In LDS understanding, those who are ordained to the priesthood are not an elite or professional priestly class distinct from laymen. They are all laymen. It is taught that “a man must be called of God by prophecy and the laying on of hands” by those who are in authority (A of F 5; cf. 1 Tim. 4:14). “By prophecy” means the right to receive and the power to interpret manifestations of the divine will.

At the age of twelve, all worthy LDS men may receive the Aaronic Priesthood and be ordained to the office of DEACON. At later ages they may be ordained TEACHERS and PRIESTS. Adult male converts are generally ordained priests shortly after BAPTISM. An ordained BISHOP is SET APART to preside over the Aaronic Priesthood and to serve as the PRESIDING HIGH PRIEST of his WARD. He authorizes all ordinations in the Aaronic Priesthood in his ward, which are performed either by a priest or a member of the Melchizedek Priesthood, often the father. Other priesthood holders usually join in the ordination standing in a circle around the seated person and laying their hands on his head. The one serving as voice invokes the authority of the priesthood and the name of Jesus Christ and pronounces the specific ordination, with accompanying words of counsel and promise.

Worthy men eighteen years of age and older may receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and be ordained ELDERS. Men called to presiding positions in the Church such as BISHOPS, HIGH COUNCILS, and STAKE PRESIDIENCIES, as well as PATRIARCHS and APOSTLES, are ordained high priests.

At the present time only those called to serve as GENERAL AUTHORITIES in a quorum of SEVENTY are ordained to the office of seventy. Members of the QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APPOSTLES are ordained apostles. Counselors in the First Presidency generally, but not always, also hold the office of apostle. The PROPHET of the Church is the Senior Apostle. When he becomes the presiding officer, he is ordained and set apart as the PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH by the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

HOYT W. BREWSTER, JR.

ORGANIZATION
[This entry is divided into two parts:

Organizational and Administrative History
Contemporary Organization

The first article summarizes 160 years of Church organization and programs, and Contemporary Organization examines the organization of the Church in 1990. There are separate entries for most major officers and units. See Auxiliary Organizations for an overview of subsidiary units that support the work of Priesthood. For details of local organization, consult District, Ward, and Stake entries; see also those associated with Mission. Correlation of the Church, Administration reviews more recent efforts to streamline and coordinate all Church curricula and administration.]

ORGANIZATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY
Church organization and administration since 1830 have been the result of the restoration of ancient PRIESTHOOD authority and offices, of decisions made by living PROPHETS receptive to divine revelation, and of practical responses to changing world and Church circumstances. From its inception the Church has been hierarchical, with authority flowing from the PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH. Most positions are filled by lay members called to serve without remuneration, and members are entitled to sustain or not sustain decisions and officers proposed by their leaders (see COMMON CONSENT; LAY PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP).

The Foundation. Joseph Smith and Oliver COWDERY received priesthood ordination and baptism under the direction of heavenly messengers in 1829. They then baptized others. This cluster of believers gathered on April 6, 1830, for the formal ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH, with Joseph Smith as First Elder and Oliver as Second Elder. Two months later the Church held its first conference and soon established a tradition of semiannual general conferences. From the beginning, Church officers were sustained by conference vote, and members and officials received certificates of membership or ordination from conferences.

During the first two years of the Church, DEACONS, TEACHERS, PRIESTS, and ELDERS constituted the local ministry. “The Articles and Covenants” served as a handbook explaining the duties of these officers (see DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS: SECTION 20).

A revelation in 1831 instituted the office of bishop, initially one for Missouri and another for Ohio. Temporal affairs were their primary stewardship at first; they received consecrations of property in the 1830s, tithes afterward, and cared for the poor. Soon bishops also received responsibility for disciplinary procedures and for the Aaronic priesthood. Not until 1839, in Nauvoo, Illinois, did the Church have bishops assigned to local geographical subdivisions called wards, under the
jurisdiction of the bishop responsible for the larger region.

The office of High Priest was instituted in 1831, with Joseph Smith as the Presiding High Priest over the Church. In 1832 he chose counselors to assist him, initiating what became the First Presidency. Revelation in March 1833 (D&C 90) gave the presidency supreme authority over all affairs of the Church; their roles at the head of the hierarchy remain essentially unchanged. Late in 1833 a second general officer, the Patriarch to the Church, was called and ordained.

In 1834 two stakes—geographic entities—were formed (one in Ohio and the second in Missouri) to direct the operation of branches (congregations) and local officers. Stakes were led by a three-man stake presidency and a twelve-member high council (D&C 102). High councils arbitrated disputes, investigated and tried charges of misconduct, and generally oversaw local ecclesiastical operations. Outside stake boundaries, members clustered into isolated branches led by elders or priests.

