and quorum presidents receive keys of presidency when they

are set apart. The word keys should not be used when setting apart counselors, high councilors, high priests group leaders, presidents of auxiliary organizations, the bishop's priests quorum assistants, or teachers in an organization.)

5. Gives a priesthood blessing as the Spirit directs.
6. Closes in the name of Jesus Christ.

Ordaining and Setting Apart Bishops

If a man who is called as bishop is not a high priest, the stake president should see that he is ordained a high priest before ordaining him a bishop. If the man was ordained a bishop previously, he needs only to be set apart as bishop of the ward.

When authorized by the First Presidency, a General Authority, Area Authority Seventy, or stake president:

1. Ordains the man a bishop (unless he was previously ordained).
2. Sets him apart to preside over the ward and to be the president of the Aaronic Priesthood and the priests quorum, emphasizing his responsibilities for the Aaronic Priesthood and for young women in the ward.
3. Confers on him all the keys, rights, powers, and authority of the office of bishop, referring specifically to the bishop's duties as a common judge in Israel and as the presiding high priest in the ward.
4. Adds words of blessing as the Spirit directs.

Releasing Members from Church Callings

Releases from Church callings are made by the same level of authority that extended the callings. To issue a release, an authorized leader meets with the member personally, informs him or her of the release, and expresses appreciation for the service. The leader also asks the person to return any current, usable materials so they can be given to the successor. Only those who need to know are informed of a release before it is announced publicly.

The same congregation that sustained a person gives a vote of thanks when the person is released. An authorized priesthood officer may say:

"[Name] has been released as (position], and we propose that he [or she] be given a vote of thanks for his [or her] service. Those who wish to express their appreciation may manifest it by the uplifted hand." No dissenting vote is called for.

When a president, bishop, or high priests group leader is released, the counselors or assistants are released automatically. Others who hold positions in the organization are not released automatically.

7. Meetings

This section summarizes instructions on Church meetings. It describes (1) meetings that include a full congregation, (2) leadership meetings primarily for stake presidencies and bishoprics, and (3) funerals.

Meetings that include leaders of more than one organization are described on pages 315-19 in *Book 2*.

Meetings that are specific to an organization, such as quorum, Relief Society, Young Men, Young Women, Primary, Sunday School, and stake mission meetings, are described in that organization's section of *Book 2*.

In addition to the meetings outlined in the handbooks, presiding authorities occasionally may call other meetings and define their composition and purpose.

Doctrines Relating to Church Meetings

The Savior has commanded His people to meet together often (see Mosiah 18:25; 3 Nephi 18:22). He promised, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

Church meetings are held to worship, pray, renew covenants, perform ordinances, teach and exhort, sing, conduct business, and strengthen associations as brothers and sisters in the gospel.

One of the most important meetings is sacrament meeting (see D&C 59:9). The scriptures also speak of conferences and other public meetings (see D&C 20:61; 46:3). Regular Sunday meetings and conferences of the Church are open to members and nonmembers (see 3 Nephi 18:22; D&C 46:3-5).

General Guidelines

Leaders plan and conduct meetings "as they are led by the Holy Ghost, according to the commandments and revelations of God" (D&C 20:45; see also D&C 46:2; Moroni 6:9). They should use an agenda to help them focus on the meeting's purposes and use time effectively, but they should remain open to promptings of the Holy Ghost and comments of those in attendance. Meetings should not be longer than needed. General guidelines for planning and conducting meetings are provided on pages 314-15 in *Book 2*.

Principles of Effective Church Council and Committee Meetings

When councils or committees meet, the presiding officer outlines the matters being discussed, then invites ideas and suggestions from others. He helps others participate fully in the discussions, decisions, and plans. He considers their suggestions carefully in making plans and giving assignments.

Council and committee meetings should focus on accomplishing the mission of the Church and planning how to strengthen individuals and families. Time spent on calendaring and other administrative business should be minimal.

General Meetings

General Conference

General conferences are held in April and October to refresh and renew the faith of members, to instruct and edify, and to conduct Church business.

General Relief Society Meeting

General Young Women Meeting

A general Relief Society meeting is held each year for Relief Society sisters. A general Young Women meeting is held each year for young women ages 12 through 17, their mothers, and their leaders.

Area Meetings

Area Council Meeting

Area Presidencies may hold area council meetings periodically to instruct Area Authority

Seventies and others as invited. These meetings are also used to correlate, plan, and resolve matters affecting an area. Agenda items include discussions on missionary work, spiritual and temporal welfare, and temple and family history work.

Regional Welfare Committee Meeting

Area Presidencies organize a regional welfare committee for each welfare region. Each committee consists of all stake presidents, all chairmen of stake bishops' welfare councils, and all stake Relief Society presidents in the welfare region. The Area Presidency appoints one stake president to be chairman of the committee.

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This committee meets at least twice each year to teach and inspire leaders in their welfare responsibilities and to implement instructions from the Area Presidency. Committee members also coordinate welfare activities, such as balancing donated labor assignments among stakes and planning responses to emergencies. Other matters to discuss may include fostering self-reliance, caring for the needy, and encouraging fast-offering donations. Committee members also report on local welfare projects and review the services of Church welfare operations (where they exist).

Where travel is difficult or long, the Area Presidency may ask fewer stake bishops' welfare council chairmen and stake Relief Society presidents to attend this meeting.

The Area Presidency appoints a regional welfare agent for each regional welfare committee. He should hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and have welfare experience (see page 259 in *Book 2*). He is the executive secretary of the committee and reports to the stake president who is chairman.

Regional Conference

Regional conferences of stakes in an area are held periodically to refresh the faith of members and to instruct and edify. These conferences include stakes selected by the Office of the Quorum of the Twelve. General Authorities preside over and conduct these conferences.

Stake Meetings

The stake president oversees stake meetings. He presides at these meetings unless a General Authority or Area Authority Seventy attends. His counselors may conduct stake meetings and may preside if he is absent. Stake meetings should not conflict with Sunday ward meetings.

Stake Conference

Each stake holds two stake conferences during the year as scheduled by the President of the Quorum of the Twelve. In most parts of the world, the stake president presides at one stake conference and an assigned General Authority or Area Authority Seventy presides at the other. In years when a stake attends a regional conference, that conference takes the place of the stake conference at which a General Authority or Area Authority Seventy would have presided.

The primary purpose of stake conference is to help the Saints build faith and testimony. All talks and music should be planned with this purpose in mind.

Another purpose is to conduct stake business. During the first stake conference each year, a member of the stake presidency presents general, area, and stake officers to be sustained, using the Officers Sustained (Stake) form. He also presents the names of stake officers who have been released so the congregation can give an expression of thanks for their service.

Stake officers who are called or released after the first stake conference should be presented for a sustaining vote or an expression of thanks in the second stake conference unless this has been done in ward sacrament meetings as outlined on page 39. Brethren who have been recommended for ordination to the offices of elder and high priest are presented for a sustaining vote in either stake conference. For instructions, see pages 31 and 38-39.

Each stake conference normally includes the following meetings:

1. A meeting of the General Authority or Area Authority Seventy (if assigned), stake presidency, stake executive secretary, and stake clerk.
2. A priesthood leadership meeting, including the General Authority or Area Authority Seventy (if assigned); stake presidency; high council; stake executive secretary; stake clerk (and assistant clerks as needed); stake mission presidency; stake Young Men presidency (and secretary as needed); bishoprics; ward executive secretaries; ward clerks (and assistant clerks as needed); high priests group leaders, assistants, and secretaries; elders quorum presidencies and secretaries; ward mission leaders; and ward Young Men presidencies (and secretaries and assistant advisers as needed).
3. A combined stake and ward council leadership training meeting. This meeting normally is held on Saturday evening. Depending on local circumstances, it may be held on Sunday if approved by the presiding authority.
All members of stake and ward councils should attend this meeting. Assistants in high priests groups, counselors in elders quorum presidencies, and counselors in stake and ward auxiliary presidencies may also be invited to attend.
This is a leadership training meeting, not a council meeting. Instruction is under the direction of the presiding authority. When a General Authority or
Area Authority Seventy will preside, the stake president normally may suggest topics to him. When the stake president will preside, he and his counselors select topics.
4. A general session held on Sunday for all members and interested nonmembers. Temple presidents, stake patriarchs, and full-time mission presidents or their representatives who attend should sit on the stand. More than one Sunday general session may be held if facilities are not adequate to seat everyone in the same session. Primary children attend this session with their families, not in a separate meeting.

Planning and Conducting Stake Conference

The presiding officer directs all conference planning He approves all conference participants and all musical selections well before the conference weekend.

The stake president conducts the Sunday general session. His counselors may conduct other conference meetings.

The stake president speaks in the Sunday general session of the conference. His counselors speak in conference sessions as determined by the presiding authority.

Planning includes making arrangements for adequate seating, ushering, and parking. Stake leaders may assign priesthood quorums and groups, including prospective elders, to provide these services.

Music for Stake Conference

See pages 289-91 in *Book 2*.

Stake General Priesthood Meeting

The stake presidency convenes a stake general priesthood meeting twice a year, once in each half. All Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood holders in the stake are to attend.

The stake presidency uses these meetings to instruct and inspire priesthood holders. The presidency prayerfully selects the themes for these meetings to meet the needs of those who attend.

In these meetings the stake presidency also conducts stake priesthood business, such as:

1. Presenting to be sustained the names of brethren who have been recommended for ordination to the offices of elder and high priest (see page 31).
2. Presenting to be sustained the names of newly called stake officers (see the Chart of Callings, pages 40-42, for guidelines about who is to be presented for this vote).

Stake Priesthood Leadership Meeting

See page 315 in *Book 2*.

Stake High Priests Quorum Meeting

See page 167 in *Book 2*.

Stake Presidency Meeting

The stake presidency meets weekly. The stake executive secretary and stake clerk attend; the clerk records minutes. The stake president may invite others to attend as needed.

During this meeting, members of the stake presidency consider all matters affecting the stake. They also plan how to strengthen individuals and families. They evaluate wards, high priests groups, elders quorums, the stake mission, auxiliaries, programs, and activities. They also make plans to implement instructions from the scriptures, Church leaders, and handbooks.

During this meeting, members of the stake presidency identify members to call to Church positions (see pages 37-38). They also review bishops' recommendations of members to serve missions and of brethren to be ordained elders or high priests.

Other agenda items for this meeting could include reporting on assignments, planning meetings, reviewing the stake calendar, and reviewing the stake budget.

Stake Priesthood Executive Committee Meeting

See page 315 in *Book 2*.

Stake Council Meeting

See page 315 in *Book 2*.

Stake Welfare Committee Meeting

See pages 315-16 in *Book 2*.

Stake Melchizedek Priesthood Committee Meeting

See page 316 in *Book 2*.

Stake Aaronic Priesthood Committee Meeting

See page 316 in *Book 2*.

Stake Aaronic Priesthood-Young Women Committee Meeting

See page 316 in *Book 2*.

Meeting with Bishoprics

The stake presidency meets regularly with bishoprics to instruct them and to review directions and policies. The stake presidency, all bishoprics, the stake executive secretary, and the stake clerk attend this meeting. If desired, the stake president may limit the meeting to bishops only.

Stake Bishops' Welfare Council Meeting

The stake bishops' welfare council is composed of all bishops in the stake. The stake president appoints one bishop to be chairman of the council. In consultation with the stake president, the chairman arranges meetings, prepares agendas, leads discussions, and arranges for instruction. The stake president attends council meetings occasionally to give instruction. The stake bishops' welfare council does not make policy. Rather, it refers policy matters to the stake president.

The council meets at least quarterly. During these meetings, council members receive instruction in welfare matters. They also exchange ideas and experiences relating to their welfare responsibilities.

Matters for discussion could include trends in fast-offering contributions, welfare needs, and welfare assistance. Council members could also identify work opportunities for members who receive welfare assistance. In addition, they could discuss ways for priesthood quorums and the Relief Society to help meet welfare needs in the stake. They also could identify agencies and services in the community that could be used to assist members.

In areas where there are Church welfare operations, such as Deseret Industries or commodity production projects, the stake bishops' welfare council evaluates the services and management of the operations.

If the stake president has assigned one bishop to oversee assistance to transients, council members could discuss how to coordinate this assistance.

Stake Committee for Single Members Meeting

See page 316 in *Book 2*.

Stake Public Affairs Council Meeting

See page 317 in *Book 2*.

Ward Meetings

The bishop oversees ward meetings. He presides at these meetings unless a member of the stake presidency, a General Authority, or an Area Authority Seventy attends. His counselors may conduct ward meetings and may preside if he is absent. Presiding authorities should be invited to sit on the stand.

Schedule for Sunday Meetings

Sunday meetings provide vitally important time for members to partake of the sacrament, worship, learn the gospel, learn their duties, and give service. Wards are to hold the following Sunday meetings in one three-hour period (for meeting schedule options, see the "Sunday Meeting Schedules" chart on page 64):

1. Sacrament meeting (for all members and interested nonmembers)
2. Priesthood meeting (for all priesthood holders, prospective elders, and unordained young men of Aaronic Priesthood age; see page 56)
3. Relief Society (for all women ages 18 and older and for younger women who are married)
4. Young Women (for young women ages 12 through 17)
5. Primary (for children ages 3 through 11; also for children ages 18 months through 2 years if a nursery is organized and parents want their children to attend)
6. Sunday School (for those ages 12 and older)

Sacrament Meeting

Purposes of Sacrament Meeting

Each sacrament meeting should be a spiritual experience in which members of the Church renew their baptismal covenants by partaking of the sacrament. Other purposes of sacrament meeting are to worship, receive gospel instruction, perform ordinances, conduct ward business, and strengthen members spiritually.

Planning and Conducting Sacrament Meeting

Members of the bishopric plan sacrament meetings and conduct them in a reverent and dignified manner. They oversee the administration of the sacrament, select topics for talks and music, select and orient participants, and invite members to give opening and closing prayers.

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A sample sacrament meeting agenda follows:

1. Prelude music
2. Greeting and welcome
3. Acknowledgment of presiding authorities or visiting high councilors who are attending
4. Announcements (if possible, most announcements should be printed so they do not take time in sacrament meeting; the bishopric may give essential announcements briefly before the opening hymn)
5. Opening hymn and prayer
6. Ward business, such as:
a. Sustaining and releasing ward officers and teachers (see pages 38-39)
b. Recognizing children who advance from Primary (see page 231 in *Book 2*)
c. Presenting names of brethren to receive or advance in the Aaronic Priesthood (see page 32)
d. Presenting the Duty to God Recognition and the Young Womanhood Recognition (see pages 190 and 227 in *Book 2*)
e. Presenting names of new ward members (see page 127)
7. Naming and blessing children (fast and testimony meeting) and performing confirmations
8. Sacrament hymn and administration of the sacrament
9. Gospel messages, congregational singing, and special musical selections
10. Closing hymn and prayer
11. Postlude music

The bishopric ensures that sacrament meetings begin and end on time and are not overprogrammed. The bishopric and the speakers should be in their seats at least five minutes before the meeting begins.

The bishopric encourages families to arrive on time and sit together. Members should be reverent before and during sacrament meeting.

Blessing and Passing the Sacrament

The bishopric ensures that the sacrament is blessed and passed in a reverent and orderly manner. The sacrament table should be prepared before the meeting begins. Instructions for preparing, blessing, and passing the sacrament are on pages 29-30.

Selecting Topics for Talks and Music

The bishopric selects topics for talks and music in sacrament meetings. Talks and music should focus on gospel subjects that ward members most need to build faith and testimony.

Selecting and Orienting Participants

Selecting Participants. The bishopric selects members to participate in sacrament meetings. Most opportunities to participate should be given to ward members. If the bishopric invites members from outside the ward to speak, the guidelines on page 151 should be followed.

Members of the bishopric regularly invite youth ages 12 through 17 to speak in sacrament meeting. Youth should speak briefly (five minutes each) on assigned gospel subjects. They should prepare their own talks, though the bishopric may encourage parents to help. In addition, the bishopric may call a speech specialist to help youth learn to prepare talks and speak in public. The speech specialist is a member of the activities committee.

Missionaries are normally invited to speak in a sacrament meeting just before they depart and when they return (see pages 84 and 87-88). The bishopric plans these meetings.

The bishopric schedules high councilors to speak as assigned by the stake president (usually once each month, though the stake president may adjust the frequency of such assignments according to the needs of the ward).

The bishopric schedules one sacrament meeting each year for the Primary children to take part in a Primary program (see page 237 in *Book 2*).

Occasionally the bishopric may invite the full-time missionaries who are serving in the area to speak.

Bishoprics may not turn sacrament meetings over to auxiliaries or outside musical groups' However auxiliaries may be invited to participate in the meeting under the bishopric's direction.

Orienting Participants. Members of the bishopric orient sacrament meeting participants. They review the purposes of sacrament meeting and explain that all talks and music should be in harmony with the sacred nature of the sacrament.

When inviting members to speak, a member of the bishopric explains clearly the topic and the length of time the person should speak. He counsels speakers to teach the doctrines of the gospel, relate faith-promoting experiences, bear witness of divinely revealed truths, and use the scriptures (see D&C 42:12; 52:9). Speakers should teach in a spirit of love after prayerful preparation. They should not speak on subjects that are speculative, controversial, or out of harmony with Church doctrine.

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Members who participate in sacrament meeting should stay until the meeting ends.

Music

The bishopric selects or approves music for sacrament meetings. Music and musical texts are to be sacred, dignified, and otherwise suitable for sacrament meeting. Guidelines for determining whether music is appropriate are provided on pages 289-90 in *Book 2*.

Audiovisual Materials

Audiovisual materials such as prerecorded music, videocassettes, filmstrips. and slides should not be used in sacrament meeting. An exception may be made to use appropriate recorded accompaniment if a piano, organ, or accompanist is not available.

Sacrament Service in Unusual Situations

Every member needs the spiritual blessings that come from partaking of the sacrament. Occasionally members may be unable to attend sacrament meeting because they are confined to a home, nursing home, or hospital. The bishop may assign priesthood holders to prepare, bless, and pass the sacrament to these members.

Occasionally members may be unable to attend sacrament meeting because of distance to the meetinghouse. Under unusual circumstances, the bishop may give authorization for a sacrament service to be held away from the meetinghouse. The priesthood holder whom the bishop authorizes to conduct the service must be a priest in the Aaronic Priesthood or hold the Melchizedek Priesthood. He also must be worthy to bless and pass the sacrament. The bishop's authorization is also required if the service will be attended by members of more than one family. The priesthood holder who directs the service reports to the bishop when the service has been held.

When members are traveling or temporarily residing away from their home wards, they should make a sincere effort to attend sacrament meeting and other Sunday meetings in a ward or branch of the Church.

Sacrament services should not be held in conjunction with family reunions or other outings.

Fast and Testimony Meeting

One Sunday a month, usually the first Sunday, sacrament meeting is a fast and testimony meeting. Under the bishop's direction, children may be named and blessed and confirmations may be performed before the sacrament is blessed and passed.

After the sacrament, the bishopric member who is conducting bears a brief testimony. He then invites members to bear brief, heartfelt testimonies and to relate faith-promoting experiences.

Priesthood Meeting Opening Exercises

All priesthood holders attend brief opening exercises together before separating for their quorum or group meetings. A member of the bishopric conducts. Opening exercises should include an opening hymn and prayer. They also may include priesthood business, instruction, brief announcements, introduction of new members, additional hymns, and special musical selections.

The elders quorum president and high priests group leader sit with the bishopric during opening exercises.

Priesthood Quorum and Group Meetings

After opening exercises, priesthood quorums and groups meet to conduct business, learn priesthood duties, and study the gospel. Bishopric members normally attend Aaronic Priesthood quorum meetings, though occasionally they attend Young Women classes. Sometimes they may combine the elders quorum and high priests group, Aaronic Priesthood quorums, or all priesthood holders for instruction during this time.

For more information about these meetings, see pages 167-68 and 184-85 in *Book 2*.

Young Men Meetings

See pages 183-84 in *Book 2*.

Relief Society Meetings

See pages 200-202 in *Book 2*.

Young Women Meetings

See pages 219-21 in *Book 2*.

Primary Meetings
See pages 233-35 in *Book 2*.
Sunday School Meetings
See page 243 in *Book 2*.

Ward Conference

The stake presidency schedules and directs a ward conference once a year in each ward. Members of the stake presidency, high council, and stake auxiliaries take part in ward conference sessions as the stake president directs. The purposes of ward conference are to refresh the faith of ward members, provide instruction, conduct business, and evaluate activity.

The main session of ward conference is held during sacrament meeting. Normally the agenda for this sacrament meeting is similar to that of others. The stake president presides, and the stake presidency usually plans the meeting. A member of the bishopric usually conducts. Before the sacrament, a member of the stake presidency or a designated priesthood officer uses the Officers Sustained form (prepared by a ward clerk) to present the names of Church officers to ward members for their sustaining vote. After the sacrament, speakers normally include the bishop and stake president.

The ward usually holds regular priesthood and auxiliary meetings as part of ward conference. Stake leaders may give instruction and assistance during these meetings.

In connection with ward conference, the stake presidency meets with the bishopric to review the status of individuals and organizations in the ward and to plan for improvement. This meeting need not be held on ward conference Sunday.

Bishopric Meeting

The bishopric usually meets at least weekly. The ward executive secretary and ward clerk attend; the clerk records minutes. The bishop may invite others to attend as needed.

During this meeting, members of the bishopric consider all matters affecting the ward. They also plan how to strengthen individuals and families, especially young men and young women, the needy and the aged, unordained brethren, single parents, and children. They evaluate quorums, auxiliaries, programs, and activities. They also make plans to implement instructions from the scriptures, Church leaders, and handbooks.

During this meeting, members of the bishopric identify members to call to serve in the ward. They also identify which members are coming of age to be eligible for ordinances, including priesthood ordinations. In addition, they identify whom to recommend to the stake president to be ordained elders and high priests and to serve as missionaries.

Other agenda items for this meeting could include reporting on assignments, discussing how to improve gospel teaching and learning, planning meetings, reviewing the ward calendar, and reviewing the ward budget.

Ward Priesthood Executive Committee Meeting

See page 317 in *Book 2*.
Ward Council Meeting
See pages 317-18 in *Book 2*.
Ward Welfare Committee Meeting
See page 318 in *Book 2*.

Ward Aaronic Priesthood Committee Meeting

See page 318 in *Book 2*.

Bishopric Youth Committee Meeting

See pages 318-19 in *Book 2*.

Ward Committee for Single Members Meeting

See page 319 in *Book 2*.

Teacher Improvement Meeting

See page 319 in *Book 2*.

Funerals

Preparation

When a Church member dies, the bishop visits the family to comfort them and offer assistance from the ward. He may ask his counselors to accompany him. The bishop offers help in notifying relatives, friends, and associates of the death. He also offers help in planning the funeral service, preparing a suitable obituary, and notifying newspapers of the death. In addition, he may offer to help make mortuary and cemetery arrangements according to local laws and customs. As needed, he may offer help from the ward in providing local transportation for the family and for the body of the deceased.

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The bishop notifies the Melchizedek Priesthood leader who is responsible for the family so he and other brethren (including home teachers) can assist the bereaved family. Such assistance could include dressing the body of a deceased male for burial, safeguarding the home during the funeral, and providing other support.

The bishop also notifies the Relief Society president so she and other sisters (including visiting teachers) can assist the family. Such assistance could include dressing the body of a deceased female for burial, helping with flowers, tending small children, safeguarding the home during the funeral, and preparing meals (see pages 207-8 in *Book 2*).

Temple Burial Clothing

See page 70.

Preparation of the Meetinghouse

Priesthood leaders are responsible for seeing that the meetinghouse is prepared for funerals. It should be open and available to funeral directors at least one hour before the scheduled times for the viewing and funeral. The meetinghouse needs to be clean and brought to appropriate temperature and light levels. The sound system should be activated and tested. Overflow chairs may need to be set up and arranged. At a time when feelings are very sensitive, a well prepared meetinghouse may be a source of comfort and consolation to family members.

Funeral Services for Members

If a funeral for a member is held in a Church building, the bishop conducts it. If it is held in a home, at a mortuary, or at the graveside, the family may ask the bishop to conduct it. A funeral conducted by the bishop, whether in a meetinghouse or in another location, is a Church meeting and a religious service. It should be a spiritual occasion in addition to a family gathering. The bishop should urge members to maintain a spirit of reverence, dignity, and solemnity during a funeral service and at gatherings connected with funerals.

When a bishop conducts a funeral, he or one of his counselors oversees the planning of the funeral. He considers the wishes of the family as he works with them to plan the services. He ensures that the services are simple and dignified, with music and brief addresses and sermons centered on the gospel. Videocassettes and slides should not be used as part of the service. For suggestions about music in funeral services, see page 290 in *Book 2*.

If a viewing is held immediately before the funeral service, the bishop should conclude it at least 20 minutes before the service begins. The obituary should include the times when the viewing will begin and end.

After the viewing, a family prayer may be offered if the family desires. This prayer should conclude before the funeral is scheduled to begin so it does not impose on the time of the congregation assembled in the chapel. The casket should be closed before it is moved to the chapel for the funeral service.

Funerals should start on time and, as a matter of courtesy to those who attend, should not be too long. Funerals that last more than one and one-half hours place an undue burden on those attending and participating.

Funeral addresses and music should balance tributes with teaching the gospel. Members of the family are not required to speak at funerals.

A member of the stake presidency, a General Authority, or an Area Authority Seventy presides at funeral services he attends. The person conducting should consult him in advance and recognize him during the service. The presiding officer should be extended the opportunity of offering closing remarks if he desires.

Funeral services are not normally held on a Sunday.

If the bishop is not able to attend, he may assign one of his counselors to conduct the funeral and graveside services.

Burial

At least one member of the bishopric should accompany the cortege to the cemetery. If the grave is to be dedicated, the bishopric member, after consulting with the family, asks a Melchizedek Priesthood holder to do so according to instructions on page 34. If the family prefers, a graveside prayer rather than a dedicatory prayer may be offered, preferably by a Melchizedek Priesthood holder.

Financial Policies

Church members who conduct or take part in funeral services should not accept fees or contributions, whether the service is for a member or a nonmember.

In some cases, bishops can arrange with morticians to provide respectable burial services at cost when expenses are paid from Church fast-offering funds.

Funeral Services for Nonmembers

Bishops may offer the use of Church meetinghouses for the funeral services of nonmembers. Such services generally may be held in the manner prescribed by the deceased person's church. However, rituals of other churches or of outside organizations may not be performed in a Church meetinghouse. If the family desires, the service may be conducted by a clergyman of the person's church, provided it is dignified and appropriate.

8. Temples and Marriage

A bishop should consult with his stake president if he has questions about temples and temple work that are not answered in this section. The stake president may direct questions to the Office of the First Presidency.

Preparing to Receive Temple Ordinances

Temple ordinances and covenants are sacred. Members who enter a temple should be worthy and should understand the purposes and eternal significance of temples. They also should understand the solemn and sacred responsibilities they assume as they participate in temple ordinances and make covenants.

Temple Preparation Seminar

The bishop organizes and oversees temple preparation seminars for new members, less-active members, and endowed members who have not renewed their recommends for an extended time. The purpose of these seminars is to help members prepare to receive the ordinances and blessings of the temple. The high priests group leader and elders quorum president assist the bishop. Instructions are provided on page 264 in *Book 2* and in *Endowed from on High: Temple Preparation Seminar Teacher's Manual.*

Temple Orientation Class

Members who will soon receive their own endowment should be invited to a one-session temple orientation class. The stake presidency assigns one or two high councilors to provide this orientation using the Temple Media Kit. Generally, members attend this orientation after attending a temple preparation seminar in their wards.

Making Plans to Go to a Temple

Each stake and mission is included in a temple district. Members may go to any temple, but leaders should encourage them to go to the temple in their own district. Group visits to temples outside the assigned temple district are discouraged.

Endowment, Marriage, or Sealing

Members who are planning to go to a temple for their own endowment, marriage, or sealing should contact temple officials in advance to schedule the ordinances. They also may wish to read *A Member's Guide to Temple and Family History Work,* which contains additional information about specific preparations for temple ordinances.

Baptisms and Confirmations for the Dead

Before taking a group to a temple to be baptized and confirmed for the dead, the bishop or stake president (or someone under his direction) makes arrangements with temple officials. The bishop assigns at least one adult to accompany each group. These adults should have valid temple recommends and be the same gender as members of the group. If brethren are needed to officiate in the baptistry, they must be endowed. They do not need to be set apart as temple ordinance workers. Priests and unendowed elders may not officiate.

Quotas for Temple Attendance

Priesthood leaders encourage members to set personal goals for temple attendance and to go to the temple as often as circumstances allow. However, leaders should not set quotas for temple attendance for wards and stakes or for individual members. Nor should leaders establish reporting systems for temple attendance.

Translation Assistance

If members will need translation assistance in a temple, they should contact temple officials in advance to ensure that needed assistance is available.

Child Care at Temples

Temples are equipped to care only for children who come to be sealed to parents or to witness sealings of living brothers and sisters. Other children should not be brought to a temple.

Recommends to Enter a Temple

A member who is eight or older must have a valid recommend to enter a temple. A valid recommend admits a member to all temples. The three types of temple recommends are listed below:

1. *Temple Recommend* for members receiving their own endowment and for previously endowed members. This recommend authorizes a member to participate in all temple ordinances.
2. *Recommend for Living Ordinances* for members receiving their own endowment, those being sealed to a spouse, and those being married in a temple for time only. This recommend may be used only with a valid temple recommend.
3. *Limited-Use Recommend* for unendowed members (see page 68).

Children under eight who are to be sealed to their parents do not need recommends. However, the family needs to present a family group record showing the relationship of the child to the family.

General Guidelines for Issuing Recommends

Authorized Church officers conduct worthiness interviews for temple recommends as outlined in the temple recommend binder. Church officers are responsible to see that no unworthy person enters the house of the Lord.

In Wards and Stakes

The bishop, or his counselors as authorized by him, interviews and issues temple recommends to worthy ward members. The bishop personally interviews members who (1) are preparing to receive their own endowment, (2) are planning to be married in a temple, and (3) have not lived in the ward continuously for at least one year. Only in the most urgent cases when he is absent may he authorize one of his counselors to issue recommends in these circumstances.

Following the interview by a member of the bishopric, a member of the stake presidency interviews the person and signs the recommend if the person is worthy. The stake president personally interviews members who are receiving their own endowment and members who are planning to be married in a temple.

In Missions

The branch president interviews and issues temple recommends to worthy branch members. Following this interview, a member of the mission presidency interviews the person and signs the recommend if the person is worthy The mission president personally interviews members who are receiving their own endowment and members who are planning to be married in a temple. The district president does not interview members for temple recommends.

Mission presidents issue recommends to returning missionaries as instructed on page 87 and in the *Mission President's Handbook*.

In Isolated Areas

A temple president may interview and sign a recommend for a member who lives in an isolated area that would require unusual travel expense or difficulty for the member to meet with a member of the stake or mission presidency. The temple president first confers with the stake or mission president. In these cases, the bishop already should have interviewed the member and signed the recommend. This policy applies also to members in the military who are in isolated areas and have been interviewed by the bishop of their home ward or the ward that supports their duty station.

A temple president may interview and sign a recommend for a member who lives outside an organized stake or mission. No other interview is needed.

Members Who Have Not Lived in the Same Ward for at Least One Year

If a member has not lived in the same ward continuously for at least one year, the bishop contacts the prior bishop to certify the member's worthiness before interviewing the member for a temple recommend. This includes members of young single adult Wards, single adult wards, and student wards. It also applies to members who seek limited-use recommends (except new converts).

Newly Baptized Members

A waiting period of at least one full year after baptism and confirmation is required before a worthy adult may be endowed. Only the First Presidency may authorize exceptions. During a person's first year of membership, the bishopric may issue a limited-use recommend for baptisms and confirmations for the dead according to the guidelines on page 68.

Members Receiving Their Own Endowment

Instructions for issuing a recommend to a person who is receiving his or her own endowment are in the temple recommend binder. A man must hold the Melchizedek Priesthood to receive his temple endowment.

Most single members will be interviewed for a recommend for their own endowment when they are called as missionaries or when they are to be married in a temple. Worthy single members who have not received their endowment in connection with a mission or marriage may become eligible for a recommend interview when the bishop and the stake president determine that they are sufficiently mature to understand and keep the sacred covenants made in a temple. Such eligibility should be determined individually for each person rather than using routine criteria such as reaching a certain age or leaving home for college or employment.

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A worthy member who is married to an unendowed spouse, whether the spouse is a member or nonmember, may receive a recommend when (1) the bishop receives the written consent of the spouse and (2) the bishop and stake president are satisfied that the responsibility assumed with the endowment will not impair marital harmony.

Unendowed Prospective Missionaries

Bishops should not issue temple recommends to young, unendowed prospective missionaries until they have received a mission call from the President of the Church.

Missionaries Serving in Temples

A temple president may issue renewal recommends to temple missionaries who are called to work in a temple outside their local unit boundaries. No other interview is needed.

Members Who Have Disabilities

Endowment. Members who have physical disabilities may receive their own endowment.

Melchizedek Priesthood holders and sisters who have mental disabilities may receive their own endowment if the bishop determines that they have sufficient mental capacity to understand it and to make and keep the associated covenants. If the member lives with his or her parents, the bishop counsels with them.

Sealing to Parents. Persons with mental disabilities who are eight or older and are sufficiently accountable must be baptized before being sealed to their parents. Those who are not accountable do not need to be baptized before being sealed. Bishops refer questions about specific cases to the stake president, who may refer the questions to the First Presidency.

Members older than 21 who do not have sufficient mental capacity to understand the endowment may be sealed to parents without being endowed.

Work for the Dead. Members who have disabilities may do temple work for the dead if they (1) have sufficient mental capacity to understand the ordinance and (2) can care for themselves without help or are accompanied by relatives or friends who can provide the help needed.

Blind Members. Blind members should have members of the same gender accompany and assist them. Guide dogs are not permitted in temples.

Issuing Recommends in Special Circumstances

After Divorce, Separation, or Annulment

If a member has been divorced or legally separated or has had a marriage annulled, the bishop and stake president carefully interview him or her in the first subsequent temple recommend interview. They also review events that led to the breakdown of the marriage. If the member has not committed serious transgression, a temple recommend may be issued according to the usual procedure.

Members Who Have Been Readmitted by Baptism after Excommunication or Name Removal

Members Who Were Not Previously Endowed. After baptism, these members may be issued limited-use recommends to do baptisms and confirmations for the dead as outlined on page 68. There is no waiting period. Brethren must be ordained to the priesthood before they may be issued limited-use recommends.

These members may not be issued recommends to receive their own endowment until one full year after their baptism.

Members Who Were Previously Endowed. These members may not be issued recommends, including limited-use recommends, until their temple blessings are restored through the ordinance of restoration of blessings (see pages 106-7).

Members Who Have Committed a Serious Transgression

A member who has committed a serious transgression may not receive a temple recommend until he or she has repented. The waiting period between the transgression and the issuing of a recommend is left to the bishop's discretion. It should be sufficient to determine that the person has genuinely repented.

Members Who Have Undergone a Transsexual

Operation

A member who has undergone an elective transsexual operation may not receive a temple recommend.

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Members Whose Close Relatives Belong to Apostate Groups

Bishops and their counselors must take exceptional care when issuing recommends to members whose parents or other close relatives belong to or sympathize with apostate groups. Such members must demonstrate clearly that they repudiate these apostate religious teachings before they may be issued a recommend.

Issuing Limited-Use Recommends

General Guidelines

The bishop, or his counselors as authorized by him, may issue limited-use recommends to worthy unendowed members as follows:

1. For members ages 12 and older to be baptized and confirmed for the dead.
2. For single members ages 8 through 20 to be sealed to their parents.
3. For single members ages 8 through 20 to observe sealings of their living brothers and sisters to their parents.
The same standards of worthiness apply to those who receive limited-use recommends as to those who receive other recommends. Male members ages 12 and older must hold the priesthood. It is not necessary to have been a member for one year to receive a limited-use recommend.

When issuing a limited-use recommend, a member of the bishopric interviews the person individually. A member of the stake presidency does not interview the person if the recommend is being issued only for baptisms and confirmations for -the dead.

The bishopric may issue limited-use recommends for groups or individuals. When issuing a recommend to an individual, the member of the bishopric cuts away or crosses out the additional lines on the recommend so other names cannot be added.

