MAY 2019

Handbook 1

Stake Presidents and Bishops

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STAKE PRESIDENTS AND BISHOPS

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0. Introduction

The Lord admonished, "Let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence" (Doctrine and Covenants 107:99).

Church leaders 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 help leaders understand and fulfill 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 Doctrine and Covenants 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 while seeking the guidance of the Spirit.

0.1 Handbooks for Church Leaders

The Church provides two handbooks for leaders:

Handbook 1: Stake Presidents and Bishops. The first two chapters of this handbook outline the general responsibilities of stake presidents and bishops. The other chapters provide detailed information about policies and procedures. This detailed information is arranged by topic to provide easy access when stake presidents and bishops have questions about their specific responsibilities.

Handbook 2: Administering the Church. This handbook is a guide for members of ward and stake councils. The first two chapters present the doctrinal foundation of the work of the Church: the salvation of individuals and the sealing and exaltation of families through the power of the priesthood. The other chapters provide instructions for administering priesthood quorums and auxiliaries. They also present principles and guidelines that apply to multiple organizations in the ward.

The headings and subheadings in these handbooks are numbered to make topics easy to locate or reference. Rather than refer to a page or group of pages, leaders may refer to a topic by its number. For example, instructions about temple marriage are provided in 3.5.1. The number 3 refers to the chapter, the number 5 refers to a section of the chapter, and the number 1 refers to a subsection.

0.2 Updates and Supplements to Instructions

Occasionally the information in these handbooks will be updated or supplemented through letters, notices, and other communication from the First Presidency, Quorum of the Twelve, and Presiding Bishopric. When this occurs, leaders should note the changes in their copies of the handbooks. Leaders should keep handbooks and these supplementary materials together.

0.3 Questions about Instructions

Leaders who have questions about information in the handbooks or about issues that are not addressed should direct the questions to their immediate presiding authority.

0.4

Application in Branches, Districts, and Missions

For administrative purposes, the terms *bishop* and *bishopric* in the handbooks refer also to branch presidents and branch presidencies. The terms *stake president* and *stake presidency* refer also to district presidents and district presidencies. However, the offices of bishop and branch president are not equivalent in authority and responsibility. Nor are the offices of stake president and district president. The bishop is an office in the priesthood, and ordination is authorized only by the First Presidency. Stake presidents are called by General Authorities and Area Seventies.

References to wards and stakes usually apply also to branches, districts, and missions.

0.5

Contacting Church Headquarters or the Assigned Administrative Office

Some chapters in this handbook include instructions to contact Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office. The instruction to contact Church headquarters applies to priesthood leaders and clerks in the United States and Canada. The instruction to contact the assigned administrative office applies to priesthood leaders and clerks outside the United States and Canada.

0.6

Distribution

Handbook 1: Stake Presidents and Bishops should be distributed as follows:

- General Authorities, Area Seventies, members of general auxiliary presidencies, Church department heads, directors for temporal affairs (1 copy each)
- Temple presidency (4 copies)
- Mission presidency (3 copies)
- Stake or district presidency (3 copies)
- Stake or district clerk (1 file copy)
- Bishopric (3 copies)
- Branch president (1 copy)
- Ward or branch clerk (1 file copy)

This handbook has been prepared solely for use by general and local Church officers to administer the affairs of the Church. It should not be duplicated or given to any other persons. The distribution list includes a file copy to be kept in a secure place by each stake and ward clerk. He may refer to it for information on finances and records and for information on supporting the stake president or bishop.

When Church officers who have a copy of this handbook are released, they give the copy promptly to their successors or to their presiding authority.

1.

Duties of the Stake President

The stakes of the Church are established "for a defense, and for a refuge" for the Saints in the latter days (Doctrine and Covenants 115:6). The term *stake* comes from the prophecies of Isaiah, who described latter-day Zion as a tent or a tabernacle that would be secured by stakes (see Isaiah 33:20; 54:2).

The stake president holds the priesthood keys to direct the work of the Church within the stake. He and his counselors form a stake presidency. They care for stake members with love and concern, helping them become true followers of Jesus Christ.

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 oversees welfare matters.
4. He oversees records, finances, and properties.

Because the stake president holds priesthood keys, he has some responsibilities that are his alone. To enable him to concentrate on these duties, he delegates many other assignments to his counselors, high councilors, the stake clerk, the stake executive secretary, and assistant stake clerks.

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.

The stake clerk and stake executive secretary work closely with the stake presidency, but they are not members of the presidency and do not need to be released when the presidency is reorganized. Responsibilities of the stake clerk and executive secretary are outlined in 13.3.2 and 13.3.4.

1.1

Presiding High Priest

This section outlines the stake president's responsibilities as the presiding high priest in the stake.

1.1.1

Leadership

Church members look to their stake president as the primary spiritual leader in the stake. He sets the spiritual tone for the stake by doing the Lord's work "with holiness of heart" (Mosiah 18:12). He teaches and uplifts members after the example of the Savior.

A stake president is a faithful disciple and witness of Jesus Christ. He is true to his covenants. He is loyal to his wife and considerate of her. He sets an example of righteousness for his children, the stake, and the community. His counselors are men of the same character.

The stake president provides guidance and counsel to bishops and other leaders in the stake. He meets with new bishoprics as soon as reasonable after their callings to instruct them. Thereafter, he instructs and encourages bishops in regular priesthood interviews, in meetings with bishoprics, and in other settings.

The stake president helps members increase their spiritual strength. He teaches them to pray, study the scriptures, and receive the saving ordinances.

In addition to strengthening individuals, the stake president strengthens families. He teaches that the family is the most important organization in time and eternity. He encourages them to participate in regular prayer and gospel instruction, including scripture study and home evening. He also encourages families to be considerate of one another. He ensures that Church callings do not unduly infringe on family responsibilities. He also ensures that Church activities support parents' efforts to raise righteous children.

The stake president emphasizes the importance of members having and accessing the scriptures and the Church magazines in their homes.

1.1.2
The Work of Salvation

The stake president presides over the work of salvation in the stake. This work includes member missionary work, convert retention, activation, temple and family history work, and teaching the gospel. Responsibilities for this work are outlined in *Handbook 2,* chapter 5. Some of the stake president's unique responsibilities for temple and missionary work are also outlined in chapters 3 and 4 of this handbook.

1.1.3
Priesthood

1.1.3.1
Melchizedek Priesthood

Members of the stake presidency preside over those who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood in the stake.

The stake president is the stake high priests quorum president. He and his counselors comprise the presidency of the stake high priests quorum. That quorum consists of the high priests who currently serve in the following callings: the stake president and his counselors, all bishops and their counselors in the stake, high councilors, and functioning patriarchs.

The stake presidency oversees elders quorums. (See *Handbook 2,* 7.2.1.)

The stake president oversees the conferral of the Melchizedek Priesthood and ordinations to the offices of elder and high priest (see 16.7.1).

1.1.3.2
Aaronic Priesthood

Members of the stake presidency instruct bishoprics in their responsibilities for Aaronic Priesthood holders and young women.

The stake president assigns one of his counselors to preside over the stake Aaronic Priesthood–Young Women committee (see *Handbook 2,* 18.3.9). This counselor also oversees the stake Young Men and Young Women organizations.

1.1.4
Stake Patriarch

The stake president presides over the stake patriarch and should develop a close relationship with him. For information about calling and supervising the stake patriarch, see chapter 15.

1.1.5
Councils, Committees, and Meetings

1.1.5.1
Councils and Committees

The stake president presides over the high council and the stake council. He assigns his counselors to preside over the stake Aaronic Priesthood–Young Women committee, the stake young single adult committee, and the stake single adult committee (where organized).

Each stake president is a member of a coordinating council. Members of this council meet to (1) coordinate the work of stakes and missions and (2) coordinate multistake matters. Council meetings are held under the direction of the Area Presidency. Normally they designate an Area Seventy to serve as chairman of the council. Subjects for discussion in council meetings could include missionary work, welfare, Church education, temple work, family history work, public affairs, activities, the Perpetual

Education Fund (where approved), and other matters as needed.

1.1.5.2
Meetings

The stake presidency plans the stake meetings listed in *Handbook 2,* chapter 18. The stake president presides at stake meetings unless an Area Seventy or General Authority attends. The stake president's counselors may conduct these meetings and may preside if the stake president is absent.

1.1.6
Callings and Releases

The stake president's responsibilities for callings and releases are outlined in *Handbook 2,* chapter 19. He may assign his counselors and high councilors to extend callings and releases as outlined in the Chart of Callings in that chapter. The stake president, or a person with higher authority, personally extends the following callings:

1. Counselors in the stake presidency. The stake president recommends brethren to be called or released as his counselors. Instructions are 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.

2. Stake patriarch. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles directs the calling of stake patriarchs (see Doctrine and Covenants 107:39). The stake president may recommend whom to call. Recommendations should be submitted online through Leader and Clerk Resources. The stake president may interview, call, and ordain a patriarch after receiving approval from the Quorum of the Twelve (see chapter 15).

3. Bishops. The stake presidency recommends brethren to be called or released as bishops. Instructions are on the Recommendation for New Bishop form. The stake president may call, ordain, and set apart a bishop, or release a bishop, after receiving written approval from the First Presidency.

4. Elders quorum presidents. The stake president calls and sets apart elders quorum presidents because he is the person who is authorized to bestow the priesthood keys associated with their callings.

5. Stake clerk. Because of the importance of the stake clerk's responsibilities and the need for him to be a man of unquestionable integrity, the stake president personally calls him and sets him apart.

In units that use Church record-keeping software, forms for recommending counselors in the stake presidency, patriarchs, and bishops are available electronically. In other areas, these forms are available from the assigned administrative office.

1.1.7
Auxiliaries and Programs

The stake president oversees the stake Relief Society. He assigns his counselors to oversee other stake auxiliary organizations and programs. (See *Handbook 2,* 15.1.2.)

1.1.8
Public Affairs

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 may organize and oversee a 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. Some stakes will participate in a multistake council rather than have a separate stake public affairs council.

The stake presidency may call and set apart a stake public affairs director, assistant directors, and specialists as needed (see *Handbook 2,* 15.5).

1.2
Common Judge

The stake president has the following responsibilities as the common judge in the stake:

1. Conduct worthiness interviews as outlined in 7.1.3. He may also authorize his counselors to conduct interviews as outlined in 7.1.4. For guidelines on worthiness interviews, see 7.1.1.
2. Counsel stake members who seek spiritual guidance, who have weighty personal problems, or who have committed serious transgressions, as needed or requested by the bishop. For guidelines on counseling, see 7.2.
3. Administer Church discipline when Church members have committed serious transgressions. For principles and instructions relating to Church discipline, see chapter 6.

1.3
Welfare

The stake president has the following responsibilities for welfare in the stake:

1. Provide welfare leadership by teaching the doctrines and principles relating to welfare, instructing bishops and other leaders in their welfare responsibilities, directing the welfare work of the stake council, and serving as the agent stake president for Church welfare operations when assigned.
2. Oversee welfare assistance *(a)* when a bishop or members of his immediate family need assistance and *(b)* in special circumstances that go beyond what the bishop is authorized to provide (see 5.1.2).
3. Direct the stake's efforts to prepare for and respond to emergencies (see 5.1.3).

For information about welfare responsibilities and principles, see 5.1 in this handbook and chapter 6 in *Handbook 2.*

1.4
Records, Finances, and Properties

The stake president oversees records, reports, finances, and properties in the stake. He may assign much of the work with records, reports, and finances to his counselors and clerks. He assigns a high councilor to be the stake physical facilities representative and to help oversee properties.

For information about records and reports, see chapter 13. For information about finances, see chapter 14. For information about physical facilities, see chapter 8.

2.

Duties of the Bishop

Wards are the basic congregations of the Church. In wards, Church members worship together, partake of the sacrament, learn the gospel, and serve and strengthen each other.

The bishop holds the priesthood keys to direct the work of the Church within the ward. He and his counselors form a bishopric, which works under the direction of the stake presidency. They care for ward members with love and concern, helping them become true followers of Jesus Christ.

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

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

Because the bishop holds priesthood keys, he has some responsibilities that are his alone. To enable him to concentrate on these duties, he delegates many other assignments to his counselors, the ward clerk, the ward executive secretary, assistant ward clerks, and quorum and auxiliary leaders.

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 any questions about acting for the bishop.

The ward clerk and ward executive secretary work closely with the bishopric, but they are not members of the bishopric and do not need to be released when the bishopric is reorganized. Responsibilities of the ward clerk and executive secretary are outlined in 13.4.2 and 13.4.4.

2.1

Presiding High Priest

This section outlines the bishop's responsibilities as the presiding high priest in the ward.

2.1.1

Leadership

Ward members look to their bishop as the primary spiritual leader in the ward. He sets the spiritual tone for the ward by doing the Lord's work "with holiness of heart" (Mosiah 18:12). He teaches and uplifts members after the example of the Savior.

A bishop is a faithful disciple and witness of Jesus Christ. He is true to his covenants. He is loyal to his wife and considerate of her. He sets an example of righteousness for his children, the ward, and the community. His counselors are men of the same character.

The bishop provides guidance and counsel to other leaders in the ward. He instructs them in their duties and encourages them.

The bishop helps members increase their spiritual strength. He teaches them to pray, study the scriptures, and receive the saving ordinances.

In addition to strengthening individuals, the bishop strengthens families. He teaches that the family is the most important organization in time and eternity. He encourages them to participate in regular prayer and gospel instruction, including scripture study and home evening. He also encourages families to be considerate of one another. He ensures that Church callings do not unduly infringe on family responsibilities. He also ensures that Church activities support parents' efforts to raise righteous children.

The bishop emphasizes the importance of members having and accessing the scriptures and the Church magazines in their homes.

2.1.2
The Work of Salvation

The bishop directs the work of salvation in the ward. This work includes member missionary work, convert retention, activation, temple and family history work, and teaching the gospel. Responsibilities for this work are outlined in *Handbook 2,* chapter 5. Some of the bishop's unique responsibilities for temple and missionary work are also outlined in chapters 3 and 4 of this handbook.

2.1.3
Priesthood

The bishop and his counselors direct the work of the elders quorum president in watching over quorum members and their families, building strength in the quorum, and ensuring that the work of the priesthood is accomplished. Under the bishop's direction, the elders quorum president may be assigned to oversee member missionary work and temple and family history work in the ward.

The bishop also directs the elders quorum and Relief Society presidents in overseeing ministering. He meets with both presidents together at least quarterly to address the needs of individuals and families (see *Handbook 2,* 7.4.2, 9.5.2).

The bishop's Aaronic Priesthood responsibilities are outlined in 2.2.

2.1.4
Ordinances and Blessings

The bishop directs the administration of the following ordinances and blessings in the ward: the sacrament, naming and blessing of children, baptism and confirmation of 8-year-old children of record, and conferral of the Aaronic Priesthood and ordination to the offices of deacon, teacher, and priest.

For information about ordinances and blessings, see chapter 16 in this handbook and chapter 20 in *Handbook 2.*

2.1.5
Councils, Committees, and Meetings

2.1.5.1
Councils and Committees

The bishop presides over the ward council and bishopric youth committee. If a ward young single adult committee is organized, the bishop assigns a counselor to preside over it.

The bishop uses the ward council as a resource for counseling together and for delegating important elements of the Lord's work to priesthood and auxiliary leaders (see *Handbook 2,* chapter 4).

2.1.5.2
Meetings

The bishopric plans sacrament meetings and other ward meetings listed in *Handbook 2,* chapter 18. The bishop presides at ward meetings unless a member of the stake presidency, an Area Seventy, or a General Authority attends. The bishop's counselors may conduct these meetings and may preside if the bishop is absent.

2.1.6
Callings and Releases

The bishop's responsibilities for callings and releases are outlined in *Handbook 2,* chapter 19. He may assign his counselors to extend callings and releases as outlined in the Chart of Callings in that chapter.

2.1.7
Auxiliaries and Programs

The bishop oversees the ward Relief Society. He assigns his counselors to oversee other ward auxiliary organizations and programs. (See *Handbook 2,* 8.3.1, 9.2.1, 10.3.1, 11.2.1, and 12.2.1.)

2.2
President of the Aaronic Priesthood

"The bishopric is the presidency of [the Aaronic] priesthood, and holds the keys or authority of the same" (Doctrine and Covenants 107:15). The bishop has the following responsibilities as the president of the Aaronic Priesthood in the ward. His counselors assist him.

1. Members of the bishopric watch over and nurture young men and young women in the ward. They help young men serve faithfully, advance in the priesthood, and accomplish the purposes of the Aaronic Priesthood (see *Handbook 2,* 8.1.3). They help young women live the Young Women values (see *Handbook 2,* 10.1.4). They help all youth live the standards in *For the Strength of Youth*.

2. The bishopric oversees Aaronic Priesthood quorums and Young Women classes. The bishop is president of the priests quorum (see Doctrine and Covenants 107:87–88).

3. The bishop assigns one of his counselors to oversee the ward Young Men organization. He also assigns a counselor to oversee the ward Young Women organization. The same counselor could oversee both organizations.

2.3
Common Judge

The bishop has the following responsibilities as the "common judge" in the ward (see Doctrine and Covenants 107:72–74):

1. Conduct worthiness interviews as outlined in 7.1.5. He may also authorize his counselors to conduct interviews as outlined in 7.1.6. For guidelines on worthiness interviews, see 7.1.1.

2. Counsel ward members who seek spiritual guidance, who have weighty personal problems, or who have committed serious transgressions. For guidelines on counseling, see 7.2.

3. Administer Church discipline when Church members have committed serious transgressions. For principles and instructions relating to Church discipline, see chapter 6.

2.4
Welfare

The purposes of welfare are to help members become self-reliant, care for the poor and needy, and give service. The bishop has the following responsibilities for welfare in the ward:

1. Provide welfare leadership by teaching the doctrines and principles relating to welfare, instructing leaders in their welfare responsibilities, and directing the welfare work of the ward council.

2. Seek out the poor and provide assistance to those in need.

3. Direct the ward's efforts to prepare for and respond to emergencies.

For information about welfare responsibilities and principles, see 5.2 in this handbook and chapter 6 in *Handbook 2.*

2.5

Records, Finances, and the Meetinghouse

The bishop oversees records, reports, finances, and the meetinghouse. He may assign much of the work with records, reports, and finances to his counselors and clerks. He may assign one of his counselors to serve as the ward building representative, or he may call another member to do so.

For information about records and reports, see chapter 13. For information about finances, see chapter 14. For information about meetinghouses, see chapter 8.

3.

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 chapter. The stake president may direct questions to the Office of the First Presidency.

3.1

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 should also understand the solemn and sacred responsibilities they assume as they participate in temple ordinances and make covenants.

Stake presidents and bishops help individuals prepare to receive the sacred ordinances of the temple at the appropriate time. Relief Society presidents and elders quorum presidents assist stake presidents and bishops by helping ensure members are prepared to make the covenants and receive the blessings of the temple. Youth leaders and parents also help young people prepare to make and keep temple covenants. They do this through both formal teaching opportunities and by example.

3.1.1

Temple Preparation Course

The bishop oversees the temple preparation course for members who are preparing to receive their own endowment. The purpose of this course is to help members prepare to receive the ordinances and blessings of the temple. Instructions are provided in *Handbook 2,* 5.4.5.

3.1.2

Temple Orientation

Members who are preparing to receive their endowment or who are preparing to be sealed should carefully read the booklet *Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple.* Leaders may use the booklet as a basis for counsel and instruction when interviewing and orienting these members.

3.2

Making Plans to Go to a Temple

Each stake and mission is included in a temple district. While individual members may attend any temple they desire, organized ward or stake visits to temples outside the assigned temple district are not encouraged. Such visits require the approval of the stake presidency and should be coordinated with the temple.

3.2.1

Endowment, Marriage, or Sealing

Members who are planning to go to a temple to receive their own endowment, to be married, or to be sealed should contact the temple in advance to schedule the ordinances.

3.2.2

Baptisms and Confirmations for the Dead

Organized groups, such as families, wards, and stakes, who desire to participate in ordinances in the baptistry normally make arrangements with the temple in advance. One or more adults should accompany organized groups, making sure that there are a reasonable number of leaders representing each gender in the group. These adults should have valid temple recommends.

Brethren and sisters who assist in the baptistry do not need to be set apart as temple ordinance workers. Endowed brethren, unendowed Melchizedek Priesthood holders, and priests in the Aaronic Priesthood may perform baptisms and serve as witnesses to the baptisms.

Only endowed brethren may officiate in confirmations and serve as the recorder at the font or in the confirmation room.

Sisters, including young women, may assist with baptistry assignments such as assisting patrons, distributing clothing and towels, and, where possible, recording baptism and confirmation ordinances in the computer system. Sisters who serve in the baptistry do not need to be endowed.

3.2.3
Quotas for Temple Attendance

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 establish reporting systems or set quotas for temple attendance.

3.2.4
Translation Assistance

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

3.2.5
Child Care at Temples

Temples are equipped to care only for children who come to be sealed to parents or to observe sealings of living siblings, step siblings, or half siblings. Other children should not be brought to a temple.

3.3
Recommends to Enter a Temple

The opportunity to enter a temple is a sacred privilege. It is also an indication that a member is willing to obey God and follow His prophets. Priesthood leaders encourage all members who are of age to prepare themselves to enter the house of the Lord. This sacred privilege allows those who are properly prepared to make sacred covenants and receive promised blessings.

A valid recommend admits a member to all temples. The three types of temple recommends are listed below:

1. *Limited-use recommend* for unendowed members (see 3.4.14).
2. *Temple recommend* for previously endowed members. This recommend, issued from recommend book 1, authorizes a member to participate in all temple ordinances for the deceased. This recommend is also used when a member is sealed to living or deceased parents or children.
3. *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, issued from recommend book 2, includes a recommend for living ordinances and is attached to a valid temple recommend, which is retained by the member and used when the member returns to the temple (described above).

Children under eight who are to be sealed to their parents or are to observe the sealings of their living siblings, step siblings, or half siblings to their parents do not need temple recommends.

3.3.1 Safeguarding Temple Recommend Books

Priesthood leaders who have temple recommend books should safeguard them carefully. No unauthorized individuals should have access to these books. When Church headquarters updates temple recommend books, the outdated books should no longer be used and should be destroyed.

3.3.2 Disposal of Outdated Temple Recommends

Stake, mission, and temple presidents (and their counselors who are authorized to conduct temple recommend interviews) should retrieve expired temple recommends when issuing new recommends to worthy Church members. These expired recommends should be shredded.

3.3.3 Lost or Stolen Recommends

The bishop should ask members to notify him promptly if a recommend is lost or stolen. If the bishop learns of a lost or stolen recommend, he uses the Leader and Clerk Resources system to cancel the recommend as soon as possible. If he is not able to cancel the recommend in a timely manner, he asks one of his counselors or the ward clerk to cancel it. If the Leader and Clerk Resources system is not available, the bishop or stake president contacts the temple recorder of the temple to which the stake is assigned.

3.3.4 Unworthy Recommend Holders

If the bishop determines that a member who has a current recommend is unworthy, he immediately requests the recommend from the member and uses the Leader and Clerk Resources system to cancel the recommend according to the guidelines in 3.3.3.

3.4 General Guidelines for Issuing Temple Recommends

Authorized Church officers conduct worthiness interviews for temple recommends as outlined in the temple recommend book. Church officers make every effort to see that only worthy members enter the house of the Lord. This requirement is to both protect the sanctity of the temple and to avoid placing that which is sacred before those who are unprepared (see Doctrine and Covenants 97:15–16).

Temple recommend interviews follow the pattern set by the Lord, "that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established" (Matthew 18:16). The interview allows a member to attest that he or she is living according to God's commandments and he or she is prepared to enter the house of the Lord. Priesthood leaders also attest, through an interview, that the member is worthy and understands the sacred responsibility he or she assumes by making covenants and participating in temple ordinances.

Temple recommend interviews must be private. They should not be rushed. Interviewers should not add to or remove any requirements from those that are outlined in the temple recommend book.

A member of the stake presidency or a stake clerk activates the temple recommend in the Leader and Clerk Resources system (where it is available) soon after it is issued and before the member attends the temple. Limited-use recommends for baptisms and confirmations are printed under the direction of a member of the bishopric or branch presidency using the Leader and Clerk Resources system. The temple recommend remains the property of the Church and is not transferable.

3.4.1 Wards and Branches in Stakes

The bishop, his counselors as authorized by him, or the branch president interviews ward or branch members and issues temple recommends to those who are worthy.

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

Before issuing a recommend in any of the three above-listed circumstances, the bishop carefully reviews the membership record to verify that it does not include a notation about a sealing or ordinance restriction or unresolved Church discipline.

Following the interview by a member of the bishopric or by the branch president, a member of the stake presidency interviews the person and signs the recommend if he determines that the person is worthy. The stake president personally interviews members who are receiving their own endowment and members who are planning to be married or sealed in a temple. Because of the large number of such interviews in a young single adult stake, as an exception the stake president may authorize his counselors to interview those who are receiving their own endowment or being married in a temple.

3.4.2 Branches in Districts

In districts, the branch president interviews branch members and issues temple recommends to those who are worthy. Before issuing a recommend to a member who is to receive the endowment or be married or sealed in a temple, the branch president carefully reviews the membership record to verify that it does not include a notation about a sealing or ordinance restriction or unresolved Church discipline.

Following the interview by the branch president, a member of the mission presidency interviews the person and signs the recommend if he determines that the person is worthy. The mission president personally interviews members who are receiving their own endowment and members who are planning to be married or sealed in a temple.

The district president does not interview members for temple recommends unless authorized by the First Presidency.

3.4.3 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, an authorized counselor, or the branch president should have already interviewed the member and signed the recommend. This policy also applies to members in the military who are in isolated areas and have been interviewed by the bishop of their home ward or the unit 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.

3.4.4 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 him or her for a temple recommend. Members of young single adult wards and single adult wards are included in this policy. Members who seek limited-use recommends are also included, except new converts.

3.4.5
Full-Time Missionaries

Before a full-time missionary completes his or her service, the mission president may provide a temple recommend to the missionary. The mission president interviews the missionary and signs the recommend in place of the bishop and the stake president. A temple recommend issued in this way should be activated in the mission office so that it expires three months from the date the missionary leaves full-time missionary service. Missionaries should meet with their bishop within three months of their release to receive a new temple recommend.

3.4.6
Newly Baptized Members

The bishop interviews new members who are of an appropriate age to receive a limited-use recommend soon after their confirmation, normally within a week, according to the guidelines in 3.4. For male converts, this interview may be held as part of the interview to receive the Aaronic Priesthood. A limited-use recommend should not be issued to a brother until after he has been ordained to an office in the priesthood.

A waiting period of at least one full year after confirmation is required before a worthy adult may receive his or her own endowment. When issuing temple recommends for new members to receive their own endowment, priesthood leaders ensure that the date the endowment will be received is at least one full year from the member's date of *confirmation,* not from the date of baptism. Only the First Presidency may authorize exceptions.

3.4.7
Members Receiving Their Own Endowment

Instructions for issuing a recommend to a person who is receiving his or her own endowment are located in the temple recommend book. A man must hold the Melchizedek Priesthood to receive his endowment. In addition, members should not receive their own endowment until they (1) have reached the age of 18 and (2) are no longer attending high school, secondary school, or the equivalent.

Adult members can be interviewed for a recommend to receive their own endowment when they are called as missionaries, when they are to be married in a temple, or when they feel a desire to make these sacred covenants. The bishop and stake president should determine that they are sufficiently mature to understand and keep the sacred covenants made in a temple. Such eligibility is determined individually for each person. Bishops and stake presidents should not define eligibility by outward criteria such as reaching a certain age, leaving home for college or employment, or desire to observe the temple marriages of siblings or friends.

In assessing questions of maturity, preparation, and timeliness, the bishop and stake president take into account a single adult's personal circumstances and conduct over time. They ensure that responses to the temple recommend questions meet the requirements for worthiness. They should also consider matters such as the person's:

1. Depth of gospel understanding and testimony.
2. Faithfulness in Church service.
3. Appreciation of the implications of entering into sacred temple covenants.
4. Commitment to wear the temple garment appropriately.

A worthy member who is married to an unendowed spouse, whether the spouse is a member or nonmember, may receive his or her own endowment when both of the following conditions are met:

1 The bishop receives written consent from the spouse.

2 The bishop and stake president are satisfied that the responsibility assumed with the covenants of the endowment will not impair marital harmony.

3.4.8
Members Who Have Disabilities

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

Melchizedek Priesthood holders and sisters who have intellectual disabilities may receive their own endowment if the bishop determines that they have sufficient intellectual capacity to understand, make, and keep the associated covenants. The bishop seeks the direction of the Spirit in making this determination. If the member lives with his or her parents, the bishop counsels with them. When priesthood leaders determine that a member is not accountable, they should record this designation in the Leader and Clerk Resources system.

Sealing to Parents. Persons with intellectual disabilities who are eight or older and are sufficiently accountable must be baptized and confirmed before they can be sealed to their parents. Those who are not accountable do not need to be baptized and confirmed before they can be sealed. Bishops refer questions about specific situations to the stake president, who may refer the questions to the Office of the First Presidency.

Members older than 21 who do not have sufficient intellectual 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 intellectual capacity to understand the ordinance.

2 Can care for themselves without help or are accompanied by relatives or friends who can provide the help they need.

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

3.4.9
After Divorce, Separation, or Annulment

If a member has been divorced or legally separated or has had a marriage annulled since last receiving a temple recommend, the bishop and stake president may feel impressed to interview the member to strengthen them spiritually and emotionally and to ensure continued temple worthiness. If the member has not committed any serious transgression contributing to the divorce or separation, a temple recommend may be retained by the member or renewed according to the usual procedure.

3.4.10
Members Who Have Been Readmitted by Baptism and Confirmation after Excommunication or Name Removal

Members Who Were Not Previously Endowed. After baptism and confirmation, these members may be issued limited-use recommends to do baptisms and confirmations for the dead as outlined in 3.4.14—usually within a week of being confirmed. Brethren must be ordained to an office in 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 the date of their readmission to the Church by baptism and confirmation.

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 6.15).

3.4.11
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.

3.4.12
Members Who Have Undergone a Transsexual Operation

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

3.4.13
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. They should not be made to feel unworthy by mere association; however, such members must demonstrate clearly that they repudiate these apostate religious teachings before they may be issued a recommend.

3.4.14
Issuing Limited-Use Recommends

3.4.14.1
General Guidelines

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

1. For members ages 11 and older to be baptized and confirmed for the dead. (Young women and ordained young men are eligible for a limited-use recommend beginning in January of the year they turn 12.)
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 siblings, step siblings, or half siblings to their parents.

The same standards of worthiness apply to those who receive limited-use recommends as to those who receive other temple recommends. Male members old enough to hold the priesthood must be ordained to an office in the priesthood before being issued a temple recommend. The bishop interviews new members, including 11-year-old new members who will turn 12 during the current year, to receive a limited-use recommend soon after their confirmation, normally within a week. Members who have been previously endowed are not issued limited-use recommends.

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

When interviewing newly baptized and confirmed members, the bishop helps them understand the importance of testimony, sustaining the President of the Church and other leaders, and keeping the commandments. These commandments include obeying the law of chastity, keeping the Sabbath day holy, and attending Sabbath meetings. Because new members typically have not had sufficient time to establish a pattern of paying tithing, the bishop asks if they are willing to pay tithing, rather than if they are full-tithe payers. He helps new members understand the blessings of paying a full tithe. As needed, he invites them to start paying tithing and to attend tithing settlement.

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 limited-use recommend.

3.4.14.2
Limited-Use Recommends for Baptisms and Confirmations for the Dead

Limited-use recommends that are issued to perform baptisms and confirmations for the dead may be used only for that purpose. These recommends are printed using the Leader and Clerk Resources system where it is available.

For information about scheduling baptisms and confirmations for the dead, see 3.2.2.

3.4.14.3
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 siblings, step siblings, or half siblings to their parents. Those who are issued limited-use recommends for the purpose of being sealed to parents, or to observe such sealings, are interviewed by both a member of the bishopric and a member of the stake presidency. Based on the age and maturity of the member, this interview could cover the eternal nature of families and the significance of the sealing ordinance. For a basic understanding of temple ceremonial clothing, members may view the video titled "Sacred Temple Clothing" available at Newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

All children under the age of 21 must be born in the covenant or have been previously sealed to their parents to observe a sealing of living siblings, step siblings, or half siblings to parents. Members who are married or are 21 or older may not be sealed to their parents or observe the sealing of living siblings, step siblings, or half siblings to their parents unless they are endowed.

Limited-use 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 eight do not need recommends to be sealed to their parents or to observe such sealings.

Some children desire to observe the sealing of their living siblings, step siblings, or half siblings to their parents or to a natural parent and a stepparent. If the children who want to observe the sealing do not live the majority of the time in the same home as the children who are being sealed, local priesthood leaders should obtain permission from the children's custodial parent or guardian.

First Presidency approval is necessary if a person who is not baptized or endowed at the required ages due to intellectual disabilities would like to observe the sealing of his or her living siblings. The stake president should send the request with the relevant information to the Office of the First Presidency.

Unendowed children are not permitted to observe the sealing of their parents.

3.5
Temple Clothing and Garments

3.5.1
Clothing to Wear to a Temple

Members who go to a temple should wear the type of clothing that they typically wear to sacrament meeting. They should avoid wearing casual clothes, sports attire, and tuxedos. This instruction is best taught by local priesthood and Relief Society leaders as members prepare to attend the temple. See also “Appropriate Dress for a Temple Marriage,” 3.6.1.3.

3.5.2 Obtaining Temple Clothing and Garments

Local leaders encourage endowed members to purchase their own temple clothing for use when performing temple ordinances. This sacred clothing may be purchased through Church Distribution Services. Some 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 maintain a limited supply of temple clothing that full-time missionaries may use without charge when they receive their own endowment, while they are in missionary training centers, and when they are authorized to participate in temple ordinances while serving in the mission field.

Distributing and selling garments requires the authorization of the First Presidency. Garments are available in a variety of styles and fabrics. They may be purchased through Distribution Services. Relief Society presidents may assist sisters with questions concerning garment fabric and style. Members who have special needs may contact Distribution Services about special orders.

When needed, bishops, Relief Society presidents, and stake presidents instruct members in how to purchase temple clothing and garments. Stake and ward clerks may help members order the clothing.

3.5.3 Making Temple Ceremonial Clothing

Members may make their own temple aprons only if they use the approved apron embroidery and sewing kit. This kit is available from Church Distribution Services. Other temple ceremonial clothing and temple garments may not be made.

3.5.4 Clothing to Wear for a Temple Marriage

See “Appropriate Dress for a Temple Marriage,” 3.6.1.3.

3.5.5 Wearing and Caring for the Garment

Church members who have received the endowment have made a covenant to wear the garment according to the instructions given in the temple. When issuing temple recommends, priesthood leaders should read aloud the First Presidency statement on wearing the garment. 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 the 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.

Members should not alter the garment from its authorized design or wear it contrary to instructions to accommodate different styles of clothing. Members should wear both parts of the two-piece garment.

The garment is sacred and should be treated with respect. The garment is worn beneath the clothing, and out of respect for its sacred significance, it is kept covered. Members normally care for their garments personally. Members should avoid displaying the garment publicly.

Members who have made covenants in the temple should be guided by the Holy Spirit to answer for themselves personal questions about wearing the garment.

3.5.6
Garments and Temple Clothing for Members Who Have Disabilities

Garments for members who are bedridden or who have severe physical disabilities are available by special order from Beehive Clothing. Bishops, Relief Society presidents, and elders quorum presidents may assist members with these orders.

Shorter temple robes are available for members who are in wheelchairs or who have other special needs. These are also available by special order from Beehive Clothing.

3.5.7
Wearing the Garment in the Military

See 10.8.

3.5.8
Disposing of Garments and Temple Ceremonial 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.

To dispose of worn-out temple ceremonial clothing, members should destroy the clothing by cutting it up so the original use cannot be recognized.

Members may give garments and temple clothing that are in good condition to other worthy endowed members. Priesthood and Relief Society leaders can identify those who might need such clothing. Members should not give garments or temple ceremonial clothing to Deseret Industries, bishops' storehouses, or charities.

3.5.9
Temple Burial Clothing

If possible, deceased members who were endowed should be buried in temple clothing. If 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 were endowed in life 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. However, persons whose blessings have not been restored after excommunication or name removal may not be buried in temple clothing. A person who was endowed in life and who died by suicide may 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.

A member who is to be buried in temple clothing may be dressed by an endowed family member of the same gender or by the spouse. If a family member is not available or would prefer not to dress the body of an endowed man, the bishop invites an endowed man to dress the body or to oversee the proper dressing. If a family member is not available or would prefer not to dress the body of an endowed woman, the bishop asks the Relief Society president to invite an endowed woman to dress the body or to oversee the proper dressing. Leaders ensure that this assignment is given to a person who will not find it objectionable.

A man's body is dressed in temple garments and the following white clothing: a long-sleeved shirt, necktie, pants, socks, and shoes or slippers. A woman's body is dressed in temple garments and the following white clothing: a dress (or a skirt and blouse), socks or hosiery, and white shoes or slippers.

Temple ceremonial clothing is placed on the body as instructed in the endowment. The robe is placed on the right shoulder and tied with the drawstring at the left waistline. The apron is secured around the waist. The sash is placed around the waist and tied in a bow over the left hip. A man's cap is usually placed beside his body until it is time to close the casket. The cap is then placed with the bow over the left ear and the cap string attached to a loop of the robe on the right shoulder. A woman's veil may be draped on the pillow at the back of her head. The matter of veiling a woman's face prior to burial is optional and may be determined by the family.

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

Some countries require that deceased persons be dressed in biodegradable clothing when they are buried. In such cases, biodegradable temple clothing is available through Church Distribution Services.

The Church does not normally encourage cremation. However, if the body of an endowed member is being cremated, it 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.

3.6 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 or when parents or immediate family members might feel excluded, leaders may perform civil marriages as outlined in 3.6.3 and 3.7.1.1.

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

3.6.1 Temple Marriage

The purpose of a temple marriage, referred to in the scriptures as "the new and everlasting covenant of marriage," is to seal a husband and wife for time and eternity, subject to their faithfulness. This ordinance is necessary to enter the highest degree of celestial glory (Doctrine and Covenants 131:2). Only a marriage that has been performed in the temple with the proper authority and sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise can be eternal (see Doctrine and Covenants 132:7). Through this ordinance, a couple's children may also be part of their eternal family.

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

3.6.1.1 Who Performs a Temple Marriage

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

3.6.1.2 Who May Attend a Temple Marriage

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

3.6.1.3

Appropriate Dress for a Temple Marriage

The bishop reviews the following guidelines with each bride and bridegroom well in advance of the wedding. It is especially important to review the guidelines for temple wedding dresses with each bride and her parents before they make or purchase the dress. The bishop also makes the following information about brides' dresses available to the Relief Society and Young Women presidencies so they can help members be informed of the expectations far in advance of the actual events.

Brides' Dresses. All dresses that are worn in the temple should be white, modest in design and fabric, and free of elaborate ornamentation. Sheer fabric should be lined. Three-quarter length sleeves are acceptable. Brides' dresses should not have a train unless the train can be pinned up or removed for the temple ceremony. The temple may provide a dress if needed or desired.

Formal Wear and Flowers. Those being sealed in the temple should be made aware in advance that neither they nor their guests should wear tuxedos, dinner jackets, cummerbunds, formal headwear, boutonnieres, or corsages during a sealing ceremony. 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 temple ceremonial clothing.

3.6.1.4

Exchanging Rings

Exchanging rings is not part of the temple marriage ceremony. However, couples may exchange rings after the ceremony in the sealing room. To not detract from the marriage ceremony, couples should not exchange rings at any other time or place in a temple or on temple grounds.

For those who are married and sealed in the same ceremony, a ring exchange at a later time is permissible to accommodate those unable to attend a temple marriage. The proceedings of the ring exchange should be consistent with the dignity of a temple marriage.

If a couple is married civilly before their temple sealing, they may exchange rings at their civil ceremony or at their temple sealing.

3.6.1.5

Marriage of Members Who Need a Cancellation of Sealing or a Sealing Clearance

See "Applying for a Cancellation of Sealing or a Sealing Clearance," 3.7.1.4.

3.6.2

Marriage in a Temple for Time Only

Marriage in a temple for time only may be performed only when all of the following requirements are met:

1. The man and the woman are each already sealed to a spouse who is deceased.
2. Neither the man nor the woman has been involved in a divorce while a member of the Church.
3. The man and the woman each has a valid temple recommend and a recommend for living ordinances.
4. Temple marriages are legal marriages in the country where the temple is located.
5. The couple has a valid marriage license.

A marriage in the temple for time only will not be authorized for a woman who is in the process of seeking a cancellation of sealing.

For the policy on sealing a couple who were married in the temple for time only, see "Sealing after Temple Marriage for Time Only," 3.7.1.6.

3.6.3
Civil Marriage

When temple marriage is not possible because of personal circumstances or legal requirements, leaders may perform civil marriages as outlined in this section. A civil marriage is valid for as long as a couple lives, but it does not endure beyond mortal life.

Leaders should encourage couples to be both married and sealed in the temple when possible. However, when a temple marriage would cause parents or immediate family members to feel excluded, a civil ceremony followed by a temple sealing is authorized.

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

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

3.6.3.1
Who May Perform a Civil Marriage

When permitted by local law, the following currently serving Church leaders may act in their calling to perform a civil marriage ceremony: stake president, mission president, district president, bishop, or branch president.

Latter-day Saint chaplains on active military duty may perform civil marriages without prior approval. Chaplains who are assigned to Reserve or National Guard units must receive prior approval from the Church's Military Relations and Chaplain Services Division to perform a civil marriage.

Nonmilitary chaplains who serve in hospitals, hospice organizations, assisted living centers, prisons, border patrol, or police or fire departments must receive prior approval from the Church's Military Relations and Chaplain Services Division to perform a civil marriage.

Retired chaplains are not authorized to perform civil marriages in their capacity as chaplains.

Those who perform marriages acting in their callings as Church leaders or endorsed chaplains should use the guidelines in this section and follow all legal requirements.

Latter-day Saint chaplains are not considered presiding Church officers unless they are serving as a stake president, bishop, or branch president. When a chaplain who is not a presiding Church officer performs a civil marriage, he or she functions as an agent of the government or civilian organization he or she serves. Thus, the wording of the civil marriage ceremony is changed slightly for these chaplains (see "Civil Marriage Ceremony," 3.6.3.6).

Church officers and Latter-day Saint chaplains are not to use their ecclesiastical authority to perform marriages between two people of the same sex.

Church officers and chaplains who perform civil marriages for members of the Church should provide the necessary marriage information to the ward or branch clerk. The clerk will then update the membership records.

A Church officer or chaplain who performs civil marriages in a Church capacity may not accept fees.

3.6.3.2
Civil Marriage for Members from Other Units

Church officers may not perform marriages for Church members when neither marriage partner belongs to the Church unit over which the officer presides. An exception is made for Latter-day Saint chaplains. Any other exceptions require the approval of the First Presidency in each case.

