meetings, or to train and advise ward MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD quorum leaders. He may be asked to report regularly to the stake presidency concerning the status of a particular ward. In addition, he may serve as a member of the stake Melchizedek Priesthood committee, which assists the stake presidency in installing, training, and advising Melchizedek Priesthood leaders. Other assignments that are generally given to a member of a high council include membership on the AARONIC PRIESTHOOD/Boy Scouting Committee; adviser to the stake YOUNG WOMEN organization; stake mission president; coordinator of stake WELFARE programs; coordinator for temple service and FAMILY HISTORY programs; stake EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS director, or other such administrative roles. A high councilor will usually also be assigned to speak periodically in ward SACRAMENT MEETINGS under the direction of the stake presidency.

At regular meetings of the stake high council, the presidency presents matters of business to the council for its approval. Such matters may include endorsing an individual’s name for an assignment in the stake organization, recommending a person as a potential ward bishop or counselor in a bishopric, or considering an individual for ordination to an office in the Melchizedek Priesthood. The stake president may also ask for discussion of particular issues, and high councilors may be asked to report on the status of their assignments.

As part of its judicial function, the high council serves as a disciplinary council when convened by the stake president to consider cases of serious transgression that affect the standing or fellowship of a Church member. Following the presentation of the facts of the case and due deliberation and prayer, a decision is rendered by the stake president and ratified by the stake high council (see DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES).

DONOVAN E. FLEMING

HIGH PRIEST

The term "high priest" refers to an office in the MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD. Men must be ordained high priests to serve as BISHOPS, on high councils, or in STAKE PRESIDENCIES, or as GENERAL AUTHORITIES (see HIGH COUNCIL; PRIESTHOOD). Stake presidents may ordain high priests for other reasons as well. When released from any of these callings, a high priest continues to be a member of the high priests quorum in his resident stake and to participate in the activities of his ward’s high priests group (see PRIESTHOOD QUORUM).

The president of the Church is the presiding high priest in the Church (D&C 107:65–66), the president of the stake is the presiding high priest in the stake, and the bishop is the presiding high priest in the ward. Since 1956, stake presidencies have been serving as the presidencies of their respective stake high priests quorums. Each ward in a stake has a high priests group with a group leader and one or more assistants, as needed. Ward groups of high priests meet weekly to be instructed in their duties and in the principles of the gospel (D&C 124:134; J. Taylor in JD 23:219). During group meetings they also receive and report on assignments such as HOME TEACHING and volunteer service projects.

To be ordained a high priest, an ELDER must be recommended by the ward bishopric to the stake presidency. After approval by the stake presidency and high council, his name is presented to the general body of stake priesthood bearers for a sustaining vote after which he is ordained by or under the direction of the stake president.

The first ordinations to the office of high priest in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were done at the fourth conference of the Church, held in June 1831 in Kirtland, Ohio. Twenty-three men were ordained at that time, including the Prophet Joseph Smith, who was ordained a high priest under the hands of Lyman Wight, who had been ordained to that office by the Prophet. Joseph Smith had received this authority earlier at the hands of Peter, James, and John (see MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD; RESTORATION OF). Current records do not specify when high priests were first organized as a quorum, but it apparently was before January 1836. For a period of time, high priests quorums were organized in each ward with their own presidencies, but in 1877 Brigham Young indicated that stake presidents had responsibility over these quorums. In December 1975 the First Presidency clarified details of the current arrangement under which ward high priests groups function as units of the stake high priests quorum, with the stake president as the president of the quorum and ward high priest group leaders functioning under his direction. As of 1989, there
were approximately 246,000 high priests in the Church.

From Adam to Moses, righteous men holding the holy priesthood were ordained high priests. Adam, Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, and many others were all ordained high priests (D&C 107:53; Alma 13). After the time of Moses the Melchizedek Priesthood was generally withdrawn from the earth, except among the prophets, and the law functioned under the Aaronic Priesthood. Thus, under the LAW OF MOSES a high priest was the chief priest in the AARONIC PRIESTHOOD. He presided over all other priests in their functions and ordinances, particularly those of the temple. Only a direct descendant of the firstborn son of AARON anointed to be the spiritual head of the people could become the high priest.

In the Book of Mormon, there were apparently no Levites or descendants of Aaron among the people. High priests were the presiding spiritual authorities and held the Melchizedek Priesthood (e.g., Alma 8:23; 30:20, 23).

In the epistle to the Hebrews, Paul declares Christ to be the promised high priest “after the order of Melchisedec,” an order higher in authority than the Aaronic Priesthood and not dependent upon the Aaronic lineage (Heb. 5:4–6, 10; 7:3, 11, 14–15; Ps. 110:4). As the great high priest, Christ made an eternal sacrifice, once for all time and all people (Heb. 9:11–12), and he continues to preside over all the ordinances and the organization of the Church, which bears his name (see HEAD OF THE CHURCH).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. LEGRAND RICHARDS

HIRAM, OHIO

Hiram, Ohio, a small town twenty-five miles south and slightly east of KIRTLAND, OHIO, was the site of a large branch of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the 1830s and served for one year as home to the Prophet Joseph Smith. John and Elsa Johnson, a prosperous farmer and his wife, residents in Hiram Township, welcomed Joseph, Emma, and their adopted twins to live with them in September 1831. Joseph had healed Elsa’s arthritic arm several months earlier.

During the Smiths’ stay, Joseph received an outpouring of fifteen of the revelations now published in the DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS. Section 1, known as the Preface, was given at one of many Church conferences held there. On February 16, 1832, Joseph and his scribe at this time, Sidney Rigdon, beheld a divine vision of the eternal worlds that forms the basis of Latter-day Saint understanding of life after death. In this vision (see DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS: SECTION 76) they reported seeing both God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ and bore witness of Jesus Christ: “He lives! For we saw him, even on the right hand of God” (verses 22–23). A Hiram conference in November 1831 voted to print all revelations received up to that date as the BOOK OF COMMANDMENTS.

On the cold night of March 24, 1832, a mob dragged Joseph and Sidney from their beds into a nearby meadow, beat them, and poured tar and feathers on their bodies (HC 1:261–65). Joseph and Sidney bore the marks of that night for the rest of their lives. Another consequence was the death of Joseph and Emma’s adopted eleven-month-old son, Ill with the measles at the time, he was exposed to the cold and died five days later.

While living in Hiram, Joseph accomplished a significant portion of his translation of the Bible (see JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE

The John Johnson home in Hiram, Ohio. Joseph Smith received several revelations here, including D&C 76, known as the Vision, about the degrees of glory in heaven. Courtesy LaMar C. Berrett.