Limited-Use Recommends for Baptisms and Confirmations for the Dead

Members ages 12 through 20 are normally listed *as a group* on a limited-use recommend if they are going as a group to be baptized and confirmed for the dead. Group recommends are used for only one temple visit. They are left at the temple, where they are destroyed.

Members ages 12 through 20 may be issued *individual* limited-use recommends that they retain if they are frequently baptized and confirmed for the dead. If parents take children ages 12 through 20 to do baptisms for the dead, children in the same family may be listed on one recommend.

Limited-use recommends that are issued to unendowed members who are 21 or older or who are married must be *individual* recommends. These recommends may be used only to perform baptisms and confirmations for the dead.

For information about scheduling baptisms and confirmations for the dead, see page 63.

Limited-Use Recommends for Sealing Living

Children to Parents

Single members ages 8 through 20 are issued limited-use recommends to be sealed to their parents or to observe the sealing of their living brothers and sisters to their parents. Recommends may be issued for individual children or for a group of children in the same family. The same recommend may be used to list children who are being sealed and children who are observing. Children under 8 do not need recommends for these purposes. Members who are married or are 21 or older must receive their own endowment before they can be sealed to their parents or observe the sealing of living brothers and sisters to their parents.

The approval of the First Presidency is necessary to issue limited-use recommends to children and youth to observe the sealings of stepbrothers and stepsisters to parents. No special approvals are necessary to issue limited-use recommends to adopted brothers and sisters, half-brothers and sisters, and full brothers and sisters who wish to observe sealings of living children to parents.

Lost or Stolen Recommends

The bishop should ask members to notify him promptly if a recommend is lost or stolen. Procedures for reporting lost or stolen recommends are in the temple recommend binder.

Unworthy Recommend Holders

If the bishop determines that a member who has a valid recommend is unworthy, he immediately requests the recommend from the member. If the member refuses to return it, the bishop notifies the stake president at once. The stake president informs temple officials in his temple district according to instructions in the temple recommend binder.

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Temple Clothing and Garments

Clothing to Wear to a Temple

Members who go to a temple should wear clothing that is suitable for the house of the Lord. They should avoid wearing casual clothes, sports attire, and ostentatious jewelry.

Obtaining Temple Clothing and Garments

Members change to white clothing in a temple to participate in the ordinances. Temple clothing is available for purchase at clothing distribution centers located near many of the temples. Many temples also have temple clothing available for rent. If a temple does not have rental clothing, members need to bring temple clothing with them.

Temples that have rental clothing furnish it to full-time missionaries without charge when missionaries receive their own endowment and while they are in missionary training centers.

The distribution and sale of garments requires the authorization of the First Presidency. Garments are available in a variety of styles and fabrics. They may be purchased at clothing distribution centers or by mail order from these centers in some areas. Members who have special needs may contact a clothing distribution center about special orders.

When necessary, bishops and stake presidents should instruct members in how to purchase temple clothing and garments. Assistant stake and ward clerks may help provide this instruction and help members order the clothing (see pages 283-84 in *Book 2*).

Making Temple Clothing

Members may make temple clothing for themselves or a family member if they are endowed or have received a temple recommend to receive their own endowment. *Instructions are provided in the Instructions for Making Temple Clothing* booklet, which is available to stake Relief Society presidents through the Temple Department or the area office. Members who make their own temple clothing should do so under the direction of the stake Relief Society president.

Members may not make their own temple garments.

Clothing to Wear for a Temple Marriage

See page 71.

Wearing and Caring for the Garment

Church members who have been clothed with the garment in a temple are obligated to wear it according to the instructions given in the endowment. When issuing temple recommends, priesthood leaders should teach the importance of wearing the garment properly. Leaders also emphasize the blessings that are related to this sacred privilege. These blessings are conditioned on worthiness and faithfulness in keeping temple covenants.

The garment provides a constant reminder of the covenants made in a temple. When properly worn, it provides protection against temptation and evil. Wearing the garment is also an outward expression of an inward commitment to follow the Savior.

Endowed members should wear the temple garment both day and night. They should not remove it, either entirely or partially, to work in the yard or for other activities that can reasonably be done with the garment worn properly beneath the clothing. Nor should they remove it to lounge around the home in swimwear or immodest clothing. When they must remove the garment, such as for swimming, they should put it back on as soon as possible.

Members should not adjust the garment or wear it contrary to instructions in order to accommodate different styles of clothing. When two-piece garments are used, both pieces should always be worn.

The garment is sacred and should be treated with respect at all times. Members should keep their garments clean and mended. They should not alter the garment from its authorized design. Nor should they display it or expose it to the view of those who do not understand its significance.

Members should be guided by these principles and the Holy Spirit to answer for themselves personal questions about wearing and caring for the garment.

Garments and Temple Clothing for Members Who Have Disabilities

For members who are bedfast or who have severe physical disabilities, necessary adjustments may be made in wearing the garment. If recommended by a member's bishop, a garment designed like a hospital gown is available by special order for those who are bedfast.

Shorter temple robes are available to meet the needs of members who are in wheelchairs.

Wearing the Garment in the Military

See page 122.

Disposing of Garments and Temple Clothing

To dispose of worn-out temple garments, members should cut out and destroy the marks. Members then cut up the remaining fabric so it cannot be identified as a garment. Once the marks are removed, the fabric is not considered sacred.

To dispose of worn-out temple clothing, members should burn it or alter it so the original use cannot be recognized.

Members may give garments and temple clothing that are in good condition to other worthy endowed members. The bishop can help identify those who might need such clothing. Under no circumstances should members give garments or temple clothing to Deseret Industries, bishops' storehouses, or charities.

Temple Burial Clothing

Where possible, endowed members should be buried in temple clothing when they die. Where cultural traditions or burial practices make this inappropriate or difficult, the clothing may be folded and placed next to the body in the casket.

Only members who have been endowed may be buried in temple clothing. An endowed person who stopped wearing the garment before his or her death may be buried in temple clothing if the family so requests. An endowed person who has committed suicide may be buried in temple clothing. However, persons whose blessings have not been restored after excommunication or name removal may not be buried in temple clothing.

Temple clothing that is used for burial need not be new, but it should be clean. The member's own temple clothing may be used.

Bishops and Relief Society presidents should know what temple clothing is available for burial and how to dress a deceased member in temple clothing.

A member who is to be buried in temple clothing may be dressed by an endowed family member of the same gender. If a family member is not available, the bishop assigns an endowed man to dress a deceased man. The bishop asks the Relief Society president to assign an endowed woman to dress a deceased woman. Guidelines for dressing deceased members are provided in *Instructions for Clothing the Dead Who Have Received Their Endowments.* Leaders may obtain these instructions from Church distribution centers.

In some areas only a licensed funeral director or in employee of the director is allowed to handle a deceased body. In these cases, an endowed family member or an endowed person who is assigned by the bishop or Relief Society president should ensure that the clothing has been properly placed on the body.

Although the Church does not normally encourage cremation, the body of an endowed member who is being cremated should be dressed in temple clothing if possible.

In areas where temple clothing may be difficult to obtain in time for burial, stake presidents should keep on hand at least two complete sets of medium-sized clothing, one for a man and one for a woman.

If temple clothing is not available, a deceased endowed member is clothed for burial in the garment and other suitable clothing.

Marriage

Church leaders encourage members to qualify for temple marriage and to be married in a temple. Where temple marriage is not possible because of personal circumstances or legal requirements, leaders may perform civil marriages as outlined on pages 71-72.

A couple who are planning to be married must obtain a legal marriage license that is valid in the place where the marriage is to be performed.

Temple Marriage

The purpose of a temple marriage, referred to in the scriptures as "the new and everlasting covenant of marriage" (D&C 131:2), is to seal a husband and wife for time and eternity, faithfulness. depending on their faithfulness. Through this ordinance, a couple's children may also be part of their eternal family. Only a marriage that has been sealed in the temple and confirmed by the Holy Spirit of Promise can be eternal (see D&C 132:7).

A man and woman must each be endowed before they may be married and sealed in a temple. They must each have a valid Recommend for Living ordinances and a valid temple recommend.

Who Performs a Temple Marriage

Bishops and stake presidents encourage members to have temple sealers perform their marriages rather than asking General Authorities.

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Who May Attend a Temple Marriage

Only members who have valid recommends and have . received their endowment may attend a temple marriage. Couples should invite only family members and close friends to be present for a temple marriage.

Appropriate Dress for a Temple Marriage

Brides' Dresses. All dresses that are worn in the temple should be white, long-sleeved, modest in design and fabric, and free of elaborate ornamentation. Sheer fabric should be lined. Women's pants are not permitted in the temple. Brides' dresses should not have a train unless the train can be removed for the temple ceremony.

The bishop should review these requirements for temple wedding dresses with each bride and her parents before they make or purchase the wedding dress. He also might share this information with the Relief Society and Young Women presidents.

Formal Wear and Flowers. Tuxedos, dinner jackets, cummerbunds, formal headwear, and boutonnieres and other flowers are not appropriate in a sealing room or during a sealing ceremony. This applies not only to those who are being sealed, but also to their guests. If desired, formal wear and flowers may be worn outside for photographs after the ceremony.

Wedding Guests. Couples should not ask their wedding guests to dress in white unless the sealing room must be entered through the celestial room. Members who come to a wedding directly from an endowment session may wear ordinance clothing.

Exchanging Rings after a Temple Marriage

Exchanging rings is not part of the temple marriage ceremony. However, couples may exchange rings after the ceremony in the room where the ceremony takes place. To avoid confusion with the marriage ceremony, couples should not exchange rings at any other time or place in a temple or on temple grounds. However, after their temple marriage, a couple may exchange rings at locations other than the temple. If such an exchange is made, the circumstances should be consistent with the dignity of their temple marriage. The exchange should not appear to replicate any part of the marriage ceremony, and the couple should not exchange vows.

Special Meeting for Guests, Who Do Not Have Temple Recommends

A couple may arrange with their bishop to hold a special meeting for relatives and friends who do not have temple recommends. This meeting provides an opportunity for those who cannot enter a temple to feel included in the marriage and to learn something of the eternal nature of the marriage covenant. The meeting may include a prayer and special music, followed by the remarks of a priesthood leader. No ceremony is performed, and no vows are exchanged.

No other marriage ceremony should be performed following a temple marriage.

Marriage in a Temple for Time Only

Couples may be married in a temple "for time only" if all the following requirements are met:

1. The woman is already sealed to a previous husband who is deceased or from whom she is divorced.
2. Temple marriages are legal marriages in the country where the temple is located.
3. Both the man and the woman are endowed, have current temple recommends, and have a marriage license that is valid where the temple is located.

Bishops encourage such worthy couples to marry in a temple. In some circumstances, these couples may later be sealed in a temple (see page 74).

Civil Marriage

When temple marriage is not possible because of personal circumstances or legal requirements, leaders may perform civil marriages as outlined below. A civil marriage does not endure beyond mortal life.

Civil marriages should be performed in accordance with the laws in the place where the marriage is performed.

Civil marriages and related religious ceremonies should not be performed on Sunday or at unusual hours.

Who May Perform a Civil Marriage

Members who are planning a civil marriage may invite any of the following presiding officers of their Church units to perform the marriage ceremony if civil law authorizes him to do so: stake president, mission president, bishop, or branch president. An LDS military chaplain on active duty may also perform the ceremony. Unless contrary to legal requirements, a Church officer may perform a marriage for a member of his unit outside the boundaries of that unit.

Those who have been released from these offices may not perform marriages. Other Church officers are not authorized to perform civil marriages.

Civil Marriage for Members from Other Units

Church officers, except LDS military chaplains who are on active duty, may not perform marriages for Church members when neither marriage partner belongs to the Church unit over which the officer presides. Any exceptions require the approval of the First Presidency in each case.

Civil Marriage for Nonmembers

Authorized Church officers may perform marriages for nonmembers without receiving special approval.

Where to Perform Civil Marriages

Civil marriages are preferably performed in the home of a family member or in a Church building rather than at a commercial wedding chapel or other public place. Marriages in a Church building may be performed in the chapel, the cultural hall, or another suitable room. The person who performs the ceremony determines the location.

Civil Marriages That Must Be Performed by a Public

Official or in a Public Place

Some areas require that a marriage ceremony be performed by a public official. Some require that the ceremony be performed in a public building or another public place. In these cases, the temple sealing necessarily follows the civil marriage as soon as possible (see "Sealing after Civil Marriage," page 74). If the couple will not be sealed, the bishop or stake president may conduct a brief religious ceremony after the civil marriage. In this ceremony he gives counsel to the couple and gives Church recognition to their marriage. The instructions in this section on the use of Church buildings and the simplicity of ceremonies should be followed.

Civil Marriage Ceremony

Civil marriage ceremonies should be simple, conservative, and in harmony with the sacredness of the marriage covenants. There should be no extravagance in decorations or pomp in the proceedings. Video recorders and cameras may not be used in the chapel. For suggestions about music for civil weddings, see page 290 in *Book 2*.

Before performing a civil marriage, a Church officer may counsel the couple on the sacred nature of the marriage covenant and may add other counsel as the Spirit directs.

To perform a civil marriage, a Church officer addresses the couple and says, "Please take each other by the right hand." He then says, "[Bridegroom's full name and bride's full name], you have taken one another by the right hand in token of the covenants you will now enter into in the presence of God and these witnesses." (The couple may choose or nominate these witnesses.)

The officer then addresses the bridegroom and asks, "[Bridegroom's full name], do you take [bride's full name] as your lawfully wedded wife, and do you of your own free will and choice covenant as her companion and lawfully wedded husband that you will cleave unto her and none else; that you will observe all the laws, covenants, and obligations pertaining to the holy state of matrimony; and that you will love, honor, and cherish her as long as you both shall live?"

The bridegroom answers, "Yes" or "I do."

The Church officer then addresses the bride and asks, "[Bride's full name], do you take [bridegroom's full name] as your lawfully wedded husband, and do you of your own free will and choice covenant as his companion and lawfully wedded wife that you will cleave unto him and none else; that you will observe all the laws, covenants, and obligations pertaining to the holy state of matrimony, and that you will love, honor, and cherish him as long as you both shall live?"

The bride answers, "Yes" or "I do."

The Church officer then addresses the couple and says, "By virtue of the legal authority vested in me as an elder of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I pronounce you, [bridegroom's name] and [bride's name], husband and wife, legally and lawfully wedded for the period of your mortal lives.

"May God bless your union with joy in your posterity and a long life of happiness together, and may He enable you to keep sacred the covenants you have made. These blessings I invoke upon you in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ, amen.

"You may kiss each other as husband and wife."

A Church officer who performs civil marriages in his Church capacity may not accept fees.

A Church officer who performs a civil marriage for members must send to the bishop(s) of the home ward(s) of those he has married a letter with all information needed to update membership records. He also must comply fully with legal requirements for reporting and record keeping.

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Marriage after a Spouse's Death or after a Divorce or Annulment

A member who has been sealed to a spouse may remarry after the spouse's death or following a divorce or annulment. A member's divorce proceedings must be final according to law before he or she may remarry.

Worthy members in these circumstances may also be sealed according to the guidelines under "Sealing Policies" on this page.

Wedding Receptions

A wedding reception may be held in a Church building if it does not disrupt the schedule of regular Church functions. However, these receptions may not be held in the chapel unless it is a multipurpose area. Receptions should not be held on Sundays or on Monday evenings.

Those in charge of the reception are responsible for cleaning the areas of the building they use.

Sealing Policies

Sealing ordinances include covenants that can bind families together for eternity. These ordinances include (1) sealing of a husband and wife and (2) sealing of children to parents.

Stake presidents should contact the Office of the First Presidency or the temple in their temple district for guidance in special circumstances related to sealings that are not covered in these instructions.

Sealing of a Husband and Wife

Living Women

A living woman may be sealed to only one husband. If she is sealed to a husband and later divorced, she must receive a cancellation of that sealing from the First Presidency before she may be sealed to another man in her lifetime (see "Applying for a Cancellation of Sealing or a Sealing Clearance" on this page).

Deceased Women

A deceased woman may be sealed to all men to whom she was legally married during her life. However, if she was sealed to a husband during her life, all her husbands must be deceased before she can be sealed to a husband to whom she was not sealed during life.

Living Men

If a husband and wife have been sealed and the wife dies, the man may have another woman sealed to him if she is not already sealed.

If a husband and wife have been sealed and later divorced, the man must receive a sealing clearance from the First Presidency before another woman may be sealed to him (see "Applying for a Cancellation of Sealing or a Sealing Clearance" on this page). *A sealing clearance is necessary even if the previous sealing has been canceled.*

Deceased Men

A deceased man may have sealed to him all women to whom he was legally married during his life if they are deceased or if they are living and not sealed to another man.

Applying for a Cancellation of Sealing or a Sealing Clearance

When a woman has been sealed and divorced, she may apply for a cancellation of the previous sealing. The bishop and stake president submit an Application to the First Presidency form to seek this cancellation.

When a man has been divorced from a woman who was sealed to him and is worthy and prepared to have another woman sealed to him, he may apply for a sealing clearance. The bishop and stake president submit an Application to the First Presidency form to seek this clearance.

The Application to the First Presidency form is available from the Office of the First Presidency in the United States and Canada. It is available from the Area Presidency in other areas. Instructions are on the form. The stake president should not submit it until the divorce is final and all legal issues relating to the divorce have been resolved.

Removing a Restriction against Temple Sealing

If a person who has been sealed to a spouse commits adultery, he or she may not be sealed to the partner in the adultery unless:

1. The President of the Church authorizes the sealing as part of his action on an application for cancellation of sealing or sealing clearance, or
2. The restriction against such a sealing is thereafter lifted by the President of the Church. A couple who desire the lifting of the restriction so they can be sealed may seek an interview with their bishop and stake president. If these leaders feel to recommend removal of the restriction, they may write separate or joint letters to the First Presidency, summarizing their recommendations and commenting on the applicants' temple worthiness and the stability of their marriage for at least five years. The couple should also write a letter of request to the First Presidency. The stake president should submit all of these letters to the First Presidency.

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Sealing after Civil Marriage

A husband and wife who were married outside a temple may be sealed after one full year from the time of the civil marriage. However, this one-year waiting period does not apply to worthy couples in the following cases:

1. The temple in which the couple will be sealed is in a country that requires a civil marriage and does not recognize a marriage in the temple.
2. The couple live in a country where there is not a temple and the laws of the country do not recognize a marriage performed outside the country
3. An unchaperoned couple's travel to a temple will require one or more overnight stops

because of distance.
4. The couple could not be married in a temple because one or both had not been a member of the Church for one year at the time of their civil marriage. They may be endowed and sealed any time after both have been members for at least one year.
5. The couple were married in a civil ceremony while awaiting the processing of an application that had already been submitted to the First Presidency for *(a)* the cancellation of the wife's previous sealing or *(b)* the husband's sealing clearance. The couple may be sealed any time after they receive notification from the First Presidency that the cancellation or clearance was granted. They must present the letter(s) at the temple in which they will be sealed.
In the first three cases, worthy couples should receive their endowment and be sealed as soon as possible after their civil marriage.

Worthy couples who were married in a civil ceremony and have been members of the Church for at least one year may receive their own endowment and participate in all other temple ordinances except their marriage sealing any time within the year following civil marriage.

Only the First Presidency may grant exceptions to the preceding policies. The stake president may seek an exception if it appears to be justified. The couple should not go to a temple to be sealed unless they are notified that the First Presidency has granted an exception.

When issuing recommends to a couple for sealing after a civil marriage, priesthood leaders should be sure the civil marriage was valid.

Sealing after Temple Marriage for Time Only

A couple who were married in a temple for time only may later be sealed if the woman receives a cancellation of her previous sealing from the First Presidency. If the husband was previously divorced from a woman who was sealed to him, he must receive a sealing clearance from the First Presidency before the couple may be sealed.

A worthy couple may be sealed any time after receiving the letter(s) from the First Presidency notifying them that the cancellation or clearance was granted. The couple must present the letter(s) at the temple in which they will be sealed. There is a one-year waiting period from the time of the marriage if the request for cancellation of sealing or sealing clearance was submitted to the First Presidency after the marriage was performed.

Deceased Couples Who Were Divorced

Deceased couples who were divorced may be sealed by proxy. These sealings often provide the only way for children of such couples to be sealed to parents. See page 76 for a restriction if either the husband or wife was excommunicated or had his or her name removed from Church membership records at the time of death.

Effects of Excommunication or Name Removal

After a husband and wife have been sealed in a temple, if one of them is excommunicated or has his or her name removed from Church membership records' his or her temple blessings are revoked. However, the sealing blessings of the innocent spouse or children are not affected (see page 76).

Sealing Children to Parents

Children Who Are Born in the Covenant

Children who are born after their mother has been sealed to a husband in a temple are born in the covenant of that sealing. They do not need to receive the ordinance of sealing to parents. Being born in the covenant entities children to an eternal parentage, depending on their faithfulness. However, it does not guarantee that children will be sealed to their natural parents if the parents are not faithful.

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If a woman who has been sealed to a former husband remarries, the children of her later marriage are born in the covenant of the first marriage unless they were born after the sealing was canceled or after it was revoked due to excommunication or name removal.

Children Who Were Not Born in the Covenant

Children who were not born in the covenant can become part of an eternal family by being sealed to their natural or adoptive parents. These children receive the same right to blessings as if they had been born in the covenant.

A child may be sealed only to two parents-a husband and wife-and not to one parent only.

Members who are married or are 21 or older must receive their own endowment before they may be sealed to their parents or observe the sealing of living brothers and sisters to their parents.

Adopted or Foster Children Who Are Living

Living children who are Born in the covenant or have been sealed to parents cannot be sealed to any other parents.

Living children who have been legally adopted and were neither born in the covenant nor sealed to former parents may be sealed to their adoptive parents after the adoption is final. A copy of the final adoption decree or the revised birth certificate should be presented at the temple. There is no obligation to identify the natural parents of these children.

A living unmarried child under 21 who was not born in the covenant or sealed previously, and who has not been adopted, may be sealed to one natural parent and a stepparent if (1) the other natural parent has given signed consent and (2) the natural parent to whom the child is being sealed has legal custody of the child. The signed consent must (1) name the child and the parents to whom the child will be sealed and (2) be presented at the temple. If other natural parent is deceased or missing, and if reasonable efforts to find the parent have failed, no consent is required. The temple president can approve the sealing to be completed subject to future review.

A court decree granting legal custody is not sufficient clearance for a sealing. The consent or permission mentioned in the preceding paragraphs is necessary.

A living endowed member who is over 21 or is married and was not born in the covenant and has not been sealed to parents may be sealed either (1) to natural parents or (2) to one natural parent and a stepparent if the natural mother and father are not sealed to each other.

First Presidency approval is necessary for a living member to be sealed to foster parents. This requirement applies even if the natural parents of the foster child are unknown and cannot be identified by reasonable effort. Priesthood leaders may assist members in making these requests.

Adopted or Foster Children Who Are Deceased

A deceased adopted person usually is sealed to his or her adoptive parents.

A deceased foster child usually is sealed to his or her natural parents.

Children Who Were Born out of Wedlock

A living child who was born out of wedlock may be sealed to both natural parents without special approval after the parents have been sealed in a temple.

A living child who was born out of wedlock may be sealed to one natural parent and a stepparent when at least one of the following conditions applies:

1. The child marries.
2. The child reaches the age of 21.
3. The child's other natural parent is deceased.
4. The other natural parent has given signed consent for the sealing.
5. The rights of the natural father or mother have been terminated by legal process, such as an adoption proceeding.

Children Conceived by Artificial Insemination or In Vitro Fertilization

Children conceived by artificial insemination or in vitro fertilization are born in the covenant if their parents are already sealed. If the children are born before their parents are sealed, they may be sealed to their parents after their parents are sealed to each other.

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Status of Children When a Sealing Is Canceled or Revoked

Children who are born in the covenant or sealed to their parents remain so even if the sealing of the parents is later (1) canceled or (2) revoked by the excommunication or name removal of either parent. Children who are born after their parents' sealing is canceled or revoked are not born in the covenant. These children need to be sealed to their parents after their parents' blessings are restored (if applicable) and any other obstacles are removed.

Temple Ordinances for the Dead

General Guidelines

Generally, members may perform temple ordinances for deceased persons one year or more after the date of death without regard to the person's worthiness or cause of death. Bishops should explain this waiting period to members who plan to perform temple ordinances for deceased family members. Members who have questions should contact their bishop. He may direct questions to the stake president.

Ordinances that are performed for the dead are effective only if the deceased person chooses to accept them and becomes qualified to receive them (see D&C 138:19, 32-34).

Members Unable to Go to a Temple before **Death**

The one-year waiting period for temple ordinances does not apply to worthy members who were prevented from going to a temple in life for reasons beyond their control.

Members Who Died within One Year of Baptism or Civil Marriage

If a worthy member dies within the year after being baptized, temple ordinances may be completed when one year has passed since the baptism.

If a worthy member dies within one year of a civil marriage, the sealing of the couple may be performed when one year has passed since the marriage.

Stillborn Children (Children Who Die before Birth)

Temple ordinances are not performed for stillborn children, but no loss of eternal blessings or family unity is implied. The family may record the name of a stillborn child on the family group record followed by the word *stillborn* in parentheses. For more information about stillborn children, see page 157.

Children under Eight Who Died

No baptism or endowment is performed for a child who died before age eight. Only sealings to parents are performed for such children. If the child was sealed to parents while he or she was living, or if the child was born in the covenant, no vicarious ordinances are performed.

Deceased Persons Who Had Mental Disabilities

Temple ordinances for deceased persons who had mental disabilities are performed the same as for other deceased persons.

Persons Who Are Presumed Dead

Temple ordinances may be performed for a person who is presumed dead after 10 years have passed since the time of the presumed death. This policy. applies to (1) persons who are missing in action, are lost at sea, or have been declared legally dead; and (2) persons who disappeared under circumstances where death is apparent but no body has been recovered.

In all other cases of missing persons, temple ordinances may not be performed until 110 years have passed from the time of the person's birth.

Persons Who Have Taken Their Own Lives

Unless they were excommunicated or had their names removed from Church membership records at the time of death, persons who have taken their own lives may have temple ordinances performed for them one year or more after the date of death.

Persons Who Were Excommunicated or Had Their Names Removed from Church Records

First Presidency approval is required to perform temple ordinances for deceased persons who, at the time of their death, were excommunicated or had their names removed from Church membership records.

Restoration of Temple Blessings (after Excommunication or Name Removal)

Endowed persons who were excommunicated (or who had their names removed from Church membership records) and were later readmitted by baptism can receive their temple blessings only through the ordinance of restoration of blessings. Such persons are not endowed again, since these blessings are restored through the ordinance. For information about performing this ordinance for the living, see pages 106-7.

First Presidency approval is required to perform this ordinance for the dead.

Verifying Ordinances Necessary to Receive the Endowment

For the Living

A living person whose baptism and confirmation are not recorded on Church membership records may not be endowed until the baptism and confirmation are verified, ratified, or performed again. Brethren whose Melchizedek Priesthood ordination is not recorded must also have it verified, ratified, or performed again. Procedures are outlined on pages 24-25. Those pages also explain the procedure to follow if a living person is endowed without a valid record of baptism or if a male is endowed without a valid record of Melchizedek Priesthood ordination.

For the Dead

Sometimes a deceased person's baptism that was performed while he or she was living cannot be verified after a diligent search. If an unverified baptism was relied on to perform the person's endowment, the person must be baptized and confirmed by proxy. It is not necessary to perform the endowment and sealings again.

Temple Ordinance Workers

Process of Calling

Recommendations for prospective temple ordinance workers may come to a temple president from ward or stake leaders, ordinance workers, his personal knowledge and contacts, and the guidance of the Spirit.

When a temple president identifies a member whom he would like to consider calling as an ordinance worker, he sends a Confidential Report on Proposed Temple Ordinance Workers form to the member's bishop (one form for each couple or individual). If the bishop feels that the member is worthy and the calling would be suitable, he completes the form and sends it to the stake president. If the stake president concurs with the temple president and the bishop, he signs the form and sends it to the temple president.

After the temple president receives a completed form, a member of the temple presidency interviews

the person. When so inspired, he then calls those who are able to serve and sets them apart. He notifies the stake president of each calling.

The bishop and stake president must not inform members that they are being considered for this calling. Their first notification comes when a member of the temple presidency interviews them.

Qualifications

To be considered for callings as temple ordinance workers, members must:

1. Be endowed, strictly comply with temple covenants, and qualify to hold a temple recommend.
2. Be experienced in living gospel principles.
3. Be mature in their knowledge of the restored gospel.
4. Have been a member of the Church for at least one year.
5. Have not been subjected to formal Church discipline or received a restoration of blessings within the past five years.
6. Be in good health and able to endure the rigors of temple service.
7. Be emotionally stable.
8. Be respected in the community.
9. Be married, if a male over 30 years old (widowers excepted).
10. Not have been divorced, after baptism, within the past five years.

Restricted Service Ordinance Workers

Mothers who have minor children living at home and brethren who are serving in bishoprics, branch presidencies, stake presidencies, or district presidencies may not be called as regular temple ordinance workers. However, outside the United States and Canada they or any worthy members who meet the qualifications listed above may be called as restricted service ordinance workers. They function in this assignment only when the need exists with organized groups from their own Church units. They also may function with groups that have special language needs. Any exceptions to these policies require the approval of the First Presidency.

Restricted service ordinance workers are called and set apart the same as regular ordinance workers. No distinction of title is made when they are set apart, but the member of the temple presidency who extends the calling and sets them apart explains the restriction.

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9. Missionary Service

Doctrines Pertaining to Missionary Service

Qualifications for Missionary Service

Missionaries who represent the Lord and His Church must be properly called and set apart (see D&C 42:11; Articles of Faith 1:5). They also should meet the qualifications revealed in section 4 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

"O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day...

"And faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualify him for the work.

"Remember faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence" (D&C 4:2, 5-6; see also D&C 12:8; 88:121,123-26).

The Lord counseled those who teach His gospel that they must first learn it (see D&C 11:21). Missionaries are also required to be morally clean (see D&C 38:42).

The Missionary's Responsibilities

Missionaries are to teach the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, testify of its truth, and warn people of the need to repent and prepare for the coming judgments of God (see D&C 88:81-82; see also D&C 15:6; 38:41; 43:15).

Missionaries are to teach the first principles and ordinances of the gospel and the glad tidings of the Atonement of Jesus Christ (see D&C 42:12). They are to say "none other things than that which the prophets and apostles have written" (D&C 52:9). Missionaries are also to teach people the commandments of God "after having made known unto them the plan of redemption" (Alma 12:32). They should deliver this message "in mildness and in meekness" (D&C 38:41).

Missionaries are to seek the Spirit "by the prayer of faith" (D&C 42:14). They are to teach as they are "directed by the Spirit" (D&C 42:13). If their teaching is not directed by the Spirit, "it is not of God" (D&C 50:18; see also 50:13-22).

In 1839 the Quorum of the Twelve counseled:

"Preach the first principles of the doctrine of Christ -faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance towards God, baptism in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins, laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

"When you go forth to preach, and the Spirit of God rests upon you, giving you wisdom and utterance, and enlightening your understanding, be careful that you ascribe the glory to God, and not to yourselves. Boast not of intelligence, of wisdom, or of power; for it is only that which God has imparted unto you; but be humble, be meek, be patient and give glory to God" (*History of the Church*, 3:396).

Preparing Full-Time Missionaries

Full-time missionary service is a privilege, not a right, for members who are called through inspiration by the President of the Church. Missionary service is literally service to the Lord and His Church. Its objective is not primarily the personal development of a missionary, although righteous service invariably produces that result.

Priesthood leaders have an important responsibility to help identify and prepare worthy, qualified members for full-time missionary service. Leaders teach prospective missionaries about the joys and blessings of missionary service. Leaders also inspire them to prepare spiritually, financially, emotionally, and physically. Such preparation includes being worthy and living an exemplary life. It also includes studying the gospel and building a testimony. Leaders encourage youth to attend seminary to assist with this preparation.

Because all worthy, able young men should serve full-time missions, leaders give special attention to helping them prepare, particularly those who seem uncertain about serving.

The bishopric calls youth leaders who love missionary work and who will help youth have experiences that build faith and cultivate a desire to serve the Lord. Exemplary returned missionaries should also be invited to speak about missionary work in sacrament meetings and other meetings.

Leaders should provide opportunities for prospective missionaries to serve in the Church. Leaders also should encourage them to work with full-time missionaries and to friendship nonmember friends and relatives. In addition, prospective missionaries should receive training through home teaching, the Teaching the Gospel course, and a missionary preparation class.

High priests group meetings, elders quorum meetings, and Relief Society meetings should occasionally be used to teach parents how to help their children prepare to serve as missionaries.

Age and Term of Service for Full-Time Missionaries

Men

Church leaders should encourage all worthy, able, single men ages 19 through 25 to serve full-time missions. Full-time missionary service is a priesthood responsibility of these young men. They are called to serve for 24 months.

In some instances, single men ages 26 and older may be called to serve locally in nonproselyting assignments. These assignments are outlined on page 88.

Women

Worthy, able, single women ages 21 through 39 may be recommended to serve full-time missions. They are usually called to serve for 18 months. These women should not feel obligated or be urged unduly to serve full-time missions. Bishops should not recommend them for missionary service if it will interfere with imminent marriage plans.

Worthy, able, single women ages 40 and older may also be recommended to serve full-time missions. They are usually called to serve for 12 months. In exceptional cases, such as where a language ability or other special skill is needed, they may be called to serve for 18 months. Bishops and stake presidents should take special care to ensure that these women are in good enough health to serve effectively as full-time missionaries. Assignments are outlined on page 88.

Couples

Bishops and stake presidents should prayerfully consider which couples in their units could be called to serve as full-time missionaries. Bishops may interview them to determine availability, ask them to prepare for a full-time mission call, and help them complete and submit the recommendation forms.

Couples normally serve for 12, 18, or 24 months. A 6-month term of service will be considered only for those in special situations such as agricultural occupations. Couples serving outside their native land are called for at least 18 months. Assignments for couples are outlined on page 88.

Couples who are recommended for full-time missionary service must no longer be engaged in full-time employment. If the couple will be serving away from home, they must not have any dependent children living at home. Bishops and stake presidents should take special care to ensure that couples are in good enough health to serve effectively as full-time missionaries.

Members Who Are Not Eligible for Full-Time Missions

Members in the following situations are not eligible to serve full-time missions:

1. Those who are not worthy as outlined under "Worthiness" on page 81.
2. Those who would have to leave dependent children in the care of someone else.
3. Young couples who are capable of bearing children.
4. Those who have been members of the Church for less than one year.
5. Those who are in debt and have not made definite arrangements to meet their obligations.
6. Those who are on legal probation, parole, or other unresolved legal status.
7. Those who have serious unresolved marital problems.
8. Those who are HIV positive.

In addition, members in the situations described below are not normally recommended to serve full-time missions. However, if the bishop and stake president discern unusual circumstances that they feel warrant an exception, the stake president sends a recommendation to the Missionary Department for the consideration of the First Presidency:

1. Brethren ages 19 through 25 and sisters ages 21 through 39 who have been divorced.
2. Sisters who have submitted to an abortion, or brethren or sisters who have performed, encouraged, paid for, or arranged for an abortion. This policy does not apply to persons who were involved in an abortion before they were baptized or for one of the reasons outlined on page 157
3. Brethren who have fathered or sisters who have given birth to a child out of wedlock, regardless of whether they have any current legal or financial responsibility for the child.
4. Members who are not physically, mentally, or emotionally able to withstand the rigors of full time missionary service (see "Physical, Mental, and Emotional Disabilities" on this page).

When members do not qualify for full-time missionary service, priesthood leaders should give them appropriate Church callings in their stake or ward, or recommend them as Church-service missionaries (see pages 88-89), to help them grow and experience the joy of service.

Ensuring Worthiness and Ability to Serve

The bishop and stake president are responsible to confirm that each full-time missionary candidate is worthy and qualified for full-time missionary service. If they are not able to recommend a person without reservation, they should not submit the recommendation papers. This will help avoid the devastating feelings that can result if a recommendation is returned or a missionary is sent home for failure to meet these standards.

Interviews

The bishop and stake president conduct thorough, searching interviews with each missionary candidate. If they have questions about a person's worthiness or ability to serve, the stake president may inquire of the Area Presidency.

Only in the most urgent cases when the stake president or bishop is absent may either of them authorize a counselor to conduct a missionary recommendation interview.