In 1835 the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the Quorum of the Seventy were organized. The Twelve, subordinate to the First Presidency, were assigned by revelation to preside outside organized stakes as a traveling high council. This included ordaining and supervising other officers of the Church outside stakes, including patriarchs. They were also to direct proselytizing in all lands, assisted by the Seventy. The Seventy’s presidency of seven, called the first Council of the Seventy, were sustained with other general authorities in August 1835.

By 1835 revelations defined two orders of priesthood: the higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood, including the offices of high priest, seventy, and elder; and the lesser, or Aaronic Priesthood, comprising priests, teachers, and deacons. Priesthood quorums in the stakes consisted of up to ninety-six elders, forty-eight priests, twenty-four teachers, and twelve deacons, each with its own presidency except the priests, whose president is a bishop.

In the fall of 1835 the Church published the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. The three revelations placed first (now sections 20, 107, and 84) described priesthood and its organization.

Visitations by Moses, Elias, and Elijah in 1836 restored the keys of the priesthood and responsibility to gather scattered Israel and the sealing powers by which families could be linked for eternity in temples (see Doctrine and Covenants: Sections 109-110). These keys are still the basis for LDS missionary, family history/genealogy, and temple work.

After a mission to Great Britain, in 1839–1841, the Twelve received broadened responsibility, under the First Presidency, for Church government within the stakes as well as outside them, a responsibility they have carried since. In Nauvoo they received temple ordinances and the keys necessary to govern the Church if there were no First Presidency.

To complete Church organization and prepare the women, along with the men, for the temple, in 1842 Joseph Smith organized the women’s Relief Society in Nauvoo. A counterpart of priesthood organization for men, the Relief Society was seen as a more integral part of Church organization than were later auxiliary organizations.

In 1841 Joseph Smith established the office of Trustee-in-Trust to manage Church properties at the general level. The role of bishops in temporal affairs thus became subordinate to that of the Trustee-in-Trust, generally the President of the Church. In Nauvoo, and for the next decade after, a Council of Fifty assisted as political and temporal administrators.

The last body in the governing hierarchy to emerge was the Presiding Bishopric. Until 1847 the Church had two general bishops, but that year Bishop Newel K. Whitney became Presiding Bishop. When his successor (1851), Bishop Edward Hunter, received two regular counselors in 1856, the three constituted the first full Presiding Bishopric. Initially, the Presiding Bishopric’s primary responsibility was the overall management of temporal affairs, including the supervision of ward bishops in their temporal duties. Beginning in the 1850s, the Presiding Bishopric also oversaw Aaronic Priesthood matters.

The First Presidency, Twelve, Seventy, and Presiding Bishopric—all dating from this first generation—continue to be the main administrative officers of the Church. These General Authority offices are generally life-tenured callings except in cases of calls to a higher position or removal for cause or health problems, though emeritus status has recently been introduced. The Second Quorum of the Seventy is comprised of men called to serve a five-year period. Between 1941 and 1976 additional General Authorities known as Assistants to the Twelve also served. The office of Patriarch to the Church, which earlier had
The Council House, Salt Lake City, completed in 1850, was one of the early public and church buildings in Utah. The territorial legislature met here; a public library was here; endowments were given here; and for several years the University of Deseret occupied the building. It was destroyed by fire in 1883.

administrative functions, was eventually limited to giving **patriarchal blessings** to Church members outside stakes, and in 1979 was discontinued.

After Joseph Smith's death in 1844, the Twelve Apostles led the Church under the direction of senior apostle and quorum president Brigham Young. In 1847 he was sustained as President in a new First Presidency. **Succession in the presidency continues to adhere to that basic pattern.**

The Pioneer Organization. After migration to the West in the late 1840s, Church organization adapted to facilitate **colonization** of the undeveloped Great Basin. Church officers directed the establishment of hundreds of colonies and helped provide settlements with economic, political, judicial, social, and spiritual programs. Often, one of the Twelve presided in larger settlements. Mormon villages combined private enterprise and economic cooperation, with bishops or stake presidents supervising the dispensing of land, building of roads, digging of ditches and canals, and conducting of business ventures (see **city planning**; **pioneer economy**). Although civil government gradually assumed an increasing role, the Church remained a significant influence in local and regional affairs throughout the pioneer period.

In a largely cashless economy with little investment capital, Church leaders promoted colonization and industrial enterprises by calling individuals on special missions and by using Church resources to foster community enterprises. A Church public works program, directed by the First Presidency and managed by the Presiding Bishopric, provided employment and helped build the **Salt Lake Temple and Tabernacle** and create other community improvements. In the 1870s Brigham Young directed the organization of **United Orders**, economic endeavors managed by stake presidents and bishops. Since **tithing** donations were usually in "kind" rather than cash, local bishops and the Presiding Bishopric directed a gigantic barter and transfer system that paid for needed services, fed public works employees, and assisted the needy.
Much Church effort went toward assisting with immigration to the Great Basin (see Immigration and Emigration). The Perpetual Emigrating Fund, a revolving loan fund, helped poorer immigrants, including handcart immigrants, make the trek. In the 1860s Church wagon trains were sent from Utah to convey immigrants from the railroad terminus. After they arrived in Utah, the First Presidency and Presiding Bishopric directed immigrants to settlements where they were needed.

