

Church Administrator's Handbook 2005 Edition



Community of Christ

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More information concerning many items contained in this handbook can be obtained by contacting the church's headquarters in Independence, Missouri, USA. Offices are open 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. (800–1700) in the central time zone (GMT minus 6 hours; GMT minus 5 hours from the first Sunday in April to the last Sunday in October).

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Introduction

The *Church Administrator's Handbook* is a summary of policies, legislative actions, and established procedures intended to provide guidance to the administration of the church's various ministries, especially in field jurisdictions. Congregational pastors, mission center presidents, financial officers, and other leaders will find that many commonly asked questions are answered in these pages.

The 2000 World Conference approved new church bylaws that reorganized mid-level field administration into mission centers rather than the multiple forms of organization that were present formerly. This handbook intends to reflect those changes. The bylaws themselves may be found in the current edition of *World Conference Resolutions* (Herald House).

In its current form, this handbook applies most directly to the church in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Western Europe. General principles apply to the church wherever it is organized, however, and field apostles are responsible for making procedural adjustments in jurisdictions where legal and cultural factors call for alternative arrangements. They do this in consultation with pastors, mission center presidents, financial officers, and appropriate World Church officers.

General principles apply broadly wherever the church exists. For example, specific financial procedures may vary from nation to nation, depending on legal requirements, the nature of banking and economic systems, etc. Nevertheless, all financial procedures should reflect integrity, transparency, and concern for the benefit of the church's ministries as well as complying with local legal requirements.

The success of the church depends primarily on whether or not its ministries adequately reflect the ministries of Jesus Christ. The policies and procedures contained in this handbook are intended to allow those ministries to occur without being unduly hindered by the mechanics of church operations. The church exists to reflect the ministries that we see in our Lord, and it is to that end that we serve.

—*The First Presidency*

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Part I: Organization

1. Nature of Governance in the Community of Christ

Theocratic Democracy

The church, as defined by President Joseph Smith III, is a theocratic democracy. It was brought into being by divine initiative, is guided and administered by divine authority, is sustained by the light of the Holy Spirit, and exists for divine purposes. In response to divine initiative, members share responsibility for governing the church. "...[A]ll things must be done in order and by common consent in the church, by the prayer of faith" (Doctrine and Covenants 27:4).¹

Priesthood

The government of the church is by divine authority through priesthood. It should be noted that the government of the church is *through* priesthood, not *by* priesthood. The distinction is important. Ministers must first of all be disciples. Disciples are those who seek to transform this world into the kingdom of God and Christ. In no other way can their claim to divine authority become rich and meaningful.²

Priesthood Calls

The basic principles pertaining to priesthood calls are that all calls shall be initiated by appropriate administrative officers, shall receive necessary administrative approvals, shall be presented to the candidate for acceptance, and shall be approved by an appropriate conference of members. Specific procedures are established by the First Presidency.³

Leadership and Administrative Functions

Leadership and administration is through members of the priesthood, acting according to their several callings and with the consent of the church. Supervisory leadership of the ministries of the church is vested in the following groups:

- a. The *First Presidency* is composed of the president and two counselors, and they preside over the whole church. This includes responsibility for the World Conference, field ministries, priesthood quorums and orders, and headquarters functions.
- b. The *Council of Twelve Apostles* is responsible for the evangelistic witness of the church. Individual apostles may be assigned to various responsibilities of church leadership, including field administration.
- c. The *Presiding Bishopric* is composed of the presiding bishop and two counselors. They are the chief financial officers and trustees of the church, and are responsible for the administration of the temporal affairs of the whole church.

Together these groups function as the leadership body of the church known as the World Church Leadership Council.

To this council, from time to time, additional persons are added because of the unique contribution they make to the administrative, programmatic, or missionary ministries of the church.

Other leadership functions are vested in the following councils, quorums, and orders:

- Council of Presidents of Seventy
- Quorums of Seventy
- Quorum of High Priests
- Order of Bishops
- Order of Evangelists⁴

Legislative Functions

Legislation is considered and enacted in World Conference, mission center conferences, and in congregational conferences. These conferences meet at the call of the responsible administrative officers, at times and places determined by the bodies concerned, or without such provisions at times and places set by the responsible administrative officers.

- a. **Authority of Conferences.** Each conference has authority to legislate for those it represents, insofar as it does not usurp rights lawfully centered elsewhere. Accordingly, no congregational conference can legislate for its mission center, such as requiring certain acts on the part of mission center leaders and no congregational or mission center conference can enact binding legislation on matters of World Church importance.
- b. **Limits.** No legislative body can rightfully take to itself administrative or judicial functions.
- c. **Right to Nominate.** It is the right of all members to make nominations in filling elective offices in the jurisdictions of the church, but this action in no sense denies the right of presiding officers to present concurrent nominations for the filling of such elective offices nor does it suppose that every office should be filled by election. Often program assistants are appointed by presiding officers and sustained by the appropriate conference.⁵

Judicial Functions

When conflicts between members or on issues of church polity arise, every attempt should be made to resolve them through the ministry of reconciliation. When these attempts have not been successful, in extreme cases, members of the church have right of access to the courts of the church for protection or redress. Bishop's courts, or where these are not feasible, elders' courts, are standing courts and have original jurisdiction. The Standing High Council may hear appeals

from bishop's courts and has original jurisdiction in some matters. However, the First Presidency has the authority to determine whether any case is subject to a court hearing or a rehearing on appeal.⁶

Common Consent

A basic principle of decision making in the Community of Christ is common consent. Common consent respects the rights of the people to assent to the general conduct of business within the church and to sustain those called of God to provide leadership. Common consent is exercised when members assemble in conferences in congregations, mission centers, and at the World Conference. Leadership is exercised through the responsibility of presiding officers and members to make proposals to the various conferences to which they are responsible and through recognizing that these conferences have the responsibility to review such proposals, to share points of view, and to vote as they feel led by the Holy Spirit.

The rights of the body are safeguarded through the process of common consent as follows:

- a. By the guidance of the Holy Spirit in calling members to the priesthood. All priesthood members are to be ordained according to the gifts and callings of God unto them, and they are to be ordained by the power of the Holy Spirit which is in those who ordain them.
- b. By the requirement that calls to the priesthood be presented for approval to an appropriate conference.
- c. By the right of approval and disapproval which rests with the people who are asked to sustain World Church leaders at World Conference, and local leaders at local conferences.
- d. By the requirement that all things be done with due regard for the duties and privileges of other ministers and members and in harmony with the legislative enactments of the body.
- e. By the provisions for correcting disorder (Doctrine and Covenants 122:10, 126:10).
- f. By the understanding that, for the good of all, properly selected leaders must be allowed to do their work without undue interference, subject always to the provisions made to cover special situations.⁷

Common consent is a goal that all decision-making processes in the church seek to achieve. It is not confined to one specific process. In common consent, there is general agreement that a decision has been made by the appropriate person or body, that all relevant perspectives have been considered, and that the process used to arrive at the decision fosters the spirit of community within the church.

Common consent is a central element in the polity of the Community of Christ, but its definition has always been somewhat elusive. On one hand, it means something more than majority rule, but it means something less than full unanimity on the course of action to be taken.

Perhaps the definition of common consent is elusive because common consent is, above all, a goal to be achieved. Depending on the prevailing culture and the operational context, a number of methods might be used to achieve this end. This section will explore the concept of common consent in terms of the core values of the church. Hopefully, this will allow us to explore the operational issues with more clarity.

Common Consent in Relation to Theocratic Democracy

It may be helpful, first of all, to explore the idea of common consent in relation to another theological element of our polity, the idea of theocratic democracy. This term was initially proposed by Joseph Smith III as a description of the church's governmental structure. It is an ambiguous term, and rightly so. In theocratic democracy, the theocratic and democratic elements are held in tension, with neither claiming absolute precedence over the other. Rather, they support each other while holding each other in check.

It is, perhaps, worth noting that the process is not described as "prophetic democracy." This would imply that the will of the people is held in tension with the will of God. This could imply that the will of the governing authorities of the church is the same thing as the will of God. Yet, this is precisely the question: Who has the better understanding of the will of God for this time—the governing authorities or the people?

The governing authorities (the "theocracy") seek to understand the will of God, but like the people, their understanding is always less than perfect. A healthy tension between the governing authorities and the people does not guarantee that the church is always in perfect alignment with God's will, but it does provide fertile ground for repentance—a change of heart.

In this context, common consent describes decisions arrived at in this tension between the church's governing authorities and the people. The existence of a tension between varying perspectives among the people is only one part of the process, and the existence of tension means that decisions made by the church are always temporal—"for now." We do not win or lose in some final sense. Rather, the community makes the best decision that it can, for now, and continues to reevaluate its direction in the face of experience.

Theological Underpinnings of Common Consent

Common consent is rooted in the church's theology and is based on the worth of persons and the call to community. Decision-making processes play an important role in the spirit of community within the church. Therefore, the goal of common consent in the church is to arrive at broad agreement about issues of importance to the church community.

Various methods can be used to make decisions in the spirit of common consent. The best method to use depends on the cultural context, the significance of the

decision, the intensity of feeling generated by an issue, the time frame within which an issue must be decided, the principle of the worth of persons, etc. Leaders should use discretion in determining the best methods to use in specific circumstances.

Decision making is a stewardship exercised by a group of church members on behalf of a larger body of members. The feelings and concerns of those not present must always be taken into account when a decision is made.

Invariably, consideration of minority viewpoints will strengthen deliberations and decisions. Minority perspectives can often be incorporated into a decision in ways that improve it.