Worthiness

Repentance of Serious Transgressions

A prospective missionary who has been guilty of adultery, fornication, heavy petting, homosexual activity, other sexual perversions, drug misuse, serious violation of civil law, or other serious transgressions must repent before he or she may be recommended for missionary service. The member must also be worthy to enter the temple before he or she may be recommended.

The bishop and stake president confirm that the member is free of transgression for sufficient time to manifest genuine repentance and prepare spiritually for a mission call. This period could be as long as three years for multiple serious transgressions and should not be less than one year from the most recent serious transgression. Mere confession does not constitute repentance. There must also be evidence of a broken heart and contrite spirit and of a lasting change of behavior

Bishops and stake presidents teach prospective missionaries that to qualify for the needed guidance of the Spirit, they must resolve transgressions before entering the mission field. Unless there are unusual extenuating circumstances, missionaries who are found to have entered the mission field without resolving serious transgressions with the bishop will be released early and returned home (see page 86).

Predatory Pattern of Serious Transgressions

If a person has established a predatory pattern of repeated serious transgressions, he or she may not be called to full-time missionary service.

Homosexual Activity

If a person has participated in homosexual acts during or after the last three teenage years, he or she will not be considered for full-time missionary service unless the bishop and stake president see strong evidence of lasting repentance and reformation, with at least one year free of transgression.

If a person was victimized or participated in early-age experimentation and has no current indication of homosexual tendencies, he or she may be considered for full-time missionary service.

Physical, Mental, and Emotional Disabilities

Missionary work is physically, mentally, and emotionally demanding. Members who have physical, mental, or emotional disabilities that would prevent them from serving effectively are not called to full-time missionary service.

Candidates for missionary service who have previously had significant emotional challenges must be stabilized and confirmed to be fully functional before being recommended. A candidate who is dependent on medication for emotional stability must have demonstrated that he or she can fully function in the demanding environment of a mission before being recommended.

If the bishop and stake president are unsure about recommending a member who has a disability, they may consult with the Missionary Department (telephone 1-801-240-2179 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2179).

If members who have serious disabilities strongly desire to serve full-time missions but do not qualify, the bishop or stake president expresses gratitude for their willingness to serve. He explains that because of their circumstances, they are honorably excused from full-time missionary service for their own benefit and to avoid placing undue demands on mission leaders and companions.

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Medical Limitations

A prospective missionary who has a serious medical limitation due to injury or illness can be considered only with the recommendation and advice of a competent medical authority. Before submitting the recommendation papers, the stake president should consult with the Missionary Department (telephone 1-801-240-2179 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2179).

Financing Full-Time Missionary Service

Missionaries and their families should make appropriate sacrifices to provide financial support for a mission. However, worthy members should not be prevented from serving missions solely for financial reasons when they and their families have sacrificed according to their capability.

Bishops should explain to missionary candidates and to others who contribute missionary funds that these contributions are not refunded (see page 135).

Countries with Equalized Missionary Contributions

The Church has equalized the contributions required to cover the service-related expenses of many missionaries from the United States, Canada, and some other countries. These equalized contributions apply regardless of where such a missionary serves. Equalized missionary contributions do not apply to full-time missionary couples, full-time single missionaries who are not serving proselyting missions, and Church-service missionaries. To the extent they are able, these missionaries pay their expenses directly from their own resources.

For each single full-time proselyting missionary from his ward, the bishop ensures that the monthly equalized contribution is available in the ward missionary fund. The current amount is identified in instructions from Church headquarters. These contributions are made by individual missionaries or by their parents, families, and friends. If necessary, the stake president or bishop may ask stake or ward members to help support these missionaries by contributing to the ward missionary fund. However, Church leaders are not to solicit funds for any purpose, including the support of missionaries, outside the boundaries of their own Church units. Budget and fast offering funds may not be used for missionary support.

Each month Church headquarters or the local administration office withdraws the equalized contribution from the ward missionary fund and sends the amount approved for the mission to the mission president. Each mission president distributes to his missionaries the funds necessary to cover their service-related expenses. He has discretion to distribute the money according to established policies and his understanding of the needs of the mission.

Ward missionary funds should not be used to send additional money to missionaries who are covered by the equalized contributions. Nor should they be used to fund any other ward or stake missionary activities.

Missionaries who are not covered by equalized contributions may be assisted from the ward missionary fund if they do not have adequate means and if the funds are available. However, they may not contribute to the ward missionary fund for their own use.

Countries without Equalized Missionary Contributions

In countries where missionary contributions are *not* equalized, missionaries who are able are asked to contribute either the equivalent of the U.S. dollar equalized contribution or the amount of the mission base of the mission in which they serve, whichever is less. Instructions will be sent from the Missionary Department.

If missionaries who are called from these countries need financial assistance to supplement contributions from themselves, their family, and the ward missionary fund, bishops may request partial financial support from the General Missionary Fund. This assistance is available only to single elders ages 19 through 25 and single sisters ages 21 through 39. To request it, the bishop submits a Request for Supplemental Financial Assistance for Full-time Missionary form with the missionary's recommendation papers.

Medical Expenses

General Instructions

All missionaries are strongly encouraged to maintain their existing medical insurance during their missions. This conserves Church funds and helps missionaries avoid having to prove insurability after their missions.

The Church does not pay for routine eye or dental care, eyeglasses, or nonprescription medicines for any missionaries.

Bishops and stake presidents should see that a fully completed Missionary Personal Insurance Information form is included with the missionaries' recommendation papers.

Single Elders and Sisters Younger Than 40

For treatment of pre-mission conditions, the missionary or family pays all medical expenses (including prescriptions). A pre-mission condition is any injury or sickness with signs or symptoms, a diagnosis, or treatment within the two years before the missionary began serving, regardless of whether the symptoms were present when the missionary began serving.

For proselyting missionaries who are serving in the United States, medical expenses for illnesses or accidents that occur during the mission are managed by Missionary Medical, the medical professionals who assist mission presidents in medical matters. The missionary pays a copayment for each visit to a health care provider and for each prescription. Missionary Medical pays the medical bills and, if the missionary or the family has insurance coverage, submits claims for reimbursement from the insurance carrier.

For proselyting missionaries who are serving outside the United States, medical expenses for illnesses or accidents that occur during the mission are paid by the mission. If the missionary or the family has insurance coverage, they are asked to submit a claim and reimburse the Church for any benefit paid.

Nonproselyting missionaries pay all their own medical expenses.

Couples and Single Sisters Ages 40 and Older

These missionaries are responsible for their own health care expenses and must have health insurance adequate for their mission assignments. If the insurance coverage of those living away from home is not adequate for their assignment, Deseret Mutual Benefits Administrators (DMBA) will send them information on additional insurance that they may purchase. Missionaries who need additional coverage but do not enroll in the DMBA plan must provide proof of adequate coverage before their service begins.

Submitting Recommendation Papers for Full-Time Missionaries

The bishop and stake president ensure that missionary recommendation papers are prepared completely and accurately. The bishop or stake president sends these papers to the Missionary Department 60 to 90 days before the prospective missionary is available to begin a mission. Instructions are provided on the recommendation form.

When recommending couples for full-time missions, leaders may confidentially recommend specific assignments for consideration. However, they should not make commitments about the assignment a member will receive. Missionary candidates should be willing to accept any assignment.

Missionaries are called from their home wards. However, the bishop of an away-from-home ward, such as a student ward, may process a Missionary Recommendation form for the home ward. To do so, he must (1) obtain permission from the bishop of the home ward, (2) ask him about the candidate's worthiness, in preparation for conducting a worthiness interview, and (3) ask him for a letter endorsing the recommendation. The name of the home ward and stake, the names of the bishop and stake president of those units, and the unit number of the home ward should be included on the recommendation.

The procedure outlined above helps ensure that all issues pertaining to worthiness, physical and emotional health, financial support, and point of departure have been resolved before a recommendation is submitted to the Missionary Department. The president of the away-from-home stake ensures that this procedure is followed and that the letter from the home-ward bishop is submitted with the recommendation.

If the bishop of the home ward processes a recommendation for a missionary who has not lived in the ward continuously for at least one year, he should confer with the bishop of the away-from-home ward before proceeding.

Neither the stake president, the bishop, the prospective missionary, nor the family should make any announcement before a missionary call is received.

After Full-Time Missionaries Are Called

The bishop continues to monitor the missionary's progress after the call is received to ensure that he or she remains worthy of the sacred calling. Bishops and stake presidents must instruct prospective missionaries plainly regarding the seriousness and the consequences of immorality after a missionary has received a call.

The bishop ensures that newly called missionaries continue to prepare to serve. He also ensures that they comply promptly with all instructions they receive from Church headquarters, such as securing passports, applying for visas, and acquiring appropriate clothing for the mission assignment. Newly called missionaries should also read or reread the Book of Mormon before beginning their missions.

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Sacrament Meetings, Open Houses, and Publicity

The bishopric may invite newly called full-time missionaries to speak in a sacrament meeting before they depart. The bishopric plans and conducts these meetings. As in all sacrament meetings, talks and music should be worshipful, faith promoting, and gospel oriented. The missionary should have sufficient time to deliver a spiritual message. If there is time for other family members to speak, preference is usually given to the missionary's parents. It is not necessary that all family members participate in the program. The regular time of the sacrament meeting should not be extended.

Although it is valuable to have missionaries speak in sacrament meeting, such programs should not dominate the sacrament meeting schedule to the exclusion of other valuable subjects and speakers. If a ward sends out many missionaries, the bishop could consider having more than one departing or returning missionary speak in the same sacrament meeting.

Members should avoid practices that may detract from the sacred nature of a mission call or create unnecessary expense. Such practices include holding open houses for missionaries (except for family gatherings), sending formal printed announcements or invitations, printing special programs, and forming reception lines at the meetinghouse after sacrament meeting.

Bishops review these guidelines with newly called missionaries and their families well before the departure date.

Personal Temple Endowments

See pages 66-67

Setting Apart Missionaries

The stake president sets apart all full-time missionaries before they depart for a missionary training center (MTC) or directly to the field. Only in the most urgent cases when he is absent may the stake president assign one of his counselors to set apart a full-time missionary.

A young man should have the Melchizedek Priesthood conferred upon him and be ordained an elder before he is set apart as a missionary. If he needs to be set apart before his ordination can be sustained in a stake conference or stake general priesthood meeting, he is presented for a sustaining vote in his ward sacrament meeting. His name is then presented in the next general stake meeting to ratify the ordination.

The missionary is set apart as near as possible to his or her departure date. Even if the missionary will be traveling for some time between departure from home and arrival at the MTC or in the field, the stake president should not expect MTC leaders or other priesthood leaders to set apart the missionary.

A day or two before the missionary is set apart, the stake president conducts an interview to determine whether he or she is still worthy. This interview is also a good time to review the missionary's current medical status. If the missionary is not worthy or if there are serious unresolved medical problems, he or she is not set apart. The stake president notifies the

Missionary Department.

The setting apart should be a special occasion. The missionary's family and close friends may attend. The stake president speaks briefly to help them feel the sacredness and importance of the missionary's call.

The stake president follows the usual procedure for setting apart (see page 39). First he sets the person apart as a missionary of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints assigned to labor in the mission to which he or she has been assigned. Then he adds a priesthood blessing as the Spirit directs. He may invite worthy Melchizedek Priesthood holders, such as the missionary's father, to stand in the circle.

The setting-apart blessing should not be recorded word for word. However, the missionary is encouraged to record in a personal journal the setting apart date, the name of the stake president who officiated, and the words of blessing and counsel that were especially meaningful.

The stake president advises the missionary that after being set apart, he or she is a missionary and is obligated to live by missionary standards.

Within a week after a missionary is set apart, the stake clerk gives the ward clerk the date of the setting apart. The ward clerk records the appropriate information on the membership record.

Transportation

The Church pays the expenses of full-time missionaries to travel to and from the field. For those who attend an MTC, the Church pays for their travel to the MTC and to the field, Travel arrangements are sent soon after the mission call.

Couples and older individuals who are serving in their native land may take their own vehicle with them. They are responsible for maintaining it, including insurance, repairs, and fuel.

Couples who drive their own vehicle to or from the field will be given an established reimbursement for travel expenses.

Transporting Items to a Mission

Occasionally members ask missionaries to take items such as medications or special eyeglasses to the mission field if they are not available there. If such requests are made, the bishop or stake president should direct them to the Missionary Department. Missionaries should not transport personal belongings of others to a mission.

Full-Time Missionaries in the Mission Field

Meals and Housing

About two-thirds of the monthly expense for missionaries is for meals and housing. These expenses can be reduced greatly if Church members, in the spirit of Doctrine and Covenants 84:90, (1) provide some meals for missionaries and (2) house missionaries in their homes at reasonable rental rates.

Meals

Under the direction of the Area Presidency, mission presidents and stake presidents confer to determine whether and to what extent Church members may provide meals for missionaries. If members provide some meals, the mission and stake presidents ensure that the circumstances are appropriate for the missionaries and the members. Such meals should be coordinated through ward mission leaders. Consideration should be given to inviting part-member and less-active families to provide meals.

Missionaries should not eat at the same members' homes frequently. Visits should not last longer than one hour Missionaries must be able to leave members' homes early enough that the visits do not interfere with prime proselyting time.

Housing

Mission presidents and stake presidents confer to determine whether and to what extent Church members may rent parts of their homes to missionaries. Such housing must meet the requirements outlined in the following paragraphs. Each housing arrangement requires the approval of the mission president.

When missionaries rent part of a member's home, they must have living quarters separate from the members' living area, a private bedroom with two beds, and a private bathroom. They also should have access to separate cooking and food storage facilities. They should not have access to a television or radio.

Elders may live in homes where married couples or widowers ' live. They may not live in homes where teenage or single adult females live or where the husband is away frequently. Sister missionaries may five in homes where married couples or widows live, They may not live in homes where teenage or single adult males live.

Members who provide housing for missionaries should understand the missionaries' schedule: arise by 6:30 A.m., be out working by 9:30 A.M., and be in bed by 10:30 P.M. The family should not call on the missionaries for assistance (except in emergencies) or expect them to spend time with the family.

Local leaders review these instructions with each member who is interested in providing housing for missionaries.

Placement of Missionaries

The mission president determines the placement of missionaries within the mission. However, stake presidents should recommend the number and location of full-time missionaries to be assigned within the stake.

Interviews of Missionaries

The mission president conducts regular interviews with missionaries. He also may ask stake presidents to interview or provide counsel to specific missionaries as needed.

Full-Time Missionaries Teaching Less-Active Members

Under the direction of the Area Presidency, mission presidents and stake presidents work together to make full-time missionaries available to assist local leaders in their efforts with less-active members. The mission president informs the stake president of the missionary support that he can make available. The stake president, in consultation with bishops, determines how much missionary support is needed. Under the direction of the bishop, the ward mission leader coordinates the assistance of full-time missionaries in fellowshipping and teaching less-active members.

Requests to Support Members Financially

Full-time missionaries and their families must not be asked to provide financial support for members who live in the area where the missionaries are serving.

Fasting

Missionaries should not ask friends, relatives, or members of their home wards to join them in special fasts for investigators.

Medical Release and Medical Leave

If a missionary who is in the field (including a missionary training center) suffers a physical or emotional disability that prevents effective missionary service, he or she is returned home for treatment. If the condition would keep the missionary from performing meaningful missionary service for the remainder of the mission, he or she is given a *medical release*. If treatment may enable the missionary to return to missionary service within a reasonable period of time, he or she is granted temporary *medical leave*.

A missionary on medical leave has not been re leased. He or she is subject to the normal rules of missionary conduct and the standards governing relationships with others, as far as medical circumstances allow.

A missionary on medical leave is under the supervision of the stake president and bishop. They outline a plan to help the missionary maintain the spirit of a mission. The plan could include personal study, regular interviews, and working with local missionaries. They periodically evaluate the missionary's condition. The stake president keeps the Missionary Department informed of the missionary's health. For counsel about arranging for medical care for a missionary on medical leave, stake presidents in the United States may contact Missionary Medical (telephone 1-800-777-1647).

After a missionary on medical leave undergoes a period of treatment, the bishop and stake president evaluate whether he or she again qualifies for missionary service. To do this, they obtain a written evaluation from a competent medical authority and conduct their own thorough review. If they feel that the missionary should return to the field, they submit a recommendation to the Missionary Department.

If the disability continues for an extended period of time, or if the missionary returns to the field but later fails to withstand the demands of missionary service, the stake president, in consultation with the Missionary Department, issues a medical release. if the bishop and stake president later determine that a released missionary has recovered sufficiently, they may recommend that the missionary return to the field.

If a missionary who has been granted a medical release or medical leave does not have adequate insurance or other personal resources to pay for necessary medical care for an illness or accident that originated in the mission field, the Missionary Department may provide assistance for up to 90 days. In such situations, all medical care must be arranged through the stake president. In the United States, the stake president coordinates these expenses through Missionary Medical (see the telephone number on this page; see also "Medical Expenses," pages 82-83). After 90 days, expenses for medical assistance may be paid by the ward or stake, according to established Church principles governing welfare assistance.

Belated Confessions

If a full-time missionary confesses a serious transgression that he or she committed before entering the mission field, the mission president reviews the matter with a member of the Area Presidency, the missionary's stake president, and the Missionary Department. Unless there are unusual extenuating circumstances, the missionary will be released early and returned home.

Bishops and stake presidents should ensure that missionary candidates understand this. Any early release must be approved by a General Authority in the Missionary Department.

A stake president may recommend to the Missionary Department that a member who was sent home after a belated confession return to the mission field after having repented fully. Such a recommendation must include an explanation of why it is considered justified.

Serious Transgression in the Mission Field

If a missionary commits a serious transgression in the mission field, the mission president convenes a disciplinary council (see page 92). Before doing so, he reviews the matter with a member of the Area Presidency and must receive authorization from a General Authority in the Missionary Department.

Unless there are unusual extenuating circumstances, the missionary will be released early and returned home. Family members, priesthood leaders, and others should provide support and fellowship, helping the missionary repent and enjoy the full blessings of the gospel.

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Such missionaries do not normally return to the mission field. Exceptions require approval of the First presidency.

Membership Records and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction

Missionaries Who Serve under the Direction of a Mission President

The home ward keeps the membership records, accepts any tithing contributions, and records the tithing status of full-time missionaries who serve under the direction of a mission president. Missionaries who pay fast offerings should pay them through the ward in which they are serving.

Missionaries Who Do Not Serve under the Direction of a Mission President

Full-time missionary couples and older individuals who serve in their native land and are not under the direction of a full-time mission president should have their membership records moved to the ward where they will live. Normally they pay their tithing and other offerings through that ward. However, they may pay tithing through their home ward if necessary. The bishop of the ward away from home interviews them for temple recommend renewals and provides any needed counseling.

Full-time missionary couples and older individuals who serve outside their native land and are not under the direction of a full-time mission president should keep their membership records in their home ward. They pay tithing through their home ward but pay fast offerings and other contributions through the ward where they live while serving.

Release of Full-Time Missionaries

Missionaries should complete the full term of service for which they are called. Under normal circumstances, neither they nor their parents should request early releases or extensions of service.

Missionaries should travel directly home from their missions. Exceptions may be allowed only if a missionary will be accompanied by at least one parent and the travel is limited to no more than one or two weeks. The parents' plans must be based on the release date determined by the mission president and not on travel commitments. Parents should advise the mission president as early as possible of such plans.

Missionaries must dress and conduct themselves according to missionary standards during travel from their missions because they are not released until they report to their stake presidents. They should not impose on members, missionaries, or other missions as they travel home.

Temple Recommends

Mission presidents issue temple recommends to worthy full-time missionaries at the time they are released. Such recommends require only the interview of the mission president and the signatures of the president and the missionary.

If a missionary who is sent home early because of a belated confession or a disciplinary action holds a temple recommend, the mission president asks for the recommend. The bishop and stake president may issue a new temple recommend when the person is worthy.

Interviews, Reports, and Callings

The stake president releases returned missionaries from missionary service and gives them the release certificate he has received from the mission president. At this time he also interviews them. He commends them for their service and invites them to report on their mission. He inquires about their conduct while traveling home. He discusses how they can build on the strengths and good habits they have developed. He helps them set goals that will enable them to continue feeling the Spirit daily. He encourages them to prepare for marriage in the temple, choose and prepare for their life's work, commit to always be full-tithe payers, continue to be active in the Church, and serve faithfully in Church callings and assignments. He counsels them to live worthy of a temple marriage, but he should not suggest or imply that they should be married within a specified time.

Missionaries also report to the stake priesthood executive committee (stake presidency and high council). Soon after this report, the bishopric of the home ward schedules missionaries to speak in a sacrament meeting. The stake presidency may also assign them to speak in other sacrament meetings as companions to high councilors.

The stake president counsels returned missionaries to teach the gospel in talks they give. As they speak in sacrament meetings, they should share experiences that strengthen faith in Jesus Christ, build testimonies, encourage members to live and share the gospel, and illustrate gospel principles. They should avoid travelogues, inappropriate stories about the companions or others, disparaging remarks about the areas in which they served, and other matters the would be inappropriate for a servant of the Lord discuss in the sacred setting of a sacrament meeting.

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Priesthood leaders should promptly call recently returned missionaries to Church positions. Elder quorum and Relief Society leaders also should assign every returned missionary as a home teacher or visiting teacher.

Tuberculosis Testing

Missionaries who serve in areas that have a high risk of tuberculosis should be tested when they re turn home. When a returning missionary is to be tested for tuberculosis, the mission president sends Missionary Tuberculosis Screening Report form to the missionary's stake president. The stake president and missionary should follow the instructions on the form.

Assignments for Full-Time Missionary Couples and Older Individuals

This section applies to the following missionaries who serve full time (at least 32 hours per week) away from home or at home:

1. Couples.
2. Single women ages 40 and older.

Much of this section also applies to single men ages 26 and older, although they are not called to leave home or serve in full-time proselyting assignments.

Full-time missionary couples and older individuals are called by the President of the Church. They should be willing to serve wherever they are called. They may be given one of the following assignments, or other assignments as necessary:

1. Leadership and sharing the gospel
2. Church Educational System
3. Family history
4. Finance and records
5. Humanitarian services
6. Mission offices
7. Physical facilities
8. Public affairs
9. Temples
10. Visitors' centers
11. Welfare

To the extent possible, these missionaries should participate in sharing the gospel. They also may help train leaders, work with less-active members, and fellowship new members. In missions where qualified leadership is not available, couples may serve temporarily as officers in districts and branches. The husband may serve as a counselor to the mission president.

These missionaries serve under the direction of a full-time mission president unless the letter of call indicates otherwise.

Release letters and certificates are prepared by the mission president or department coordinator. As with all full-time missionaries, these missionaries are released by their stake president.

Church headquarters distributes to stake presidents and bishops a bulletin listing full-time missionary opportunities for couples and older individuals. Stake presidents and bishops can use this bulletin to identify opportunities for members who might be recommended to serve.

Church-Service Missionaries

Church-service missionaries are part-time missionaries. They serve at least 4 hours a week but less than 32 hours. They are called by their stake president as outlined in the following paragraphs. These callings are normally for 6 to 24 months. The use of Church-service missionaries is not intended to diminish emphasis on full-time missionary service.

Church-service missionaries work for Church departments at Church headquarters or at other locations throughout the world. For example, they may be called to work in the Church Educational System, in mission offices, and in departments such as Family History, Finance and Records, Materials Management, Physical Facilities, Public Affairs, and Welfare Services. Except for those serving in mission offices, Church-service missionaries do not usually serve under the direction of a full-time mission president.

As with full-time missionaries, the bishop and stake president ensure that each prospective Church-service missionary is worthy to hold a temple recommend. They also ensure that he or she is physically and emotionally able to perform the duties of the calling. Prospective missionaries should also be able to support themselves financially, including all medical expenses.

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Recommending Church-Service Missionaries

The director of Church-service missionaries, in the Human Resource Department at Church headquarters, regularly distributes a bulletin of Church-service opportunities for the United States and Canada. Where warranted, similar bulletins may be prepared in other areas under the direction of the Area Presidency.

The bishop interviews members who may be interested in serving as Church-service missionaries. When he and a member identify a suitable Church-service opportunity on the bulletin, he contacts the director of Church-service missionaries to determine whether the opportunity is still available and would be appropriate. If so, the bishop completes the Recommendation for Part-Time Church-Service Missionary form. He notes the recommended service opportunity and forwards the form to the stake president. The stake president reviews the form, interviews the person for worthiness, signs the form if he approves, and sends it to the director of Church-service missionaries.

Calling Church-Service Missionaries

Church-service missionaries are called by their stake president and set apart by their bishop. When arrangements have been finalized at Church headquarters, the stake president is notified so he can extend the calling. The stake president advises the bishop of the calling and asks him to set the missionary apart.

After the calling is issued, the department Church-service coordinator contacts the missionary to work out pertinent details.

Bishops and stake presidents should give appropriate recognition to members who are called as Church-service missionaries. This includes communicating their callings to members of the ward or stake. It also could include inviting them to report on their service in appropriate meetings.

Transportation

Church-service missionaries provide their own transportation.

Training and Supervision

Church-service missionaries are supervised by and trained under the direction of the department in which they serve. Normally they are not trained at a missionary training center.

Medical Expenses

All Church-service missionaries are entirely responsible for their own medical needs, including dental and eye expenses and prescription drugs.

Extensions

Near the end of the assigned period, the term of service may be extended if the missionary wants to extend and the service is still needed. The extension may be for varying increments, not to exceed 30 months in total service. The department coordinator reviews the extension request with the stake president. If the stake president approves the request, he advises the missionary and notifies the missionary's bishop.

Release of Church-Service Missionaries

Toward the end of a Church-service mission, the department coordinator informs the stake president when the mission will end. At the conclusion of the mission, the stake president releases the missionary and advises the bishop.

At least six months should pass before those who are released receive another Church-service missionary call. Exceptions must be approved by the stake president.

Church-Service Missionaries in Stake and Ward Callings

Church-service missionaries may also serve in stake or ward callings at the discretion of local leaders as long as these callings do not interfere with the Church-service missionary assignment.

Volunteer Service

Many opportunities for Church service are available for members, including those who do not hold a current temple recommend, and for nonmembers. These individuals are volunteers rather than missionaries. They may serve in areas such as Family History Centers, family record extraction, welfare production projects or canneries, and Scouting if qualified for Scout registration.

Stake Mission

See pages 245-54 in *Book 2*.
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10. Church Discipline

For units in the United States and Canada, the term *administration office* in this section refers to Church headquarters in Salt Lake City.

For units outside the United States and Canada, the term *administration office* refers to the Presiding Bishopric administration office or service center that serves the unit.

In this section, references to transgressors are in the masculine gender but also include the feminine.

Purposes of Church Discipline

The purposes of Church discipline are (1) to save the souls of transgressors, (2) to protect the innocent, and (3) to safeguard the purity, integrity, and good name of the Church. These purposes are accomplished through private counsel and caution, informal probation, formal probation, disfellowshipment, and excommunication (see pages 93-95).

Save the Souls of Transgressors

When a person sins, the demands of eternal justice require repentance or punishment (see Alma 42:13-22; D&C 19:16-18). The first purpose of Church discipline is to save the souls of transgressors by helping them repent (see D&C 1:31-32; 19:13-20; 42:37; 64:12-13). When they repent, God forgives them, granting them mercy through the Atonement of Jesus Christ (see Alma 42:23; D&C 58:42). Through this process a person may once again become clean and. worthy to inherit the kingdom of God (see 3 Nephi 27:19; Moses 6:57).

Church discipline can facilitate repentance by helping transgressors recognize and forsake sin, seek forgiveness, make restitution, and demonstrate a renewed commitment to keep the commandments. Informal Church discipline often is adequate for this purpose (see pages 93-

94). However, in some instances the only way to encourage true repentance is to convene a disciplinary council (formerly called a Church court) and consider formal discipline (see pages 94-95). Without formal discipline, some transgressors may never experience the change of behavior and change of heart necessary to qualify them for redemption through the Atonement, for "none but the truly penitent are saved" (Alma 42:24).

Protect the Innocent

The second purpose of Church discipline is to protect the innocent. With inspiration, a priesthood leader should act to protect Church members when a transgressor poses a physical or spiritual threat to them, such as by physical harm, sexual abuse, drug misuse, fraud, or apostasy (see Alma 5:59-60).

Safeguard the Integrity of the Church

The third purpose of Church discipline is to safeguard the purity, integrity, and good name of the Church. Consequently, transgressions that significantly impair the good name or moral influence of the Church may require the action of a disciplinary council.

Responsibility for Church Discipline

God does not overlook sin, and His servants cannot ignore evidence of serious transgressions (see Mosiah 26:29; D&C 1:31). Stake presidents, bishops, mission presidents, district presidents, and branch presidents are called and set apart to be judges in Israel (see D&C 107:72-74). They are to "judge ... by the testimony of the just, . - . according to the laws of the kingdom which are given by the prophets of God" (D&C 58:18).

Church leaders are to help members avoid transgression. If a member commits a serious transgression, leaders administer Church discipline in a spirit of love so it can bless the life of the transgressor. To do this, leaders must be guided and inspired by the Lord.

Church discipline is administered in the ward that has the transgressor's membership record (see page 92 for exceptions). Church leaders' responsibilities for initiating and administering Church discipline are outlined in the following paragraphs.

Stake President

The stake president has authority over the Church discipline of all members in a stake. However, bishops normally administer Church discipline unless evidence indicates that a person who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood is likely to be excommunicated. In that case, the stake president convenes the disciplinary council.

High Council

The high council participates whenever a stake president convenes a disciplinary council (see pages 97,99-100, and 105).

Bishop

The bishop administers most Church discipline. He has authority for the discipline of all members in his ward, except the excommunication of a member who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood.

The bishop must confer with the stake president and obtain his approval before convening a disciplinary council. If evidence indicates that a Melchizedek Priesthood holder is likely to be excommunicated, the bishop immediately transfers the matter to the stake president.

Branch President in a Stake

A branch president in a stake may administer Church discipline as authorized by the stake president. He may receive general authorization to administer informal Church discipline. He must receive authorization in each case to convene a disciplinary council and administer formal discipline.

If evidence indicates that a Melchizedek Priesthood holder is likely to be excommunicated, the branch president immediately transfers the matter to the stake president. If a branch disciplinary council recommends excommunication of a member who does *not* hold the Melchizedek Priesthood, the stake president's approval is required before the decision is final.

Mission President

The mission president administers or oversees Church discipline of members in mission branches and districts. If time or distance prevents him from personally convening a disciplinary council for one of these members, he may authorize three Melchizedek Priesthood holders to convene it as outlined on page 98. If this disciplinary council recommends excommunication, the mission president's approval is required before the decision is final.

The mission president also administers Church discipline for full-time missionaries who commit serious transgressions in the mission field. Before convening a disciplinary council for a full-time missionary, the mission president reviews the matter with a member of the Area Presidency and must receive authorization from a General Authority in the Missionary Department (see page 86).

District President and Branch President in a Mission

A district president or branch president in a mission may administer Church discipline as authorized by the mission president. The guidelines under "Branch President in a Stake" apply, with the Mission president fulfilling the same responsibilities as the stake president.

Jurisdiction in Special Circumstances

If a member who needs Church discipline moves to another ward before action is taken, the bishops of both wards consult to determine where the disciplinary action should be taken. They consider such matters as the accessibility of key witnesses and the need for continuing efforts to encourage repentance and restoration to full fellowship. If the bishops determine that the bishop of the former ward should take the disciplinary action, he retains the membership record until the action is taken. Otherwise he transfers the membership record and confidentially informs the bishop of the current ward of the circumstances that warrant Church discipline.

If a member is living away from home temporarily (attending school or serving in the military, for example), his bishop at the place of temporary residence may counsel him or place him on informal probation. However, this bishop should consult the bishop of the home ward before initiating formal disciplinary action.

If a full-time missionary commits a serious transgression that is not revealed until after he has been released, the bishop of his current ward confers with the stake president and mission president. If evidence indicates that the member is likely to be excommunicated, the stake president convenes a disciplinary council. Otherwise he may authorize the bishop to convene a disciplinary council.

Confessions

Repentance requires that all sins be confessed to the Lord. "By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins-behold, he will confess them and forsake them" (D&C 58:43). Members also should confess to their presiding officer if they have committed serious transgressions. Members who voluntarily and completely confess transgressions demonstrate that they have begun the process of repentance.

Presiding officers should respond to confessions with love and understanding. If a sin that is confessed may be serious enough to require formal Church discipline, the presiding officer explains this to the member.

Presiding officers should encourage members to seek the Lord's forgiveness, forsake the transgression, and make restitution.

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Restitution

As part of the restitution required for repentance, transgressors should do all they can to restore what their transgression has taken from others. They also should seek forgiveness from the people they have wronged. The repentance of a married person who 'is involved in a sexual transgression usually should include confessing to and seeking forgiveness from his spouse. A young unmarried person who commits a sexual transgression should be encouraged to inform his parents.

Repentance may include disclosure to government authorities. If confidential information indicates that a member has violated applicable law, the bishop or stake president should urge him to report the matter to appropriate government authorities. To obtain guidance on local laws that govern reporting abuse, see the instructions on page 158.

Disclosure of the identity of others who participated in a transgression should be *encouraged* as part of the repentance process, especially when this can help Church leaders encourage the repentance of those participants.

Disclosure of the identity of others who participated in a transgression may be *required* when it is necessary to restore or protect persons who have been or may be seriously injured as a result of the transgression. For example, a sexual transgressor who has been exposed or who has exposed others to a sexually transmitted disease must make the disclosures necessary to protect others. Predators may need to be identified to protect potential victims. A transgressor who holds or has held a prominent position of trust may need to be identified to Church leaders for the spiritual protection of members.

Investigation

A bishop interviews any member of his ward who is accused of a serious transgression. If the member denies an accusation that the bishop has reliable evidence to support, the bishop (or the stake president if he will preside over the disciplinary council) gathers further evidence that would confirm or disprove the accusation. The presiding officer may conduct the investigation himself, or he may assign two reliable Melchizedek Priesthood holders to do so. He instructs them not to use methods that are unbecoming to priesthood holders or that could result in legal action. For example, they must not use electronic surveillance devices, hidden cameras, or tape recorders. They also must not maintain a watch on a member's home.

Confidentiality

Bishops, stake presidents, and counselors in a stake presidency have a solemn duty to keep confidential all information that members give them in confessions and interviews. The same duty of confidentiality applies to all who take part in Church disciplinary councils. It includes what is said in the presentation of evidence and in deliberations. Confidential information must not be shared with anyone except authorized ecclesiastical leaders.

Information received in a member's confession cannot be used as evidence in a disciplinary council without the member's consent. When necessary, a bishop attempts to persuade the member to give this consent. He explains that refusal reflects a lack of contrition and repentance, preventing justice and mercy from operating fully for the good of the transgressor. If consent is not given, the bishop can still impose informal discipline on the basis of the confession. A lack of consent to use a confession in evidence does not prevent a disciplinary council from proceeding on the basis of other evidence.

If a bishop learns that a Church member outside his ward may have been involved in a serious transgression, he informs that member's bishop confidentially. When members of different wards transgress together, and when one has disclosed to his bishop the identity of the other transgressor, the bishop to whom the disclosure was made consults with the bishop of the other member.

If civil authorities challenge the confidentiality required of a clergyman, the priesthood leader who is challenged should seek legal advice from the Office of Legal Services at Church headquarters (telephone 1-801-240-6301 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 6301) or from local legal counsel in Church area offices.

Informal Church Discipline

A bishop or branch president normally administers informal Church discipline. His counselors do not participate, and no disciplinary council is held. Except for the most serious transgressions, informal discipline may be sufficient for genuinely repentant persons (especially those who have confessed voluntarily), first offenders, those who have not violated temple covenants by their transgression, and those with significant mitigating circumstances. (See D&C 42:25-26 and pages 103-4.)

Informal Church discipline includes (1) private counsel and caution and (2) informal probation.

Private Counsel and Caution

Private counsel and caution may be sufficient discipline for members who have committed minor transgressions and are genuinely repentant.

Presiding officers counsel members to resist temptation and help them take preventive action to resist specific temptations. For example, such counseling often helps members who have committed minor moral transgressions guard against major transgressions. In addition, members who are courting, are having difficulty in their marriages, or are separated or divorced are often protected and strengthened by counseling designed to help them resist temptation. Presiding officers need not wait for members to seek such help, but may call them in for counseling.

For more information about counseling, see pages 21-22.