In the 1850s and thereafter, the ward became the primary Church organization in the lives of the Saints. In the pioneer era, bishops selected by the First Presidency and priesthood "block teachers" called by bishops were the main ward officers. General Authorities maintained contact through semiannual general conferences in Salt Lake City, visits to the settlements, Deseret News articles, and epistles.

Missionary work, most of it outside the Great Basin, also had to be organized. In 1850 several of the Twelve opened new missions in Europe. Usually an apostle residing in Britain supervised all European missionary work. Missions were divided into conferences, districts, and branches, each with a president selected by the line officer above him.

During the 1860s and 1870s auxiliary organizations started locally and then became general Church organizations under the supervision or presidency of General Authorities. These included Sunday Schools; the Retrenchment Association, predecessor to the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association (YLMIA; see Young Women); the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association (YMMIA; see Young Men); and the Primary for children. Relief Society for women was revived in Utah and established throughout the Church beginning in 1867.

In 1877 President Brigham Young implemented a massive reordering of wards, stakes, and priesthood quorums. This reform removed the Twelve from local leadership assignments, created new quorums for elders and Aaronic Priesthood, expanded the role of bishops as ward leaders, gave stakes increased responsibility, and, for the first time, involved most young men in Aaronic Priesthood offices. These and other changes at that time, such as quarterly stake conferences and reporting procedures, remained standard for nearly a century.

During the changes of 1877, Elder Orson Pratt explained the Church's organizational flexibility in terms that also foreshadowed future developments:

To say that there will be a stated time, in the history of this church, during its imperfections and weaknesses, when the organization will be perfect, and that there will be no further extension or addition to the organization, would be a mistake. Organization is to go on, step after step, . . . just as the people increase and grow in the knowledge of the principles and laws of the kingdom of God [Deseret News Weekly, July 18, 1877].

Led by Prophets, Seers, and Revelators, the Church has exhibited its flexibility in adapting to changing needs and circumstances.

Elaboration and Continuity. The Church faced the 1880s with a well-developed and well-functioning organization; in addition, it was beginning to create auxiliary organizations for children and youth. Over decades these would mature and be fine-tuned to function more effectively in an increasingly complex world.

Church pioneering institutions also remained. During the 1880s and 1890s, the Church continued to direct colonization and economic development (see Economic History of the Church). Building on the cooperative movement of the 1860s and the united orders of the 1870s, by the 1890s the First Presidency was coordinating development and regulated economic competition through a central Board of Trade and similar stake boards. During this period as well, revelations to President John Taylor initiated a revitalization of quorums of Seventy and moved these quorums toward becoming stake rather than general Church entities.

Federal prosecutions of polygamists during the 1880s disrupted Church administration as General Authorities, stake presidents, and bishops went into hiding or left Utah (see Anti-Polygamy Legislation). Franklin D. Richards, an apostle whose plural wife had died, carried on many of the public functions of general Church leadership under the direction of the First Presidency, who were in hiding. With general Church ownership of property severely restricted, stakes, wards, and individuals formed nonprofit associations to hold Church property, including temples, meetinghouses, tithing houses, and livestock. After the Manifesto of 1890 and the granting of amnesty,
Church leaders resumed their full administrative duties.

During the 1880s stake boards or committees were created for YMMIA, YLMIA, Relief Society, Primary, and Sunday School to promote and supervise auxiliary work locally. In 1889 the Relief Society began holding conferences in connection with the Church's general conferences, as did the Primary. By 1902 each of the auxiliaries was publishing its own magazine.

Though an extensive bureaucracy was not necessary until rapid international growth began in the 1960s, between 1900 and 1930 the Church modernized management and constructed important new facilities. The Church acquired historical sites, supported hospitals, established recreation centers in local meetinghouses, and erected new offices in Salt Lake City, including a Bishop's Building (1910) for the Presiding Bishopric and auxiliary organizations, and the Administration Building (1917), in which the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve still have their offices. Zions Securities Corporation was created to manage taxable Church properties, and the Corporation of the President was established to oversee ecclesiastical properties.

Church leaders also attended to programs for youth. Early Correlation efforts saw the autonomy of Church auxiliaries decline as the Church assumed greater control over auxiliary magazines; the YMMIA's Improvement Era became a magazine for priesthood and Church readership. In 1911 the Church adopted the Boy Scout program as part of the YMMIA (see Scouting). In response to the secularization of Utah schools during the late nineteenth century, the Church had created stake academies and conducted religion classes after school for elementary-school children. By 1910 a General Board of Education supervised thirty-four stake academies; Brigham Young College in Logan, Utah; Latter-day Saint University in Salt Lake City; and Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. By the 1920s the Church had closed most of its academies or transferred them to the state. Starting in 1912 released-time Seminaries provided religious instruction for high school students. In 1926 the first Institute of Religion for college students opened adjacent to the University of Idaho (see Church Educational System).