3.6.3.3
Civil Marriage for Nonmembers

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

3.6.3.4
Where to Perform Civil Marriages

Civil marriages are preferably performed in the home of a family member or in a Church building. Marriages in a Church building may be performed in the chapel, the cultural hall, or another suitable room. If the marriage will be performed by a priesthood leader but not in a home or a Church building, the priesthood leader approves the location after consulting with the couple.

3.6.3.5
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, an authorized priesthood officer may conduct a brief religious gathering after the civil marriage where he provides counsel to the couple and Church acknowledgement of their marriage. When the couple is to be sealed in the temple, the sealing follows the civil marriage as soon as practical.

3.6.3.6
Civil Marriage Ceremony

A civil marriage performed by a Church officer should be simple and dignified. For example, there should be no extravagance in the decorations or proceedings. When a wedding ceremony is held in a Church building, a wedding march is inappropriate. Video recorders and cameras may not be used if the ceremony is performed in the chapel (see *Handbook 2,* 21.2.10).

Before performing a civil marriage, a Church officer may counsel the couple on the sacred nature of the marriage vows 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 vows 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 receive [bride's full name] as your lawfully wedded wife, and do you of your own free will and choice solemnly promise as her companion and lawfully wedded husband that you will cleave unto her and none else; that you will observe all the laws, responsibilities, 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 receive [bridegroom's full name] as your lawfully wedded husband, and do you of your own free will and choice solemnly promise as his companion and lawfully wedded wife that you will cleave unto him and none else; that you will observe all the laws, responsibilities, 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."

[Alternate wording for a chaplain not serving as a presiding Church officer: "By virtue of the legal authority vested in me as a chaplain in the [branch of military or civilian organization], 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 bless you to keep sacred the vows you have made. These blessings I invoke upon you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen."

The invitation to kiss each other as husband and wife is optional, based on the cultural norms of the couple being married.

3.6.4
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 in 3.7.1.

3.6.5
Weddings and Wedding Receptions

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

The Church does not permit its meetinghouses or other properties to be used for ceremonies, receptions, or other activities associated with same-gender marriages.

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

3.7
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.

Members who have concerns about the eternal nature of the sealing ordinance and their associated family and spousal relationships can find peace in the knowledge that Heavenly Father is loving and just. Faithful children who are sealed to parents or born in the covenant retain the blessing of eternal parentage. This is so even if their parents cancel their marriage sealing or are excommunicated. Members who are divorced but still sealed to the former spouse are often troubled by the thought of that sealing. The sealing will not be compulsory in the postmortal life for either a man or a woman. If temple covenants are broken and no repentance is made, the sealing between the husband and wife is revoked. However, those that keep their covenants will retain the individual blessings provided by the sealing. This is the case even if their spouse has broken the covenants or withdrawn from the marriage. Once a cancellation of sealing has been approved by the First Presidency, individual blessings pertaining to that sealing are no longer in force. Priesthood leaders should counsel with members seeking a cancellation of a sealing to help them understand these principles; however, priesthood leaders should honor the agency of the member in these decisions.

Stake presidents 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.

3.7.1
Sealing of a Man and Woman

3.7.1.1
Sealing of Living Members after Civil Marriage

A man and woman who were married outside a temple and have been members of the Church for one year may be sealed in the temple when they are prepared and worthy of a temple recommend. They do not need to wait a year after a civil marriage and can be sealed as soon as circumstances permit.

When issuing recommends for a couple to be sealed, priesthood leaders should make sure the marriage is legally valid.

3.7.1.2
Sealing of Living Members after Divorce

Women. A living woman may be sealed to only one husband. If she is sealed to a husband and later divorces him, 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," 3.7.1.4).

A living woman who is not currently married may be sealed to a deceased husband, even if they were divorced in life. A living woman who is currently married may not be sealed to a deceased husband without First Presidency approval.

Men. 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," 3.7.1.4). A sealing clearance is necessary even if (1) the previous sealing has been canceled or (2) the divorced wife is now deceased.

A sealing clearance is needed if a man is divorced from the woman who was most recently sealed to him. For example, if a man received a sealing clearance to be sealed to a second wife after a divorce, and his second wife dies, he would not need a sealing clearance to be sealed again.

3.7.1.3
Sealing of Living Members after a Spouse's Death

Women. After a living woman has been sealed to a husband in the temple, she may not be sealed again unless she receives a cancellation of the first sealing.

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 to another man. In this circumstance, the man does not need a sealing clearance from the First Presidency unless he was divorced from his previous wife before she died (see 3.7.1.2 for the policy in cases of divorce).

Before a living spouse can be sealed to a deceased spouse, he or she must receive signed consent from the deceased spouse's widow or widower (if there is one).

3.7.1.4
Applying for a Cancellation of Sealing or a Sealing Clearance

A woman who has previously been sealed must receive a cancellation of that sealing from the First Presidency before she may be sealed to another man in her lifetime. A man who has been divorced from a woman who was sealed to him must receive a sealing clearance from the First Presidency before another woman may be sealed to him (see "Sealing of Living Members after Divorce," 3.7.1.2).

When the bishop and stake president recommend that a cancellation of sealing or a sealing clearance be granted, they submit an application to the First Presidency using the Leader and Clerk Resources system. Leaders that do not have access to the Leader and Clerk Resources system may obtain an

Application to the First Presidency form from the Area Presidency. Leaders of these units should not contact the Office of the First Presidency to obtain a copy. Instructions are on the form. Before submitting the application, the stake president makes sure that the divorce is final and that the applicant is current in all legal requirements for child and spousal support related to the divorce.

If a member has requested a cancellation of sealing or a sealing clearance, he or she may not schedule an appointment for a temple marriage or sealing until receiving a letter from the First Presidency giving notice that the cancellation or clearance has been granted. The person should present this letter at the temple.

3.7.1.5
Removing a Restriction against Temple Sealing

If a person commits adultery while married to a spouse to whom he or she has been sealed, he or she may not be sealed to the partner in the adultery unless the sealing is authorized by the President of the Church. Such authorization may be requested after the couple have been married for at least five years. The request may be submitted with an application for cancellation of sealing or sealing clearance.

A couple who desires to have a sealing restriction removed may seek an interview with their bishop and stake president. If these leaders feel to recommend removal of the restriction, they may write 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 submits all of these letters to the First Presidency.

3.7.1.6
Sealing after Temple Marriage for Time Only

Couples who are married in a temple for time only are not usually sealed at a later time. For such a sealing to occur, the woman must first receive from the First Presidency a cancellation of her previous sealing. Such requests are considered only in exceptional circumstances. If a bishop and stake president feel that a cancellation may be justified, they may submit an application to the First Presidency using the Leader and Clerk Resources system.

3.7.1.7
Sealing of Deceased Members

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 a deceased woman may be sealed to other men to whom she was married. This includes former husbands from whom she was divorced.

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 are not sealed to another man.

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 3.8.9 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. First Presidency approval is required for the sealing of a deceased couple who obtained a cancellation of their sealing in life.

3.7.1.8
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, personal blessings of the sealing for the innocent spouse and children remain in force.

Children who are born to a couple after one or the other has been excommunicated or had his or her name removed are not born in the covenant. See "Status of Children When a Sealing Is Canceled or Revoked," 3.7.2.8.

3.7.2
Sealing Children to Parents

3.7.2.1
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 entitles children to an eternal parentage, depending on their faithfulness.

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 sealing unless they were born after the sealing was canceled or after it was revoked due to excommunication or name removal.

3.7.2.2
Children Who Are Not Born in the Covenant

Children who are 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.

Males who are at least 11 and turning 12 during the year of the ordinance must hold the priesthood and be ordained to the office appropriate to their age before they may be sealed to their parents. Members who are married or are 21 or older may not be sealed to their parents unless they are endowed.

A deceased person is usually sealed to his or her birth or adoptive parents. However, a deceased child may also be sealed to:

- a birth father and stepmother.
- a birth mother and stepfather.
- foster parents or grandparents who raised the child.
- a couple who intended to adopt the child but could not complete the adoption before the child died.

These sealings may be done even if a deceased child is already sealed to his or her birth or adoptive parents. First Presidency approval is not necessary. Sealings to nonbiological or nonadoptive parents in circumstances other than those listed above require First Presidency approval.

3.7.2.3
Observing Sealings of Living Brothers and Sisters

To observe the sealing of living siblings, step siblings, or half siblings to their parents, children under the age of 21 must be born in the covenant or sealed to their parents. In addition, children ages 8 and older must be baptized and confirmed, and males who are at least 11 and turning 12 during the year of the ordinance must hold the priesthood and be ordained to the office appropriate to their age.

Members who are married or are 21 or older must be endowed to observe such sealings.

3.7.2.4
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 unless the First Presidency gives approval.

Living children who are 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 should be presented at the temple; a court decree granting legal custody is not sufficient clearance for a sealing. There is no obligation to identify the natural parents of these children.

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. Such requests are made by the stake president.

3.7.2.5
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.

3.7.2.6
Sealing of Living Children to One Natural Parent and a Stepparent

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 both of the following conditions exist:

1. The natural parent to whom the child is being sealed has legal custody of the child and physical custody of the child the majority of the time.
2. The other natural parent has given a signed letter of consent. A court decree granting legal custody is not sufficient clearance for a sealing. The letter of consent should use wording similar to the following: "I, [name of natural parent], give permission for [name of child or children] to be sealed in the temple to [name of parents]. I understand that the sealing is a religious ceremony and does not have legal implications." The letter should be presented at the temple before the sealing.

If the other natural parent is deceased, or if his or her parental rights have been fully terminated by legal process, no consent is required.

If the other natural parent cannot be located and thorough efforts to find him or her have failed, no consent is required. In this case, the bishop or stake president writes a letter indicating that thorough efforts to locate the missing parent have failed. This letter should be given to the temple before the sealing.

A living endowed member who is married, or who is 21 or older, and was not born in the covenant and has not been sealed to parents may be sealed to one natural parent and a stepparent.

3.7.2.7
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.

If a child was born to a surrogate mother, the stake president refers the matter to the Office of the First Presidency.

3.7.2.8
Status of Children When a Sealing Is Canceled or Revoked

Children who are born in the covenant or sealed to 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.

3.8
Temple Ordinances for the Dead

Stake presidents and bishops help members prepare to have positive experiences performing ordinances for their deceased ancestors. They do this by teaching the doctrinal basis of temple work and ensuring members understand waiting periods and other policies related to temple work.

3.8.1
General Guidelines

Generally, members may perform temple ordinances for deceased persons no sooner than one year after the date of death. If the deceased was born within the last 110 years and the person desiring to perform the ordinances is not a close relative (undivorced spouse, adult child, parent, sibling), they should request permission from a close relative before reserving temple ordinances.

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 Doctrine and Covenants 138:19, 32–34).

3.8.2
Members Unable to Go to a Temple before Death

The one-year waiting period for proxy temple ordinances does not apply to deceased worthy members who would have gone to a temple but were prevented from doing so in life for reasons beyond their control. This may include children ages eight and older and youth who were worthy at the time of death but had not received their endowment because they had not reached an appropriate age (see also 3.8.5). However, such children and youth are not buried in temple clothing.

To have the ordinance performed, family members must have either the deceased person's temple recommend that was valid at the time of death or a letter from the deceased person's bishop certifying the person's worthiness. The temple recommend or the letter should be presented at the temple before the ordinance is performed.

3.8.3
Members Who Died within One Year of Baptism

If a worthy member dies within the year after being baptized and confirmed, temple ordinances may be completed when one year has passed from the date he or she was confirmed (see 3.8.2).

3.8.4
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 in FamilySearch.org and indicate that the child was stillborn. Requests for help with recording a stillborn child in FamilySearch may be directed to a ward temple and family history consultant. For more information about stillborn children, see 17.2.10.

3.8.5 Children Who Died before Age Eight

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.

3.8.6 Deceased Persons Who Had Intellectual Disabilities

Temple ordinances for deceased persons who had intellectual disabilities and whose mental age and accountability are unknown are performed the same as for other deceased persons.

If it is known that a deceased person had intellectual disabilities and did not have a mental age of eight or older, even if their chronological age was greater than eight, only the sealing-to-parents ordinance is performed for him or her. Additional proxy temple ordinances are not performed for people who were not accountable in life. (See Moroni 8:11–12 and Doctrine and Covenants 137:10.)

3.8.7 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 or declared 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.

3.8.8 Persons Who Have Taken Their Own Lives

Persons who have taken their own lives may have temple ordinances performed for them one year or more after the date of death.

3.8.9 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. A family member should write a letter to the Office of the First Presidency. No form is required. The bishop or stake president may assist with this request as needed.

3.9 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 and confirmation can receive their priesthood and temple blessings only through the ordinance of restoration of blessings. Such persons are not ordained to any priesthood office or endowed again, since these blessings are restored through this ordinance. For information about performing this ordinance for the living, see 6.15.

First Presidency approval is required to perform this ordinance for the dead. Family members of the deceased person may request a restoration of priesthood and temple blessings for the deceased family member by writing a letter to the Office of the First Presidency. The bishop or stake president may assist with this request as needed.

Persons who were not endowed but were born in the covenant or sealed to parents prior to excommunication or name removal, do not need to be sealed again after being readmitted by baptism and confirmation.

3.10 Verifying Ordinances Necessary to Receive the Endowment

3.10.1 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 in 16.1.10. That section also explains the procedure to follow if a living person is endowed without a valid record of baptism and confirmation or if a male is endowed without a valid record of Melchizedek Priesthood ordination.

3.10.2 For the Dead

Sometimes a deceased person's baptism and confirmation that were performed while he or she was living cannot be verified after a diligent search. If a person received the endowment but the baptism and confirmation cannot be verified, the person must be baptized and confirmed by proxy. It is not necessary to perform the endowment and sealings again.

3.11 Temple Workers

3.11.1 Service in the Temple

Local priesthood and Relief Society leaders help members recognize and understand the blessings of temple service. These leaders encourage members to do ordinance work. They also encourage members to serve in the temple as ordinance workers and volunteers, as appropriate. With the guidance of the Spirit, leaders seek out members whose lives would be blessed by serving in the temple, which may include endowed members of all ages. In addition to blessing the member, this service is essential for operating each temple. Much of the work done in temples is done by members of the Church who volunteer their time and talents.

Members who are called as temple workers normally commit to a standard shift of a specified duration. Temple workers include ordinance workers as well as regularly scheduled volunteers. Once members have been called and set apart to serve in the temple, local priesthood leaders should avoid issuing additional callings that would conflict with the calling to serve in the temple.

3.11.2 Process of Calling

Recommendations for prospective temple workers may come to a temple president from ward or stake leaders and other temple workers. The temple presidency, the matron, and assistants to the matron may also recommend members to be approved through the bishop and stake president.

When a stake president or bishop identifies a member whom he feels should be called as an ordinance worker or temple volunteer, he logs in to ChurchofJesusChrist.org and uses the Recommend Temple Worker tool. He reviews the requirements, and if he feels that the calling would be suitable, he completes the information and submits the recommendation. After the bishop and the stake president provide a recommendation, the information is sent to the temple president.

A temple president may also submit the name of a member to be approved as an ordinance worker or temple volunteer. He submits the name to the bishop and stake president using the Recommend Temple Worker tool on ChurchofJesusChrist.org. The bishop and stake president review the recommendation. If they feel it is appropriate, they approve it in the system, which returns the approved submission to the temple president.

After the temple president receives the approval, a member of the temple presidency interviews the person. When so inspired and as appropriate, he calls those who are able to serve and sets them apart. He or a staff member records the setting apart in the system. The Recommend Temple Worker tool includes a report that shows to each bishop and stake president the members from their ward or stake who are serving in the temple.

3.11.3
Requirements for Ordinance Workers

To be recommended for a calling as a temple ordinance worker, a member should reside in the temple district of the temple where he or she will serve. The member should also meet each of the following qualifications:

- Be endowed, comply with temple covenants, and hold a current temple recommend.
- Have a mature knowledge of the restored gospel.
- Be respected in the Church and the community.
- Work well with others.
- Be dependable, in good health, and emotionally stable.
- If ever a recipient of formal Church discipline, have been taken off probation, have been reinstated, or have received a restoration of blessings at least five years ago.
- Not currently have an annotation on his or her membership record

3.11.4
Requirements for Volunteers

Regularly scheduled temple volunteers may be called to serve under the direction of the temple presidency. Depending on the services offered at the temple, volunteers may serve in the temple office, laundry, cafeteria, youth center, baptistry, and at the recommend desk. They may also perform tasks such as cleaning or maintaining the temple.

To be recommended as a regularly scheduled temple volunteer, a member should reside in the temple district of the temple where he or she will serve. The member should also meet each of the following qualifications:

- Be endowed, comply with temple covenants, and hold a current temple recommend.
- Work well with others.
- Be dependable, in good health, and emotionally stable.
- Not currently have an annotation on his or her membership record

As an exception to the above requirements, members who volunteer to work outside the temple, such as those who work on the grounds, do not need to be endowed.

See 3.11.2 for information about the process of calling volunteers.

4.

Missionary Service

In this chapter, each mention of missionaries and missions refers to full-time missionary service unless otherwise noted.

4.1

The Call to Serve

Full-time missionary service is a privilege 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.

Missionaries who represent the Lord and His Church must be properly called and set apart (see Doctrine and Covenants 42:11). This calling is extended only to those who are worthy and able to accomplish it. Missionary service demands faith, desire, and consecration. Missionary candidates should have an eagerness and a desire to serve the Lord as His ambassadors. They should be filled with "faith, hope, charity and love" and have "an eye single to the glory of God" (Doctrine and Covenants 4:5).

4.2

Preparing Missionaries

The Lord expects each able young man to prepare spiritually, physically, mentally, emotionally, and financially for missionary service. Personal preparation includes studying the gospel and the scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon, and building a testimony.

Preparing missionaries should be a high priority for parents, leaders, and teachers. Bishops and stake presidents have an especially important responsibility to identify and prepare worthy, qualified members for missionary service. They give special attention to helping young men prepare, especially those who seem uncertain about serving, and to helping young women prepare when they have a desire to serve.

The following suggestions will guide bishops and stake presidents in preparing missionaries:

1. Work with young men beginning at an early age, and with their parents, to help the young men develop the desire and worthiness to serve a mission.
2. Teach young members what will be expected of them when they serve missions. Let parents know what will be expected so they can help their children prepare for service. Share "Standard Interview Questions for Prospective Missionaries" with young members and their parents as part of their preparation (see ChurchofJesusChrist.org/mss).
3. Call youth leaders who love missionary work and will help youth learn the gospel, build faith, and desire to serve the Lord.
4. Invite exemplary returned missionaries to speak about missionary work in sacrament meetings and on other occasions. Consider calling returned missionaries to serve in the Young Men organization.
5. Encourage youth to attend seminary to strengthen missionary preparation.
6. Provide opportunities for prospective missionaries to serve in the Church, including service as ministering brothers and sisters. Ensure that young men and young women have opportunities to teach the gospel in quorum or class meetings and in other settings.

7. Encourage young people to have and, where possible, regularly use a limited-use temple recommend.
8. Arrange for prospective missionaries to participate in missionary preparation classes that are held outside regular Sunday meetings. The main resources for missionary preparation classes are the scriptures, the *Missionary Handbook,* and *Preach My Gospel.*
9. Encourage young people to share the gospel with friends and family members.

See *Handbook 2,* 8.7, for additional suggestions.

In elders quorum and Relief Society meetings, leaders and teachers regularly discuss how parents can help their children prepare to serve as missionaries.

The bishop reviews the *Missionary Handbook* with each missionary candidate and his or her family. The bishop makes sure the candidate understands and is committed to abiding by the guidelines in that handbook. These guidelines concern personal conduct; language; dress and grooming; music and other media; computers; finances; staying together as companions; refraining from inappropriate contact—including with all children, with members of the opposite sex, and with members of the same sex; obeying local laws and customs; and communicating with family members.

4.3 Age and Term of Service for Missionaries

4.3.1 Men

Worthy single men ages 18 through 25 who are physically, mentally, and emotionally able are encouraged to serve missions. Missionary service is a priesthood responsibility of these brethren. Young men should be encouraged to begin preparing at a young age for missionary service. Once eligible, they should be encouraged to begin service as soon as they are prepared.

Single men ages 18 through 25 are called to serve for 24 months. Single men ages 26 and older are not called as missionaries.

4.3.2 Women

Worthy single women ages 19 and older who are physically, mentally, and emotionally able may be recommended to serve missions.

Single women ages 19 through 39 usually are called to serve for 18 months. These sisters can make a valuable contribution in the mission field, and there is a continuing need for them to serve. Bishops may initiate discussions about missionary service with these sisters but should not pressure them to serve. Bishops should not recommend sisters for missionary service if it will interfere with imminent marriage prospects.

Single women ages 40 and older usually are called to serve for 12 or 18 months. Those assigned to serve outside their country of residence are called for 18 months. Bishops and stake presidents make sure these sisters are in good enough health to serve effectively as missionaries.

4.3.3 Couples

Couples usually are called to serve for 12, 18, or 24 months. A 6-month term of service is considered only for those in special situations, such as seasonal occupations. Couples serving outside their country of residence are called for at least 18 months. Qualifications and assignments for couples are outlined in 4.11.1 and 4.11.3.

4.4

Members Who Are Not Eligible for Missions

Members are not eligible to serve missions if they:

1. Are not worthy as outlined in 4.5.2.
2. Would have to leave dependent children in the care of someone else.
3. Have been members of the Church for less than one year.
4. Are in debt and have not made definite arrangements to meet their obligations.
5. Are on legal probation or parole.
6. Are HIV positive.
7. Have been convicted of sexual abuse.

If priesthood leaders have questions about any of these restrictions, such as for a person who is on probation for a minor offense, they may contact the Missionary Department.

Couples who are still in childbearing years or who have unresolved marital problems are not called to serve missions.

In addition, the following members are not normally recommended to serve missions:

1. Brethren ages 25 and younger and sisters ages 39 and younger who have been divorced.
2. Sisters who have submitted to an abortion, or brethren or sisters who have performed, arranged for, paid for, or encouraged 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 in 17.3.1.
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 missionary service (see 4.5.3).

If the bishop and stake president can strongly recommend that an exception is warranted because of unusual circumstances, the stake president may submit a recommendation for the First Presidency to consider. He submits the recommendation through the Missionary Department and includes specific details of the situation. Bishops and stake presidents should not request exceptions that are unwarranted or that they do not endorse without reservation.

When members do not qualify for missionary service, priesthood leaders give them Church callings in their stake or ward to help them grow and experience the blessings of service. Priesthood leaders could also recommend them as Church-service missionaries (see 4.12).

4.5

Ensuring Worthiness and Ability to Serve

Bishops and stake presidents have the serious responsibility of identifying worthy, qualified members who are spiritually, physically, mentally, and emotionally prepared for missionary service. The bishop and stake president should not submit a recommendation until they are fully satisfied that a candidate is prepared in each of these ways. They should be able to recommend each candidate without reservation.

While it is important to ensure that missionary candidates are well prepared, bishops and stake presidents should not impose preparatory or other requirements on candidates beyond those stated in this handbook.

4.5.1
Interviews

The bishop and stake president conduct thorough, searching interviews with each missionary candidate. If the bishop and stake president have concerns about whether a person is able or worthy to serve a mission, they counsel together and discuss the concerns with the individual and his or her parents. This will help avoid the negative feelings that can result if a recommendation is returned or a missionary is sent home for failure to meet these standards.

If the bishop and stake president have questions about a person's worthiness or ability to serve, the stake president may inquire of the Missionary Department (1-801-240-2179 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-2179) or 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.

4.5.2
Worthiness

Missionary work demands clean hands and a pure heart. Missionary candidates are to be morally clean in every way and otherwise worthy to be the Lord's representatives (see Doctrine and Covenants 38:42). They should be living exemplary lives. If the life of a missionary candidate needs reforming, that must happen well before he or she is recommended for missionary service. Because genuine, thorough repentance may take some time, some young men may need to wait until they are older than 18 to serve missions.

Those who are recommended to serve as missionaries must meet the qualifications outlined in section 4 of the Doctrine and Covenants (see also Doctrine and Covenants 88:121–26).

4.5.2.1
Repentance of Serious Transgressions

A person who has been guilty of adultery, fornication, heavy petting, homosexual activity, other sexual perversions, serious violation of civil law, or other serious transgressions must repent before he or she may be recommended for missionary service. A prospective missionary must also overcome any addictions before being considered for missionary service.

Mere confession and refraining from a sin for a period of time do not on their own constitute repentance. There must also be evidence of a broken heart, a contrite spirit, and a lasting change of behavior (see Mosiah 5:2). The bishop and stake president are to confirm that the member is free of transgression for a sufficient time to manifest genuine repentance and to prepare spiritually for the temple and for a sacred 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. Questions about specific individuals may be directed to a General Authority in the Missionary Department, the Area Presidency, or a member of the Presidency of the Seventy.

4.5.2.2
Extended Pattern of Serious Transgressions

A person who has been promiscuous with several partners or with one partner over an extended period of time in a relationship outside of marriage will not be considered for missionary service. Stake presidents and bishops help these individuals repent and provide them with other meaningful ways to serve the Lord.

If priesthood leaders believe that unusual circumstances or situations warrant an exception, the stake president may submit a recommendation for the First Presidency to consider. He submits the recommendation through the Missionary Department and includes specific details of the situation and a letter from the candidate describing the nature of his or her repentance. Bishops and stake presidents should not recommend exceptions that are unwarranted or that they do not endorse without reservation.

4.5.2.3
Homosexual Activity

A candidate who has participated in homosexual activity during or after the last three teenage years will not normally be considered for missionary service, especially if the person has participated in such activities with several partners or with one partner over an extended period of time.

In rare cases the stake president may submit a recommendation that the First Presidency consider an exception if there is strong evidence of genuine repentance and reformation and if the candidate has been free of transgression for a sufficient period of time. This period of repentance should be at least one year and may be as long as three years if the acts occurred several times or over an extended time or if the person was the aggressor. Such a recommendation is submitted through the Missionary Department for the consideration of the First Presidency.

A professional evaluation (normally arranged through LDS Family Services) and an HIV test are required whenever a candidate has been involved in homosexual activity.

If a person was victimized or participated in early-age same-sex experimentation and has no current indication of homosexual tendencies, he or she may be considered for missionary service. Submission of the missionary recommendation forms does not require any further clearance beyond that of the stake president.

4.5.2.4
Belated Confessions

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. These leaders explain to missionary candidates that unless there are unusual 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.

4.5.3
Physical, Mental, and Emotional Challenges

Missionary work is demanding. Members who have physical, mental, or emotional challenges that would prevent them from serving effectively are not called to missionary service. Experience indicates that those who, for example, suffer from serious emotional instability, are severely impaired visually, require a wheelchair or crutches, or are dependent on others to perform normal daily tasks should not be recommended for missionary service.

Missionary candidates 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 with the medication before being recommended. The candidate must also commit to continue taking the medications unless otherwise authorized by a professional health care provider. The bishop includes in the recommendation forms a list of medications the person is taking.

Young missionaries who are significantly overweight experience difficulties dealing with the rigorous physical demands of a mission. These difficulties also affect their companions. Bishops and stake presidents should be sensitive and wise in considering whether individuals should be recommended for missions when their weight will adversely affect their service. If prospective missionaries are significantly overweight, local leaders should counsel with them about reducing their weight before the missionary recommendation forms are submitted. For weight guidelines, the bishop or stake president may contact the Missionary Department or the assigned administrative office.

If the bishop and stake president are unsure about recommending a member who has any of these challenges, they may consult with the Missionary Department (1-801-240-2179 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-2179). They should not recommend exceptions that are unwarranted or that they do not endorse without reservation.

If a member who has serious challenges strongly desires to serve a mission but does not qualify, the bishop and stake president express love and gratitude for the member's willingness to serve and explain that because of the circumstances, the member is honorably excused from missionary service for his or her own benefit and to avoid placing undue demands on mission leaders and companions.

These members should be encouraged to pursue such important endeavors as education, career development, temple preparation, and temple marriage. For those who have a strong desire to serve, the bishop may counsel with the stake president to identify local opportunities for Church or community service. See 4.12 for information about Church-service missionaries.

4.5.4
Medical Limitations

A prospective missionary who has a serious medical limitation, including any due to injury or illness, can be considered only with the recommendation of a competent medical authority. Before submitting the recommendation forms, the stake president should consult with the Missionary Department (1-801-240-2179 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-2179).

4.5.5
Review by the Area Medical Adviser

Outside the United States and Canada, missionary recommendation forms are submitted through the Area Presidency. Under their direction, the area medical adviser reviews all recommendation forms and identifies any unresolved medical and dental conditions or immunization issues that could affect the candidate's ability to serve or the nature of the assignment.

If the area medical adviser feels that treatment is needed before a person is able to serve, he reviews the situation with the Area Presidency. They may return the missionary recommendation forms to the stake president, who ensures that the necessary treatment is arranged for. When the medical condition is resolved, the stake president may resubmit the forms.

4.6
Financing Missionary Service

The primary responsibility to provide financial support for missionary service lies with the individuals serving and their families. Generally, missionaries should not rely entirely on people outside of their families to finance missionary service.

Missionaries and their families should make appropriate sacrifices to help cover the cost of missionary service. It is better for a person to delay a mission for a time and earn money toward the cost of missionary service than to rely entirely on others. However, worthy missionary candidates should not be prevented from serving missions solely for financial reasons when they and their families have sacrificed according to their capability.

4.6.1
The Ward Missionary Fund

The ward missionary fund is used solely for donations relating to ward members who are serving as full-time missionaries. Ward missionary funds should not be sent directly to individual missionaries. Nor should ward missionary funds be used for any missionary activities in the ward or stake.

Stake presidents and bishops inform missionaries and others who contribute to the ward missionary fund that these contributions, including those that are prepaid (see 14.4.9), will not be refunded.

Members who wish to help missionaries whose home wards are in the member's country of residence to meet their contribution commitments may donate to the missionary's home ward missionary fund. Members who wish to help missionaries whose home wards are not in the member's country of residence should donate instead to the General Missionary Fund (see 4.6.2).

4.6.2
The General Missionary Fund

The Church uses contributions to the General Missionary Fund in missionary efforts worldwide. These contributions may be used either to support missionaries or to finance other aspects of the Church's missionary program. Contributions made to the General Missionary Fund will not be refunded and cannot be designated to cover the costs or contribution commitments of particular missionaries.

4.6.3
Financing Single Teaching Missionaries

4.6.3.1
Contribution Commitment

Missionaries, parents, other family members, and friends make commitments to contribute a specific amount to the Church's ward missionary fund. This commitment amount is equalized in certain countries (see "Equalized Contribution" below). In other countries, the commitment amount is not equalized (see "Nonequalized Contribution" below). If necessary, the stake president or bishop may ask members within the stake or ward boundaries to contribute to the ward missionary fund. Budget and fast offering funds may not be used to meet missionary contribution commitments.

The contribution commitment applies only to the following teaching missionaries:

1. Single men ages 18 through 25
2. Single women ages 19 through 39

The contribution commitment does not apply to missionary couples, sisters ages 40 and older, or Church-service missionaries.

The bishop ensures that the monthly contribution commitment amount for each missionary serving from his ward is available in the ward missionary fund. These contributions need to be available regardless of whether it is an equalized or nonequalized amount. Each month, Church headquarters withdraws the contribution commitment from the ward missionary fund. The Church uses such funds to cover overall missionary costs, which varies by location.

4.6.3.2
Equalized Contribution

The Church has equalized the contribution commitment requested to help cover the overall costs for the service-related expenses of missionaries whose home wards are in designated countries. (Contact your area administration office for a list of these countries.) The commitment is the same regardless of where these missionaries serve. The equalized contribution amount is identified in instructions from Church headquarters.

4.6.3.3
Nonequalized Contribution

Missionaries whose home wards are not in designated countries work with their stake presidents and bishops to establish a specific contribution commitment. The commitment amount will be determined according to guidelines established by the Area Presidency and based on appropriate sacrifice by the missionary and the family. This contribution commitment will apply regardless of where these missionaries serve.

4.6.3.4
Personal Funds

The service-related expenses of the missionaries listed under the previous headings are covered through contributions; however, additional expenses are paid with personal funds. These expenses include clothing purchases and repairs, bicycle purchases and repairs, medical costs not paid by the mission, and approved telephone calls home. Other personal expenses, which should be kept to a minimum, might include cameras, souvenirs, gifts, traffic fines, and damage to apartments or vehicles caused by the missionary's misconduct or negligence. Bishops should encourage family members to donate the contribution commitment before sending personal funds to their missionaries.

For missionaries from countries that do not participate in the equalized contribution program, personal expenses for needed items while in the mission field may be paid by the mission if approved by the mission president. These items may include replacement clothing, bicycles, or medical and dental care.

4.6.4
Financing Couples and Sisters Ages 40 and Over

Except as noted in the following paragraph, missionary couples and sisters ages 40 and older may not contribute to the ward missionary fund connected to their own missionary service.

Regardless of where they serve, missionary couples and sisters ages 40 and older whose home wards participate in the equalized contribution program contribute an assigned monthly housing and vehicle (if applicable) amount to their home ward missionary fund. The bishop ensures that the monthly housing and vehicle amounts are available in the ward missionary fund for each couple or sister. Each month, Church headquarters withdraws the housing and vehicle amounts from the ward missionary fund.

Church headquarters uses these funds to help cover the costs of missionary housing, transportation, and similar costs worldwide. The bishop may use other general contributions to the ward missionary fund to help cover the monthly housing and vehicle amounts for missionary couples and sisters ages 40 and older when they meet all of the following requirements:

1. The missionary's home ward is in a country that is designated by the Church to participate in the equalized contribution program.
2. The missionary does not have adequate means to provide support.
3. Funds are available in the ward missionary fund.

Missionary couples whose home wards do not participate in the equalized contribution program contribute at least a minimum monthly amount to help cover missionary housing costs. This amount is established by the Area Presidency. Missionaries make their contributions to the General Missionary Fund through the ward or branch they attend in the mission field.

Missionary couples and sisters ages 40 and older are responsible for all personal expenses of missionary service that are not covered by the Church using ward missionary fund donations.

Sisters ages 40 and older from countries that are not designated to participate in the equalized contribution program are not called as full-time missionaries unless they can fully support themselves financially.

4.6.5
Medical Insurance

All missionaries are strongly encouraged to maintain their existing medical insurance while serving. Maintaining medical insurance conserves Church funds and helps missionaries avoid the need to prove insurability after their missions.

4.7
Submitting Recommendation Forms for Missionaries

The bishop and stake president ensure that all missionary recommendation forms are prepared completely and accurately. The bishop or stake president sends these forms to the Missionary Department up to 120 days before the candidate's birthday or availability date (whichever is later). Recommendation forms for couples may be submitted up to six months before their availability date. Instructions are provided on the recommendation forms.

When recommending couples for missions, leaders may confidentially recommend specific types of assignments for consideration. However, leaders should not make commitments about the assignment candidates will receive. Missionary candidates should be willing to accept any assignment.

Missionaries are called from their home ward. However, the bishop of an away-from-home ward, such as a young single adult ward, may process a missionary recommendation 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.
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.

A young single adult ward should never be assigned as the home ward for a missionary candidate. If a missionary candidate does not have a home ward, a family ward within the local stake or the ward to which the missionary plans to return after his or her mission should be designated as the home ward.

By following this procedure, the bishop of the away-from-home ward can ensure that all issues pertaining to worthiness; physical, mental, and emotional health; financial support; and point of departure are resolved before he submits a missionary recommendation. 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 a bishop processes a recommendation for a missionary candidate who has not lived in the ward continuously for at least one year, he confers with the bishop of the previous ward before proceeding.

The stake president, the bishop, the missionary candidate, and the family should not make any announcement about a mission call before the call is received.

4.8
After Missionaries Are Called

The bishop continues to monitor the missionary's progress after the mission call is received to help the missionary remain worthy of the sacred calling and continue his or her preparation. Bishops and stake presidents instruct newly called missionaries clearly regarding the seriousness and the consequences of transgressions after receiving the call.

The bishop also makes sure newly called missionaries comply promptly with all instructions from Church headquarters, such as securing passports, applying for visas, and acquiring appropriate clothing.

Newly called missionaries should also read or reread the Book of Mormon before they begin their missions.

4.8.1
Sacrament Meetings, Open Houses, and Publicity

The bishopric usually invites newly called missionaries to speak in sacrament meeting just before they depart. The bishopric should make it clear that this is a regular sacrament meeting and is not to be a missionary farewell. The bishopric plans and conducts these meetings. Family members and friends of the missionary are not invited to speak. However, other departing or returning missionaries or other members may be invited to speak. As in all sacrament meetings, talks and music should be worshipful, faith promoting, and gospel oriented. The bishopric ensures that each missionary has sufficient time to deliver a spiritual message. The regular time of the sacrament meeting should not be extended.

Although it is valuable to have newly called missionaries speak in sacrament meeting, such talks should not dominate the sacrament meeting schedule to the exclusion of other valuable subjects and speakers.

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 sacrament meeting 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.

4.8.2
Personal Temple Endowment

Where possible, unendowed missionaries should receive their own temple endowment after they receive their mission call.

4.8.3
Setting Apart Missionaries

The stake president sets apart all 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 missionary.

The mission president sets apart missionaries who are called from districts in his mission. However, if it is not feasible for him to do so, he may assign one of his counselors to set apart a missionary. The district president does not set apart missionaries.

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.

A missionary is set apart as close 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, neither MTC leaders nor other priesthood leaders should be expected to set apart the missionary.

A day or two before a missionary is set apart, the stake president conducts an interview to confirm the missionary's worthiness. This interview is also a good opportunity 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 (1-801-240-2179 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-2179).

The setting apart should be a special occasion. Family members and close friends may attend. The stake president speaks briefly to help them feel the sacredness and importance of the call.

The stake president follows the usual procedure for setting apart (see *Handbook 2,* 19.4). 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.

When a missionary is set apart, the setting apart should not be recorded. However, the missionary is encouraged to record in a personal journal the date of the setting apart, the name of the stake president who officiated, and parts of the blessing that were especially meaningful.

The stake president advises the missionary that after being set apart, he or she is a missionary and should live by missionary standards.

4.8.4
Transportation

The Church pays the expenses of missionaries to travel to and from the field. For those who go to an MTC, the Church pays for their travel to the MTC and to the field. Travel arrangements are sent soon after the mission call.

When serving in their country of residence, couples and single women ages 40 and older may take their own vehicles with them. They are responsible for the operating and maintenance expenses for their vehicles, including insurance, repairs, and fuel. These missionaries will be given a travel allowance for the expense of driving their own vehicles to or from the field. Information on this reimbursement is available from the Church Travel Office. For questions, call 1-800-537-3537 or 1-801-240-5149.

4.8.5
Missionary Departures

Parents or other immediate family members may bring a missionary to an MTC but are not expected to do so. Those who must travel long distances are discouraged from going to an MTC. Family members will say farewell as the missionary's luggage is unloaded from the vehicle. The MTC does not have an orientation or other meeting for families.

Families are discouraged from going to airports when missionaries leave the MTC.

4.8.6
Transporting Items to a Mission

Missionaries should not transport personal belongings of others to the mission field. 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 directs them to the Missionary Department.

4.9
Missionaries in the Mission Field

4.9.1
Placement of Missionaries

The mission president determines the placement of missionaries within the mission. However, stake presidents consult with bishops and recommend the number and location of missionaries to be assigned within the stake. The mission president then assigns missionaries according to available resources.

4.9.2
Housing and Meals

The stake president and mission president determine whether and to what extent Church members should provide housing and meals for missionaries.

4.9.3
Missionaries Working with Less-Active Members

See *Handbook 2,* 5.3.4.

4.9.4
Missionaries in Branch Leadership Positions

With the approval of the mission president, missionary couples may on occasion serve in branch leadership positions. However, it is generally preferable for them to serve in a training capacity to help the local members fulfill these responsibilities.

In rare situations, younger missionaries may be assigned to serve in branch leadership positions. However, such assignments require the approval of the mission president and are made only after thoughtful and prayerful consideration of all other options. If couples or younger missionaries are given such assignments, they serve only until a suitable local member can be called.

If missionaries are assigned to leadership positions in branches that are in a mission, including branch president, they are not set apart. The authority to act in any position in the mission is inherent in their setting apart as a missionary. If they perform a function that requires priesthood keys, such as conducting a baptism interview or presiding over a branch, they do so by assignment and the delegation of authority.

If missionaries are assigned to leadership positions in branches that are in a stake, they are set apart under the direction of the stake presidency. They are not members of the high priests quorum.

4.9.5
Requests to Support Members Financially

Missionaries and their families must not be asked to provide financial support for members who live in areas where the missionaries are serving.

4.9.6
Fasting

Missionaries should not ask friends, relatives, or members of their home wards to join them in special fasts.

4.9.7
Missionaries’ Communication with Their Families

4.9.7.1
Telephone Calls

Under the direction of the mission president, missionaries may telephone their parents at Christmas and on one other occasion during the year, usually Mother’s Day or another significant holiday. Mission presidents, stake presidents, and bishops encourage missionaries and parents to keep these calls relatively brief, preferably no longer than 30 or 40 minutes.

4.9.7.2
E-mail

As an alternative to regular mail, missionaries may use e-mail to communicate with their families on preparation day, according to guidelines that have been approved in the mission.

4.9.8
Medical Disability

If a missionary in the field (including an MTC) suffers a physical or emotional disability that prevents effective missionary service, he or she is returned home for treatment. A representative of the Missionary Department will explain to the stake president whether the missionary has been released or placed on medical leave and what steps should be taken.

4.9.9
Death of a Family Member

If a member of a missionary's immediate family dies, the Church encourages the missionary to remain in the field. However, with approval from his or her mission president, the missionary may view the funeral services via streaming (see *Handbook 2,* 18.6.4).

If the missionary and his or her family choose to have the missionary return home, he or she may be allowed to return at the family's expense. The stake president may request such an exception through the Missionary Department.

4.9.10
Membership Records, Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, and Contributions

4.9.10.1
Missionaries Who Serve under the Direction of a Mission President

The home ward retains the membership records, accepts any tithing contributions, and records the tithing status of missionaries who serve under the direction of a mission president. Missionaries pay fast offerings through the ward in which they are serving.

4.9.10.2
Missionaries Who Serve under the Direction of a Temple President or Area President

The home ward retains the membership records, accepts any tithing contributions, and records the tithing status of missionaries who serve under the direction of a temple president or Area President. These missionaries receive any needed ecclesiastical support, including counseling, from the temple president or Area President. They receive temple recommends from their home priesthood leaders or from local priesthood leaders.

4.9.10.3
Missionaries at Church Headquarters Who Do Not Serve under the Direction of a Mission President

Membership records of full-time missionaries at Church headquarters who do not serve under the direction of a mission president should be in the ward where they live during their service. Normally they pay tithing and other offerings through that ward. However, if they move from their home ward to serve at Church headquarters, they may pay tithing through their home ward if they desire. The bishop of the ward in which they live during their service interviews them for temple recommend renewals and provides any other needed ecclesiastical support.

4.9.10.4
Mission Presidents

See 13.6.5.1.

4.10
Release of 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. Any other travel is permitted only when the missionary is accompanied by at least one parent or guardian.

The Church discourages parents from picking up missionaries. However, if parents request this privilege, they should understand that:

1. Their plans must be based on the release date established by the mission president.
2. They should not request a change in the release date to accommodate other travel plans or commitments.
3. They should inform the mission president or the Church Travel Office at least three months in advance if they plan to travel with their missionary.
4. They are expected to make their own travel arrangements, including lodging and meals.