The principle of the “worth of persons” suggests that disagreement is not disloyalty. Disciples should feel free to share their perspectives openly and without fear of retribution or ostracism. Careful and respectful consideration of alternative perspectives is an important element in reaching common consent.

Operational Principles of Common Consent

From these core values, the following ten operational principles for common consent in church settings can be distilled. These are based on the history of church governance blended with the fundamental desire to respect the worth of all persons:

1. Common consent on direction, policy making, and theological understandings is essential for effective church government.
2. Common consent can be defined as general agreement or assent to direction, policy making, and theological understanding. Such agreement is promoted through open, honest, and unfettered exchange of views in a prayerful environment of conciliatory speech, freedom from recrimination, openness to the view and opinions of others, and a continual willingness to reexamine and revise one’s point of view based on such an exchange of views and the impress of the Holy Spirit.
3. General agreement might be defined in the ultimate sense as a unanimous vote of the body. Yet given recognition of the worth of all persons and the church’s high regard for diversity of thought and theological understanding, unanimity may not always be possible, nor, in fact, is it always desirable if it does not honestly reflect the feelings of the body.
4. The nature of a true conferring process presupposes differences of opinion not just on issues that are easily resolved, but on matters of great import for which generations may be required before an agreement on direction is possible.
5. Common consent, if it truly involves a process that respects human diversity and openness, cannot assume that the result will always be unanimous agreement.

To arrive at a sense of general agreement there must be a willingness to accept dissenting views as valid and not to attribute unchristian motives such as lack of support for leadership, a desire for self-aggrandizement, or an attitude of unwillingness to compromise to those who cannot in good conscience be part of a unanimous agreement on any particular direction, policy, or theological understanding.

6. The essence of common consent then rests more on the process undertaken to achieve it and the attitudes of those engaged in the process of seeking it than in the relative degree of unanimity resulting from it.
7. Of course more agreement is better than less. Even though unanimity is the goal, there must be a concomitant willingness to make decisions with less than this level of agreement if the church is not going to be paralyzed in its decision-making processes and also respect human worth and dignity. From time to time this may mean that decisions are taken on the basis of a majority agreement, meaning more favoring a particular course of action or position than oppose it.
8. To be sure, this is not a simple proposition and care should be taken so that this form of agreement does not become reliance on a “simple” majority. Such a majority does not presuppose the process of careful exchange of views and the willingness to alter one’s viewpoint as described earlier. Again, it is not so much the decisional point as the process of give and take preceding it that is the hallmark of true common consent. Indeed, it might be said that a decision made through a true process of common consent that results in agreement by more than half of those involved in decision making is, in fact, a “complex” majority, one achieved after careful deliberations rooted in mutual forbearance and respect for differing points of view.
9. Such a decisional method assumes no motives by any member other than the best interest of the church as seen through the eyes of reason, experience, understanding of scripture, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
10. Common consent assumes responsibility on the part of each person involved in the conferring process, whether they are part of a majority or a minority, after decisions are made.

Notes

1. Bylaws of the Community of Christ, Article III, Section 1.
2. Ibid., Article III, Section 2.
3. Ibid., Article III, Section 3.
4. Ibid., Article III, Section 5.
5. Ibid., Article III, Section 6.
6. Ibid., Article III, Section 7.
7. Ibid., Article III, Section 4.

2. Field Organization

A. Congregations

Congregations are communities of disciples, and they form the fundamental unit of the church's administrative, ministerial, and missional life. Congregations gather frequently, preferably at least weekly, to engage in worship, education, fellowship, and other preparation for mission. Out of a common sense of vision, each congregation seeks to engage in significant missional ministries and together celebrates life as a gift from God as caring, service, prayer, and love are offered and received. Formally organized local units needing extra support or assistance in their early years of development may be organized as *emerging congregations*.

Congregations are grouped into larger jurisdictional units known as *mission centers* for mutual support and to augment the ministries that each can offer. The structure of a congregation varies depending on its mission and structures developed by the World Church and the local mission center. Congregations are encouraged to develop structures that will assist them in freeing the giftedness of people and in meeting the needs for ministry evident in their local communities.

1. Organization:

a. Congregations may be organized by the authority of the First Presidency or any member of the Council of Twelve having jurisdiction. At the time of organization, a congregation should have sufficient members, priesthood, and material resources to provide a stable presence of the church in the community in which it is located. It should also show promise of potential further growth and expansion. The World Church secretary and the World Church recorder should be informed as these are established so that a record of the organization may be made.

b. Analysis of congregations with large memberships may demonstrate membership clusters that suggest establishing new congregations. Congregations may cooperate with mission centers in establishing emerging congregations in circumstances that show promise for evangelistic growth.

c. Congregations should cooperate with their respective mission centers to give significant attention to assisting in the development of new congregations where appropriate. In this process, the mission center should play a leading role in assisting in new church planting.

d. If congregations are deemed to be below a level necessary to maintain stability, consideration should be given to providing additional strength, relocation, merger with another congregation, or disorganization.

2. Pastors:

The pastor is the chief spiritual and administrative officer of the congregation. The pastor is called to be a visionary leader who seeks to engender in the congregation a sense of mission and who helps its members maintain a strong

sense of kinship and love. The pastor seeks to identify the giftedness of the members and the needs and opportunities for ministry in the community. From the intersection of these factors, the pastor leads the congregation into ministries of service, witness, and caring.

3. Selection of Pastors:

a. Ideally, one holding the office of high priest or elder should be selected as pastor. If no high priests or elders are available, or reason exists for selecting another, then the priests, teachers, and deacons, in that order, may be considered. The pastor must be a member of the priesthood. Ordinarily, neither evangelists nor bishops should be selected. If it becomes necessary to select an evangelist to serve as pastor, the evangelist would need to be temporarily released from that office for the duration of the pastorship to serve as a high priest. A similar procedure should be considered for bishops, depending on the circumstances.

b. Members of the congregation attending the congregational conference may nominate eligible persons to serve as pastor. The mission center president also has the right to nominate a candidate, either in person or by written correspondence. A pastor should be elected by a majority vote of the congregational conference.

c. Some congregations may find it helpful to use a nominating committee or a search committee, broadly representative of the congregation itself, to discuss leadership needs and to seek out those who might serve well in the role of pastor.

d. Pastors should be elected annually. To provide for continuity of leadership, some mission centers may suggest that pastors be willing to serve for a period of several years, but a congregation should elect its pastor for terms of one year at a time.

4. Co-pastors:

a. In certain situations, congregations may wish to elect more than one person to the position of pastor. All persons elected as pastors should be members of the priesthood, preferably of the Melchisedec priesthood.

b. Where two individuals are co-pastors, both may be recorded with the World Church as being pastor. Where three or more persons share pastoral duties, one person should be named pastor of record and reported to the World Church recorder.

c. Where co-pastors are elected, major administrative decisions (such as priesthood calls and major program initiatives) should be made mutually between the co-pastors.

d. Successful co-pastor relationships require a high degree of communication and coordination. While individual co-pastors may take primary leadership in various areas of congregational life, major decisions should be made in ways that allow for mutual agreement among the co-pastors.

5. Mission Center President/Pastor Relationships:

Pastors work closely with the mission center president and cooperate in all mission center activities. Because the mission center president is responsible for the care and direction of the mission center's congregations, the pastor is accountable to the mission center president for the conduct of the affairs of the congregation.

6. Counselors to the Pastor:

Pastors may appoint counselors to serve as members of the congregational pastorate. Those selected should be members of the priesthood and should be sustained by a vote of the congregational conference. Counselors serve at the pleasure of the pastor, and their tenure in office automatically ends with the resignation, death, or replacement of the pastor. The appointment of counselors does not preclude pastors from appointing other assistants, who may or may not be members of the priesthood, as they deem necessary.

7. Duties and Responsibilities of Pastors:

The following is a reference list of the major duties and responsibilities of congregational pastors. While local situations vary, this list represents the common activities and ministries of most pastors.

The pastor

- a. is responsible for ensuring that congregational life and ministry function in a balanced way;
- b. initiates, coordinates, and is responsible for these ministries, even though responsibility is delegated at many points;
- c. establishes an appropriate congregational structure to carry out the ministries of the church;
- d. convenes and chairs all congregational conferences, except as others are designated by the pastor or on the request of the mission center president, or designate. Uses the church's bylaws, World Conference resolutions, and generally accepted rules of parliamentary procedure as the authorities for conducting congregational conferences. In the United States, Canada, and in the World Conference, *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* is the parliamentary authority. In other settings, it may be used, or some other culturally appropriate rules may be used;
- e. convenes and chairs meetings of the pastoral team (pastor and counselors) at least monthly;
- f. on a quarterly basis, convenes and chairs the congregational leadership team composed of key congregational leaders, where the congregational program of ministry is planned and activities are coordinated;

- g. encourages the congregation and its leaders to discern a vision for that congregation, and to establish specific short- and long-range goals for fulfillment of that vision;
- h. understands and supports the relationship of the congregation, mission center, and World Church in pursuing the ministries of the church;
- i. attends at least one pastor's training event each year, the purpose being leadership education, awareness of and appreciation for World Church resources, as well as peer fellowship;
- j. encourages congregational leaders to attend mission center and World Church leadership meetings and workshops;
- k. develops leadership within the congregation:
 - encourages study programs in leadership training, Temple School curriculum, and other education opportunities;
 - gives prayerful attention to the discernment and nurture of ministerial gifts and callings among the membership;
 - provides opportunities for leadership experiences, carefully matching personal giftedness and potential ministries, and providing follow-up support;
- l. recommends people to serve in appointed offices;
- m. initiates appropriate calls to the priesthood as led by the spirit of inspiration and the testimony of the life of the one being called;
- n. maintains a relationship with the priesthood members in the congregation as that of a minister's minister:
 - keeps in close touch with them, their families, and their needs;
 - encourages and motivates them in their ministry including a periodic review of their ministry;
- o. coordinates the ministry of priesthood and members as they undertake specific responsibilities in harmony with each one's authority and giftedness;
- p. promotes unified congregational support for the Disciple's Generous Response, which the congregational financial officer directs under the leadership of the mission center financial officer:
 - develops, in cooperation with the congregational financial officer, the congregational budget; all program leaders should be consulted in this process;
 - makes recommendations, in consultation with the congregational financial officer, to the congregation on desired modification and repairs of church plant, new equipment, etc.;