Informal Probation

Informal probation is a means for a presiding officer to restrict some of a transgressor's privileges of Church membership in ways that the officer specifies. Such restrictions may include suspending the right to partake of the sacrament, hold a Church position, exercise the priesthood, and enter a temple. If the privilege of entering a temple is suspended, a member should give his temple recommend to the presiding officer for the period of suspension. Wisely administered and humbly received, informal probation can be effective in helping a transgressor repent.

In less serious cases, a presiding officer may determine that a member needs a more active rather than a less active exercise of the privileges of Church membership. In these cases, informal probation may include positive conditions such as regular Church attendance, regular prayer, and reading selected scriptures or Church literature.

A bishop normally does not inform anyone of a decision to place a member on informal probation. No official record is made of such decisions, but the bishop may make private notes for his own use. He should keep these notes secure and destroy them after the probation concludes. If a bishop is released or if the member moves to a new ward before informal probation ends, the bishop may inform the new bishop to the extent necessary for the new bishop to supervise the remaining probation.

When a member who is on informal probation makes specified progress and meets prescribed conditions, the presiding officer may end the probation. If the member does not make this progress and meet the conditions, additional disciplinary action may be needed.

Formal Church Discipline

Formal Church discipline is administered in a disciplinary council (see "Disciplinary Councils," pages 95-103). This discipline is ecclesiastical, not civil or criminal. It can affect only a member's standing in the Church (see D&C 134: 10).

At times, formal discipline is the only way to help a transgressor repent, to protect the innocent, or to safeguard the purity and good name of the Church. A presiding officer who is unwilling to proceed in such cases is not fulfilling his responsibilities as a common judge. Presiding officers should approach formal discipline with a prayerful desire to help, not to condemn.

Formal Church discipline includes formal probation, disfellowshipment, and excommunication.

Formal Probation

Formal probation is an action taken by a disciplinary council to restrict or suspend some of a transgressor's privileges of Church membership in ways that the council specifies. These restrictions could include or go beyond those imposed by informal probation. Positive conditions similar to those imposed by informal probation could also be prescribed.

When a member on formal probation makes specified progress and meets prescribed conditions, the presiding officer may convene another disciplinary council to consider ending the probation (see pages 104-6). If the member does not make this progress and meet the conditions, the disciplinary council may continue probation or take more severe disciplinary action.

Disfellowshipment

A person who is disfellowshipped is still a member of the Church but is no longer in good standing. Disfellowshipment is a severe action that may be adequate for all but the most serious transgressions.

A person who is disfellowshipped may not hold a temple recommend, serve in a Church position, or exercise the priesthood in any way. He should be encouraged to attend public Church meetings if his conduct is orderly, but he may not give a talk, offer

a public prayer, partake of the sacrament, or participate in the sustaining of Church officers. The presiding officer may impose additional restrictions, such

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as staying away from pornographic materials and other evil influences. He also may impose positive conditions such as regular Church attendance, regular prayer, and reading selected scriptures or Church literature.

Disfellowshipped members are encouraged to pay tithes and offerings, to continue wearing temple garments if endowed, and to seek a return to fellowship in the Church through sincere repentance and righteous living.

Disfellowshipment is intended to be temporary but usually lasts at least one year. When a member shows true repentance and satisfies the conditions imposed, the presiding officer may convene another disciplinary council to consider restoring him to full fellowship (see pages 104-6). If a member does not repent, the disciplinary council may continue disfellowshipment or consider excommunication.

Excommunication

A person who is excommunicated is no longer a member of the Church. Excommunication is the most severe Church disciplinary action. As directed by the Spirit, it may be necessary for:

1. Members who have committed serious transgressions, especially violations of temple covenants (see "Considerations in Church Discipline," pages 103-4).
2. Members who have been disfellowshipped and have not repented and for whom excommunication seems to offer the best hope for reformation.
3. Members whose conduct makes them a serious threat to others and whose Church membership facilitates their access to victims.
4. Church leaders or prominent members whose transgressions significantly impair the good name or moral influence of the Church in the community that is aware of the transgression.

Excommunication is mandatory for murder and almost always required for incest.

A person who is excommunicated does not enjoy any of Church membership. He may not wear temple garments or pay tithes and offerings. He may attend public Church meetings if his conduct is orderly, but his participation in such meetings is limited the same as for disfellowshipped members.

If a person shows true repentance and satisfies the conditions imposed while -he is excommunicated, he may be readmitted by baptism. The readmission process is explained on pages 104-6.

For information about the effects of excommunication on temple sealings, see pages 74 and 76.

Disciplinary Councils

Because formal Church discipline is ecclesiastical, not civil or criminal, court procedures of the state or nation do not apply. However, procedures in a Church disciplinary council must be fair and considerate of the feelings of all who participate.

When a Disciplinary Council Is Mandatory

A disciplinary council *must* be held when evidence suggests that a member may have committed any of the following transgressions.

Murder

As used here, *murder* refers to the deliberate and unjustified taking of human life. It requires excommunication. Abortion is not defined as murder for this purpose. If death was caused by carelessness or by defense of self or others, or if mitigating circumstances prevail (such as deficient mental capacity or wartime conditions), the taking of a human life might not be defined as murder. Bishops refer questions on specific cases to the stake president. He may direct questions to the Office of the First Presidency if necessary

Incest

As used here, *incest* refers to sexual relations between a parent and a natural, adopted, or foster child or stepchild. A grandparent is considered the same as a parent. Incest also refers to sexual relations between brothers and sisters. It almost always requires excommunication. Bishops refer questions on specific cases to the stake president. He may direct questions to the Office of the First Presidency if necessary.

Child Abuse

As used here, *child abuse* refers to a sexual offense against or serious physical abuse of a child. If priesthood leaders learn of or suspect child abuse, they should follow the instructions on pages 157-58.

Apostasy

As used here, *apostasy* refers to members who:

1. Repeatedly act in clear, open, and deliberate public opposition to the Church or its leaders.
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2. Persist in teaching as Church doctrine information that is not Church doctrine after they have been corrected by their bishops or higher authority
3. Continue to follow the teachings of apostate sects (such as those that advocate plural marriage) after being corrected by their bishop or higher authority.

In such cases, excommunication may be necessary if repentance is not evident after counseling and encouragement.

Priesthood leaders must take disciplinary action against apostates to protect Church members. The Savior taught the Nephites that they should continue to minister to a transgressor, but "if he repent not he shall not be numbered among my people, that he may not destroy my people" (3 Nephi 18:31; see also Mosiah 26:36).

Total inactivity in the Church or attending or holding membership in another church does not constitute apostasy.

Serious Transgression While Holding a Prominent Church Position

A disciplinary council must be held for a member who commits a serious transgression while holding a prominent Church position, such as Area Authority Seventy; temple, mission, or stake president; patriarch; or bishop. As used here, *serious transgression* is defined as a deliberate and major offense against morality. It includes (but is not limited to) attempted murder, rape, forcible sexual abuse, spouse abuse, intentional serious physical injury of others, adultery, fornication, homosexual relations, deliberate abandonment of family responsibilities, robbery, burglary, theft, embezzlement, sale of illegal drugs, fraud, perjury, and false swearing.

Transgressor Who Is a Predator

A disciplinary council must be held for a member who commits a serious transgression that shows him to be a predator with tendencies that present any kind of serious threat to other persons.

Pattern of Serious Transgressions

A disciplinary council must be held for a member who demonstrates a pattern of serious transgressions, especially if prior transgressions have resulted in Church discipline.

Serious Transgression That Is Widely Known

A disciplinary council must be held for a member who commits a serious transgression (as defined under "Serious Transgression While Holding a Prominent Church Position" on this page) that is widely known.

When a Disciplinary Council May Be Necessary

Serious Transgression

Formal Church discipline may be necessary for any member who commits a serious transgression as defined under "Serious Transgression While Holding a Prominent Church Position" on this page.

Abortion

Presiding officers review carefully the circumstances of members involved in abortions. Formal Church discipline may be necessary for members who submit to, perform, encourage, pay for, or arrange for abortions. However, Church discipline should not be considered for members who were involved in an abortion before they were baptized or because (1) the pregnancy resulted from forcible rape or incest, (2) the life or health of the mother was in jeopardy, or (3) the fetus was known to have severe defects that would not allow the baby to survive beyond birth (see page 157). Bishops refer questions on specific cases to the stake president. He may direct questions to the Office of the First Presidency if necessary.

Transsexual Operation

Church leaders counsel against elective transsexual operations. If a member is contemplating such an operation, a presiding officer should inform him of this counsel and advise him that the operation may be cause for formal Church discipline. Bishops refer questions on specific cases to the stake president. He may direct questions to the Office of the First Presidency if necessary.

Request for Name Removal

If a member requests that his name be removed from the records of the Church, a disciplinary council may still be necessary if he has committed a serious transgression. Name removal should not be used as a substitute for or alternative to Church discipline. For instructions in these circumstances, see page 130.

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When a Disciplinary Council Is Not Necessary

A disciplinary council normally is not necessary in the following instances.

Failure to Comply with Some Church Standards

A disciplinary council should not be held to discipline or threaten members who do not comply with the Word of Wisdom or whose transgressions consist of omissions, such as failure to pay tithing, inactivity in the Church, or inattention to Church duties.

Business Failures or Nonpayment of Debts

Leaders or members should not use the threat of Church discipline as a form of harassment or as a device to settle business controversies. Business failures and nonpayment of debts are not reasons for convening a disciplinary council. However, a disciplinary council may be held for deceptive practices, false representations, or other forms of fraud or dishonesty in business transactions.

Civil Disputes

Disciplinary councils should not attempt to resolve disputes over property rights or other civil controversies. However, if such a dispute involves accusations that a member has committed acts that would justify Church discipline, the accusations should be treated like any other accusations of transgression.

IF Church leaders are asked to help settle civil disputes, they should act as unofficial, private advisers and should not involve the Church.

Passage of Time

If a member voluntarily confesses a serious transgression that was committed long ago and his faithfulness and service in the intervening years have demonstrated full reformation and repentance, a disciplinary council often is unnecessary, See also "Time between Transgression and Confession," page 103.

Possible Decisions

A disciplinary council can reach any of the following decisions:

1. No action. A disciplinary council can reach this decision even if a transgression has been committed As part of this decision, the member may be given cautionary counsel or referred to his bishop for an interview that might lead to informal discipline.
2. Formal probation (see page 94).
3. Disfellowshipment (see pages 94-95).
4. Excommunication (see page 95).

If discipline is imposed, the presiding officer interviews the person regularly. The officer counsels him in love, helps him repent, and encourages him to live so he may again enjoy the full blessings of Church membership.

Leaders Who Are to Participate

Stake Disciplinary Councils

All three members of the stake presidency and all twelve members of the high council participate in a stake disciplinary council. If a counselor in the stake presidency is unable to participate, the stake president calls a member of the high council to take the counselor's place. If a high councilor is unable to participate, the stake president calls a high priest in the stake to take the high councilor's place. If the stake president is unable to participate, the First Presidency may authorize one of his counselors to preside in his place. If filling one vacancy creates another, the presiding authority fills it as prescribed in this paragraph.

Ward Disciplinary Councils

All three members of the bishopric participate in a ward disciplinary council. If the bishop is unable to participate, he refers the case to the stake president. The bishop may not assign a counselor to convene or preside over a disciplinary council. If a counselor in the bishopric is unable to participate, the bishop may ask a high priest in the ward to take the counselor's place.

If a high priest is unavailable, the bishop refers the case to the stake president.

The bishop always consults with the stake president and obtains his approval before convening a disciplinary council.

Branch Disciplinary Councils in a Stake

A branch president in a stake may convene a disciplinary council when authorized by the stake president. All three members of the branch presidency participate in the disciplinary council.

Mission Disciplinary Councils

When a mission president holds a disciplinary council for members or full-time missionaries under his jurisdiction, he appoints two Melchizedek Priest

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hood holders to assist him. A disciplinary council in a mission follows the procedures and exercises the authority specified for a disciplinary council 'in a stake, except that a high council does not participate.

If time or distance prevents a mission president from personally holding a disciplinary council for a member under his jurisdiction, he may authorize three Melchizedek Priesthood holders to convene a mission disciplinary council. Normally the presiding officer is the member's district president or branch president (see "District and Branch Disciplinary Councils in a Mission" below).

A mission president must preside over disciplinary councils for full-time missionaries in his mission.

District and Branch Disciplinary Councils in a Mission

A district president or branch president in a mission may convene a disciplinary council when authorized by the mission president. A district council does not participate in disciplinary councils.

General Instructions about Participation

If a transgressor objects to the participation of a counselor in the bishopric or stake presidency, the presiding officer evaluates the objection. If the presiding officer concludes that the objection is reasonable in fact or appearance, the counselor should not participate. If the transgressor objects to the bishop, the disciplinary matter must be referred to the stake president. If the transgressor objects to the stake president, or if the stake president feels that he cannot be impartial in the matter, he consults the Office of the First Presidency.

If a member of a bishopric, stake presidency, or high council or a clerk has a legal duty because of his occupation (such as a law enforcement officer) to report to government authorities facts that are likely to be disclosed in a disciplinary council, he should not participate.

Notice and Scheduling

Presiding officers should not schedule a disciplinary council until (1) they have had adequate time to determine the relevant facts and (2) they and the transgressor and the aggrieved parties have had adequate time to give unhurried consideration to the consequences of the transgression.

Notice of a Disciplinary Council to Consider Imposing Church Discipline

The presiding officer gives a member written notice of a disciplinary council that will be held in his behalf. This notice should be addressed to the member by his full name and signed by the presiding officer. It should state:

1. That "the [stake presidency or bishopric] is considering formal disciplinary action in your behalf, including the possibility of disfellowshipment or excommunication, because you are reported to have [set forth the charge in general terms, such as 'been in apostasy' or 'participated in conduct unbecoming a member of the Church,' but do not give any details or evidence]."
2. That "you are invited to attend this disciplinary council to give your response and, if you wish, to provide witnesses and other evidence in your behalf."
3. That "the disciplinary council will be held on [date and time] at [place]."

Two Melchizedek Priesthood holders deliver the notice to the member personally and privately with courtesy and dignity. The members who deliver the notice must give the clerk of the disciplinary council a signed statement certifying that the member was notified and describing how he was notified.

If the notice cannot be delivered in person, it may be sent by registered or certified mail, with a return receipt requested.

A member who is incarcerated when the council is to be held is notified as specified in the preceding paragraphs, with one exception: since he would not be able to attend, he should not be invited. However, the letter should invite him to send evidence in his behalf, including a written response about the crime with which he has been charged and, if applicable, convicted. The letter also may invite him to tell how he feels about continued fellowship or membership in the Church.

Notice of a Disciplinary Council to Consider ending Church Discipline

See page 105.

Procedures of the Council

Councils to Consider Imposing Church Discipline

The stake president, bishop, mission president, district president, or branch president conducts the

disciplinary council. He also rules on the procedures that are followed and the evidence that is presented.

A clerk records the proceedings of the council as a basis for completing the Report of Church Disciplinary Action form, but he does not participate in the discussion or decision.

The presiding officer helps the member prepare for the disciplinary council by explaining its purpose and procedures. If the member has confessed and given consent, the presiding officer explains that the confession will be used in the council. He also explains the consequences of the decisions the council may reach.

Immediately before the council begins, the presiding officer tells his counselors (and the high council if it is a stake disciplinary council) whom it is for and what the reported misconduct is. if necessary, he explains the procedures of the council to these leaders. The person is then invited into the meeting and introduced.

The council is opened with prayer. Then the presiding officer or someone designated by him states the reported misconduct and asks the member to respond by admitting or denying it.

If the member denies the reported misconduct, the presiding officer or someone designated by him presents the evidence of the misconduct. This evidence includes the written or oral statements of witnesses, reliable documents, and the substance of the member's confession (if he has confessed and given consent), The member must be given an opportunity to question the witnesses against him. (If witnesses are unable to attend, see page 102.)

The member then presents his response. He may bring in witnesses one at a time, submit other relevant evidence, comment on the evidence, and make any other statements he wants to make.

Witnesses should be Church members unless the presiding officer has determined in advance that a nonmember witness will respect the purposes and procedures of a Church disciplinary council. Witnesses wait in a separate room until they give their evidence. The presiding officer asks them not to talk with each other about the matter either before or after they testify.

The presiding officer and his counselors may ask questions of the member or witnesses in an orderly, polite manner, avoiding argument. Questions are to be brief and limited to the essential facts of the case.

When all relevant matters have been presented, the presiding officer excuses the member and, with his counselors, prayerfully deliberates over what action to take. The presiding officer is the judge, and he makes the decision through inspiration. if his counselors have a different opinion, he listens and seeks to resolve the differences so the decision can be unanimous.

If there is not enough evidence to justify formal Church discipline but the presiding officer feels that the matter should not be concluded at that time by a decision of no action, he may adjourn the council temporarily to seek additional evidence.

After reaching a decision, the presiding officer may invite the person back into the council meeting to inform him of it. If the decision is formal probation, disfellowshipment, or excommunication, the presiding officer explains the terms and conditions imposed by the decision, tells the person in a spirit of love how to overcome those restrictions, and offers other appropriate instruction and counsel.

If the person holds a valid temple recommend and the right to enter the temple has been withdrawn, he gives the recommend to the presiding officer at this time, unless he has already done so.

The presiding officer explains the person's right to appeal (see page 101) and closes the meeting with prayer.

If the person does not attend the council, the presiding officer informs him of the decision and gives instruction and counsel by meeting with him or by other means if necessary.

Disciplinary councils should not be recorded on videotape or audiotape.

Councils to Consider Ending Church Discipline

See pages 104-6.

High Council Participation

Stake disciplinary councils always include the high council. The basic principles governing the participation of the high council, including the casting of lots to determine the order of speaking, are stated in Doctrine and Covenants 102:12-23.

The following paragraphs provide additional instructions on questions that have arisen as stake presidencies and high councils have applied these principles. For example, it should be remembered that a Church disciplinary council is not organized as a criminal trial and does not follow the procedures of such a trial. The high council is not a jury.

Except as stated in the following paragraphs, up to the time of deliberation the procedures for a stake

disciplinary council are the same as those prescribed for other disciplinary councils.

During the presentation of evidence, any member of the high council may ask questions in an orderly, polite manner, avoiding argument with the member or witnesses. Questions are to be brief and limited to the essential facts of the case.

After all the evidence has been presented, the appointed high councilors present their views of the matter. They are not prosecutors or defenders. They are councilors, responsible to see that the evidence is examined in its true light before the council. Each is to speak "according to equity and justice" (D&C 102:16). One-half of those appointed to speak are responsible "to stand up in behalf of the accused, and prevent insult and injustice" (D&C 102:17).

The accused member and the accuser (if any) are then given another opportunity to speak, after which they are excused from the council room.

After hearing any additional comments from the high council, the stake presidency withdraws from the council room to confer in private. After consultation and prayer, the stake president makes the decision and invites his counselors to sustain it.

The stake presidency then returns and announces the decision to the high council. The stake president asks the high councilors as a group to sustain his decision. The high council cannot veto the decision; it is binding even if it is not sustained unanimously. However, if one or more high councilors object to the decision, the stake president should make every effort to resolve the concerns and achieve unanimity. He may recall witnesses for further questioning. If necessary, the disciplinary council may again review the evidence, but not in the presence of the member.

Written Notice of the Decision

After a Council Has Imposed Church Discipline

The presiding officer ensures that a person who is placed on formal probation, disfellowshipped, or excommunicated by a disciplinary council receives prompt written notice of the decision and its effects, even if he has been advised orally. This notice should consist of a general statement that the person has been placed on formal probation, disfellowshipped, or excommunicated for conduct contrary to the laws and order of the Church. It also could include counsel to help the person come back into full fellowship in the Church. The presiding officer does not give the person a copy of the Report of Church Disciplinary Action.

After a Council Has Ended Church Discipline

See page 100.

Announcement of the Decision

When announcing Church discipline, leaders must consider the feelings of the transgressor's innocent family members and the needs of innocent potential victims,

A decision to place a member on informal probation is not announced.

A decision to place a member on formal probation may be announced to those who need to know if the presiding officer determines that an announcement is necessary.

A decision of disfellowshipment or excommunication is announced only to those who need to know. The principles and procedures in the following paragraphs govern such announcements.

No announcement is made if a decision is being appealed, unless the presiding officer of the disciplinary council concludes that an announcement pending appeal is necessary to protect potential victims, to support the healing of victims (although victims' names are * not announced), or to safeguard the name of the Church.

The bishop announces the decision in confidence in ward priesthood executive committee meeting to guide priesthood officers who might otherwise consider the disciplined person for Church service, offering prayers, or giving talks or lessons.

The bishop advises the ward Relief Society president in confidence when a member of the Relief Society has been disciplined or was a victim.

If a case concerns (1) the preaching of false doctrine, (2) a transgressor whose predatory tendencies seriously threaten other persons, or (3) other flagrant transgressions (such as ridicule of Church leaders, plural marriage, or cultist teachings to attract a following), then, with the approval of the stake president, the bishop announces the decision in meetings of the elders quorum, high priests group, and Relief

Society in his ward. In such cases the stake president also may need to authorize a broader announcement,

such as in a stake priesthood meeting or to the Melchizedek Priesthood brethren and Relief Society sisters of other wards in the stake. In some cases the

presiding officer may find it beneficial to notify some or all of the victims and, when necessary, their families that the transgressor has been the subject of a disciplinary council.

When an announcement of Church discipline is necessary, it is limited to a general statement that the person has been disfellowshipped or excommunicated for conduct contrary to the laws and order of the Church. The officer who makes the announcement asks those who hear it not to discuss it with anyone. Announcements of disfellowshipment or excommunication do not require a sustaining vote.

To dispel rumors, a bishop or stake president may need to announce that a disciplinary council considered charges against a member but that no action was taken.

Appeals

A person who has been excommunicated, disfellowshipped, or placed on formal probation by a disciplinary council may appeal the decision. An appeal of the action of a ward disciplinary council is to the stake presidency (and high council). An appeal of the action of a stake disciplinary council is to the First Presidency. An appeal of the action of a branch or district disciplinary council is to the mission president. An appeal of the action of a disciplinary council presided over by a mission president is to the First Presidency.

If a person who has been disciplined wants to appeal the decision, he should specify in writing the alleged errors or unfairness in the procedure or decision. The person should present the appeal within 30 days to the presiding officer of the disciplinary council that made the decision. If a bishop or branch president presided over the council, he forwards the appeal with the Report of Church Disciplinary Action and other relevant documents to the stake or mission president. If the stake or mission president presided over the council, he forwards the materials to the First Presidency.

The decision on the appeal may be to (1) let the initial decision stand, (2) modify the initial decision, or (3) direct the disciplinary council to rehear the matter. In addition, the First Presidency may refer an appeal to another priesthood officer or body for review (with or without receiving additional evidence) and resubmittal to the First Presidency with a recommendation.

Reports on Disciplinary Councils

The presiding officer asks a clerk to summarize the proceedings of the disciplinary council on a Report of Church Disciplinary Action form. The form provides instructions on how to complete it, whether to retain or submit it, and how to submit it.

Membership Records After Discipline Has Been Imposed

Members Placed on Formal Probation

Formal probation is not noted on a membership record. However, the record may be annotated if a person is placed on formal probation for one of the reasons explained on page 129.

Disfellowshipped Members

Disfellowshipment is noted on a person's membership record. The administration office makes this note and provides an updated record after receiving the Report of Church Disciplinary Action.

If a disfellowshipped member moves, the bishop transfers the membership record to the new ward. The record will notify the new bishop that the person has been disfellowshipped The bishop may also contact the bishop of the new ward to communicate relevant information about the disciplinary action.

Excommunicated Members

When a person is excommunicated, his name is removed from the membership records of the Church. The administration office takes this action after receiving the Report of Church Disciplinary Action.

Although a person who is excommunicated no longer has a membership record, the presiding officer of the disciplinary council asks for his consent to retain his name and address so Church leaders can continue to assist him. The presiding officer does this with genuine love and concern at a time when the excommunicated person is most likely to consent. This may be immediately after the person is told of the excommunication decision or at a later time. If the person consents, this is noted on the Report of Church Disciplinary Action.

If an excommunicated person moves after consenting to have the Church maintain contact with him, the bishop contacts the bishop of the new ward, giving him the person's name and address and communicating relevant information about the disciplinary action.

If an excommunicated person moves after not giving consent to have the Church maintain contact with him, the bishop contacts the bishop of the new ward, identifies the person involved, and indicates that a disciplinary council has been held and that the person has requested that no further information be shared and no contact be made. The request of

the excommunicated person should be respected until I there is a change of mind.

Records with Annotations

See page 129.

Procedures in Exceptional Circumstances

Conduct Examined in Civil or Criminal Courts

Normally a disciplinary council is not held to consider conduct being examined by a criminal or civil court until the court has reached a final judgment and until the period of appeal has expired or the appeal has been rejected. However, priesthood leaders should proceed with informal or formal Church discipline when evidence of transgression is available and they have persuasive reasons not to wait.

Criminal charges may or may not necessitate Church discipline. Acts that constitute serious crimes under local law normally would be considered serious transgressions. However, minor offenses under local law, such as traffic violations or unintentional failure to comply with technical government regulations, normally would not. Criminal charges that have serious moral overtones may warrant Church discipline even if a criminal court dismisses these charges for technical reasons. Acts such as fornication, adultery, or abortion are serious transgressions though they may not be crimes under local law.

When a member is convicted of a crime or found guilty in a civil action for fraud or other dishonest or immoral conduct, the judgment of the criminal or civil court is a sufficient basis for holding a Church disciplinary council. A finding of guilt in a court may be considered as evidence of guilt for purposes of Church discipline. Reliable evidence submitted to a court may also be considered in a Church disciplinary council.

To avoid implicating the Church in legal matters to which it is not a party, leaders should avoid testifying in civil or criminal cases reviewing the conduct of members over whom they preside. For specific guidelines, see page 151.

Church leaders should not try to persuade alleged victims or other witnesses either to testify or not to testify in criminal or civil court proceedings.

Notice of Criminal Court Conviction

If a member has been convicted of a crime involving conduct that might threaten the well-being of other persons or of the Church, the presiding officer of the Church disciplinary council should promptly send to the Office of the First Presidency a written statement about the nature of the offense and the sentence imposed by the criminal court, even if a disciplinary council does not impose formal discipline.

Reporting Embezzlement of Church Funds

If a person is disciplined for embezzling Church funds, the presiding officer should report it as outlined on page 139.

Party or Witness Unable to Attend

If a party or essential witness is unable to attend a disciplinary council, the presiding officer invites him to submit a written statement. Such statements may be considered as evidence. When necessary, the party or witness may be questioned further, in writing or orally.

Preserving Evidence

If a witness will not likely be available for a possible future disciplinary council, the presiding officer invites him to write his testimony for use when needed.

Evidence When Adultery Is Charged

If a person who is accused of adultery denies the charge and the matter is being considered in a disciplinary council, revelation requires that "every word shall be established against him or her by two witnesses of the church" (D&C 42:80). "Two witnesses" means two separate sources of evidence. This could include the personal evidence of a participant and some other source of evidence of the member's guilt.

Questions about Procedure

If a bishop is unsure of the procedures to follow in administering Church discipline, he consults his stake president. If a branch president is unsure of procedures, he consults his stake or mission president. A stake or mission president should refer unresolved procedural questions to the Office of the First Presidency.

Questions about Decisions

Local presiding officers should not expect General Authorities to tell them how to decide difficult matters. Decisions on Church discipline are within the discretion and authority of local presiding officers as they prayerfully seek guidance from the Lord.

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First Presidency Authority

The First Presidency has ultimate authority over all Church discipline. Decisions of the First Presidency take precedence despite any rules or procedures to the contrary

Considerations in Church Discipline

The following paragraphs list some of the factors that leaders may need to consider in reaching decisions on formal and informal Church discipline. These factors are listed in order from those that suggest stem discipline to those that suggest more lenient discipline. None of these factors dictates any particular decision. They are only aids to a decision that must be pursued prayerfully and guided by the Spirit of the Lord.

Violation of Covenants

If a transgressor has been endowed, he has made covenants to live a higher standard of behavior than applies to those who have not been endowed. Violating these covenants magnifies the seriousness of the transgression. Therefore, endowed persons who commit adultery or fornication (including homosexual relations) are subject to stern Church discipline.

Adultery is a more serious sexual transgression than fornication because adultery involves a violation of marriage covenants.

Position of Trust or Authority

If a transgressor occupied a position of trust or authority (such as parent, bishop, or teacher) that was violated by the transgression, the seriousness of the transgression is magnified. For example, incest is a most serious form of sexual transgression for a parent because it violates the sacred trust of parental authority. Embezzlement is a most serious form of theft because the transgressor has been trusted with funds; it is a particularly serious offense when it involves Church funds. See also "Serious Transgression While Holding a Prominent Church Position," page 96.

Repetition

If a transgression that was previously confessed and seemingly forsaken is repeated, the repetition may be viewed as part of a, pattern of conduct, even though the earlier transgression has been resolved with Church authorities. As the Lord warned those he had forgiven, "Go your ways and sin no more; but unto that soul who sinneth shall the former sins return" (D&C 82:7).

Magnitude

The seriousness of a transgression is measured in part by the number of sinful acts and the number of persons injured. The number of persons who are aware of the transgression also affects its seriousness.

Age, Maturity, and Experience

Presiding officers should consider a transgressor's age, maturity, and experience when administering Church discipline. The Lord revealed, "For of him unto whom much is given much is required; and he who sins against the greater light shall receive the greater condemnation" (D&C 82:3).

Leniency is often appropriate for those who are immature in the gospel. Leniency may also be appropriate for young members who are involved in a moral transgression if they forsake the sin and manifest sincere repentance. However, young members who persist in immoral conduct may require formal disciplinary action.

Interests of the Innocent

When administering and announcing discipline, presiding officers should consider the interests of innocent victims and the transgressor's innocent family members.

Time between Transgression and Confession

If a transgression occurred many years before it was confessed, the presiding officer carefully considers the intervening circumstances. If the sin was not repeated and the member has lived righteously in the interim, his conduct during the intervening time can show that he has forsaken the sin. In this instance, confession may complete rather than start the process of repentance.

Voluntary Confession

Voluntary and complete confession demonstrates a repentant attitude, which may favor leniency. An admission of guilt after a person has been accused of or interviewed about a transgression is less indicative of repentance. A person who admits guilt when interviewed by a bishop shows greater repentance than one who tries to deceive and admits guilt only when confronted with evidence.

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Evidence of Repentance

Normally, evidence of repentance is the most important single factor in determining how to accomplish the first purpose of Church discipline: saving the soul of the transgressor. Genuine repentance is demonstrated more reliably by righteous actions over a period of time than by intense sorrow during a single interview. Judgments about the adequacy of repentance require spiritual discernment. Factors to consider include the nature of the confession, depth of sorrow for the sin, success in forsaking the sin, strength of faith in Jesus Christ, faithfulness in obeying other commandments, truthful communications to Church officers, restitution to injured persons' obedience to legal requirements, and willingness to follow the direction of Church authorities.

Fellowshipping

The bishop's role as a common judge does not end when a member has been disciplined. It continues until the person returns to full fellowship and, when necessary, receives a restoration of blessings. Disciplinary action should be the first step on the way back to the full blessings of Church membership. Church leaders and members should be anxious to help a person who has been disciplined to repent so he can enjoy these blessings. The bishop oversees these efforts.

The time just after a person has been disciplined is difficult and critical for the person and his family. During this time, priesthood leaders and other Church members should be patient and sensitive to the needs of those involved and should give special encouragement and assistance. The bishop should interview the person frequently and, if necessary, his spouse.

The bishop sees that mature, caring home teachers and visiting teachers are assigned to a person who has been disfellowshipped or excommunicated and to his immediate family members. In some cases couples may be assigned. Home teachers and visiting teachers should make regular contacts and see that the person, his spouse, and other family members receive the counsel and fellowship they need during this critical period of anguish, repentance, and healing.

If a person who has been disciplined moves from the ward before he has returned to full fellowship and received a restoration of blessings, the bishop informs the person's new bishop of the discipline and what remains to bring the member back to full fellowship and blessings. The bishop makes this same contact for excommunicated persons who have consented to be assisted by Church leaders (see page 101 for guidelines in such situations).

Ending Formal Probation, Disfellowshipment, or Excommunication

Determine Jurisdiction and Participation

To consider ending formal probation, disfellowshipment, or excommunication, a presiding officer where the person currently lives must convene a disciplinary council. The council should have the same (or higher) level of ecclesiastical authority as the council that took the initial disciplinary action. For example:

1. If a bishop presided over the disciplinary council that administered the discipline, the person's current bishop normally presides over another council to consider changing the person's status.
2. If a stake president presided over the disciplinary council, a stake president normally presides over another council to consider changing the person's status.

A bishop needs the approval of the stake president to convene a disciplinary council to consider changing a person's status. In a mission, a branch or district president needs the approval of the mission president to convene such a disciplinary council.

Review the Proceedings of the Initial Council

The current presiding officer reviews the proceedings of the initial disciplinary council. These proceedings are summarized on the Report of Church Disciplinary Action form.

For disfellowshipped or excommunicated persons, the presiding officer requests a copy of the original report from the Office of the First Presidency.

For members on formal probation whose conduct has threatened the well-being of other persons or of the Church, the presiding officer obtains a copy of the report from the Office of the First Presidency. For other members on formal probation, the presiding officer obtains a copy of the report from the presiding officer of the unit where the initial disciplinary action was taken.

Interview the Person

The presiding officer interviews the person thoroughly to determine the strength of his faith in Jesus Christ, the extent of his repentance, and whether the

conditions specified in the initial disciplinary action have been met.

Determine Status of Civil or Criminal Court

Action (If Necessary)

If a person who has had Church discipline was convicted of a crime or found guilty in a civil action of fraud or other dishonest or immoral conduct, a disciplinary council should not be held to consider changing his Church status until he has fulfilled all terms and conditions of any sentence imposed by legal authorities. These conditions may include imprisonment, probation, parole, and fines or restitution. Exceptions require the approval of the First Presidency

Consult with the Presiding Officer Where Action

Was Taken (If Necessary)

If the presiding officer has questions or concerns as he reviews the report of the initial disciplinary council, he may consult with the presiding officer of the unit where the council was held to see if he can provide clarification.

When there is an aggrieved victim (such as for incest, child abuse, or spouse abuse) whose circumstances are known by the current presiding officer of the unit where the initial disciplinary action was taken, the disciplined person cannot return to full fellowship or be readmitted by baptism until his current presiding officer has consulted with the current presiding officer of that unit and obtained his opinion on the advisability of the proposed change of status.

Give Notice of the Disciplinary Council

The presiding officer notifies the person of the date, time, and place of the disciplinary council where his change of Church status will be considered so he can attend or submit a written statement if he desires.

Convene and Conduct the Disciplinary Council

The presiding officer convenes and conducts the disciplinary council. The person is invited into the room, the council is opened with prayer, and the presiding officer or someone designated by him states the purpose of the council. The presiding officer then asks the member questions about what he has done to repent and about his commitment to the Church and the strength of his testimony.

In a stake disciplinary council that is convened to consider ending Church discipline, the role of the high council is much the same as outlined on pages 99-100, but it is not necessary for high councilors to draw lots or to speak before the council.

When all relevant matters have been presented, the presiding officer excuses the member and, with his counselors, prayerfully deliberates over what action to take. See page 99 for instructions about these deliberations and about informing the member of the council's decision.

If First Presidency approval is not necessary to end the discipline prescribed in the case, the presiding officer may end it himself. If First Presidency approval is necessary (as outlined below), the conclusion of the council can be only a recommendation to the First Presidency and not a final decision.

Complete and Submit a Report

See page 101.

Apply for First Presidency Approval (If Necessary)

If the person was disfellowshipped or excommunicated for any of the following reasons, the approval of the First Presidency is required before he may be reinstated to full fellowship or readmitted by baptism:

1. Murder (as defined on page 95).
2. Incest (as defined on page 95).
3. Sexual offense against or serious physical abuse of a child by an adult.
4. Apostasy (as defined on pages 95--96).
5. Committing a serious transgression while holding a prominent Church position (as defined on page 96).
6. An elective transsexual operation.
7. Embezzlement of Church funds or property.

In these circumstances, the disciplinary council is conducted as stated previously. No preauthorization from the First Presidency is required. If the disciplinary council recommends a change in status, the presiding officer may notify the person of this recommendation. He should explain that the person's status cannot be changed until the First Presidency gives written approval of the recommendation.