Correlation efforts also extended to the work of priesthood, including missionary work, and to auxiliaries. A Priesthood Committee on Outlines began publishing lesson materials for each priesthood quorum during a priesthood revitalization movement (1908–1922). Church leaders also grouped deacons, teachers, and priests by age and defined their duties more fully; instituted weekly ward priesthood meetings, conducted by the bishops; and improved ward (formerly "block") teaching. After 1923 members of the Quorum of the Twelve directly supervised Melchizedek Priesthood work while the Presiding Bishopric supervised the Aaronic Priesthood, and in 1928 the Church published its first Melchizedek Priesthood handbook. A Priesthood-Auxiliary Movement, in 1928–1937, made Sunday School the instructional

Construction on the Gardo house began under the direction of Brigham Young and was completed during John Taylor's administration. The Gardo house was the official Salt Lake residence of President John Taylor, and it was used by President Wilford Woodruff as a Church office. Begun under direction of Brigham Young for one of his wives, it was eventually purchased from the Church by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco. It was razed in 1921. Photographer: Albert Wilkes. Courtesy Utah State Historical Society.
arm and YMMIA the activity arm of priesthood. This plan defined auxiliaries as aids to the priesthood and made the adult Gospel Doctrine class in Sunday School an integral part of adults' Sunday activity. Junior Sunday School for children became part of the Sunday School program Churchwide in 1934.

The Presiding Bishopric began providing aggressive leadership to Aaronic Priesthood work and to the YMMIA in 1938, and shortly thereafter they were given supervision of the young women. They provided counsel to bishops and stake presidents on Aaronic Priesthood, buildings, records and reports, and ward teaching through a weekly bulletin, Progress of the Church.

Beginning in 1925 a mission home in Salt Lake City provided training for new full-time missionaries. During the 1920s radio and motion pictures first helped missionaries convey the LDS message. Stake missionary work (part-time proselytizing by local members), started locally by 1915, was supervised by the First Council of Seventy after 1936. In 1937 the first missionary handbook was published, and in 1952 missionaries began using A Systematic Program for Teaching the Gospel, the Church's first official proselytizing outline. In 1954 a Missionary Committee, under General Authorities, began overseeing missionary appointments, the mission home in Salt Lake City, and publicity and literature. A Language Training Mission for full-time missionaries called to foreign lands opened in 1961 at Provo, Utah, and in 1978 it was expanded to become a Missionary Training Center for most new missionaries. Eventually Mission Training Centers were established in other countries; collectively these provide intensive training in dozens of languages.

In 1936, to ease hardships caused by the Great Depression, the First Presidency introduced the Church Security Program. Renamed the Welfare Program in 1938, it established through existing priesthood channels a network of farms, canneries, and factories that sent food, clothing, furniture, and household goods to Bishop's Storehouses to assist the needy and, later, disaster victims. Soon after World War I, the Relief Society developed a Social Services department to help families. This was gradually expanded to provide professional assistance, available through priesthood leaders, in such matters as counseling, therapy, and adoptive services. Eventually Social Services joined health services, employment bureaus, and other guidance programs as part of welfare services.

To meet the needs of LDS servicemen far from home wards and stakes, the Church responded with servicemen's groups on military bases, LDS chaplains, servicemen's coordinators, a Military Relations Committee, servicemen's conferences, seminars to prepare young men for the service, and an English-speaking servicemen's stake in West Germany (see Military and the Church). Native Americans also received renewed administrative attention. An Indian mission was formed in 1936 in the American Southwest, a general-level Indian Committee in the late 1940s, and the Indian Student Placement Services beginning in 1947.

Challenges of Growth and Internationalization. Between 1960 and 1990, Church membership more than quadrupled, with especially rapid growth outside the United States. Many organizational developments during these decades were designed to streamline operations, enhance communication and leadership training, and focus resources on the needs of Church members far from headquarters.

The Church Administration Building, at 47 East South Temple Street, Salt Lake City, completed in 1917, serves as the main office building for the Church President, his counselors, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and other General Authorities.

By the 1960s three kinds of organizations were operating within the Church: (1) an ecclesiastical system under a priesthood chain of command; (2) auxiliaries, each with its own general officers, manuals, conferences, and publication; and (3) professional services and departments for education, social work, legal affairs, building, communications, accounting, etc. Early in the 1960s, efforts began to correlate these organizations. A Correlation Committee consolidated and simplified Church curriculum, publications, meetings, and activities. Further elements of the correlation program, implemented in 1964, grouped priesthood responsibilities into four categories: missionary, genealogy, welfare, and home teaching. Ward teaching became home teaching, giving the priesthood quorums new responsibility for carrying Church programs to LDS families. Wards developed priests executive committees and ward councils to coordinate functions and reach out to individuals. In 1965 family home evening was established churchwide and, in 1970, Monday nights were set aside for families; special manuals provided suggestions for gospel-oriented family activities.