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, mission presidents, missionaries, or other missions as they travel home.

4.10.1
Temple Recommends

All qualified, endowed missionaries should have a valid temple recommend when they are released. The procedure for issuing a temple recommend to a returning missionary varies depending on the age of the missionary.

4.10.1.1
Young Missionaries

When young missionaries are released, they benefit from frequent interviews with priesthood leaders during the time when they are making the transition from the intense spiritual focus of missionary service to the varied pursuits of daily life.

To help facilitate this, the mission president conducts a worthiness interview with each young returning missionary and issues a temple recommend that is valid for only 90 days. The mission president writes an issue date on the temple recommend that will cause it to expire in 90 days. Such a recommend requires only the interview by the mission president and the signatures of the president and the missionary. If the missionary already has a valid temple recommend at the time of this interview, the mission president requests it and destroys it when he issues the 90-day recommend.

Local priesthood leaders interview the returned missionary near the conclusion of the 90-day temple recommend expiration period. If the returned missionary is worthy, a new temple recommend is issued with the normal expiration period of two years.

4.10.1.2
Senior Missionaries

If a returning senior missionary's temple recommend is about to expire, the mission president conducts a temple recommend interview as part of the final interview and issues a new recommend. Such a recommend requires only the interview by the mission president and the signatures of the president and the missionary.

4.10.1.3
Missionaries Who Are Not Worthy of a Recommend

If a missionary who is sent home early because of a belated confession or a disciplinary action holds a temple recommend, the mission president requests the recommend. The bishop and stake president may issue a new temple recommend when the person is worthy.

4.10.2
Arrivals at Airports

It is recommended that only immediate family members go to the airport to pick up missionaries who are returning at the completion of their missions.

4.10.3
Interviews, Reports, Sacrament Meetings, and Callings

4.10.3.1
Interviews

The stake president releases returning missionaries from missionary service and gives them the release certificate he has received from the mission president. He commends them for their service and invites them to report on their mission. He also inquires about their conduct while traveling home.

When releasing missionaries, the stake president also interviews them. This interview is an important opportunity to help missionaries build on their mission experiences and commit to continue on a lifelong path of spiritual growth and service. The stake president should devote enough time to these interviews to:

1. Discern missionaries' strengths and needs, then help them set goals and make plans that will build on the good habits they have developed and that will have power in their daily lives.
2. Review the importance of doing what is necessary to continue feeling the Spirit daily.
3. Encourage missionaries to choose and prepare for their life's work.
4. Ask missionaries to commit to pay a full tithing, be active in the Church, and serve faithfully in Church callings and assignments throughout their lives.
5. Encourage them to maintain high standards of conduct, including dress and grooming.

The stake president also encourages young returning missionaries to live worthy of and prepare for marriage in the temple. However, he should not suggest or imply that they should be married within a specified time.

4.10.3.2
Reports and Sacrament Meetings

In addition to their interview with the stake president, missionaries report to the stake presidency and high council in a high council meeting.

As soon as practical, the bishopric of the home ward schedules missionaries to speak in a sacrament meeting. Missionaries should be given sufficient time to share spiritual experiences and bear testimony. Their talks should build faith and encourage youth to serve missions. The stake presidency may also assign them to speak in other sacrament meetings as companions to high councilors.

The stake president counsels returning missionaries to teach the gospel in the talks they give. As missionaries 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 their companions or others, disparaging remarks about the areas in which they served, and other matters that would be inappropriate for a servant of the Lord to discuss in the sacred setting of a sacrament meeting.

4.10.3.3
Callings

Priesthood leaders promptly call recently returned missionaries to Church positions. Elders quorum and Relief Society leaders also assign every returned missionary as a ministering brother or ministering sister.

4.11
Missionary Assignments for Senior Couples and Sisters

4.11.1
Identifying Prospective Missionary Couples

Bishops and stake presidents prayerfully consider which couples in their units could be called to serve as missionaries. Bishops may interview them to determine availability, ask them to prepare for mission calls, and help them complete and submit the recommendation forms as outlined in 4.7.

Couples who are recommended for missionary service must no longer be engaged in full-time employment. If they will be serving away from home, they must not have any dependent children living at home. Bishops and stake presidents take special care to make sure that couples are in good enough health to serve effectively as missionaries.

Information on missionary opportunities for couples can be found on the Internet at ChurchofJesusChrist.org. Stake presidents and bishops can use this information to identify opportunities for members they are encouraging to serve. The bishop may confidentially recommend specific assignments for these members. However, he should not make commitments about the assignments a member will receive. Missionary candidates should be willing to accept any assignment.

General Authorities, mission presidents, temple presidents, and Church department heads may also identify couples who might be recommended for missionary service. The names of these members should be submitted to the Missionary Department. Representatives of the Missionary Department will then contact the stake president. He confers with the bishop to consider each prospective missionary's health, ability and willingness to serve, and other circumstances. The bishop then meets with the members and encourages them to complete the missionary recommendation forms. If the recommendation is approved, the President of the Church issues a letter of call.

Where there are large concentrations of members, the Area Presidency coordinates with stake presidents to identify couples who could fill local missionary needs in mission offices, visitors' centers, employment centers, family history centers, temples, and Church Educational System offices. Couples for these assignments could include those who are not able to leave their homes but desire to serve at least 32 hours per week. These missionaries may receive live-at-home mission calls from the President of the Church. Recommendations for such missionaries are submitted in the normal manner.

Those who can serve fewer than 32 hours per week may still be given local assignments and are called by their stake president, as specified in 4.12.

Bishops, stake presidents, and others who are encouraging couples to serve missions should understand that these members may have some anxiety because of inaccurate preconceptions about what will be expected of them. Leaders can reassure prospective missionary couples that they will not be asked to meet the same standards in work hours or other activities that are expected of younger missionaries. Couples will be allowed some flexibility in setting their own goals and schedules based on personal needs, the requirements of their assignments, and guidance from the person who presides over them.

4.11.2
Health Insurance for Senior Missionaries

Missionary couples and sisters ages 40 and older are responsible for their own health care expenses and must have adequate health insurance 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 they may purchase. Missionaries who need additional coverage but do not enroll in the DMBA plan must provide proof of adequate coverage before they begin serving.

4.11.3
Assignments for Senior Missionaries and Some Sister Missionaries

To the extent possible, all missionaries should participate in sharing the gospel. Senior missionaries may also be asked to help train leaders, fellowship new members, and work with less-active members. In addition to these basic assignments, senior missionaries, sister missionaries over the age of 40, and some sisters under age 40 may receive one or more of the following assignments as part of their mission call:

1. Leadership
2. Church Educational System
3. Family history
4. Humanitarian services
5. Mission offices
6. Area offices
7. Facilities management
8. Farm management
9. Public affairs
10. Temples
11. Visitors' centers and historic sites
12. Welfare services
13. Perpetual Education Fund

In response to local needs, mission presidents may change these assignments in consultation with the headquarters departments that supervise the original assignment.

For information about senior missionaries serving as officers in local units, see 4.9.4.

4.11.4
Releases of Senior Missionaries

Release letters and certificates for senior missionaries are prepared under the direction of the person who oversees their assignment. As with all missionaries, these missionaries are released by their stake president.

4.12
Church-Service Missionaries

The Church-service missionary program provides service opportunities for worthy members around the world. Church-service missionaries typically work for Church departments. Except for those serving in mission offices, they do not usually serve under the direction of a full-time mission president. The use of Church-service missionaries is not intended to diminish emphasis on full-time missionary service.

Church-service missionaries are normally called for 6 to 24 months. They serve at least 8 hours a week and typically fewer than 32 hours. They usually live at home while they are serving. Men should be at least 18 years of age, and women should be at least 19. There is no maximum age.

Church-service missions are often a good alternative when worthy members are not able to serve full-time missions because of health, financial, family, or other challenges (see 4.5.3).

Church-service missionaries are called by their stake president and set apart by their bishop as outlined in 4.12.3.

4.12.1
Identifying Church-Service Missionary Opportunities

The bishop may counsel with the stake president to identify local opportunities for members who desire to serve as Church-service missionaries. Examples of possible assignments are listed below:

1. Welfare: bishops' storehouses, canneries, Deseret Industries, and employment resource centers. Additional opportunities in the Salt Lake City area: Deseret Manufacturing, Humanitarian Center, and Welfare Square
2. Church Educational System: receptionist, office work, and computer support; student recruiting and enrollment; institute hosting; training; teaching some classes at seminaries and institutes
3. Church-owned farms, ranches, and recreational properties
4. Physical Facilities: building inspection and maintenance
5. Special local projects
6. Church History: Church History Museum and Church History Library in Salt Lake City, including Library Services, Collections Development, Preservation Services, and Joseph Smith Papers
7. Family History: Family History Library in Salt Lake City, regional family history libraries, and worldwide FamilySearch support
8. Materials Management: distribution centers, food services, and fleet services (primarily in Salt Lake City)
9. Other departments and operations unique to Church headquarters: member locator services, building hosting, Conference Center events, and administrative offices

Stake presidents, bishops, and members are encouraged to use the following resources to identify and obtain information about Church-service missionary opportunities:

In the United States and Canada:
  Internet: ChurchofJesusChrist.org/csm
  Telephone: 1-801-240-4914
  E-mail: csm-support@ChurchofJesusChrist.org
Outside the United States and Canada:
  Internet: ChurchofJesusChrist.org/csm
  Telephone or write the assigned administrative office
  E-mail: csm-support@ChurchofJesusChrist.org

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, mentally, and emotionally able to perform the duties of the calling. Prospective missionaries should be able to support themselves financially, including all living expenses, insurance, and medical and dental expenses. Members should not be called on a Church-service mission if the mission responsibilities would keep them from fulfilling their responsibilities to care for dependent children who live at home.

4.12.2
Recommending Church-Service Missionaries

A member, bishop, or stake president may initiate an inquiry into a suitable Church-service missionary opportunity. After an opportunity has been identified, the bishop or the member contacts a representative of the department or other entity that posted the position to determine whether it is still available and whether the member is able to fulfill the requirements. The representative's contact information is posted on the Web site with the position.

If the Church-service opportunity is still available and the member meets the requirements, the bishop conducts a worthiness interview. The bishop and the member complete a Recommendation for Church-Service Missionary form. The bishop notes the recommended service opportunity, signs the form, and forwards it to the stake president. The stake president then interviews the member for worthiness, signs the form if he approves, and sends it to the director of Church-service missionaries at Church headquarters or to the Church-service missionary coordinator in his area.

4.12.3
Calling Church-Service Missionaries

Church-service missionaries are called by their stake president. They are set apart by their bishop. After the recommendation form has been processed at Church headquarters or with the local coordinator, the stake president is notified so he can extend the calling. At this time, the stake president also gives the missionary a call letter that is provided by the Church-service missionary coordinator in his area. The stake president advises the bishop of the calling and asks him to set the missionary apart.

After the calling is issued, the missionary contacts the Church department representative to work out pertinent details.

Bishops and stake presidents give appropriate recognition to members who are called as Church-service missionaries. This recognition includes communicating their callings to members of the ward or stake. It also could include inviting missionaries to report on their service in appropriate meetings.

4.12.4
Transportation

Church-service missionaries should provide their own transportation to their primary workplace. If a mission assignment requires additional travel, those expenses may be reimbursable.

4.12.5
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.

4.12.6
Medical Expenses

All Church-service missionaries are entirely responsible for their own medical needs, including dental and eye expenses and prescription drugs.

4.12.7
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.

4.12.8
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. The stake president also gives the member a release certificate that is provided by the Church-service missionary coordinator in his area.

At least six months should pass before those who are released receive another Church-service mission call. Any exceptions must be approved by the stake president.

4.12.9
Church-Service Missionaries in Stake and Ward Callings

Church-service missionaries are encouraged to 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.

4.12.10
Callings That Are Not Processed as Church-Service Missions

Callings to assist with activation efforts or to help strengthen members in wards are made by local leaders. These callings are not processed as Church-service mission calls. This guideline applies even if members will serve outside their home wards.

4.13
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. Volunteers may serve in areas such as family history centers, FamilySearch indexing, welfare production projects and canneries, and Scouting if qualified for Scout registration.

5.

Administering Church Welfare

The purposes of Church welfare are to help members become self-reliant, to care for the poor and needy, and to give service. For information about welfare doctrines and principles, see the following publications:

Handbook 2, chapter 6

Providing in the Lord's Way: Summary of a Leader's Guide to Welfare (pamphlet)

Basic Principles of Welfare and Self-Reliance (DVD and booklet)

All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Home Storage (pamphlet)

All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Finances (pamphlet)

5.1

Welfare Duties of the Stake Presidency

5.1.1

Welfare Leadership and Councils

5.1.1.1

Teach Welfare Doctrines and Principles

The stake president and his counselors ensure that the doctrines, principles, and blessings related to spiritual and temporal welfare are taught regularly to stake members. These doctrines and principles are outlined in the publications listed above.

5.1.1.2

Teach Leaders Their Welfare Responsibilities

The stake president and his counselors teach leaders their welfare responsibilities. The stake president takes special care to instruct bishops in the principles and policies of administering Church welfare assistance. As part of this responsibility, he organizes the stake bishops' welfare council (see 5.3).

The stake president ensures that bishops administer Church welfare properly. In his regular interviews with bishops, he asks about the welfare of individual ward members and discusses the use of welfare assistance, including fast offerings, to help those in need.

Welfare matters may also be discussed in the stake presidency's training meetings with bishoprics, in stake priesthood leadership meetings, and in other similar settings.

5.1.1.3

Attend Coordinating Council Meetings

Stake presidents attend coordinating council meetings to receive instruction in various Church matters, including welfare principles and duties. In these meetings, presided over by an assigned Area Seventy, leaders consider ways to foster self-reliance, care for the needy, and encourage fast-offering donations.

5.1.1.4

Preside over the Welfare Work of the Stake Council

The stake president directs the welfare work of the stake council. In stake council meetings, leaders consider spiritual and temporal welfare matters as follows:

They identify welfare concerns in the stake and seek ways to address those concerns. However, they do not assume responsibility to resolve ward welfare matters.

They plan ways to teach welfare principles to stake and ward leaders.

They discuss ways to make ward leaders aware of people in the stake who can serve as resources to help with welfare needs.

They develop and maintain a simple written plan for the stake to respond to emergencies (see 5.1.3).

They plan welfare activities, taking care not to place undue burdens on ward leaders.

They plan ways to respond to stake welfare assignments.

When assigned by the Area Presidency, they provide leadership and support for a welfare operation.

If a bishop has been assigned to handle requests for assistance to people who are transient or homeless, members of the stake council determine how to make stake resources available to that bishop.

5.1.1.5
Serve as the Agent Stake President for Church Welfare Operations

The Area Presidency appoints an agent stake to each bishops' storehouse, cannery, home storage center, employment resource center, production project, Deseret Industries store, and other Church welfare operation or project in the area. This assignment may change periodically.

All stakes that are served by a welfare operation, not just the agent stake, may be called on to provide volunteer labor for it. These efforts are coordinated in coordinating council meetings. The president of the agent stake represents the welfare operation in these meetings.

The president of the agent stake organizes an agent stake operating committee to oversee the welfare operation. This committee is composed of the stake president or an assigned counselor, the stake bishops' welfare council chairman, the stake Relief Society president, the manager of the operation, and other specialists as needed. The committee meets regularly to provide priesthood guidance and support to the manager of the operation, to make sure the operation serves needy members appropriately, and to coordinate volunteer labor.

5.1.1.6
Call Stake Welfare Specialists

A member of the stake presidency or an assigned high councilor may call a stake employment specialist and other welfare specialists. These stake specialists serve as resources for bishops and other ward leaders. They may help with welfare needs such as job placement, education, training, nutrition, sanitation, home storage, health care, family finances, and the Perpetual Education Fund.

5.1.2
Welfare Assistance

Generally, welfare assistance is administered by bishops. However, the stake president has a role in providing assistance in the following circumstances.

5.1.2.1
Assistance for Bishops

The stake president should be aware of the temporal circumstances of bishops and their families. When a bishop or members of his immediate family need welfare assistance, he reviews the needs and the proposed assistance with the stake president. The stake president's written approval is required before the bishop may:

1. Sign a bishop's order for Church welfare assistance for himself or his immediate family members.
2. Use fast offerings to assist himself or his immediate family. If fast-offering funds are used,

the stake president reviews the bills and other expenses before authorizing payment.

3. Obtain help for himself or his immediate family through Church welfare operations.

When authorizing the use of fast offerings for the bishop or his immediate family, the stake president ensures that the instructions under “Fast Offerings” in 5.2.4 are followed, particularly with regard to signing checks. In summary, the bishop may not sign a check that is for welfare assistance for himself or his immediate family.

5.1.2.2
Medical Expenses That Exceed Authorized Amounts

The Church’s General Welfare Committee establishes the maximum amounts that a bishop and stake president may authorize for payment of a needy member’s medical expenses, including mental health care, without additional authorization. As a general guideline, the maximum authorization amounts are $5,000 for a bishop and $10,000 for a stake president; however, the Area Presidency may recommend lower limits if they feel that circumstances in their administrative area so warrant. They submit these recommendations to the Presiding Bishopric for the General Welfare Committee to consider.

If the total Church payment of a needy member’s medical expenses is expected to exceed the amount that a bishop is authorized to approve, the stake president’s approval is required before the bishop may commit to pay health care providers. If the total amount is expected to exceed the amount that a stake president is authorized to approve, the stake president must receive approval from the Area President before the bishop may commit to pay health care providers.

The Area President may authorize expenditures of up to $25,000. When these leaders feel that assistance in excess of $25,000 may be justified, they may submit a request for the Presiding Bishopric to consider. These requests are submitted through Welfare Services (1-801-240-3001 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-3001).

The Area Presidency may recommend the ward, stake, and area maximum authorized amounts for medical expenses for the areas they preside over. They submit these recommendations to the Presiding Bishopric for the General Welfare Committee to consider.

5.1.2.3
Other Special Medical Circumstances

See 5.2.6.

5.1.2.4
Assistance for Members Who Are Transient or Homeless

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

Where there is a concentration of stakes with large numbers of people who are transient or homeless seeking assistance, the Area Presidency may call a Church-service missionary to handle such requests. This man should have served as a bishop. He should also be experienced in helping the needy and be familiar with the use of Church welfare resources. Where there is a bishops’ storehouse, this Church-service missionary serves under the direction of the bishops’ storehouse manager. Exceptions to these guidelines must be approved by the Presiding Bishopric.

5.1.2.5
Support to Members in Prisons, Hospitals, and Other Institutions

See 17.1.45.

5.1.3
Emergencies

The stake president directs the stake council in preparing a simple written plan for the stake to respond to emergencies. This plan should be coordinated with similar plans of other stakes in the coordinating council and with plans in the community.

The stake council makes assignments for carrying out the stake's emergency response plan. The council periodically reviews and updates these assignments.

Care should be exercised so emergency planning does not promote fear. Mock emergency exercises should not be conducted.

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

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

With approval from the Area Presidency, Church buildings (except temples) may be used as shelters, first-aid stations, feeding locations, and recreation centers during emergencies. Stake and ward council members ensure that those using the buildings observe Church standards of conduct, including the Word of Wisdom, while they are in the buildings.

During an emergency, the stake president oversees public information that is released locally by the Church. He ensures that it is accurate and timely. He may respond to questions from the media, or he may assign a stake public affairs director or assistant director to do so. He may also serve as the local Church spokesman, or he may designate a spokesperson. The stake president reviews and approves all news releases given by the spokesperson. He also gives proper recognition to civil authorities and relief agencies.

5.2
Welfare Duties of the Bishopric

5.2.1
Welfare Leadership and Councils

5.2.1.1
Teach Welfare Doctrines and Principles

The bishop and his counselors ensure that the doctrines, principles, and blessings related to spiritual and temporal welfare are taught regularly to ward members. These doctrines and principles are outlined in the publications listed at the beginning of this chapter.

5.2.1.2
Teach Leaders Their Welfare Responsibilities

The bishop and his counselors teach priesthood and auxiliary leaders their welfare responsibilities to (1) encourage self-reliance, (2) care for the poor and needy, and (3) help members resolve long-term welfare needs. The bishopric teaches these responsibilities in personal interviews, in ward council meetings, and in other similar settings.

5.2.1.3
Encourage Members to Live the Law of the Fast

The bishopric and members of the ward council encourage members to live the law of the fast. Typically this includes (1) fasting each fast Sunday for two consecutive meals and (2) giving a fast offering that is at least the equivalent value of the meals not eaten. Members are encouraged to be generous and give much more than the value of two meals if they are able.

When members live the law of the fast and contribute fast offerings, their lives and the lives of the needy will be blessed (see Isaiah 58:6–12). The importance of living the law of the fast should be taught in sacrament meetings, priesthood meetings, Relief Society and other auxiliary meetings, home visits, temple recommend interviews, and tithing settlement interviews.

5.2.1.4
Oversee the Gathering and Accounting of Fast Offerings

See 14.4.2.

5.2.1.5
Preside over the Welfare Work of the Ward Council

The bishop directs the welfare work of the ward council. He ensures that in ward council meetings, leaders consider spiritual and temporal welfare matters as outlined in *Handbook 2,* 6.2.2.

5.2.1.6
Participate in the Stake Bishops' Welfare Council

See 5.3.

5.2.1.7
Call Ward Welfare and Employment Specialists

See "Ward Welfare Specialists" in 5.2.4.

5.2.2
Overview of Welfare Assistance

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 cannot meet their basic needs, generally they should first turn to their families for help. When this is not sufficient or feasible, the Church stands ready to help.

The objectives of Church welfare assistance are to strengthen needy members as follows:

1. Help them become self-reliant and stand independent of all welfare assistance, regardless of its source.
2. Help them become stronger spiritually and learn to provide for others.
3. Help them maintain their self-respect and dignity.

5.2.3
Principles and Guidelines for Rendering Assistance

The Lord has described His way for caring for the poor and needy. He instructed the Saints to "impart of your substance unto the poor, . . . and [it] shall be laid before the bishop . . . [and] shall be kept in my storehouse, to administer to the poor and the needy" (Doctrine and Covenants 42:31, 34).

The Lord further explained that these offerings should include members' talents. These talents are "to be cast into the Lord's storehouse, . . . every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God" (Doctrine and Covenants 82:18–19).

In some locations the Church has established buildings called bishops' storehouses. When members receive permission from their bishop, they may go to the bishops' storehouse to obtain food and clothing.

But the Lord's storehouse is not limited to a building used to distribute food and clothing to the poor. It also includes Church members' offerings of time, talents, compassion, materials, and financial means that are made available to the bishop to help care for the poor and needy. The Lord's storehouse, then, exists in each ward. The bishop is the agent of the Lord's storehouse.

The bishop is entrusted with the responsibility of using the resources of the Lord's storehouse to care for the poor and needy members of the ward. He uses the gift of discernment, sound judgment, and compassion in determining how best to help those in need. Each circumstance is different and requires inspiration.

The bishop seeks the guidance of the Spirit and applies the following welfare principles to help him determine who should receive assistance, what kind and amount of assistance to provide, and how long to provide it.

5.2.3.1
Seek Out the Poor

The bishop has a divine mandate to seek out and care for the poor (see Doctrine and Covenants 84:112). It is not enough to assist only when asked. He should be aware of the temporal circumstances of needy ward members and ensure that those in need receive proper care. He encourages priesthood and Relief Society leaders and those who minister under their direction to help identify members who need assistance.

5.2.3.2
Promote Personal Responsibility

Before providing Church welfare assistance, the bishop reviews with members what resources and efforts they and their family can provide to meet their needs. Teaching principles of provident living and committing members to live by these principles will often help members do much to resolve their needs themselves.

When appropriate and feasible, those in need should seek help from family members before seeking help from the Church.

Church welfare assistance is normally given to meet temporary needs as members work to become self-reliant. It is intended to help members develop independence, not dependence. The bishop encourages even those who may require long-term assistance, such as some who are disabled or aged, to do all they can to help themselves.

5.2.3.3
Sustain Life, Not Lifestyle

The bishop provides basic life-sustaining necessities. He does not provide assistance to maintain an affluent living standard.

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.

5.2.3.4
Provide Commodities before Cash

When possible, the bishop provides members with commodities or services instead of giving them money or paying their bills. Members can then use their own money to pay other obligations. Where bishops' storehouses are not available, fast offerings may be used to buy essential commodities.

5.2.3.5
Give Work Opportunities

The bishop asks those who receive assistance to work to the extent of their ability for what they receive. He teaches the importance of work and gives meaningful work assignments. If members are reluctant to work, the bishop helps them understand that work assignments are given to bless them. When they work for assistance, they remain industrious, maintain self-respect, and increase their ability to be self-reliant.

The ward council compiles and maintains a list of meaningful work opportunities. If Church welfare operations exist in the area, these operations may provide work opportunities and training for people who need Church assistance.

5.2.3.6
Other Guidelines

Completing a Needs and Resources Analysis form may help the bishop determine what assistance to provide. If the circumstances are complicated and additional information is needed, bishops in the United States and Canada may consider using the Needs and Resources Analysis Supplement form.

The bishop should bear in mind that the temporal circumstances and needs of members vary from country to country. A family that might be considered needy in one location might not be considered so if they lived elsewhere. Also, members who are considered poor by some often do not view themselves as being poor.

When the bishop does not know a member, he contacts the member's previous bishop before giving welfare assistance.

Generally, the bishop assists only those members who currently live within his own ward's boundaries. Individuals who are not members of the Church are usually referred to local community resources if they need welfare assistance. However, on rare occasions the bishop, under the inspiration of the Spirit, may assist individuals who are not members of the Church, particularly if they are parents or caregivers of member children. He should be discerning about the type and amount of assistance he gives.

Providing welfare assistance should not be based on the activity level or worthiness of those who need it. Using the welfare principles outlined in this handbook, the bishop administers assistance to all members in need. He encourages less-active members who receive assistance to improve their spiritual well-being by attending church, praying, reading the scriptures, and increasing their activity in the Church.

In some situations, providing welfare assistance may be contingent on members fulfilling simple assignments from the bishop, such as doing assigned work, looking for a job, and eliminating unnecessary expenses. However, some members who are widowed, orphaned, elderly, or disabled may be unable to fulfill assignments. The bishop provides compassionate care to these members based on their situations and capabilities.

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

5.2.4
Church Resources Available to Help the Poor

The bishop prayerfully determines how to use the following Church resources to help those in need.

5.2.4.1
Ward Council

Members of the ward council help the bishop meet members' welfare needs. For information about the welfare work of the ward council, see *Handbook 2,* 6.2.2.

5.2.4.2
Elders Quorum and Relief Society

Welfare is central to the work of the elders quorum and the Relief Society. Elders quorum and Relief Society leaders ensure that they regularly consider welfare matters in their leadership meetings.

Under the direction of the bishop and quorum or Relief Society leaders, ministering brothers, ministering sisters, and others help needy members find solutions to welfare needs and become self-reliant. The time, talents, and skills of ward members are an important resource for the bishop to use in caring for the needy.

The welfare work of Melchizedek Priesthood quorums and the Relief Society is explained more fully in *Handbook 2,* 6.2.4.

5.2.4.3
Relief Society President

The bishop normally assigns the Relief Society president to visit members who need welfare assistance. She helps assess their needs and suggests to the bishop what assistance to provide. This may include preparing a Bishop's Order for Commodities form for the bishop to approve and sign.

The Relief Society president's role in making these visits is explained more fully in *Handbook 2,* 9.6.1.

5.2.4.4
Ward Welfare Specialists

The bishopric may call an employment specialist to help members prepare for and find suitable employment. The bishopric may also call other welfare specialists to help members with needs such as education, training, nutrition, sanitation, home storage, health care, family finances, and the Perpetual Education Fund.

5.2.4.5
Fast Offerings

Each week the Church consolidates fast-offering contributions into a worldwide general fast-offering fund. Bishops then draw on this fund as needed to provide short-term shelter, medical assistance, and other life-sustaining aid.

Guidelines for the bishop in using fast offerings to administer assistance are outlined below:

1. Personally approve all fast-offering expenditures.
2. If a bishops' storehouse is not available, use fast offerings to buy essential commodities (see "Provide Commodities before Cash" in 5.2.3).
3. When possible, make payments to providers of goods and services rather than to the person being assisted or to other individuals.
4. Do not loan fast offerings to members. Members are not required to repay welfare assistance they receive from the Church. Encourage members to contribute to the fast-offering fund when they are again able to do so.
5. Do not use fast offerings to pay members' consumer debt or obligations incurred in business failures or speculative ventures.
6. Ensure that any fast-offering assistance to the bishop or his immediate family members is first approved in writing by the stake president (see 5.1.2) and complies with the following instructions for preparing checks.
7. When preparing a check for fast-offering assistance (or a payment approval form, where used), ensure that:
    a. Two authorized signers always sign the check or form.
    b. The persons signing the check or form are not related to either the payee or the person being assisted.
    c. Neither the payee nor the person being assisted signs the check or form.

5.2.4.6
Stake and Other Church Resources

If the stake presidency has called stake welfare specialists, the bishop may ask them to provide expertise or other assistance.

In some parts of the world, the Church has established welfare operations such as bishops' storehouses, canneries, employment resource centers, Deseret Industries stores, and LDS Family Services agencies. Where these operations 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 contacts the chairman of the stake bishops' welfare council or the stake president.

5.2.5
Non-Church Resources Available to Help the Poor

Members may choose to use resources in the community, including government resources, to help meet their basic needs. The bishop and members of the ward council should become familiar with these non-Church resources. Such resources may include:

1. Hospitals, physicians, or other sources of medical care.
2. Job training and placement services.
3. Help for people with disabilities.
4. Professional counselors or social workers.
5. Addiction treatment services.

Even when members receive assistance from non-Church sources, the bishop helps them avoid becoming dependent on these sources. He also advises them to comply with any laws associated with receiving non-Church assistance, especially while receiving Church welfare assistance. Bishops should be careful not to duplicate non-Church welfare assistance.

5.2.6
Members Who Need Medical Care

Before the bishop pays medical expenses for needy members, including mental health care, he determines whether the care is necessary based on sound medical advice. The bishop also determines whether family members are able to assist and whether the member is fully using insurance, government assistance, and other available benefits.

If the bishop feels that the Church should help pay a needy member's medical expenses, he uses fast-offering funds. He ensures that the records of health care providers designate the member or family as the party responsible for payment, not the Church.

In general, fast offerings may only be used to pay for medical treatment that is consistent with the standard quality of care available in the country where the member resides. Fast offerings are not to be used to pay for medical care provided by practitioners or facilities outside the administrative area of the Church where the member's ward is located (or, in the case of the United States or Canada, outside the country where the member's ward is located). Exceptions to this policy should be rare and require authorization from the Presiding Bishopric.

If the member's bishop feels that an exception may be justified, he counsels with the stake president. If the stake president agrees, he may submit a recommendation for the Presiding Bishopric to consider an exception. He submits his recommendation through Welfare Services (1-801-240-3001 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-3001).

Fast offerings may not be used to pay for medical care that is morally, ethically, or legally questionable.

5.2.7
Members Who Are Transient or Homeless

The bishop may assist members and others who are transient or homeless, 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.

For instructions when there are two or more wards in the vicinity, see "Assistance for Members Who Are Transient or Homeless" in 5.1.2.

5.2.8
Confidentiality

The bishop maintains confidentiality about the welfare assistance that members receive. He carefully safeguards the privacy and dignity of members who receive assistance. When he feels that other ward leaders can help members in need, he may share information according to the guidelines in *Handbook 2,* 6.4.

5.2.9
Welfare Abuse and Fraud

Bishops should protect against welfare abuse and fraud. In the United States and Canada, bishops who have concerns about welfare abuse or fraud should call the bishops' help line (1-801-240-7887 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-7887). Bishops may also call the help line to verify a person's membership in the Church before giving welfare assistance.

Outside the United States and Canada, bishops should contact the assigned administrative office.

5.2.10
Members with Social and Emotional Needs

Some members may experience serious social and emotional challenges, such as mental illness; unwed pregnancies; marriage and family problems; drug, alcohol, and pornography addictions; and same-gender attraction.

Members who face these and other similar challenges require increased sensitivity, understanding, compassion, and confidentiality. Bishops can be instrumental in helping members heal and recover. In many instances, members with challenges such as pornography and other addictions may have additional moral and spiritual needs that the bishop can help them resolve. Bishops should offer spiritual solutions by helping individuals understand the basic doctrines of hope and redemption through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

The behavior of individuals with social and emotional challenges often adversely affects spouses and family members. The bishop and others whom he asks to assist should meet with those who are adversely affected and extend support and understanding to them.

The bishop may consult with LDS Family Services agencies, where available, for help in assessing needs, determining the need for professional counseling, and identifying resources to assist members with social and emotional challenges. The bishop may also use the *Church Materials Catalog* to identify Church publications that have been prepared to help these members.

5.2.11
Emergencies

The bishopric directs the ward council in preparing a simple written plan for the ward to respond to emergencies. This plan should be coordinated with similar plans in the stake and community.

The ward council makes assignments for carrying out the ward's emergency response plan. The council periodically reviews and updates these assignments.

Care should be exercised so emergency planning does not promote fear. Mock emergency exercises should not be conducted.

When emergencies arise, the bishop should receive reports from quorum leaders concerning the conditions and needs of members. Quorum leaders receive these reports from ministering brothers. The bishop then reports to the stake presidency on 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 make the services of the Church available to civil authorities. Church leaders also take independent action in behalf of Church members as needed. For information on using Church buildings during emergencies, see 5.1.3.

Supplemental equipment, food, clothing, and services are available through bishops' storehouses, Deseret Industries stores, and LDS Family Services agencies where they are established. During emergencies, the bishop should request these commodities or services as needed.

During emergencies, full-time missionaries can help with communication, ensuring that all members receive needed information and are accounted for.

5.3

Stake Bishops' Welfare Council

The stake bishops' welfare council is composed of all bishops and branch presidents 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 may attend these council meetings occasionally to give instruction. A stake clerk also attends and keeps a record of assignments and decisions. As needed, welfare specialists occasionally may be invited to attend.

The council meets at least quarterly. Agenda items for these meetings may include the following:

1. Receive instruction in welfare matters. This may include reviewing instructions the stake president received at coordinating council meetings.
2. Exchange ideas and experiences relating to welfare responsibilities.
3. Review trends in fast-offering contributions, welfare needs and resources, and welfare assistance.
4. Identify work opportunities for members who receive welfare assistance.
5. Identify ways for priesthood quorums and the Relief Society to help meet welfare needs in the stake.
6. Identify agencies and services in the community that could be called on to assist members.
7. Evaluate the services and management of Church welfare operations in areas where they exist.
8. Discuss coordination of assistance to people who are transient or homeless if the stake president has assigned one bishop to oversee this assistance.
9. Review bishops' storehouse procedures where one exists.
10. Coordinate welfare farm and other welfare operations labor assignments.

6.

Church Discipline and Name Removal

In this chapter, references to transgressors are in the masculine gender but also include the feminine.

6.1

Definition and Purposes of Church Discipline

Bishops and stake presidents have a responsibility to help members overcome transgression through repentance. This responsibility includes counseling with individual members as needed and helping them in their efforts to repent. In some circumstances, it requires administering Church discipline. The term *Church discipline* refers to restrictions and conditions of repentance placed on a person.

Guided by the Holy Ghost and the instructions in this chapter, bishops and stake presidents administer either informal or formal Church discipline as needed. 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.

Informal Church discipline is administered in private interviews. It does not affect a member's standing in the Church (see 6.8). Formal Church discipline is administered in a disciplinary council and can affect a member's standing in the Church (see 6.9 and 6.10).

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.

6.1.1

Save the Souls of Transgressors

The first purpose of Church discipline is to save the souls of transgressors by helping them repent (see Doctrine and Covenants 1:31–32; 19:13–20; 42:37; 64:12–13). When people do not repent, they are exposed to the demands of eternal justice (see Alma 34:16). When they exercise faith unto repentance, God forgives them, granting mercy through the Atonement of Jesus Christ (see Alma 42:23; Doctrine and Covenants 58:42). Through this process, they may 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 is often adequate for this purpose. However, in some instances the only way to encourage true repentance is to convene a disciplinary council and consider formal discipline. 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).

6.1.2

Protect the Innocent

The second purpose of Church discipline is to protect the innocent. With inspiration, a priesthood leader should act to protect others when a transgressor poses a physical or spiritual threat to them, such as by predatory practices, physical harm, sexual abuse, drug misuse, fraud, or apostasy (see Alma 5:59–60).

6.1.3 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.

6.2 Responsibility for Church Discipline

God does not overlook sin, and His servants cannot ignore evidence of serious transgressions (see Mosiah 26:29; Doctrine and Covenants 1:31). Stake presidents, bishops, mission presidents, district presidents, and branch presidents are called and set apart to be judges in Israel (see Doctrine and Covenants 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" (Doctrine and Covenants 58:18).

Church discipline is administered in the ward or stake that has the transgressor's membership record (see 6.2.7 for exceptions). Church leaders' responsibilities for initiating and administering Church discipline are outlined in the following paragraphs.

6.2.1 Stake President

The stake president has authority over Church discipline in the stake. However, bishops normally administer Church discipline unless evidence indicates that a man who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood is likely to be excommunicated. In that case, the stake president convenes a stake disciplinary council. When a stake president convenes a disciplinary council, the participation of the stake presidency and high council is required as outlined in "Stake Disciplinary Councils" in 6.10.1.

6.2.2 High Council

The high council participates whenever a stake president convenes a disciplinary council (see 6.10.1 and 6.10.4).

6.2.3 Bishop

The bishop has authority over Church discipline in the ward, except the excommunication of a man 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.

When a bishop convenes a disciplinary council, it must include all three members of the bishopric (see "Ward Disciplinary Councils" in 6.10.1).

6.2.4 Branch President in a Stake

A branch president in a stake is not authorized to administer Church discipline without the permission and counsel of the stake president. He must receive authorization in each case to convene a disciplinary council.

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.

When a branch president in a stake convenes a disciplinary council, it must include all three members of the branch presidency (see "Branch Disciplinary Councils in a Stake" in 6.10.1).

6.2.5
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 in "Mission Disciplinary Councils" in 6.10.1. 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 General Authority in the Missionary Department. If the mission president is outside the United States and Canada, he also reviews the matter with the Area Presidency. In either case, the mission president may not convene the disciplinary council until he receives authorization from a General Authority in the Missionary Department.

6.2.6
District President and Branch President in a Mission

A district president or branch president in a mission is not authorized to administer Church discipline without the permission and counsel of the mission president. He must receive authorization in each case to convene a disciplinary council.

6.2.7
Jurisdiction in Special Circumstances

If a member who needs Church discipline moves to another ward before disciplinary action is taken, the bishops of both wards consult to determine where the 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 person's current bishop 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.

6.3
Information about a Possible Serious Transgression

The process of Church discipline begins when a presiding officer receives information that a member may have committed a serious transgression. This information may come in at least three different ways:

1. Confession by the member. 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" (Doctrine and Covenants 58:43). Members

should also 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.

2. Information from someone else. Such information might come from a family member, another Church leader, a victim, or a participant in the transgression.

3. Promptings from the Holy Ghost. When a presiding officer feels that a member in his ward or stake may be struggling with sin, he may schedule an interview with the member. In such a case, the leader talks with the member in a respectful and helpful manner, avoiding any tone of accusation.

6.4

Interviews and Investigation

A bishop interviews any member of his ward who confesses or is accused of a serious transgression. If the member confesses the sin, either on his own or as a result of an accusation from someone else, the bishop responds with love and understanding. He encourages the member to seek the Lord's forgiveness, forsake the transgression, and make restitution. If the sin may be serious enough to require formal Church discipline, the bishop explains this to the member (see 6.7).

If a member denies an accusation that the bishop has reliable evidence to support, the bishop (or the stake president if the member is a Melchizedek Priesthood holder who is likely to be excommunicated if the accusation is true) 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. However, leaders should not investigate individuals or matters while they are the subject of investigation by law enforcement authorities. For guidance in such circumstances, the stake president seeks legal advice from the Church's Office of General Counsel or from the area office as instructed in 17.1.26.

Priesthood leaders who conduct an investigation should not 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 recording devices. They also must not maintain a watch on a member's home.

6.5

Confidentiality

Bishops, stake presidents, and their counselors 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 and who are assigned to conduct investigations. 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.

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 seeks legal advice from the Church's Office of General Counsel (1-801-240-6301 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-6301) or from the area office.

6.6

Seeking Forgiveness and Disclosing Information

As part of the repentance process, transgressors should seek forgiveness from the people they have wronged. The repentance of a married person who is involved in a sexual transgression usually includes 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 urges him to report the matter to appropriate government authorities. The member should also be counseled to seek competent legal advice before reporting. To obtain guidance on local laws that govern reporting abuse, see the instructions in 17.3.2.

Disclosure of the identity of others who participated in a transgression is *encouraged* as part of the repentance process, especially when this can help Church leaders assist those participants in their repentance.

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.

6.7

Determining Whether a Disciplinary Council Is Necessary

6.7.1

When a Disciplinary Council Is Not Necessary

A disciplinary council normally is not necessary in the following instances.

6.7.1.1

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, who are struggling with pornography or self-abuse, or whose transgressions consist of omissions, such as failure to pay tithing, inactivity in the Church, or inattention to Church duties.

6.7.1.2

Business Failures or Nonpayment of Debts

Church 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.

6.7.1.3

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, leaders treat the accusations 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.

6.7.1.4
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 "Time between Transgression and Confession" in 6.10.6).

6.7.2
When a Disciplinary Council May Be Necessary

6.7.2.1
Serious Transgression

Formal Church discipline *may* be necessary for any member who commits a serious transgression. As used here, *serious transgression* is defined as a deliberate and major offense against morality. It includes (but is not limited to) attempted murder, forcible rape, sexual abuse, spouse abuse, intentional serious physical injury of others, adultery, fornication, homosexual relations (especially sexual cohabitation), deliberate abandonment of family responsibilities, robbery, burglary, theft, embezzlement, sale of illegal drugs, fraud, perjury, and false swearing.

6.7.2.2
Abortion

Presiding officers carefully review the circumstances of members who have been involved in abortions. Formal discipline may be necessary for members who submit to, perform, arrange for, pay for, or encourage 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 serious jeopardy, or (3) the fetus was known to have severe defects that would not allow the baby to survive beyond birth (see 17.3.1). Bishops refer questions on specific cases to the stake president. The stake president may direct questions to the Office of the First Presidency if necessary.

6.7.2.3
Transsexual Operation

Church leaders counsel against elective transsexual operations. If a member is contemplating such an operation, a presiding officer informs him of this counsel and advises him that the operation may be cause for formal Church discipline. Bishops refer questions on specific cases to the stake president. The stake president may direct questions to the Office of the First Presidency if necessary.

6.7.3
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.

6.7.3.1
Murder

As used here, *murder* refers to the deliberate and unjustified taking of human life. It requires excommunication. It does not include police or military action in the line of duty. 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), the taking of a human life might not be defined as murder. Bishops refer questions on specific cases to the stake president. The stake president may direct questions to the Office of the First Presidency if necessary.