To submit a recommendation to the First Presidency, the presiding officers complete each step on the Application to the First Presidency form. In the United States and Canada, this form is available

from the Office of the First Presidency. In other areas it is available from the Area Presidency.

The stake or mission president sends (1) the completed application form, (2) the Report of Church Disciplinary Action form, and (3) any necessary attachments (such as letters that are required on the application form) to the Office of the First Presidency or to the Area Presidency if the unit is outside the United States and Canada. The Office of the First Presidency will notify the stake or mission president of the decision.

Give Written Notice of the Decision

The presiding officer ensures that after the disciplinary council, the person receives prompt written notice of the decision and its effects, even if he has been advised orally.

Readmitting Excommunicated Persons by Baptism

When all approvals have been received, a person who was excommunicated may be readmitted into the Church by baptism. The bishop prepares a Baptism Record, noting on the form that the baptism is for readmission. After baptism, the person is confirmed a member of the Church and receives the gift of the Holy Ghost as in any other confirmation.

Church Activity after Readmission

Members Who Were Not Previously Endowed. From the time of their baptism, these members may participate in Church activity just as a new convert would.

Members Who Were Previously Endowed. From the time of their baptism until their blessings are restored by a General Authority assigned by the First Presidency, these members may participate in any Church activity that is permissible for an unendowed member who does not hold the priesthood. However, they may not participate in vicarious baptisms for the dead until their blessings are restored.

Ordination after Readmission

Brethren Who Previously Held the Priesthood but Were Not Endowed. After baptism, these brethren are ordained to the priesthood office they previously held.

Brethren Who Previously Held the Priesthood and Were Endowed. See "Restoration of Blessings" on this page.

Temple Recommends after Readmission

See page 67.

Membership Records After Discipline Has Ended

After Formal Probation Has Ended

No change is made to the membership record because formal probation is not recorded on it.

After Disfellowshipment Has Ended

After a person has been reinstated to full fellowship, the administration office removes the notice of disfellowshipment and provides an updated membership record.

After Readmission by Baptism'

After a person is readmitted by baptism, the stake president or bishop submits a copy of the Baptism Record, usually with the Report of Church Disciplinary Action.

If the member was not endowed before excommunication, the administration office provides the ward a membership record that shows the member's original baptism and other ordinance dates, with no reference to excommunication.

If the member was endowed before excommunication, the administration office provides the ward a membership record that shows the member's new baptism date and includes the message "Restoration of Blessings Required." After the member's blessings are restored, the administration office provides another updated membership record that shows the member's original baptism and other ordinance dates, including endowment (and current priesthood, if applicable,) with no reference to excommunication.

Annotations

Although membership records do not mention formal probation and do not mention disfellowshipment or excommunication after discipline has ended, they may include annotations until the First Presidency authorizes their removal (see page 129).

Restoration of Blessings

Endowed persons who were excommunicated and later readmitted by baptism can receive their priesthood and temple blessings only through the ordinance of restoration of blessings. Such persons are not ordained to priesthood offices or endowed again, since all priesthood and temple blessings held at the time of excommunication are restored through the ordinance. Brethren are restored to their former priesthood office, except the office of bishop or patriarch.

Only the First Presidency can approve the performance of the ordinance of restoration of blessings. The First Presidency will not consider an application for this *ordinance sooner* than one year after the person is readmitted by baptism.

To submit a recommendation to the First Presidency, the presiding officers complete each step on the Application to the First Presidency form. In the United States and Canada, this form is available from the Office of the First Presidency. In other areas it is available from the Area Presidency.

The stake or mission president sends the completed application form and any necessary attachments (such as letters that are required on the form) to the Office of the First Presidency or to the Area Presidency if the unit is outside the United States and Canada. The Office of the First Presidency will notify the stake or mission president of the decision.

Performance of the Ordinance

If the First Presidency authorizes the restoration of blessings, a General Authority is assigned to interview the applicant. If the applicant is found worthy, the General Authority performs the ordinance to restore the person's blessings.

For the Dead

See pages 76-77.

Retention of Records

The presiding officer should destroy copies of paper and electronic records relating to a disciplinary action after the ward receives an updated membership record or other notification of action on the record. If a council has taken no action or imposed formal probation on a member whose conduct is not threatening, the presiding officer retains these records until the matter is resolved.

The presiding officer should destroy copies of records relating to the submission of an Application to the First Presidency form after he receives notification that Church headquarters has received the application.

Church Discipline

Documents Required to Complete Confidential Actions or Applications

Required Documents

Action or Application

Report of Administrative Action form
Administrative action (name removal)
Letter from the person requesting name removal
Administrative action (name removal)
Copy of the letter from the bishop informing the person of
Administrative action (name removal)
Copy(ies) of the membership record
Administrative action (name removal)
Report of Church Disciplinary Action form
Formal probation (in cases of threatening conduct)
Disfellowshipment

Excommunication
Copy of the letter notifying the person of the disciplinary council
Formal probation (in cases of threatening conduct)
Disfellowshipment
Excommunication
Reinstatement (not requiring First Presidency approval)
Readmission (not requiring First Presidency approval)
Reinstatement (requiring First Presidency approval)
Readmission (requiring First Presidency approval)
Certification of delivery of the letter notifying the person of the disciplinary council
Formal probation (in cases of threatening conduct)
Disfellowshipment
Excommunication
Reinstatement (not requiring First Presidency approval)
Readmission (not requiring First Presidency approval)
Reinstatement (requiring First Presidency approval)
Readmission (requiring First Presidency approval)
Copy of the letter to the person stating the decision of the council
Formal probation (in cases of threatening conduct)
Disfellowshipment
Excommunication
Reinstatement (not requiring First Presidency approval)
Readmission (not requiring First Presidency approval)
Reinstatement (requiring First Presidency approval)
Readmission (requiring First Presidency approval)
Baptism Record form and Confirmation Record/Baptism and Confirmation Certificate form
Readmission (not requiring First Presidency approval)
Application to the First Presidency form
Reinstatement (not requiring First Presidency approval)
Readmission (not requiring First Presidency approval)
Reinstatement (requiring First Presidency approval)
Readmission (requiring First Presidency approval)
Restoration of blessings
Cancellation of sealing
Sealing clearance
Letter from the applicant
Reinstatement (not requiring First Presidency approval)
Readmission (not requiring First Presidency approval)
Reinstatement (requiring First Presidency approval)
Readmission (requiring First Presidency approval)
Restoration of blessings
Cancellation of sealing
Sealing clearance
Letter from the applicant's bishop
Reinstatement (not requiring First Presidency approval)
Readmission (not requiring First Presidency approval)
Reinstatement (requiring First Presidency approval)
Readmission (requiring First Presidency approval)

Restoration of blessings
Cancellation of sealing
Sealing clearance
Letter from the applicant's stake president
Reinstatement (not requiring First Presidency approval)
Readmission (not requiring First Presidency approval)
Reinstatement (requiring First Presidency approval)
Readmission (requiring First Presidency approval)
Restoration of blessings
Cancellation of sealing
Sealing clearance
Letter from the applicant's present spouse
Reinstatement (requiring First Presidency approval)
Readmission (requiring First Presidency approval)
Restoration of blessings
Letter from applicant's former spouse (if applicant was married to a former spouse at time of disfellowshipment or excommunication)
Reinstatement (requiring First Presidency approval)
Readmission (requiring First Presidency approval)
Restoration of blessings
Letters from victims of child abuse (if they are now 18 years of age or older)
Reinstatement (requiring First Presidency approval)
Readmission (requiring First Presidency approval)
Restoration of blessings
Letter(s) from the applicant's former sealed spouse(s)
Cancellation of sealing
Sealing clearance
Letter from the bishop of the person to whom the applicant plans to be sealed
Cancellation of sealing
Sealing clearance

11. Single Members and Students

Single Members in the Church

Our Heavenly Father established the family as the basic unit of His kingdom on earth and in eternity. Temple marriage-the sealing of husband and wife for time and eternity by the authority of the priesthood-is a sacred privilege and obligation that every able member of the Church should have as a goal. The Church strongly counsels members, especially men, not to put off or avoid marriage.

Faithful members who do not have the opportunity of marrying in this life will have every opportunity for the blessings, exaltation, and glory that will come to those who enter into and honor the covenant of eternal marriage.

Church members who have never married or are divorced or widowed make up a significant portion of Church membership. All members, regardless of their age, circumstances, or interests, need the blessings of the gospel and a full range of Church experiences. Priesthood leaders should be aware of these needs and provide each member opportunities for growth and service.

Single members in the Church comprise two groups: young single adults (ages 18 through 30) and single adults (ages 31 and older). This section of the handbook is intended to guide Church leaders in ministering to these members. While single members may, at some times in their lives, feel a need to participate in wards or special activities for single members, all members of the Church should associate together as "fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19).

Conventional Stakes and Wards

Single members are encouraged to participate in the regular activities and programs of their conventional stakes and wards. These units provide a full range of Church experience and offer opportunities to serve, teach, lead, and associate with people of all ages. They also reinforce the important role of the family and the home in the gospel plan.

Stake Leaders' Responsibilities for Single Members

The stake presidency and other stake leaders consult with single members to determine their needs and make plans to help meet them. The stake president assigns a high councilor to help oversee stake activities and programs for single members.

The stake presidency organizes a stake committee for single members, with a member of the stake presidency as chairman. For information about this committee's meetings, see page 316 in *Book 2*.

Where enough single members reside in a stake, one or more stake single member representatives may be called by the stake presidency or another priesthood officer under their direction. These representatives serve on the stake committee for single members.

Ward Leaders' Responsibilities for Single Members

The bishopric, other priesthood leaders, and Relief Society leaders consult with single members to determine their needs and make plans to help meet them. Ward leaders should consider the needs and interests of single members regularly in leadership meetings. Ward leaders also should include single members in meaningful callings, assignments, and activities. In addition, leaders should prayerfully assign home teachers and visiting teachers who will faithfully visit and care for single members.

If needed, the bishop may organize a ward committee for single members, with a member of the bishopric as chairman. For information about this committee's meetings, see page 319 in *Book 2*.

Where enough single members reside in a ward, the bishopric calls one or more ward single member representatives. These representatives serve on the stake and ward committees for single members.

Meetings and Activities

Priesthood and Relief Society Meetings

Quorum and Relief Society leaders should be sensitive to the needs of single members, particularly when lessons include topics such as marriage and children. Occasionally single members may meet in special quorum and Relief Society classes that focus on pertinent topics such as preparation for missionary service, the temple endowment, and temple marriage.

Home Evening Groups

The bishopric may organize one or more home evening groups for single members who do not have children in the home and do not live with their parents. If possible, the bishopric appoints a single priesthood holder to lead each group. If a ward has few single members, the stake presidency may authorize bishoprics to organize home evening groups that cross ward boundaries. Resources for home evening lessons include the scriptures, the *Family Home Evening Resource Book, Gospel Principles*, and other approved Church materials.

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Sunday School Classes

Each ward that has enough young single adults may have a separate class for them during Sunday School (see page 244 in *Book 2*).

institutes of Religion

Young single adults are invited to participate in institute of religion classes and activities. Some institute classes may be taught in the stake by volunteer teachers who are recommended by the stake presidency and appointed and supervised by the local Church Educational System (CES) representative. Classes are held at institutes or other Church facilities. Nominal fees may be charged to participate in institute classes. For more information, see pages 115-17.

Gospel Study Classes for Young Single Adults

The stake presidency or bishopric may organize gospel study classes for young single adults. These classes may be held at times other than Monday evening or the regular Sunday meeting schedule. They are not considered institute of religion classes.

Special Stake and Ward Activities

Single members should be offered stake and ward activities such as firesides, dances, choirs, priesthood preparation seminars, temple preparation seminars, temple excursions, cultural events, and sports.

In stakes, the stake committee for single members normally plans and conducts these activities, obtaining the stake presidency's approval for each one. In wards, the ward committee for single members normally plans and conducts these activities, obtaining the bishopric's approval for each one.

Only single members, assigned Church officers, and single nonmembers who are willing to abide by Church standards may participate in these activities. Individuals who are separated from their spouse or are seeking a divorce may not participate until their divorce decree has become final according to law.

Activities for single members are to comply with the policies and guidelines on pages 276-80 in *Book 2*.

Multistake Activities

With the approval of the Area Presidency, multistake activities may be held to allow single members opportunities to meet together, socialize, and serve without leaving the ecclesiastical care of their bishop. A designated priesthood leader could ask stake and ward single member representatives to help with these activities.

Funding

Normally, funding for stake and ward activities for single members comes from the local unit budget allowance. This funding should be consistent with the policies outlined on pages 137-39.

Minimal fees may be assessed for optional activities if necessary to cover costs. However, leaders should ensure that all single members have the opportunity to participate in approved activities without incurring unnecessary costs.

Single Member Wards

Creation and Membership

Most single members are best served as members of conventional wards. However, in some exceptional situations, units for single members may be organized. After prayerful consideration, priesthood leaders may recommend creating a young single adult ward or (more exceptional) a single adult ward. Guidelines and procedures for making these recommendations are provided on pages 143-46. Those pages also provide guidelines about who may be members of these wards.

Leadership

Bishops of young single adult wards and single adult wards should be married men of mature judgment who live in the stake. Their counselors should be married high priests; normally they should live in the stake. Other ward officers and teachers are called from among the single members of the ward.

Student Stakes and Wards

Creation and Membership

A stake president may recommend creating Student stakes and wards as outlined on pages 143-46.

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Those pages also provide guidelines about who may be members of these wards.

Leadership

Stake presidencies, high councilors, and bishops of student units should be married men of mature judgment who are established residents of the community. In student wards, a bishop's counselors should be mature, married students who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood. They do not need to be high priests. As an exception, brethren who are not students may be recommended to serve as counselors when necessary.

Other ward officers and teachers are called from among the students in the ward. These callings give them opportunities to develop leadership skills and give service. However, students should not be given Church responsibilities that would unduly interfere with their studies.

Policies for Young Single Adult, Single Adult, and Student Units

Church Organization and Program

Young single adult, single adult, and student units should use the regular program of the Church as much as possible.

Temple Recommends

See pages 65-68.

Priesthood Ordinations

See pages 31-33.

Missionary Recommendations

See page 83.

Leaders' Membership Records

Membership records of the following brethren and their families normally remain in the home ward:

1. Brethren who are called to serve in the bishopric of a young single adult or single adult ward.
2. Brethren who are called to serve in the stake presidency, on the high council, or in the bishopric of a student ward or stake.

The home ward is responsible for the tithing, other offerings, temple recommends, and member progress reporting of these leaders and their families.

Tenure of Service

Normally brethren serve no more than three to five years in assignments that keep them away from their home wards. This limitation includes cumulative service in different assignments.

Cooperation

Officers of conventional stakes and wards should cooperate fully when members are requested to serve in units for students and single members. The following guidelines apply:

1. A member who is requested to serve in the stake presidency of a student stake usually should be made available.
2. A member who is requested to serve on the high council of a student stake usually should be made available unless he is presently serving in a stake presidency or as a bishop.
3. A member who is requested to serve as bishop of a young single adult, single adult, or student ward should be made available unless he is presently serving in a stake presidency or as a bishop. A member who is requested to serve as a bishop's counselor should be made available unless he is presently serving in a stake presidency or bishopric.

Supervision by Stake Leaders

Members of the stake presidency supervise leaders of young single adult, single adult, and student wards the same way they supervise leaders of conventional wards. Stake auxiliary leaders also work with leaders of these wards in the same way they work with leaders of conventional wards.

Welfare Assistance

Occasionally a bishop may find it necessary to meet the temporary welfare needs of single members and students in his ward. To do so he follows the principles on pages 14-17 in this book and on pages 255-58 in *Book 2*.

Students who face prolonged financial difficulties may need to leave school temporarily to resolve them.

Finances and Budgets

The bishopric encourages members to pay a full tithing and contribute generous fast offerings. Bishoprics should follow current financial policies and procedures as directed by the stake presidency, Area Presidency, and Church headquarters.

Home Teaching and Visiting Teaching

See pages 168-70 and 202-4 in *Book 2*.

Records and Reports

Single members and students should make sure their membership records are moved to the ward where they are members. Leaders and clerks should take special care to keep records current. For additional information, see pages 123-32.

Activities

See pages 276-80 in *Book 2*.

Home Evening Groups

The bishopric may organize home evening groups similar to the way they are organized for single members in conventional wards (see pages 109-10).

School Breaks

If possible, student wards should function during school breaks. A student ward that has few members during school breaks may meet with an adjacent student ward. The wards keep separate records, reports of attendance, and finances.

Dating or Get-Acquainted Businesses for Single Members

See page 150.

12. Church Educational System

Programs of the Church Educational System

The Church Educational System (CES) consists of four programs:

1. Religious education (seminaries and institutes of religion)
2. Church universities and colleges
3. Adult and continuing education
4. Elementary and secondary education (in some areas outside the United States)

Administration of the Church Educational System

Church Board of Education

The Church Board of Education is composed of the First Presidency and other General Authorities and Church officers. The board oversees the operation of seminaries, institutes of religion, adult and continuing education, and elementary and secondary education programs of CES. It defines the objectives of these programs and approves the policies under which they operate.

Church Boards of Trustees

A Church Board of Trustees is established for each Church-sponsored institution of higher education: Brigham Young University, Brigham Young University-Hawaii, Ricks College, and LDS Business College. Each board is composed of the same General Authorities and officers as the Church Board of Education but functions separately in guiding each institution as an independent legal corporation.

CES Administrative Personnel

Under the direction of the Church Board of Education, the Church's religious, elementary, and secondary education programs are supervised by the CES administrator of religious education and elementary and secondary education. Under his direction, full-time CES representatives, such as zone administrators and coordinators, are assigned to geographic areas throughout the world. Priesthood leaders should direct requests or questions about CES programs to their local CES representative.

CES personnel are authorized to request name, address, and age information about potential seminary and institute students from ward records. If a ward uses the Member Information System (MIS) software, a clerk may download this information on a diskette or print a copy for official CES use. CES personnel use this information to recruit and enroll youth in the Church's seminary and institute programs.

Area Presidency

The Area Presidency ensures that priesthood leaders fulfill their responsibilities for Church education as outlined in this section. The Area Presidency also coordinates Church education matters with the CES zone administrator and area directors.

If a seminary serves more than one stake, the Area Presidency appoints a stake president to be chairman of a local CES board of education.

If an institute serves more than one stake, the Area Presidency appoints a stake president to be chairman of an institute of religion advisory council (see page 116).

Stake Presidency

The stake presidency encourages and monitors the seminary and institute participation of eligible stake members. High councilors and the stake executive secretary may assist.

The stake presidency regularly includes Church education matters on the agendas of stake leadership meetings. The local CES representative should be invited to attend the Church education portion of these meetings.

Where needed, the stake presidency confers with bishops to recommend members to be appointed as early-morning and home-study seminary teachers, volunteer institute teachers, and stake supervisors. A member of the stake presidency, a high councilor, or the bishop makes these recommendations to the local CES representative, who appoints, supervises, and releases these members in consultation with priesthood leaders. Membership records of those who are recommended for such service must currently be in the ward.

Where CES has not been authorized to rent or build facilities, the stake presidency ensures that facilities are provided for early-morning seminary, home-study seminary, and institute classes.

The stake presidency ensures that CES satellite firesides are included on the stake calendar, that facilities are provided for viewing them, that they are publicized throughout the stake, and that nothing is planned for members ages 18 through 30 that would conflict with these firesides. High councilors and the stake executive secretary may assist.

The stake president presides at seminary and institute graduation exercises (see pages 115 and 116-17). He may also be assigned by the Area Presidency to serve on a local CES board of education or to serve as chairman of the institute of religion advisory council (see page 116).

The stake president or one of his counselors interviews stake members who seek approval to enroll at Church universities or colleges (see page 117).

High Councilors

The stake president may assign one or two high councilors as seminary and institute advisers. They help encourage and monitor enrollment, arrange for meeting facilities, publicize CES firesides, and may act as liaisons between the stake president and the local CES representative.

Bishopric

The bishop and his counselors personally encourage (1) all youth ages 14 through 18 to participate in seminary and (2) all young single adults and married college students ages 18 through 30 to participate in institute classes. Members of the bishopric also oversee the registration of those who are eligible. The ward executive secretary may help with this registration. The local CES representative provides registration materials for seminary and institute.

The bishopric regularly includes Church education matters on the agendas of ward leadership meetings.

Where needed, the bishop confers with the stake presidency to recommend members to be appointed as early-morning and home-study seminary teachers and volunteer institute teachers.

The bishop or an assigned counselor interviews seminary and institute students to certify their worthiness for graduation. The bishop also interviews members who seek approval to enroll or continue attendance at Church universities or colleges (see page 117).

Worthiness of CES Employees and Volunteers

Each employee and volunteer of the Church Educational System and of Church universities and colleges must be worthy to have a temple recommend. A stake president (or in some cases a bishop) completes an annual ecclesiastical clearance form to confirm the worthiness of each full-time employee within the stake.

Religious Education

Objective

The objective of religious education in the Church Educational System is to assist the individual, the family, and priesthood leaders in accomplishing the mission of the Church by:

1. Teaching students the gospel of Jesus Christ as found in the standard works and the words of the prophets.
2. Teaching students by precept and example so they will be encouraged, assisted, and protected as they strive to live the gospel of Jesus Christ.
3. Providing a spiritual and social climate where students can associate together.
4. Preparing youth for effective Church service.

Seminaries

The Church's seminary program offers weekday religious instruction for youth ages 14 through 18 throughout the world. Students who do not attend public schools may enroll in seminary if the school certifies that the student is at least in the ninth grade (or equivalent) and will turn 14 years of age or older during the school year.

Courses of instruction, in a four-year cycle, include the Old Testament, New Testament, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants-Church History.

Released-Time, Daytime, and Early-Morning Seminary

Released-time seminary (during school) and daytime seminary (after school) are established in areas where Church membership is sufficiently large and local public education policies permit. If these conditions are not present, early-morning seminary (before school) is established.

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Students in released-time, daytime, and earlymorning seminary meet each day that public school is in session.

Home-Study Seminary

Home-study seminary is organized where students cannot attend a daily class because of distance or other factors. It usually is organized within the ward. Students are provided materials to enhance their daily scripture study. They are required to study the scriptures daily and attend a weekly class with a CES-appointed teacher. This class should not be held on Sunday.

Home-study students from several wards meet together at least four times a year for instruction under the direction of a CES coordinator or stake supervisor. An activity under the direction of stake or district priesthood leaders may be held in conjunction with these meetings.

Seminary for Home-School Students

Students ages 14 through 18 who are involved in home schooling attend the seminary class that is available in their area (released-time, daytime, earlymorning, or home-study seminary).

Funding and Activities

CES pays all costs for approved seminary programs. There is no fee charged for seminary enrollment. However, students are to obtain their own copies of the scriptures. Wards may assist students by ordering scriptures or having them available to purchase.

CES provides a limited budget for some activities. Seminary fund-raising projects are not authorized.

Seminary activities are to comply with the policies and guidelines on pages 276-80 in *Book 2*.

Facilities, Materials, and Equipment

Released-time seminary and daytime seminary are held in Church-owned or rented buildings near public schools. Early-morning seminary is held in meetinghouses or other facilities approved by local priesthood leaders.

The local CES representative orders all seminary materials except scriptures.

When seminary is held in a meetinghouse, curriculum materials are stored in the meetinghouse library. The meetinghouse library also supplies the audiovisual equipment needed for these seminary classes.

CES videocassettes and audiocassettes have been produced primarily for seminary students. However, other Church members may use them if (1) the materials are *not* used where youth of seminary age or younger are present and (2) the seminary teacher does not need them for lesson preparation or presentation.

CES has produced special religious education materials for students who have reading problems or other disabilities. The Church Educational System Publications Catalog lists these materials.

Seminary Graduation Exercises

Stake presidents preside over seminary graduation exercises. A member of the stake presidency works with the seminary principal or local CES coordinator to plan these exercises. Limited funds are available from CES to assist with expenses. For additional information, see A Guide to *Quality Seminary Graduation Exercises* or contact the local CES representative.

Institutes of Religion

Institutes of religion provide weekday religious instruction for all young single adults and married college students ages 18 through 30. Independent study classes are also available.

In addition to religious instruction, institutes provide opportunities to serve, enjoy social interaction, receive leadership training, and grow spiritually. Institutes assist local priesthood leaders in encouraging youth to serve missions and marry in the temple.

Institutes of religion are established under the direction of CES in selected locations adjacent to colleges and universities where sufficient numbers of Church members are enrolled. Institute classes may also be organized away from college campuses at the stake or multistake level, making it easier for nonstudent young single adults to participate.

For a class to qualify as an institute class, it must be an approved CES course. The teacher must be approved by the stake president and appointed and

supervised by CES. Approved CES curriculum materials must be used, and the class must meet for a prescribed amount of time per credit unit. Credit earned for classes that meet these criteria may be transferred to other institutes. Under certain circumstances it may also be transferred to Church universities and colleges.

The stake presidency or bishopric may organize gospel study classes for young single adults. However, these classes are not institute of religion classes.

Organization of Institutes

For information or charts about the organization of institutes, contact the local CES representative.

Institute of Religion Advisory Council

The institute of religion advisory council consists of a stake president, an institute director, and a student council presidency. The stake president is the chairman of the council. In institutes that serve multiple stakes, the Area President appoints one of the stake presidents as chairman of the council.

The advisory council directs the institute of religion student council. It also ensures correlation of recruitment and of activities and service projects that affect students and nonstudent young single adults who participate in the institute program.

Institute of Religion Student Council

Presidency. The institute of religion student council presidency is composed of a president, vice president(s), and secretary. The presidency may be composed of students and nonstudent young single adults who are recommended by priesthood leaders or CES personnel. Members of the presidency are approved, called, and set apart by or under the direction of the chairman of the advisory council.

Presidency members direct the student council in fulfilling the responsibilities outlined below.

Adviser. The institute director appoints an institute faculty member to advise the student council.

Council Members. The institute of religion student council is composed of students and nonstudent young single adults who are enrolled in institute and who represent various organizations (such as LDSSA) and interests (such as single members). Members of the student council are recommended by priesthood leaders or CES personnel. They are approved, called, and set apart by or under the direction of the chairman of the advisory council.

Responsibilities. Members of the institute of religion student council plan and implement all institute activities as approved by the advisory council. Members of the student council also encourage students and nonstudent young single adults to enroll in institute classes. They also foster spirituality.

Coordination with Stake Activities. The institute of religion student council does not replace stake leaders' responsibilities for young single adults. However, the two groups can coordinate their activities. This coordination usually occurs in institute student council meetings. It also could take place in the stake if an institute has not been established.

Organization in Stakes and Districts. In addition to being organized at institutes, student councils may be organized in stakes or districts where institute classes are removed from an established institute.

Funding and Activities

Institute students purchase their own scriptures. They also may purchase student manuals and pay a modest institute activity fee.

Funding for institute activities may come from the following sources as approved by the advisory council: (1) institute fees, (2) minimal charges for individual activities, and (3) stake, ward, or branch budgets. (Funding policies may vary in areas outside of North America.)

All institute activities must have the approval of the advisory council. The student council plans and implements approved activities. These activities are to comply with the policies and guidelines on pages 276-80 in *Book 2*.

Latter-day Saint Student Association (LDSSA)

The Church Educational System administers the Latter-day Saint Student Association (LDSSA). The LDSSA gives Latter-day Saint college students formal recognition, a legal presence on campus, and the organization to render campus service. At the local level, the institute director supervises the LDSSA through the institute of religion student council.

Facilities

Where available, institute buildings are the primary facilities for institute classes. Seminary buildings also may be used. If institute and seminary buildings are not available or are not conveniently located, CES personnel, under the direction of the stake president who is chairman of the institute advisory council, schedule classes in meetinghouses or other suitable facilities.

Institute Graduation Exercises

The stake president who is chairman of the institute advisory council presides over institute of religion graduation exercises. A member of the stake presidency works with the institute director or local CES coordinator to plan these exercises. He also consults with other stake presidents as appropriate.

Seminary and Institute Enrollment

Enrollment of youth and young adults in seminary and institute is to be a joint effort by priesthood leaders and CES representatives throughout the year. Recruitment is not complete until every potential student is enrolled.

Literacy

CES assists priesthood and Relief Society leaders in the literacy effort by providing literacy materials, giving instruction in the use of those materials, and giving ongoing support as requested.

Church Universities and Colleges

The Church sponsors several institutions of higher education. Information about admissions and academic programs can be obtained from the local CES representative and from the schools' admissions offices:

Brigham Young University
Admissions and Records
A-153 ASB
Provo, UT 84602
Brigham Young University-Hawaii
Admissions Office
Laie, HI 96762
Ricks College
Admissions Office
Rexburg, ID 83460-4104
LDS Business College
411 East South Temple Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84111

Endorsement to Enroll at Church Universities and Colleges

Church schools are centers of higher education but, more important, are communities of faith and commitment where firm testimonies of the restored gospel are developed and nurtured. To help ensure that those who attend Church schools are living by Church standards and will continue to do so, prospective and continuing students must receive endorsements from priesthood leaders as outlined in the following paragraphs.

Endorsement to Enroll at a Church School

Students who plan to enroll at Brigham Young University, BYU-Hawaii, Ricks College, or LDS Business College must receive endorsements from their bishop and a member of their stake presidency to be eligible for admission.

Endorsement to Continue Enrollment at a Church School

After being admitted to a Church school, students must receive an annual endorsement from the bishop of the ward they attend while in school. Students who do not have this endorsement may not register for the next academic year.

Instructions for Endorsement Interviews

The bishop or member of the stake presidency conducts a private, detailed interview with each student. He determines whether the person is active in the Church and living by Church standards. He commits the person to continue doing so, explaining that these are requirements of members who attend a Church university or college. He also commits the person to abide by the school's honor code and dress and grooming standards.

Interviewers of prospective students use the information from this interview to complete the confidential section of the application for admission. Interviewers of continuing students complete an ecclesiastical clearance form available from the school.

Leaders should not endorse members who are less active, unworthy, or under Church discipline. Leaders should work with these members to help them qualify for an endorsement in the future.

Adult and Continuing Education

Listed below are some of the adult and continuing education programs that are available through CES in many areas:

1 . Education Days and Education Week 2. Know Your Religion
3. Adult Religion Classes
4. Centers for Continuing Education
5. BYU Independent Study
6. Bachelor of Independent Studies

All continuing education programs are financially self-sustaining. Fees are assessed. Information about these programs can be obtained from the local CES representative or from:
Brigham Young University
Division of Continuing Education
Harman Continuing Education Building
Provo, UT 84602

Elementary and Secondary Education (in Some Areas outside the United States)

Where Church members contribute taxes to support their local, state, and national governments, and where local governments provide secular education for their citizens, those members are entitled to the benefits of their government's systems of education and should participate fully in those systems. In a few areas of the world and at the discretion of the Church Board of Education, some Church elementary and secondary schools have been established to give young Church members an opportunity to receive both secular and religious instruction.

13. Military Relations

Purpose of the Military Relations Program

The military relations program helps make the blessings of Church participation available to members who serve in the military. The program consists of (1) Church orientation for members who enter military service, (2) support from stakes and wards, and (3) the organization of service member groups when members in military service are unable to attend local wards. Leaders in some areas may need to adapt the instructions in this section. Any adaptations should be consistent with the general principles of these instructions.

Church Orientation

Preservice Church Orientation

Members who enter military service should attend a preservice Church orientation meeting before leaving their home wards. Where resource materials are available for conducting this orientation, a member of the stake presidency may order them from the distribution center that serves the stake.

Inservice Church Orientation

All members who enter military service should attend an inservice Church orientation meeting at their basic training stations. This meeting includes a more detailed discussion of the topics covered in the preservice orientation. If members have not received a military scripture set and an LDS identification tag, they should receive them during this orientation.

Stake Military Relations Leadership

Stake Presidency

A member of the stake presidency oversees preservice Church orientation in the stake. He makes sure it is offered to all members who are entering military service. He orders any available resource materials from the distribution center and makes them available to ward orientation instructors. The stake executive secretary may help coordinate this orientation.

If a military installation is located in the stake, the stake presidency calls a person with military experience to conduct the inservice Church orientation. A member of the stake presidency oversees this orientation and ensures that it is offered to all Church members at the installation.

A member of the stake presidency should develop a working relationship with the senior chaplain at each military installation in the stake. The chaplain should be given the names and telephone numbers of stake leaders so he can provide this information to newly arriving members and use it if there is an emergency, such as illness or death of a member at the installation.

A member of the stake presidency conducts an annual interview with LDS chaplains and spouses who are assigned to military installations in the stake or who consider the stake to be their home stake. One purpose of this interview is to determine their well-being. The chaplain also may be invited to report on the activities of Church units at the military installation.

If necessary, members of the stake presidency organize and oversee service member groups at military installations in the stake (see page 120). They call, set apart, and instruct group leaders and their assistants. They also give each group leader a Certificate of Appointment and a letter that outlines his responsibilities and authorizes him to preside over the group and conduct meetings.

If members or military installations are in a mission rather than a stake, the mission president fulfills the responsibilities that are outlined in this section for stake presidencies. As needed, he may delegate these responsibilities to his counselors and to district presidents.

Stake Executive Secretary

See page 9.

Ward Military Relations Leadership

Bishopric

The bishop or an assigned counselor interviews ward members before they leave for military service. He counsels them to obey the commandments of God and participate actively in the Church wherever they are stationed. He also gives them a military scripture set and an LDS identification tag. If appropriate, he may invite them to speak in sacrament meeting.

The bishopric encourages each member who is entering military service to attend a preservice Church orientation meeting. A member of the bishopric calls an instructor, preferably someone with military experience, to provide this orientation. Where resource materials are available for conducting this orientation, the instructor may obtain them from the stake presidency.

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When a member enters military service or is transferred to a new location, a member of the bishopric helps him or her identify the Church unit nearest the new duty station. The *Church's Directory of General Authorities and Officers* lists the Church unit that is responsible for members at United States military installations throughout the world. In some cases this information may be acquired from a telephone book or the installation chaplain.

Members of the home-ward bishopric should correspond frequently with each ward member in military service. They also encourage families to ensure that family members in the military receive the *Ensign* and *Church News.*

Each bishop is responsible for Church members who are assigned to a military installation within the boundaries of his ward. He notifies the senior chaplain of the ward's meeting schedule, meeting location, and contact person so the chaplain can give this information to Church members at the installation.

Ward Executive Secretary

See page 17

Organizing Service Member Groups

Members in military service should participate in the wards or branches at or near their military installations. When that is not feasible, the president of the stake or mission where the military installation is located organizes a Latter-day Saint service member group for military personnel and their families at the installation. He may organize these groups in any of the following circumstances:

1. There is not an organized Church unit within a reasonable distance of a military unit to which members are assigned.
2. The members' military unit is deployed or will be deployed in a location where the Church is not organized, where the local Church unit cannot accommodate the members, or where attendance at local meetings is not feasible.
3. Members are participating in training or other military exercises and attendance at local meetings is not feasible.
4. Members who belong to Reserve and National Guard units are participating in weekend drills

Before organizing a service member group, the stake or mission president consults the installation chaplain. If a chaplain is not assigned, he consults the commanding officer.

The stake president oversees service member groups at military installations in the stake. He may designate a ward to support each group.

The mission president oversees service member groups at military installations that are not in a stake. He may delegate responsibilities to the district president in whose district the installation is located.

Service Member Group Leadership

Calling Service Member Group Leaders and Assistants

Where a service member group is organized, the stake or mission president calls and sets apart a worthy Melchizedek Priesthood holder to be the group leader. The stake or mission president also oversees the calling of two worthy Melchizedek Priesthood holders to be the group leader's assistants. If a stake or mission president is not available to organize a service member group or extend these callings, a representative of Church members at the installation should request guidance from the Church's Military Relations Division (see the address on page 122).

In some cases, a person who will be called as a service member group leader or assistant may not be a member of the stake or mission where the military installation is located. For example, he may be a member of a Reserve or National Guard unit. When this occurs, the stake or mission president confers with the bishop of the person's home ward to determine the person's worthiness and the appropriateness of the call.

When more than one military unit with an organized service member group is deployed in the same area and the groups meet together, the stake or mission president or the senior LDS chaplain in the area appoints one leader to preside over the combined group.