Beginning in 1965 all messages from general Church agencies to wards and stakes were funneled into the priesthood bulletin. Regional publications merged in 1967 into a unified international magazine, published in several languages. In 1971 Church magazines in the United States and Great Britain were restructured with the publication of the ensign for adults, the new era for teens, and the friend for children. By 1970 the Church had implemented a worldwide translation and distribution organization with publishing and distribution centers in European countries, the Americas, and the Pacific Rim.

Members of the First Council of the Seventy were ordained high priests in 1961 in order to better assist the Twelve in overseeing the growing number of wards and stakes. Regional representatives and mission representatives of the Twelve were called in 1967 and 1972, respectively (and merged in 1974). These officers played a key role in training and advising local leaders, an increasing number of whom were relatively recent converts with little administrative experience.

Spencer W. Kimball's presidency (1973–1985) saw important administrative changes, often in the direction of regionalizing responsibilities. Several functions previously reserved for General Authorities were delegated to stake presidents. In 1975 the first Quorum of the Seventy was reinstated as a body of General Authorities; a decade later the office of Seventy became exclusively a General Authority position. Regional representatives received limited line authority to supervise stake work (1976). In 1978 the Twelve became more directly involved in such ecclesiastical matters as curriculum, activity programs, and scouting; the presiding Bishopric retained responsibility for temporal programs but no longer for the youth. To enhance general Church supervision of local operations throughout the world and at the same time facilitate regionalization, in 1984 an area presidency (a president and two counselors, all of the Seventy) was organized for each of several major geographic areas. As the Church expands, boundaries are redrawn, and the number and importance of area presidencies increase.

Church programs have also been redesigned to meet the needs of an increasingly international membership. During the 1960s a labor missionary program (modeled after one that earlier constructed a college and a temple in New Zealand, and numerous chapels, especially in the South Pacific) helped the Church build meetinghouses in all parts of the world (see building program). In the mid-1970s the Church divested itself of hospitals that benefited primarily residents of the intermountain West and focused increased attention on the construction of chapels and temples world-
wide—this time not by labor missionaries but by professional builders. A consolidated Sunday three-hour meeting schedule for priesthood, SACRAMENT MEETING, and auxiliary meetings was introduced in the United States and Canada in 1980 and later worldwide. By the 1980s a SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK linked headquarters with many local stakes; that, and the widespread use of videotapes, made general conferences and communications from Church headquarters much more accessible. By 1990 much of the training of local leaders had been assumed by area presidencies and regional representatives.

In the 1980s Church financing became increasingly centralized, relieving local units of a major burden. Beginning in 1982 ward and stake buildings were funded fully from general Church funds (from tithes). In 1990 general funds also became the source for financing all local operations in the United States and Canada (see FINANCES OF THE CHURCH).

Though the basic administrative officers date from the founding generation, the challenges faced and the way the Church organizes itself to meet those challenges have changed dramatically. Such changes will continue. As President John Taylor said in 1886, the priesthood must not be fettered by "cast iron rules," for it is "a living, intelligent principle, and must necessarily have freedom to act" as circumstances require (First Council of the Seventy, Minutes, Dec. 15, 1886, Church Archives).

BIBLIOGRAPHY
CONTEMPORARY ORGANIZATION

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe that certain organizational principles, laws, and arrangements are divinely inspired. As evidence of this they point to callings and offices in the contemporary organization of the Church (e.g., prophet, apostle, the seventy, and evangelist or patriarch) that were also present in the early Christian church. Several early revelations, including the original articles of Church organization and government (D&C 20) and the revelation on Priesthood (D&C 107), are seen by members of the Church as sources of a divinely inspired organizational pattern. All offices and callings are filled by lay leaders, as the Church has no professional clergy. Even full-time missionaries and general authorities are drawn from the laity (see Lay Participation and Leadership).

PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION. Six basic principles that can be inferred from the revelations have shaped the historical and contemporary organization of the Church.

First is the guiding principle that the Church functions in the context of God’s eternal plan. Latter-day Saints believe that God’s work and glory is to “bring to pass the immortality and eternal life” of mankind (Moses 1:39). To further this plan, the Church pursues a complex mission that can be described as threefold: (1) proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people; (2) perfecting the Saints by preparing them to receive the ordinances of the gospel and, by instruction and discipline, to gain exaltation; and, (3) redeeming the dead by performing vicarious ordinances in the temple for those who have lived on the earth (Kimball, p. 5). The structures, programs, and processes of the contemporary organization of the Church are designed to fulfill one or more dimensions of the Church mission.