6.7.3.2
Incest

As used here, *incest* refers to sexual intercourse between a parent and a natural, adopted, or foster child or a stepchild. A grandparent is considered the same as a parent. Incest also refers to sexual intercourse between brothers and sisters. It almost always requires excommunication. Bishops refer questions on specific cases to the stake president. The stake president may direct questions to the Office of the First Presidency if necessary. If a minor commits incest, the stake president contacts the Office of the First Presidency for direction.

6.7.3.3
Child Abuse

As used here, *child abuse* refers to a sexual offense against a child or physical abuse of a child. If priesthood leaders learn of or suspect child abuse, they follow the instructions in 17.3.2. If a minor abuses a child, the stake president contacts the Office of the First Presidency for direction.

6.7.3.4
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.
2. Persist in teaching as Church doctrine information that is not Church doctrine after they have been corrected by their bishop or a 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 a higher authority.
4. Are in a same-gender marriage.
5. Formally join another church and advocate its teachings.

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 another church does not constitute apostasy. However, if a member formally joins another church and advocates its teachings, excommunication or name removal may be necessary if formal membership in the other church is not ended after counseling and encouragement.

6.7.3.5
Serious Transgression While Holding a Prominent Church Position

A disciplinary council must be held for a member who commits a serious transgression while holding one of the following prominent Church positions: Area Seventy; temple, mission, or stake president; patriarch; or bishop (but not branch president). The term *serious transgression* is defined in 6.7.2.

6.7.3.6
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.

6.7.3.7
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.

6.7.3.8
Serious Transgression That Is Widely Known

A disciplinary council must be held for a member who commits a serious transgression (as defined in 6.7.2) that is widely known.

6.8
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 persons who are genuinely repentant (especially if they have confessed voluntarily), for first-time offenders, for those who have not violated temple covenants by their transgression, and for those with significant mitigating circumstances (see Doctrine and Covenants 42:25–26; see also 6.10.6).

Informal Church discipline includes (1) private counsel and caution and (2) informal probation.

6.8.1
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. Such counseling often helps members who have committed minor moral transgressions guard against major transgressions. Such counseling also helps protect and strengthen those who are courting, are having difficulty in their marriages, or are separated or divorced. Presiding officers need not wait for members to seek such help, but may call them in for counseling.

For more information about counseling, see 7.2.

6.8.2
Informal Probation

Informal probation is a means for a presiding officer to restrict some of a transgressor's privileges of Church membership. Such restrictions may include suspending the right to partake of the sacrament, hold a Church position, exercise the priesthood, or enter a temple. If the privilege of entering a temple is suspended, a member gives 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.

Informal probation is not an option when priesthood leaders administer Church discipline for a member who has been involved in any of the serious transgressions listed in 6.12.10.

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 keeps these notes secure and destroys 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 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.

6.9 Formal Church Discipline

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. Presiding officers approach formal discipline with a prayerful desire to help, not to condemn. A presiding officer who is unwilling to proceed in such cases is not fulfilling his responsibilities as a common judge.

Formal Church discipline is administered in a disciplinary council (see 6.10). Because formal Church discipline is ecclesiastical, not civil or criminal, it can affect only a member's standing in the Church (see Doctrine and Covenants 134:10). Court procedures of a state or nation do not apply.

Formal Church discipline includes formal probation, disfellowshipment, and excommunication.

6.9.1 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. 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 (see 6.8.2).

Formal probation is not an option when priesthood leaders administer Church discipline for a member who has been involved in any of the serious transgressions listed in 6.12.10. If a minor commits incest or abuses a child, the stake president contacts the Office of the First Presidency for direction.

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 6.12). If the member does not make this progress and meet the conditions, the disciplinary council may continue probation or take more severe disciplinary action.

6.9.2 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 is 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 conditions, such as staying away from pornographic materials and other evil influences. He may also 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 6.12). If a member does not repent, the disciplinary council may continue disfellowshipment or consider excommunication.

6.9.3
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 "Violation of Covenants" in 6.10.6).
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 (as defined in 6.7.3) and is almost always required for incest.

A person who is excommunicated does not enjoy any privileges 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.

Excommunication almost always lasts at least one year. If a person shows true repentance and satisfies the conditions imposed while he is excommunicated, he may be readmitted by baptism and confirmation. The readmission process is explained in 6.12.

For information about the effects of excommunication on temple sealings, see "Effects of Excommunication or Name Removal" in 3.7.1.8.

6.10
Disciplinary Councils

A presiding officer convenes a disciplinary council when he has determined that formal Church discipline may be necessary. Procedures in a disciplinary council must be fair and considerate of the feelings of all who participate.

6.10.1
Leaders Who Are to Participate

6.10.1.1
Stake Disciplinary Councils

All three members of the stake presidency, all twelve members of the high council, and a clerk participate in a stake disciplinary council. If a counselor in the stake presidency is unable to participate, the stake president asks a member of the high council to take the counselor's place. If a high councilor is unable to participate, the stake president asks 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.

Without exception, fifteen high priests participate in a stake disciplinary council: the three members of the stake presidency or those who are authorized to participate in their places, and the twelve members of the high council or those who are authorized to participate in their places.

6.10.1.2
Ward Disciplinary Councils

All three members of the bishopric and a clerk participate in a ward disciplinary council. If the bishop is unable to participate, he refers the case to the stake president, who convenes a stake disciplinary council. 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, who convenes a stake disciplinary council. In these circumstances, as with other stake disciplinary councils, the participation of the stake presidency and high council is required as outlined above.

The bishop always consults with the stake president and obtains his approval before convening a disciplinary council.

6.10.1.3
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.

6.10.1.4
Mission Disciplinary Councils

When a mission president holds a disciplinary council for members or full-time missionaries under his jurisdiction, he appoints two Melchizedek Priesthood 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. Before doing so, he must receive authorization from a General Authority in the Missionary Department (see 6.2.5 and the *Mission President's Handbook*).

6.10.1.5
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. District councils do not participate in disciplinary councils. See also 6.2.5 and 6.2.6.

6.10.1.6
Additional 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 participation of the bishop, the disciplinary matter must be referred to the stake president, who convenes a stake disciplinary council. If the transgressor objects to the participation of 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.

6.10.2
Notice and Scheduling

A presiding officer should not schedule a disciplinary council until (1) he has had adequate time to determine the relevant facts and (2) he and the transgressor and the aggrieved parties have had adequate time to give unhurried consideration to the consequences of the transgression.

The presiding officer gives a member written notice of a disciplinary council that will be held in his behalf. This notice is addressed to the member by his full name and is signed by the presiding officer. It states:

"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].

"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.

"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 a council is to be held is notified as specified in the preceding paragraphs, with one exception: since he will not be able to attend, he is not 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 may also invite him to tell how he feels about continued fellowship or membership in the Church.

6.10.3
Communicating with Aggrieved Victims

When there is an aggrieved victim (such as for incest, child abuse, or spouse abuse), the presiding officer of the upcoming disciplinary council contacts the victim's current bishop or stake president. If the victim's current bishop or stake president already knows about the situation, the two leaders determine whether it would be helpful and appropriate for the victim to be given an opportunity to provide a written or oral statement about the known or alleged misconduct and how it has affected the victim and his or her family.

Any interview with an aggrieved victim for this purpose is conducted by his or her current bishop or stake president. Any inquiries about a victim who is under 18 years of age are made through the child's parent(s) or legal guardian(s). Great care must be taken to avoid causing further trauma, especially with a victim of sexual or physical abuse. In the United States, Canada, and selected other countries, the Church has established a help line for cases that involve abuse. Priesthood leaders should call the help line for guidance in such cases (see 17.3.2). In the United States and Canada, the telephone number is 1-801-240-1911 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-1911.

6.10.4
Procedures of the Council

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. He also explains the consequences of the decisions the council may reach.

If the member has confessed, the presiding officer asks for consent to use the confession as evidence in the council. Information received in a member's confession cannot be used as evidence in a disciplinary council without the member's consent. When necessary, the presiding officer 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.

A lack of consent to use a confession as evidence does not prevent a disciplinary council from proceeding on the basis of other evidence. Also, the presiding officer can still impose informal discipline on the basis of the confession, even if the member does not give consent for the confession to be used in the council.

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 presiding officer conducts the disciplinary council as follows:

1. Invite a participant to open the council with prayer.

2. State the reported misconduct, or designate someone else to state it. Ask the member to respond by admitting or denying it.

3. If the member admits to the misconduct, proceed to number 5 below. If he denies the reported misconduct, present evidence of it or ask someone else to do so. This evidence may include 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 any witnesses who give evidence against him. (If witnesses are unable to attend, see "Party or Witness Unable to Attend" in 6.10.12.4.)

4. If the member desires to present evidence in his behalf, invite him to bring in witnesses one at a time, submit other relevant evidence, comment on the evidence, and make any other statements he desires.

   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.

5. Ask questions of the member or witnesses in an orderly, polite manner, avoiding argument. Allow counselors in the bishopric or stake presidency to do the same. Questions are to be brief and limited to the essential facts of the case.

6. In a stake disciplinary council, invite members of the high council to participate as outlined in "High Council Participation" (see the next heading).

7. When all relevant matters have been presented, excuse the member and, with counselors in the bishopric or stake presidency, prayerfully deliberate over what action to take. The presiding officer is the judge. He makes the decision through inspiration and invites his counselors to sustain it. If they have a different opinion, he listens and seeks to resolve the differences so the decision can be unanimous.

   In a stake disciplinary council, the stake presidency withdraws from the council room to confer in private. After the stake president reaches a decision and his counselors sustain it, he announces it to the high council as outlined in "High Council Participation" (see the next heading).

   If there is not enough evidence to justify formal Church discipline but it seems inappropriate to conclude the matter immediately by a decision of no action, the presiding officer adjourns the council temporarily to seek additional evidence.

8. Invite the person back into the council meeting to inform him of the decision. If the decision is formal probation, disfellowshipment, or excommunication, explain the terms and conditions that are imposed, tell the person in a spirit of love how to overcome those restrictions, and offer other appropriate instruction and counsel.

9. Explain the person's right to appeal (see 6.10.10).

10. Invite a participant to close the council with prayer.

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.

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.

Video or audio recordings of disciplinary councils should not be made.

6.10.4.1
High Council Participation

Stake disciplinary councils always include the high council. 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.

This section provides additional instructions as stake presidencies and high councils apply these principles. Except as stated here, up to the time of deliberation, the procedures for a stake disciplinary council are the same as those prescribed for other disciplinary councils.

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.

The stake president may invite any member of the high council to ask questions in an orderly, polite manner, avoiding argument. 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" (Doctrine and Covenants 102:16). One-half of those appointed to speak are responsible "to stand up in behalf of the accused, and prevent insult and injustice" (Doctrine and Covenants 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.

The stake president may ask for any additional comments from the high council. He and his counselors then withdraw from the council room to confer in private.

After the stake president reaches a decision and his counselors sustain it, he announces it to the high council and asks them as a group to sustain it. 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 makes 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.

For instructions on how to proceed when one or more high councilors are not available, see "Stake Disciplinary Councils" in 6.10.1.

For instructions on high council participation in disciplinary councils to consider ending Church discipline, see 6.12.8.

6.10.5
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 he may be referred to his bishop for an interview that might lead to informal discipline.
2. Formal probation (see 6.9.1).
3. Disfellowshipment (see 6.9.2).
4. Excommunication (see 6.9.3).

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.

6.10.6
Considerations in Reaching a Decision

This section lists 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 stern 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.

6.10.6.1
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 Church discipline.

Adultery is a more serious sexual transgression than fornication because adultery involves a violation of marriage covenants. See also "Removing a Restriction against Temple Sealing" in 3.7.1.5.

6.10.6.2
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" in 6.7.3.

6.10.6.3
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 that shows a lack of repentance, even though the earlier transgression had been resolved with Church authorities. 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” (Doctrine and Covenants 82:7).

6.10.6.4
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.

6.10.6.5
Age, Maturity, and Experience

Presiding officers 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” (Doctrine and Covenants 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.

6.10.6.6
Interests of the Innocent

When administering and announcing discipline, presiding officers consider the interests of innocent victims and the transgressor’s innocent family members.

6.10.6.7
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.

6.10.6.8
Voluntary Confession

Voluntary, 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.

6.10.6.9
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 a person's 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.

6.10.7 Written Notice of the Decision

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 consists 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 could also 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 form.

6.10.8 Maintaining Contact with a Person Who Has Been Excommunicated

When a person is excommunicated, his name is removed from the membership records of the Church. Although the person 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 form.

If an excommunicated person moves after consenting to have the Church maintain contact with him, the bishop contacts the bishop of the new ward, gives him the person's name and address, and communicates 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 there is a change of mind.

6.10.9 Announcement of the Decision

When announcing Church discipline, leaders must consider the feelings of the transgressor's family members and the needs of 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 as determined by the presiding officer.

A decision of disfellowshipment or excommunication is announced only to those who need to know. The principles and procedures in the following paragraphs govern these 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 council meeting to guide officers who might otherwise consider the person for Church service, offering prayers, or giving talks or lessons.

If a case concerns (1) preaching of false doctrine, (2) a transgressor whose predatory tendencies seriously threaten other persons, or (3) other flagrant transgressions (such as plural marriage, cultist teachings to attract a following, or ridicule of Church leaders), then, with the approval of the stake president, the bishop announces the decision in meetings of the elders quorum and Relief Society in his ward. In such cases the stake president may also 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.

6.10.10
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 specifies in writing the alleged errors or unfairness in the procedure or decision. The person presents 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 form and other relevant documents to the stake or mission president. If a 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.

6.10.11
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.

6.10.12
Procedures in Exceptional Circumstances

6.10.12.1
Conduct Examined in Criminal or Civil Courts

Normally a disciplinary council is not held to consider conduct being examined by a criminal trial court until the court has reached a final judgment. In some cases it may also be appropriate to delay disciplinary proceedings until the period of appeal has expired or the appeal has been rejected.

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 liable 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 or liability in a court may be considered as evidence of guilt or liability for purposes of Church discipline. Reliable evidence submitted to a court may also be considered in a Church disciplinary council.

For guidelines on Church leaders testifying in legal proceedings, see 17.1.26.

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.

For information about membership records of those who are incarcerated and face Church disciplinary action, see 6.13.8.

6.10.12.2
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 disciplinary council promptly sends 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.

6.10.12.3
Reporting Embezzlement of Church Funds

If a person is disciplined for embezzling Church funds, the presiding officer reports it as outlined in 14.9.5.

6.10.12.4
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 a statement may be considered as evidence. When necessary, the party or witness may be questioned further, in writing or orally.

6.10.12.5
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.

6.10.12.6
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" (Doctrine and Covenants 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.

6.10.12.7
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 refers unresolved procedural questions to the Office of the First Presidency.

6.10.12.8
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.

6.10.12.9
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.

6.11
Fellowshipping after Discipline

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. Leaders and members should be eager 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 frequently interviews the person and, if necessary, his spouse.

The bishop ensures that mature, caring members are assigned to watch over and minister to a person who has been disfellowshipped or excommunicated—and to immediate family members. Couples may be assigned to minister together. Those who minister make regular contacts and see that the person, spouse, and other family members receive the care 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, when necessary, 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 6.10.8).

6.12

Ending Formal Probation, Disfellowshipment, or Excommunication

6.12.1

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 or mission president presided over the disciplinary council, a stake or mission president presides over another council to consider changing the person's status. Any exceptions to this policy require the approval of the First Presidency.
3. If a branch president in a mission presided over the disciplinary council and the disciplined person later lives in a stake, the person's current bishop normally presides over another council to consider changing the person's status (see number 5 below for an exception).
4. If a district president in a mission presided over the disciplinary council and the disciplined person later lives in a stake, the stake president presides over another council to consider changing the person's status. Any exceptions to this policy require the approval of the First Presidency (see also number 5 below).
5. If a district or branch president in a mission presided over a disciplinary council that excommunicated a Melchizedek Priesthood holder (with authorization from the mission president), and if the excommunicated person later lives in a stake, the stake president presides over another council to consider readmitting the person into the Church.

A bishop needs approval from 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.

6.12.2

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, the presiding officer obtains a copy of the report from the presiding officer of the unit where the initial disciplinary action was taken.

6.12.3

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.

6.12.4
Determine Status of Criminal or Civil Court Action (If Necessary)

If a person who has had Church discipline has been convicted of a crime or found guilty in a civil action of fraud or other dishonest or immoral conduct, a disciplinary council is not held to consider changing his Church status until he has fulfilled all terms and conditions of any sentence or judgment imposed by legal authorities. These conditions may include imprisonment, probation, parole, and fines or restitution. Any exceptions require the approval of the First Presidency.

6.12.5
Contact the Presiding Officer Where Action Was Taken

If the presiding officer has questions or concerns as he reviews the report of the initial disciplinary council, he may consult with the current presiding officer of the unit where the council was held to see if he knows the circumstances and can provide clarification.

In cases of incest, child abuse, or spouse abuse, the presiding officer of the disciplined person must contact the current presiding officer of the unit where the initial disciplinary action was taken. If that officer already knows about the situation, the disciplined person's presiding officer seeks his opinion on the advisability of a proposed change of status for the disciplined person. This discussion must take place before a disciplinary council is held to consider reinstating the disciplined person to full fellowship or readmitting him into the Church.

6.12.6
Contact the Priesthood Leaders of Aggrieved Victims

The presiding officer of the upcoming disciplinary council contacts the current bishop or stake president of any aggrieved victim (such as in cases of incest, child abuse, or spouse abuse). If the victim's current bishop or stake president already knows about the situation, the two leaders determine whether it would be helpful and appropriate for the victim to be given an opportunity to provide a written or oral statement about how the disciplined person's misconduct has affected the victim and his or her family. A victim may also comment on evidence of the person's repentance since the disciplinary action was taken.

Any interview with an aggrieved victim for this purpose should be conducted by his or her current bishop or stake president. Inquiries about a victim who is under 18 years of age are made through the child's parent(s) or legal guardian(s). Great care must be taken to avoid causing further trauma, especially with a victim of sexual or physical abuse. In the United States, Canada, and some other countries, the Church has established a help line for cases that involve abuse. Priesthood leaders should call the help line for guidance in such cases (see 6.10.3).

6.12.7
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.

6.12.8
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 person 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 in 6.10.4, 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 6.10.4 for instructions about these deliberations and about informing the member of the council's decision.

A disciplinary council may either end or continue Church discipline, but it cannot place a disfellowshipped member on formal probation.

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 in 6.12.10), the conclusion of the council can be only a recommendation to the First Presidency and not a final decision.

6.12.9
Complete and Submit a Report

See 6.10.11.

6.12.10
Apply for First Presidency Approval (If Necessary)

If the person was disfellowshipped or excommunicated for any of the following reasons, or if he committed any of these transgressions after being disfellowshipped or excommunicated, the approval of the First Presidency is required before he may be reinstated to full fellowship or readmitted by baptism and confirmation. For the purposes of Church discipline, some of the following terms are defined in 6.7.3.

1. Murder
2. Incest
3. Sexual offense against a child or serious physical abuse of a child by an adult or by a youth who is several years older than the child
4. Apostasy
5. Committing a serious transgression while holding a prominent Church position
6. An elective transsexual operation
7. Embezzlement of Church funds or property

In these circumstances, the presiding officer conducts the disciplinary council as stated previously. Preauthorization from the First Presidency is not required to convene the council. If the disciplinary council recommends a change in status, the presiding officer may notify the person of this recommendation. However, he explains that the status cannot be changed until the First Presidency gives written approval of the recommendation.

To submit a recommendation to the First Presidency, the presiding officer completes each step on the Application to the First Presidency form. This form is available electronically in units that use Church record-keeping software. 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.

6.12.11
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.

6.12.12
Readmission of Excommunicated Persons by Baptism and Confirmation

When all approvals have been received, a person who was excommunicated may be readmitted into the Church. After the person is baptized, he is confirmed a member of the Church as in any other confirmation. The bishop prepares a Baptism and Confirmation Record, noting on the form that the ordinances are for readmission.

6.12.12.1
Church Activity after Readmission

Members Who Were Not Previously Endowed. From the time of their baptism and confirmation, these members may participate in Church activity just as a new convert would.

Members Who Were Previously Endowed. From the time of their baptism and confirmation until their blessings are restored (see 6.15), 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 wear temple garments, receive a temple recommend, or participate in vicarious baptisms for the dead until their blessings are restored.

6.12.12.2
Ordination after Readmission

Brethren Who Previously Held the Priesthood but Were Not Endowed. Immediately after baptism and confirmation, these brethren have the priesthood conferred upon them and are ordained to the priesthood office they held at the time of excommunication. In this circumstance, a sustaining vote of members is not required. The bishop records the ordination information in the spaces provided on the Baptism and Confirmation Record so it can be properly recorded at Church headquarters. See also 6.13.3.

Brethren Who Previously Held the Priesthood and Were Endowed. After baptism and confirmation, these brethren are not ordained to any priesthood office and may not perform ordinances until their priesthood and temple blessings are restored (see 6.15).

6.12.12.3
Temple Recommends after Readmission

See "Members Who Have Been Readmitted by Baptism and Confirmation after Excommunication or Name Removal" in 3.4.10.

6.13
Membership Records and Church Discipline

6.13.1
Records of Members Placed on Formal Probation

Formal probation is not noted on a membership record.

6.13.2
Records of Disfellowshipped Members and Those Reinstated to Full Fellowship

Disfellowshipment is noted on a person's membership record. Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office makes this note and provides an updated record after receiving the Report of Church Disciplinary Action form.

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.

After a person has been reinstated to full fellowship, Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office removes the notice of disfellowshipment and provides an updated membership record.

6.13.3
Records of Excommunicated Members and Those Readmitted by Baptism and Confirmation

6.13.3.1
After Excommunication

When a person is excommunicated, his name is removed from the membership records of the Church. Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office takes this action after receiving the Report of Church Disciplinary Action form.

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. For instructions, see 6.10.8.

6.13.3.2
After Readmission

After a person is readmitted by baptism and confirmation, the stake president or bishop submits a copy of the Baptism and Confirmation Record, usually with the Report of Church Disciplinary Action form.

If the member was not endowed before excommunication, Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office provides the ward a membership record that shows the dates of the member's original baptism and other ordinances, with no reference to excommunication.

If the member was endowed before excommunication, Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office provides the ward a membership record that shows the member's new baptism date. This record also includes the message "Restoration of Blessings Required." After the member's blessings are restored, Church headquarters or the administrative office provides another updated membership record that shows the dates of the member's original baptism and other ordinances, including endowment (and current priesthood, if applicable), with no reference to excommunication.

6.13.4
Records with Annotations

In areas authorized by the First Presidency, 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 follows the instructions in the annotation.

Church headquarters will automatically annotate a person's membership record in any of the following situations:

1. The stake president or bishop submits a Report of Church Disciplinary Action form 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), predatory conduct, or embezzlement of Church funds or property.
2. The stake president or bishop submits written notification that the person has been criminally convicted for one of these transgressions.

3. 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, an annotation on a membership record is removed only with First Presidency approval upon request of the stake president.

6.13.5 Records with Special Comments

The bishop and a clerk review the records of new ward members for special comments that Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office may have added. If a record includes such comments, the bishop contacts Church headquarters or the administrative office as needed and takes appropriate action.

6.13.6 Records with Bishop's Request for Contact

If a member moves and the bishop feels a need to share information with the member's new bishop, he instructs a clerk to place a request for contact on the record when sending it to the new ward. When a bishop receives a membership record with such a request, he contacts the previous bishop as soon as feasible.

6.13.7 Move Restrictions on Membership Records

If a member moves while Church disciplinary action or another serious concern is pending, the bishop, or the ward clerk with the bishop's authorization, may contact Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office and ask for a move restriction on the membership record. 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.

6.13.8 Records of Those Who Are Incarcerated in Correctional Facilities

If a member has been convicted of a crime and is incarcerated in a correctional facility, the stake president or bishop of the unit where the person resided at the time of conviction should proceed with any disciplinary action that may be necessary. This presiding officer should take the necessary action before forwarding the membership record to the unit that has ecclesiastical responsibility for the institution where the person is incarcerated.

6.14 Removing Names from Church Membership Records

An adult member who wishes to have his name removed from the membership records of the Church must send the bishop a written, signed request. 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 and confirmation only after a thorough interview (see 6.14.4).

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 determine that the bishop has followed established procedures, they ask him to send the member a letter stating that his name is being removed from the records of the Church as requested. The letter should state the consequences of name removal. It should also 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 a member demands that his name be removed immediately from Church records, the 30-day waiting period may be waived.

If a member demands immediate name removal or does not request a recision within 30 days, the stake president 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.

If a member sends a written request for name removal directly to Church headquarters rather than to local leaders, the Office of the First Presidency will forward this letter to the member's stake president for action in accordance with this section. *The stake president should give prompt attention to such requests.* If Church headquarters has not received a response from the stake president within 60 days, the name removal request will be granted automatically.

A minor who wishes to have his 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 8) and by the parent(s) or guardian(s) 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. However, a Report of Administrative Action form should be completed and signed for each person who has requested name removal.

If a member requesting name removal threatens legal action against the Church or its leaders, the stake president follows the instructions in 17.1.26.

Requests for name removal should be acted on promptly as outlined above. The Report of Administrative Action form and all supporting documentation should be submitted in a timely manner.

6.14.1
Name Removal and Suspected Transgression

A request for name removal should be acted upon whether or not priesthood leaders suspect or have evidence of transgression. Any allegations or evidence of unresolved transgressions are noted on the Report of Administrative Action form so priesthood leaders may resolve such matters in the future if the individual applies for readmission into the Church.

6.14.2
Effects of Name Removal on Temple Sealings

See "Effects of Excommunication or Name Removal" in 3.7.1.8.

6.14.3
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 in 6.10.9 apply.

6.14.4
Readmission after Name Removal

After name removal, a person must be baptized and confirmed to be readmitted into the Church. If the person was an adult when his name was removed from Church membership records, readmission is not usually considered until at least one year later.

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 report, 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 disfellowshipped 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 does 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 in 6.12.10, 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 6.13.4), 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 16.3.3). When the bishop is satisfied that the person is worthy and sincere in wanting to be readmitted, he prepares a Baptism and Confirmation Record. He notes on the form that the baptism is for readmission. After the person is baptized, he is confirmed a member of the Church. 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 and confirmation (see 6.13.3).

6.15
Restoration of Blessings

Endowed persons who were excommunicated and later readmitted by baptism and confirmation 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 seventy, bishop, or patriarch. (See also 6.12.12.)

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 and confirmation.

To submit a recommendation to the First Presidency, the presiding officer completes each step on the Application to the First Presidency form. This form is available electronically in units that use

Church record-keeping software. 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, if the unit is outside the United States and Canada, to the Area Presidency. The Office of the First Presidency will notify the stake or mission president of the decision.

6.15.1
Performance of the Ordinance

If the First Presidency authorizes the restoration of blessings, they assign a General Authority or the stake president to interview the applicant. If the applicant is worthy, the General Authority or the stake president performs the ordinance to restore the person's blessings.

In designated areas, when an Area President receives authorization from the First Presidency to conduct an interview for restoration of blessings, he may delegate the authority to an Area Seventy. When assigned, this Area Seventy may then conduct the interview and perform the ordinance if the applicant is worthy.

6.15.2
For the Dead

See 3.8.9.

6.16
Retention of Records

The presiding officer destroys 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. When such notification is received, the clerk immediately informs the bishop and stake president. If a disciplinary council has imposed formal probation, the presiding officer retains the records of the council until the matter is resolved.

The stake or mission president destroys 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.

6.17

Documents Required at Church Headquarters

Documents Required at Church Headquarters for Confidential Actions or Applications

	Action or Application									
Required Documents	**Administrative action (name removal)**	**Disfellowshipment**	**Excommunication**	**Ending disfellowshipment (not requiring First Presidency approval)**	**Readmission (not requiring First Presidency approval)**	**Ending disfellowshipment (requiring First Presidency approval)**	**Readmission (requiring First Presidency approval)**	**Restoration of blessings**	**Cancellation of sealing**	**Sealing clearance**
Report of Administrative Action form	✓									
Letter from the person requesting name removal	✓									
Copy of the letter from the bishop informing the person of name removal	✓									
Copy (or copies) of the membership record	✓	✓	✓							
Report of Church Disciplinary Action form		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Copy of the letter notifying the person of the disciplinary council		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Certification of delivery of the letter notifying the person of the disciplinary council		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Copy of the letter to the person stating the decision of the council		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Baptism and Confirmation Record form					✓					
Application to the First Presidency form						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Letter from the applicant						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Letter from the applicant's bishop						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Letter from the applicant's stake president						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Letter from the applicant's current spouse						✓	✓	✓		
Letter from applicant's former spouse (if applicant was married to a former spouse at time of disfellowshipment or excommunication)						✓	✓	✓		
Letter(s) from victim(s) of child abuse (if they are now 18 years of age or older)						✓	✓	✓		
Letter(s) from the applicant's former sealed spouse(s)									✓	✓
Letter from the bishop of the person to whom the applicant plans to be sealed									✓	✓

7.

Interviews and Counseling

7.1

Interviews

Each stake president and bishop is "a judge in Israel" (Doctrine and Covenants 107:72). By this authority he conducts worthiness interviews and priesthood interviews. He represents the Lord in conducting these interviews. Accordingly, he should seek to bless members and help them live the gospel of Jesus Christ.

7.1.1

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 should also seek the power of discernment. This is a spiritual gift that will help them discern truth, as well as a member's needs (see Doctrine and Covenants 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 the member understands the questions being asked. He sets aside enough time to conduct the interview in a dignified, unhurried manner.

7.1.2

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 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 should also express gratitude and strengthen the leader in his personal and family life.

7.1.3

Interviews Conducted by the Stake President

The stake president conducts the following interviews with stake members:

1. For temple recommends for those who are receiving their own endowment or are being married or sealed in a temple (see 3.4.7).
2. For recommendation of full-time missionaries (see 4.5).
3. For release of full-time missionaries after they have returned home (see 4.10.1 and 4.10.3).
4. For callings to serve as counselors in the stake presidency, as patriarchs, and as bishops, when authorized.
5. For callings to serve as elders quorum presidents and stake clerks.

The stake president also interviews each bishop regularly to encourage and instruct him. He interviews the stake patriarch at least twice a year (see 15.4).

7.1.4

Interviews Conducted by the Stake President or Assigned Counselors

The stake president or assigned counselors conduct the following interviews with stake members. Before interviewing a person for any of the following purposes, the member of the stake presidency ensures that the person has been interviewed or cleared by the bishop or an assigned counselor in the bishopric.

1. For renewal of temple recommends (see 3.4).
2. For ordination to the offices of elder and high priest (see 16.7.1).
3. For callings to serve in Church positions as indicated in the Chart of Callings in *Handbook 2,* chapter 19.
4. For an endorsement to enroll at a Church university or college (see 11.4).
5. For an endorsement to participate in the Perpetual Education Fund loan program, where the program is approved (see 12.4).

If a counselor in the stake presidency encounters serious matters in an interview, such as transgressions that require confession, he refers the member to the bishop without delay.

7.1.5

Interviews Conducted by the Bishop

The bishop conducts the following interviews with ward members:

1. For temple recommends for those who are receiving their own endowment or are being married or sealed in a temple (see 3.4.7).
2. For limited-use recommends for new converts (see 3.4.14).
3. For recommendation of full-time missionaries (see 4.5).
4. For ordination to the offices of elder and high priest, when authorized by the stake presidency (see 16.7.1).
5. For annual tithing settlement (see 14.4.1).
6. For callings to serve as ward auxiliary presidents, the ward mission leader, and the ward temple and family history leader. (For more information about calling a ward mission leader and a ward temple and family history leader or having members of the elders quorum presidency function in these roles, see *Handbook 2,* 5.1.3.)
7. For ordination to the office of priest (see 16.7.2).
8. For ordination of male converts to offices in the Aaronic Priesthood (see 16.7.2).
9. For callings to serve as assistants in the priests quorum.
10. Of youth (see 7.1.7).
11. For an endorsement to enroll or continue enrollment at a Church university or college (see 11.4).

The bishop also meets regularly with the elders quorum president and the Relief Society president both separately and together (see *Handbook 2,* 7.3.1, 7.4.2, 9.2.1, 9.5.2).

7.1.6

Interviews Conducted by the Bishop or Assigned Counselors

The bishop or assigned counselors conduct the following interviews with ward members. Only the bishop addresses concerns about chastity, associated moral matters, and other serious transgressions in these interviews. If a counselor encounters serious matters, such as transgressions that require confession, he refers the member to the bishop without delay.

1. For renewal of temple recommends and limited-use recommends (see 3.4).
2. For callings to serve in Church positions as indicated in the Chart of Callings in *Handbook 2,* chapter 19.
3. For baptism and confirmation of 8-year-old children who are members of record or, if they are not members of record, have at least one parent or guardian who is a member (see 16.3.3).
4. For callings to serve as the deacons quorum president, counselors, and secretary; teachers quorum president, counselors, and secretary; priests quorum secretary; and Young Women class presidents, counselors, and secretaries. However, only the bishop may set apart the deacons and teachers quorum presidents.
5. For 11-year-olds as they move from Primary. During this interview, the bishop or his assigned counselor also interviews the young men to determine whether they are worthy and prepared to receive the Aaronic Priesthood. He interviews the young women in preparation for entering the Young Women program.
6. For ordination to the office of deacon or teacher (see 16.7.2).
7. Of youth and young single adults (see 7.1.7 and 7.1.8).
8. For patriarchal blessings (see 16.12.1).
9. For a priesthood holder who desires to act as voice in a priesthood ordinance in another ward but does not have a temple recommend. If the person is worthy, the bishopric member fills out and signs a Recommend to Perform an Ordinance form.
10. For members who are entering military service (see 10.2).
11. For an endorsement to participate in the Perpetual Education Fund loan program, where the program is approved, and for counsel and encouragement thereafter (see 12.4).

7.1.7 Guidelines for Youth Interviews

7.1.7.1 Role of Parents

Parents have the primary responsibility for teaching their children the gospel of Jesus Christ. They help their children grow spiritually and prepare to make and keep sacred covenants. Parents also counsel with their children regarding worthiness and help them repent and improve. Bishops and other Church leaders support parents in these efforts.

7.1.7.2 The Bishop's Communication about Interviews

As a young woman prepares to become part of the Young Women organization, and as a young man prepares to receive the Aaronic Priesthood, the bishop shares with youth and their parents the following information about interviews. He could do this as part of the annual Temple and Priesthood Preparation meeting or at other times as needed.

- Parents have the primary responsibility to teach and nurture their children.
- The bishop or one of his counselors will interview the young man or young woman at least twice a year for the reasons outlined in "Purposes of Interviews" below. A bishopric member may also meet with youth to answer questions, give support, or extend assignments.
- To help youth prepare spiritually, interviews are required for sacred matters such as temple

recommends, priesthood ordinations, and mission calls. Leaders work with parents to help youth prepare for these interviews.

- Parents encourage their children to meet with the bishop when they need his help with spiritual guidance or with repentance.
- If a youth desires, he or she may invite a parent or another adult to be present when meeting with the bishop or one of his counselors.

7.1.7.3

Purposes of Interviews

Bishops and their counselors have a sacred responsibility to lead, teach, and inspire youth. Effective personal interviews are one important way they do this. During these interviews, the bishop and his counselors teach youth about becoming disciples of the Savior. They help youth consider how well they are following the Savior and His teachings. Interviews should be uplifting spiritual experiences.

Interviews provide an opportunity to reaffirm each youth's limitless potential as a child of God. Interviews also provide an opportunity to inspire youth to develop plans to draw closer to Heavenly Father and to improve in all areas of their lives.

As representatives of the Savior, bishops are divinely appointed judges in Israel. In this role, they conduct interviews to determine worthiness and to help youth repent of transgressions.

Those who conduct interviews express love and listen carefully. They encourage youth to talk rather than doing most of the talking themselves.

7.1.7.4

Frequency of Interviews

The bishop interviews each young man and young woman at least annually. If possible, he interviews each 16- and 17-year-old twice a year. If this is not possible, he assigns a counselor to conduct some of these interviews.

After the annual interview with the bishop, each young man and young woman ages 11 through 15 usually has an interview at another time during the year with the counselor in the bishopric who oversees the Aaronic Priesthood quorum or Young Women class in which the youth participates.

Acting with inspiration and wisdom, bishops 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. Ward size, geography, schedules, and other circumstances may also affect the frequency of interviews.

7.1.7.5

Matters for Discussion

Key matters for discussion include the growth of the young person's testimony of Heavenly Father, the mission and Atonement of Jesus Christ, and the restored gospel. The bishop and his counselors emphasize the importance of keeping baptismal covenants. They teach youth to prepare to make and keep temple covenants through daily righteous living. Bishopric members encourage youth to pray regularly in private and with their family and to study the scriptures. They also encourage youth to stay close to their parents.

When discussing obedience to the commandments, the bishop and his counselors make appropriate use of the limited-use temple recommend interview questions and the standards and explanations in *For the Strength of Youth.* Leaders adapt the discussion to the understanding and questions of the youth. They ensure that discussions about moral cleanliness do not encourage curiosity or experimentation.

The bishop and his counselors may also address the matters listed below:

Priesthood ordination. With young men, they discuss the blessings and duties of holding the Aaronic Priesthood (see Doctrine and Covenants 20:46–60; 84:31–48; recent general conference addresses on the subject; and *Handbook 2,* 8.1.1 and 8.1.3).

Seminary. For youth of the appropriate age, they encourage regular seminary attendance and emphasize the blessings that come from regular participation.

Missionary service. They give special attention to preparing young men to serve a full-time mission (see 4.2). Young men are encouraged to serve (see 4.3.1), and young women, when they desire, may be recommended to serve (see 4.3.2). They discuss preparing spiritually by being worthy, studying the gospel, and building a testimony. They also discuss preparing physically, mentally, emotionally, and financially.

Standard interview questions for full-time missionary candidates are available at ChurchofJesusChrist.org/mss. The bishop reviews these questions with the candidates and their parents before the mission interview.

Members of the bishopric should be sensitive to the circumstances under which young men are honorably excused from full-time missionary service (see 4.5.3). The bishop discusses opportunities for service missions with young men and young women, as applicable (see 4.12).

Temple. They ensure that youth understand the blessings of temple covenants and temple marriage and the requirements for receiving these blessings. To issue or renew a temple recommend, they ask the standard limited-use temple recommend questions. As needed, they adapt the questions to the age and circumstances of youth.

7.1.8
Interviews of Young Single Adults

The bishop or an assigned counselor interviews each young single adult. These interviews are usually held annually. However, acting with inspiration and wisdom, the bishopric may adjust the frequency of these interviews.

7.1.9
Interviews of Persons to Be Readmitted by Baptism and Confirmation

For instructions about interviewing persons who have been excommunicated and want to be readmitted by baptism and confirmation, see 6.12.3.

For instructions about interviewing persons who have had their names removed from Church records and want to be readmitted by baptism and confirmation, see 6.14.4.

7.2
Counseling

7.2.1
General Guidelines

Stake presidents and bishops counsel stake and ward members who seek spiritual guidance, who have weighty personal problems, who have doctrinal questions, or who have committed serious transgressions. Stake presidents and bishops may delegate some of this counseling to their counselors, though not when a member has committed serious transgressions. In appropriate cases, such as when a family has financial struggles, a bishop or stake president may also delegate some counseling to Melchizedek Priesthood holders who are qualified to assist. A person whom a bishop or stake president assigns to counsel a member reports regularly to the leader who made the assignment. The person also maintains confidentiality.

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 may refer them to the stake president. Local leaders should discourage members from calling, visiting, or writing to Church headquarters about personal matters (see 17.1.29).

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 by 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.

Leaders should frequently use the scriptures and the words of latter-day prophets in offering counsel. These inspired words should be used with sensitivity, love, and warmth. They should be used to inspire and encourage, not to coerce or cause fear.

Leaders should schedule adequate time for appointments. Members should not feel that leaders are too busy and can devote only a few minutes to them. Leaders should also help members feel comfortable as an appointment begins.

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

7.2.2 Spiritual Self-Reliance

Leaders encourage members to develop spiritual self-reliance. Leaders avoid making decisions for those whom they counsel. Instead, leaders help them make their own decisions with the Lord's guidance.

The stake president or bishop should also avoid immediately offering solutions to those he counsels. To the extent possible, he helps them analyze and resolve their own problems or questions in the context of the doctrines of the gospel and the plan of salvation. Ideally, he teaches members how to find solutions and strength from the scriptures on their own.

7.2.3 Questions and Listening

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 listens 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.

7.2.4 Repentance and Resisting Temptation

If a member has transgressed, the stake president or bishop firmly and lovingly helps him or her repent. He teaches that repentance includes exercising faith in Jesus Christ, 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 (see chapter 6).

When counseling members, leaders help them take preventive action to resist temptations. For example, members who are courting, are having difficulty in their marriages, are separated or divorced, or are struggling with minor moral problems may be protected and strengthened by counseling that is 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.

7.2.5 Marriage, Divorce, and Separation

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.

A member who is separated from his or her spouse or is going through a divorce should be counseled not to date until the divorce decree has become final according to law.

7.2.6 Professional Counseling

In addition to the inspired help of Church leaders, members may need professional counseling. In the United States and Canada, stake presidents and bishops may contact LDS Family Services to identify resources to provide such counseling in harmony with gospel principles (1-801-240-1711; 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-1711; or ldsfamilyservices.org). Outside the United States and Canada, stake presidents may contact the Area Presidency for guidance.

7.2.7 Priesthood Blessings

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

7.3 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 a counselor in the bishopric or stake presidency encounters matters that need to be discussed with the bishop or stake president, he explains this to the member and refers him or her to the bishop or stake president without delay.

If a person moves to a new ward or stake, the presiding officer of the unit from which he or she moved may need to share information about formal Church discipline or pending disciplinary matters with the person's new presiding officer (see also 6.2.7 and 6.13.4 through 6.13.7). Doing so is not considered a violation of confidentiality. However, the presiding officer should not share information about transgressions that have been resolved.

7.4 Protecting against Misunderstandings

When a member of a bishopric or stake presidency or another assigned leader meets with a child, youth, or woman, he or she should ask a parent or another adult to be in an adjoining room, foyer, or hall. If the person being interviewed desires, another adult may be invited to be present during the interview. Leaders should avoid all circumstances that could be misunderstood.

7.5

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 reporting and responding to abuse are provided in 17.3.2.

8.

Physical Facilities

8.1

Purpose

The Church purchases land and provides facilities to give Church members places where they can worship, teach, learn, pray together, make and renew covenants, and receive sacred ordinances. Each Church facility should (1) provide a spiritual setting for members to worship and (2) present an image of reverence and dignity in the community.

8.2

Organization

8.2.1

Meetinghouse Facilities Department

Under the direction of the Presiding Bishopric, the Meetinghouse Facilities Department establishes policies and operating procedures that assist in providing facilities for Church members worldwide.

8.2.2

Administrative Offices

Area Presidencies and directors for temporal affairs are responsible for the purchase and operation of Church property. These properties include meetinghouses, institutes of religion, mission homes and offices, welfare operations, and others.

Local facilities personnel serve under the direction of the director for temporal affairs.

8.2.3

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.

8.2.4

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 the facilities manager, unless the stake presidency designates an alternate to participate.

8.2.5

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.