- assures that all congregational priesthood and leaders participate in the Disciple's Generous Response;
- q. considers a lifestyle of stewardship and generosity to be a spiritual principle of the gospel; in cooperation with the congregational financial officer, promotes stewardship accountability, generous offering of time, talent, and treasure, and the raising of funds for local budgetary needs;
 - r. carries basic responsibility for the missionary ministries of the congregation in coordination with the congregational missionary coordinator;
 - s. ensures opportunity for the regular expression of the sacraments of the church;
 - t. is responsible for review, where appropriate, of all sacraments requested within the congregational area;
 - u. is responsible for dealing with any infractions of church law that occur in the congregation; ministry of reconciliation should first be attempted, and if there is no positive response to such ministry, appropriate administrative action should be taken after consultation with the mission center president;
 - v. requests the ministry of World Church personnel through the mission center president when making requests for guest ministry, and seeks approval from the mission center president for all self-sustaining guest ministry from beyond the mission center boundaries;
 - w. presides over the congregation but does not "possess" it; directs the work of the congregation with love and equity in all programs and functions;
 - x. presides over worship services often and preaches periodically; and
 - y. models an affirmative, vision-directed, goal-oriented, and Spirit-led leadership stance, which will assist the congregation to claim, expand, and add to its strengths of ministry:
 - assures that the congregation is represented in the community clergy association or ministerial alliance;
 - serves as official liaison between the congregation, the mission center, and the World Church, assuring that necessary reports are completed and submitted on time; and
 - calls for the annual audit of the congregations financial records.

8. Congregational Conferences:

- a. *Membership:* All baptized members of a congregation are members of the congregational conference. Administrative officers having jurisdiction over the congregation

have voice and vote in a congregational conference by right of their office.

- b. *Presiding at Congregational Conferences:* The pastor presides over the congregational conference. The counselors may preside at the request of the pastor or when the pastor is absent. Members of the First Presidency, Council of Twelve, mission center presidents, or their authorized representatives may preside as a courtesy or in special circumstances (Bylaws, Article V, Section 6).
- c. *Frequency and Scheduling of Congregational Conferences:* Congregational conferences should be held as often as necessary to aid communications, develop cohesiveness, and transact necessary business. At least one congregational conference should be held each year. The scheduling of all congregational conferences should be coordinated between the pastor and the mission center president.
- d. *Recommended Order of Proceedings:* The order recommended for a congregational conference may vary, depending on cultural circumstances. A suggested order of proceedings in the section on "Planning and Conducting Conferences" is appropriate to most settings.
- e. *Special Congregational Conference:* Special congregational conferences may be called by the pastor. Care should be taken to see that those who have a right to participate have sufficient notice of time, place, and business to be considered (Bylaws Article V, Section 4). Notice should normally be given at least two weeks before the conference.
- f. *Voting:* Members of a congregation must be present in order to vote. Proxy voting and absentee voting are not permitted.
- g. In unusual circumstances the presiding minister next higher in the administrative line (the mission center president or field apostle) may call and preside over a conference in any of the congregations that constitute the larger jurisdiction, subject to the confirming action of the conference when it convenes (WCR 1097).

9. Bylaws:

No congregation may establish bylaws. The rules given in the World Church Bylaws and the procedures in the *Church Administrator's Handbook* should be followed.

10. Record Keeping:

- a. *Change of Address:* Any pastor who moves should immediately notify the mission center president and ensure that the congregational recorder (or the mission center recorder when necessary) makes the change in the World Church records. Where this is impractical, information may be provided to the World Church recorder via mail or e-mail.

- b. *Change of Pastor:* Any change in pastor should be brought to the attention of the mission center president, and notice should be given to the World Church recorder.
- c. *Congregational Files:* Each congregation should maintain files of the following information so that it can be transmitted to the next pastor to aid in continuity of administration.
 - (1) Congregational officers: a complete, up-to-date mailing list along with telephone numbers and e-mail addresses where appropriate;
 - (2) membership mailing list: a membership mailing list should be kept. Most congregations use the Ministry Information System, a computer database housed at World Church headquarters that maintains accurate mailing information, records of sacraments, etc. In some jurisdictions the field apostle may establish other procedures for maintaining and reporting this information;
 - (3) current priesthood list with office, age, and activity indicated;
 - (4) the current editions of *World Conference Resolutions* and the *Church Administrator's Handbook*;
 - (5) information about any priesthood calls in process;
 - (6) copy of congregational conference minutes;
 - (7) calendar of scheduled congregational activities, building reservations, etc.;
 - (8) statistical reports on congregational membership, finances, attendance, and other information;
 - (9) audited financial reports reflecting operating and building fund budgets, income and expenses, and fund balances;
 - (10) files of correspondence with the mission center president and other supervisory officers;
 - (11) a current list of all registered youth/children's workers in the congregation; and
 - (12) files related to priesthood silences, registered youth/ children's workers, and other confidential member actions should not be kept in the pastor's possession, but transmitted to the First Presidency.

11. Secretary:

The congregational secretary should be elected by the congregational conference with the right of concurrent nomination resting with the pastor and with the members of the conference. The secretary is responsible for keeping the minutes of all congregational conferences and for assisting the pastor in preparing for conferences and meetings.

12. Congregational Financial Officer:

Congregational financial officers (CFO) are appointed by the mission center financial officer (MCFO) in consultation with the mission center president and congregational pastor and are sustained by a congregation conference. The

CFOs function on behalf of the Presiding Bishopric and are supervised by the mission center financial officer with respect to financial procedures. As such the MCFO must be a signatory on all congregation accounts. The CFO, as part of the congregational leadership team, supports the pastor and is accountable to the pastor and the congregation. The CFO must be a member of the church, although the CFO may appoint assistants (who need not be members of the church) for tasks such as data entry, bookkeeping, etc.

The specific duties of the CFO in the United States are summarized in the following profile. In nations where adjustments to this profile are required, it is the responsibility of the field apostle to work with the Presiding Bishopric in developing appropriate adjustments.

a. Ministerial Activities

- Teaching and preaching of stewardship
- Teaching of A Disciple's Generous Response principles (financial stewardship aspects)
- Promotion of incorporating A Disciple's Generous Response principles into members' daily lives
- Promotion of church goals through preaching, teaching, and presence in the congregations
- Providing ministry through the use of the Oblation fund

b. Financial Management

- Responsible for congregational assets, to include
 - Assisting the pastor and program leaders in the development of the annual conference-approved budgets;
 - monitoring of annual conference-approved budgets;
 - timely reporting of mission tithes contributions;
 - timely processing of contributor reports;
 - maintenance of contributors' addresses;
 - collecting, receipting, and accounting for all congregational funds;
 - support of annual audits for the congregational financial records; and
 - coordination of the offering envelope program.
- Representing needs and use of world and local mission tithes

c. Competencies

- Competent ministerial skills in representing stewardship and A Disciple's Generous Response
- Detailed knowledge of A Disciple's Generous Response
- Financial management skills
- Basic computer skills, processing contributions online under the Shelby system.

For further information contact the mission center financial officer.

13. Budgets:

Each congregation should have a budget that supports a program of ministry that is designed to achieve the mission

of the church in its area. There are annual expenses that each congregation must pay, such as insurance, utilities, and mission center support approved by the mission center conference. These expenses must be included in the congregation's budget. Next the pastors and the CFO determine what additional ministries and services will be provided based on available funding for that year. The draft budget is presented to the appropriate congregational leadership group for further consideration. The proposed budget that is developed is presented to the congregation for approval. This process should invite and encourage the general membership to review, understand, comment upon, and ultimately endorse both the program of ministry and the supporting budget for the congregation. The congregational budget is not valid unless it is approved by formal action of the congregational conference.

The CFO of a congregation is encouraged to report monthly on the status of income and expense relative to the approved budget of the congregation.

The funds of the congregation are received and disbursed according to the approved budget. Budget approval relates to approving the scope of ministries and services being funded as well as the dollar amount for those ministries and services. At times, items approved in the budget may vary in cost. The CFO is authorized to manage the bottom line of the budget, making adjustments to specific line items in the budget as necessary to account for these variations. However, if a change from the approved scope of ministries and services is necessary, either addition or deletion, then congregational approval is required. In emergency situations requiring a change in scope, the CFO shall receive approval from the pastor and/or other key congregational leaders before expending funds and then notify the congregation at the next available opportunity.

It is possible for projected income to not meet the approved budgeted expenses. If the congregation has adequate reserves then with congregational conference approval those funds can be used to meet the approved budgeted expenses. However, if there are no reserves or insufficient reserves then the CFO along with the pastor and leadership team will need to adjust the budget accordingly and then obtain congregational conference approval.