The second principle establishes the priesthood of God as the organizing authority of the Church. Structurally, the Church follows a strict hierarchical form, and authority is exercised through priesthood keys, which determine who presides over the Church and who directs its affairs at each organizational level. The President of the Church is the only person on earth authorized to exercise all priesthood keys. But through his authority different keys are delegated to individuals when they are called and “set apart” to specific positions of priesthood leadership and responsibility.

Third is the principle of presidencies and councils (see Presidency, Concept of; Priest-
HOOD COUNCILS). Presidents, because they hold priesthood keys and are entitled to the powers of presidency, possess the ultimate decision-making authority for their assigned stewardships. Nevertheless, all presidents are instructed to meet in presidencies and councils to hear various points of view. For example, it is the responsibility of counselors to presidents to give counsel; in Church disciplinary councils, council members may even be assigned to represent competing points of view. The same patterns are observed in the presidencies of the AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS, even though no priesthood keys may be involved.

Fourth is the law of COMMON CONSENT. Church leaders are selected through revelation by those in authority. Before new leaders may serve, they must receive a formal sustaining vote from the members whom they will serve or over whom they will preside. When members of the Church sustain leaders, they commit themselves to support these leaders in fulfilling their various stewardships.

Fifth is the principle of orderly administration. The organization of the Church follows prescribed policies and procedures that in the contemporary Church are defined in the GENERAL HANDBOOK OF INSTRUCTIONS, the Melchizedek Priesthood Handbook, and other handbooks and manuals for specific programs. An order or pattern is indicated for such procedures as ordinations, ordinances, and blessings; conducting meetings; extending callings and releases to members in various callings in the Church; keeping records and reports; controlling finances; and exercising Church discipline (see DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES).

Sixth, the contemporary organization of the Church continues to change in response to the demands of rapid international growth. New auxiliary organizations and new levels of geographic representation (e.g., region and area) have been added since the original revelations were received. Nevertheless, the influence of the first five organizing principles can still be seen at every organizational level, in both the ecclesiastical order and the administrative support system of the Church. In this respect, the contemporary organization of the Church is a product of both constancy and change.

Most people experience the organization of the LDS Church principally at the local level, where congregations are organized into WARDS. Although the local ward organization meets most of the religious needs of the members within its boundaries, many specialized services are provided at a higher level. In addition, ward officers are in continuing contact with a hierarchy of priesthood leaders linking them directly to the central authorities in Salt Lake City. Wards are organized into STAKES, stakes into regions, and regions into areas, which constitute the major international divisions of the Church organization. The present article will describe the organization beginning with the most general level and ending with the local wards.

A body of priesthood leaders called the General Authorities heads the organization of the Church. They are full-time ecclesiastical leaders drawn from the laity, and they receive modest living allowances from returns on investments made by the Church, not from the tithes and offerings paid by members of the Church. The General Authorities consist of the FIRST PRESIDENCY of the Church, the QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES or Council of the Twelve, the quorums of the SEVENTY, and the PRESIDING BISHOPRIC.
These General Authorities preside over the entire ecclesiastical organization of the Church, from the central headquarters in Salt Lake City, and its area offices in major cities in different parts of the world. They also manage the departments of the central office, which are composed largely of full-time employees who serve the administrative needs of the Church from offices in Salt Lake City and other locations as needed. This administrative support system functions in cooperation with the normal ecclesiastical channels, maintaining clear and direct lines of authority and responsibility between local and general officers of the Church.

The First Presidency. The First Presidency is the highest council of the Church, and is composed of the President of the Church and usually two counselors. The First Presidency performs the central and authoritative role of receiving revelation and establishing policies and procedures for the Church. When the President dies, the senior apostle (i.e., the member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles with the longest tenure) becomes President of the Church, and he chooses his counselors usually from among the other apostles, without regard to seniority. A new apostle is then chosen to fill the complement of twelve.

Since the First Presidency is a policymaking body, relatively few organizations and departments of the Church administrative support system report directly to it. For example, the various units of the Church Educational System (CES), including Institutes and Seminaries, report through a Board of Education. Brigham Young University, BYU–Hawaii, Ricks College, the LDS Business College, and several small colleges and schools located outside the United States also report through their boards of trustees.

The Church Auditing Department, the Budget Office, and the Personnel Department report directly to the First Presidency or its committees, as do the advisers to the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Symphony and Chorus. Although not a part of the Church administrative system, Temple Presidents likewise report directly to the First Presidency.

The Council of the Twelve. The Council, or Quorum, of the Twelve Apostles is a quorum “equal in authority and power” to the First Presidency, meaning that when the First Presidency is dissolved (which occurs upon the death of the President of the Church) the Council of the Twelve exercises all of the power and authority previously reserved to the First Presidency until a new First Presidency is organized (D&C 107:23–24). The Council of the Twelve is presently organized into four executive groups—the Correlation Executive Committee composed of the Council of the Twelve’s three most senior apostles; the Missionary Executive Council; the Priesthood Executive Council; and the Temple and Family History Executive Council.