8.2.6 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 8.3.5).

8.2.7 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.

8.2.8 Members

Priesthood leaders 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.

8.3 Administration of Physical Facilities

8.3.1 Use and Care of Meetinghouses

Local Church leaders and members are responsible for the use and care of meetinghouses. They are assisted by local facilities personnel. Leaders strive to ensure that meetinghouses and grounds are always neat, clean, attractive, and in good repair. Church facilities should reflect proper care and respect in every way.

Church members, including youth, should help clean and care for meetinghouses. As members provide such service, their reverence for the Lord's house deepens. Where possible, members should fulfill this responsibility as part of weekly events when they are already at the meetinghouse. Members may also be asked to help clean other Church facilities.

8.3.2 Meetinghouse Maintenance and Inspection

The facilities manager inspects 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.

8.3.3 Meetinghouse Planning

The stake presidency provides information to the Area Presidency that will assist the director for temporal affairs in preparing and updating a master plan of projected needs for future building sites and new or additional meetinghouse space.

8.3.4
Energy and Water Conservation

The Church incurs substantial utility costs for meetinghouses. Leaders can help reduce these costs substantially by teaching members to turn off lights and equipment when they are not needed and to follow other energy and water conservation practices. Leaders ensure that lighting, heating, air conditioning, equipment, and water are used as economically as possible.

As needed, a member of the stake presidency or an assigned high councilor may call a stake building specialist for water and energy conservation for each meetinghouse and recreational property in the stake. These specialists work under the direction of the stake physical facilities representative.

Leaders are also encouraged to follow the energy and water conservation initiatives of local governments.

8.3.5
Safety and Security

Leaders instruct members—*especially women and youth*—not to be alone in Church buildings.

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 8.4.2).

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.

8.3.6
Accident Reporting

Church activities should involve minimal risk of injury or illness to participants or of damage to property. During activities, leaders make every effort to ensure safety. By planning effectively and following safety precautions, leaders can minimize the risk of accidents.

The bishop or stake president should be notified promptly if:

1. An accident, injury, or illness occurs on Church property or during a Church-sponsored activity.
2. A person who was participating in a Church-sponsored activity is missing.
3. Damage to private, public, or Church property occurs during a Church-sponsored activity.

If a person has been seriously injured or is missing, if property has been seriously damaged, or if legal action is threatened or anticipated, the stake president (or a bishop under his direction), promptly takes one of the following actions:

1. In the United States or Canada, he notifies the Risk Management Division at Church headquarters (1-801-240-4049 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-4049; after business hours or on weekends, call 1-801-240-1000 or 1-800-453-3860, and the operator will contact someone immediately).
2. Outside the United States and Canada, he notifies the area office.

Leaders also report injuries and damage involving Church facilities or property to the facilities manager.

Leaders should review the applicability of the Church Activity Medical Assistance Program if an injury occurred during a Church-sponsored activity, event, or assignment. For information about insurance, see *Handbook 2,* 13.6.9.

The stake president (or a bishop under his direction) refers questions about safety issues or claims against the Church to the Risk Management Division or to the area office.

See *Handbook 2,* 13.6.20, for additional instructions on how to proceed in case of an accident or emergency.

8.4

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. Nor may property be used for other purposes that would violate these laws. The following list provides examples of uses that are not approved:

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 activities (see *Handbook 2,* 13.6.8).
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 may be made to use meetinghouse pianos and organs for paid private instruction (see *Handbook 2,* 14.7).
6. Holding organized athletic events that are not sponsored by the Church, including practices.
7. Holding political meetings or campaigns. As an exception, Church facilities may be used for voter registration and as polling places at the request of voting officials if:
   a. There is no reasonable alternative.
   b. The officials and voters maintain Church standards in the building.
   c. The event will not pose physical danger to the building.
   d. The event will not harm the image of the Church.

The use of Church property should not pose a significant risk of harm to participants or to the property. Nor should it unduly expose the Church to liability or disturb surrounding neighbors.

For more detailed instructions on using and caring for Church buildings and other property, see *Facilities Management Guidelines for Meetinghouses and Other Church Property* or contact Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office.

8.4.1

Artwork

Church-approved artwork for meetinghouses is obtained through the facilities manager using the *Church Facilities Artwork* catalog. The facilities manager may also obtain artwork that is appropriate for meetinghouses through Church Distribution Services.

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, and mosaics are not authorized. This policy may not apply to works of art that have been on display for many years in the chapels of existing meetinghouses.

Artwork in meetinghouses should be properly framed.

8.4.2
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 should be modest and inexpensive and must not be a fire hazard. Hay, straw, palm fronds, other dehydrated materials, and lighted 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.

8.4.3
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 Presidency in coordination with the director for temporal affairs. The Area Presidency 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 service.

Dedicatory prayers of buildings may be recorded with permission from the presiding authority.

8.4.4
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. Stake and ward leaders ensure that people who use the buildings observe Church standards of conduct, including the Word of Wisdom, while they are in the buildings. For more information about emergencies, see 5.1.3.

8.4.5
Firearms

Churches are dedicated for the worship of God and as havens from the cares and concerns of the world. With the exception of current law enforcement officers, carrying lethal weapons on Church property, concealed or otherwise, is prohibited.

8.4.6
Fires and Candles

Open flames and lighted candles may not be used in Church buildings.

8.4.7
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 at places of worship.

8.4.8
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.

8.4.9
Historic Preservation

All questions about placing Church-owned property or buildings on national or local historic preservation lists or registries should be directed to Church headquarters through the Area Presidency. For questions about marking, commemorating, or preserving other sites, artifacts, works of art, or documents, contact the Church History Department at 1-801-240-2272 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-2272.

8.4.10
Meetinghouse Construction, Rental, or Purchase

For policies about construction, rental, or purchase of meetinghouses, see *Facilities Management Guidelines for Meetinghouses and Other Church Property* or contact the director for temporal affairs.

8.4.11
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.

8.4.12
Monday Nights

See *Handbook 2,* 13.6.10.

8.4.13
Overnight Lodging or Camping

Church meetinghouse properties may not be used for overnight lodging, camping, or slumber parties.

8.4.14
Parking Lots

Use of Church parking lots should comply with the guidelines at the beginning of section 8.4. In addition, Church parking lots should not be used for commuter parking without permission from the director for temporal affairs.

8.4.15
Photographs, Video Recordings, and Broadcasts in Chapels

Taking photographs or making video recordings in chapels is not permitted. Meetings and other events that are held in the chapel may not be broadcast over the Internet or by any other means (see 18.3.1 in *Handbook 2* for an exception).

8.4.16
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.

8.4.17
Recreational Property Administration

For information about administering recreational property, see *Facilities Management Guidelines for Meetinghouses and Other Church Property* or contact the director for temporal affairs.

8.4.18
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.

8.4.19
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. Under certain conditions, the name of the Church may also be mounted on the grounds on a stand-alone sign.

8.4.20
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.

8.4.21
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.

9.

Creating, Changing, and Naming New Units

9.1

Creating, Changing, or Discontinuing Church Units

Church units include stakes, districts, wards, and branches. They are created, changed, or discontinued only when the need is clearly demonstrated.

The following guidelines are intended to help ensure that Church units are divided only when they are sufficiently strong. Dividing a unit prematurely can weaken it before it becomes a center of strength. Premature divisions can also overburden members.

9.1.1

Stakes and Districts

Stakes are created from 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 1,900 members and five wards. There is no fixed minimum number of members or branches needed to create a district.

All new stakes must have at least 24 active, full-tithe paying Melchizedek Priesthood holders, in addition to the required minimum of 15 such brethren in each ward in the stake. These brethren should be capable of serving effectively in stake and ward priesthood, administrative, and auxiliary positions.

To propose creating a stake or district, changing its boundaries, changing its name, or discontinuing it, the stake or mission president completes a Stake and 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 (1-801-240-3500 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-3500). In other countries, stake and mission presidents can obtain application forms and unit maps from the assigned administrative office. If unit maps are not available from that office, leaders should obtain 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 gives the completed application and maps to the Area Presidency. A mission president who is proposing the creation of a stake from a district follows the same procedure. 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. Before endorsing a proposal for a district to be made a stake, the Area Presidency ensures that the unit is well above the minimum guidelines and has been functioning at the desired level of maturity and strength. 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.

Leaders who have questions about nonnative language stakes may contact the Area Presidency.

9.1.2

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. All new wards must have at least 15 Melchizedek Priesthood holders who are active in the Church, full-tithe payers, and capable of serving in a priesthood or auxiliary position. Normally all new wards must have at least one active, full-tithe paying Melchizedek Priesthood holder per 20 members. Therefore, new wards with more than 300 members must have more than the required minimum of 15 active Melchizedek Priesthood holders. Requests for exceptions may be submitted in areas where this may not be possible.

To create a branch in a stake, generally there should be a minimum of 20 members and at least 4 to 6 full-tithe paying Melchizedek Priesthood holders.

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 and Branch Organization Application form and marks any proposed boundary changes on a map. Instructions for obtaining the application form and maps are provided in 9.1.1.

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. Before endorsing a proposal for a branch to be made a ward, the Area Presidency ensures that the unit is well above the minimum guidelines and has been functioning at the desired level of maturity and strength. 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.

When new wards are created, the stake president completes a Recommendation for New Bishop form for each bishop who is being recommended. This form should be submitted with the proposal. Stakes that use Church record-keeping software can print the form locally. Other stakes can obtain it from the assigned administrative office.

9.1.3
Branches in Missions

There is no fixed minimum number of members needed to create a branch in a mission. However, these new branches generally should have at least 4 to 6 active priesthood holders. At least one should be a full-tithe paying Melchizedek Priesthood holder.

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 and Branch Organization Application form and marks any proposed boundary changes on a map. Instructions for obtaining the application form and maps are provided in 9.1.1. The mission president gives the completed application and maps to the Area Presidency.

The Area Presidency may give final approval or denial of a proposal to (1) create and name a new 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.

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, 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.

9.1.4
Groups in Missions, Stakes, and Areas

Where members cannot assemble in a ward or branch, groups may be created. Groups may also be created in unusual circumstances, such as when a small number of ward or branch members speak a different language or are deaf and there is not a ward or branch that can accommodate their needs. Groups may also be created for members in the military as outlined in 10.4.

For a group to be created, there must be two or more members in a locality, and one must be a worthy priest in the Aaronic Priesthood or a worthy Melchizedek Priesthood holder. When a group is created, no unit number is assigned by Church headquarters.

In missions, the mission president may recommend creating a group to the Area Presidency. With their approval, the mission president may organize a group, or he may assign a branch president to organize and supervise it.

In stakes, the stake president may recommend creating a group to the Area Presidency. With their approval, the stake president may assign a bishop or branch president to organize and supervise a group.

The mission president, bishop, or branch president calls a group leader and sets him apart. A group leader organizes group meetings, which include the administration of the sacrament. He does not have priesthood keys, so he is not authorized to receive tithes and offerings, counsel members about serious transgressions, administer Church discipline, or perform other duties that require keys.

Typically, groups use the Basic Unit Program (see 9.3).

Membership records of group members are kept in the branch or ward that supervises the group.

As groups grow in size and maturity and as circumstances permit, priesthood leaders may apply for the group to be made a branch.

9.1.5
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 150 members. The standard requirement for the number of Melchizedek Priesthood holders also applies (see 9.1.2). There is no fixed minimum number of members needed to create a branch.

Nonnative language wards and branches are created or changed using the procedures outlined in 9.1.2. Approval is given only by the First Presidency.

9.1.6
Young Single Adult Wards and Branches

9.1.6.1
Creation

Most young single adults (ages 18 to 30) live in conventional wards, many with their parents. However, a stake president may recommend the creation of a young single adult ward or branch if a stake has a sufficient number of active young single adults who want to attend such a unit and if the circumstances make this desirable.

Young single adult wards normally require a minimum of 125 active single members. The standard requirement for the number of Melchizedek Priesthood holders also applies (see 9.1.2). Branches normally require a minimum of 50 active single members. Generally, a young single adult ward should not have more than 225 active members. When active members exceed 225, the stake president recommends the creation of an additional ward.

If a stake does not have enough young single adults to create a ward or branch, stake presidents may recommend creating a young single adult unit with membership from two or more adjacent stakes. The unit will be the responsibility of one of the participating stakes, as assigned by the Area Presidency. This assignment, or any changes to it, must have the approval of the First Presidency.

Young single adult wards and branches are created or changed using the procedures outlined in 9.1.2. Approval is given only by the First Presidency.

9.1.6.2
Membership

Membership in a young single adult ward or branch is restricted to young single adults who live within the boundaries of the stake(s) authorized to participate. Both student and nonstudent young single adults are eligible to be members of the unit. Eligible members may, in consultation with their parents, choose to be members of that unit or to remain in their conventional ward. Membership records should be in the unit the person is attending.

Young single adults who are students living in housing that is located on campus or owned by a university or college should be members of a young single adult unit if one exists to serve the institution. If there is more than one ward serving the institution, ward membership is determined geographically by the location of a person's living quarters.

Single parents who have 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.

In consultation with bishops, the stake president may authorize transferring the membership records of designated less-active young single adults to the young single adult unit for fellowshipping and activation. However, when these members become active, they may choose to be a member of either the young single adult unit or their conventional ward.

Membership in a young single adult unit is temporary. Leaders help young single adults prepare to return to a conventional ward when they marry or reach age 31.

9.1.6.3
Leadership

Bishops of young single adult wards should be married men of mature judgment. Bishops' counselors may include married students or other young married men. Other ward officers and teachers are called from among the membership of the ward.

Counselors to bishops of young single adult wards in conventional stakes must be high priests. Bishopric counselors in young single adult stakes who are not ordained high priests are not members of the high priests quorum (see "Leadership" in 9.1.7).

9.1.7
Young Single Adult Stakes

9.1.7.1
Creation

Where large numbers of young single adults reside in a concentrated area, usually near universities or colleges, one or more young single adult stakes may be organized. Generally, a minimum of 1,500 young single adult members is necessary to justify creating such a stake.

A conventional stake with boundaries that overlap those of a young single adult stake does not normally have its own young single adult ward or branch.

A young single adult unit that is in a conventional stake may be included in a young single adult stake only if (1) its boundaries are within or adjacent to the young single adult stake and (2) the presidents of both stakes recommend the transfer.

Young single adult stakes are created or changed using the procedures outlined in 9.1.1. Approval is given only by the First Presidency.

9.1.7.2
Membership

Membership in a young single adult stake is restricted to young single adults who live within the boundaries of the stake. Normally, both student and nonstudent young single adults are eligible for membership. All young single adults within the stake boundaries who are not living at home with their parents, both active and less active, will be considered members of that stake unless they advise the bishop of the young single adult ward that they are attending the conventional ward for their place of residence. Young single adults who live at home with their parents may, in consultation with their parents, choose to be members of the conventional ward or the young single adult ward and stake. Membership records should be in the ward the person is attending.

Membership in a young single adult stake may be limited to students when justified by local circumstances, as approved by the Area Presidency.

The other membership guidelines in 9.1.6 for young single adult wards in conventional stakes also apply in young single adult stakes.

9.1.7.3
Leadership

The stake presidency, high councilors, stake patriarch, bishoprics, and stake Relief Society presidency in a young single adult stake are to be married people of mature judgment. Bishops' counselors may include married students or other young married men. As an exception, bishops' counselors in wards that are in young single adult stakes do not need to be ordained high priests. However, at least the first counselor is usually a more experienced and mature person than those of the typical university or college student's age. Bishopric counselors who are not ordained high priests are not members of the high priests quorum.

The stake presidency, high councilors, stake patriarchs, bishoprics, and stake Relief Society presidency in a young single adult stake may be called from a broader geographical area than the boundaries of the stake, as determined by the Area Presidency or an assigned Area Seventy. Those who extend such callings first obtain authorization by consulting with the president of the person's conventional stake. For guidelines, see *Handbook 2,* 16.6.2. The approval of the First Presidency is also required before calling a bishop. The approval of the Quorum of the Twelve is required before calling a patriarch.

Other stake and ward officers and teachers are called from among the membership of the stake and wards.

9.1.8
Married Student Stakes, Wards, and Branches

A stake president may recommend that a married student stake be created when 1,500 or more married members attend a university or college located in his stake.

A stake president may recommend that a married student ward be created when 125 or more married members attend a university or college located in his stake and want to attend a married student ward. These wards are created using the procedures outlined in 9.1.2. Approval is given only by the First Presidency.

Members who are eligible to attend a married student ward may choose to be members of that ward or their conventional ward. Membership records should be in the unit the members are attending.

9.1.9
Single Adult Wards

9.1.9.1
Creation

Most older single adult members are best served as members of conventional wards. As an exception, when a stake includes 150 or more single adults ages 31 to 45 whose needs for service, leadership, and social interaction are not met adequately by conventional units, the stake president may recommend the creation of a single adult ward. Such a ward is created or changed using the procedures outlined in 9.1.2. Approval is given only by the First Presidency.

If stake leaders desire to create a single adult ward but do not have enough members in one stake, the stake presidents may recommend creating a ward with membership from two or more adjacent stakes. The ward will be the responsibility of one of the participating stakes, as assigned by the Area Presidency. This assignment, or any changes to it, must have the approval of the First Presidency.

9.1.9.2
Membership

Membership in a single adult ward is limited to single adults ages 31 to 45 who live within the boundaries of the stake(s) authorized to participate. These members may choose to be members of that ward or to remain in their conventional ward. Membership records should be in the ward the person is attending.

Single parents who have 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.

9.1.10
Special Needs Wards and Branches

Wards or branches may be created for groups of members who have special needs, such as members who are deaf or are in care centers, residential treatment programs, or prisons. These units are created or changed using the procedures outlined in 9.1.2. Approval is given only by the First Presidency.

9.1.11
Church Units at Military Installations

For instructions on creating wards, branches, and service member groups that meet on military installations, see 10.4.

9.2
Naming Church Units

When new units are created, local leaders may submit unit names to the Area Presidency. These leaders review the names to ensure that they comply with

Church guidelines. If these leaders endorse the proposed names, they are submitted to the Boundary and Leadership Change Committee for review. Approvals for naming Church units are made by the First Presidency.

9.2.1
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 usually the state or province in which the stake or district is located. In other countries the second word is usually the name of the country. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Office of the First Presidency. (One such exception is that stakes in Salt Lake City do not include the word *Utah*.)

When the name of a city is repeated in the name of its state, province, or country, the name of the state, province, or country is not used as part of the stake or district name. For example:

Colorado Springs East Stake, *not* Colorado Springs Colorado East Stake
Guatemala City Central Stake, *not* Guatemala City Guatemala Central Stake
Idaho Falls Eagle Rock Stake, *not* Idaho Falls Idaho Eagle Rock Stake
Mexico City Azteca Stake, *not* Mexico City Mexico Azteca Stake

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.

9.2.2
Wards and Branches

The name of a ward or branch should uniquely identify it so 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, the 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, neighborhood, street, or geographical feature is used in the unit name. If there is more than one ward or branch with the same name, a number is added as part of the name, such as Montevideo 1st Ward, Montevideo 2nd Ward, and Montevideo 3rd 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*) are not included in the name.

9.3
Basic Unit Program

Because units of the Church are at different stages of development and have different needs, the Church has developed the Basic Unit Program to be used by some small branches and by groups.

An Area Presidency may authorize the use of the Basic Unit Program in small branches or in groups where any of the following conditions apply:

1. The Church is in its beginning stages.
2. Members are scattered.
3. The number of members is small and leadership is just beginning to develop.
4. Members have special language needs or other special needs.

With the approval of the Area Presidency, the Basic Unit Program may also be used in stakes where similar conditions exist.

Guidelines for the Basic Unit Program are provided in the *Basic Unit Program Guidebook.* Other helpful information is provided in the *Branch Guidebook, Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders' Guidebook, Family Guidebook,* and *Teaching Guidebook.*

9.4

Growth of Church Units

The organization, auxiliaries, and programs of a Church unit should grow only as fast as the size and maturity of the unit permits. Leaders should not try to organize all the programs outlined in the handbooks unless they have the strength of leadership and the number of members needed to do so. Trying to develop the full program of the Church prematurely can overburden members and may lead them to withdraw from Church activity.

The doctrines, ordinances, and practices that are established by the scriptures and the teachings of the living prophets and apostles are to be uniform throughout the Church. However, under the direction of presiding authorities, leaders may adapt the auxiliaries, leadership meetings, and activities according to local need and capacity. For guidelines about appropriate adaptations, see *Handbook 2,* chapter 17.

10.

Military Relations and Chaplain Services

Stake presidents and bishops help make the blessings of Church participation available to members who serve in the military. As outlined in this chapter, the Church's military relations program consists of:

1. Support from stakes and wards.
2. Church orientation for members who enter military service.
3. Organization of wards, branches, or Latter-day Saint service member groups.
4. Endorsement of Latter-day Saint chaplains.

10.1

Stake Military Relations Leadership

If military installations or members who serve in the military are in a stake, the stake presidency has the responsibilities outlined in this section. If such installations are located in a mission rather than a stake, the mission president fulfills these responsibilities.

A member of the stake presidency oversees the pre–military service Church orientation in the stake. He makes sure the orientation is offered to all members entering military service. The stake executive secretary may coordinate this orientation.

Where needed, the president of a stake where a military installation is located organizes a ward, branch, or service member group for military personnel and their families (see 10.4). For each of these units, the stake president calls, sets apart, and oversees a bishopric (when authorized by the First Presidency), branch presidency, or service member group leader and assistants. The stake president gives contact information for these leaders to the Church's Military Relations Division. He may designate a ward to support each service member group.

Where one or more Church units are established for military personnel, the stake president coordinates with the Military Relations and Chaplain Services Division to provide each bishop, branch president, or group leader a letter of appointment. This letter outlines his responsibilities and authorizes him to preside over the unit and conduct meetings. A copy of the letter should be given to the installation chaplain.

A member of the stake presidency develops a working relationship with the senior chaplain at each military installation in the stake. He ensures that bishops of wards whose boundaries encompass a military installation do the same. These leaders inform the chaplain of the ward's meeting schedule, meeting location, and contact person so the chaplain can give this information to members at the installation.

The stake president conducts an annual interview with each Latter-day Saint chaplain who lives within his stake boundaries. The purpose of this interview is to determine the chaplain's well-being and worthiness to serve. The stake president also separately interviews the spouse of each chaplain annually.

Latter-day Saint chaplains and their spouses should have ward or stake callings. A Latter-day Saint chaplain who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood may serve in leadership callings, such as on the high council or presiding over a military ward, branch, or service member group as long as this calling does not conflict with his military duties. However, chaplains should not be called to serve in positions that require proselyting.

The stake president may consider inviting a chaplain to attend stake council meetings to report on the activities of Church units and activation efforts at the installation. The chaplain may also serve as the liaison between military leaders and the stake president. Chaplains may also help the stake president identify members in the military to call as service member group leaders and may assist with activation efforts among Church members in the military.

The military requires that a chaplain provide administrative oversight to any religious service held on a military installation. If there is a Latter-day Saint chaplain on the installation, the military normally assigns the chaplain to provide such oversight to a Church unit that meets there. Unless called as bishop, branch president, or service member group leader, the chaplain does not preside at the worship services but is expected to attend and participate.

10.2

Ward Military Relations Leadership

A member of the bishopric interviews ward members before they leave for military service. He makes sure they have an opportunity to attend the pre–military service Church orientation.

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. Information on meeting times and locations for Church services on military installations is available from the Church's Military Relations and Chaplain Services Division.

Priesthood leaders in the home ward should correspond regularly with each ward member who is away in military service. They also encourage families to ensure that their family member in the military receives the *Ensign* or *Liahona*. The *Church News* is also available for those who read English.

Each bishop is responsible for Church members assigned to a military installation within his ward boundaries. He establishes a working relationship with the senior chaplain at the installation (see 10.1).

10.3

Pre–Military Service Church Orientation

At the pre–military service Church orientation, members entering military service learn what to expect regarding Church services and activities in the military. The orientation may be held on a stake or ward level. A member of the stake presidency or bishopric calls an instructor, preferably someone with recent military experience, to provide the orientation.

The orientation may include watching the video recordings *Serving Your Country* and *Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled*. The member should receive a military scripture set, a Latter-day Saint identification tag, and the *Serving Your Country* brochure. If a member did not receive this orientation before arriving at basic training, the bishop, branch president, or service member group leader who is responsible for those in training provides it as soon as possible after the member arrives on the base.

10.4

Church Units for Service Members

Members in the military normally participate in wards or branches located at or near their military installations. However, in the following circumstances, the stake or mission president may organize a ward, branch, or service member group for military personnel and their families at the installation:

1. There is not an organized Church unit within a reasonable distance of a military installation to which Church members are assigned.

2. Military personnel are in a country where they do not understand the language spoken in the local ward or branch.

3. Military personnel are unable to leave a military installation because of training requirements or other restrictions.

4. The Church members' military unit is deployed or will be deployed for contingency operations to a location where the Church is not organized, where the local Church unit cannot accommodate the members because of a different language, or where attendance at local meetings is not feasible.

5. Members belong to Reserve or National Guard units and participate in weekend drills or annual training exercises.

Wards and branches at military installations are created using the procedures outlined in chapter 9.

Generally a ward or branch is established, rather than a service member group, if there is a need to support both military members and their families. A ward or branch may also be established for military members without their families if there is a long-term need to provide Church services and programs for members attending basic or advanced training or on a remote assignment. The military does not normally allow Church members who are not associated with the military to belong to a ward or branch that uses installation facilities.

If circumstances do not justify creating a ward or branch at a military installation, the stake or mission president may establish a service member group. A service member group is a small Church unit that holds Church meetings and looks after members. However, the group leader does not have priesthood keys, so he is not authorized to receive tithes and offerings, counsel members about serious transgressions, administer Church discipline, or perform other duties that require keys. For information about service member groups, contact the Military Relations and Chaplain Services Division or see "Military Relations and Chaplain Services" at ChurchofJesusChrist.org/military.

Leaders of service member groups in isolated areas may obtain a Group Leader Kit and additional Church materials by contacting the Church's Military Relations and Chaplain Services Division.

Depending on the needs of service members, Church programs in a ward, branch, or service member group that meets on a military installation may be limited in scope and complexity.

When a Church unit is established at a military installation, coordination with the senior installation chaplain is necessary to arrange for meeting times and use of base facilities. If there is not an installation chaplain assigned to the base, the stake president consults with the commanding officer.

10.5

Group Leaders in Remote Areas or War Zones

While stake or mission presidents normally call and set apart service member group leaders, this may not be possible in remote areas or war zones. Since a group leader is not given priesthood keys with his calling, it is permissible for him to be appointed without being set apart. The priesthood leader who is responsible for the area can appoint a worthy Melchizedek Priesthood holder to serve as the group leader after verifying his worthiness with his bishop and stake president. Or, if there is an LDS chaplain in the area, the priesthood leader can authorize him to call and set apart a group leader.

When a group leader is called, the Church's Military Relations and Chaplain Services Division should be notified. A letter of appointment will be sent to him. This letter is required by the military before the group leader may hold Church services.

10.6
Missionary Service and Military Obligation

In countries that have mandatory military conscription (draft), stake presidents and bishops must consider how these laws apply to individuals who desire to serve missions. In the United States military, a person who joins the active-duty military before serving a mission must complete his enlistment obligation before serving a mission. Those in Reserve or National Guard units may be able to serve missions after they complete basic and advanced training. For more information, leaders may contact the Church's Military Relations and Chaplain Services Division.

10.7
Latter-day Saint Chaplains

The Church's Military Relations and Chaplain Services Division provides centralized endorsement for male and female chaplains who serve in a variety of government and nongovernment settings. These settings include the military, hospitals, hospice organizations, prisons, detention centers, police and fire departments, border patrol, civic and veteran organizations, and colleges and universities. Each organization establishes the educational and ministry requirements for chaplains, but most institutions require Church endorsement before a person may serve as a chaplain.

Chaplains serve people of all faiths, including Latter-day Saints. They ensure that individuals are afforded religious freedom and help facilitate or accommodate the religious needs of those they serve.

The scope and type of ministry a chaplain provides varies greatly depending on the setting. For example, military chaplains are authorized to:

- Lead nondenominational Christian services.
- Perform civil marriages.
- Assist commanders with death notifications.
- Conduct funeral and memorial services.
- Provide grief and bereavement counseling.
- Conduct suicide prevention training.
- Provide spiritual care and counseling to service members and their families.

For information about Latter-day Saint chaplains performing civil marriages, see 3.6.3.1.

Chaplains may assist Church members in the repentance process under the direction of their priesthood leaders. However, members must resolve serious transgressions with their bishop or stake president.

Military chaplains in a war zone or isolated area may fulfill additional responsibilities under the direction of their Church leaders. For example, chaplains who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood may call and set apart service member group leaders. When authorized by Church leaders, they may also interview a service member for baptism, confirmation, and Aaronic or Melchizedek Priesthood ordination if conditions prevent access to full-time missionaries or to the service member's bishop or stake president.

If the duties of chaplains prevent them from attending their own ward meetings, they should seek approval from their stake president to attend Church services at another ward.

10.8
Wearing the Garment in the Military

If members who enter military service have been endowed, bishops make sure they understand the following guidelines.

When possible, endowed members who are 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 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.

Members in the military should consult with their individual services on specific requirements that undergarments must meet, such as color or neckline style. A special military garment that meets the specifications of the Church and the United States Army and Air Force can be obtained through Church Distribution Services. This two-piece garment is coyote tan in color and has a T-shirt top with a crew neck. It should be worn with the combat camouflage uniform when required by military regulations. Since the T-shirt is considered part of the uniform, the marks are stenciled inside so they are not visible to others if the T-shirt is worn without the camouflage uniform shirt.

When military service requires a different color of T-shirt than coyote tan, approved military T-shirts may be purchased and sent to Beehive Clothing to be marked individually. White or coyote tan garment bottoms may be worn with the service-specific colored tops.

Certain synthetic fibers worn next to the skin may create serious hazards for airmen and others who may be exposed to fire. All nylon and some 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 garment should be worn in these situations.

To place special orders for garments, members may contact Distribution Services.

10.9
Other Information

For information about membership records of service members, see 13.6.8.

For information about patriarchal blessings for service members, see 16.12.3.

For information about ordaining service members in isolated areas, see 16.7.4.

For information about giving temple recommends in isolated areas, see 3.4.3.

If Church leaders have questions about military relations, they may contact:

Military Relations Division
50 East North Temple Street, Room 2048
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0020
Telephone: 1-801-240-2286
E-mail: pst-military@ChurchofJesusChrist.org

11.

Church Educational System

The Church Educational System (CES) consists of:

1. Seminaries and Institutes of Religion.
2. Elementary and secondary education (in some areas outside the United States).
3. Institutions of higher education (in the United States only).

11.1

Responsibilities of Priesthood Leaders

11.1.1

Stake Presidency

The stake president works with seminary and institute personnel to administer local seminary and institute programs according to the policies and practices established by the Church Board of Education. Members of the stake presidency encourage and monitor the participation of eligible stake members in CES programs. High councilors and the stake executive secretary may be asked to assist.

The stake presidency regularly includes Church education matters on the agendas of stake leadership meetings. Seminary and institute personnel may be invited to attend the part of these meetings when Church education matters are discussed.

The stake president or an assigned counselor or high councilor calls, sets apart, and releases stake seminary and institute teachers. The stake president first consults with the person's bishop and may consult with seminary and institute personnel. Teachers should be called early enough to allow time for seminary and institute personnel to provide orientation and training before classes begin.

Two adults should always be present in the building or home where a seminary class is being taught. This may require calling a team teacher or assigning another responsible adult to be present, such as a student's parent or guardian or the teacher's spouse. The second adult should be the same sex as the teacher, unless that person is the teacher's spouse.

The stake president verifies that each CES employee, stake seminary or institute teacher, and supervisor in his stake is worthy to hold a temple recommend. This verification should occur before the beginning of the person's CES service and annually thereafter.

The stake president or one of his counselors may be assigned to serve as chairman of the local seminary board of education.

The stake president approves members of the seminary student council and the institute student council after verifying their worthiness with bishops. He or an assigned delegate sets apart these students.

The stake president or one of his counselors serves as chairman of the Institute Advisory Council for campus institute programs (see 11.2.2).

The stake president or one of his counselors consults with seminary and institute personnel to organize stake institute classes.

A member of the stake presidency presides at seminary graduation and institute recognition exercises.

The stake president or one of his counselors interviews stake members who are seeking approval to enroll at Church universities or colleges (see 11.4).

Where there are no separate seminary and institute facilities, the stake presidency ensures that facilities are available as outlined in "Facilities" in 11.2.3.

11.1.2
Bishopric

The bishopric oversees the enrollment of those who are eligible for seminary and institute. The bishop and his counselors encourage:

1. Parents to register their children for seminary.
2. All youth of the appropriate age (generally 14–18) to participate in seminary.
3. All young single adults to participate in institute. The bishopric may also encourage married postsecondary students and their spouses to participate as their needs and interests may be served (see 11.2.2).

The bishopric regularly includes Church education matters on the agendas of ward leadership meetings.

The bishop may recommend to the stake president whom to call as stake seminary and institute teachers and stake supervisors.

To ensure that two adults are present in the building or home where a seminary class is being taught, the bishop may assign another responsible adult to assist as needed (see 11.1.1).

The bishop or one of his counselors interviews students to determine worthiness for seminary and institute recognition. This ecclesiastical endorsement may be completed as part of regularly scheduled interviews.

The bishop interviews and recommends ward members who are seeking approval to enroll or continue enrollment at Church universities or colleges (see 11.4).

The ward executive secretary may help the bishopric with seminary and institute matters, such as registration for classes.

Seminary and institute personnel work closely with priesthood leaders to ensure that each seminary-age youth and each institute-age young single adult is personally invited to participate.

11.2
Seminaries and Institutes of Religion

The purpose of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion is to help youth and young adults understand and rely on the teachings and Atonement of Jesus Christ, qualify for the blessings of the temple, and prepare themselves, their families, and others for eternal life with their Father in Heaven.

Under the direction of the Church Board of Education, full-time seminary and institute personnel are assigned to assist each stake. Leaders direct requests or questions about seminary and institute programs to these representatives.

Seminary and institute classes are not held on Sunday unless the Church Board of Education has given approval.

11.2.1
Seminaries

The seminary program provides weekday religious instruction for youth (generally 14–18 years of age).

Seminary is most effective in helping youth develop spiritually when:

1. The environment is conducive to the influence of the Spirit.
2. It includes daily study of the scriptures.
3. Teachers are capable and well trained, with minimal turnover.
4. Expectations and student accountability are reasonable.
5. Teachers and students have frequent face-to-face or in-person classroom interaction.

11.2.1.1

Types of Seminary Programs

Stake Seminary. Stake seminary can be offered through (1) daily classes that meet outside of school hours when local schools are in session or (2) online or home-study classes. For approved options, see the following table:

Option	Number of Weekly In-Class Lessons	Number of Weekly Home-Study or Online Lessons	Total Weekly Lessons
A	5 (50 minutes)	None	5
B	4 (60 minutes)	None	5
C	4 (50 minutes)	1	5
D	3 (50 minutes)	2	5
E	2 (90 minutes)	1	5
F	2 (50 minutes)	3	5
G	1 (50 minutes)	4	5

As the table shows, the options for home-study or online lessons include meeting together as a class at least once a week.

Area Seminaries and Institutes personnel, together with local priesthood leaders, counsel about which of these options will be best for each stake or program. If they would like to change the option the stake is currently using or start a new program, they recommend one of the approved options to the Seminaries and Institutes of Religion administration. Approval is necessary before implementing the change.

The following questions should be considered when deciding which option to recommend for stake seminary:

1. Which option will most effectively help youth develop spiritually?
2. Which one will work best in local circumstances? Factors to consider include the number of LDS youth, availability of Church facilities, travel distance, safety issues, legal constraints, and school policies and calendars.
3. Which one will provide the best possible experience for the students while reasonably allowing them to attend at least 75 percent of classes, which is required for course credit?

Released-Time Seminary. As approved by the Church Board of Education, released-time seminary is established in some areas of the United States and Canada. These classes are held during school hours according to the school's schedule. The local Church board of education may approve offering additional classes before or after school when the needs of students justify it.

11.2.1.2

Local Board of Education

A local board of education is established in locations with released-time seminary programs.

The Area Presidency or an assigned Area Seventy assigns a stake to be responsible for the board. The president of this stake may serve as chairman or assign one of his counselors to do so. This chairman oversees seminary programs that are located within the geographic area of the board. Where the board is made up of multiple stakes, each stake may be represented by a member of the stake presidency or a high councilor.

Local board of education meetings may be held once or twice a year. Members of the board make plans for enrolling youth in seminary, approve and correlate calendar items, report on enrollment and attendance trends, coordinate graduations, and discuss any challenges facing the seminary programs.

The local board may also discuss items of interest with regard to local institute programs. These boards may meet in conjunction with the institute advisory council (see 11.2.2, "Institute Advisory Council").

A local board of education may also be established where several stakes with daily seminary classes, home-study classes, or both are in close proximity and have common concerns and challenges.

11.2.1.3
Seminary Class Officers

A seminary teacher may appoint a class president, one or more vice presidents, and a secretary. Before making these appointments, the teacher contacts the bishop(s) for approval. The teacher considers all worthy students for class officers, including those who have disabilities. The teacher announces officers in class, but they are not sustained or set apart. These officers assist the teacher as needed.

11.2.1.4
Seminary Student Council

A seminary student council may be organized where more than one seminary class meets in a building. This council may consist of a president, one or more vice presidents, a secretary, and a limited number of council members as needed. Members of the council are recommended by the faculty and approved, called, and set apart by or under the direction of their stake president.

Members of the seminary student council help teachers (1) maintain an appropriate spirit in the building, (2) encourage enrollment and attendance in seminary classes, (3) establish positive traditions, and (4) plan and conduct limited activities that involve more than one class.

11.2.2
Institutes of Religion

Institutes of religion provide weekday religious instruction for young single adults. All young single adults should be encouraged to participate in institute classes whether they are attending school or not. Married postsecondary students and their spouses may participate in institute as their time and circumstances allow. In addition to religious instruction, institutes give students opportunities to grow spiritually through service, social interaction, and leadership training.

Stake presidencies and institute personnel counsel together regarding the establishment of institute classes. Where feasible, these classes should be made available for all young single adults.

Campus institute of religion programs are organized primarily to meet the needs of LDS postsecondary students, ages 18–30. Classes are held at times and locations that are convenient for these students. Young single adults who are not students may also attend. Postsecondary students should attend campus institute programs when available.

Stake or multistake institute classes may be organized where campus institute classes are not readily accessible. Classes are generally taught in meetinghouse facilities by stake institute teachers. Institute personnel provide training and administrative support for these teachers.

Institute classes generally meet twice a week for 50 minutes or once a week for 100 minutes. Independent study courses can be made available for students who are unable to attend regular institute classes. Under certain circumstances, credit for institute classes may be transferred to Church institutions of higher education.

Location and contact information about institute programs worldwide is available on the Internet at ChurchofJesusChrist.org/si/institute and through institute personnel.

11.2.2.1
Institute Advisory Council

An institute advisory council is established wherever there is an institute program. For stake institute programs, these needs may be met by the stake young single adult committee (see *Handbook 2,* 16.3.2). The stake president may serve as chairman of the council or assign one of his counselors to do so.

If an institute serves more than one stake, the Area Presidency or an assigned Area Seventy assigns one of the stakes to be responsible for the advisory council. The president of the assigned stake may serve as chairman or assign one of his counselors to do so. Stake presidents of other participating stakes may attend council meetings or assign a counselor to do so.

The institute advisory council consists of the chairman, the institute director, and the institute student council presidency. The chairman may invite representation from other stakes as needed.

This advisory council organizes and directs the institute student council. It also encourages institute enrollment and attendance. In addition, the council approves the annual student activity calendar and the expenditure of funds for student activities, including any travel. The advisory council may meet in conjunction with the local board of education (see 11.2.1, "Local Board of Education").

11.2.2.2
Institute Class Officers

An institute teacher may appoint class officers as needed. Before making these appointments, the teacher contacts the bishop(s) for approval. The teacher considers all worthy students for class officers, including those who have disabilities. The teacher announces officers in class, but they are not sustained or set apart. These officers assist the teacher as needed.

11.2.2.3
Institute Student Council

In campus institute programs, an institute student council is organized to serve those participating. In stake institute programs, the stake young single adult committee typically meets these needs (see *Handbook 2,* 16.3.2).

The institute student council may consist of a president, one or more vice presidents, a secretary, and a limited number of council members as needed. Members of the council are called and set apart by or under the direction of the chairman of the advisory council (see "Institute Advisory Council"). The chairman should consult with each member's stake president.

Members of the student council encourage enrollment and attendance in institute classes. They also plan and conduct institute activities approved by the advisory council.

11.2.2.4
Latter-day Saint Student Association (LDSSA)

When formal recognition is needed on a campus to facilitate institute involvement and service opportunities, a Latter-day Saint Student Association (LDSSA) may be organized under the direction of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion. Officers for LDSSA are called and set apart in the same way as institute student council members. The approved constitution for LDSSA is available from institute personnel.

11.2.3
General Information

11.2.3.1
Policies and Procedures

Seminary and institute classes, including stake institute classes, follow policies approved by the Church Board of Education.

Priesthood leaders may access registration, enrollment, and attendance reports through MLS, Clerk and Leader Resources on ChurchofJesusChrist.org, or seminary and institute personnel.

11.2.3.2
Orientation and Training

Seminary and institute personnel orient and train those who have been called as teachers and supervisors.

11.2.3.3
Class Materials

Seminary and institute classes must use approved seminary and institute course materials. Seminary and institute personnel provide class materials for teachers. Teachers and students are to obtain their own scriptures.

11.2.3.4
Number of Adults Present in the Teaching Environment

Two adults should always be present in the building or home where a seminary class is being taught (see 11.1.1).

11.2.3.5
Activities

Seminary activities should be limited. Activities are normally conducted on seminary class premises and during normal class hours. Any request for exceptions should be approved well in advance by the local priesthood leaders or the local board of education.

Campus institute activities are planned by the institute student council and are approved by the advisory council. They are funded through institute budgets.

Stakes may sponsor activities associated with stake institute classes. They are planned by the stake young single adult committee (see *Handbook 2,* 16.3.2) and are funded through local unit budgets.

Campus and stake institute activities should be coordinated so they do not interfere with each other or with activities sponsored by local young single adult organizations in the Church. They must comply with Church policies and guidelines.

No money should be collected from students for seminary or institute classes and activities.

11.2.3.6
Facilities

Where possible, seminary and institute sites and facilities are to be shared with other Church units or departments. Where there are no seminary and institute facilities, the stake presidency ensures that facilities such as meetinghouses or members' homes are available for seminary and institute classes. Renting facilities for stake seminary programs is not authorized. However, facilities may be rented for institute classes when authorized by the headquarters office of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion.

11.2.3.7
Travel Expenses

In areas outside the United States, the Area Presidency determines whether stake seminary and institute teachers and supervisors may be reimbursed for transportation expenses. With this approval, stake presidents may authorize seminary and institute personnel to make transportation reimbursements to stake members for travel related to teaching and supervising seminary and institute classes and attending inservice meetings.