14. Recorder:

a. The congregational recorder is appointed by the mission center recorder (in consultation with the World Church recorder), functions on behalf of the Presiding Bishopric, and is supervised by the mission center financial officer. The congregational recorder, as part of the congregational leadership team, supports the pastor and is accountable to the pastor and the congregation. When the MCFO makes a change in congregational recorder, the change should be reported to the mission center recorder and the World Church recorder

and should include contact information for the new recorder and the effective date of the change.

- b. It is the responsibility of the congregational recorder to keep the statistical records for the congregation up to date. This would include baby blessings, baptisms, confirmations, marriages, divorces, ordinations, deaths, transfers, address changes, adoptions, and name changes. The congregational recorder should be well acquainted with the members of the congregation. The recorder should be tactful in gathering the necessary information and attend regularly in order to be aware of information that needs to be recorded.
- c. The pastor and financial officer should partner with the recorder to keep changes and updates processed as quickly as possible. Members of the congregation should also keep the recorder informed of any changes that need to be made. Each congregational leadership team should develop a process that works best for them to ensure the quickest and most accurate way to keep the church's database current. Information gathered by the recorder for church purposes is confidential and should not be given out to anyone, except specific persons or groups that the pastor has approved for use in congregational work.
- d. Information collected by the recorder is processed in two ways. The recorder can enter the information directly into the church's database, or they can collect the information and submit it to their mission center for entry. Corrections and updates to the records can also be made by the mission center or World Church, when necessary.

15. Historian:

The congregational historian is appointed by the World Church historian on the recommendation of the pastor and with a sustaining vote of the congregational conference. Congregational historians should submit annual historical reports for the congregation to the World Church historian's office for deposit in the church archives. Guidelines for congregational historians are available from the World Church historian's office.

16. Selection of Other Program Leaders:

Congregational program leaders should be selected approximately three months before the date they are to take office. Early selection will permit these leaders and the pastor to plan goals, objectives, ministry programs, and the calendar of activities for the ensuing year. (The positions to be filled with such officers will vary depending on local needs, but they may include church school director, music director, youth leader, etc.) The pastor should discuss leadership needs with the mission center president before the congregational conference. Congregational program leaders

are assistants to the pastor to whom they are responsible for their activities. As such they should be appointed by the pastor and sustained by the congregational conference.

17. Timeline for Officer Selection, Program Planning, and Budget Development:

While jurisdictional needs may vary, each congregation should develop a timeline for the annual process of selecting officers, planning a program of ministry, and approving an annual budget. The following items should be placed on the timeline on intervals that provide adequate time for processing and meeting notices:

- a. Congregational conference selects pastor and other leaders.
- b. New congregational leaders assume office.
- c. Goals, objectives, and ministry programs developed.
- d. Proposed congregational budget is developed.
- e. Congregational conference approves budgets.

18. Term of Office:

The term of office for congregational officers should be one year. Officers continuing in service should be elected or sustained annually.

19. Ministry with Youth and Children:

It is the responsibility of the pastor to assure that all people who work with children or youth have completed the Registered Children's and Youth Worker Application Form and have completed the screening process to be a registered person to work with children and youth. Only registered children's and youth workers, and children's and youth worker assistants, may be used in church programs that work directly with children or youth. This includes such things as nursery workers, church school teachers, youth leaders, camp counselors, etc. It is desirable for all congregational leaders and priesthood to be registered youth workers. (See Part II, Section 10 for detailed information on the Registered Children's and Youth Worker application and screening process.)

20. Flexibility in Structure:

Congregations are free to develop the organizational structure that best suits their needs. They should be sure to plan ministries that reflect the breadth of congregational life and mission. Congregations may wish to appoint program leaders for worship, Christian education, caring ministries, missionary outreach, compassionate service, community development, communications, leadership development and training, and children's and youth ministry. The decision about which program leaders are needed should be based on the congregation's giftedness and the needs and opportunities for ministry in the congregation and the community.

21. Priesthood Calls:

The pastor initiates priesthood calls in congregations. However, when a family member of the pastor is involved, the mission center president should recommend priesthood calls in congregations and may also initiate calls in other special circumstances (WCR 988). All calls are initiated through the spirit of inspiration and the testimony of the life of the one being called. Calls are not to be discussed with the candidate or the membership until administrative approval is received. Public announcement can be made after the candidate has accepted the call. In cases where the call is not accepted, all information should remain confidential.

- a. Calls to the Aaronic priesthood and to the office of elder shall be the responsibility of the pastor and the mission center president. In the process of consideration, it is highly recommended that administrative officers consult with other leaders such as counselors, evangelists, and financial officers. In this way the insights and views of various leaders can be helpful in the process of discerning priesthood calls. The mission center president gives final approval for these calls after clearance by the First Presidency for ministerial and personal issues. The candidate may then be contacted and the call presented to the appropriate conference (Joint Council Minutes, March 3, 1967).
- b. Pastors who hold the office of priest may not initiate calls to the Melchisedec priesthood. In addition, pastors who hold the offices of deacon or teacher may not initiate calls to the priesthood. Pastors in these circumstances who discern such calls should consult with the mission center president, who may then initiate a call if prayerful discernment so indicates.
- c. Ordinations should be approved by vote of the congregational conference. Legislative approval of ordinations is subject to the completion of all required preordination training. Candidates should not be ordained until they have completed all preordination requirements. Calls for those on the nonresident list should be approved by the mission center conference. When the candidate attends a different congregation than where he or she is enrolled, approval should be given by the congregation or mission center where the candidate is enrolled.
- d. Forms for submitting priesthood calls are available from mission center offices (sample on pp. 88-90).
- e. If a candidate declines ordination for one year, the call is withdrawn. If appropriate the call may be reprocessed at a later date.
- f. Procedures for initiating priesthood calls to the high priesthood and the office of seventy are found in the section of this handbook relating to Priesthood and Ordination.

- g. See Part II—Policies and Procedures for more detailed information.

22. Priesthood and Leadership Education:

The pastor is responsible for priesthood and leadership training within the congregation. The mission center president is also responsible for planning and carrying out priesthood and leadership training supplemental to those within the congregations. Additional information may be found in Part II, Section 6, “Priesthood and Ordination”. For information on setting up Temple School courses, contact Temple School.

23. Houses of Worship:

All congregational building programs must receive the approval of the mission center officers as well as the approval of the field apostle and the Presiding Bishopric through Real Estate Services at World Church headquarters.

Loans for construction or development may be secured, when funds are available and requirements met, through the Presiding Bishopric from the Houses of Worship Revolving Loan Fund. Contact the Real Estate Services for specific details, rates, and other information.

24. Emerging Congregation Organization:

- a. Emerging congregations are organized by the mission center president.
- b. The types of emerging congregation organization may vary. All emerging congregations shall be organized with the knowledge and consent of the field apostle. The World Church secretary and the World Church recorder should be informed as these are established so that a record of the organization may be made.
- c. Membership should be transferred into the emerging congregation as soon as possible. The organization is completed when all transfers are completed.
- d. The pastor, mission center president, or appropriate World Church officers may initiate ordinations among emerging congregation membership. Legislative approval should be given by an appropriate conference as determined by the mission center president.
- e. Emerging congregation pastors are appointed by the mission center president. The appointment should be presented to the emerging congregation conference for a sustaining vote.

25. Emerging Congregations Fiscal Procedures:

The Presiding Bishopric has created guidelines for financial accountability in emerging congregations. These guidelines are available through the MCFO or can be found at www.CofChrist.org/cfo#PB.

26. Group Organization:

A group is an informal association of people, not in sufficient number for congregational organization, who meet together for church purposes and with the approval of jurisdictional officers. Membership cannot be transferred to a group but must be kept on the appropriate congregational or nonresident list.

27. Congregational Names:

Except in unusual circumstances, congregations should be known by the names of the towns, cities, or sections within a city where meetings are held. Apostolic approval should be received before name changes are made (WCR 1142).

28. Disorganization of a Congregation:

- a. A congregation may be disorganized when any one or a combination of the following circumstances prevail:
 - when an area within a mission center is reorganized;
 - when it is ministerially or financially unwise to maintain the congregation;
 - when leadership potential declines to the point that the mission center must provide leadership indefinitely; or
 - when a congregation is in a state of disorder.
- b. The authority to disorganize rests with the field apostle after consultation with the mission center officers.
- c. The field apostle should notify the World Church secretary and the World Church recorder of any organizational change.
- d. All members of a congregation being disorganized should be transferred to an appropriate congregation or the nonresident list. The organization and disorganization of a congregation is accomplished when all transfer reports are recorded.

29. Financial Considerations in Closing Congregations:

- a. Flexibility should be used when making financial determinations regarding the assets of a closing jurisdiction.
- b. When a jurisdiction closes, any existing debt needs to be acknowledged and payment provisions agreed to before the closure is final.
- c. Existing jurisdictional funding boards and their associated financial assets need to be integrated into another jurisdiction before closure is complete.
- d. A final audit of the closing jurisdiction's assets should be accomplished.
- e. Any funds resulting from the sale of real property will be managed in accordance with the Presiding Bishopric's “Fund Utilization Policy.”

- f. Determining the disposition of existing funds of the closing jurisdiction is the responsibility of that jurisdiction but should be done in collaboration with the next higher jurisdiction.