The Correlation Executive Council reviews the work of the three other councils. It also directs the Correlation Department, which evaluates manuals and other materials disseminated to the membership of the Church and conducts research for the General Authorities (see Correlation). The Evaluation Division of the Correlation Department includes lay-member committees responsible for reviewing all Church materials, research, and the translation of materials.

The Missionary Executive Council directs the work of the Missionary Department of the Church, which provides support to a worldwide proselytizing effort. It is made up of several major sections, including the Proselyting Research Division; several Missionary Training Centers; the Missionary Operations Division, for handling day-to-day missionary activities; and the Media Division.

The Priesthood Executive Council directs the Priesthood Department and the Curriculum Department of the Church (see Curriculum). The Priesthood Department supervises the activities of the Melchizedek Priesthood and the auxiliaries of the Church. Among these auxiliary organizations are the Primary (for young children), the Young Men and Young Women (for youth ages twelve to eighteen), the Relief Society (for adult women), and the Sunday School. The members of the general presidencies of the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary are women who are called to serve on a part-time basis, while members of the general presidencies of the Young Men and Sunday School are members of the quorums of the Seventy. The principal role of the general presidencies of the auxiliaries is to train and serve the leaders and members of their respective organizations in the stakes and wards of the Church. The Curriculum Department is responsible for planning, developing, and producing printed, audio, and audiovisual materials for the Church. It in-
cludes the Curriculum Planning and Development Division, the Audiovisual Planning and Development Division, the Publications Coordination Division, the Scriptures Coordination Division, and the Church Magazines Division.

The Temple and Family History Executive Council directs the Temple Department, the Family History Department, and the Historical Department of the Church. The Temple Department supervises the operation of the Church's temples throughout the world. The major divisions of the Temple Department are the Recording and Ordinance Procedures Division, the Ordinance Recording Systems Division, and the Audiovisual Services Division. The Family History Department manages the genealogical research done by members of the Church all over the world and assists members in researching their ancestors (see Family History, Genealogy; Genealogy). It engages in the acquisition and storage of genealogical records, manages the worldwide system of genealogical libraries, and supervises the preparation of individual names for temple ordinance work. The Historical Department acquires, organizes, preserves, and oversees the use of materials of enduring value to the Church. The department includes the Archives Division, the Library Division (for historical research), and the Museum Division.

Members of the Missionary, Priesthood, and Temple and Family History executive councils also have "first contact" assignments in various areas of the Church. This means that these members of the Council of the Twelve work with specific area presidencies and are ultimately responsible for all the work of the Church in their assigned areas.

The Quorums of the Seventy. Members of the First Quorum of the Seventy are called to serve usually until they reach seventy years of age, while members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy are normally called to serve for five years. Members of the quorums of the Seventy serve under the direction of the Presidency of the Seventy. The seven presidents of the Seventy presently serve as Executive Directors of, respectively, the Correlation, Missionary, Priesthood (two Executive Directors assigned), Curriculum, Temple, and Family History departments of the Church. Members of the quorums of the Seventy are assigned to serve in area presidencies throughout the world. Area presidencies oversee both the local units and the missions of the Church. Each mission is presided over by a Mission President, who oversees the proselytizing activities of approximately two hundred missionaries.

Those members of the quorums of the Seventy assigned to the areas of North America work at the general headquarters of the Church in Salt Lake City. They also receive assignments as assistant executive directors over the departments of the Church or as members of general presidencies of the Young Men and Sunday School organizations of the Church.

The Presiding Bishopric. The Presiding Bishopric is made up of three General Authorities—the Presiding Bishop and two counselors—responsible for many of the temporal affairs of the Church. They report directly to the First Presidency of the Church and oversee the Welfare Services, Physical Facilities, Materials Management, Information Systems, Finance and Records, Investments, LDS Foundation, and Security departments of the Church. The members of the Presiding Bishopric also support directors for temporal affairs assigned to each of the areas of the Church, who oversee all the temporal affairs of the Church in their assigned areas.

The Welfare Services Department is charged with helping members of the Church to care for themselves and for the poor and needy. The department consists of the Employment Services Division, Deseret Industries (organized for the employment and rehabilitation of disadvantaged members of the Church), and the Production/Distribution Division (responsible for the production, processing, and distribution of sustenance to temporarily disadvantaged Church members).

The Physical Facilities Department provides, maintains, and manages Church buildings and sites in the United States and Canada, and provides functional support for Church-owned physical facilities throughout the world. The department is divided into the Architecture and Engineering Division, the Headquarters Facilities Division, the Real Estate Division, and the Temple and Special Projects Division.

The Materials Management Department provides Church members and the local units of the Church with equipment, functional services, supplies, sacred clothing, and published materials.
The divisions of this department include Printing Services, Beehive Clothing (a production facility for articles of sacred clothing), the Purchasing Division, the Translation Division, the Vehicle Fleet Division, and the Food Services Division.