11.2.3.8
Audiovisual Materials

When seminary and institute classes are held in a meetinghouse, audiovisual curriculum materials are stored in the meetinghouse library. The meetinghouse library also supplies the audiovisual equipment needed for classes that are held in the meetinghouse.

11.2.3.9
Materials for Those with Disabilities

Special religious education materials for students with reading problems or other disabilities are available to assist seminary and institute students. Seminary and institute personnel can provide information about ordering these materials. Teachers may also find helpful information at disabilities.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

11.2.3.10
Graduation and Recognition

All students who meet the minimum attendance requirement will be recognized for attending seminary or institute classes. Students who desire to receive a seminary or institute diploma will need to complete additional religious education requirements, including an ecclesiastical endorsement. Seminary and institute personnel verify that the student has completed all course requirements. The bishop or one of his counselors endorses the student's worthiness, confirming that students are worthy and committed to live the standards outlined in *For the Strength of Youth* or similar standards for young adults. This ecclesiastical endorsement is completed annually for seminary students who desire to graduate. For institute students it is completed previous to institute recognition. The bishop or one of his counselors may complete these endorsements as part of regularly scheduled interviews.

A member of a stake presidency presides at seminary graduation and institute recognition exercises. These exercises are planned by a member of a stake presidency or a high councilor, assisted by seminary and institute personnel and by seminary and institute students. For additional information, see *A Guide to Seminary Graduation and Institute Recognition Exercises*.

11.3
Elementary and Secondary Education (in Some Areas outside the United States)

The Church provides elementary or secondary education at a few long-established locations in Mexico and the Pacific Islands. No new schools are anticipated.

Under the direction of the Church Board of Education and the Commissioner of the Church Educational System, these schools are directed by full-time Seminaries and Institutes of Religion administrators. The schools provide secular and religious instruction. Students who attend these schools must receive an ecclesiastical endorsement to enroll and to continue enrollment each year.

11.4
Institutions of Higher Education (in the United States Only)

The Church sponsors four institutions of higher education: Brigham Young University, Brigham Young University–Hawaii, Brigham Young University–Idaho, and LDS Business College.

Under the direction of a Board of Trustees and the Commissioner of the Church Educational System, each of these schools is directed by a full-time university or college president. Information about admissions and academic programs can be obtained at education.ChurchofJesusChrist.org, besmart.com, or from the schools' admissions offices:

Brigham Young University
Admissions Office
A-41 ASB
Provo, UT 84602
Telephone: 1-801-422-2507

Brigham Young University–Hawaii
Admissions Office
55-220 Kulanui Street
Laie, HI 96762-1294
Telephone: 1-808-675-3738

Brigham Young University–Idaho
Admissions Office
120 Kimball Building
Rexburg, ID 83460-1615
Telephone: 1-208-496-1300

LDS Business College
Admissions Office
95 North 300 West
Salt Lake City, UT 84101-3500
Telephone: 1-801-524-8145

11.4.1
Endorsement to Enroll at Church Universities and Colleges

The Church's institutions of higher education are founded on the gospel of Jesus Christ and exist to provide an environment of faith in which young people can, through serious study, pursue both spiritual and academic preparation. The Church Educational System would like to accommodate all who desire to attend. However, each institution has a limited enrollment. A student who is admitted without being fully worthy is not prepared spiritually and displaces another student who is qualified to attend.

To help ensure that those who attend Church institutions of higher education are living by Church standards and will continue to do so, prospective and continuing students must receive endorsements from ecclesiastical leaders as outlined in the following paragraphs. Students who do not have this endorsement may not enroll or register for the next academic year.

11.4.2
LDS Students

LDS students who apply to Brigham Young University, Brigham Young University–Hawaii, Brigham Young University–Idaho, or LDS Business College must receive endorsements from their bishop and a member of their stake presidency to be eligible for admission. After being admitted to a Church institution of higher education, students must receive an annual endorsement from the bishop of the ward they attend while in school.

11.4.3
Non-LDS Students

Non-LDS students who wish to apply to a Church institution of higher education must receive an endorsement from clergy of their own faith or from an LDS bishop. A non-LDS student must receive an annual endorsement in order to register for the next academic year. He or she may obtain this endorsement from (1) the local ecclesiastical leader of his or her own faith if the student is an active member of the congregation or (2) the bishop of the LDS ward where the student resides while in school.

11.4.4
Instructions for Endorsement Interviews

The bishop and a member of the stake presidency each conduct a private interview with each LDS student. Interview instructions are on the application provided by the school.

The Student Commitment and Confidential Report submitted by ecclesiastical leaders is an important factor in the admissions process. The leader completes this report during an interview with the applicant. The leader also discusses the Honor Code and the dress and grooming standards in detail with each prospective student. Leaders are asked to certify that each applicant is worthy to attend, has been and is now abiding by the requirements, and will continue to abide by them while a student at a Church school.

Individuals who are less active, unworthy, or under Church discipline should not be endorsed for admission until these issues have been completely resolved and the requisite standards of worthiness are met.

12.

Perpetual Education Fund

12.1

Introduction

The Perpetual Education Fund (PEF) and the Church's Perpetual Education Fund Department have been established to assist worthy young adults with educational needs. In areas of the Church where the PEF program is approved, it provides these members with support and with some of the resources necessary to improve their lives through additional education and better employment.

The PEF embraces eternal principles, including the importance of education, integrity, hard work, and self-reliance. It encourages members to become "one," as all are invited to give of their means to build the fund. In this way, an ever-increasing number of young adults may be served. (See Doctrine and Covenants 38:24–27; 104:15–18.)

12.2

Opportunities for Participants

Through the PEF program, returned missionaries and other young adults—men and women, married and single—are inspired to expand the vision of their possibilities and to choose promising careers that are needed in their own communities. They learn to select nearby schools that will help them qualify for their chosen occupations. They also discover how best to use their own finances and other local resources to attend those schools. If a student needs additional help, he or she may apply for a PEF loan to pay a portion of the educational costs. The PEF participant learns to honor commitments by repaying the loan so others may be blessed through the fund.

12.3

Organization and Coordination

The PEF works through the existing organization of the Church. In areas where the program is approved, an area PEF committee, chaired by a member of the Area Presidency, directs it. PEF efforts are coordinated with the Church Educational System, Church Employment Resource Services, and the PEF Service Center (where available).

PEF participants are interviewed and encouraged by their local priesthood leaders. Participants also receive instruction, guidance, and support from the entities listed in the previous paragraph.

Details of the training and application process, as well as specific requirements and policies, are available from the Area Presidency.

12.4

Responsibilities of the Stake Presidency and Bishopric

In countries where PEF loans are approved, the stake president administers the PEF program for the stake under the direction of the area PEF committee. He directs efforts to seek out worthy young adults, including returned missionaries, to teach and inspire them, to assist them with the application process, and to sustain them as they achieve their career goals and honor their commitments.

A member of the bishopric and a member of the stake presidency each interview a person who requests a PEF loan. If the person qualifies based on worthiness, need, and ambition, the interviewer may give an endorsement to participate in the program. Thereafter, a member of the bishopric interviews participants as needed to give counsel and encouragement.

If needed, stake presidents and bishops may call and train PEF specialists to help them teach PEF principles and processes, prepare PEF applicants, and support PEF participants. Because the work of PEF specialists parallels the work of stake and ward employment specialists, the same person(s) could fulfill both responsibilities.

12.5

Area Perpetual Education Fund Committee

In areas where PEF loans are approved, a member of the Area Presidency is designated to organize the area PEF committee and be its chairman. This committee consists of the chairman, the Church Educational System area director (who may be the vice chairman), the area PEF coordinator (who is the secretary), the director for temporal affairs, the area welfare manager, the employment resource service manager (where available), and the area controller. An area legal adviser may be invited to join the committee as needed.

The area PEF committee meets regularly to review the progress of the PEF program in the area. These meetings are used to coordinate efforts to instruct priesthood leaders, support PEF participants, service PEF loans, and expand efforts to seek out others who need assistance. The committee provides a semiannual report to the Executive Director of the PEF Department.

In areas with multiple countries that have been approved for the PEF program, a local country committee may be formed. The chairman is designated by the Area President. That committee meets periodically to ensure that the country's program is operating properly. The committee chairman reports to the area PEF committee.

12.6

Contributions and Questions

For information about contributions to the PEF, see 14.4.6.

Questions about the PEF program may be directed to the PEF office:

Perpetual Education Fund Department
50 East North Temple Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0008
Telephone: 1-801-240-0541
E-mail: perpetualeducationfund@ChurchofJesusChrist.org

13.

Records and Reports

13.1

Overview of Church Records

Accurate records help Church leaders know members and identify their needs. For example, records can help leaders identify who may need special care to become more active in the Church or to become worthy of temple blessings. Accurate records also help leaders evaluate progress and make plans for improvement.

Another important purpose of Church records is to identify which saving ordinances a person has received.

The following types of records are kept in Church units:

Reports on member participation include information about meeting attendance, ministering interviews, activity and priesthood office of new members, and temple recommend status of endowed members (see 13.5).

Membership records include members' names and addresses, as well as ordinance information and other vital information (see 13.6).

Historical records include information about accomplishments, challenges, faith-building experiences, and other notable events in the unit (see 13.7).

Financial records include information about tithes and other offerings and costs for activities and supplies (see chapter 14).

13.2

General Instructions for Clerks

All clerks should have unquestionable integrity and demonstrate a willingness to follow the Lord's commandments. They should be honest and careful record keepers. They should also be capable teachers and administrators. The clerk who is assigned to finances should be qualified to handle financial matters. Calling clerks who meet these qualifications will help ensure that they have the Spirit of the Lord with them as they work with Church finances and records.

Clerks should carefully follow current policies and procedures to safeguard Church funds and to ensure that Church records are current and accurate. Clerks should immediately notify priesthood leaders of any improprieties affecting Church funds or records.

The duration of clerks' service should be sufficient for them to learn their duties, magnify their callings, and preserve continuity in their work. Because they are not members of the stake presidency or bishopric, they do not need to be released when a stake presidency or bishopric is reorganized.

Responsibilities of stake and ward clerks are outlined in 13.3.2, 13.3.3, 13.4.2, and 13.4.3.

13.3

Stake Records and Reports

13.3.1

Stake Presidency

The stake president oversees stake record keeping. He may assign his counselors and clerks to do much of this work under his direction. He ensures that they follow Church policies and procedures in fulfilling their responsibilities.

13.3.2
Stake Clerk

Every stake should have a qualified, functioning stake clerk. He is called and set apart by the stake president. He should hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and be worthy to have a temple recommend. He is a member of the stake council and attends high council meetings. He is not a member of the high priests quorum.

The stake clerk is trained by the stake presidency and works under their direction. The stake president may assign him responsibilities such as those outlined in this section. Assistant stake clerks may be called to help (see 13.3.3).

13.3.2.1
Record-Keeping Responsibilities

The stake clerk provides administrative support to the stake presidency. He keeps a record of assignments and decisions in stake leadership meetings. He also reminds the stake presidency of items that need follow-up or further consideration.

The stake clerk (and assistant stake clerks as assigned) prepares stake records and reports. These include financial records (see chapter 14), reports on member participation (see 13.5), membership information (see 13.6), and historical records (see 13.7). The stake clerk ensures that records and reports are accurate, complete, and on time.

The stake clerk (and assistant stake clerks as assigned) meets with the stake president to review records and reports. The clerk 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 computers where they are available.

Other record-keeping duties the stake presidency may give the stake clerk or an assistant stake clerk include:

1. Ensuring that certificates for Melchizedek Priesthood ordination are prepared and distributed and that the ordinations are properly and promptly recorded.
2. Recording temple recommend information.
3. Preparing the Officers Sustained form for stake conference.
4. Designing and printing boundary models to use in proposing realignment of stake and ward boundaries.
5. Overseeing the transfer of ward records, correspondence, and accounts when a new ward is created, a ward is discontinued, or a bishop is released.
6. Recording information for stake disciplinary councils (see 6.10.4 and 6.10.11).
7. Maintaining and updating the stake's Web site if the stake has a Church-approved site (see 17.1.24).

13.3.2.2
Review of Ward Records and Reports

The stake clerk (and assistant stake clerks as assigned) 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 and assistant 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. The stake clerk or assistant stake clerks may also meet with assistant ward clerks as needed. These meetings are held to ensure that:

1. Membership records are updated promptly and accurately to include all baptisms and confirmations, priesthood ordinations, endowments, marriages, and deaths.
2. Certificates of blessing, baptism and confirmation, and priesthood ordination are given to ward members.
3. The ward's annual history is kept current and is submitted to the stake at the end of each year (see 13.7).

13.3.2.3
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 to ensure that they receive all the training they need to accomplish their record-keeping responsibilities.

Instruction on record keeping 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. New assistant stake clerks, ward clerks, and assistant ward clerks should be instructed within 30 days of when they are called.

13.3.2.4
Audits

The stake clerk should be knowledgeable of audit procedures and reports. Assistant stake clerks should also be knowledgeable of audit procedures and reports for their area of responsibility. For information about audits of membership records, see 13.6.24. For information about audits of Church finances, see 14.9.

13.3.2.5
Stake Historical Records

See 13.7.

13.3.3
Assistant Stake Clerks

The stake president or an assigned counselor may call and set apart one or more assistant stake clerks as needed. Assistant stake clerks should be Melchizedek Priesthood holders who are worthy to have a temple recommend. They work under the direction of the stake presidency and the stake clerk.

If assistant stake clerks are called, the stake presidency may assign them to various parts of stake record keeping, such as financial records (see chapter 14), reports on member participation (see 13.5), membership information (see 13.6), and historical records (see 13.7).

13.3.3.1
Church Materials

The stake presidency may assign an assistant stake clerk to become familiar with Church resource materials and know how to order them from Church Distribution Services. This clerk coordinates efforts to help stake members be informed about these materials and know how to obtain them.

13.3.3.2
Computers and Technology

The stake presidency may assign an assistant stake clerk to be the stake technology specialist. The stake clerk could be given this assignment if necessary. The stake technology specialist has the following responsibilities for managing Church computers in the stake, including those in family history centers:

He takes direction from the stake presidency about placing, sharing, reassigning, and scheduling all stake computers.

He serves as the primary contact for technology services and electronic devices in all Church meetinghouses in the stake. As requested, he provides support for all who use computers in Church meetinghouses.

He maintains a current inventory of all computer hardware, with serial numbers, models, capacities, and physical locations.

He ensures that (1) computers, software, and confidential information are secure, (2) data files are backed up regularly, and (3) backup files are stored away from the building (see 13.8 and 13.9).

He should be familiar with the general policies for Church computers in 17.1.12. He should also be familiar with guidelines for obtaining and managing Church computers. These guidelines are available from Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office. They provide information about matters such as hardware and software, donated computers, Internet connections, repairs, disposal of computers, stolen or damaged computers, security, and use by members.

To assist the stake technology specialist, the stake presidency may assign worthy youth and adults (brethren or sisters) to serve as assistant technology specialists. These individuals may be organized by building, ward, or other criteria determined by the stake presidency. They are referred to as assistant technology specialists, not assistant stake technology specialists.

The stake technology specialist oversees and coordinates the work of assistant technology specialists. If the stake does not have a stake technology specialist, the stake clerk or an assistant stake clerk oversees the assistant technology specialists and communicates assignments from the stake presidency.

13.3.4
Stake Executive Secretary

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

The executive secretary is an administrative assistant to the stake presidency. He meets with them and prepares agendas as assigned. He is also a member of the stake council and attends high council meetings. As directed by the stake presidency, he follows up on assignments made in these meetings. He is not a member of the high priests quorum.

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

If assigned by the stake presidency, he encourages and assists ward executive secretaries with Church magazine subscription efforts.

He may help the stake presidency encourage and monitor the participation of eligible stake members in CES programs (see 11.1 and 11.2).

He advises the stake presidency of members who are entering the military or are already in military service. Under the direction of the stake presidency, he may help coordinate Church orientation for stake members who are entering the military (see 10.1 and 10.3).

He orients new ward executive secretaries as soon as reasonable after they are called. He provides ongoing instruction to them as needed.

13.4
Ward Records and Reports

13.4.1
Bishopric

The bishop oversees ward record keeping. He may assign his counselors and clerks to do much of this work under his direction. He ensures that ward clerks and quorum and auxiliary leaders are taught their record-keeping responsibilities. He also ensures that they follow Church policies and procedures in fulfilling these responsibilities.

13.4.2
Ward Clerk

Every ward should have a qualified, functioning ward clerk. He is recommended by the bishopric and called and set apart by a member of the stake presidency. He should hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and be worthy to have a temple recommend.

The ward clerk is trained by the bishopric and by stake clerks. He works under the direction of the bishopric. The bishop may assign him responsibilities such as those outlined in this section. Assistant ward clerks may be called to help (see 13.4.3).

For additional responsibilities of the ward clerk, see *Handbook 2,* 4.6.4.

13.4.2.1
Record-Keeping Responsibilities

The ward clerk provides administrative support to the bishopric. He keeps a record of assignments and decisions made in ward leadership meetings. He also reminds the bishopric of items that need follow-up or further consideration.

The ward clerk (and assistant ward clerks as assigned) prepares ward records and reports. These include financial records (see chapter 14), reports on member participation (see 13.5), membership records (see 13.6), and historical records (see 13.7). The ward clerk ensures that records and reports are accurate, complete, and on time.

The ward clerk (and assistant ward clerks as assigned) meets regularly with the bishop to review records and reports. The clerk 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 reports on member participation, the 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 computers where they are available. He or an assistant ward clerk provides membership directories, lists, and rolls to the bishopric, to other priesthood leaders, and to auxiliary leaders.

As requested, the ward clerk or an assistant ward clerk provides members copies of their Individual Ordinance Summary for their personal records and for help in accessing family history and other Church services. He prints these summaries using Church record-keeping software. In areas that do not have this software, he may request copies from the assigned administrative office.

Other record-keeping duties the bishopric may give the ward clerk or an assistant ward clerk include:

1. Ensuring that certificates for blessing, baptism and confirmation, and priesthood ordination are given to ward members and that these ordinances are properly and promptly recorded.

2. Preparing the Officers Sustained form for ward conference.
3. Recording information for ward disciplinary councils (see 6.10.4 and 6.10.11).
4. Maintaining and updating the ward's Web site if the ward has a Church-approved site (see 17.1.24).

13.4.2.2
Record-Keeping Instruction

The ward clerk coordinates record-keeping instruction for assistant clerks and for quorum and auxiliary secretaries. He makes sure 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.

13.4.2.3
Ward Historical Records

See 13.7.

13.4.3
Assistant Ward Clerks

One or more assistant ward clerks may be called as needed. They are recommended by the bishopric and called and set apart by a member of the stake presidency or an assigned high councilor. These brethren should be priesthood holders who are worthy to have a temple recommend. If an assistant ward clerk is assigned to finances, he should hold the Melchizedek Priesthood. Assistant ward clerks work under the direction of the bishopric and the ward clerk.

If assistant ward clerks are called, the bishopric may assign them to various parts of ward record keeping, such as financial records (see chapter 14), reports on member participation (see 13.5), membership records (see 13.6), and historical records (see 13.7).

The bishopric may also assign an assistant ward clerk to become familiar with Church resource materials and know how to order them from Church Distribution Services. This clerk coordinates efforts to help ward members be informed about these materials and know how to obtain them.

13.4.4
Ward Executive Secretary

The ward executive secretary is recommended by the bishopric and called and set apart by a member of the stake presidency or an assigned high councilor. He should hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and be worthy to have a temple recommend.

The executive secretary is an administrative assistant to the bishopric. He meets with the bishopric and prepares agendas as assigned. He is also a member of the ward council. As directed by the bishopric, he follows up on assignments made in these meetings (see *Handbook 2,* 4.6.5).

He coordinates ward business between the bishopric and other leaders.

He schedules appointments for the bishopric. He also distributes Church publications and correspondence promptly.

If assigned by the bishop, he coordinates the ward's Church magazine subscription efforts, helping members receive the blessings of having Church magazines in their homes. He may be assisted by the ward magazine representative and others appointed by the bishopric.

He may help the bishopric with seminary and institute matters, such as registration for classes (see 11.1 and 11.2).

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

13.4.5
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.

13.5
Reports on Member Participation

Reports on member participation consist of weekly, monthly, and quarterly information that helps leaders focus on the progress and needs of members. All members of record (as defined in 13.6.2) are included in these reports.

13.5.1
Components of Reports

13.5.1.1
Attendance Reports

Sacrament Meeting. Attendance at sacrament meeting is recorded by the ward clerk or an assistant ward clerk. The attendance count is the number physically present in the meeting, even if they are not members of the ward. Ward members who are not present because they have another assignment or are attending another ward are not counted.

Sunday Priesthood and Auxiliary Meetings. Attendance at elders quorum and Relief Society meetings is recorded by the quorum or Relief Society secretary. Attendance at Aaronic Priesthood quorum meetings and Young Women classes is recorded by quorum and class secretaries and compiled by the ward Young Men and Young Women secretaries. Attendance at Primary is recorded by the teachers and compiled by the Primary secretary.

13.5.1.2
Ministering Interview Reports

See *Handbook 2,* 7.4.4 and 9.5.4.

13.5.1.3
Quarterly Report

The Quarterly Report generally includes information for only the last month of each quarter. An exception is the report of ministering interviews, which are reported for the entire quarter. The stake president or bishop may request some information monthly.

The ward clerk or an assistant ward clerk prepares the report under the direction of the bishop. By the 10th of the month following the end of each quarter, quorum and auxiliary leaders or secretaries give attendance information for the previous month to the clerk so he can include it in the report. The elders quorum and Relief Society give ministering interview reports for the quarter. The bishop reviews the report for accuracy and makes sure the clerk submits it on time.

Units That Use Church Record-Keeping Software. A clerk from each ward prepares the report on the computer and transmits it electronically to Church headquarters according to instructions on the report. Clerks print, distribute, and retain copies as needed.

Units That Do Not Use Church Record-Keeping Software. Each ward receives a paper copy of the Quarterly Report from the assigned administrative office at the end of each quarter. This copy has membership and enrollment numbers preprinted on it. A clerk from each ward fills in the blank spaces and sends the completed report to the stake according to the instructions on the report. Clerks distribute and retain copies as needed.

The stake also receives a paper copy of the Quarterly Report from the administrative office. This copy has membership and enrollment numbers preprinted on it for each ward in the stake. After receiving reports from the wards, the stake clerk or an assistant stake clerk completes the stake report, reviews it with the stake president, and sends it to the administrative office within 30 days of the end of the quarter.

13.5.2
Membership Lists

Membership lists are produced by ward computers or by the assigned administrative office. These lists provide important supplemental information to reports on member participation. They help leaders identify which members are of age for ordinances, which young men are of missionary age, which men hold the Melchizedek Priesthood, which members are endowed, and which youth need to be scheduled for bishopric interviews. Quorum and auxiliary leaders should have access to lists of those who belong to their quorum or organization.

13.5.3
Using the Information

Every number and statistic in a report represents an individual member who has unique needs. Leaders should seek direction from the Lord as they consider who may need their help and what help to provide.

Information from these reports is especially important for the bishopric and ward council to use in tracking the progress of ward members and deciding how to bless and strengthen them. For example, these reports can help leaders determine which adult converts did not attend priesthood or Relief Society meetings during the month.

Percentages in participation reports may be used to show trends, such as whether activity is increasing or decreasing. However, percentages 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.

13.6
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 where the member lives. Exceptions, which should be few, require the consent of the bishops and stake president(s) involved and the approval of the Office of the First Presidency. To request an exception, the stake president(s) sends a letter to the Office of the First Presidency for approval.

Membership records are the only means of recording ordinances and other official actions in the permanent records of the Church. Therefore, the bishop makes sure that clerks keep accurate records and send updated information promptly to Church headquarters or the assigned administrative 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.

Before a member is interviewed for a Church calling, ordination to a Melchizedek Priesthood office, or a temple recommend, the bishop ensures that the membership record does not include an annotation, a comment about a sealing or ordinance restriction, or a comment about unresolved Church discipline.

Official Church membership records should not be shown or given to members. Nor may they be copied for members. Under no circumstances may membership records be given to anyone other than the bishop or a clerk.

Members are encouraged to have copies of the Individual Ordinance Summary for themselves and for any dependent children living at home. Each year, clerks or bishopric members review these summaries with members in accordance with the data privacy policies in 13.8 and 13.9. This review could be done as part of the annual tithing settlement. If errors are found, a clerk ensures that they are corrected on the membership records.

In units that use Church record-keeping software, clerks can print each member's Individual Ordinance Summary. In other units, leaders or clerks may request copies of these summaries from the assigned administrative office.

The Church provides handbooks or other instructions for creating and updating membership records. Some general principles are outlined in the following paragraphs.

13.6.1
Names Used in Church Records

A person's full legal name, as defined by local law or custom, should be used on membership records and ordinance certificates.

13.6.2
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 9 who have been blessed but not baptized.
3. Those who are not accountable because of intellectual disabilities, regardless of age.
4. Unblessed children under 8 when *(a)* at least one parent or one grandparent is a member of the Church and *(b)* both parents give permission for a record to be created. This includes children of converts. (If one parent does not have legal custody of the child, the permission of the parent who has custody is sufficient.)

A person age 9 or older who has a membership record but has not been baptized and confirmed is not considered a member of record. However, the ward in which the person lives retains 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 intellectual disabilities are not canceled.

13.6.3
Records of New Ward Members

The ward clerk or an assistant clerk meets with new ward members soon after their membership records arrive to review the Individual Ordinance Summary for accuracy.

For instructions about introducing new members after their records are received or after they are baptized and confirmed, see "Introducing New Members" in *Handbook 2,* 18.2.2.

13.6.4
Records of Members Who Move or Are Temporarily Away from Home

Ward leaders, ministering brothers, ministering sisters, 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.

If, after sufficient effort, a clerk cannot find out where members have moved, he obtains the bishop's approval to send the membership records to Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office, where efforts to locate the members will continue.

When a person moves from a ward for more than three months, a clerk 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 or seasonal employment purposes that may last longer than three months.

When a person moves from the ward for less than three months and plans to return, the membership record is kept in the home ward. The home ward also maintains the member's financial records.

If leaders are uncertain about where a membership record should be (such as for a member in prison), they make sure it is kept in the ward that can best meet the person's needs.

13.6.5
Records of Members Serving outside Their Home Ward

13.6.5.1
Mission Presidents and Temple Presidents

The membership records of a mission president and his wife are kept in their home ward unless their children accompany them in the assignment. If children accompany them, the records of the mission president, his wife, and his children are moved to the ward where they live during their mission.

The membership records of a temple president and his wife should stay in their home ward.

13.6.5.2
Other Church Assignments

If members have Church assignments outside of 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.

13.6.5.3
Full-Time Missionaries

See 4.9.10.

13.6.6
Records of Young Single Adults

See *Handbook 2,* 16.6.6.

13.6.7
Records of Members Who Live in Hospitals or Homes for the Aged

The records of members who live in hospitals or homes for the aged and infirm should be 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.

13.6.8
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 record is usually kept in the ward that supports the duty station.

13.6.9
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 are made to that ward.

13.6.10
Records of Members Who Have Intellectual Disabilities

If the bishop determines that a person who is at least 8 years old is not accountable, he instructs a clerk to indicate "Not Accountable" in the baptism section of the person's membership record (see 16.3.5). The clerk sends the update to Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office. The membership record should not be canceled.

13.6.11
Records of Members Who Are Deaf or Hearing Impaired

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 ward that is designated to host a group for the deaf or hearing impaired within a specified geographic area, or (3) a ward or branch that is organized for members who are deaf or hearing impaired.

13.6.12
Records of Adopted Children

Records of adopted children may be created or updated only after an adoption is final. The name on the record should conform to the decree of adoption. Records of adoptive parents may be updated only after an adoption is final.

13.6.13
Records of Babies Who Were Born out of Wedlock

See *Handbook 2,* 20.2.3.

13.6.14
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 on certificates of priesthood ordinances and blessings.

13.6.15
Records with Annotations

See 6.13.4.

13.6.16
Records with Special Comments

See 6.13.5.

13.6.17
Records with Bishop's Request for Contact

See 6.13.6.

13.6.18
Move Restrictions on Membership Records

If a member moves while Church disciplinary action or another serious concern is pending, the bishop, or the ward clerk with the bishop's authorization, may contact Church headquarters or the assigned administrative 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.

13.6.19

Records from the "Address Unknown" File

When a member is located after his or her record has been in the "address unknown" file, the membership record is sent to the ward with a message encouraging the bishopric and quorum leaders to visit the person as soon as possible and to provide fellowshipping. Full-time missionaries may also be asked to visit and fellowship these members.

13.6.20

Recording and Correcting Ordinance Information

See *Handbook 2,* chapter 20.

13.6.21

Preparing Certificates for Ordinances and Blessings

Priesthood leaders ensure that clerks prepare and distribute ordinance and blessing certificates as soon as possible after the blessing of a child, a baptism and confirmation, and a 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.

13.6.22

Recording and Correcting Civil Information

Membership records include a person's civil information (name; parents' names; date of birth; marriage information; date of divorce, if applicable; and places where these events occurred). If members see that this information is incorrect on their Individual Ordinance Summary, they may ask the clerk to have it corrected on their membership records. If official documents are available, a bishop may want to review them to verify the accuracy of a requested correction.

13.6.23

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 Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office.

13.6.24

Audits of Membership Records

Each year the stake clerk or an assistant stake clerk ensures that an audit of membership records in each ward is conducted. The stake president may assign this task to the stake clerk, an assistant stake clerk, the ward clerk, an assistant ward clerk, or a combination of these brethren, depending on the circumstances in his stake. The stake president may call others who are experienced in membership record keeping to assist with these audits. Audits should be completed by June 30 of each year.

In addition to these audits, the bishop assigns one or more clerks in the ward to conduct an annual review of the Individual Ordinance Summary with members as explained in 13.6. If errors are found, a clerk ensures that they are corrected on the membership records.

13.7

Historical Records

The stake presidency directs the stake clerk or an assistant stake clerk in preparing the stake's annual history. The stake presidency may also call a history specialist to prepare the history under the direction of the assigned clerk.

The bishopric directs the ward clerk or an assistant ward clerk in preparing the ward's annual history. The bishopric may also call a history specialist to prepare the history under the direction of the assigned clerk. Each ward's annual history is submitted to the stake and is used in preparing the stake's annual history.

Instructions for preparing and submitting these histories are provided on the Annual History for Stakes and Districts form.

Annual histories provide a means to gather, preserve, and share experiences as they occur throughout the Church. Those who prepare these histories should provide enough detail to give a clear understanding of events and their effects on those who have been involved. The histories should be compiled throughout the year to ensure that they contain accurate information.

Annual histories should not include information about Church discipline, finances, members who have received welfare assistance, or the worthiness of individuals. As an exception, if such information is essential in documenting the history of the unit, it may be included in a separate section of the annual history and labeled as confidential.

For information about area or country history initiatives, contact the Church History Department (see contact information below). Such initiatives could include writing a history, improving historical content on a country Web site, collecting records, establishing a local records repository, or celebrating a historical anniversary.

The Church History Library selectively retains other historical records "for the good of the church, and for the rising generations" (Doctrine and Covenants 69:8). Questions about the historical value of records may be addressed to:

Church History Library
15 East North Temple Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-1600
Telephone: 1-801-240-2272
E-mail: churchhistorylibrary@ChurchofJesusChrist.org

13.8
Confidentiality of Records

The records of the Church are confidential, whether they exist on paper, in computers, or in other electronic media. These include membership records, financial records, notes of meetings, official forms and documents (including records of disciplinary councils), and notes made from private interviews.

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.

Information from Church records and reports may be given only to those who are authorized to use it.

Information that is stored electronically must be kept secure and protected by a password (see 13.9.1). Leaders ensure that such data 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.

Stake and ward directories that are distributed to members must follow the guidelines in 17.1.16. Membership lists that have more information, such as age and membership status, may be given only to authorized stake and ward leaders.

13.9 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.

13.9.1 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 electronic storage media, should be kept in a locked drawer or cabinet in the leader's office when they are not being used.

To protect confidential information on computers, leaders and clerks 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 periodically, and they should always be changed when leaders or clerks are released. If members use stake and ward computers for family history work, they should not have access to membership or financial information.

Many countries have enacted data protection laws that regulate the processing of personal data, such as the information that is contained in membership records and other records that identify individuals. To determine the extent to which such laws govern local management of Church records, or to obtain direction in specific instances, leaders may contact the Church data privacy officer at the following e-mail address: dataprivacyofficer@ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

13.9.2 Retention

Records should be kept only as long as they are needed for administrative, legal, and historical purposes. Leaders who have questions about how long to keep records should consult record-keeping instructions or contact Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office.

13.9.3 Disposition

Records that are outdated or no longer needed should be destroyed in such a way that the information cannot be retrieved or reconstructed. When deleting membership or financial information that is stored on a hard drive or another electronic storage device, a person must ensure that it cannot be recovered through any technical means.

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 the Church History Library (see contact information in 13.7).

14.

Finances

14.1

Use of Church Funds

Church funds are sacred and must be carefully accounted for and protected. These funds may be used only by authorized members for authorized Church purposes. Church leaders must protect against the embezzlement and any other misuse of Church funds. These funds may not be used for personal purposes or "borrowed." Nor may Church funds be mixed with personal funds or deposited into the account of an individual. These and other misuses of Church funds are serious offenses that may result in Church discipline (see 6.7.2, 6.10.6, and 14.9.5).

14.2

Stake Financial Leadership

14.2.1

Stake Presidency

This section outlines the stake president's responsibilities for stake finances. He may delegate some of this work to his counselors and clerks.

He ensures that stake funds are properly handled and accounted for (see 14.6).

He ensures that clerks, stake leaders, and ward leaders are taught their responsibilities for finances and that they complete available training. He also ensures that they follow Church policies and procedures in fulfilling these responsibilities. He regularly counsels with leaders and clerks concerning their personal temporal circumstances and their responsibilities for sacred Church funds.

He teaches members to pay a full tithe and give generous offerings (see 14.4).

He manages the stake budget and expenditures (see 14.7). He regularly reviews budgets and expenditures with bishops, stake clerks, and stake leaders. He ensures that budget allowance guidelines are followed in the stake (see 14.7.2).

He ensures that the stake and wards comply with all applicable tax laws to preserve the Church's tax-exempt status (see 14.10.1).

He ensures that the stake audit committee is organized and functioning properly. He also reviews audits of stake and ward financial records. He ensures that audit concerns are resolved (see 14.9).

14.2.2

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. These duties are outlined in this section and explained further in instructions from Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office.

With a member of the stake presidency, this clerk properly records any funds received. He or another Melchizedek Priesthood holder accompanies the member of the stake presidency who deposits the funds. Only members of the stake presidency—not clerks—may receive funds for the stake.

This clerk makes sure stake financial obligations are paid promptly. He prepares checks or, in locations where checks are not used, payment approval forms.

He helps the stake presidency prepare the annual stake budget and keep track of the stake budget allowance (see 14.7.1 and 14.7.2). He informs the stake president of the status of stake expenditures in relation to the budget allowance.

He reconciles the stake checking account each month as instructed in 14.6.7. As needed, he helps reconcile ward checking accounts.

He ensures that the stake complies with all applicable tax laws (see 14.10). He also participates in periodic audits by stake auditors and takes corrective actions if needed (see 14.9).

For information about calling stake clerks and assistant stake clerks, see 13.3.2 and 13.3.3.

14.3
Ward Financial Leadership

14.3.1
Bishopric

This section outlines the bishop's responsibilities for ward finances. He may delegate some of this work to his counselors and clerks.

He ensures that ward funds are properly handled and accounted for (see 14.6).

He ensures that all clerks in the ward and all ward leaders are taught their responsibilities for finances and that they complete available training. He also ensures that they follow Church policies and procedures in fulfilling these responsibilities. He regularly counsels with leaders and clerks concerning their personal temporal circumstances and their responsibilities for sacred Church funds.

He teaches members to pay a full tithe and give generous offerings (see 14.4).

He manages the ward budget and expenditures (see 14.7). He regularly reviews budgets and expenditures with ward clerks and ward leaders. He ensures that budget allowance guidelines are followed in the ward (see 14.7.2).

He makes sure the ward complies with all applicable tax laws to preserve the Church's tax-exempt status (see 14.10.1).

He should be available to answer questions during audits of ward financial records (see 14.9).

14.3.2
Ward Clerk (or Assistant Ward Clerk)

The bishop assigns the ward clerk or an assistant ward clerk to help with ward financial record keeping. These duties are outlined in this section and explained further in instructions from Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office.

Each week this clerk helps a member of the bishopric account for all tithes and other offerings (see 14.6.2). He normally accompanies the bishopric member who deposits the funds in a bank, although another Melchizedek Priesthood holder may do so. He also submits or transmits the related donation reports to Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office. Only members of the bishopric—not clerks—may receive funds for the ward.

This clerk makes sure ward financial obligations are paid promptly. He prepares checks or, in locations where checks are not used, payment approval forms.

He helps the bishopric prepare the annual ward budget and keep track of the ward budget allowance (see 14.7.1 and 14.7.2). He informs the bishop of the status of ward expenditures in relation to the budget allowance.

He reconciles the ward checking account each month as instructed in 14.6.7.

Each year he prepares and organizes records to help the bishop conduct tithing settlement. He produces and distributes the year-to-date tithing and offerings statements and year-end summaries to members. He also helps the bishop prepare a year-end report of tithing status in the ward.

He participates in financial audits by stake auditors and takes corrective actions if needed (see 14.9).

For information about calling ward clerks and assistant ward clerks, see 13.4.2 and 13.4.3.

14.4
Contributions

Church leaders should teach members the principles of tithes and other offerings and encourage members to live these principles. Nonmembers may also make contributions to the Church. However, a person who has been excommunicated may not pay tithing or other offerings to the Church.

14.4.1
Tithing

14.4.1.1
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, Mar. 19, 1970; see also Doctrine and Covenants 119:4).

14.4.1.2
Who Should Pay Tithing

All 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.)

If mission presidents have income that should be tithed, they generally pay tithing in the ward where their membership records are located (see 13.6.5). However, if they are serving outside their own country and their membership records are in the ward where they are residing, they generally contribute their tithing directly to Church headquarters.

14.4.1.3
When and How to Pay Tithing

Leaders 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 the bishop or one of his counselors (see 14.6.1).

14.4.1.4
Use of Tithing Funds

Bishops may not use tithing funds for any purpose. All tithing funds must be remitted to Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office (see Doctrine and Covenants 120).

14.4.1.5
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. However, such a need would be rare.

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. If possible, all members of a family should attend tithing settlement.

In addition to reviewing records of members' tithing, fast offerings, and other donations, 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. At the time of tithing settlement, a clerk or a member of the bishopric could also review the Individual Ordinance Summary with members (see 13.6).

Instructions for tithing settlement are provided by Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office.

14.4.2
Fast Offerings

Church leaders encourage members to live the law of the fast. Typically this includes (1) fasting each fast Sunday for two consecutive meals and (2) giving a fast offering that is at least the equivalent value of the meals not eaten. Members are encouraged to be generous and give much more than the value of two meals if they are able.

Where a ward is geographically concentrated and where safety conditions permit, the bishop may direct Aaronic Priesthood holders, especially deacons, to contact member households each month to give members the opportunity to contribute fast offerings. Even if members do not contribute, priesthood holders should continue to give them the opportunity to do so. If distances or other circumstances make it necessary, the bishop may limit or eliminate fast-offering collections from homes.

Priesthood holders should go in pairs when gathering fast offerings. Melchizedek Priesthood holders may accompany Aaronic Priesthood holders if necessary.

Members should not give other contributions, such as tithing, to those who collect fast offerings.

Those who gather fast offerings deliver them promptly to a member of the bishopric.

Some members may choose to contribute fast offerings by using the envelopes for tithing and other offerings and giving them directly to the bishopric.

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.

Mission and temple presidents contribute fast offerings to the ward where their membership records are located.

Guidelines for using fast-offering funds are provided in 5.2.4.

14.4.3
Missionary Funds

Contributions to the ward missionary fund are used primarily to meet the contribution commitments of full-time missionaries from the ward, as identified in 4.6.2 and 4.6.3. Excess amounts may be used to meet such commitments of other missionaries in the stake or coordinating council. Ward missionary funds should not be sent directly to individual missionaries. Ward missionary funds should not be used for any missionary activities in the ward or stake.

Contributions to the General Missionary Fund are used by the Church in its overall missionary efforts.

Stake presidents and bishops should send missionary funds that exceed reasonable stake and ward needs to the General Missionary Fund at Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office. Bishops or individuals may contact the Global Service Center (1-855-537-4357) for further information about contributions to the General Missionary Fund.

For additional information about missionary funds and financing missionary service, see 4.6.

14.4.4
Humanitarian Aid

Church humanitarian work assists people of all faiths throughout the world who are in dire need. Those who desire to contribute to the Church's Humanitarian Aid Fund may use the Tithing and

Other Offerings form. The ward remits these contributions according to instructions from Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office. Donations may also be sent directly to Church headquarters at the following address:

Finance and Records Department
Treasury Services Division
Attention: Humanitarian Aid
50 East North Temple Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-1521

Online donations may be made by going to www.ldsphilanthropies.org/humanitarian-services.

14.4.5
Temple Construction Fund

Members who desire to contribute financially to the construction of temples are invited to do so as their circumstances permit. They may contribute by using the Tithing and Other Offerings form. They indicate the donation in the "Temple construction" category or by writing "temple" in the "Other" category. If members want to designate the donation for a specific temple, they may note this on the form.

Leaders should not conduct fund-raising efforts or establish assessments or goals for contributions to the temple construction fund.

14.4.6
Perpetual Education Fund

In areas of the Church where the Perpetual Education Fund program is approved, it assists worthy young adults who need help in qualifying for employment opportunities in their own countries by providing loans for career training and education. Those who desire to contribute to this fund may use the Tithing and Other Offerings form. The ward remits these contributions according to instructions from Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office.

In approved countries, applications for PEF loans are available through institutes of religion (see chapter 12).

14.4.7
LDS Philanthropies

LDS Philanthropies is a department of the Office of the Presiding Bishopric that correlates, encourages, facilitates, and accepts voluntary philanthropic contributions to the Church and its affiliated charities and activities. Assistance in making contributions may be obtained by contacting LDS Philanthropies at Church headquarters as follows:

LDS Philanthropies
15 East South Temple Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0402
Telephone: 1-801-240-5567 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-5567

Online donations may be made by going to give.ldsp.org.

14.4.8
In-Kind Donations, Including Tithing

The Church normally discourages paying tithing and other donations in kind. It is preferable for members to dispose of the property themselves and then pay tithing and other donations in cash. However, in-kind donations 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 Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office. If members want to contribute other items, the bishop seeks approval from the stake president. The stake president contacts Church headquarters or the administrative office for approval before authorizing the bishop to accept the items.

14.4.9
Contributions Not to Be Refunded

Stake presidents and bishops should inform those who contribute tithes and other offerings that these contributions cannot be refunded. This policy applies also to missionary contributions that are prepaid.

When tithes and other offerings are given to the Church, they belong to the Lord, to whom they are consecrated. 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 contributions given to the Church. Doing so would violate the spirit of freewill offerings. In some countries, refunding contributions could also cause legal and income tax complications for both the contributor and the Church.

14.5
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.