B. Mission Centers

1. Purpose:

Mission centers exist to support congregations, facilitate church expansion, and provide linkage between World Church ministries and congregations. Key functions include, but are not limited to,

- pastoral support of congregational leaders;
 - leadership skill development;
 - congregational consultant ministries;
 - missionary ministries;
 - church planting;
 - congregational crisis support;
 - financial resource development and support;
 - specialized ministries (e.g. children, youth, young adult, singles);
 - coordination of periodic celebration events (e.g. reunions, camps, conferences, etc.);
 - technical assistance to congregations (e.g., legal, risk management, real estate, etc.);
 - human resources; and
 - essential administrative functions (e.g., implementation of World Church policies, priesthood administration, pastoral supervision, etc.).
- a. Mission centers are formed by the approval of the World Church Leadership Council on the recommendation of the field apostle, with appropriate consultation.
- b. A mission center president is supervised by the field apostle.
- c. Mission center leaders should assist congregations to establish clear goals and objectives for ministry in the major areas of church life.
- d. Mission centers have no fixed geographical boundaries. They are defined as a list of congregations composing the mission center.
- e. Mission center resources should be used to develop key congregations within the mission center where opportunities for growth are discovered.

2. Selection of Mission Center President:

Mission centers are presided over by high priests or elders. Mission center presidents are appointed by the World Church through procedures established by the First Presidency. They are sustained annually by the mission center conference.

3. Duties of Mission Center President:

The mission center president is the chief administrative, pastoral, and expansion officer of the church within the

mission center and is entrusted with the care and direction of the mission center's congregations through the properly constituted officers of the congregations, and of the non-resident members of the jurisdiction directly or through a nonresident pastor. Mission center presidents are set apart (see p. 34).

- a. The mission center president should focus on strengthening existing congregations and helping them grow while supporting the planting of new congregations as a central part of the mission center's program of ministries.
- b. A key element in the mission center president's responsibility is to work with the priesthood and leadership of each congregation to discover and recruit the best person available to serve as pastor. In congregations the pastor is elected with the right of concurrent nomination resting with the mission center president and with the members of the congregational conference. In emerging congregations the pastor is appointed by the mission center president and sustained by a vote of the emerging congregation.
- c. All pastors report to the mission center president and are subject to the mission center president's supervision. They are accountable to the mission center president for the conduct of the affairs of the congregation.
- d. In turn the mission center president is responsible to the field apostle for the conduct of the affairs of the mission center.
- e. The mission center president should call for an audit of the mission center financial records each year.
- f. At times a single person will serve as mission center president and mission center financial officer. In these cases, this individual is appointed to both roles and is responsible for the duties of each of these positions.

4. Counselors to Mission Center President:

Mission center presidents may appoint two counselors to serve as members of the mission center presidency. Those selected should be members of the Melchisedec priesthood and should be sustained by a vote of the mission center conference. Counselors serve at the pleasure of the mission center president and their tenure in office automatically ends with the resignation, death, or replacement of the mission center president. The appointment of counselors does not preclude mission center presidents from appointing other assistants, who may or may not be members of the priesthood, as they deem necessary.

5. Change of Address:

Any mission center president who moves should notify the field apostle and Human Resource Ministries. The local recorder should be contacted to make any necessary changes to the World Church membership database.

6. Mission Center Files:

Each mission center president should maintain files of the following information so they can be handed to the next mission center president to aid in continuity of administration.

- a. *Mission Center Calendar*: Information on camping programs, retreats, institutes, workshops, leadership development activities, etc.
- b. *Mission Center Conference Minutes and Reports*: Have available copies of mission center conference minutes, congregational financial officer's reports, and budgets as well as any recent reports from mission center committees or commissions.
- c. *Annual Financial Reports from Congregations*: These reports should include operating and building fund data such as income, expenses, and yearly balance from each congregation.
- d. *Information on priesthood calls* currently in process.
- e. *Files related to*: priesthood silences, registered youth/children's workers, and other confidential member actions should not be kept in the mission center president's possession, but transmitted to the office of the First Presidency.
- f. *Annual Congregation Audit Reports*: The mission center should maintain a copy of the completed audit for each congregation each year.

7. Relationship of Mission Center Presidents to Field Apostle:

The mission center president will report to the field apostle, as requested, regarding events taking place within the mission center, plans for the future, and progress.

8. Mission Center Conferences:

- a. *General Information Concerning Conferences*: Mission center conferences are authorized to transact business relating to the work of the church within the mission center. They are subject to the bylaws and resolutions of World Conference, and to the advice of the field apostle and other World Church officers.
- b. *Frequency and Scheduling of Mission Center Conferences*: Conferences should be held as often as needed to transact necessary business. At least one should be held each year unless circumstances make this practice impossible. Mission center conferences should be scheduled in coordination with the field apostle. At least four weeks notice should be given.
- c. *Presiding at Mission Center Conference*: The mission center president presides over the mission center conference.

If applicable, counselors may preside at the request of the mission center president or when the mission center president is absent. Members of the First Presidency, Council of Twelve, or their authorized representatives preside as a courtesy or in special circumstances.

- d. *Recommended Order of Proceedings*: The order recommended for a mission center conference may vary, depending on cultural circumstances. A suggested order of proceedings in the section on "Planning and Conducting Conferences" is appropriate to most settings.
- e. *Special Mission Center Conferences*: Special conferences may be called by the mission center president. Care should be taken to see that those who have a right to participate have sufficient notice of time (at least four weeks), place, and business to be considered (Bylaws, Article VI, Section 6). In unusual circumstances the field apostle or other World Church officer concerned may call and preside over a conference in any of the local organizations that constitute the larger jurisdiction, subject to the confirming action of the conference when it convenes (WCR 1097).
- f. *Representation at Mission Center Conference*: All members in good standing within the mission center are members of the mission center conference unless the mission center chooses to hold delegate conferences. Where delegate conferences are authorized, the mission center conference may determine the basis of representation.
 - If the mission center has a delegate conference, only delegates may vote. Members should not vote in legislative meetings of mission centers in which they do not hold membership.
 - In nondelegate conferences, a member who has changed his or her place of residency but whose transfer has not yet been processed may be given the right of voice and vote by action of the assembly.
 - The privilege of voice in the conference's deliberations may also be extended as a courtesy to members who have special information or interest in the issue at hand. However, the giving of such a privilege is up to the assembly.

9. Mission Center Councils:

- a. Mission center councils are advisory in nature and assist the mission center leaders in the development of the work of the mission center.
- b. The composition of the mission center councils is determined by the mission center involved and should be broadly representative of the membership and congregations of the mission center.
- c. Members of mission center councils may or may not be members of the priesthood.

- d. If mission center council members are appointed and sustained, the appointing officer or entity may change the persons appointed from time to time to meet changing needs.
- e. Mission center councils may give programmatic, leadership, and spiritual advice to the mission center leadership, but these councils are not administrative in nature.
- f. If a mission center conference is not feasible, the mission center council may assume the necessary legislative functions of a mission center conference.

10. Bylaws:

No mission center may establish separate bylaws. The rules given in the World Church Bylaws and the procedures in the *Church Administrator's Handbook* should be followed.

11. World Conference Representation:

The number of delegates that may be elected by a mission center is determined by a formula described in World Church Bylaws, Article IV, Section 2 c. The exact number will be calculated by the Credentials Committee before each World Conference and forwarded to the mission center president. In the process of electing delegates to the World Conference, every effort should be made to assure that the mission center's delegation is representative of its membership with age, congregational membership, gender, and priesthood status being carefully considered. In electing delegates, a plurality vote is considered sufficient for election with the alternates being ranked according to the number of votes each received.

12. Mission Center Financial Officer:

Mission center financial officers (MCFOs) are appointed by the World Church through procedures established by the First Presidency and are sustained by the mission center conference. MCFOs are supervised by mission center presidents and are subject to the direction and counsel of the Presiding Bishopric for matters related to trustee responsibilities of the church. As such, the presiding bishop must be a signatory on all mission center accounts.

The Presiding Bishopric participates with the apostle in completion of the MCFO's ministerial review and development plan. The Presiding Bishopric is responsible for providing development of all MCFOs, including orientation, training/certification, and mentoring as well as continued educational opportunities.

It is traditional for MCFOs to be set apart in this role during a worship service following the sustaining action of the mission center conference. The MCFO is a member of the mission center council and may choose to have up to two counselors or, if great diversity is required, may choose to organize a finance committee to provide support and insights.

The specific duties of the mission center financial officer

are summarized in the following profile. Questions may be addressed by e-mail to mcfotraining@CofChrist.org.

Mission Center Financial Officer Profile

a. *Ministerial Activities*

- Teaching and preaching of stewardship
- Teaching of A Disciple's Generous Response principles (financial stewardship aspects)
- Promotion of incorporating A Disciple's Generous Response principles into members' daily lives
- Promotion of church goals through preaching, teaching, and presence in the congregations
- Providing ministry through the use of the Oblation fund
- Focal point for Aaronic minister support
- Coordination of self-sustaining bishop ministry

b. *Financial Management*

- Responsible for mission center and congregation assets to include
 - developing and monitoring of annual conference-approved budgets;
 - timely reporting of local and world mission tithes contributions;
 - timely processing of contributor reports;
 - maintenance of contributors' addresses;
 - collecting, receipting, and accounting for all mission center funds;
 - accomplishment of annual audits for the mission center, congregations, and campground associations; and
 - signatory on all mission center, congregation, and campground association accounts.
- Representing needs and use of world and local mission tithes
- Lead for funding for mission activities
- Recruiting, appointing, training and supervising congregational financial officers
- Responsible for emerging congregation's financial activities and assets

c. *Real Estate/Legal/Risk Management*

- Overseeing the appropriate management and maintenance of church properties to include on-site World Church representative for all building projects
- World Church representative on campground boards
- Focal point for risk management
- Overseer of youth worker registration process compliance

d. *Records and Information Management*

- Teaching improved congregational leadership

- skills through the use of ministry information
- Managing membership records for the mission center
- Recruiting, appointing, training, and supervising mission center and congregational recorders
- Responsible for mission center records retention and management

e. **Competencies**

- Competent ministerial skills as established for World Church ministers
- Detailed knowledge of A Disciple's Generous Response
- Knowledge of the ministerial roles and responsibilities for each office of the Aaronic priesthood
- Financial management skills
- Basic computer skills for the following applications:
 - Microsoft Office products
 - Shelby General Ledger, Contributions, and Membership
- Program management skills

Required Internal Controls: Each mission center is required to establish and maintain internal control procedures that are in accordance with the guidelines established by the Presiding Bishopric. The internal control guidelines for single-line and dual-line administration are available at www.CofChrist.org/cfo#Internal. Each mission center shall maintain a document that details the procedures and shall submit this document to the Presiding Bishopric and field apostle for approval.