Responsibilities of Group Leaders and Assistants

The service member group leader presides over the group. He and his assistants seek out Church members at the installation and invite them to participate in group meetings and activities. They conduct a sacrament service, weekly when possible, to give group members the opportunity to partake of the Sacrament.

The group leader and his assistants organize and oversee home teaching in the group. Guidelines are provided on pages 168-70 in Book 2.

The group leader and his assistants ensure that quality gospel teaching and learning occur in group meetings. They obtain any necessary materials and supplies from the Church unit that supports the military installation.

Each month the group leader gives the bishop or the stake or mission president a report on the welfare of group members, activities held by the group, and attendance at group meetings.

When authorized by the stake or mission president, the group leader may interview baptismal candidates and oversee their baptism. The group leader also may recommend brethren for priesthood ordination and, if authorized, conduct interviews and oversee ordinations to Aaronic Priesthood offices (see page 33).

In the rare case that it is not feasible for a worthy member to meet with the bishop for a temple recommend interview, the group leader writes a letter of recommendation for the member to take to the stake, mission, or temple president who conducts the interview.

The group leader does not collect tithing or other Church contributions. These contributions should be made to each member's ward.

The group leader is the group's representative with local military authorities, and he should develop a working relationship with them. He presents to the chaplain or commander his Certificate of Appointment and a letter from the stake or mission president that outlines his responsibilities and authorizes him to preside over the group and conduct meetings. If necessary, this letter may be obtained from the Church's Military Relations Division (see the address on page 122).

When meeting with the chaplain or commander, the group leader receives their permission and guidance concerning holding Church meetings. If necessary, he also inquires about possible locations for these meetings.

Church Responsibilities of LDS Chaplains

Active-Duty Chaplain

An active-duty LDS chaplain serves as a high councilor or in another appropriate calling in the stake or ward in which he is stationed. If he is not

called as a high councilor, the stake president should invite him to attend stake priesthood executive committee meetings. Stake presidents should not call chaplains to preside over service member groups, branches, or wards if such callings would conflict with the chaplains' military duties. Chaplains should not be called to positions that require proselyting.

Active-duty LDS chaplains observe Church units at their military installations and report on the activities of the units to the stake or mission president. They may act as liaisons between military leaders and the stake or mission president. When stationed in a stake, they may advise the stake presidency on military relations. When stationed in a mission, they may advise the mission president on military relations.

Active-duty LDS chaplains help local Church leaders locate members in the military and direct them to the appropriate Church unit. Chaplains also may help stake and mission presidents identify members in the military to call as service member group leaders. Under the direction of the stake or mission president, a chaplain may call and set apart assistants to group leaders.

When authorized by the bishop or the stake or mission president, chaplains may conduct interviews for priesthood ordination and oversee ordinations (see page 33).

Active-duty LDS chaplains may perform civil marriages as outlined on pages 71-72.

Reserve or National Guard Chaplain

When they are performing their Reserve or National Guard duties, Reserve or National Guard LDS chaplains have most of the same responsibilities as active-duty chaplains. However, their Church callings are determined by their home ward and stake priesthood authorities. Another difference is that they must receive permission from the Church's Military Relations Division each time they perform a marriage.

Records of Members in Military Service

See page 128.

Patriarchal Blessings for Members Entering the Military

See page 35.

Ordaining Servicemen in Isolated Areas

See page 33.

Issuing Temple Recommends to Military Personnel in Isolated Areas

See page 66.

Wearing the Garment in the Military

If members who enter military service have been endowed, bishops should make sure they understand the guidelines on page 69 and in the following paragraphs.

When possible, endowed members in the military should wear the garment the same as any other member. However, members should avoid exposing the garment to the view of those who do not understand its significance. When conditions make this unavoidable, members should seek the guidance of the Spirit and use tact, discretion, and wisdom. It may be best to lay the garment aside temporarily and put it on again when conditions permit. However, mere inconvenience in wearing the garment does not justify laying it aside.

When military regulations prevent a member from wearing the garment, the member's religious status is not affected, provided that he or she remains worthy If members in military service are unable to wear the garment because of military regulations or circumstances beyond their control, it is their privilege, right, and duty to wear it again as soon as circumstances permit.

Ordering Special Garments

Members in the military should consult with their individual services on requirements that garments must meet (such as one-piece or two-piece, color, or neckline style). To place special orders or receive assistance in selecting garments for special circumstances, members may call Beehive Clothing in Salt Lake City at 1-800-521-1203.

A two-piece brown cotton garment with a crew neck and T-shirt top that meets the specifications of the Church and the United States Army is available at clothing distribution centers or may be ordered from Beehive Clothing. This special military garment should be worn with the battle dress uniform when required by military regulations. A two-piece white cotton garment with a crew neck is also available.

Marine service members who require green garment tops should purchase the military green T-shirts and send them to Beehive Clothing to be marked individually. Brown garment bottoms may be worn with the green tops.

Certain synthetic fibers worn next to the skin may create serious hazards for airmen and others who may be exposed to fire. AR nylon and polyester blend materials fall into this category. Military authorities have indicated that cotton is a much safer fabric for these individuals to wear. A 100 percent cotton crewneck garment is available for these members.

Questions about Wearing the Garment

If members in the military have questions about wearing the garment, they may write or call:

Military Relations Division
Floor 20
50 East North Temple Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-6080
Telephone: 1-801-240-2286

14. Records and Reports

For units in the United States and Canada, the term *administration office* in this section refers to Church headquarters in Salt Lake City.

For units outside the United States and Canada, the term *administration office* refers to the Presiding Bishopric administration office or service center that serves the unit.

Purposes of Church Record Keeping

The Lord places great importance on record keeping in the Church. One of the first commandments He gave Joseph Smith when the Church was organized was, "There shall be a record kept among you" (D&C 21:1). Keeping records has been a commandment in all dispensations, and this important work continues in our time.

Accurate records help leaders get to know members and identify their needs. For example, records can help leaders identify who may need special care in becoming more active in the Church or becoming worthy of temple blessings. Accurate records also help leaders evaluate progress in accomplishing the mission of the Church. This evaluation can help leaders make plans for improvement.

These purposes of record keeping are similar to the purposes that Moroni suggested: "And after they had been received unto baptism, and were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost, they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ; and their names were taken, that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God" (Moroni 6:4).

Another important purpose of record keeping in the Church is to maintain a record of the saving ordinances that each person receives.

.Leaders should provide instruction on how to use Church records to help accomplish the purposes outlined above.

Types of Records

The following types of records are kept in Church units:

Member progress reports. These include information about meeting attendance, visits to members, activity and priesthood office of new converts, and temple recommend status of endowed members (see pages 126-27).

Membership records. These include names and addresses and information about birth, parentage, and ordinances for each member (see pages 127-31).

Historical records. These include information about officers who are serving, accomplishments, challenges, faith-building experiences, and other notable events (see page 131).

Financial records. These include information about tithes and other offerings and costs for activities and supplies (see pages 133-40).

Stake Record-Keeping Leadership

Stake President

The stake president oversees stake record keeping. He may assign his counselors and clerks to do much of this work under his direction.

The stake president ensures that stake clerks and stake and ward leaders are taught their record-keeping responsibilities. He also ensures that they follow Church policies and procedures in completing their assignments.

The stake president oversees stake clerks in preparing records and reports. He meets with the clerks to review these materials; to ensure that they are accurate, complete, and on time; and to sign those that require his signature. A counselor may review and sign reports in the stake president's absence.

The stake president assigns clerks to follow up on all audit concerns within 30 days of the audit.

The stake president oversees the preparation of the annual stake historical summary (see page 131). He also ensures that people who have access to records and reports protect the privacy of individuals (see pages 131-32).

Stake Clerk

A stake clerk is called as outlined on page 9. The stake president may assign him responsibilities such as those outlined below. Assistant stake clerks may help.

Stake Record-Keeping Responsibilities

The stake clerk provides administrative support to the stake presidency. He records minutes of stake leadership meetings. He also reminds the stake presidency of items that need follow-up or further consideration.

The stake clerk prepares stake records and reports. These include the Member Progress Report (see page 126), financial records (see pages 133-40), and membership information. He ensures that records and reports are accurate, complete, and on time.

The stake clerk meets with the stake president to review records and reports. He provides information from these materials to help leaders identify (1) the needs of members and organizations; (2) the availability of resources, such as finances and priesthood strength; and (3) trends, strengths, and weaknesses.

The stake clerk should become familiar with the record-keeping programs on Church computer systems where they are available.

The stake clerk may design and print boundary models to use in proposing realignment of stake and ward boundaries. He also may complete forms for proposed boundary changes.

When a new ward is created or a bishop is released, the stake clerk oversees the transfer of ward records, correspondence, and accounts. He also submits information to the administration office when there is a change in stake president, stake president's counselor, bishop, or patriarch.

The stake clerk prepares the Officers Sustained form for the first stake conference of each year and for the annual historical summary. He also ensures that certificates for Melchizedek Priesthood ordination are prepared and distributed properly.

The stake clerk helps the stake president record information for stake disciplinary councils (see pages 99,101).

Review of Ward Records

The stake clerk reviews ward records and reports to ensure that they are accurate and complete. He resolves record-keeping problems before giving reports to the stake president. He works directly with ward clerks to resolve minor problems. He discusses serious problems with the stake president or, at his request, the bishop.

The stake clerk meets with each ward clerk twice each year to ensure that (1) membership records are updated promptly and accurately and (2) certificates of blessing, baptism and confirmation, and priesthood ordination are given to ward members.

Record-Keeping Instruction

As requested by the stake president or a bishop, the stake clerk instructs assistant stake clerks, ward clerks, and assistant ward clerks. This instruction is especially important when clerks are newly called, when a Church record-keeping program is introduced or updated, and when records are not completed properly. He should instruct new ward clerks within 30 days of when they are called.

The stake clerk also may help priesthood and auxiliary leaders instruct secretaries.

Record-keeping instruction can be given individually and during priesthood leadership meetings, ward conferences, and other times as necessary.

When instructing clerks or secretaries, the stake clerk helps them understand how information from records and reports can help leaders.

The stake clerk ensures that other clerks and secretaries obtain the materials they need to fulfill their responsibilities.

Audits

The stake clerk should be aware of audit reports. He works with ward clerks and assistant clerks to ensure that membership and financial record-keeping problems are resolved. For information about audits of membership records, see the Stake/District Audit of Membership Records form. For information about audits of Church finances, see pages 139-40.

Stake Historical Records

The stake president may assign the stake clerk, an assistant stake clerk, or a stake history specialist to prepare the annual Stake and District Historical Summary (see page 131).

Assistant Stake Clerks

Assistant stake clerks may be called as outlined on page 9. The stake presidency may assign these clerks to each part of stake record keeping, such as financial records, member progress reporting, and historical records. They work under the direction of the stake presidency and the stake clerk.

The stake president assigns an assistant stake clerk to become familiar with Church-published resource materials and know how to order them from distribution centers. This clerk also should know how to order garments and temple clothing. He instructs clerks who have similar responsibilities in wards. He also coordinates efforts to help stake members be informed about these materials and know how to obtain them.

Ward Record-Keeping Leadership

Bishop

The bishop oversees ward record keeping. He may assign his counselors and clerks to do much of this work under his direction.

The bishop ensures that ward clerks and quorum, group, and auxiliary leaders are taught their recordkeeping responsibilities. He also ensures that they follow Church policies and procedures in fulfilling these responsibilities.

The bishop oversees ward clerks in preparing records and reports. He meets with the clerks to review these materials; to ensure that they are accurate, complete, and on time; and to sign those that require his signature. A counselor may review and sign reports in the bishop's absence.

The bishop ensures that people who have access to records and reports protect the privacy of individuals (see pages 131-32).

Ward Clerk

A ward clerk is called as outlined on page 17. The bishop may assign him responsibilities such as those outlined below. Assistant ward clerks may help.

Ward Record-Keeping Responsibilities

The ward clerk provides administrative support to the bishopric. He records minutes of ward leadership meetings. He also reminds the bishopric of items that need follow-up or further consideration.

The ward clerk prepares ward records and reports. These include the Member Progress Report (see page 126), financial records (see pages 133-40), and membership records (see pages 127-31). He ensures that records and reports are accurate, complete, and on time.

The ward clerk meets regularly with the bishop to review records and reports. He provides information from these materials to help leaders identify (1) the needs of members and organizations; (2) the availability of resources, such as finances and priesthood strength; and (3) trends, strengths, and weaknesses.

When compiling the Member Progress Report, the ward clerk reviews information submitted by ward organizations to ensure that it is accurate and complete. He resolves record-keeping problems before giving the report to the bishop. He works directly with secretaries to resolve minor problems. He discusses serious problems with the bishop or, at his request, the organization leader.

The ward clerk should become familiar with the record-keeping programs on Church computer systems where they are available. He also provides membership directories, lists, and rolls received from the administration office or produced by the Member Information System (MIS) software to the bishopric, to other priesthood leaders, and to auxiliary leaders.

The ward clerk prepares the Officers Sustained form for ward conference. He also ensures that certificates of blessing, baptism and confirmation, and priesthood ordination are given to ward members.

The ward clerk helps the bishop record information for ward disciplinary councils (see pages 99, 101).

Record-Keeping Instruction

The ward clerk coordinates record-keeping instruction for assistant ward clerks and for quorum, group, and auxiliary secretaries. He ensures that they receive instruction when they are newly called, when a Church record-keeping program is introduced or updated, and when records are not completed properly.

When instructing assistant clerks or secretaries, the ward clerk helps them understand how information from records and reports can help leaders.

The ward clerk ensures that assistant clerks and secretaries have the materials they need to fulfill their responsibilities.

Assistant Ward Clerks

Assistant ward clerks may be called as outlined on page 17 The bishopric may assign these clerks to each part of ward record keeping, such as financial and membership records. They work under the direction of the bishopric and the ward clerk.

The bishop assigns an assistant ward clerk to become familiar with Church-published resource materials and know how to order them from distribution centers. This clerk also should know how to order garments and temple clothing. He coordinates efforts to help ward members be informed about these materials and know how to obtain them.

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Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders

Priesthood and auxiliary leaders oversee record keeping in their organizations. They may assign secretaries to do much of this work under their direction. They meet regularly with secretaries to ensure that records are accurate, complete, and on time.

Priesthood and Auxiliary Secretaries

See pages 166, 182, 197-98, 217, 232, and 242 in *Book 2*.

Member Progress Reporting

Member progress reporting consists of weekly, monthly, and quarterly information that helps leaders focus on the progress and needs of members. All members of record (as defined on page 127) are included in member progress reporting.

Components of Member Progress Reporting

Attendance Rolls

See pages 170, 189-90, 207, 226, 238, and 244 in Book 2.

Home Teaching and Visiting Teaching Reports

See pages 170 and 207 in Book 2.

Member Progress Report-Stake /District

Under the direction of the stake president, the stake clerk prepares the Member Progress Report-Stake/District each quarter. Instructions are on the form.

The stake president reviews the report for accuracy, signs it, and makes sure the clerk submits it to the administration office by the 30th of the month following the end of the quarter.

Member Progress Report-Ward /Branch

Under the direction of the bishop, the ward clerk prepares the Member Progress Report-Ward/Branch each month. Instructions are on the form.

The bishop reviews the report for accuracy, signs it, and makes sure the clerk submits it to the stake by the 15th of each month.

Membership Lists

Membership lists provide important supplemental information to member progress reporting. These lists are produced by the administration office or by ward computers. They include information about members who are of age for ordinances. They also identify young men of missionary age. In addition, the lists identify which men hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and which members are endowed. Lists for the bishopric's youth interviews are also available.

Using the Information

Leaders should serve and nurture all members, but member progress reporting can help identify which individuals and families need the most care. Every number and statistic in member progress reporting represents an individual member who has unique needs. Leaders should seek direction from the Lord as they consider whom to reach out to and what help to provide.

Using information from member progress reporting, leaders can identify attendance patterns that help them focus attention on those who need help and those who are most likely to respond to activation efforts.

Information from member progress reporting also helps leaders determine -which members are missed regularly by home teachers or visiting teachers. Leaders can then take steps to make sure these members are visited.

Member progress reporting can help leaders identify which members should be considered for priesthood ordinances and full-time missionary service. It also helps leaders determine which recent adult male converts have not been ordained and which adult converts did not attend priesthood or Relief Society meetings during the month. With this information, leaders can plan how to help members prepare to receive ordinances and how to encourage attendance.

Member progress reporting also helps leaders focus attention on endowed members who do not have current temple recommends.

Percentages are not part of member progress reporting, but they may be computed to show trends, such as whether activity is increasing or decreasing. They should not be used to compare one ward with another, one quorum with another, or one person with another. Ward and individual circumstances are unique.

When monitoring attendance, leaders should consider that some members may be on Church assignments outside the ward. Other members may be required to work on Sunday or may be away for vacations and other reasons. Leaders also should keep in mind members who are ill, members who are confined to their homes or to health-care facilities, and members who are giving care on Sunday to those who are confined.

Membership Records

Membership records include members' names and addresses, as well as ordinance and other vital information. The ward should have a membership record for each member living within the ward boundaries. Membership records are to be kept in the ward in which the member lives. Exceptions, which should be few, require the consent of the bishops and stake presidents involved and the approval of the Office of the First Presidency.

Membership records are the only means of recording ordinances and actions in the permanent records of the Church. Therefore, the bishop makes sure that clerks keep accurate records and send updated information promptly to the administration office. It is especially important to record ordinance information, promptly request records of members who move into the ward, and promptly transfer records of members who move from the ward.

Occasionally members should review their own membership records and those of dependent children living at home, but only with a clerk or the bishop. Members may not have copies of membership records. However, they may request copies of their Individual Ordinance Summary for personal use in areas where the First Presidency has authorized the summary. Under no circumstances may membership records be given to anyone other than the bishop or a clerk.

The administration office provides handbooks or other detailed instructions for creating and updating membership records. Some general principles are outlined in the following paragraphs.

Names Used in Church Records

A person's full proper name, not initials or a nickname, should be used on membership records and ordinance certificates.

Members of Record

For statistical and reporting purposes, the following individuals are members of record. Each of them should have a membership record:

1. Those who have been baptized *and* confirmed.
2. Those under age nine who have been blessed but not baptized.
3. Those who are not accountable because of mental disabilities, regardless of age.
4. Unblessed children under age eight when (*a*) at least one parent is a member of the Church and (*b*) both parents give permission for a record to created. This includes children of converts.

After a person is baptized, the administration office sends a record of baptism to the unit. After I person is confirmed, the administration office sends a new or updated membership record to the unit.

A person age nine or older who has a membership record but has not been baptized and confirmed is not considered a member of record. However, tile bishop keeps the membership record until the person is 18. At that time if the person chooses not to be baptized despite being given every opportunity, the bishop, with written permission from the stake president, cancels the membership record. However, records of unbaptized members who are considered not accountable because of mental disabilities are not canceled.

Records of New Ward Members

When membership records are received in a ward and when converts are baptized and confirmed, a member of the bishopric introduces and welcomes the new members in the next sacrament meeting. He reads each person's name, invites the person to stand, and asks members of the congregation to show by the uplifted hand that they accept the members in full fellowship in the ward. Records of family members are read together. If a member knows any reason why a person may not be entitled to full fellowship, he or she should talk to the bishop privately.

After children who are members of record are baptized and confirmed, a member of the bishopric announces each child's baptism and confirmation in sacrament meeting. These children are not presented for acceptance into the ward because they are already members.

The ward clerk or an assistant ward clerk meets with new ward members soon after they arrive to review their membership records for accuracy

Records of Members Who Move or Are Temporarily Away from Home

Ward leaders, home teachers, or clerks obtain the forwarding addresses of members as soon as they become aware that members intend to move. Leaders of the new ward should contact members as soon as possible after they move in.

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If a clerk cannot find out where members have moved, he sends the membership records to the administration office, where efforts to locate the members will continue.

When a person moves from a ward for more than three months, a clerk normally moves the membership record to the new ward. As an exception, the record is not moved if the member intends to return after leaving for temporary seasonal or employment purposes that may last longer than three months.

When a person moves from the ward for less than three months and intends to return, the membership record is kept in the home ward. The home ward also maintains the member's financial records.

If local leaders are uncertain about where a membership record should be (such as for a member in prison), they should keep the record in the ward that can best meet the member's needs.

Records of Members Serving outside Their Home Ward

Mission and Temple Presidents

The membership records of mission and temple presidents and their wives should stay in their home ward unless their children accompany them in the assignment. If children accompany them, the records should be sent to the ward where they live during the assignment. Financial contributions and tithing declarations should be made to the ward where the membership records are located.

Other Church Assignments

If members have Church assignments outside their home ward but live in their home ward, their membership and financial records are kept in the home ward. If assignments require members to move from their home ward for three months or more, and if their children accompany them, their membership records are moved to the new ward.

Full-Time Missionaries

See page 87

Records of Members in Hospitals or Homes for the Aged

The records of members who live in hospitals or homes for the aged and infirm are kept in the ward that can best serve them. In most cases this is the ward where the hospital or home is located. Ward leaders make sure these members receive the full program of the Church to the extent possible.

Records of Members in Military Service

When a member enters military service for training, the membership record is kept in the home ward until the member is assigned to a more long-term duty station. At that time, the member should contact the home ward and provide the name and address of the new ward so a clerk can move the membership record.

If a member is at sea for an extended time, is deployed in a war zone, or is not within the boundaries of a stake or mission, the membership record is usually kept in the ward that supports the duty station.

Records of Members Who Do Not Have a Permanent Address

Members who travel extensively and do not have a permanent address should consult with the bishop at their place of primary residence and designate a home ward. That ward keeps the membership records, and ward leaders should maintain contact with the members. Financial contributions and tithing declarations should be made to that ward.

Records of Members Who Have Mental Disabilities

If the bishop determines that a person who is at least eight years old is not accountable, he instructs a clerk to write *Not Accountable* under the heading for baptism on the person's membership record (see also pages 26-27). The clerk sends the record to the administration office for updating. The record should not be canceled.

Records of Members Who Have Hearing Impairments

Members who use sign language and their families may choose to have their Church membership records in one of the following places: (1) their home ward, (2) a designated host ward within a geographic area to which a group for the hearing impaired is assigned, or (3) a ward or branch organized for members who are hearing impaired.

Records of Adopted Children

Records of adopted children and their adoptive parents may be created or updated only after the adoption is final. The name on the membership record should conform to the decree of adoption.

Records of Babies Who Were Born out of Wedlock

See page 25.

Records of Children of Divorced Parents

If a child's parents are divorced, his or her legal name, as defined by local law or custom, should be recorded on the membership record and the certificate.

Records with Special Comments

The bishop and a clerk review the records of new ward members for special comments that the administration office may have added. When records include such comments, the bishop contacts the administration office as needed and takes appropriate action.

Records with Annotations

In areas where the First Presidency has given authorization, an annotation may be placed on the record of a member whose conduct has threatened the well-being of other persons or of the Church. An annotation helps the bishop protect Church members and others from such individuals. When a bishop receives an annotated membership record, he should follow the instructions in the annotation.

Church headquarters will automatically annotate a person's membership record when the stake president or bishop:

1. Submits a Report of Church Disciplinary Action showing that the person was disciplined for incest, sexual offense against or serious physical abuse of a child, plural marriage, an elective transsexual operation, repeated homosexual activities (by adults), or embezzlement of Church funds or property.
2. Submits written notification that the person has been criminally convicted for one of these transgressions.

Church headquarters also will automatically annotate a person's membership record when the stake president and bishop jointly submit written notification that the person has committed one of these transgressions before or after excommunication or name removal. In addition, the stake president and bishop may jointly recommend that a person's membership record be annotated for other conduct that threatens the well-being, of other persons or of the Church.

In all cases, annotation of membership records is removed only with First Presidency approval upon request of the stake president.

Requests for Contact on Membership Records

If a member moves and the bishop feels a need to share information with the member's new bishop, he completes a Request for Contact form and sends it with the membership record. When a bishop receives a record that is accompanied by one of these forms, he should contact the previous bishop as soon as feasible. After the contact, the bishop should destroy the Request for Contact form.

Move Restrictions on Membership Records

If a member moves while Church disciplinary action or another serious concern is pending, the bishop or another authorized priesthood leader may contact the administration office and ask for a move restriction on the membership record. A move restriction may also be requested in cases of welfare abuse.

A record that has a move restriction will not be moved to a new unit until the priesthood leader who requested the restriction authorizes it to be removed.

Recording and Correcting Ordinance Information

Instructions for recording and correcting ordinance information on membership records are provided on pages 24-25, 26, 29, and 33.

Preparing Certificates for Ordinances and Blessings

Priesthood leaders ensure that certificates are prepared and distributed as soon as possible after the blessing of a child, baptism and confirmation, and priesthood ordination. These certificates are a member's only Church source for the names of those who performed the ordinance or blessing. Leaders encourage members to safeguard these certificates, explaining that they may be irreplaceable if they are lost or destroyed.

Recording and Correcting Civil Information

Civil information (name, date of birth, marriage information, date of divorce, and places where these events occurred) is recorded on membership records. If this information has been recorded incorrectly, a member may ask the bishop to have it corrected. If official documents are available, a bishop may want to review them to verify the accuracy of a requested correction.

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Special Situations

For special situations that are not addressed in this section, such as records for common law marriages, leaders should see membership records instructions or contact the administration office.

Removing Names from Church Membership Records

An adult member who wishes to have his or her name removed from the membership records of the Church must send the bishop a written, signed request (not a form letter). A request that Church representatives not visit a member is not sufficient to initiate this action.

The bishop makes sure that a member who requests name removal understands the consequences: it cancels the effects of baptism and confirmation, withdraws the priesthood held by a male member, and revokes temple blessings. The bishop also explains that a person can be readmitted to the Church by baptism only after a thorough interview (see "Readmission after Name Removal" on this page).

If the bishop is satisfied that the member understands these consequences and is not likely to be dissuaded, he completes a Report of Administrative Action form and forwards it to the stake president. The bishop forwards the member's written request and membership record with the form.

If members of the stake presidency concur after reviewing the matter, they ask the bishop to send the member a letter stating that his or her name is being removed from the records of the Church as requested. The letter should state the consequences of name removal. It also should state that the request for name removal can be rescinded only if the member sends the stake president a written request for recision within 30 days (the stake president's name and address should be included). If the stake president does not receive such a request, he submits the completed Report of Administrative Action form and other documents requested on the form. Instructions for submittal are on the form. The person's name is then removed from the membership records of the Church.

A minor who wishes to have his or her name removed from the records of the Church must follow the same procedure as an adult with one exception: the written request must be signed by the minor (if over the age of eight) and by the parent, parents, or guardians who have legal custody of the minor.

If two or more family members want their names removed from the records of the Church, they need to prepare only one written request.

If a member requesting name removal threatens legal action against the Church or Church leaders, the stake president should follow the instructions on page 151.

Name Removal and Church Discipline

If a member requests name removal and a bishop or stake president has evidence of transgression that warrants convening a disciplinary council, he should not act on the request until Church discipline has been imposed or he has concluded that no disciplinary council will be held. Name removal should not be used as a substitute for or alternative to Church discipline.

If a member requests name removal and a bishop or stake president suspects transgression but lacks sufficient evidence to convene a disciplinary council, the request for name removal may be approved. Any evidence of unresolved transgressions should be noted on the Report of Administrative Action form so priesthood leaders may resolve such matters if the individual applies for readmission into the Church.

Effects of Name Removal on Temple Sealings

See pages 74 and 76.

Announcement of Name Removal

In some cases a bishop may need to announce that a person's name has been removed from the membership records of the Church. The announcement merely states that the action was taken at the person's request. The announcement should not use the word *excommunication.* The guidelines under "Announcement of the Decision" on pages 100-101 apply.

Readmission after Name Removal

After name removal, a person must be baptized to be readmitted into the Church. When a person requests readmission, the bishop or stake president requests a copy of the Report of Administrative Action form that accompanied the request for name removal. This copy is available from the Office of the First Presidency. After reviewing the form, the bishop interviews the person thoroughly. He inquires about the reasons for the name removal request and the desire for readmission. He also determines whether any unresolved transgressions may have been committed before or after name removal.

If the person was on formal probation or was disciplinary at the time of name removal, a disciplinary council is held to consider the request for readmission.

If the bishop finds that before name removal the person committed transgressions that warranted disciplinary action but were not resolved, he should not approve a request for readmission until he is satisfied that the person has repented of those and any subsequent transgressions. No disciplinary council is held.

If the person committed any of the transgressions listed under "Apply for First Presidency Approval" (see page 105), either before or after name removal, the approval of the First Presidency is required for readmission. If the person is readmitted after committing any of the transgressions listed under "Records with Annotations" (see page 129), either before or after name removal, an annotation will be made on the new membership record.

A person who requests readmission must meet the same qualifications as others who are baptized (see the Baptism Record book). When the bishop is satisfied that the person is worthy and sincere in wanting to be readmitted, he prepares a Baptism Record, noting on the form that the baptism is for readmission. After baptism, the person is confirmed a member of the Church and receives the gift of the Holy Ghost. The confirmation may be performed during the baptismal service or during a sacrament meeting.

Priesthood ordination, temple recommends, membership records, and the ordinance of restoration of blessings are handled the same as for an excommunicated person who has been readmitted by baptism (see pages 106-7).

Historical Records

Each year the stake president oversees the stake clerk, an assistant stake clerk, or a stake history specialist in preparing the Stake and District Historical Summary. The person who prepares the summary gathers information concerning noteworthy events, accomplishments, and spiritual experiences from stake priesthood and auxiliary leaders, the stake mission, and wards. When preparing the summary, the person should provide enough detail to give a clear understanding of events and their effect on those who are involved.

The Officers Sustained forms from the stake and each ward should be included in the historical Summary. The completed summary should be submitted at the end of the year as indicated on the form.

Confidentiality of Records

Church records are confidential. These include membership records, financial records, minutes of meetings, official forms and documents (including records of disciplinary councils), and notes made from private interviews. These records may exist on paper, computer, or diskette.

Leaders and clerks are to safeguard Church records by handling, storing, and disposing of them in a way that protects the privacy of individuals. Leaders ensure that information that is gathered from members is (1) limited to what the Church requires and (2) used only for approved Church purposes.

Leaders give information from Church records and reports only to those who are authorized to use it. Leaders ensure that it is not used for personal, political, or commercial purposes. Information from Church records, including historical information, may not be given to individuals or agencies conducting research or surveys.

Membership directories that are distributed to members should include only name, address, and telephone information. Membership lists that have more information, such as age and membership status, may be given only to authorized stake and ward leaders.

For additional guidelines, see "Records Management" below.

Records Management

Stake and ward leaders should make effective records management a part of their record-keeping procedures. Three important areas of records management are outlined in the following paragraphs.

Protection

All information should be protected against unauthorized access, change, destruction, or disclosure. Church records, reports, and backup copies of computer software programs and data should be kept in a safe place. Highly sensitive records, including computer printouts and disks, should be kept in a locked drawer or cabinet in the leader's office when they are not being used .

To protect confidential membership and financial information on computers, leaders should use the password features of Church record-keeping systems. Passwords should be written down and kept in locked files away from the computer. They should be changed when leaders and clerks are released. If members use stake and ward computers for family history work, they should not have access to membership or financial information.

Retention

Records should be kept only as long as they are needed for administrative and legal purposes. Leaders who have specific questions about how long to keep records should consult record-keeping instructions or the administration office.

Disposition

Records that are outdated or no longer needed should be destroyed in such a way that the information cannot be retrieved or reconstructed. Membership diskettes should be destroyed rather than erased and used for other purposes.

Records that have potential historical value should not be discarded, destroyed, or placed in the meetinghouse library. Questions about the historical value of records may be addressed to:

> Historical Department (Archives Division)
> Floor 2EW
> 50 East North Temple Street
> Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3800
> Telephone: 1-801-246-1702

15. Finances

For units in the United States and Canada, the term *administration office* in this section refers to Church headquarters in Salt Lake City.

For units outside the United States and Canada, the term *administration office* refers to the Presiding Bishopric administration office or service center that serves the unit.

General Church Financial Leadership

The Council on the Disposition of the Tithes, composed of the First Presidency, Quorum of the Twelve, and Presiding Bishopric, oversees all finances and property of the Church and determines the disposition of tithes and other offerings (see D&C 120; Conference Report, Apr. 1991, 74).

Stake Financial Leadership

Stake President

The stake president oversees stake finances. He may delegate much of this work to his counselors and clerks. He should read all instructions from the administration office about Church finances.

The stake president ensures that stake clerks and stake and ward leaders are taught their responsibilities for finances. He also ensures that they follow Church policies and procedures in fulfilling these responsibilities. He regularly reviews budgets and expenditures with bishops, stake clerks, and stake leaders.

The stake president teaches members to pay a full tithe and give generous offerings (see pages 134-35).

The stake president ensures that stake funds are properly handled and accounted for (see pages 136-37). He also manages the stake budget and expenditures (see page 137).

The stake president ensures that budget allowance guidelines are followed in the stake (see pages 137-38). He also ensures that the stake and wards follow applicable tax regulations to preserve the Church's tax-exempt status (see page 140).

The stake president oversees and reviews audits of stake and ward financial records (see page 139). He assigns clerks to follow up on all audit concerns within 30 days of the audit.

Stake Clerk (or Assistant Stake Clerk)

The stake president assigns the stake clerk or an assistant stake clerk to help with stake financial record keeping. This is an important calling to help account for and protect the sacred funds of the Church. The financial record-keeping duties of this clerk are outlined below and explained further in instructions from the administration office.

He receipts income property (such as funds collected from members for optional enrichment activities or from other stakes for multistake activities). He also accompanies the member of the stake presidency who deposits the income.

He prepares checks and makes sure stake financial obligations are paid promptly. He also reconciles the checking account and the local deposit bank account, if any. If necessary, he helps wards reconcile and correct ward deposits and expenditures.

He helps the stake presidency prepare the annual stake budget and keep track of the stake budget allowance (see pages 137-38). He also helps the stake president keep track of missionary funds in the stake.

He makes sure the stake is complying with all, applicable tax laws (see page 140). He also participates in periodic audits by stake auditors (see page 139).

Ward Financial Leadership

Bishop

The bishop oversees ward finances. He may delegate much of this work to his counselors and clerks. He should read all instructions from the administration office about Church finances.

The bishop ensures that ward clerks and ward leaders are taught their responsibilities for finances. He also ensures that they follow Church policies and procedures in fulfilling these responsibilities. He regularly reviews budgets and expenditures with clerks and ward leaders.

The bishop teaches members to pay a full tithe and give generous offerings (see pages 134-35).

He ensures that ward funds are properly handled and accounted for (see pages 136-37). He also manages the ward budget and expenditures (see page 137).

The bishop ensures that budget allowance guidelines are followed in the ward (see pages 137-38).

He also ensures that the ward follows applicable tax regulations to preserve the Church's tax-exempt status (see page 140).

The bishop should be available to answer questions during audits of ward financial records (see page 139).

Ward Clerk (or Assistant Ward Clerk)

The bishop assigns the ward clerk or an assistant ward clerk to assist with ward financial record keeping. This is an important calling to help account for and protect the sacred funds of the Church. The financial record-keeping duties of this clerk are outlined below and explained further in instructions from the administration office.

Each week he helps a member of the bishopric account for all tithes and other offerings. He accompanies the member of the bishopric who deposits these funds in a bank. He also remits the tithing to the administration office.

Each month this clerk reconciles the ward checking account and any other financial records required. He also informs the bishop of (1) the status of ward expenditures in relation to the budget allowance and (2) the amount of funds in the ward "Missionary" and "Other" categories.

Each year this clerk prepares and organizes records to help the bishop conduct tithing settlement. He also helps the bishop prepare the Annual Tithing Status Report. In addition, he produces and distributes Year-to-Date Tithing and Offerings Statements and year-end summaries to members.

The bishop may assign this clerk to prepare checks as needed, help prepare the annual ward budget, and participate in financial audits by stake auditors (see page 139).

Contributions by Members

Church leaders should teach members the principles of tithes and other offerings and encourage members to live these principles. Nonmembers also may make contributions to the Church. Tithes, other offerings, and other contributions are described in the following paragraphs.

Tithing

Definition of Tithing

The First Presidency has written: "The simplest statement we know of is the statement of the Lord himself, namely, that the members of the Church should pay 'one-tenth of all their interest annually, which is understood to mean income. No one is justified in making any other statement than this" (First Presidency letter, 19 Mar. 1970; see also D&C 119:4).