If necessary, the bishop may tell the elders quorum president whether individual quorum members are full-tithe payers, contributors to the tithing funds, or exempt. The elders quorum president must keep this information confidential.

14.6
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.

14.6.1
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 Doctrine and Covenants 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 (see 14.4.2).

Ward members 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 leave their donations unattended, such as by placing them in a contribution box or under the door of the bishop's office.

Checks should be made payable to the ward, not to the bishop or the Church. In units where members make payments electronically (such as direct deposit or automatic bill pay), payments should be deposited in the Church's bank account as instructed by Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office.

Only the stake president and his counselors should receive funds for the stake. They should maintain custody of the funds until the funds are recorded and prepared for deposit by a member of the stake presidency and a clerk.

14.6.2
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—open each envelope together to verify that the funds enclosed are the same as the amount written on the Tithing and Other Offerings form. If the funds and the written amount differ, the contributor should be contacted as soon as possible to resolve the difference.

14.6.3
Depositing Tithing and Other Offerings

A bishopric member and another Melchizedek Priesthood holder, usually the clerk who helped verify the donations, prepare the deposit.

Those who deposit funds should use, where available, (1) deposit bags that are locked when funds are inserted and are opened only by the bank or (2) other tamper-resistant deposit bags. A clerk or member of the bishopric checks with Church headquarters, the assigned administrative office, or the local bank for availability of such deposit bags.

Where a 24-hour bank depository is available, the bishopric member, accompanied by the other priesthood holder, deposits the funds in the bank on the same day the funds are opened and verified.

Where a 24-hour bank depository is not available and the bank is closed on Sunday, the bishop designates a Melchizedek Priesthood holder, normally a member of the bishopric, to make the deposit at the bank the next business day. The person who makes the deposit is accountable for these funds. He should:

1. Ensure that the funds are kept secure until they are deposited at the bank.
2. Obtain a bank-certified deposit receipt showing the date and the amount of the deposit.

Furthermore, a bishopric member and a clerk should complete the following procedure on the next Sunday before processing any donations for that day:

1. Compare the bank-certified deposit receipt to the previous week's deposit records to verify that the correct amount was deposited.
2. Sign the bank-certified deposit receipt and file it with the previous week's donation information.

14.6.4
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.

14.6.5
Receipting Tithing and Other Offerings

Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office sends instructions to stakes and wards for issuing receipts for tithing and other offerings.

Receipts to members who make donations in kind (noncash tithing and other offerings) are issued only by Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office. These receipts show no monetary value for the items contributed.

14.6.6
Receiving and Managing Budget Allowance Funds

See 14.7.2.

14.6.7
Managing Stake and Ward Checking Accounts

Each stake normally has one checking account. The stake president manages it, though his counselors and clerks may assist him. The counselor who serves as chairman of the stake audit committee generally should not sign checks or otherwise be involved in stake financial record keeping.

All ward funds are handled in one checking account. The bishop manages the 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. An authorized check signer should not sign a check if he is the payee or the fast-offering beneficiary.

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.

Each month the stake president or bishop promptly reviews the Church unit financial statement or the bank statement and gives it to a clerk to be reconciled.

Each month a stake clerk reconciles the stake checking account and the local deposit bank account (if one exists) and funds in the "Other" category (if any). Each month a ward clerk reconciles the ward checking account, funds in the "Other" category, and any other financial records required. The clerk signs the reconciliation. The stake president or bishop then reviews and signs the reconciliation.

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 Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office. He also requests a stop payment on the missing checks.

Stakes and wards that have checking accounts may not have savings accounts.

Quorums, auxiliaries, 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.

14.6.8
Managing Stake and Ward Funds Not Held in a Checking Account

The following instructions apply to units outside the United States and Canada that do not manage their funds through a checking account. Instead, these units have cash working funds, savings accounts, or bank accounts accessed by a debit card.

The assigned administrative office provides specific guidelines for these units to follow. Some basic principles are outlined below:

1. A unit should have only one cash working fund, savings account, or debit card bank account.
2. The funds should be controlled by the stake president or bishop.
3. Money from cash working funds, savings accounts, or debit cards should not be used until two authorized people have signed a payment approval form. They should not sign this form until it is filled out completely.

   Supporting documents such as invoices, bills, or receipts should be attached to the payment approval form. If funds are advanced to a member, he or she signs the form, acknowledging the receipt of the money and noting the date and the amount. The member then *(a)* provides supporting documentation for the funds spent and *(b)* returns any unspent funds.

4. If there is a bank statement, it should be delivered directly to the stake president or bishop, not to the meetinghouse or a clerk. He opens each bank statement promptly, reviews it, and gives it to a clerk to be reconciled. The clerk signs the reconciliation. The stake president or bishop then reviews and signs the reconciliation.
5. The stake president or bishop reviews any other financial reports and ensures that they are reconciled.
6. The stake president or bishop maintains custody of cash working funds.
7. Cash working funds should be separate from personal funds. Church funds must be physically safeguarded at all times.
8. Cash working funds should be counted each month by two authorized signers. The counts and signatures should be documented on forms provided by the assigned administrative office. Any fund shortages should be reported immediately to the area controller.
9. All disbursements should be promptly recorded, and all bills, receipts, or other documents supporting the disbursements should be retained.

14.6.9
Keeping Financial Records

Each stake and ward should keep current, accurate financial records. These records help stake presidents and bishops account for and protect sacred Church funds. Accurate records are also necessary for preparing budgets, managing the budget allowance, and providing information to members on their financial contributions.

For information about the use and retention of records and reports, clerks should refer to instructions from Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office. Financial records should be retained for at least three years plus the current year. Local laws may require longer retention periods.

14.7
Budget and Expenditures

14.7.1
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. Each may also assign a clerk to help prepare and monitor the budget.

No stake or ward expenses may be incurred or paid without the presiding officer's authorization.

Stake presidencies and bishoprics begin preparing budgets well before the beginning of each calendar year as follows:

1. Review the amounts spent during the previous year to make sure that 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.

The stake president reviews ward expenditures as part of his interview with each bishop.

14.7.2
Budget Allowance

The budget allowance program 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.

14.7.2.1
Allocation of Budget Allowance Funds

Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office allocates budget funds based on attendance in the following categories:

1. Sacrament meeting
2. Young men
3. Young women
4. Primary children ages 8–11
5. Young single adults

The stake president determines how much of the funds are allocated to the stake and to the wards. He ensures that the stake and wards are funded fairly and adequately as permitted within these guidelines.

The stake president works with bishops in a unified, cooperative manner. If unforeseen changes occur that may justify altering original budget allocations, he makes sure that fair adjustments are made.

The bishop oversees the allocation of budget allowance funds in the ward. He ensures that organizations in the ward 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.

14.7.2.2
General Principles and Guidelines

The budget allowance was created to reduce the financial and time burdens on members. If necessary, leaders should reduce and simplify activities to stay within the allowance. Most activities should be simple and have little or no cost. Expenditures must be approved by the stake presidency or bishopric before they are incurred.

Stake and ward budget funds should be used to pay for all activities, programs, manuals, and supplies. Members should not pay fees to participate. 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 doing so does not place undue burdens on members.

Possible exceptions to the funding policy in the preceding paragraph may be made for annual camps or similar activities (see *Handbook 2,* 13.2.8), optional activities (see *Handbook 2,* 13.5), and occasional young single adult activities (see *Handbook 2,* 16.3.7).

Members who want to contribute additional funds to the Church may not designate them for the stake or ward budget. Instead, leaders encourage them to contribute the funds to fast offerings, missionary funds, or other authorized donation categories.

Stake presidents and bishops make sure budget allowance funds are spent wisely. Funds should be used to bless people and to 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. Unneeded ward funds are returned to the stake. Unneeded stake funds are returned to Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office. As an exception, stakes and wards may retain some unspent funds if they are needed for specific activities that are planned for the next year, such as a youth conference. However, significant portions of the stake or ward budget allowance should not be retained from one year to the next to cover travel expenses. Nor should funds from the "Other" category be used to supplement the "Budget" category.

For the budget allowance to succeed, it is important that the Quarterly Report is accurate and on time.

The budget allowance does not include expenses for building construction, maintenance, telephones, utilities, computers, or priesthood leader travel. These expenses are paid from general Church funds according to current guidelines.

14.7.3
Funding Special Activities and Equipment

14.7.3.1
Stake and Multistake Activities

Local leaders are encouraged to hold stake and multistake activities that provide opportunities to develop unity and friendships, especially among youth and young single adults. Leaders ensure that they budget adequate funds to support an appropriate number of stake and multistake activities. These funds should come from the budget allowance.

For more information about activities, see chapter 13 in *Handbook 2.*

14.7.3.2
Youth Conferences

See *Handbook 2,* 13.4.

14.7.3.3
Annual Camps or Similar Activities and Equipment

See *Handbook 2,* 13.2.8 and 13.2.9.

14.7.3.4
Scouting

See *Handbook 2,* 8.13.4.

14.7.3.5
Optional Activities

See *Handbook 2,* 13.5.

14.8
Fund-Raising

See *Handbook 2,* 13.6.8.

14.9
Audits

14.9.1
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. The counselor who serves as chairman generally should not sign checks or otherwise be involved in stake financial record keeping. Committee members should not be stake auditors and should not perform stake or ward financial record keeping.

14.9.2
Stake Auditors

The stake president or his counselor who is chairman of the stake audit committee calls at least two stake auditors. These auditors should be trustworthy brethren who hold current temple recommends. If possible, they should be experienced in accounting or auditing. They should be approved by the stake presidency and high council, but they are not sustained and are not usually set apart.

High councilors may also serve as stake auditors. However, the stake clerk and assistant stake clerks may not be called as auditors. Those who serve as auditors may also hold other callings.

14.9.3
The Auditing Process

Stake auditors audit financial records of the stake, wards, branches, and family history centers twice each year. Auditors also audit the financial records of recreational properties once 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 and the clerk assigned to finances should be available to answer questions during audits.

The stake president, stake audit committee, and stake clerk assigned to finances review finished audits. They sign the audit reports and ensure that the originals are sent to Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office to arrive by the due date. They also ensure that any exceptions disclosed by an audit are promptly corrected.

14.9.4
Local Unit Area Auditor/Trainer

The Area Presidency calls a local unit area auditor/trainer for each area. In the United States and Canada, he reports to the Church Auditing Department. Outside the United States and Canada, he reports to the member and statistical records manager. The Area Presidency may also call assistant auditor/trainers.

The primary responsibility of local unit area auditor/trainers (and their assistants if called) is to provide training on audits and financial policies to priesthood leaders, clerks, audit committees, and stake auditors. They also follow up on missing audits and high-risk audit exceptions and perform special audits as assigned.

14.9.5
Loss, Theft, Embezzlement, or Misappropriation of Church Funds

If Church funds have been lost or stolen, or if a leader has embezzled or misappropriated Church funds, the stake president or chairman of the stake audit committee should be notified promptly. He notifies the Church Auditing Department (or the area controller if the unit is outside the United States and Canada). The Auditing Department (or area controller) sends a loss report form to the stake president or chairman of the audit committee. Under the direction of the Auditing Department (or the area controller), the stake president or chairman of the audit committee ensures that the matter is properly investigated and the loss 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.

14.9.6
Stake Clerk or Assistant Stake Clerk Assigned to Finances

The stake clerk or the assistant stake clerk assigned to finances ensures that other clerks in the stake and wards are properly instructed in financial record keeping. He should be aware of audit findings. The stake president assigns clerks to follow up on any problems disclosed by audits within 30 days of the audit.

14.9.7
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 controller):

Church Auditing Department
50 East North Temple Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0016
Telephone: 1-801-240-4018 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-4018

14.10 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:

Tax Administration
50 East North Temple Street, Room 2225
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0022
Telephone: 1-801-240-3003 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-3003

Priesthood leaders outside the United States and Canada should contact the assigned administrative office to resolve questions on taxes.

14.10.1 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. Stake and ward leaders ensure that Church facilities are not used for political, business, or investment purposes as outlined in 8.4. To do so would violate 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.

14.10.2 Sales and Use Tax

Sales and use tax laws and how they apply to the Church vary by country and by state. Leaders should contact the Church's Tax Administration Division or the assigned administrative office to see whether the Church is exempt or must pay such taxes.

14.10.3 Property Tax

The Church's Tax Administration Division files all property tax exemptions and pays all required property taxes. No action is required by local leaders.

15.

Stake Patriarch

This chapter outlines the stake president's responsibilities for the stake patriarch. It includes guidelines for calling, ordaining, instructing, and overseeing the stake patriarch. For information about patriarchal blessings, see the following sources:

16.12 in this handbook

Handbook 2, 20.12

Information and Suggestions for Patriarchs

Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting: The Patriarch

15.1

Calling, Sustaining, and Ordaining a Stake Patriarch

The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles directs the calling of stake patriarchs (see D&C 107:39). The stake president may recommend whom to call. Recommendations should be submitted online through Leader and Clerk Resources. In making this recommendation, the stake president 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 husband and 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. He must be married.

If the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles approves the recommendation, the stake president may be authorized to interview and call the patriarch, present his name for a sustaining vote in the general session of the next stake conference or in the next stake general priesthood meeting, and ordain him. Because the calling of patriarch is an office of the Melchizedek Priesthood, a new patriarch is first ordained to that office and then set apart to serve in a specific stake.

A stake president may not assign a counselor to ordain a patriarch. Nor should he invite others to stand with him during the ordination of a patriarch.

After a patriarch has been ordained, this information must be recorded in Leader and Clerk Resources before he is given access to the online tools for patriarchs.

15.2

Calling a Second Stake Patriarch

The Quorum of the Twelve normally does not approve calling a second patriarch for a stake unless the present functioning patriarch is unable to give the number of blessings requested. 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.

15.3

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* and *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting: The Patriarch*.

15.4

Supervising the Work of the Stake Patriarch

The stake president presides over the stake patriarch and supervises his work as outlined in *Information and Suggestions for Patriarchs*. He should not delegate this responsibility to one of his counselors. A patriarch benefits from a close relationship with his stake president.

The stake president interviews the patriarch at least twice a year. He also reviews the blessings the patriarch has given at least twice a year. As needed, the stake president may make general suggestions about the content of the patriarch's blessings. The stake president also discusses the patriarch's feelings about the work, the health and 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 all blessings are submitted to Church headquarters. Blessings should be submitted through the Patriarchal Blessing System on ChurchofJesusChrist.org. Where this system is not accessible, blessings should be mailed to headquarters at least once every six months at the following address:

Church History Library
Attn: Patriarchal Blessings
15 East North Temple Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-1600

A functioning patriarch is a member of the high priests quorum and participates in annual quorum meetings.

15.5

Nonfunctioning Status for a Stake Patriarch

The ordination 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 recommends to the Quorum of the Twelve that the patriarch be given nonfunctioning status. He submits this recommendation through Leader and Clerk Resources. If the recommendation for nonfunctioning status is approved, the patriarch's name is no longer presented for a sustaining vote in stake conferences when Church officers are sustained. The stake president notifies bishops not to send members to that patriarch. The stake president also ensures that all blessings the patriarch has given are sent promptly to the recipients and to Church headquarters as noted in 15.4.

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 15.7 and 15.8). In such circumstances, the stake president notifies the Quorum of the Twelve through Leader and Clerk Resources and follows the instructions in the previous paragraph. A patriarch is not automatically returned to functioning status when he completes his missionary service or other Church assignments (see 15.6).

A patriarch who is given nonfunctioning status may continue to give patriarchal blessings to his lineal descendants (children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren) if the stake president determines that he is able to do so. The stake president reviews these blessings and ensures they are submitted to Church headquarters as noted in 15.4 (see also 16.12.2).

15.6
Returning a Patriarch to Functioning Status

To return a patriarch to functioning status, the stake president interviews him carefully and submits a recommendation to the Quorum of the Twelve through Leader and Clerk Resources. If the recommendation is approved, the patriarch's name is presented for a sustaining vote in the general session of the next stake conference or in the next stake general priesthood meeting. Once sustained, he should be set apart to serve in that stake.

15.7
Patriarchs Who Move to a Different Stake

If a patriarch moves to a different stake, his status automatically becomes nonfunctioning. He contacts the president of the new stake as a courtesy to inform him of his residence there. 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 15.6.

If the stake president decides not to recommend having the patriarch serve in the new stake, the patriarch remains on nonfunctioning status as explained in 15.5.

15.8
Patriarchs Who Are Called to Another Church Position

A patriarch may not be called to a position of Church administration, such as bishop, high councilor, or stake president, unless the Quorum of the Twelve approves the call in advance. If it is approved, the patriarch is given nonfunctioning status as explained in 15.5.

15.9
Confidentiality of Patriarchal Blessings

To protect the confidentiality of patriarchal blessings, the stake president ensures that after the patriarch has given the final copy to the recipient and submitted it to Church headquarters, and he has received confirmation that the submission has been received, all audio, electronic, and paper copies are deleted or destroyed. This includes copies stored on computers and portable storage devices.

If the patriarch's computer is to be turned over to anyone else, either by sale, for salvage, or for other use, the patriarch should ensure that previously deleted blessings cannot be recovered through any technical means. This should be done by either reformatting the hard drive or running a cleaning utility that will eliminate the possibility of recovering the text.

16.

Ordinance and Blessing Policies

This chapter outlines priesthood ordinance and blessing policies for stake presidents and bishops. Instructions for performing ordinances and blessings are outlined in the following publications:

Handbook 2, chapter 20

Family Guidebook, pages 18–25

Duties and Blessings of the Priesthood, Part B, pages 42–47

Policies that pertain to temple ordinances are outlined in chapter 3 of this handbook.

16.1

General Policies

16.1.1

Worthiness to Participate in an Ordinance or Blessing

Only a Melchizedek Priesthood holder who is worthy to hold a temple recommend may act as voice in confirming a person a member of the Church, conferring the Melchizedek Priesthood, ordaining a person to an office in that priesthood, or setting apart a person to serve in a Church calling.

As guided by the Spirit and the instructions in the next paragraph, bishops and stake presidents have discretion to allow priesthood holders who are not fully temple worthy to perform or participate in some ordinances and blessings. However, presiding officers should not allow such participation if a priesthood holder has unresolved serious sins.

A bishop may allow a father who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood to name and bless his children even if the father is not fully temple worthy. Likewise, a bishop may allow a father who is a priest or Melchizedek Priesthood holder to baptize his children or to ordain his sons to offices in the Aaronic Priesthood. A Melchizedek Priesthood holder in similar circumstances may be allowed to stand in the circle for the confirmation of his children, for the conferral of the Melchizedek Priesthood on his sons, or for the setting apart of his wife or children. However, he may not act as voice.

16.1.2

Translating and Interpreting Ordinances and Blessings

If necessary, a presiding officer may ask a priesthood holder to translate or interpret orally an ordinance or blessing into a language that the recipient understands. If a priesthood holder is not available, a presiding officer may ask a woman to do the translation.

A presiding officer may also ask a priesthood holder to interpret an ordinance or blessing if the recipient is deaf or hearing impaired. If a priesthood holder is not available, a presiding officer may ask a woman to do the interpretation.

For information about translation and sign language interpretation of patriarchal blessings, see 16.12.4 and 16.12.5.

16.1.3

Records of Ordinances

When a person receives a saving ordinance or priesthood ordination, a clerk from the ward where the person's membership record is held (1) obtains information about the ordinance or ordination and (2) ensures that this information is recorded on the person's membership record and on the certificate.

The complete date that the following ordinances were performed should be recorded on a person's membership record: baptism, confirmation, priesthood ordinations, temple endowment, sealing to parents, and temple sealing. For Melchizedek Priesthood ordinations, the name of the person who performed each ordination should also be recorded.

16.1.4
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 that is signed by a member of his bishopric.

16.1.5
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.

16.1.6
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.

16.1.7
Ordinances for Adopted Children

After a legal adoption is final, adopted children receive ordinances in the surname of their adoptive parents. An older child who is adopted after baptism is not baptized again. A ward clerk changes the membership record to conform to the decree of adoption.

For information about the sealing of adopted or foster children, see 3.7.2.4.

16.1.8
Ordinances for Persons Who Have Intellectual Disabilities

When considering whether to perform ordinances for a person who has an intellectual disability, priesthood leaders and parents should 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 intellectual capacity of little children are not accountable (see Doctrine and Covenants 29:46–50). The saving ordinances do not need to be performed for these individuals. A bishop consults 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.

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

Information about individual ordinances for persons who have intellectual disabilities is provided as follows:

1. For baptism, see 16.3.5.
2. For priesthood ordination, see "Brethren Who Have Intellectual Disabilities" in 16.7.4.
3. For patriarchal blessings, see the fifth paragraph in 16.12.1.

4. For temple ordinances, see "Members Who Have Disabilities" in 3.4.8; see also 3.8.6.

16.1.9 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, deafness, or a hearing impairment, may perform and receive ordinances and blessings. Leaders make the necessary arrangements for these persons to participate in ways that their disabilities allow. If leaders have questions they cannot resolve, the stake president refers the questions to the Office of the First Presidency.

Persons who are deaf or hearing impaired may communicate through sign language when performing or receiving an ordinance or blessing. A priesthood leader who oversees an ordinance ensures that the recipient can understand it through an interpreter or by other means (see 16.1.2).

16.1.10 Procedure When an Ordinance Is Not Valid

16.1.10.1 Ordinances for Which There Is No Valid Record

For record-keeping purposes, an ordinance is not considered 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 the 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. The written testimony may then be discarded.

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 considered valid.

If the member has received other ordinances after having received an invalid ordinance, they must be ratified by the First Presidency to be considered valid. To request ratification, the stake president sends a letter to the Office of the First Presidency.

16.1.10.2
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 sends a letter to the Office of the First Presidency.

16.1.10.3
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 8 years old. 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 sends a letter to the Office of the First Presidency.

16.1.10.4
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.

16.2
Naming and Blessing Children

16.2.1
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" (Doctrine and Covenants 20:70). In conformity with this revelation, only 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 are normally named and blessed during fast and testimony meeting in the ward where the parents are members of record.

The following policies apply to blessing babies in special circumstances.

16.2.2
Babies Who Were Born out of Wedlock

Children who were born out of wedlock may be blessed during fast and testimony meeting. 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.

16.2.3
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 notifies the bishop promptly so necessary records can be made.

16.2.4
Babies with a Nonmember Parent

When either of a child's parents is not a member of the Church, 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 should also tell them (1) that ward members will contact them periodically and (2) that when the child reaches age 8, the bishop or the ward missionaries will visit them and propose that the child be baptized.

16.3
Baptism and Confirmation

16.3.1
Children Who Are Members of Record

Under the direction of the presiding authority, children who are members of record should be baptized and confirmed on or as soon after their 8th birthday as reasonable. These are children for whom Church membership records already exist (see 13.6.2).

Under the direction of the bishop, members of the ward council give special attention to 7-year-old children in the ward. They ensure that parents, Primary leaders and teachers, and those who are assigned to minister to their families help them prepare for baptism and confirmation. Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society leaders also encourage parents to teach and prepare their children for these ordinances. When children reach age 8, the bishop makes sure they have every opportunity to accept the gospel and be baptized and confirmed.

16.3.2
Converts

The mission president holds the keys for baptizing and confirming converts. Under his direction, full-time missionaries conduct a baptism and confirmation interview for each candidate and authorize the ordinances to take place. The mission president also oversees the recording of the ordinances by the mission staff so that a membership record can be created.

The full-time missionaries coordinate closely with the ward mission leader (if one is called; see *Handbook 2,* 5.1.3) or a member of the elders quorum presidency who leads missionary work in the ward. The priesthood holder functioning as the ward mission leader is responsible for scheduling and organizing baptismal services. Bishops ensure that converts are confirmed in a sacrament meeting.

Convert baptisms are defined as baptisms of (1) persons ages 9 and older who have never been baptized and confirmed and (2) children age 8 whose parents are not members or are being baptized and confirmed at the same time as the children.

Former members who are readmitted by baptism and confirmation after excommunication or name removal are not considered converts. Missionaries may not interview them for baptism. For information about readmitting former members by baptism and confirmation, see 6.12.12 and 6.13.3.

16.3.3
Baptism and Confirmation Interviews

An authorized priesthood leader or missionary interviews each person before baptism and confirmation as outlined in this section.

16.3.3.1
Eight-Year-Old Children

The bishop or an assigned counselor conducts interviews for the baptism and confirmation of 8-year-old children who are members of record and 8-year-old children who are not members of record but have at least one parent or guardian who is a member. The full-time missionaries teach and interview 8-year-old children whose parents are not members and children who will be 9 years old or older at the time of baptism.

A bishopric member who interviews a child for baptism ensures that he or she understands the purposes of baptism. He also ensures that each child understands the baptismal covenant and is committed to live by it. As guided by the Spirit, he could ask questions similar to the first two that are asked in convert baptism interviews (see "Interview Instructions" on page 144). In asking other questions, the interviewer should bear in mind that children are accounted as sinless before God until the age of 8.

16.3.3.2
Converts

The full-time missionary district leader normally interviews convert baptism candidates (as defined in 16.3.2). The zone leader conducts the interview if the person was taught by the district leader. Missionaries are authorized to conduct these interviews by delegation of authority from the mission president.

Each prospective convert should meet with the bishop before baptism and confirmation. However, the bishop does not interview such candidates for baptism, nor does he determine their worthiness.

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

1. Has submitted to, performed, arranged for, paid for, consented to, or encouraged an abortion.
2. Has been convicted of a serious crime (see 16.3.14).
3. Has committed a homosexual transgression.

In these instances, the mission president conducts a searching interview and issues a Baptism and Confirmation Record if he determines that the person has repented and is worthy.

If necessary, the mission president may authorize one of his counselors to conduct the interview in cases of abortion. Each interview must be authorized separately. The counselor who conducts it reports to the mission president, who may then authorize or deny the baptism and confirmation.

The mission president must conduct an interview and receive authorization from the First Presidency before a prospective convert may be baptized and confirmed if the person:

1. Has committed murder (see 16.3.14).
2. Has been involved in the practice of plural marriage (see 16.3.8 and 16.3.9).
3. Has undergone an elective transsexual operation (see 16.3.16).
4. Is currently on legal probation or parole (see 16.3.14).

16.3.3.3
Interview Instructions

The person who conducts a convert baptism and confirmation interview uses the following questions, with the guidance of the Spirit, to determine whether the candidate meets the qualifications described in Doctrine and Covenants 20:37 (see also Mosiah 18:8–10; Moroni 6:1–4). These questions apply to all candidates but should be adapted to the person's age and maturity.

1. Do you believe that God is our Eternal Father? Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior and Redeemer of the world?
2. Do you believe that the Church and gospel of Jesus Christ have been restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith? Do you believe that [current Church President] is a prophet of God? What does this mean to you?
3. What does it mean to you to repent? Do you feel that you have repented of your past transgressions?
4. Have you ever committed a serious crime? If so, are you now on probation or parole? (For instructions if the person answers affirmatively, see 16.3.14.) Have you ever participated in an abortion? a homosexual relationship?
5. You have been taught that membership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints includes living gospel standards. What do you understand about the following standards? Are you willing to obey them?
   a. The law of chastity, which prohibits any sexual relations outside the bonds of a legal marriage between a man and a woman.
   b. The law of tithing.
   c. The Word of Wisdom.
   d. Keeping the Sabbath day holy, including partaking of the sacrament weekly and rendering service to others.
6. When you are baptized, you covenant with God that you are willing to take upon yourself the name of Christ and keep His commandments throughout your life. Are you ready to make this covenant and strive to be faithful to it?

After determining that a candidate is prepared for baptism, the interviewer fills out the Baptism and Confirmation Record according to instructions with the form. After a person is confirmed, the bishop and ward clerk ensure that the confirmation information is complete and correct. For more information about the Baptism and Confirmation Record, see *Handbook 2,* 20.3.11.

16.3.4
Baptismal Services and Baptism and Confirmation Guidelines

For guidelines on baptismal services, see *Handbook 2,* 20.3.4.

For guidelines on baptism and confirmation, see *Handbook 2,* 20.3.5 through 20.3.11.

16.3.5
Persons Who May Not Be Accountable

Persons who have intellectual disabilities and cannot knowingly repent may be considered by the bishop as not accountable. These persons do not need to be baptized and confirmed, regardless of their age. They are "saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven" (Doctrine and Covenants 137:10; see also Moroni 8:8–12).

If a person later demonstrates an understanding of repentance and an appropriate degree of accountability and desire, he or she may be baptized and confirmed. If a person was baptized but later becomes intellectually disabled, the baptism and confirmation are still valid.

For additional guidelines, see 16.1.8. For information about the membership records of persons who may not be accountable, see 13.6.10.

16.3.6
Minors

A minor child, as defined by local laws, may be baptized and confirmed only when both of the following conditions are met:

1. Consent has been given by the custodial parent(s) or legal guardian(s). The person who conducts the baptism and confirmation interview may ask for this consent to be in writing if he feels it will help prevent misunderstandings.
2. The person who conducts the baptism and confirmation interview discerns that there is clear evidence that the child understands the baptismal covenant and will make every effort to keep it through obeying the commandments, including faithfully attending Church meetings.

16.3.7
Children Whose Parents Are Divorced

A child whose parents are divorced may be baptized and confirmed only with the permission of the parent(s) with legal custody. 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 and confirmed in the name by which he or she will be known. However, the child's legal name, as defined by local law or custom, should be recorded on the membership record and the baptism and confirmation certificate.

16.3.8
Adults Involved in Plural Marriage

An adult who has previously encouraged, taught, or been involved in the practice of plural marriage must receive approval from the First Presidency before he or she may be baptized and confirmed. The mission president may request this approval from the Office of the First Presidency. The request should provide information about the individual's past involvement in plural marriage and his or her subsequent repentance and current family situation.

16.3.9
Children Whose Parents Have Practiced or Are Practicing Plural Marriage

Children of parents who have practiced or are practicing plural marriage contrary to the law must receive approval from the First Presidency before they may be baptized and confirmed. The mission president may request this approval from the Office of the First Presidency when he is satisfied that all three of the following requirements are met:

1. The children accept the teachings and doctrines of the Church.
2. The children repudiate the teachings upon which their parents based their practice of plural marriage.
3. Minor children are not living in a home where polygamy is being taught or practiced.

16.3.10
Persons Who Are Married

A married person must have the consent of his or her spouse before being baptized.

16.3.11
Persons Who Have Been Cohabiting out of Wedlock

A baptismal candidate who has been cohabiting out of wedlock with a person of the opposite gender must either marry the person or cease living with the person before he or she can be baptized.

16.3.12
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 and confirmation. Instructions are provided in 6.12, particularly 6.12.12.

Persons who have had their names removed from Church membership records may be readmitted by baptism and confirmation. Instructions are provided in 6.14.4.

16.3.13
Persons Who Have Been Involved in an Abortion

See “Converts” in 16.3.3.2.

16.3.14
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 may not be baptized and confirmed until they complete their terms of imprisonment. Those who have been convicted of felonies or any crimes of immoral character may not be baptized and confirmed until they have also completed their terms of 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 and confirmation.

Full-time missionaries are not to teach people who are in prison or jail.

A person who has been convicted of murder, or who has confessed to it even in private confessions to a priesthood leader, may not be baptized and confirmed unless the First Presidency gives permission. The request for permission 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 the bishop (if a former member is seeking readmission). As used here, murder does not include police or military action in the line of duty. Abortion is not defined as murder for this purpose.

16.3.15
Persons Who Have HIV Infection or AIDS

Persons who are infected with HIV or who have AIDS are treated as anyone else who expresses faith in God, repents, requests baptism and confirmation, and is living the gospel of Jesus Christ.

16.3.16
Persons Who Are Considering or Have Undergone a Transsexual Operation

A person who is considering an elective transsexual operation may not be baptized or confirmed. Baptism and confirmation of a person who has already undergone an elective transsexual operation require the approval of the First Presidency. The mission president may request this approval if he has interviewed the person, found him or her to be otherwise worthy, and can recommend baptism. However, such persons may not receive the priesthood or a temple recommend.

16.4
Sacrament

See *Handbook 2,* 20.4.

16.5
Consecrating Oil

See *Handbook 2,* 20.5.

16.6
Administering to the Sick

See *Handbook 2,* 20.6.

16.7
Conferring the Priesthood and Ordaining to an Office

16.7.1
Melchizedek Priesthood Offices

16.7.1.1
Stake President's and Bishop's Responsibilities

The stake president oversees the conferral of the Melchizedek Priesthood and ordinations 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 Ordination Record. Before doing so, he carefully reviews the person's membership record to verify that it does not include an annotation or a comment about an ordinance restriction or unresolved Church discipline.

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 Ordination Record. He also makes sure the member understands the oath and covenant of the priesthood and agrees to live by it (see Doctrine and Covenants 84:33–44).

After the interview, the stake presidency asks the high council to sustain the decision to ordain the person. A member of the stake presidency then presents the person for a sustaining vote in the general session of stake conference or in a stake general priesthood meeting (see Doctrine and Covenants 20:65, 67). 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 privately 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, they are presented in their ward sacrament meetings for a sustaining vote. Their names are then presented in the next stake conference or stake general priesthood meeting to ratify the ordination.

When the necessary interviews and approvals are completed, the ordination is performed according to the instructions in *Handbook 2,* 20.7.1.

16.7.1.2
Elders

Worthy brethren may receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and be ordained elders when they are 18 years old or older. Based on individual circumstances, such as a young man's testimony and maturity, school graduation, desire to continue with peers, and college attendance, the bishop determines whether a young man should be ordained an elder soon after his 18th birthday or remain with the priests quorum longer. In making this decision, the bishop consults first with the young man and his parents. By age 19, or prior to leaving home to attend college, serve in the military, or accept full-time employment, all worthy brethren should be ordained elders.

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.

16.7.1.3
High Priests

Brethren are ordained high priests when they are called to a stake presidency, high council, or bishopric or when otherwise recommended by the bishop and approved by the stake president. As an exception, bishops' counselors in wards that are in young single adult stakes do not need to be ordained high priests (see "Leadership" in 9.1.7). When such counselors are elders, they are not members of the high priests quorum.

Only high priests may stand in the circle when ordaining a man to the office of high priest.

16.7.2
Aaronic Priesthood Offices

16.7.2.1
Bishop's Responsibility

The bishop oversees the conferral of the Aaronic Priesthood and ordination to the offices of deacon, teacher, and priest. Worthy brethren typically should be ordained at the following minimum ages, but not earlier:

Deacon in January of the year they turn 12

Teacher in January of the year they turn 14

Priest in January of the year they turn 16

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

If a member is found worthy in an interview, the person who conducts the interview completes the Aaronic Priesthood Ordination Record. The bishop or one of his counselors presents the member in sacrament meeting for the sustaining vote of members (see Doctrine and Covenants 20:65). This should follow the pattern for presenting brethren for Melchizedek Priesthood ordination (see 16.7.1). If a member in good standing gives a dissenting vote, a member of the bishopric confers with him or her privately after the meeting.

After the sustaining vote, the ordination is performed by or under the direction of the bishop according to instructions in *Handbook 2,* 20.7.1.

16.7.2.2
Young Men Whose Parents Are Divorced

A young man whose parents are divorced may be ordained to Aaronic Priesthood offices only with the permission of the parent(s) with legal custody. 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. However, the young man's legal name, as defined by local law or custom, should be recorded on the ordination certificate.

16.7.2.3
Recently Baptized and Confirmed Brethren

Brethren who have recently been baptized and confirmed should receive the Aaronic Priesthood if they are at least age 11 and turning 12 during the year and should be ordained to the appropriate office soon after their confirmation, normally within a week. Before receiving the priesthood, brethren must be interviewed for worthiness and presented in sacrament meeting for a sustaining vote. They are typically ordained to the following offices when they are the following ages:

- Deacon, beginning in January of the year they turn 12
- Teacher, beginning in January of the year they turn 14
- Priest, beginning in January of the year they turn 16

Brethren ages 19 and older are also considered prospective elders (see 16.7.3).

Because brethren who have been recently baptized and confirmed need to be interviewed by the bishop and sustained by a vote of ward members before they are ordained to an Aaronic Priesthood office, they are not ordained on the day they are baptized or confirmed.

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

16.7.3 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 other priesthood leaders in the ward to prepare them to receive the Melchizedek 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 *Handbook 2,* 7.6.

16.7.4 Unusual Circumstances

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

If a male 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 ordination certificate is prepared in the ward where the ordination is performed.

16.7.4.2 Brethren in Young Single Adult Wards and Single Adult Wards

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

16.7.4.3 Military Servicemen in War Zones or Isolated Areas

A military serviceman is normally interviewed and ordained in the ward that has his membership record. However, this may not be feasible if the serviceman is at sea for an extended time or is serving in a war zone or isolated area. In such cases, the serviceman meets with his service member group leader. 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. That presiding officer contacts the bishop of the serviceman's home ward to determine if he has any concerns about worthiness.

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. All ordinations should be sustained or ratified as explained in 16.7.1 and 16.7.2.

16.7.4.4
Brethren Who Have Intellectual Disabilities

Priesthood leaders decide whether brethren who have intellectual disabilities should receive the priesthood. If the member lives with his parents, priesthood leaders consult with them. To be ordained, a member who has an intellectual 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.

16.7.4.5
Brethren Who Have Been Readmitted by Baptism and Confirmation

For instructions about ordaining brethren who have been readmitted by baptism and confirmation after being excommunicated or having their names removed from the records of the Church, see "Ordination after Readmission" in 6.12.12.

16.7.4.6
Members Who Have Undergone a Transsexual Operation

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

16.8
Father's Blessings and Other Blessings of Comfort and Counsel

See *Handbook 2,* 20.8.

16.9
Dedicating Graves

See *Handbook 2,* 20.9.

16.10
Setting Apart Officers and Teachers

See *Handbook 2,* 19.4.

16.11
Dedicating Homes

See *Handbook 2,* 20.11.

16.12
Patriarchal Blessings

Information about patriarchal blessings is provided in the following paragraphs and in these additional sources:

Chapter 15 in this handbook

Handbook 2, 20.12

Information and Suggestions for Patriarchs

Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting: The Patriarch

16.12.1
General Guidelines

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

The bishop or an assigned counselor interviews members who wish to receive a patriarchal blessing. If a member is worthy, the interviewer prepares a Patriarchal Blessing Recommend and submits it through the Patriarchal Blessing System on ChurchofJesusChrist.org. If the blessing will be given by a patriarch who lives outside the recipient's stake, a member of both stake presidencies must also approve the recommend through the Patriarchal Blessing System (such authorization may be given only as outlined in 16.12.2).

The person who issues a Patriarchal Blessing Recommend ensures that the member is of sufficient age and maturity to understand the significance and sacred nature of the blessing. Ideally the member should be young enough that many important decisions in life are still ahead, though older adults are also encouraged to receive their patriarchal blessings. Priesthood leaders should not establish a minimum age for a member to receive a patriarchal blessing.

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

If a member has an intellectual disability, the bishop may issue a recommend only when, in consultation with the parents, he believes there is a sufficient level of understanding. Members should keep in mind that a patriarchal blessing is for the recipient and not for the parents.

When possible, a missionary should receive a patriarchal blessing before beginning missionary service. A missionary who is in residence at a missionary training center may receive a patriarchal blessing only when all of the following apply:

1. The missionary comes from an area where no patriarch is able to give a blessing in the missionary's native language.
2. The missionary will serve in a mission where no patriarch is able to give a blessing in the missionary's native language.
3. The missionary will return home to an area that does not have a patriarch.
4. A patriarch near the missionary training center can provide a blessing in the missionary's native language.

If a missionary arrives in the mission field without having received a patriarchal blessing, the mission president is authorized to interview him or her, prepare a Patriarchal Blessing Recommend, and submit it through the Patriarchal Blessing System. The mission president ensures that the missionary can receive the blessing in his or her native language. If this is not possible, the missionary may need to wait until returning home to receive a patriarchal blessing.

16.12.2
Giving Patriarchal 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 lineal descendants (children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren) regardless of where they live. A member of the bishopric conducts an interview and submits a recommend

through the Patriarchal Blessing System on ChurchofJesusChrist.org. If the recipient lives in a different stake than the patriarch, a member of both stake presidencies must approve the recommend through the Patriarchal Blessing System.

2. A member who lives in a stake that does not have a functioning patriarch may go to a patriarch in a nearby stake. A member of the bishopric conducts an interview and submits a recommend through the Patriarchal Blessing System. A member of both stake presidencies must approve the recommend through the system.

3. A member who lives in a district may go to a patriarch in a nearby stake. The branch president conducts an interview and submits a recommend through the Patriarchal Blessing System. A member of the mission presidency and the nearby patriarch's stake presidency must approve the recommend through the system.

4. 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. A member of the bishopric conducts an interview and submits a recommend through the Patriarchal Blessing System. A member of both stake presidencies must approve the recommend through the system.

16.12.3
Patriarchal Blessings for Members Entering the Military

When a worthy member enters military service, priesthood leaders encourage him or her to receive a patriarchal blessing before reporting for active duty.

If it is not possible for a member to receive a patriarchal blessing before leaving, he or she can receive it from a patriarch where the temporary duty station is located. The stake president of the temporary duty station contacts a member of the home ward bishopric. The stake president then conducts an interview and submits a recommend through the Patriarchal Blessing System. The stake patriarch where the member is stationed then gives the patriarchal blessing. For more information, the stake president or other presiding priesthood leader where the member is stationed contacts the Office of the Quorum of the Twelve by email at Q12Patriarchs@ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

16.12.4
Translation of Patriarchal Blessings

The Church does not provide translations of the text of patriarchal blessings. Nor are members encouraged to translate patriarchal blessings, since it is difficult to convey the inspired depth of meaning and feeling of a blessing. Nevertheless, if a member does not understand the language of the patriarch and desires to have a blessing translated into another language after it has been received, it is his or her responsibility to find a trusted and worthy member of the Church who can provide the translation. The translator should be carefully selected, skilled in the language, and capable of understanding the spiritual nature and confidentiality of the blessing. Translated copies of blessings are not filed at Church headquarters.

A stake president may request a braille transcription of a patriarchal blessing by contacting the Office of the Quorum of the Twelve.

16.12.5
Sign Language Interpretation of Patriarchal Blessings

If a member requires interpretation by sign language to understand the blessing as it is being pronounced, it is his or her responsibility to find a trusted and worthy member of the Church who can provide the interpretation.

16.12.6
Second Patriarchal Blessings

In very rare circumstances, a member may request a second patriarchal blessing. However, this is generally not encouraged, and the request may not be approved. If a worthy member has an important reason for such a request, he or she discusses it with the bishop. If the bishop feels that a second blessing is necessary, he prepares a Patriarchal Blessing Recommend and submits it through the Patriarchal Blessing System on ChurchofJesusChrist.org. The stake president then interviews the member and reads the original blessing with him or her. If he feels that a second blessing is necessary, the stake president contacts the Office of the Quorum of the Twelve.

If the request is approved, the stake president informs the recipient and the patriarch before approving the Patriarchal Blessing Recommendation in the Patriarchal Blessing System. The stake president also informs the recipient that the original blessing will be replaced by the second blessing. The patriarch may then give a second patriarchal blessing.

16.13
Children of a Parent Living in a Same-Gender Relationship

A natural or adopted child of a parent living in a same-gender relationship, whether the couple is married or cohabiting, may not receive a name and a blessing.