13. Budgets:

Each mission center should have a budget that supports a program of ministry designed to achieve the mission of the church in its particular area. There are annual expenses that each mission center must pay, such as insurance and basic administrative costs. These expenses must be included in the budget. Next, the mission center president and the mission center financial officer determine what additional ministries and services will be provided based on the available funding for that year. The draft budget is presented to the appropriate mission center leadership group (such as the mission center council) for further consideration. The recommended budget that is developed is presented to the mission center conference for final approval. This process should invite and encourage the general membership to review, understand, comment upon, and ultimately endorse both the program of ministry and the supporting budget for the mission center. The approval of the budget by the mission center conference constitutes a commitment on behalf of the congregations to financially support the income projection in the budget. The funds of the mission center are received and disbursed according to the approved budget.

14. Recorder:

The mission center recorder is appointed by the mission center financial officer in consultation with the mission center president and the World Church recorder and is then sustained at a mission center conference. As a representative of the World Church recorder, it is the mission center recorder's responsibility to maintain the records of the mission center as well as provide training and support to the congregational recorders. The mission center recorder is the point of entry for statistical information if the congregational recorder is not on-line with the church's database. Much of the mission center recorder's responsibilities are similar to that of a congregational recorder. Please refer to the section on the congregational recorder.

15. Historian:

The mission center historian is appointed by the World Church historian on the recommendation of the mission center president and with a sustaining vote of the mission center conference. Mission center historians should submit annual historical reports for the mission center to the World Church historian's office for depository in the church archives. Guidelines for historians are available from the historian's office.

16. Mission Center Missionary Coordinator:

The mission center missionary coordinator serves in a significant role as part of the mission center leadership team. Primary focus of this position is the missionary task with emphasis on Each One, Reach One and the witnessing dimension of the Sharing Goal. Keeping this missionary task before the congregations and leadership of the mission center is vital. Supporting the congregational missionary coordinators, missionary elders, seventies, and witnessing disciples is critical to the success of the church's mission. The primary responsibilities are as follows:

- To Envision**
 - Help develop and communicate effectively and passionately a strategic missionary plan to include:
 - missionary priorities
 - support/network opportunities
 - Sharing Goal
 - Identify missionary opportunities including new church plants, existing congregations prepared to grow, and key issues calling for response
 - Express one's personal call to leadership and discipleship
- To Enlist**
 - Refine the congregational missionary coordinator job description draft, modify it as appropriate, and share personally with pastor and missionary coordinator
 - Develop a process for identifying and "calling"

individuals to serve as congregational missionary coordinators

- Coordinate the role of seventies, missionary elders, and others in implementing mission center missionary plan
- Constantly be aware of persons with missionary leadership potential/gifts and help provide opportunities for their witness
- Enlist additional congregational involvement in A Witnessing Community and facilitators for implementation

c. **To Equip**

- Identify available financial resources in support of missionary strategy
- Provide overview of current missionary resources
- Coordinate A Witnessing Community implementation
- Address the use of scripture, message, and identity in the overall missionary task
- Communicate ongoing opportunities for missionary skill development to missionary leadership at all levels
- Understand appropriate presentation skills

d. **To Encourage**

- Provide tools for creating missionary teams
- Personally facilitate A Witnessing Community or similar strategy
- Develop healthy working relationships with other key leaders at the congregational and mission center levels
- Model self-care (ethically, spiritually, and in work/life balance)

17. Specialized Ministries:

Leaders of specialized ministries may be selected to advise in ministries with children, youth, and adults, or in such areas as Christian education, worship, communications, caring ministries, leadership development and training, missionary outreach, compassionate service, and community development. Mission center leaders may conduct workshops on the mission center level with the approval of the mission center president. They may be called for consultation by congregational leaders; however, mission center program leaders have no direct administrative connection to congregational program leaders.

- a. As assistants to the mission center president, mission center leaders of specialized ministries should be appointed by the mission center president and sustained by the mission center conference. Some are program assistants to presiding officers; some involve trust relationships; and some represent World Church functions, as do historians and recorders.

- b. Leaders of specialized ministries should be sustained in regular conferences rather than by any subgroup. No program area should establish prior claim to the services of certain persons when the interests of other program areas may conflict.
- c. If a conference votes not to sustain an appointment, it is the responsibility of the appropriate church officials to present another person for consideration by the conference.

18. Mission Center Gatherings:

Mission center meetings or intercongregational gatherings should be cleared with the mission center president or a designated representative whose special function is to keep these in balance and pointed in a positive direction. All mission center retreats, institutes, workshops, etc., should receive the prior approval and support of the mission center presidency. Requests for scheduling of ministry external to the mission center must be done through the administrative procedures outlined in "Scheduling Personnel from Other Jurisdictions" (p. 20).

19. Clusters:

Mission centers may create clusters, groupings of congregations that may perform certain functions for mutual support and assistance. For example, pastors of congregations in a cluster may meet with the mission center president or a designee for pastoral support or to discuss issues present within one or more congregations. In mission centers where congregations are widely dispersed, clusters consisting of congregations in the same general area may find it helpful to meet together for worship or fellowship on occasion.

Clusters are optional structures that should be formed only to meet specific needs. They are not jurisdictions and do not generally have officers or budgets. They have no legislative functions. Those responsible for leading clusters do so through authority delegated from the mission center president.

20. Reports:

- a. The relaying of information starts from the congregational level. Congregational officers and leaders of specialized ministries should report necessary information to the pastor.
- b. The mission center president, in turn, will receive reports from the pastor. A mission center president may request reports from mission center officers and leaders of specialized ministries.
- c. Reports should deal with the condition of the mission center and indicate progress being achieved, areas of

special opportunity and difficulty, and activities of special interest.

21. Priesthood and Leadership Education:

The mission center president has general supervision of all priesthood and leadership education in the mission center. Priesthood and leadership training may include both Temple School field schools and classes or workshops organized within the mission center. Training programs are under the supervision of the mission center presidency.

22. Houses of Worship:

All building programs shall receive the approval of mission center officers as well as the approval of the field apostle and the Presiding Bishopric through Real Estate Services at World Headquarters.

Loans for construction or development may be secured, when funds are available and requirements met, through the Presiding Bishopric from the Houses of Worship Revolving Loan Fund. Contact Real Estate Services for specific details, rates and other information.

C. Multi-Jurisdictional Associations

1. Multi-Jurisdictional Associations:

Groups of congregations, mission centers, or both, may be formed to achieve a specific church-related purpose in the operation and management of real property.

2. Formation:

Multi-jurisdictional associations are formed on the approval of the field apostle.

3. Bylaws:

Each multi-jurisdictional association shall be managed in accordance to bylaws. Contact Legal Services at headquarters for information about bylaws for multi-jurisdictional associations.

4. Administrative Representation:

To coordinate campgrounds and other entities with ongoing church operations, the presidents and financial officers of any mission center having congregations participating in a multijurisdictional association should be members of the board of the association.

D. Fields

1. Organization:

Fields are groupings of mission centers and are established by the First Presidency. Fields are flexible in nature,

and their configuration will change periodically. The purpose of fields is to support mission centers in their efforts to support congregations and grow the church.

2. Supervision:

The First Presidency appoints members of the Council of Twelve to supervise fields.

3. Conferences:

Legislative functions are not appropriate to fields. In some circumstances, field apostles may organize nonlegislative gatherings for the purposes of training, education, or coordination.

4. Unorganized Areas:

Church activities in areas that are not clearly within an existing mission center are under the jurisdiction of the director of Field Ministries.

E. Scheduling Personnel from Other Jurisdictions

1. All requests for ministry by general officers, staff specialists, or other people from outside a mission center shall be made by the mission center president or by the pastor of a congregation with the prior approval of the mission center president.
2. The officer making the invitation should send a copy of the request to the presiding officer of the next higher administrative level.
3. Those invited to give such ministry shall clear the requests with their own supervisors before responding.
4. When clearance is obtained, the person being invited shall respond directly to the officer who made the invitation. Copies of the response should be sent to the administrative supervisor of both the invited person and the officer making the invitation.
5. Requests for ministry from outside a mission center should be coordinated with other needs and opportunities for ministry in the area concerned. Mission centers and congregations inviting personnel from other mission centers or from a World Church headquarters office should arrange to cover travel costs.
6. General officers may initiate such ministry by following the clearance and notification procedures indicated above.
7. Mission centers may establish their own procedures for congregations requesting ministry from within the mission center.

3. Quorums and Orders

A. First Presidency

The function of presidency provides presiding, coordinating, and facilitating leadership. Such presidency relates to the several offices of the Melchisedec and Aaronic priesthoods (D. and C. 104:11a). Nonpriestly or nonecclesiastical functions, such as associations, committees, etc., also require a presiding function. Because of the variety of functions in the church, presidency is also expressed in a variety of forms. Administrative presidency is traced from the “three presiding high priests” of the Melchisedec order who make up the “quorum of the Presidency of the church” (D. and C. 104:11b), through the Quorum of Twelve Apostles (D. and C. 104:11e) to the presiding officers of various field jurisdictions.