Who Should Pay Tithing

All Church members who have income should pay tithing, with the following exceptions:

1. Members who are entirely dependent on Church welfare assistance.
2. Full-time missionaries. (However, missionaries should pay tithing on personal income beyond the amount they receive for their support.)

When and How to Pay Tithing

Local leaders should encourage members to pay tithing as they receive their income. However, members who wish to pay annually may do so.

Members give their tithing and a completed Tithing and Other Offerings form to a member of the bishopric. See also "In-Kind Donations, Including Tithing," page 135.

Use of Tithing Funds

Bishops may not use tithing funds for any purpose. All tithing funds must be remitted to the administration office (see D&C 120).

Tithing Settlement

The bishop holds tithing settlement near the end of each year. In urgent cases when the bishop is absent, the stake president may authorize one of the bishop's counselors to conduct tithing settlement.

All members should attend tithing settlement to make sure their contribution records are correct and to declare to the bishop their status as tithe payers. AR members of a family should attend tithing settlement. In addition to reviewing the members' tithing records, during tithing settlement the bishop can discuss the principle of tithing with them, encourage them to give a generous fast offering, and discuss other relevant matters.

Instructions for tithing settlement are provided by the administration office.

Fast Offerings

Each month members should contribute fast offerings that are at least the equivalent value of the two consecutive meals not eaten during the fast. When possible, members are I encouraged to be generous and contribute much more than this amount.

To contribute fast offerings, members give the offering and a completed Tithing and Other Offerings form to a member of the bishopric. Members may also give the offering and form to Aaronic Priesthood holders who are assigned to collect fast offerings each month and who take the offerings to the bishopric. Members should not give other contributions to these Aaronic Priesthood holders. For more information about Aaronic Priesthood holders collecting fast offerings, see page 186 in *Book 2*.

Members should contribute fast offerings without designating how the funds should be used. Bishops may not enter into arrangements or make commitments to give a member's fast-offering contribution to an individual or family or to use it for a special purpose that the donor designates.

Guidelines for using fast-offering funds are provided on pages 15-16.

In-Kind Donations, Including Tithing

The Church normally discourages paying tithing in kind. It is preferable for members to dispose of the property themselves and then pay tithing in cash. However, the payment of tithing in kind may be accepted in certain cases and may be a common practice in some areas of the world.

The Church accepts (1) stocks, bonds, or other securities that are marketable immediately and (2) some marketable real estate. Before accepting these contributions, local leaders should receive approval from the administration office. If members want to contribute any other items, the bishop should clear it with the stake president. The stake president should contact the administration office for approval before authorizing the bishop to accept the items.

Missionary Funds

Financing Missionary Service

See pages 82-83.

Contributing to Missionary Funds

Members may use the Tithing and Other Offerings form to contribute to Church missionary funds.

Contributions to the ward missionary fund are used to assist missionaries from the ward or stake.

Contributions to the General Missionary Fund help spread the gospel in ways such as providing partial financial support for missionaries who need it to supplement contributions from themselves, their family, and the ward missionary fund.

Contributions to the General Book of Mormon Fund are used to provide copies of the Book of Mormon for full-time missionaries as needed.

Stake presidents and bishops should send missionary funds and other funds that exceed reasonable stake and ward needs to the General Missionary Fund at the administration office. Bishops or individuals may contact the administration office for further information about contributions to the General Missionary Fund.

LDS Foundation

The LDS Foundation is a department of the Office of the Presiding Bishopric that correlates, encourages, facilitates, and accepts voluntary philanthropic contributions to the Church and its related organizations and activities. Assistance in making contributions may be obtained by contacting LDS Foundation at Church headquarters.

Humanitarian Aid

Church humanitarian work assists people in dire need throughout the world. Members who desire to make contributions to Church humanitarian aid may use the Tithing and Other Offerings form. Members should enter the contribution on the "Other" line and designate that it is for humanitarian aid. These contributions should be remitted according to instructions provided by the administration office.

Contributions Not to Be Refunded

When tithes and other offerings are given to the Church, they belong to the Lord, to whom they are consecrated. These offerings include all contributions to the ward and general missionary funds. The essence of all such contributions is that they are freewill offerings, made without reservation of purpose, retention of control, ownership in any form, or expectation of any benefit by the donor other than the Lord's blessings.

It is therefore improper to refund missionary or other contributions to contributors. To do so not only violates the spirit of freewill offerings but also may cause legal and income tax complications in some countries for both the contributor and the Church.

Confidentiality of Tithing and Other Offerings

The amount of tithing and other offerings paid by a member is confidential. Only the bishop and those who are authorized to handle such contributions should know the amount. Stake presidents and bishops are not to announce the total amount of tithing received.

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If necessary, the bishop may tell the elders quorum president or high priests group leader whether individual members of their quorum or group are full-tithe payers, contributors to the tithing funds, or exempt. Quorum presidents and group leaders should keep this information confidential.

Handling and Accounting for Funds

The stake president and bishop ensure that all Church funds are properly handled and accounted for according to current financial instructions. General principles are outlined in the following paragraphs.

Receiving Tithing and Other Offerings

The Lord has given bishops the sacred trust of receiving and accounting for the tithes and other offerings of the Saints (see D&C 119; 42:30-33).

Only the bishop and his counselors may receive tithes and other offerings. Under no circumstances should their wives, other members of their families, clerks, or other ward members receive these contributions. The only exception is when Aaronic Priesthood holders are assigned to collect fast offerings. These brethren give the fast offering envelopes directly to a member of the bishopric.

Ward members should give contributions to a member of the bishopric in a sealed envelope with a properly completed Tithing and Other Offerings form enclosed. Church members should not place their tithes and other offerings in a contribution box. Checks should be made payable to the ward, not to the bishop or the Church.

Verifying Tithing and Other Offerings

Contribution envelopes should be opened and verified on Sunday, except during tithing settlement, when they are opened and verified on the day they are received. Two persons-a member of the bishopric and a clerk, or two members of the bishopric should open each envelope together to verify that the funds enclosed are the same as the amount written on the Tithing and Other Offerings form. They resolve any differences between the funds and the written amounts as soon as they can contact the contributor.

Depositing Tithing and Other Offerings

The persons who verify contributions prepare a bank deposit. A member of the bishopric makes the deposit. He should be accompanied by another person, usually a clerk. If a night depository is available, the deposit is made on the same day. The deposit should not be made later than the following day.

Stake presidents and bishops must be certain that Church funds are not deposited to the account of an individual or mixed with personal funds.

Safeguarding Church Funds

Members who are responsible for Church funds must never leave them in the meetinghouse overnight or leave them unattended at any time, such as during meetings and activities.

Receipting Tithing and Other Offerings

The administration office sends stakes and wards instructions for issuing receipts for tithing and other offerings.

Receipts to members who donate in kind (noncash tithing and other offerings) are issued only by the administration office. These receipts show no monetary value for the items contributed.

Receiving and Managing Budget Allowance Funds

See pages 137-38.

Managing Stake and Ward Checking Accounts

Each stake normally has one general checking account. The stake president manages this account, though his counselors and clerks may assist him. If the stake has a physical facilities account, the administration office will provide instructions for using it.

All ward funds are handled through one checking account. The bishop manages this account, though his counselors and clerks may assist him.

Each check must have two authorized signatures. Usually the stake president, his counselors, and the clerk assigned to finances are authorized to sign checks for the stake account. Usually the bishop, his counselors, and the clerk assigned to finances are authorized to sign checks for the ward account.

Although counselors may be authorized to sign checks, they should not do so unless the stake president or bishop has approved the expenditure.

A check should not. be signed until it is filled out completely.

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The stake president or bishop should have the bank mail the statement for the stake or ward checking account directly to his home, not to the meetinghouse or a clerk's home. He should open each bank statement promptly, review it, and give it to the clerk to be reconciled. The stake president or bishop then reviews and signs the reconciliation. Finally, he reviews the monthly financial statement or report and ensures that it is reconciled.

Checkbooks and blank checks should be stored in a locked file or cabinet. They must not be left unattended when they are not locked securely. If any blank checks are missing, the stake president or bishop immediately reports the numbers of these checks to the administration office. He also asks the bank to stop payment on the missing checks.

Stakes and wards may not have savings accounts. Quorums, auxiliary, and Scout organizations may not have checking accounts, savings accounts, or petty cash funds. Their budgeted expenses are all paid through the stake or ward checking account.

Keeping Financial Records

Stakes and wards should keep current, accurate financial records. These records can help stake presidents and bishops account for and protect the sacred funds of the Church. These records are also necessary for preparing budgets, managing the budget allowance, and providing information to members on their financial contributions.

Budget and Expenditures

Stake and Ward Budgets

Every stake and ward prepares and operates on a budget. The stake president manages the stake budget, and the bishop manages the ward budget, though each may assign a counselor to supervise it under his direction.

No stake or ward expenses may be incurred or paid without the presiding officer's authorization. Stake presidents regularly review ward expenditures with each bishop as part of the monthly priesthood interview.

Stake presidencies and bishoprics should begin preparing budgets well before the beginning of each calendar year as follows:

1. Review amounts spent during the previous year to be sure recurring expenses are considered.
2. Ask organizations to estimate their budget needs in detail.
3. Compile the budget, using wise budgeting practices, being equitable, and ensuring that projected expenses do not exceed anticipated budget allowance funds.

It is not necessary to call for a sustaining vote to accept the budget.

Budget Allowance

The budget allowance provides general Church funds to pay for the activities and programs of stakes and wards. It eliminates the need to receive budget contributions from members. Faithful payment of tithes has made the budget allowance possible.

Allocation of Budget Allowance Funds

The administration office allocates budget allowance funds to each stake based on sacrament meeting attendance. The stake presidency allocates some of these funds to the stake and most of them to the wards. The stake president ensures that the stake and wards are funded fairly and adequately as permitted within the budget allowance.

When allocating funds, the stake president considers each ward's special needs, such as large numbers of youth. He works with bishops in a unified, cooperative manner. If unforeseen changes occur that may alter original budget allowances, he makes sure that fair adjustments are made.

The bishop oversees the allocation of budget allowance funds in the ward. He ensures that ward organizations are funded fairly and adequately.

Priesthood leaders make every effort to ensure that the level of budget allocations and activities for the Young Men and Young Women organizations are equitable.

General Principles and Guidelines

Most questions about the budget allowance can be answered by applying the basic principles that are outlined below. The stake presidency and bishopric should teach these principles to priesthood and auxiliary leaders.

The budget allowance was created to reduce the financial and time burdens on members. If necessary, priesthood and auxiliary leaders should reduce and simplify activities. Activities should have little or no cost, should build testimonies, and should provide meaningful service to others.

Stake or ward budget allowance funds should be used to pay for all Church activities, programs, and supplies. Members should not pay fees to participate (exceptions may be made for annual camps and enrichment activities as explained on pages 138-39). Nor should they provide materials, supplies, rental or admission fees, or long-distance transportation at their own expense. Activities in which many members provide food may be held if they do not place undue burdens on members.

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Members who want to contribute additional funds to the Church may not designate them for the stake or ward budget. Instead, leaders should encourage them to contribute the funds to fast offerings, missionary funds, or general Church funds.

Stake presidents and bishops make sure budget allowance funds are spent wisely. Funds should be used to bless people and further gospel purposes. Leaders also ensure that all expenditures are within the allowance. The success of the budget allowance depends on the efforts of local priesthood leaders to monitor and control Church finances and expenses.

Unneeded budget allowance funds should not be spent. Unused ward funds are returned to the stake. Unused stake funds are returned to the administration office. Some unspent funds may be retained if they are needed for specific activities that are planned for the next year. Some unspent funds may also be retained to cover budget checks that will not clear the bank until the next year.

For the budget allowance to succeed, it is important that Member Progress Reports are accurate and on time. Also, each ward's Annual Tithing Status Report for the previous year should be (1) reconciled to deposits made by the ward and (2) sent to the administration office each year as instructed by that office.

The budget allowance does not include expenses for building construction, maintenance, utilities, and computers. These expenses are paid from general Church funds according to current guidelines.

For more details about the budget allowance, see the current budget allowance instructions, which are available from the administration office.

Funding Special Activities and Equipment

Scouting

Scouting activities and awards for young men ages 8 through 17 are funded from the budget allowance. If necessary, an exception may be made for one annual Scout camp or similar activity as explained in "Annual Camps or Similar Activities" on this page.

Where Scouting is authorized, the Church pays all or part of the following registration fees:

1. For boys and young men ages 8 through 15.
2. For young men ages 16 and 17 when they are pursuing rank advancements or when

stake presidents and bishops choose to sponsor Venturing Crews (or the local equivalent) for young men of this age.

3. For Scout leaders.
4. For unit chartering.

Registration and chartering expenses are paid from the stake general checking account. The Church provides these funds in addition to the budget allowance.

Annual Camps or Similar Activities

The Church encourages one annual extended Scout camp or similar activity for young men ages 12 through 17, and one annual camp or similar activity

for young women ages 12 through 17. The Church also encourages one annual day camp for Scouts ages 8 through 11 (see the *Scouting Handbook*, page 4).

If there are not sufficient stake and ward budget funds, leaders may ask participants to pay for part or all of this one annual camp or similar activity by individually earning their own money. If funds from participants are insufficient, the stake president or bishop may authorize group fund-raising activities that comply with the guidelines on page 139.

In no case should the expenses or travel for these camps or activities be excessive. Nor should the lack of personal funds prohibit a member from participating.

Equipment for Annual Camps

If possible, equipment that the unit needs for annual camps is purchased with budget allowance funds. If these funds are insufficient, the stake president or bishop may authorize group fund-raising activities that comply with the guidelines on page 139. Such activities may not be used to purchase equipment or uniforms for individuals. Nor may they be used to fund other activities.

Youth Conferences

Youth conferences should be funded from the budget allowance. Members should not be asked for more money.

Optional Enrichment Activities

Units may sponsor optional enrichment activities that are presented by Church-related entities. Such activities include the Know Your Religion Series, Church university performance groups, and periodic major cultural events. Members may be charged a modest fee to defray the costs of such events if the program is entirely optional, the cost is not burdensome, and the event is not used to raise funds. Budget funds may be used to help those who want to attend but are unable to pay.

Fund-Raising

Fund-raising activities are not normally approved because expenses for stake and ward activities are paid with budget allowance funds. As an exception, a stake president or bishop may authorize group fund-raising activities only when necessary to help pay for annual camps and equipment as outlined on page 138.

If a fund-raising activity is held, it should provide a meaningful value or service. It should be a positive experience that builds unity.

Contributions to fund-raising activities should be voluntary. Priesthood leaders should take special care to ensure that members do not feel obligated to contribute.

Stakes and wards that sponsor fund-raising activities should not advertise or solicit beyond their boundaries. Nor should they sell products or services door-to-door.

Examples of fund-raising activities that are not approved include:

1 . Activities that would be taxable.
2. Activities completed with paid labor, either by employees or by contract.
3. Entertainment for which the stake or ward pays an orchestra, entertainers, or others for their services; when admission is charged; *and when the intent of the activity is to raise funds.*
4. The sale of commercial goods or services, including food storage items.
5. Games of chance, such as raffles and bingo.

Any exceptions to these instructions must be approved by the administration office.

The Friends of Scouting fund drive in the United States will continue as a separate, voluntary solicitation.

Audits

Stake Audit Committee

The stake president appoints a stake audit committee consisting of one of his counselors as chairman and two other stake members who understand financial matters. Committee members generally should not sign stake checks or otherwise be involved in stake financial record keeping.

Stake Auditors

The chairman of the stake audit committee calls at least two qualified stake auditors. They require approval by the high council, but they are not sustained and usually are not set apart.

The Auditing Process

Stake auditors audit financial records of the stake, wards, and branches twice each year. Auditors ensure that tithing and other contributions are properly recorded, Church funds are properly accounted for and protected, and financial records are complete and accurate. The unit's presiding officer should be available to answer questions during audits.

The stake audit committee reviews finished audits. The chairman signs the audit report and ensures that a copy is sent to the administration office to arrive by the due date. He also ensures that any exceptions disclosed by an audit are promptly corrected.

Embezzlement of Church Funds

If a person has embezzled Church funds, the stake president or the chairman of the stake audit committee should be notified promptly. He notifies the Church Auditing Department (or the area financial controller if the unit is outside the United States and Canada). The Auditing Department (or area financial controller) sends a loss report form to the stake president or the chairman of the audit committee. He makes sure the form is properly completed and submitted.

If a major misuse of funds is discovered, the stake president or chairman of the audit committee also notifies the Area Presidency.

Stake Clerk

The stake clerk ensures that other clerks in the stake and wards are properly instructed in financial record keeping. He should be aware of audit findings. He also helps clerks promptly resolve any problems disclosed by audits.

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For More Information

More information on audit committees, auditors, and audit procedures is included on the stake and ward audit report forms and instructions. Stake audit committees and auditors may direct questions to the Church Auditing Department (or area financial controller).

Taxes

The tax information in this section applies only in the United States and Canada. If priesthood leaders in the United States and Canada need additional information they should contact:

Church Tax Division Finance and Records Department Floor 22 50 East North Temple Street Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3620 Telephone: 1-801-240-3003 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 3003

Priesthood leaders outside the United States and Canada should contact the administration office to resolve questions on taxes.

Tax-Exempt Status

The Church normally is exempt from paying sales, property, income, and other taxes because it is a religious organization. Church buildings and other property are to be used for the purposes of worship, religious instruction, and other Church-related activities. Facilities are not to be used for political, business, or investment purposes as outlined on pages 153-54. To do so violates laws that permit tax exemption of Church property.

It is important that stake and ward leaders follow these guidelines to preserve the Church's tax-exempt status. If one stake or ward misuses the Church's tax-exempt status, other Church units could be affected.

Sales and Use Tax

Sales and use tax laws and how they apply to the Church vary from state to state. Leaders should check local tax laws to see whether the Church is exempt or must pay such taxes.

Property Tax

The Church Tax Division files all property tax exemptions and pays all required property taxes. No action is required by local leaders.

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16. Physical Facilities

For units in the United States and Canada, the term *administration office* in this section refers to Church headquarters in Salt Lake City.

For units outside the United States and Canada, the term *administration office* refers to the Presiding Bishopric administration office or service center that serves the unit.

Purpose

Church physical facilities programs provide and maintain meetinghouses to help the Church fulfill its mission. Meetinghouses should (1) provide a spiritual setting for members to worship and (2) present a positive image of the Church in the community.

Organization

Physical Facilities Department

The Physical Facilities Department of the Church oversees the maintenance of existing meetinghouses and the construction or acquisition of new meetinghouses.

Administration Offices

Administration offices are extensions of the Physical Facilities Department. Professional staffs help local Church leaders in physical facilities matters as needed.

In the United States and Canada, local multistake preventive maintenance groups have been established to do physical facilities work under the direction of the general administration office at Church headquarters in Salt Lake City.

Stake Presidency

Members of the stake presidency ensure that Church facilities are appropriately used, cared for, and protected. They teach leaders and members their responsibilities for using and caring for these facilities. They assign a high councilor to be the stake physical facilities representative. They meet with him as needed to review needs and projects.

Stake Physical Facilities Representative

The stake physical facilities representative (a high councilor) assists the stake presidency in physical facilities matters as follows:

He helps teach and implement meetinghouse use and care standards.

He coordinates the distribution and control of keys.

He coordinates the instruction of ward building representatives in their duties.

He participates in annual meetinghouse inspections conducted by representatives of the Physical Facilities Department, unless the stake presidency designates an alternate to participate.

Agent Bishop

If more than one ward meets in a building, the stake presidency assigns one bishop to be the agent bishop. He coordinates assignments for member participation in meetinghouse care and maintenance. He also coordinates safety and security procedures for the meetinghouse. In addition, he coordinates scheduling of the building with the stake and other wards that use it, though he may assign another member to do the scheduling.

Bishopric

Members of the bishopric are responsible for the use, care, and security of the meetinghouse. They teach ward members how to use and care for it. They organize member participation in meetinghouse care and maintenance, making assignments as needed. They also distribute meetinghouse keys.

Members of the bishopric ensure that appropriate safety precautions are taken in the meetinghouse and on the grounds (see page 142).

Ward Building Representative

Each ward should have a ward building representative. The bishop may appoint a member of the bishopric to serve in this position, or the bishopric may call another member to do so.

The ward building representative helps the bishopric with meetinghouse responsibilities such as energy conservation, safety, security, snow removal (if applicable), and member participation in cleaning and maintenance. He takes care of building-related needs during meetings, activities, and emergencies. If needed, he receives instruction from the stake physical facilities representative in operating sound, heating, air conditioning, and other building systems.

Members

Priesthood leaders should emphasize that member participation is a key factor in meetinghouse care and maintenance. Members are encouraged to provide individual or group services, depending on their skills and abilities.

Administration of Stake Physical Facilities

Use and Care of Meetinghouses

With help from the Physical Facilities Department, stake and ward programs for physical facilities ensure that meetinghouses and grounds are always neat, clean, attractive, and in good repair. Church facilities should in every way reflect proper care and respect.

Meetinghouse Maintenance and Inspection

representatives of the Physical Facilities Department inspect each meetinghouse annually. The stake physical facilities representative, or an alternate who is designated by the stake president, participates in these inspections. He should have full authorization to act on behalf of the stake presidency in this capacity. Those who participate in these inspections identify building maintenance needs and make plans for repairing or renewing its systems and components and for making other needed improvements.

Meetinghouse Planning

When requested, the stake presidency provides information to help the Physical Facilities Department prepare and update a master plan of projected needs for future building sites and new or additional meetinghouse space.

Energy Conservation

The Church incurs substantial utility costs for meetinghouses. Although stakes and wards do not bear these costs directly, leaders should ensure that lighting, heating, and air conditioning are used as economically as possible.

Safety, Security, Emergencies, and Loss Prevention

Priesthood leaders should instruct members, especially women and youth, not to be alone in an unlocked Church building.

Leaders should take reasonable measures to keep hallways, stairs, stairwells, exit doors, utility rooms, and sidewalks free of obstructions and other hazards. Leaders also ensure that hazardous materials or flammable items such as equipment fuel, hay, straw, and cornstalks are not used or stored in meetinghouses (see also "Decorations," page 154).

Leaders control key distribution and establish effective building lockup procedures. They also see that interior classrooms and other rooms that do not contain valuable items are left unlocked.

Leaders ensure that local emergency telephone numbers for the police, fire department, and ambulance are posted on or near each telephone with brief instructions. They report intruders to the police immediately.

If Church property is seriously damaged, leaders notify the administration office or the nearest representative of the Physical Facilities Department. If a serious personal injury occurs on Church property, leaders follow the instructions on pages 276-77 in *Book 2*.

Policies on Using Church Buildings and Other Property

See pages 153-55.

17. Creating, Changing, or Naming Church Units

Creating, or Changing Church Units

Church units include stakes, districts, wards, and branches. They are created or changed only when the need is clearly demonstrated.

Stakes and Districts

Stakes are created from mission districts or by dividing existing stakes. In the United States and Canada, stakes generally should have a minimum of 3,000 members and five wards. In all other countries, stakes generally should have a minimum of 1,300 members and five wards. There is no fixed minimum number of members or branches needed to create a district.

To propose creating a stake or district, changing its boundaries, changing its name, or discontinuing it, the stake or mission president completes a Stake/ District Organization Application form and marks any proposed boundary changes on a map. In the United States and Canada, stake and mission presidents can obtain an application form and a unit map from the Boundary and Leadership Change Committee support staff at Church headquarters (telephone 1-801-240-1102 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 1102). In other countries, stake and mission presidents can obtain application forms from their area office. They should obtain locally two standard, detailed maps with street or town indexes and use them to clearly identify unit boundaries.

A stake president who is proposing a stake change or a mission president who is proposing the creation of a stake from a mission district gives the completed application and maps to the Area Presidency. The proposal must have the written endorsement of the presidents of each affected stake or mission.

The Area Presidency reviews all applications to ensure that instructions and guidelines have been followed. If the Area Presidency endorses the proposal, the application and maps are submitted to the Boundary and Leadership Change Committee. Approval is given only by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve.

Wards and Branches in Stakes

Wards and branches in stakes are created from existing wards or from branches in stakes or missions. The stake president uses the same procedures for creating a branch as he does for a ward.

In the United States and Canada, wards generally should have at least 300 members. In all other countries, wards generally should have at least 150 members. There is no fixed minimum number of members needed to create a branch.

To propose creating a ward or branch in a stake, changing its boundaries, changing its name, or discontinuing it, the stake president completes a Ward/ Branch Organization Application form and marks any proposed boundary changes on a map. Instructions for obtaining the application form and maps are provided under "Stakes and Districts" on this page.

The stake president gives the completed application and maps to the Area Presidency. The proposal must have the written endorsement of the presidents of each affected stake or mission.

The Area Presidency reviews all applications to ensure that instructions and guidelines have been followed. If the Area Presidency endorses the proposal, the application and maps are submitted to the Boundary and Leadership Change Committee. Approval is given only by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve.

When new wards are created, the stake president should also complete a Recommendation for New Bishop form for each bishop being recommended. This form should be submitted with the proposal. In the United States and Canada, this form can be obtained from the Office of the First Presidency. In other countries, it can be obtained from the area office.

Branches in Missions

To propose creating a branch in a mission, changing its boundaries, changing its name, transferring it, or discontinuing it, the mission president completes a Ward/Branch Organization Application form and marks any proposed boundary changes on a map. Instructions for obtaining the application form and maps are provided under "Stakes and Districts" on this page. The mission president gives the completed application and maps to his Area Presidency.

The Area Presidency may give final approval or denial of a proposal to (1) create a branch in a mission, (2) discontinue it, or (3) change its boundaries if the change does not affect an adjacent district, mission, or stake. The Area Presidency must send copies of approved applications and maps to the Boundary and Leadership Change Committee at Church headquarters before a unit number can be assigned.

The Area Presidency may endorse but not give final approval of a proposal to (1) change the name of a branch in a mission, (2) transfer it to another district, mission, or stake, or (3) change its boundaries if the change would affect an adjacent district, mission ' or stake. If the Area Presidency endorses the proposal, the application and maps are submitted to the Boundary and Leadership Change Committee. Approval is given only by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve.

The Area Presidency may endorse but not give final approval of a proposal to create or change a mission branch for young single adults, single adults, students, members who speak nonnative languages, members who have special needs, or members in the military. If the Area Presidency endorses the proposal, the application and maps are submitted to the Boundary and Leadership Change Committee. Approval is given only by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve.

Nonnative Language Wards and Branches

Priesthood leaders should carefully foster the welfare of members within their boundaries who do not speak the predominant language. In circumstances where the conventional ward cannot provide for the needs of a nonnative language group, and when a language barrier exists among a sufficient number of members in a stake, the stake president may recommend that a nonnative language ward or branch be created. Such a ward generally should have at least 250 members. There is no fixed minimum number of members needed to create a branch.

Nonnative language units are created through the usual procedures. Approval is given only by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve.

Single Member Wards and Branches

Young Single Adult Wards and Branches

Creation. Most young single adults are best served as members of conventional wards. In some exceptional situations, units for young single adults may be created. If a stake includes 125 or more single members ages 21 through 30 who want to attend a young single adult ward, the stake president may recommend that such a ward be created. He may recommend that a young single adult branch be created if 50 or more unmarried members ages 21 through 30 live in the stake and want to attend.

If there are too few members to create a young single adult ward in one stake, stake presidents may recommend creating a young single adult ward with membership from more than one stake. If the First Presidency approves the recommendation, the ward may include young single adults who are members of two or more (usually limited to four) stakes. These stakes must be contiguous to the stake where the young single adult ward is located. The ward will be the responsibility of one of the participating stakes, as assigned by the Area Presidency.

Young single adult units are created through the usual procedures. Approval is given only by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve.

Membership. Generally, young single adult wards should not have more than 250 members. Membership is restricted to those who live within the stake(s) authorized to participate in the ward.

Members who are eligible to attend a young single adult ward may choose to be members of that ward or remain in their conventional ward. Membership records should be in the ward the person is attending.

Membership in a young single adult ward should be viewed as a temporary preparation for serving in a conventional ward. Members of young single adult wards normally should return to a conventional ward when they are married, when they reach the age of 31, or when warranted by other circumstances.

Single parents with children at home normally remain in their conventional ward so the children will have the benefit of Primary and youth programs. However, the parents may attend the activities of the young single adult ward.

Unmarried members ages 18 through 20 who live with their parents normally remain in their conventional ward. If they live away from home, they may attend the young single adult ward.

Single Adult Wards

Creation. In the exceptional circumstance that a stake includes 150 or more single adults ages 31 and older who want to be members of a single adult ward, the stake president may recommend that such a ward be created. Single adult wards are created through the usual procedures. Approval is given only by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve.

Membership. Members who are eligible to attend a single adult ward may choose to be members of that ward or remain in their conventional ward. Membership records should be in the ward the person is attending.

Single parents with children at home normally remain in their conventional ward so the children will have the benefit of Primary and youth programs. However, the parents may attend the activities of the single adult ward.

Student Stakes, Wards, and Branches

Creation. A stake president may recommend that a student stake be created when 1,500 or more members, married or single, attend a college or university located in his stake.

A stake president may recommend that a student ward be created when 125 or more members, married or single, attend a college or university located in his stake and want to attend a student ward.

Student units are created through the usual procedures. Approval is given only by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve.

Membership. Single students who live in housing that is located on campus or owned by a university should be members of a student ward if one exists at the institution. Single students who live away from home but off campus may choose to be members of a student ward or of the conventional ward where they reside. If there is more than one student ward in the area, and if students choose to attend a student ward, they should be members of the ward that includes their living quarters in its boundaries.

Unmarried students who live with their parents normally remain in their conventional ward.

Unmarried members who are not students do not normally attend student wards. Exceptions may be made in stakes that do not have a single member ward if the bishop of the home ward feels that it would be in the member's best interest to belong to a student ward. Such exceptions must be approved by the parents (where appropriate), by both bishops, and by both stake presidents.

Married students may choose to be members of a student ward or of the conventional ward where they reside.

Special Needs Wards and Branches

Wards or branches may be created for groups of members who have special needs, such as hearing impaired members or members in care centers, residential treatment programs, or prisons. These units are created through the usual procedures. Approval is given only by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve.

Military Wards and Branches

Members in military service should participate in the wards or branches at or near their military installation. When there are sufficient numbers of military personnel in an area, military wards or branches may be organized to meet their needs. These units are created through the usual procedures. Approval is given only by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve.

For information about military service groups, see page 120.

Naming Church Units

When necessary as new units are created, local leaders are invited to submit unit names to their Area Presidency. The Area Presidency reviews all proposed unit names to ensure that the instructions and guidelines have been followed. If the Area Presidency endorses the proposal, it is submitted to the Boundary and Leadership Change Committee for review. AR final decisions for naming Church units are made by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve.

Stakes and Districts

The name of a stake or district should uniquely identify it from other stakes or districts. Generally, names of existing stakes and districts should not be changed.

The first word of the stake or district name is the name of the city where the headquarters of the stake or district is located. In the United States and Canada, the second word is the state or province in which the stake or district is located. In other countries, the second word is the name of the country.

When more than one stake or district is in the same city, the third word is an identifying characteristic, such as a compass direction (*North, South, East, or West*), the name of a community, or the name of a geographical feature that is within or adjacent to unit boundaries. Other directional terms (such as *Southwest*), names of people, numbers, or segregating terms (such as *Spanish* or *Hearing Impaired*) should not be used.

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Wards and Branches

The name of a ward or branch should uniquely identify it so that people in the community can recognize and locate it. The name should be chosen carefully so it will not need to be changed later. Generally, names of existing wards and branches should not be changed.

The ward or branch should be named after a city, subdivision, neighborhood, street, or geographical feature that is within or adjacent to unit boundaries. The name of only one city, subdivision, neighbor-

hood, street, or geographical feature should be used in the unit name. If there is more than one ward or branch with the same name, a number should be added as part of the name, such as Montevideo First Ward, Montevideo Second Ward, and Montevideo Third Ward. The name of the ward or branch should be in the language of the area. If the language does not use the Roman alphabet, a translation using Roman characters should be included. Compass directions (such as *East* or *Northwest*), names of people, and segregating terms (such as *Spanish* or *Hearing Impaired*) should not be included in the name.

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18. Church Policies

For units in the United States and Canada, the term *administration office* in this section refers to Church headquarters in Salt Lake City.

For units outside the United States and Canada, the term *administration office* refers to the Presiding Bishopric administration office or service center that serves the unit.

This section consists of five parts, each of which is alphabetized internally:

1. General Authority and Area Authority Seventy policies
2. Administrative policies

3. Policies on using Church buildings and other property
4. Medical and health policies
5. Policies on moral issues

General Authority and Area Authority Seventy Policies

Autographs and Photographs

Church members should not seek the autographs of General Authorities or Area Authority Seventies, including signing in their scriptures. Doing so detracts from their sacred callings and the spirit of meetings. It also could prevent them from greeting other members.

Members should not take photographs of General Authorities or Area Authority Seventies in chapels.

Privately Published Writings

Members should not ask General Authorities or Area Authority Seventies to coauthor or endorse Church books or other Church writings.

Recording Addresses

Members should not record addresses that General Authorities and Area Authority Seventies give at stake conferences, regional conferences, missionary meetings, and other local meetings. Members may record broadcasts of general conference on home equipment for personal, noncommercial use.

Administrative Policies

Accidents and Other Serious Situations

See pages 276-77 in *Book 2*.

Activities

See pages 276-80 in *Book 2*.

Adopted Children and Their Natural Parents

Local Church leaders should discourage adopted children and their adoptive parents from seeking to identify the children's natural parents. However, when adopted children have genetic or medical problems, the family may seek medical information about the natural parents but should be discouraged from seeking their identities.

Adoption and Foster Care

Members who are seeking to adopt children or provide foster care should strictly observe all legal requirements of the countries (and their governmental subdivisions) that are involved. They are encouraged to work through licensed, authorized agencies. Leaders should not become involved in bypassing such agencies to help place children privately or independently. Such placements are not sanctioned by the Church and may violate local laws.

For information about placing children for adoption, see "Unwed Parents," page 160.

Audiovisual Materials

Members may use audiovisual materials such as compact discs, audiocassettes, videocassettes, filmstrips, and slides in Church settings with the following restrictions:

1. They may not be used during sacrament meetings (although appropriate recorded musical accompaniment may be used if a piano, organ, or accompanist is not available).
2. They may not be used if they are restricted by copyright (see pages 149-50).

3. They may not be used if they contain material that is not suitable for Church settings. Audiovisual materials that meet these criteria may be used in the chapel during meetings other than sacrament meeting if they are an important part of the meeting.

Bible

The Church uses the King James Version of the Bible for English-speaking members. The First Presidency has stated:

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"Many versions of the Bible are available today. ... The most reliable way to measure the accuracy of any biblical passage is not by comparing different texts, but by comparison with the Book of Mormon and modern-day revelations.

"While other Bible versions may be easier to read than the King James Version, in doctrinal matters latter-day revelation supports the King James Version in preference to other English translations" (First Presidency letter, 22 May 1992).

Ideally, English-speaking members should use LDS edition of the King James Bible. This edition includes the Topical Guide, footnotes, other study aids, excerpts from the Joseph Smith Translation, and cross-references to the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price.

The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve have selected an edition of the Bible for preferred use in many non-English languages. Members should use this Bible. It is available through Church distribution centers.

Book of Mormon

The Church discourages rewriting the Book of Mormon into familiar or modem English. The First Presidency has said:

"When a sacred text is translated into another language or rewritten into more familiar language, there are substantial risks that this process may introduce doctrinal errors or obscure evidence of its ancient origin. To guard against these risks, the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve give close personal supervision to the translation of scriptures from English into other languages and have not authorized efforts to express the doctrinal content of the Book of Mormon in familiar or modem English. (These concerns do not pertain to publications by the Church for children, such as *Book of Mormon Stories*.)" (First Presidency statement, Ensign, Apr. 1993, 74).

Church Employees

Church employees are to uphold Church standards at all times. To begin or continue employment, they must be worthy to have a temple recommend. This includes employees of the Church Educational System and Church universities and colleges.

Periodically representatives of the Church Human Resource Department will contact stake presidents or bishops to verify the temple worthiness of current or potential Church employees. These requests may be written or made by telephone and should be responded to promptly.

Church employees must comply with employment laws. Local leaders should contact their administration office for information on applicable laws.

Church Name and Logotype

The Church's name and logotype Are registered trademarks and should be used according to the following guidelines.