A natural or adopted child of a parent living in a same-gender relationship, whether the couple is married or cohabiting, may be baptized and confirmed, ordained, or recommended for missionary service only as follows:

A mission president or a stake president may request approval from the Office of the First Presidency to baptize and confirm, ordain, or recommend missionary service for a child of a parent who has lived or is living in a same-gender relationship when he is satisfied by personal interviews that both of the following requirements are met:

1. The child accepts and is committed to live the teachings and doctrine of the Church, and specifically disavows the practice of same-gender cohabitation and marriage.
2. The child is of legal age and does not live with a parent who has lived or currently lives in a same-gender cohabitation relationship or marriage.

(See First Presidency letter, November 13, 2015.)

16.14
Chart of Ordinations

Office	Recommended By	Approved By	Sustained By	Interviewed and Ordained By
Patriarch	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
High priest	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 in sacrament meeting	A General Authority or Area Seventy, or the stake president with written approval from the First Presidency
Priest	Bishop	Bishopric	Ward members in sacrament meeting	Interviewed by the bishop; ordained under the direction of the bishop
Teacher or deacon	Bishop	Bishopric	Ward members in sacrament meeting	Interviewed by the bishop or an assigned counselor; ordained under the direction of the bishop

17.
Church Policies

This chapter consists of three sections. Each section includes subtopics in alphabetical order:

1. Administrative policies
2. Medical and health policies
3. Policies on moral issues

For policies on using Church buildings and other property, see 8.4.

17.1
Administrative Policies

17.1.1
Accident Prevention and Response

See *Handbook 2,* 13.6.20.

17.1.2
Activities Policies

See *Handbook 2,* 13.6.

17.1.3
Adopted Children and Their Biological Parents

Questions regarding the exchange of information and contact between adopted children and their biological parents should be handled with sensitivity. The legal rights and emotional needs of all relevant parties should be considered. In the United States and Canada, stake presidents and bishops may contact LDS Family Services for guidance (1-801-240-1711; 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-1711; or ldsfamilyservices.org). Outside the United States and Canada, stake presidents may contact the Area Presidency for guidance.

17.1.4
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. Church 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 17.3.12.

17.1.5
Audiovisual Materials

Members may use audiovisual materials, such as CDs, DVDs, and computer presentations, in Church settings with the following restrictions:

1. They may not be used in sacrament meetings or in the general session of stake conference (however, appropriate recorded musical accompaniment may be used if a piano, organ, or accompanist is not available).
2. They may not be used if such use is restricted by copyright (see 17.1.13).
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 or the general session of stake conference if they are an important part of the meeting.

17.1.6
Autographs and Photographs of General Authorities and Area Seventies

Church members should not seek the autographs of General Authorities or Area Seventies, including signing in their scriptures, hymnals, or programs. 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 Seventies in chapels.

17.1.7
Bible

English-speaking members should use the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Version of the Bible. This edition includes the Topical Guide; footnotes; excerpts from the Joseph Smith Translation; cross-references to other passages in the Bible and to the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price; and other study aids. Although other versions of the Bible may be easier to read, in doctrinal matters, latter-day revelation supports the King James Version in preference to other English translations.

Spanish-speaking members should use the Latter-day Saint edition of the Reina-Valera Bible. This edition includes study aids similar to those in the Latter-day Saint edition in English.

In many other non-English languages, the Church has approved a non–Latter-day Saint edition of the Bible for use in Church meetings and classes. Members should use these editions of the Bible.

The most reliable way to measure the accuracy of any biblical translation is not by comparing different texts, but by comparison with the Book of Mormon and modern-day revelations.

Printed copies of approved editions of the Bible are available from Church Distribution Services. Electronic text and audio recordings of Latter-day Saint editions are also available at scriptures.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

17.1.8
Book of Mormon

The Church discourages rewriting the Book of Mormon into familiar or modern 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 modern English. (These concerns do not pertain to publications by the Church for children.)" (*Ensign,* Apr. 1993, 74).

17.1.9
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. Leaders should respond promptly.

Church employees must comply with employment laws. Church headquarters or the area office can provide information about applicable laws.

17.1.10
Church Magazines

The First Presidency has consistently encouraged members of the Church to read the Church magazines. Local Church leaders should encourage members to have the Church magazines in their homes. These magazines contain the Lord's guidance given through latter-day prophets. Church magazines strengthen faith in the Savior and provide inspired direction for personal challenges.

The stake president and bishop may assign their executive secretaries to coordinate Church magazine subscription efforts (see 13.3.4 and 13.4.4). Bishoprics may also call a ward magazine representative and appoint others to assist. If a ward magazine representative is called, he helps plan and direct Church magazine campaigns, helps members begin or renew subscriptions, and teaches members the benefits of subscribing to the Church magazines.

Members can subscribe to the Church magazines through Church Distribution Services. In some areas, members can subscribe by filling out the subscription form on the Church magazines' web pages.

17.1.11
Church Name and Logotype

The Church's name and logotype are key Church identifiers. They are registered as trademarks or are otherwise legally protected worldwide. They should be used only according to the following guidelines.

Local units may use the written name of the Church (not the logotype) when all of the following conditions are met:

1. The activity or function with which the name is associated is officially sponsored by the unit (for example, a sacrament meeting program).
2. The name of the local 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 Church logotype.

The Church's official logotype (see the front cover of this handbook) is to be used only for items approved by the Correlation Department at Church headquarters. Examples of these items are:

1. Official Church publications and stationery.
2. Missionary name tags.
3. Meetinghouse exterior signs.

The logotype may not be used as a decorative element or a computer screen saver. Nor may it be used in any personal, commercial, or promotional way, such as on family history books, T-shirts, buttons, or banners. Questions may be directed to:

Intellectual Property Office
50 East North Temple Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0005
Telephone: 1-801-240-3959 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-3959
Fax: 1-801-240-1187
E-mail: cor-intellectualproperty@ChurchofJesusChrist.org

17.1.12
Computers

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 Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office. These guidelines provide information about matters such as hardware and software, donated computers, Internet connections, repairs, disposal of computers, stolen or damaged computers, security, and use by members.

Where necessary, stake presidents arrange to make ward and stake computers available for members to use family history programs. Ward and stake computers are not authorized for other personal uses.

To protect confidential information on computers, leaders and clerks should use the password features of Church record-keeping systems. See 13.8 and 13.9 for additional instructions about protecting confidential information.

Computers should be placed so members of the bishopric and clerks can process members' weekly contributions in privacy.

For restrictions on duplicating computer software, see 17.1.13.

The stake presidency may assign an assistant stake clerk to be the stake technology specialist. The stake clerk could be given this assignment if necessary. The stake technology specialist manages Church computers in the stake, including those in family history centers. These responsibilities are outlined under "Computers and Technology" in 13.3.3.

17.1.13
Copyrighted Materials

The laws governing creative works and their permissible use vary from one country to another. The Church policies outlined in this section are consistent with international treaties that are applicable in most countries. For simplicity, this section refers to a creator's rights as "copyright." However, certain of these rights may be known by different names in some countries.

Copyright is protection given by law to the creators 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. Audio and audiovisual works (such as movies and videos, CDs, and DVDs).
4. Computer programs or games.
5. Internet and other databases.

Church members should strictly observe all copyright laws. Generally, only copyright owners may authorize duplication (copying), distribution, public performance, public display, or derivatives of their work. Using a work in any of these ways without authorization from the copyright owner is contrary to Church policy and may also subject the Church or the user to legal liability.

A user of a work should assume that it is protected by copyright. Published works usually include a copyright notice, such as "© 1959 by John Doe." (For sound recordings, the symbol is ℗.) However, a copyright notice is not required for legal protection. Similarly, the fact that a publication is out of print does not nullify its copyright or justify duplicating, distributing, performing, displaying, or making derivatives of it without permission.

The Church's Intellectual Property Office (IPO) assists in processing requests to use copyrighted Church materials or programs, including materials that are copyrighted by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. (IRI). IRI is a separate, nonprofit corporation that owns the intellectual property used by the Church. Additional information on requesting the use of Church-owned materials can be found by following the "Terms of Use" link on ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

The following questions and answers may help members understand and abide by copyright laws when using copyrighted materials at church and at home. If members have questions that are not answered in these guidelines, they may contact:

Intellectual Property Office
50 East North Temple Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0005
Telephone: 1-801-240-3959 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-3959
Fax: 1-801-240-1187
E-mail: cor-intellectualproperty@ChurchofJesusChrist.org

Can I copy pictures from Church magazines? Pictures in Church publications may usually be copied for noncommercial Church, home, and family use. However, they may not be copied for commercial purposes without specific written permission from the IPO. If a picture is restricted from being copied, words such as "may not be copied" will appear in the credits for the image.

Can I copy published Church materials? Church publications may usually be copied for noncommercial Church, home, and family use. No commercial use may be made of Church materials without specific written permission from the IPO.

Can I copy music? Special copyright laws apply to music. A person may copy music from *Hymns,* the *Children's Songbook,* and Church magazines for noncommercial Church, home, and family use except where a restriction is expressly noted on the hymn or song. Duplicating printed or recorded music without authorization from the copyright owner is contrary to Church policy. Music that has been duplicated contrary to this policy must not be used for Church purposes.

Can I alter, copy, or segment Church-produced audiovisual materials? Not unless such use is specifically authorized by the IPO. Church-produced audiovisual materials should be used in accordance with prescribed instructions in the manuals and on the packaging materials.

Can I copy materials that are not owned by the Church? Generally not. Copyright laws govern the use of privately owned materials. Usually there are restrictions that give the conditions the public must follow before copying non-Church materials. These restrictions are usually listed near the beginning of a publication. Members should strictly observe all copyright laws.

Can I show commercial audiovisual products at Church functions? Generally not. Church members should not violate warnings and restrictions that are placed on commercial audiovisual products. Using commercial audiovisual products at Church functions generally requires permission from the copyright owners.

Can I download or duplicate computer software and other programs for Church use? Generally not. Computer programs and other software may not be duplicated or downloaded unless all licenses have been appropriately purchased. As an exception, Church family history programs may be downloaded at no charge.

Can I download or distribute materials that I find on Church websites? The Church has created several websites, such as ChurchofJesusChrist.org, ComeUntoChrist.org, and FamilySearch.org. Unless otherwise indicated, all material on Church-owned websites, including visuals, text, icons, displays, databases, and general information, may be viewed, downloaded, and printed for noncommercial Church, home, and family use only. Material from these sites may not be posted, transcribed, or distributed to other websites or computer networks without permission from the IPO.

Church-owned sites and any information on these sites, including the names and addresses of those who have submitted information, may not be used for selling or promoting products or services, soliciting clients, or any other commercial purpose.

For additional information, see the terms of use associated with the websites.

What permission is needed to present musical and theatrical productions? Productions that are owned by the Church or IRI may be performed in Church settings without permission from Church headquarters.

If a copyrighted production is not owned by the Church, members must obtain the copyright owner's permission to perform all or part of it in a Church setting. Usually the copyright owner requires fees or royalties even if no charge is made for the performances. All presentations should have the approval of local priesthood leaders.

17.1.14 Curriculum Materials

The Church makes available scriptures, magazines, manuals, books, and other materials to help members learn and live the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Priesthood and auxiliary leaders encourage members to obtain copies of the scriptures and other curriculum materials to use in their homes and at church.

Leaders ensure that teachers use Church-approved materials for quorum and class instruction. The publication *Instructions for Curriculum* provides information about how to organize Sunday classes and which materials to use for lessons.

17.1.15 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 to promote any private business venture, including dating and get-acquainted businesses or services. Lists of Church groups or other information about members should not be given to such businesses.

17.1.16 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. E-mail addresses may be included only with the member's permission.

Stake or ward budget funds are used to pay for directories. Directories may not contain advertising.

Leaders may 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.

17.1.17 E-mail for Priesthood Leaders

The Church has established an e-mail system for communicating with priesthood leaders and for them to communicate with each other. Priesthood leaders will be notified when this system is available to them.

17.1.18 Emigration of Members

Generally, 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. As members remain in their homelands and work to build the Church there, great blessings will come to them personally and to the Church. Stakes and wards throughout the world will be strengthened, making it possible to share the blessings of the gospel with an even greater number of Heavenly Father's children.

Experience has shown that those who emigrate often encounter language, cultural, and economic challenges, resulting in disappointment and personal and family difficulties.

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.

17.1.19
Fast Day

A proper fast day observance typically includes abstaining from food and drink for two consecutive meals in a 24-hour period, attending fast and testimony meeting, and giving a generous fast offering to help care for those in need.

17.1.20
Fund-Raising

See *Handbook 2,* 13.6.8.

17.1.21
Gambling and Lotteries

The Church opposes gambling in any form, including government-sponsored lotteries.

17.1.22
Guest Speakers or Instructors

For most Church meetings, speakers and instructors should belong to the local ward or stake.

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 carefully screens guest speakers or instructors and the subjects of their presentations. This may include contacting the person's bishop. The bishop or stake president ensures that:

1. Presentations are in harmony with Church doctrine.
2. Guest speakers or instructors are not paid a fee, do not recruit participants, and do not solicit customers or clients.
3. The travel expenses of guest speakers or instructors are not paid, either with local unit budget funds or by private contributions.
4. Presentations comply with the guidelines for using Church facilities (see 8.4).

17.1.23
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 Doctrine and Covenants 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.

Church 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.

17.1.24
Internet

When carefully used, the Internet can help coordinate the work of the Church, strengthen faith, and minister to the needs of others. The Internet can also help people connect with one another and share Church content with friends and family. However, members should remember that electronic communication should not replace opportunities for in-person contact, where feasible.

17.1.24.1
Official Church Internet Resources

The Church provides a number of official websites, blogs, and social media profiles for general use. These sites and resources are clearly identified as official either by the use of the Church logo or in some equivalent manner. They also comply with legal requirements and the Church's intellectual property and privacy policies.

Temples, missions, and visitors' centers are not authorized to create websites.

17.1.24.2
Members' Use of the Internet in Church Callings

Members may not create websites, blogs, or social media profiles on behalf of the Church or to officially represent the Church and its views. However, they may create websites, blogs, or social media profiles to assist with their callings. When doing so, members must include a disclaimer such as "This is not an official website of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" and comply with the following guidelines:

1. Local priesthood leaders must first approve the creation of calling-related websites, blogs, or social media profiles.
2. The Church logo may not be used or imitated.
3. The name and contact information of the member who is responsible for the website, blog, or social media profile should be posted publicly.
4. Members should not state or imply that their online resource's content, images, or other materials are sponsored or endorsed by the Church or officially represent the Church in any way.
5. Church-owned artwork, videos, music, and other materials should not be posted unless such use is clearly authorized by the "Terms of Use" page of an official Church website or by the Church's Intellectual Property Office.
6. Photographs of other individuals or personal information should not be displayed without consent.
7. Social media properties must be properly maintained and actively moderated to ensure that any inappropriate content is promptly removed.
8. The website, blog, or social media profile should not be the name of a Church unit. For example, "First Ward News" or "Friends of the First Ward" is acceptable, while "First Ward" is not.

Please see internet.ChurchofJesusChrist.org for additional examples and clarification.

For help with the calendar, directory, and other tools on ChurchofJesusChrist.org, please visit tools.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

17.1.24.3
Personal Internet Use

Members are encouraged to use the Internet to flood the earth with testimonies of the Savior and His restored gospel. They should view blogs, social networks, and other Internet technologies as tools that allow them to amplify their voice in promoting the messages of peace, hope, and joy that accompany faith in Christ.

Members are encouraged to share messages from official Church websites and social accounts, as well as their own words, images, and media. As members express their own thoughts and feelings, they should not give the impression that they represent or are sponsored by the Church.

As members use the Internet to hasten the work of the Lord, they should exemplify civility and focus on sharing praiseworthy messages that strengthen those with whom they come in contact.

Search "Internet Usage Helps for Members" on ChurchofJesusChrist.org to find additional guidelines.

17.1.25
Laws of the Land

Members should obey, honor, and sustain the laws in any country where they reside or travel (see Doctrine and Covenants 58:21–22; Articles of Faith 1:12). This includes laws that prohibit proselyting.

17.1.26
Legal Counsel for Church Matters

When legal help is needed for Church matters, Church leaders should contact Church legal counsel. In the United States and Canada, stake presidents should contact the Office of General Counsel at Church headquarters (1-801-240-6301 or 1-800-453-3860). Outside the United States and Canada, stake presidents should contact the area office to obtain local legal counsel.

17.1.26.1
Testimony in Legal Proceedings

Church leaders should not involve themselves in civil or criminal cases regarding members over whom they preside without first consulting with Church legal counsel. Church leaders should confer with Church legal counsel if subpoenaed, if asked to communicate with lawyers or civil authorities about legal proceedings, or if considering testifying in a legal proceeding.

Church leaders are not authorized to testify on behalf of the Church in any legal proceeding without prior approval from the Office of General Counsel. Church leaders should not suggest or imply that any testimony they provide in a legal proceeding represents the position of the Church.

Church leaders should not try to influence the testimony of a witness in any legal proceeding.

17.1.27
Mail from Church Headquarters

Some businesses and individuals send local leaders promotional items that might appear to be official Church correspondence. Official correspondence can be distinguished from other correspondence as follows: it is always conveyed (1) personally by Church leaders, (2) in a letter from Church leaders on Church letterhead stationery, or (3) by announcement in a Church publication. Only these items require Church leaders' attention and action.

17.1.28
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.

17.1.29
Members' Communication with Church Headquarters

Members of the Church are discouraged from making telephone calls or writing letters to General Authorities about doctrinal issues or personal matters. With an ever-increasing Church membership, responding personally to these inquiries presents an almost insurmountable task and would make it difficult for General Authorities to fulfill the duties for which they alone are responsible. The General Authorities love the members of the Church and do not want them to feel that they are without the support and guidance they need. However, all things need to be done with wisdom and order.

The Lord has organized His Church so every member has access to a bishop or branch president and a stake, district, or mission president who serve as spiritual advisers and temporal counselors. By reason of their callings, these local leaders are entitled to the spirit of discernment and inspiration to enable them to counsel members within their jurisdiction.

Members who need spiritual guidance, have weighty personal problems, or have doctrinal questions should make a diligent effort, including earnest prayer and scripture study, to find solutions and answers themselves. Church members are encouraged to seek guidance from the Holy Ghost to help them in their personal lives and in their family and Church responsibilities.

If members still need help, they should counsel first with their bishop. If necessary, he may refer them to the stake president.

In most cases, correspondence from members to General Authorities will be referred back to their local leaders. Stake presidents who need clarification about doctrinal or other Church matters may write in behalf of their members to the First Presidency.

17.1.30
Members' Occupations, Professions, and Affiliations

Baptism into the Church, priesthood ordinations, and the issuing of temple recommends are based on the personal worthiness of each individual as established by a careful interview by that person's local priesthood leaders. Members of the Church should endeavor to be involved in activities and employment upon which they can in good conscience ask the blessings of the Lord and which are consistent with the principles of the gospel and the teachings of the Savior.

17.1.31
Other Faiths

Much that is inspiring, noble, and worthy of the highest respect is found in many other faiths. Missionaries and other members must be sensitive and respectful toward the beliefs of others and avoid giving offense. Stake and mission presidents who have questions about relationships with non-Christian faiths should contact the Area Presidency. Other local leaders who have such questions should contact the stake or mission president.

17.1.32
Overnight Activities

See *Handbook 2,* 13.6.12 and 21.2.8.

17.1.33
Political and Civic Activity

As citizens, Church members are encouraged to participate in political and governmental affairs, including involvement in the political party of their choice. Members are also urged to be actively engaged in worthy causes to improve their communities and make them wholesome places in which to live and rear families.

In accordance with the laws of their respective governments, members are encouraged to register to vote, to study issues and candidates carefully, and to vote for individuals whom they believe will act with integrity and sound judgment. Latter-day Saints have a special obligation to seek out, vote for, and uphold leaders who are honest, good, and wise (see Doctrine and Covenants 98:10).

While affirming the right of expression on political and social issues, the Church is neutral regarding political parties, political platforms, and candidates for political office. The Church does not endorse any political party or candidate. Nor does it advise members how to vote. However, in some exceptional instances the Church will take a position on specific legislation, particularly when it concludes that moral issues are involved. Only the First Presidency can speak for the Church or commit the Church to support or oppose specific legislation or to seek to intervene in judicial matters. Otherwise, stake presidents and other local leaders should not organize members to participate in political matters or attempt to influence how they participate.

Church members are encouraged to consider serving in elected or appointed public offices in local and national government. Candidates for public office should not imply that their candidacy is endorsed by the Church or its leaders. Church leaders and members should also avoid statements or conduct that might be interpreted as Church endorsement of any political party, platform, policy, or candidate.

Members are encouraged to support measures that strengthen the moral fabric of society, particularly those designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society.

Church records, directories, and similar materials may not be used for political purposes.

Church facilities may not be used for political purposes. However, facilities may be used for voter registration or polling where there is not a reasonable alternative (see 8.4).

17.1.34
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 restriction applies to ward or stake newsletters, announcements, flyers, and other Church-related materials. Church leaders should instruct members and missionaries not to place such items in or on mailboxes.

17.1.35
Privacy of Members

Church leaders are obligated to protect the privacy of members. Church records, directories, and similar materials may not be used for personal, commercial, or political purposes (see also 13.8).

17.1.36
Privately Published Writings

Members should not ask General Authorities or Area Seventies to coauthor or endorse Church books or other Church writings.

17.1.37
Recording Talks or Addresses of General Authorities and Area Seventies

Church members should not record the talks or addresses that General Authorities and Area Seventies give at stake conferences, missionary meetings, or other meetings. However, members may record broadcasts of general conference on home equipment for personal, noncommercial use.

17.1.38

Referring to the Church and Its Members

As the Church grows across boundaries, cultures, and languages, the use of its revealed name, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (see Doctrine and Covenants 115:4), is increasingly important in the responsibility of the Church and its members to proclaim the name of the Savior throughout all the world. Accordingly, references to the Church should include its full name whenever possible. Following an initial reference to the full name of the Church, the contractions "the Church" or "the Church of Jesus Christ" are acceptable.

Referring to the Church as "the Mormon Church," "the Latter-day Saints Church," or "the LDS Church" is discouraged.

When referring to Church members, it is preferable to use the phrase "members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." As a shortened reference, "Latter-day Saints" is preferred and "Mormons" is acceptable.

The word *Mormon* will continue to be used in proper names like the Book of Mormon. It will also continue to be used as an adjective in phrases such as "Mormon pioneers." In addition, it may be necessary to use the word *Mormon* to identify the Church as it is commonly known in some countries.

17.1.39

Research Studies in the Church

The only authorized research agency of the Church is the Correlation Research Division of the Correlation Department. Representatives of this division use questionnaires and interviews to obtain information on issues of concern to General Authorities. When Church-authorized researchers contact members, 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 a 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 Correlation Research Division (1-801-240-2727 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-2727).

17.1.40

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 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 reports accidents to Welfare Services (1-801-240-3001 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-3001) and the Risk Management Division at Church headquarters (see 8.3.6 for contact information).

17.1.41

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.

17.1.42 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. Youth may help operate it only if they are supervised.

All equipment is to be locked securely when not in use. It may not be removed from the building for home or personal use.

17.1.43 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 such 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.

17.1.44 Statements Attributed to Church Leaders

From time to time, statements are circulated that are inaccurately attributed to leaders of the Church. Many such statements distort current Church teachings and are based on rumors and innuendos. They are never transmitted officially, but by word of mouth, e-mail, or other informal means. Church members should not teach or pass on such statements without verifying that they are from approved Church sources, such as official statements, communications, and publications.

Any notes made when General Authorities, Area Seventies, or other general Church officers speak at stake conferences or other meetings should not be distributed without the consent of the speaker. Personal notes are for individual use only.

17.1.45 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 one or more nearby 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 normally be called to work with male inmates. However, a husband and wife may also be called to work with male inmates. At least two men, two women, or a husband and wife should be called to work with female inmates. Men and women who work with inmates should not be alone with them.

Worship services for members in prisons, hospitals, and other institutions may be simplified as needed to meet the needs of those involved. These 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 worship 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; support from ministering brothers and sisters; Sunday School classes, home evening, and seminary or institute classes; and other special programs.

In collaboration with the Priesthood Department at Church headquarters, Welfare Services is responsible for materials and professional resources to assist those in correctional institutions and their families. For assistance, priesthood leaders may contact Welfare Services at 1-801-240-2644 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-2644.

For assistance with welfare matters in prisons, hospitals, and other institutions, the stake president may contact the Area Presidency. The stake president may also contact Welfare Services directly at the telephone numbers in the previous paragraph.

17.1.46
Symposia and Similar Gatherings

The Church warns its members against symposia and 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.

17.1.47
Taxable Activities

Ward and stake leaders ensure that local Church activities do not jeopardize the Church's tax-exempt status. For guidelines, see 8.4 and 14.10.1.

17.1.48
Travel of Men and Women Together

A man and a woman should not travel alone together for Church activities, meetings, or assignments unless they are married to each other or are both single. For other travel policies, see *Handbook 2,* 13.6.24.

17.2
Medical and Health Policies

17.2.1
Autopsies

An autopsy may be performed if the family of the deceased gives consent and if the autopsy complies with the law.

17.2.2
Cremation

The Church does not normally encourage cremation. The family of the deceased must decide whether the body should be cremated, taking into account any laws governing burial or cremation. In some countries, the law requires cremation.

Where possible, the body of a deceased member who has been endowed should be dressed in temple clothing when it is cremated (see 3.5.9). A funeral service may be held (see *Handbook 2,* 18.6).

17.2.3
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 assisting someone to commit suicide, violates the commandments of God. (See also 17.2.8.)

17.2.4
HIV Infection and AIDS

Members who are infected with HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) or who have AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) should be treated with dignity and compassion. Some people with HIV are innocent victims of the acts of others. For example, they may have become infected through a careless blood transfusion or an infected parent. If infection has resulted from transgressing 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.

The principal safeguards against HIV and AIDS 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 at Church meetings by persons with HIV infection or AIDS does not pose a serious health problem. Public health authorities affirm that HIV has not been transmitted through casual contact in homes, schools, churches, or places of work.

Those who occasionally may need to clean up blood or render first aid should learn and follow the recommendations of local health officials.

With regard to baptism and confirmation, persons with HIV infection or AIDS are treated as anyone else who expresses faith in God, repents, and is living the gospel of Jesus Christ.

17.2.5
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.

17.2.6
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.

17.2.7
Organ and Tissue Donations and Transplants

The donation of organs and tissues is a selfless act that often results in great benefit to individuals with medical conditions. 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.

A decision to receive a donated organ should be made after receiving competent medical counsel and confirmation through prayer.

17.2.8
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.

Leaders offer special concern and blessings to those who are deciding whether or not to remove life support for a family member.

17.2.9
Self-Awareness Groups

Many private groups and commercial organizations have programs that purport to increase self-awareness, self-esteem, and spirituality. Some groups promise to enhance individual agency or improve family relationships. Some offer "experiential" or "empowerment" training.

Some of these groups falsely claim or imply that the Church or individual General Authorities have endorsed their programs. However, the Church has not endorsed any such enterprise, and members are warned against believing such claims. The fact that the Church has not formally challenged such an enterprise should not be perceived as a tacit endorsement or approval.

Church members are also warned that some of these groups advocate concepts and use methods that can be harmful. In addition, many such groups 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 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.

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.

17.2.10
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 life before birth. However, there is no direct revelation on when the spirit enters the body.

17.2.11
Word of Wisdom

The only official interpretation of "hot drinks" (Doctrine and Covenants 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.

17.3
Policies on Moral Issues

17.3.1
Abortion

The Lord commanded, "Thou shalt not . . . kill, nor do anything like unto it" (Doctrine and Covenants 59:6). The Church opposes elective abortion for personal or social convenience. Members must not submit to, perform, arrange for, pay for, consent to, or encourage an abortion. The only possible exceptions are when:

1. Pregnancy resulted from forcible 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.

Church members who submit to, perform, arrange for, pay for, consent to, or encourage 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.

17.3.2
Abuse

Abuse is the mistreatment or neglect of others (such as a child or spouse, the elderly, or the disabled) in a way that causes physical, emotional, or sexual harm. The Church's position is that abuse cannot be tolerated in any form. Those who abuse their spouses, children, other family members, or anyone else violate the laws of God and man. All members, especially parents and leaders, are encouraged to be alert and diligent and do all they can to protect children and others against abuse.

When abuse occurs, the first and immediate responsibility of Church leaders is to help those who have been abused and to protect vulnerable persons from future abuse. Church leaders should never disregard a report of abuse. In addition, members should never be encouraged to remain in a home or situation that is abusive or unsafe.

Victims of sexual abuse often suffer serious trauma and feelings of guilt. These victims are not guilty of sin. Church leaders should be sensitive to them and give caring attention to help them overcome the destructive effects of abuse.

17.3.2.1
Abuse Help Line

In the United States and Canada, the Church has established a confidential abuse help line to assist stake presidents and bishops (1-801-240-1911 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-1911). These leaders should promptly call the help line about *every* situation in which a person may have been abused—or is at risk of being abused. Stake presidents and bishops should also call the help line if they become aware of the viewing, purchasing, or distributing of child pornography.

This help line is available for bishops and stake presidents to call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, when addressing situations involving any type of abuse.

When stake presidents or bishops call the help line, legal and clinical professionals will answer their questions and provide instructions about how to assist victims, comply with local laws and requirements for reporting abuse, and protect against further abuse.

A bishop should also notify his stake president of instances of abuse.

In countries that do not have a help line, a bishop who learns of abuse should contact his stake president, who will seek guidance from the Area Presidency.

17.3.2.2
Counseling

Stake presidents and bishops make every effort to counsel those who have been involved in abuse. These leaders may refer to the resources on abuse found on ministeringresources.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

In addition to the inspired help of Church leaders, victims, perpetrators, and their families may need professional counseling. In the United States and Canada, stake presidents and bishops may contact LDS Family Services to identify resources to provide such counseling in harmony with gospel principles (1-801-240-1711; 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-1711; or ldsfamilyservices.org). Outside the United States and Canada, stake presidents may contact the Area Presidency for guidance.

Stake presidents and bishops should help those who have committed abuse to repent and to cease their abusive behavior (see Isaiah 1:18; Doctrine and Covenants 64:7). 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.

Stake presidents and bishops should also be caring and sensitive when working with the families of victims and perpetrators of abuse.

17.3.2.3
Church Discipline, Callings, and Membership Record Annotations

Members who have abused others are subject to Church discipline. They should not be given Church callings and may not have a temple recommend until they have repented and all Church discipline has been resolved.

A person whose membership record is annotated for having abused a child sexually or physically must not be given any calling or assignment involving children or youth. Also, careful consideration should be given to other assignments, such as serving as ministering brothers and sisters. These restrictions should remain in place until the First Presidency authorizes removal of the annotation (see 6.13.4 for information about annotations).

17.3.2.4
Stake and Ward Councils

In stake and ward council meetings, stake presidencies and bishoprics regularly review Church policies and guidelines on preventing and responding to abuse. They teach the key messages in "Preventing and Responding to Abuse," an enclosure to the First Presidency letter dated March 26, 2018 (see ministeringresources.ChurchofJesusChrist.org). They invite discussion from council members. Leaders and council members should seek the guidance of the Spirit as they teach and discuss this sensitive subject.

Council members should also watch and discuss the video *Protect the Child: Responding to Child Abuse* (see ministeringresources.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

For more information, see *Handbook 2,* 4.7.

17.3.2.5

Legal Issues Relating to 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 law enforcement personnel or other appropriate government authorities. Leaders can obtain information about local reporting requirements through the help line. Where reporting is required by law, the leader encourages the member to secure qualified legal advice.

Church leaders and members should fulfill all legal obligations to report abuse to civil authorities. In some locations, leaders and teachers who work with children and youth are considered "mandated reporters" and must report abuse to legal authorities. Similarly, in many locations, any person who learns of abuse is required to report it to legal authorities. Call the abuse help line for details regarding mandated reporters and other legal requirements for reporting abuse.

For guidelines on Church leaders testifying in legal proceedings, see 17.1.26.

17.3.3

Artificial Insemination

The Church strongly discourages artificial insemination using semen from anyone but the husband. 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 Church leaders in this matter are subject to Church discipline.

For information about the sealing of children who were conceived by artificial insemination, see 3.7.2.7.

17.3.4

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 should also understand that sexual relations within marriage are divinely approved not only for the purpose of procreation, but also as a way of expressing love and strengthening emotional and spiritual bonds between husband and wife.

17.3.5

Chastity and Fidelity

The Lord's law of chastity is abstinence from sexual relations outside of lawful marriage and fidelity within marriage. Sexual relations are proper only between a man and a woman who are legally and lawfully wedded as husband and wife. Adultery, fornication, homosexual or lesbian relations, and every other unholy, unnatural, or impure practice are sinful. Members who violate the Lord's law of chastity or who influence others to do so are subject to Church discipline.

17.3.6

Homosexual Behavior and Same-Gender Attraction

Homosexual behavior violates the commandments of God, is contrary to the purposes of human sexuality, 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 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.

While opposing homosexual behavior, the Church reaches out with understanding and respect to individuals who are attracted to those of the same gender.

If members feel same-gender attraction but do not engage in any homosexual behavior, leaders should support and encourage them in their resolve to live the law of chastity and to control unrighteous thoughts. These members may receive Church callings. If they are worthy and qualified in every other way, they may also hold temple recommends and receive temple ordinances.

When counseling members who have same-gender attraction, stake presidents and bishops may refer to the booklet *God Loveth His Children*.

In addition to the inspired help of Church leaders, members may need professional counseling. In the United States and Canada, stake presidents and bishops may contact LDS Family Services to identify resources to provide such counseling in harmony with gospel principles (1-801-240-1711; 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-1711; or ldsfamilyservices.org). Outside the United States and Canada, stake presidents may contact the Area Presidency for guidance.

17.3.7
In Vitro Fertilization

The Church strongly discourages in vitro fertilization using semen from anyone but the husband or an egg from anyone but the wife. 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.

For information about the sealing of children who were conceived by in vitro fertilization, see 3.7.2.7.

17.3.8
Occult Affiliation

Church members should not engage in any form of 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, Sept. 18, 1991).

17.3.9
Pornography

The Church opposes pornography in any form. Indulgence in pornography damages individual lives, families, and society. Such indulgence drives away the Spirit of the Lord. Church members should avoid all forms of pornographic material and oppose its production, dissemination, and use.

When stake presidents and bishops counsel members who are involved with pornography, they may refer to the booklet *Helping Those Who Struggle with Pornography*. The booklet *Let Virtue Garnish Thy Thoughts* also provides counsel on how to avoid and overcome problems with pornography.

In addition to the inspired help of Church leaders, members may need professional counseling. In the United States and Canada, stake presidents and bishops may contact LDS Family Services to identify resources to provide such counseling in harmony with gospel principles (1-801-240-1711; 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-1711; or ldsfamilyservices.org). Outside the United States and Canada, stake presidents may contact the Area Presidency for guidance.

17.3.10
Same-Gender Marriages

As a doctrinal principle, based on the scriptures, the Church affirms that marriage between a man and a woman is essential to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

Sexual relations are proper only between a man and a woman who are legally and lawfully wedded as husband and wife. Any other sexual relations, including those between persons of the same gender, are sinful and undermine the divinely created institution of the family. The Church accordingly affirms defining marriage as the legal and lawful union between a man and a woman.

17.3.11
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.

17.3.12
Single Expectant Parents

Church members who are single and pregnant 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 can also help them begin the process of repentance, where appropriate.

Because of the social and emotional issues inherent in such situations, bishops may want to consult with LDS Family Services counselors (where available) to help assess circumstances, determine the need for professional counseling, and identify resources. This service is free of charge.

Bishops should consider referring the expectant parents to LDS Family Services (where available). LDS Family Services provides counseling at no charge to the expectant parents and their families, regardless of whether the parents choose to marry, place the child for adoption, or parent the child without getting married.

When a man and woman conceive a child outside of marriage, every effort should be made to encourage them to marry. When the probability of a successful marriage is unlikely due to age or other circumstances, the unmarried parents should be encouraged to give prayerful consideration to what would be in the best interests of their child.

Adoption is an unselfish, loving decision that blesses both the birth parents and the child in this life and in eternity. For unmarried parents wishing to place children for adoption or for married couples who are hoping to adopt, LDS Family Services may be of assistance in identifying reputable, licensed adoption services. Licensed services are designed to protect the interest of the child, screen adoptive couples before placement, and provide needed supervision and counseling.

Birth parents who do not marry should not be counseled to keep the infant as a condition of repentance or out of a sense of obligation to care for one's own. Additionally, grandparents and other family members should not feel obligated to facilitate parenting by unmarried parents, since the child would not generally be able to receive the blessings of the sealing covenant. Further, unmarried parents are generally unable to provide the stability and the nurturing environment that a married mother and father can provide. Unmarried parents should give prayerful consideration to the best interests of the child and the blessings that can come to an infant who is sealed to a mother and father (see First Presidency letter, June 26, 2002).

If an expectant parent decides to parent the child, Church leaders and other members should treat the parent and child with care and compassion and seek to strengthen parenting skills. LDS Family Services may help in these circumstances. Leaders encourage the parent to have the child given a name and a blessing (see *Handbook 2,* 20.2).

For information about whether a pregnant young woman should attend Relief Society or Young Women meetings, see *Handbook 2,* 10.12.4.

17.3.13
Sperm Donation

The Church strongly discourages the donation of sperm.

17.3.14
Suicide

It is wrong to take a life, including 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. If the person was endowed, he or she may be buried in temple clothing.

The bishop should counsel a person who has seriously considered suicide or has attempted suicide. The bishop may also encourage the member to seek professional help.

17.3.15
Surgical Sterilization (Including Vasectomy)

The Church strongly discourages surgical sterilization as an elective form of birth control. Surgical sterilization 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.

17.3.16
Surrogate Motherhood

The Church strongly discourages surrogate motherhood. 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.

If parents want a child who was born to a surrogate mother to be sealed to them, the stake president refers the matter to the Office of the First Presidency.

Appendix: List of Items Referenced

Handbook 1: Stake Presidents and Bishops refers to many other Church-produced materials. An alphabetical list of these materials is provided below. If item numbers have been assigned, they are included in this list rather than in the text of the handbook. Most of these materials are available through Church Distribution Services. Contact information is provided below:

Distribution Services
1999 West 1700 South
Salt Lake City, Utah 84104-4233
Telephone: 801-240-3800 (Salt Lake City area)
1-800-537-5971 (U.S. and Canada)
1-801-240-1126 (other countries)
Internet: store.ChurchofJesusChrist.org

Aaronic Priesthood Ordination Record and Certificate (in areas that have Church record-keeping software, the record and certificate are printed in local units; in other areas, the item number is 35857)

A Guide to Seminary and Institute Graduation Exercises (available online at ChurchofJesusChrist.org/si/seminary)

All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Finances (04007)

All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Home Storage (04008)

Annual History for Stakes and Districts (32299)

A Parent's Guide (31125)

Application to the First Presidency form (in areas that have Church record-keeping software, the form is printed in local units; in other areas, unit leaders may obtain copies from the Area Presidency; 35789)

Baptism and Confirmation Certificate (in areas that have Church record-keeping software, the certificate is printed in local units; in other areas, the item number is 35920)

Baptism and Confirmation Record (in areas that have Church record-keeping software, the form is printed in local units; for full-time missionaries and areas that do not have record-keeping software, the item number is 35971)

Basic Principles of Welfare and Self-Reliance (booklet, 08288; DVD, 08287)

Basic Unit Program Guidebook (36717)

Bishop's Order for Commodities forms (item numbers vary by area)

Branch Guidebook (31179)

Certificate of Appointment (33120)

Children's Songbook (35395)

Church Facilities Artwork catalog (contact the facilities manager)

Confidential Report on Proposed Temple Worker form (04768)

Duties and Blessings of the Priesthood, Part B (31112)

Endowed from on High: Temple Preparation Seminar Teacher's Manual (36854)

Facilities Management Guidelines for Meetinghouses and Other Church Property (United States and Canada, 35860; outside the United States and Canada, 36485)

Family Guidebook (31180)

For the Strength of Youth (pamphlet, 36550; card, 36551)

God Loveth His Children (04824)

Group Leader Kit (08208)

Helping Those Who Struggle with Pornography (00461)

Hymns (31243)

Information and Suggestions for Patriarchs (31257)

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

Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled DVD (54616)

Let Virtue Garnish Thy Thoughts (00460)

Limited-Use Recommend (04138; use the order form in the recommend book to order additional recommends)

Melchizedek Priesthood Ordination Record and Certificate (in areas that have Church record-keeping software, the record and certificate are printed in local units; in other areas, the item number is 35858)

Member's Guide to Temple and Family History Work (36795)

Military identification tag for LDS servicemen and servicewomen (33118)

Military scripture set (31197)

Missionary Handbook (35996)

Missionary recommendation forms (in areas that do not use the online missionary recommendation system, the item number is 36549)

Mission President's Handbook (36203)

Needs and Resources Analysis form (32290)

Needs and Resources Analysis Supplement form (32291)

New Patriarch Recommendation form (31674)

Officers Sustained forms (in areas that have Church record-keeping software, these forms are printed in local units; in other areas, the item numbers are as follows: stake, 32300; district, 32301; ward or branch in stake, 32302; branch in mission, 32303)

Patriarchal Blessing Recommend (in areas that have Church record-keeping software, the form is printed in local units; in other areas, the item number is 32017)

Preach My Gospel:A Guide to Missionary Service (36617)

Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple (36793)

Preventing and Responding to Child Abuse (35665)

Preventing and Responding to Spouse Abuse (35869)

Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders' Guidebook (31178)

Protect the Child:Responding to Child Abuse DVD (06616)

Providing in the Lord's Way: Summary of A Leader's Guide to Welfare (08257)

Quarterly Report (in areas that have Church record-keeping software, the form is accessed and submitted electronically; in other areas, the assigned administrative office sends the form to units)

Recommendation for Church-Service Missionary form (available online at lds.org/csm; or item number 35813)

Recommendation for New Bishop form (in areas that have Church record-keeping software, the form is printed in local units; in other areas, the item number is 31747)

Recommendation for New Counselor to Stake President form (in areas that have Church record-keeping software, the form is printed in local units; in other areas, the item number is 31746)

Recommend for Living Ordinances (04102; use the order form in the recommend book to order additional recommends)

Recommend to Perform an Ordinance form (32595)

Report of Administrative Action form (in areas that have Church record-keeping software, the form is printed in local units; in other areas, the item number is 32427)

Report of Church Disciplinary Action form (in areas that have Church record-keeping software, the form is printed in local units; in other areas, the item number is 33493)

Request for Ordinance Information form (32388)

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

Responding to Abuse: Helps for Ecclesiastical Leaders (32248)

Serving Your Country (brochure, 35937; DVD, 01684)

Stake and District Organization Application form (34203)

Teaching Guidebook (34595)

Temple Recommend (04101; use the order form in the recommend book to order additional recommends)

Tithing and Other Offerings form (item numbers vary by area)

True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference (36863; the item number for units to order this publication as a no-charge item is 37054)

Ward and Branch Organization Application form (34202)

Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting: The Patriarch (booklet, 25240; DVD, 25241 090)

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