Administrative presidency provides structure and continuity. It manages the body through planning, consultation, assignment of responsibilities, presiding over legislative sessions, scheduling of activities, and general coordination of all the agencies that are directly involved in the institutional structure.

Due to its wide range of ministries, the church engages in a variety of functions and requires specialists who relate to each other and to the general administrative structure. This pattern of relationships is sometimes described in “line” and “staff” terms. Staff functions are provided through assistants to the quorums and councils (D. and C. 104:11, 31, 38-41), associations (D. and C. 128:6), and institutions (D. and C. 127). The need for such agencies to enrich the church’s ministries was recognized in the New Testament era when Paul referred to “helps” and “governments” in the church (I Corinthians 12:28).

Administrative direction of the various activities of an organized unit of the church is the responsibility of the presidency of that jurisdiction (mission center president and pastor).

The First Presidency may be contacted by e-mail at fp@CofChrist.org.

- I. The First Presidency is the chief administrative quorum of the church and functions in this capacity on major policy matters with individual members of the Presidency responsible for the administration of specific areas.
 - a. Major policy issues require consideration of different points of view. For this reason collective decision making is advisable. The members of the First Presidency identify policy issues and develop policy recommendations within their areas of responsibility, and these recommendations are given consideration by the First Presidency as a quorum.
 - b. Because broad consultation is consistent with the democratic nature and tradition of the church, the First Presidency considers it advisable to consult, when appropriate, with committees, consultants, and professional people in many fields. Decision making by the First Presidency is usually achieved by consensus. The First Presidency refers certain matters to other quorums for consideration or to the World Church Leadership Council for counsel and advice and in some cases for formal decision by vote.
 - c. All major decisions of the First Presidency have either the explicit approval of the president or the implicit approval of the president through assignment of the counselors to their respective roles.
 - d. In certain matters decisions are made with the counselors serving as advisors to the president but with decision-making responsibility resting with the president alone.
2. The president of the church has individual responsibility for guiding the church through inspired counsel. Through the two counselors and those responsible to them the president gives guidance to and coordinates the missionary and administrative functions of the church. The president also promotes appropriate external relationships. The First Presidency presents formal policy, program recommendations, and budgetary proposals to the World Church Finance Board, World Church Leadership Council, and World Conference for review and action. The First Presidency is responsible for ensuring that an annual audit of the World Church finances is accomplished. By assigning counselors in the First Presidency to oversee major areas of operation the president is free to focus attention on overall coordination and other elements of churchwide ministry.
3. Members of the First Presidency agree to assume on an individual basis responsibilities for general administrative relationships with the Council of Twelve, the presiding evangelist, and the Presiding Bishopric and for supervision of the other major areas of church management and operations.
4. The resource and program functions of World Church headquarters are organized under the general direction of the First Presidency under the leadership of individuals appointed by the First Presidency. Those responsible for major resource and program functions report on a regular basis through the appropriate administrator to the designated member of the Presidency. This method promotes continuity in the pursuit of objectives and establishes clear accountability for the daily activities in these areas of church operations.

In matters of policy the members of the First Presidency working with those in charge of specific areas of church life develop recommendations for the quorum of the First Presidency to consider. The First Presidency then either decides the policy questions or, as required, presents it to the appropriate quorum or council for advice and action.

Regular and frequent communication provides an opportunity for the free flow of information and points of view among the First Presidency, the Council of Twelve, the presiding evangelist, the Presiding Bishopric, and the headquarters functions. The personnel of these offices are part of the First Presidency's staff. Information about World Church headquarters offices may be found on the church's Web site (<http://CofChrist.org>).

B. Council of Twelve

1. The Council of Twelve is the chief missionary quorum of the church.
2. The president of the Council of Twelve Apostles is elected by the council and presides over council sessions. The president reports to the First Presidency.
3. The director of Field Ministries is appointed by the First Presidency to supervise the apostles in their field assignments and may or may not be the president of the Council of Twelve. The director of Field Ministries reports to the designated member of the First Presidency and directs, coordinates, and supervises the field jurisdictions of the church. Based on the goals and objectives stated by the First Presidency, the director of Field Ministries establishes the goals and objectives to be accomplished in the field.

Preliminary consideration is given to the budget required to support these goals and objectives. When they have been approved by the First Presidency, and the supporting budget has been adopted by the World Church Finance Board, the director of Field Ministries is then responsible for coordinating the program with that portion of the budget that relates to field administration. The director of Field Ministries and the apostles also serve as a primary channel of communication between World Church headquarters and the field.
4. Apostolic Duties and Assignments:
 - a. Apostles supervise the administrative line of the church in the field. Mission center presidents report directly to the apostles assigned to their jurisdictions.
 - b. For the development and implementation of ministries in the areas to which they are assigned, the apostles work with mission center presidents and mission center financial officers to develop appropriate common approaches to the church's ministries. Their assignments cover the entire field of church ministry throughout the world.
- c. In the event that individual apostles are assigned to other special ministries not directly related to field administration, they are nevertheless closely related to field activities. They have access to the field by arrangement with the appropriate field administrators and in harmony with needs recognized in consultation with the director of Field Ministries and the supervising apostles concerned. This arrangement provides channels of communication between headquarters functions and church ministries in the field.
- d. Apostles assigned to field jurisdictions are responsible for the total development of the church in their respective areas. Further, they consult with administrative and financial officers in their areas as they work to develop objectives, programs, ministries, and budgets. Apostles report to the director of Field Ministries the annual and long-range goals and objectives for their fields. Progress is also reported periodically at meetings of the Council of Twelve and of the World Church Leadership Council.
- e. The Council of Twelve, as the chief missionary quorum of the church, also functions as a whole to develop the comprehensive plans and strategies that implement the goals and objectives developed by the First Presidency in relation to the church's missionary ministries. In this process, the headquarters divisions and centers assist in planning and providing resources. Such coordination by the Council of Twelve facilitates consistency and continuity in local planning. The content of local ministries, however, is not specified by the director of Field Ministries or by the individual apostle. Each jurisdiction develops its own ministries under the guidance of presiding administrative and financial ministers in relation to general goals and objectives.
- f. The Council of Twelve may be contacted by e-mail at apostles@CofChrist.org.

C. Presiding Bishopric

The presiding bishop and counselors are known as the Presiding Bishopric (WCR 710). Article III, Section 5c of the Community of Christ Bylaws identify the Presiding Bishopric as the chief financial officers and trustees of the church, responsible for the administration of the temporal affairs of the whole church.

Members of the Presiding Bishopric share the duty of leading the Order of Bishops, providing support and mentoring to financial officers at the mission center level, as well as collaboration and guidance for self-sustaining bishops.

The members of the Presiding Bishopric are the presiding officers of the Aaronic priesthood and lead the Order of Bishops in providing support, training, and advocacy in empowering Aaronic ministers to respond to their call of ministry.

The members of the Presiding Bishopric also serve as judges in church court proceedings. Bishops in mission centers have similar duties within their local jurisdiction as standing courts of the church when so appointed by the First Presidency.

The Presiding Bishopric may be contacted by e-mail at prebish@CofChrist.org.

In 1972, the First Presidency and Presiding Bishopric developed the following responsibilities for the Presiding Bishopric (these have been adapted over time due to changes in organizational structure of the church):

Responsibilities of the Presiding Bishopric:

- i. The Presiding Bishopric function as the chief financial officers and trustees of the church and are responsible for the administration of the temporal affairs of the World Church.
 - a. They work under the general direction of the First Presidency in carrying out the functions of their office provided in Restoration scriptures and in accordance with World Conference enactments and in harmony with the various trusteeship responsibilities, which are inherent in the office. They are responsible to and report to both the First Presidency and the World Conference.
 - b. They are responsible for managing the temporal affairs of the church in order to best serve the overall program of the church.
 - c. The World Church Financial Policy (WCR 1264) provides guidance and direction to the Presiding Bishopric. They make recommendations on temporal matters to the First Presidency, the World Church Leadership Council, the Order of Bishops, the World Church Finance Board, the Stewardship Foundation, and the World Conference, as needed. They have responsibility to relate church resources and anticipated income to the long-range programming as planned and carried out under the administrative direction of the First Presidency.
 - d. They have leadership responsibility, in conjunction with the World Church Leadership Council, to raise and gather funds for budgetary, capital, and other program needs of the World Church.

- e. They have responsibility in caring for and investing World Church funds. The First Presidency shall be informed of investments either by means of the regular accounting statements or by special reports. Long-term investments will be made which may promote the program of the church in consultation with the First Presidency.
 - f. They have responsibility for disbursing the general and special funds of the church in conformity with donors' restrictions, conference enactments, accepted accounting practices, and specific policies which apply. In doing this they monitor the entire budget of the World Church. If emergencies arise for which funds have not been allocated, or budgets for any reason are found to be unworkable, they will consult with the First Presidency before budgetary revisions or other financial adjustments are made. If major adjustments are necessary in the opinion of the Presiding Bishopric they may recommend to the First Presidency the convening of the World Church Finance Board.
 - g. The director of Field Ministries, in conjunction with the Presiding Bishopric, makes recommendations to the World Church Human Resource Committee regarding the assignments of mission center financial officers. They also have responsibility for the orientation, training, and mentoring of mission center financial officers. The mission center financial officers are agents of the Presiding Bishopric in the field. That responsibility is extended by the mission center financial officers appointment of congregational financial officers to serve in congregations.
 - h. They have responsibilities as chief financial officers and trustees in trust for the World Church "in every place in the world" where the church is established. As general officers they are free to contact and be contacted by local jurisdictional officers in the field. Requests for field ministry of the Presiding Bishopric or their staff should be made through the jurisdictional administrative officer in the field. They keep in touch with the field through reports as well as visits into the field in consultation with the administrative officers concerned.
2. While the opening of missions in new nations is a primary responsibility of the Council of Twelve, the Presiding Bishopric will be kept informed and should be represented when practicable in the group making a survey trip to secure firsthand information about the mission under consideration or to determine whether such mission opening should be made.
 3. The Presiding Bishopric holds title to church properties and its three members are held responsible to

the World Church or to the other jurisdictions of the church for whose use and benefit the property is held. As trustees in trust they are legally responsible to the World Conference for all the financial assets of the World Church. It is recognized that they will use discretionary judgment in the management of the temporal resources of the church as they fulfill the requirements of the fiduciary relationship.