The written name of the Church may be used in local units when all of the following conditions are met:

1. The activity or function with which the name is associated (for example, a sacrament meeting program) is officially sponsored by the unit.
2. The name of the local Church unit is used as a prelude to the name of the Church (for example, Canyon View Ward of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints).
3. The typeface does not imitate or resemble the official logotype.

The Church's logotype is to be used only for official Church applications. Local units may use it only on publications and materials they officially sponsor.

Only the official logotype should be used (see the front cover of this handbook). It should not be imitated, digitized, or generated by computer. English and non-English versions of the logotype are produced and made available only by Church headquarters.

The logotype should be large enough to be easily read but not so large that it dominates an item. It also should be surrounded by sufficient open space. It should not be mixed, overlapped, or placed close to other patterns, symbols, logos, or competing elements.

The logotype should not be used as a decorative element. Nor should it be shaded or printed in a bright color.

The logotype should not be used on stake or ward computers. Nor should it be used in any personal, commercial, or promotional way, such as on family

history books, T-shirts, buttons, or banners.

Examples of acceptable and unacceptable uses, as well as copies of the logotype that may be duplicated, are provided in *Church Name and Logotype Guidelines for Local Units.*

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Computer Equipment

As authorized by the Church's presiding councils, some Church units are provided computers for purposes such as record keeping and family history. The stake president oversees the placement and use of computers in the stake. Guidelines for obtaining and managing Church computers are available from the administration office.

Where necessary, stake presidents should arrange to make ward and stake computers available for members to use family history software programs. These computers are not authorized for other personal uses.

Since these computers are used for confidential Church records, the Member and Financial Information Systems should be password protected to prevent unauthorized access when the computers are being used for other purposes. Computers should be placed so bishopric members and clerks can process the weekly contributions in privacy.

Copyrighted Materials

General Guidelines

Copyright is protection given by law to the owners of original works of authorship that are expressed in a tangible form, including:

1 . Literary, musical, dramatic, and choreographic works.

2. Works of art, photography, and sculpture.
3. Audiovisual works (such as movies, video recordings, and sound recordings).
4. Computer programs.

Only copyright owners may authorize duplication (copying), distribution, public performance, public display, or derivations of their work. Using a work in any of these ways without authorization from the copyright owner is illegal and dishonest.

A prospective user of a work should assume that it is protected by copyright. Published works usually include a copyright notice such as "(C) 1959 by John Doe." (For sound recordings, the symbol is (P) rather than (C).) However, even works that do not have this notice may be protected by copyright. Furthermore, the fact that a publication is out of print does not nullify its copyright or justify duplicating, distributing, performing, displaying, or making derivations of it without permission.

The following guidelines should help members understand and abide by copyright laws when using copyrighted materials in Church and home settings.

If members have questions that are not answered in these guidelines, they may contact:

Church Copyrights and Permissions Office
Floor 18
50 East North Temple Street
Salt Lake City; UT 84150-3011
Telephone: 1-801-240-3959 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 3959

The Church Copyrights and Permissions Office assists in processing requests to use copyrighted information in Church materials or programs. That office also processes requests for permission to use materials that are copyrighted by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. (IRI), a separate nonprofit corporation that holds the copyright to works used by the Church.

Audiovisual Materials

Materials Owned by the Church or IRI. Audiovisual materials that are owned by the Church or IRI, such as sound and video recordings, may be used in Church and home settings.

Audiovisual materials that are owned by the Church or IRI and are available through Church distribution centers may not be duplicated without permission from the Church or IRI. If these materials are not available through Church distribution centers, they may be duplicated without permission for noncommercial Church or home use only.

Materials Not Owned by the Church or IRI. Sound recordings that are not owned by the Church or IRI, such as audiocassettes, compact discs, and phonograph records, may be used in Church settings if the materials have been purchased, admission is not charged, and no one is paid for playing or performing the works. If a person is paid to play prerecorded music or to perform live music, he or she must sign the Performance Contract form.

Video materials that are not owned by the Church or IRI may not be used in Church settings, including Church-sponsored activities that are held in a home, without a license for public viewing. Such materials include purchased or rented videocassettes (including animated scripture videocassettes) and recordings of television, cable, or satellite programs. These materials may not be stored in or circulated from a meetinghouse library

Audiovisual materials that are not owned by the Church or IRI may not be duplicated without permission from the copyright owner.

See page 147 for additional guidelines about using audiovisual materials in Church settings.

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Printed Materials

Materials Owned by the Church or IRI. Printed materials that are owned by the Church or IRI may be duplicated for noncommercial Church or home use unless otherwise indicated. Music in Church publications may be duplicated for such purposes if it (1) has a copyright notice indicating that it is owned by the Church or IRI or (2) includes instructions that allow such duplication. Each copy should include any existing copyright notice.

Materials Not Owned by the Church or IRI. Printed materials that are not owned by the Church or IRI, including music, may not be duplicated unless the copyright owner has given permission, the copyright notice states that the work may be duplicated, or the work is in the public domain (the copyright has expired).

Printed music that is not owned by the Church or IRI may be performed in Church settings if admission is not charged and the performers or directors are not paid.

Computer Software

Computer programs may not be duplicated without permission from the copyright owner, except for backup or archival copies that are allowed by the license agreement enclosed with computer software.

Members may not make additional copies of family history software, such as Personal Ancestral File(R) or FamilySearch(R), for their own use. Members who own more than one computer must purchase one copy of Church-owned or IRI-owned family history software for each computer on which they intend to use the software.

Theatrical Productions

Productions Owned by the Church or IRI. Theatrical productions that are owned by the Church or IRI may be performed in Church settings without permission.

Productions Not Owned by the Church or IRI. Members must obtain the copyright owner's permission to perform all or part of a copyrighted play or musical production in a Church building or other public place, even if admission is not charged.

Counseling

See pages 21-22:

Dating or Get-Acquainted Businesses for Single Members

Dating and get-acquainted businesses often promote their services to single members of the Church. Church meetinghouses, classes, or programs may not be used in promoting private business ventures, including dating and get-acquainted businesses or services. Nor should lists of Church groups or other information about members be given to such businesses.

Directories

Stake and ward directories may be published according to the following instructions:

Names, addresses, and phone numbers may be included in a directory only if they are listed in a commercial telephone directory or, if they are unlisted, if the member gives permission.

Stake or ward budget funds are used to pay for directories. Directories may not contain advertising.

Leaders should not distribute directories outside the stake or ward boundaries or permit their use for commercial or political purposes.

The beginning of each directory should include a statement that it is to be used only for Church purposes and should not be copied without permission of the bishop or stake president.

Emigration of Members

Generally, Church members are encouraged to remain in their native lands to build up and strengthen the Church. Opportunities for Church activity and for receiving and sharing the blessings of the gospel are increasing greatly throughout the world. Missionaries should not ask their parents, relatives, or others to sponsor members who wish to emigrate to other countries.

Members who emigrate to any country should comply with applicable laws.

When coming to the United States or other countries on student or tourist visas, members should not expect to find jobs or obtain permanent visas after entering that country.

To be considered for Church employment in any country, a person must meet all conditions of immigration and naturalization laws. The Church does not sponsor immigration through Church employment. Any exceptions require advance approval from the Human Resource Committee.

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Fast Day

A proper fast day observance includes abstaining from food and drink for two consecutive meals, attending fast and testimony meeting, and giving a generous fast offering to help care for those in need.

Fund-Raising

See page 139.

Gambling

The Church opposes gambling in any form, including government-sponsored lotteries. Members are urged to join with others who have similar concerns in opposing the legalization and government sponsorship of any form of gambling.

Guest Speakers or Instructors

The bishop's approval is required before guest speakers or instructors may participate in any ward meeting, including auxiliary meetings. The stake president's approval is required for such participation in stake meetings.

The bishop or stake president should carefully screen guest speakers or instructors and the subjects of their presentations (this may include contacting the person's bishop). He ensures that such presentations are in harmony with Church doctrine and comply with the guidelines for using Church facilities (see "Policies on Using Church Buildings and Other Property," pages 153-55).

Income Taxes

Church members are obligated by the twelfth article of faith to obey the tax laws of the nation where they reside (see also D&C 134:5). Members who disapprove of tax laws may try to have them changed by legislation or constitutional amendment. Members who have well-founded legal objections may challenge tax laws in the courts.

Members who refuse to file a tax return, pay required income taxes, or comply with a final judgment in a tax case are in direct conflict with the law and with the teachings of the Church. Such members may be ineligible for a temple recommend and should not be called to positions of principal responsibility in the Church. Members who are convicted of willfully violating tax laws are subject to Church discipline to the extent warranted by the circumstances.

Laws of the Land

Church members should obey, honor, and sustain the laws in any country where they reside or travel (see D&C 58:21-22). This includes laws that prohibit proselyting.

Legal Matters

When legal help is needed for Church matters in the United States and Canada, the stake president should contact the Office of Legal Services at Church headquarters (telephone 1-801-240-6301 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 6301). Outside the United States and Canada, stake presidents should contact the Church area office to obtain local legal counsel.

To avoid implicating the Church in legal matters to which it is not a party, leaders should avoid testifying in civil or criminal cases reviewing the conduct of members over whom they preside. A leader should confer with the Church's Office of Legal Services or the Area Presidency:

1. If he is subpoenaed or requested to testify in a case involving a member over whom he presides.
2. Before testifying in any cases involving abuse.
3. Before communicating with attorneys or civil authorities in connection with legal proceedings.
4. Before offering verbal or written testimony on behalf of a member in a sentencing hearing, parole board hearing, or probationary status hearing.

Church leaders should not try to persuade alleged victims or other witnesses either to testify or not to testify in criminal or civil court proceedings.

Lotteries

See "Gambling" on this page.

Mail from Church Headquarters

Some businesses and individuals send local leaders promotional items that might appear to be official Church correspondence. To distinguish official Church correspondence from other correspondence, it is always conveyed personally by Church leaders, in a letter from Church leaders on Church letterhead stationery, or by announcement in a Church publication such as the *Bulletin*. Only these items require Church leaders' attention and action.

Mail Sent to Church Headquarters

Local leaders should place a return address on all letters and other items of correspondence sent to

Church headquarters, in addition to the return address on the envelope in which the item is sent.

Other Faiths

Much that is inspiring, noble, and worthy of the highest respect is found in many other faiths. Missionaries and other Church members must be sensitive and respectful toward the beliefs of others and avoid giving offense. Mission presidents and other priesthood leaders who have questions about relationships with non-Christian faiths should contact their Area Presidency.

Overnight Activities

See page 278 in *Book 2*.

Political and Civic Activity

The Church is politically neutral. It does not endorse political parties, platforms, or candidates. Candidates should not imply that they are endorsed by the Church or its leaders. Church leaders and members should avoid any statements or conduct that might be interpreted as Church endorsement of political parties or candidates.

Church records, directories, and similar materials may not be used for political purposes. Church facilities may not be used for political purposes except for voter registration or polling where there is no reasonable alternative (see page 154).

As citizens of their countries and communities, Church members are urged to be full participants in political, governmental, and community affairs, including involvement in the political party of their choice.

Members should study political issues and candidates carefully and vote for individuals whom they believe will act with integrity and in ways conducive to good communities and good government. Members of the Church are under special obligation to seek out and uphold leaders who are honest, good, and wise (see D&C 98:10).

Church members are urged to be willing to serve in elected and appointed public offices in local and national government.

Members should do their civic duty by supporting measures that strengthen society morally, economically, and culturally. Members are urged to be actively engaged in worthy causes to improve their communities and make them wholesome places in which to live and rear families. However, members should not give the impression that they represent the Church as they work for solutions to city or community problems.

Postal Regulations

In the United States and some other countries, it is a violation of postal regulations to place any material without postage in or on mailboxes. This includes ward or stake newsletters and other Church-related materials.

Prayers in Church Meetings

Men and women may offer prayers in Church meetings. Prayers should be brief and simple and should be spoken as directed by the Spirit. Members should use the pronouns *Thee, Thy, Thine*, and *Thou* when addressing Heavenly Father. All members should say an audible *amen* at the end of the prayer.

Privacy of Members

Church leaders are obligated to protect the privacy of members. Church records, reports, directories, and similar materials may not be used for personal, commercial, or political purposes.

Research Studies in the Church

The Church's only authorized research agency is the Research Information Division of the Correlation Department. Representatives of this department use questionnaires and interviews to obtain information on issues of concern to General Authorities. When Church-authorized researchers contact members by mail or phone, they provide the Church's toll-free number and a contact name at headquarters. In addition, they always allow the respondent the option of not answering any or all of the questions on the survey.

Church meetings may not be used for collecting information by unauthorized persons or agencies. Nor should the names of Church members be made available to such persons or agencies. If local leaders want to verify the authorization of questionnaires or interviews, they should contact the Research Information Division (telephone 1-801-240-2727 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2727).

Safety in Church Welfare Operations

Many Church welfare operations have equipment and machinery that can cause injury if it is not used properly. Agent stake operating committees and managers of welfare operations should ensure the safety of the employees and volunteers. Workers should be instructed regularly in safety practices. The work environment should be inspected periodically, with health and safety hazards corrected. Adequate supervision should always be provided to ensure that workers follow instructions, use tools and equipment properly, and avoid hazardous behavior.

Normally those who work at welfare operations should be 16 or older. Those who operate equipment should be mature, adequately trained, and experienced in using the equipment. Only adults may operate power equipment.

The operations manager should report accidents to the Welfare Services Department and the Risk Management Division at Church headquarters.

Sales Agents

Local leaders should not accept the claims of sales agents that the Church or a Church leader has authorized them to call on local leaders or members to sell their products.

Satellite and Video Equipment

Church satellite and video equipment may be used only for noncommercial, Church-related purposes as authorized by the stake presidency or bishopric. This equipment may not be used to record television, cable, or satellite programs that are not sponsored by the Church. Nor may Church satellite equipment be used to view non-Church programs. Members may not direct the antenna from one satellite or transponder to another without authorization from Church headquarters.

Only people who are trained to operate the equipment may do so. Unsupervised youth and children may not operate it.

All equipment is to be locked securely when not in use. It may not be removed from the building for home or personal use.

Solicitation of Funds

The established programs of the Church provide financial assistance for worthy individuals and appropriate causes. Church assistance is administered by bishops, who are familiar with the circumstances and can prevent duplicate assistance and abuses. Therefore, members should not solicit additional financial assistance from Church headquarters or from local leaders or members.

If members receive a request for funds, they could respond by saying that they have contributed in their own wards to provide funds for assistance according to established principles of Church welfare.

Symposia and Similar Gatherings

The Church warns its members against symposia and other similar gatherings that include presentations that (1) disparage, ridicule, make light of, or are otherwise inappropriate in their treatment of sacred matters or (2) could injure the Church, detract from its mission, or jeopardize its members' well-being. Members should not allow their position or standing in the Church to be used to promote or imply endorsement of such gatherings.

Taxable Activities

Ward and stake leaders should ensure that local Church activities do not jeopardize the Church's tax-exempt status. For guidelines, see "Fund-Raising," page 139, and "Policies on Using Church Buildings and Other Property" on this page.

Temple **Clothing**

See pages 69-70.

Transients

See pages 8 and 17.

Policies on Using Church Buildings and Other Property

Church buildings and other property are to be used for worship, religious instruction, and other Church-related activities. Church property should not be used for commercial or political purposes, which would violate laws that permit its tax exemption. Examples of uses that are not approved are listed below:

1. Renting or leasing Church facilities for commercial purposes.
2. Promoting business ventures or investment enterprises, including posting commercial advertising or sponsoring commercial entertainment.
3. Buying, selling, or promoting products, services, publications, or creative works, or demonstrating wares.
4. Holding unauthorized fund-raising projects (see page 139).
5. Hosting speakers or instructors who are paid a fee, who recruit participants, or who solicit customers or clients while giving seminars, lessons, aerobics classes, and so on. Exceptions are made for Church Educational System programs. Exceptions also may be made to use meetinghouse pianos and organs for paid private instruction (see page 294 in *Book 2*).
6. Holding athletic events that are not sponsored by the Church, including practices.
7. Holding political meetings or campaigns. As an exception, where there is no reasonable alternative, Church facilities may be used for voter registration and as polling places at the request of voting officials if the officials and voters maintain Church standards in the building. For example, the voting officials should post "No Smoking" signs and enforce this restriction.

Use of Church property should not pose significant risk of harm to participants or to the property. Nor should it unduly expose the Church to liability or disturb surrounding neighbors.

More detailed instructions on using Church buildings and other property are provided by the Physical Facilities Department or the administration office.

Artwork

Artwork in Church buildings should be of high quality and depict subjects that are appropriate in a house of worship. It also should be properly framed. Church-approved pictures can be obtained through the Purchasing Division or from Church distribution centers (see the *Meetinghouse Artwork Brochure*).

Pictures and other artwork may be placed in appropriate locations in the meetinghouse. However, they may not be placed in the chapel or near the baptismal font. Statues, murals, or mosaics are not authorized. This policy does not apply to works of art that have been on display for many years in the chapels of existing meetinghouses.

If artwork of poor quality is offered, local leaders should tactfully decline accepting it for display in meetinghouses.

Decorations

Decorations for Christmas, other holidays, and other similar occasions may be placed temporarily in the foyer or cultural hall of a meetinghouse, as approved under the direction of the stake presidency. With the exception of flowers, decorations may not be placed in the chapel area of the meetinghouse. Nor should the exterior of the meetinghouse or the grounds be decorated.

Decorations must be modest and inexpensive and must not be a fire hazard. Hay, straw, palm fronds, other dehydrated materials, and candles may not be used. If Christmas trees are used, they should be artificial or properly fireproofed and displayed without electric lights or candles. Local fire and safety codes and ordinances should be observed.

Dedicating Buildings

All new meetinghouses, as well as major additions that contain a chapel, a cultural hall, or an area larger than the existing structure, should be dedicated as soon as possible after the project is completed.

Smaller buildings such as mission homes, institutes, seminaries, and classroom or office additions to meetinghouses may also be dedicated if local leaders desire.

Final approval for dedication is given by the Area President in coordination with the administration office. The Area President works with the stake or mission president and indicates who is responsible for dedicating the building.

The program for a dedicatory service should be in keeping with the purpose of the event. It should not be lengthy or include extensive musical presentations. Sufficient time should be provided for the assigned leader to speak and to dedicate the building. Following the dedicatory prayer, there should be an appropriate hymn or musical selection and a short prayer to close the services.

Dedicatory prayers of buildings may be recorded with permission from the presiding authority.

Emergencies

During an emergency, the stake presidency determines whether or not to hold regular ward meetings.

In a community-wide emergency or disaster, the stake president may assist legitimate disaster relief agencies by allowing meetinghouses to be used as emergency shelters. The Church retains control, and those who use a meetinghouse under these conditions should maintain Church standards.

Fires and Candles

Open flames and lighted candles may not be used in Church buildings.

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Flags

The national flag may be flown on the grounds of Church property at any time as long as it conforms to local custom and convention. The national flag may be displayed inside Church buildings on special occasions, such as patriotic programs. Genuine patriotism does not require displaying the national flag continuously in places of worship.

Groundbreaking Services

After a new building project is approved, local leaders may conduct a groundbreaking service in preparation for the construction. This service is not to be held on Sunday.

Meetinghouse Plans

The Church has prepared a variety of standard meetinghouse plans to fit the circumstances and needs of members throughout the world. When a new meetinghouse is to be constructed, a suitable standard plan is selected. That plan outlines the policy for the rooms, features, and equipment that are included in the meetinghouse.

Monday Nights

See page 278 in *Book 2*.

Overnight Lodging or Camping

Church meetinghouse properties may not be used for overnight lodging, camping, or slumber parties.

Parking Lots

Use of Church parking lots should comply with the guidelines on pages 153-55. In addition, Church parking lots should not be used for commuter parking without permission from the administration office or the Physical Facilities Department at Church headquarters.

Photographs and Video Recordings in Chapels

Taking photographs or making video recordings in chapels is not permitted.

Property Rights and Ownership

All property assigned to or held for the benefit of local units belongs to the Church, not to the units. Nevertheless, local units have broad autonomy in using Church-owned property, including buildings, land, and other property, subject to the ownership and policies of the Church.

Serving Areas

The serving area in Church meetinghouses is not intended for food preparation or cooking unless it is part of a lesson, demonstration, or other instruction. When food is to be served in the building or on the grounds, it should be prepared elsewhere and brought to the meetinghouse, where it may be kept warm or cold until it is served.

Signs

The name of the Church is to be displayed on all meetinghouses and other Church buildings in the approved language and logo. It is to be mounted on the building.

Storage

The only storage allowed in meetinghouses is for maintenance items and other approved supplies and equipment. Welfare commodities and other such items may not be stored in meetinghouses.

Materials such as gasoline, propane, matches, and camping gear should be stored in buildings that are separate from the meetinghouse.

Cars, recreational vehicles, and other personal equipment may not be stored on Church property.

Using Meetinghouses outside of Stake Boundaries

All meetinghouses within reasonable distance of a ward must be occupied to their designed capacity before additional facilities will be provided. When necessary, stake presidencies, in consultation with the Area Presidency, may assign wards to use meetinghouses in an adjacent stake. More than one stake may use a stake center if it is conveniently located.

Medical and Health Policies

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

See page 156.

Autopsies

Autopsies may be performed if the family of the deceased gives consent and if the autopsy complies with the law.

Cremation

Normally, cremation is not encouraged. However, in some countries the law requires it. The family of the deceased must decide whether to cremate the body, taking into account any laws governing burial or cremation. Where possible, the body of a deceased member who has been endowed should be dressed in temple clothing when the body is cremated (see "Temple Burial Clothing," page 70). A funeral service may be held.

Euthanasia

Euthanasia is defined as deliberately putting to death a person who is suffering from an incurable condition or disease. A person who participates in euthanasia, including so-called assisted suicide, violates the commandments of God.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

Members who are infected with HIV or who have AIDS should be treated with dignity and compassion. If infection has resulted from transgression of God's laws, the Church advocates the example of the Lord, who condemned the sin yet loved the sinner and encouraged repentance. Members should reach out with kindness and comfort to the afflicted, ministering to their needs and helping them find solutions to their problems.

Although HIV and AIDS can afflict innocent victims, the principal safeguards are chastity before marriage, total fidelity in marriage, abstinence from any homosexual relations, avoidance of illegal drugs, and reverence and care for the body.

Attendance of people with HIV infection or AIDS at Church meetings does not pose a serious health problem. Public health authorities affirm that HIV has not been transmitted through casual contact in homes, schools, churches, and places of work.

Those who occasionally may need to clean up blood or render first aid should learn and follow local health department recommendations.

For information about performing ordinances for people who are infected with HIV or who have AIDS, see page 27. For more detailed instructions, see the March 1993 *Special Bulletin*.

Hypnosis

The use of hypnosis under competent, professional medical supervision for the treatment of diseases or mental disorders is a medical question to be determined by competent medical authorities. Members should not participate in hypnosis for purposes of demonstration or entertainment.

Medical and Health Practices

Members should not use medical or health practices that are ethically or legally questionable. Local leaders should advise members who have health problems to consult with competent professional practitioners who are licensed in the countries where they practice. Fast-offering funds may not be used to pay for unproven medical care without First Presidency approval in each case.

Organ and Tissue Donations and Transplants

The decision to will or donate one's own body organs or tissue for medical purposes, or the decision to authorize the transplant of organs or tissue from a deceased family member, is made by the individual or the deceased member's family.

The decision to receive a donated organ should be made after receiving competent medical counsel and confirmation through prayer.

Prolonging Life

When severe illness strikes, members should exercise faith in the Lord and seek competent medical assistance. However, when dying becomes inevitable, it should be seen as a blessing and a purposeful part of eternal existence. Members should not feel obligated to extend mortal life by means that are unreasonable. These judgments are best made by family members after receiving wise and competent medical advice and seeking divine guidance through fasting and prayer.

Self-Awareness Groups

Many community resources provide effective help for members who suffer from social or emotional problems. However, some groups that purport to increase self-awareness, raise self-esteem, or enhance individual agency advocate concepts and use methods that can be harmful. Some groups falsely claim Church endorsement, charge exorbitant fees, and encourage long-term commitments. Some intermingle worldly concepts with gospel principles in ways that can undermine spirituality and faith.

These groups tend to promise quick solutions to problems that normally require time and personal effort to resolve. Although participants may experience temporary emotional relief or exhilaration, old problems often return, leading to added disappointment and despair.

Church members should not participate in groups that:

1. Challenge religious and moral values or advocate unwarranted confrontation with spouse or family members as a means of reaching one's potential.
2. Imitate sacred rites or ceremonies.
3. Foster physical contact among participants.
4. Meet late into the evening or in the early-morning hours.
5. Encourage open confession or disclosure of personal information normally discussed only in confidential settings.
6. Cause a husband and wife to be paired with other partners.

Church leaders are not to pay for, encourage participation in, or promote such groups or practices. Also, Church facilities may not be used for these activities. Local leaders should counsel members that true self-improvement comes through living gospel principles. Members who have social or emotional problems may consult with priesthood leaders for guidance in identifying sources of help that are in harmony with gospel principles.

Stillborn Children (Children Who Die before Birth)

Grieving parents whose child dies before birth should be given emotional and spiritual support. Temple ordinances are not performed for stillborn children. However, this does not deny the possibility that a stillborn child may be part of the family in the eternities. Parents are encouraged to trust the Lord to resolve such cases in the way He knows is best. The family may record the name of a stillborn child on the family group record followed by the word *stillborn* in parentheses. Memorial or graveside services may be held as determined by the parents.

It is a fact that a child has fife before birth. However, there is no direct revelation on when the spirit enters the body.

Word of Wisdom

The only official interpretation of "hot drinks" (D&C 89:9) in the Word of Wisdom is the statement made by early Church leaders that the term "hot drinks" means tea and coffee.

Members should not use any substance that contains illegal drugs. Nor should members use harmful or habit-forming substances except under the care of a competent physician.

Policies on Moral Issues

Abortion

The Lord commanded, "Thou shalt not ... kill, nor do anything like unto it" (D&C 59:6). The Church opposes elective abortion for personal or social convenience. Members must not submit to, perform, encourage, pay for, or arrange for an abortion. The only possible exceptions are when:

1. Pregnancy resulted from rape or incest.
2. A competent physician determines that the life or health of the mother is in serious jeopardy.
3. A competent physician determines that the fetus has severe defects that will not allow the baby to survive beyond birth.

Even these exceptions do not justify abortion automatically. Abortion is a most serious matter and should be considered only after the persons responsible have consulted with their bishops and received divine confirmation through prayer.

The Church has not favored or opposed legislative proposals or public demonstrations concerning abortion. However, the First Presidency encourages members, as citizens, to let their voices be heard in appropriate and legal ways that will evidence their belief in the sacredness of life. (See Ensign, Mar. 1991, 78.)

Church members who submit to, perform, encourage, pay for, or arrange for an abortion may be subject to Church discipline.

As far as has been revealed, a person may repent and be forgiven for the sin of abortion.

Abuse and Cruelty

The Church's position is that abuse cannot be tolerated in any form. Those who abuse or are cruet to their spouses, children, other family members, or anyone else violate the laws of God and man. Such members are subject to Church discipline. They should not be given Church callings and may not have a temple recommend. Even if a person who abused a child sexually or physically receives Church discipline and is later restored to full fellowship or readmitted by baptism, leaders should not call the person to any position working with children or youth unless the First Presidency authorizes removal of the annotation on the person's membership record.

In instances of abuse, the first responsibility of the Church is to help those who have been abused and to protect those who may be vulnerable to future abuse. Victims of sexual abuse (including rape) often suffer serious trauma and feelings of guilt. Victims of the evil acts of others are not guilty of sin. Church leaders should be sensitive to such victims and give caring attention to help them overcome the destructive effects of abuse.

Stake presidents and bishops should make every effort to counsel those who have been involved in abuse. Members also may need professional counseling. When appropriate, bishops should contact LDS Social Services to identify resources to provide such counseling in harmony with gospel principles. If the transgressor is an adult who has committed a sexual transgression against a child, the behavior may be very deep-seated and the process of repentance and reformation may be very prolonged.

In the United States and Canada, the Church has established a toll-free Help Line (telephone 1-801-240-1911 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 1911) to provide guidance to bishops and stake presidents in cases of abuse. If one of these leaders becomes aware of physical or sexual abuse involving Church members, or if he believes that a person may have been abused or is at risk of being abused, he should call the Help Line. He will be able to consult with social services, legal, and other specialists who can help answer questions and formulate steps that should be taken. Outside the United States and Canada, stake presidents and bishops should call the Area Presidency for guidance. A bishop also should notify his stake president of instances of abuse.

If confidential information indicates that a member's abusive activities have violated applicable law, the bishop or stake president should urge the member to report these activities to the appropriate government authorities. Leaders can obtain information about local reporting requirements through the Help Line. Where reporting is required by law, the leader should encourage the member to secure qualified legal advice.

To avoid implicating the Church in legal matters to which it is not a party, leaders should avoid testifying in civil or criminal cases or other proceedings involving abuse. For specific guidelines, see "Legal Matters," page 151.

For additional information, stake presidents and bishops may refer to the booklet *Responding to Abuse: Helps for Ecclesiastical Leaders* and the pamphlets *Preventing and Responding to*

Spouse Abuse and Preventing and Responding to Child Abuse.

Adoption and Foster Care

See pages 147 and 160.

Artificial Insemination

Artificial insemination with semen from anyone but the husband is strongly discouraged. However, this is a personal matter that ultimately must be left to the judgment of the husband and wife. Responsibility for the decision rests solely upon them.

Artificial insemination of single sisters is not approved. Single sisters who deliberately refuse to follow the counsel of their Church leaders in this matter are subject to Church discipline.

For information about the sealing of children who were conceived by artificial insemination, see page 75.

Birth Control

It is the privilege of married couples who are able to bear children to provide mortal bodies for the spirit children of God, whom they are then responsible to nurture and rear. The decision as to how many children to have and when to have them is extremely intimate and private and should be left between the couple and the Lord. Church members should not judge one another in this matter.

Married couples also should understand that sexual relations within marriage are divinely approved not only for the purpose of procreation, but also as a means of expressing love and strengthening emotional and spiritual bonds between husband and wife.

Chastity and Fidelity

The Lord's law of moral conduct is abstinence from sexual relations outside of lawful marriage and fidelity within marriage. Sexual relations are proper only between husband and wife, expressed within the bonds of marriage. Adultery, fornication, homosexual or lesbian relations, and every other unholy, unnatural, or impure practice are sinful. Members who violate the Lord's law of moral conduct or who influence others to do so are subject to Church discipline (see First Presidency letter, 14 Nov. 1991).

Euthanasia

See page 156.

Homosexual Behavior

Homosexual behavior violates the commandments of God, is contrary to the purposes of human sexuality, distorts loving relationships, and deprives people of the blessings that can be found in family life and in the saving ordinances of the gospel. Those who persist in such behavior or who influence others to do so are subject to Church discipline. Homosexual behavior can be forgiven through sincere repentance.

If members have homosexual thoughts or feelings or engage in homosexual behavior, Church leaders should help them have a clear understanding of faith in Jesus Christ, the process of repentance, and the purpose of life on earth. Leaders also should help them accept responsibility for their thoughts and actions and apply gospel principles in their lives.

In addition to the inspired assistance of Church leaders, members may need professional counseling. When appropriate, bishops should contact LDS Social Services to identify resources to provide such counseling in harmony with gospel principles.

For additional suggestions, stake presidents and bishops may refer to the booklet *Understanding and Helping Those Who Have Homosexual Problems: Suggestions for Ecclesiastical Leaders.* See also "Same-Gender Marriages" on this page.

In Vitro Fertilization

In vitro fertilization using semen from anyone but the husband or an egg from anyone but the wife is strongly discouraged. However, this is a personal matter that ultimately must be left to the judgment of the husband and wife, with responsibility for the decision resting solely upon them.

For information about the sealing of children who were conceived by in vitro fertilization, see page 75.

Occult Affiliation

Members should not engage in forms of so-called Satan worship or affiliate in any way with the occult. "Such activities are among the works of darkness spoken of in the scriptures. They are designed to destroy one's faith in Christ, and will jeopardize the salvation of those who knowingly promote this wickedness. These things should not be pursued as games, be topics in Church meetings, or be delved into in private, personal conversations" (First Presidency letter, 18 Sept. 1991).

Pornography

The Church opposes pornography in any form. Members should stay away from pornographic material and oppose its production, dissemination, and use.

Prolonging Life

See page 156.

Same-Gender Marriages

The Church opposes same-gender marriages and any efforts to legalize such marriages. Church members are encouraged "to appeal to legislators, judges, and other government officials to preserve the purposes and sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman, and to reject all efforts to give legal authorization or other official approval or support to marriages between persons of the same gender" (First Presidency letter, 1 Feb. 1994; see also "Homosexual Behavior" on this page).

Sex Education

Parents have primary responsibility for the sex education of their children. Teaching this subject honestly and plainly in the home will help young people avoid serious moral transgressions. To help parents teach this sensitive and important information, the Church has published *A Parent's Guide*.

Where schools have undertaken sex education, parents should seek to ensure that the instructions given to their children are consistent with sound moral and ethical values.

Sperm Donation

The donation of sperm is strongly discouraged.

Suicide

It is wrong to take a life, even one's own. However, a person who commits suicide may not be responsible for his or her acts. Only God can judge such a matter.

Leaders should counsel and compassionately console the family members of a person who has committed suicide. The family, in consultation with the bishop, determines the place and nature of a funeral service for a person who has died under such circumstances. Church facilities may be used.

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A person who has seriously considered suicide or has attempted suicide should be counseled by his or her bishop and may be encouraged to seek professional help. For more information, see *Identification and Prevention of Suicidal Behavior.*

Surgical Sterilization (Including Vasectomy)

The Church strongly discourages surgical sterilization as an elective form of birth control. It should be considered only if (1) medical conditions seriously jeopardize life or health or (2) birth defects or serious trauma have rendered a person mentally incompetent and not responsible for his or her actions. Such conditions must be determined by competent medical judgment and in accordance with law. Even then, the persons responsible for this decision should consult with each other and with their bishop and should receive divine confirmation of their decision through prayer.

Surrogate Motherhood

Surrogate motherhood is strongly discouraged.

Unwed Parents

Church members who are involved in pregnancy out of wedlock are encouraged to go to their bishop. By virtue of his priesthood office and calling, he can counsel with them as they make important decisions that affect their own well-being and that of the child. He also can help them begin the process of repentance. Because of the social and emotional issues inherent in such situations, the bishop should consider referring the unwed parents to LDS Social Services (where available) regardless of whether they choose to marry place their child for adoption, or keep the child without getting married.

The First Presidency has stated:

"Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by parents who provide love, support, and all the blessings of the gospel.

"Every effort should be made in helping those who conceive out of wedlock to establish an eternal family relationship. When the possibility of a successful marriage is unlikely, unwed parents should be encouraged to place the child for adoption, preferably through LDS Social Services....

"Unwed parents who do not marry should not be counseled to keep the infant as a condition of repentance or out of an obligation to care for one's own. Generally, unwed parents are not able to provide the stable, nurturing environment so essential for the baby's well-being.

"When deciding to place the baby for adoption, the best interests of the child should be the paramount consideration. Placing the infant for adoption enables unwed parents to do what is best for the child and enhances the prospect for the blessings of the gospel in the lives of all concerned" (First Presidency letter, 15 June 1998; see also "Adoption and Foster Care," page 147).

If LDS Social Services agencies are not available, leaders should encourage the confidential placement of the child for adoption with a temple-worthy couple through a local licensed agency. LDS Social Services and most other licensed agencies are designed to protect the interest of the child, screen the adoptive couple before placement, and provide needed supervision and counseling.

If an unwed parent decides to keep the child, leaders and other members should treat the parent and child with compassion and concern. Leaders should encourage the parent to have the child given a name and a blessing (see pages 25-26).

For information about whether young women who have children out of wedlock should attend Relief Society or Young Women meetings, see pages 207 and 227 in *Book 2*.

LDS Social Services has established a toll-free Help Line (1-800-537-2229) for unwed parents and others to obtain help regarding pregnancies and related matters. Help Line staff provide sensitive, confidential counseling based on gospel principles. The Help Line is available in all areas of the United States and Canada. Members and nonmembers may call the number directly or call the local LDS Social Services agency. If leaders do not know the number of the local agency, they may call the Help Line to obtain that information.

Victims of Rape and Sexual Abuse

See "Abuse and Cruelty," pages 157-58.