4. The Presiding Bishopric presides over the Order of Bishops and provides nurture and support to the bishops of the church. They have the responsibility of calling them together for meeting as needs demand. The Order of Bishops as well as the Presiding Bishopric may initiate legislation for presentation to the First Presidency and World Conference. The Order of Bishops also provides advice and counsel to the Presiding Bishopric.
5. The Presiding Bishopric presides over the Aaronic priesthood and carries on such educational or other activities as are agreed upon in consultation with the First Presidency.

D. World Church Leadership Council

The World Church Leadership Council is composed of the First Presidency, Council of Twelve, Presiding Bishopric, and other key leaders of the church. It meets several times a year to consider critical strategic issues facing the church and to make decisions on fundamental matters of implementation.

E. Standing High Council

The Standing High Council meets at the request of the First Presidency to consider questions of moral and ethical significance, to provide general advice and counsel to the First Presidency, and to consider appeals from courts of field jurisdictions. The Standing High Council may also advise the Presiding Bishopric when requested by the First Presidency.

F. Orders of the High Priesthood

Members of the First Presidency, Council of Twelve, Presiding Bishopric, and Standing High Council are high priests. The high priesthood also includes the Order of Evangelists, Order of Bishops, and the general Quorum of High Priests.

1. The Order of Evangelists:

This order is made up of experienced ministers proactively offering ministries of blessing and integration to individuals and the congregations of the church. The Order of Evangelists is presided over by the presiding evangelist.

- a. The presiding evangelist:
 - gives leadership in the training of members

of the order in their personal ministry in the office;

- presides over the meetings of the order for educational purposes and when considering matters of interest to the order as a whole (e.g., the approval of documents of inspired counsel at World Conference);
 - gives ministry throughout the church under the general guidance of the First Presidency; and
 - and is available for ministry to the general officers of the church.
- b. The presiding evangelist's office is the repository of evangelist's blessings, copies of which are available to individuals who have lost their original copies.
 - c. The Order of Evangelists may initiate legislation for presentation to the World Conference.

2. The Order of Bishops:

This order is led by the Presiding Bishopric.

- a. The mission of the order is to nurture and support the ministry of the bishop. To carry out this responsibility, the order convenes as needed, to educate and discuss such topics as generosity, stewardship, A Disciple's Generous Response, and Aaronic priesthood.
- b. When the order meets, it provides opportunities for spiritual formation and fellowship. The order advises the Presiding Bishopric on areas of policies, procedures, and resources. It also provides comment and recommendations to the World Conference on inspired documents and can submit legislation.

3. The Quorum of High Priests:

In the larger sense this quorum includes all high priests. Because some are members of specific orders, however, those not in such orders are under the quorum leadership of a presidency of the Quorum of High Priests.

- a. The president is appointed by the First Presidency, subject to approval by the quorum and the World Conference. The counselors are selected by the president of the quorum with the approval of the First Presidency and the quorum. Both the president and the counselors are set apart by the laying on of hands.
- b. Quorum functions include the education and training of members. The principal source of this education is the Temple School.
- c. The Quorum of High Priests may initiate legislation for presentation to the World Conference.

G. Quorums of Seventy

The Seventy share with the apostles responsibility as special witnesses of Jesus Christ.

1. The Council of Presidents of Seventy is composed of up to seven members selected from among the members of the Quorums of Seventy. They are called by the Council of Presidents of Seventy and approved by the World Church Leadership Council and the World Conference.
 - a. Individual quorum presidents are selected by the Council of Presidents of Seventy and sustained by action of the quorums.
 - b. When gathered in a formal quorum session each quorum is under the leadership of its own president.
 - c. In mass meetings of the Seventy the senior president presides, unless the body provides otherwise.
 - d. When the office of senior president of Seventy is vacant, or when a vacancy is imminent, the Council of Presidents of Seventy recommends one of its members to serve as senior president. Upon approval by the World Church Leadership Council, this recommendation is presented to the World Conference for legislative approval.
2. Seventies are assigned to functions of evangelistic outreach and administration.
 - a. A member of the Seventy may be made available to serve as an administrative officer, particularly when a new opening for the church is under development or where there are special needs related to the seventy's calling and gifts.
 - b. A member of the Seventy who is assigned to a jurisdiction and is not the presiding officer works under the supervision of the presiding officer concerned.
3. As one of the quorums having churchwide ministerial functions, the Seventy participate with the First Presidency and the Council of Twelve in certain interquorum decisions (D. and C. 104:11-13, 122:10, 126:10).
4. The Quorums of Seventy may initiate legislation for presentation to the World Conference.

H. Elders

1. Elders are concerned with personal and corporate growth, and with the long-term implications of the Christian life. Except for the specialized responsibilities of World Church quorums and orders, elders may administer all of the basic functions of the church (D. and C. 104:6).
 - a. Elders may function in administrative roles such as congregational pastors when chosen by the vote of the people (D. and C. 120:2).

- b. They may preside over meetings and worship services (D. and C. 17:9) and participate in administering the ordinances of the church, including baptism, the laying on of hands to confirm those baptized, the blessing of children, administration to the sick, the Lord's Supper, ordination, and marriage. These ordinances mark new possibilities and call for new maturity. They symbolize God's continuing care and concern for humanity and call for support of the body of the church. These ordinances require a significant maturity on the part of the elder.
 - c. Elders may serve as counselors to mission center financial officers (D. and C. 42:8c).
 - d. Special courts are appointed from among the elders as a standing court when no bishop is available (D. and C. 42:22a-d).
 2. Elders are "spiritual" ministers. They seek to demonstrate and advocate a quality of life that gives depth, meaning, and cohesiveness to the life of each person and of the church.
 3. A "mass meeting" of elders who are delegates to the World Conference may initiate legislation for presentation to the Conference.

I. Aaronic Priesthood

The Aaronic priesthood consists of three offices—deacon, teacher, and priest—to which individuals are called and ordained. The Presiding Bishopric presides over the Aaronic priesthood and is responsible for its education and training.

1. **Ministry of Presence:** Each Aaronic priesthood office has certain distinctive areas of ministry. All of them, however, provide the same vital ministry—the *ministry of presence*. Aaronic priesthood members are called to serve others as Jesus served us. Just as Jesus was present in the world, deacons, teachers, and priests should be in our congregations and the communities where they are located. Just as Jesus showed and encouraged us to live faithfully toward God and peaceably with others, deacons, teachers, and priests should nurture individuals and families in their Christian faith and action. Just as Jesus worked to bring the kingdom of God to earth, deacons, teachers, and priests should strive to strengthen it by becoming involved in programs, activities, organizations, and the like that improve the conditions of daily life in their cities, towns, villages, neighborhoods, and places of work.
2. **The deacon** is responsible for the care of the church facility, making it inviting and a comfortable environment for worship and fellowship. This ministry of hospitality should make people feel welcome and appreciated. The deacon also cares for members and friends of the church relating to the temporal

aspects of life. This ministry includes being aware of and sensitive to people's physical and spiritual health and financial needs. They teach about stewardship as response to Christ's ministry and they teach the principles of A Disciple's Generous Response.

3. **The teacher** is a peacemaker and one whose empathy lends strength to members and friends of the church through understanding and service. The key attribute of a teacher is the ability to cultivate friendships and know the circumstances of the families in the congregation. The teacher is also a shepherd, one who closely associates with the flock and recognizes the life problems that the members face every day. The teacher's relationship to the membership is one of love and concern, especially for those who have need for personal spiritual support. Teachers will visit the members in their homes and at other places as is reasonable and needful. The teacher will cultivate close contact with the members and sense when members have needs beyond the teacher's ability to support. This information should be communicated to an appropriate congregational leader. These persons may be referred for professional help.

4. **The priest** preaches the gospel of Christ, visits members in their homes, encourages them to pray vocally and in secret, and to attend to their family duties. Priests share with the elder in the responsibility of explaining all things concerning the church to those who have been baptized, but not yet confirmed. They may administer the sacraments of baptism in water, the Lord's Supper, marriage, and the ordination of members of the Aaronic priesthood. In all of their ministry they may expect the direction of the Holy Spirit.
5. **Ministerial Support and Administrative Direction:** Ministerial support of Aaronic priesthood in the mission center is provided by one or more bishops in that jurisdiction. Administrative direction of Aaronic priesthood ministry is typically provided by the congregational presiding officer. The ministerial plan for an Aaronic priesthood member is based on the needs of the congregation and community matched with the gifts and skills of that Aaronic minister and developed in conjunction with the congregational presiding officer.
6. A **"mass meeting" of the Aaronic priesthood** who are delegates to the World Conference may initiate legislation for presentation to the Conference as the rules allow.