The Information Systems Department provides information services to the administrative departments and the areas, regions, stakes, and wards of the Church. The department is composed of the Client Services Division, the Operations Services Division (Data Center), and the Applications Services Division.

The Finance and Records Department protects the assets and vital administrative records of the Church. It is organized into the Treasury Services, Controller, Tax Administration, Risk Management, and Membership and Statistical Records divisions.

The Investments Department is responsible to the Presiding Bishopric for investment securities and investment properties of the Church and is organized into separate divisions to perform these responsibilities (see BUSINESS: CHURCH PARTICIPATION IN).

The purpose of the LDS Foundation is to encourage and facilitate charitable giving to the Church and its programs. The LDS Foundation consists of the Donor Services, Donor Services Support, and Administrative Services divisions.

Finally, the Security Department is charged with providing security for properties at Church headquarters and other locations and personal protection as determined by the First Presidency. The department is organized into divisions responsible for each activity.

THE LOCAL UNITS OF THE CHURCH. The General Authorities oversee the geographical areas of the Church and normally become involved in local Church affairs through regional representatives. Regional representatives, like stake and ward leaders, serve on a part-time basis. All are lay members, and receive no financial compensation from the Church for their services. Regional representatives perform an advisory and training role. Their principal responsibility is to train local Church leaders in their assigned regions, as directed by the Council of the Twelve through the area presidencies.

The local units of the Church are stakes and wards. Stakes are centers of Church activity. The size of a stake may range from 2,000 to 7,000 members, and each stake provides its members with the full range of programs and services of the Church. Each stake is presided over by a STAKE PRESIDENT and two counselors, assisted by a HIGH COUNCIL of twelve or more men. The stake presidency and high council form the Stake Priesthood Executive Committee, which directs all stake activities. The Stake Priesthood Executive Committee is usually divided into the Stake Melchizedek Priesthood Committee and the Stake Aaronic Priesthood Committee. The Stake Melchizedek Priesthood Committee, under the direction of the stake president (chairman) and a counselor in the stake presidency (vice-chairman), supervises Melchizedek Priesthood quorums and trains quorum and group leaders. The Stake Aaronic Priesthood Committee, chaired by the other counselor in the stake presidency, meets to correlate and supervise stake and multiward Aaronic Priesthood programs. Finally, the Stake Council, formed of the members of the Stake Priesthood Executive Committee and the presidents of the stake auxiliaries, meets regularly to coordinate the planning of stake programs and activities.

Wards are the basic ecclesiastical unit of the Church. They normally have between 200 and 800 members and are presided over by a BISHOP and two counselors. The operation of substantially all the programs of the Church takes place in wards. Moreover, all Aaronic Priesthood quorums are ward quorums, in contrast to Melchizedek Priesthood quorums, which are primarily supervised by stakes. The organization of wards resembles the organization of stakes, with the BISHOPRIC serving as the presidency of the ward and the Ward Priesthood Executive Committee and the WARD COUNCIL serving as the major councils. Ward members meet together frequently for spiritual and social purposes: According to President Harold B. Lee, “Perhaps the most important of all the work done in the Church is done in the wards.” In areas where there is a smaller Church membership, members are organized into local BRANCHES and DISTRICTS under the direction of missions, until there is sufficient membership strength to organize them as self-operating wards and stakes.

The contemporary organization of the Church is unique in its complexity and its use of lay members, though experience indicates that many details of that organization are necessarily subject to change. It is the intent of the Church to provide multiple opportunities for its members to serve in
formal organizational roles and to perform Christian service, such as visiting the sick, caring for the poor, and serving as missionaries. Accordingly, a ward of 400 members may involve as many as 250 of those members in a variety of ward and stake positions. Members view their positions in the Church as “callings.” Those who are in positions of Church authority seek inspiration from God in determining which member should receive a particular calling and then extend the call accordingly. Soon thereafter, the member is sustained by the body of membership that he or she serves, and is then set apart to the position by the presiding authority. Members of the Church expect to serve in a variety of positions throughout their lives. Although some positions are seen to carry greater status—roughly correlated with the ecclesiastical hierarchy—there is no prescribed sequence of Church positions. For example, a man might serve as a stake president and, upon his release, be called as a Sunday School teacher. Members accept such changes as inspired and as new opportunities to serve.

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LEE TOM PERRY
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ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH, 1830

On Tuesday, April 6, 1830, under the direction of the Prophet Joseph Smith, a group of friends assembled in Peter Whitmer, Sr.’s log farmhouse to organize the Church, later named The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (see NAME OF THE CHURCH). Whitmer, a German immigrant from Pennsylvania, had come to Fayette, New York, in the Seneca Lake region in 1809. Joseph and Emma Smith and Oliver Cowdery had lived and worked in the Whitmer farmhouse in 1829 while they completed the translation of the Book of Mormon.

Prior to this date, Joseph Smith and his small but growing group of believers had held meetings regularly in Fayette, Manchester, and Colesville, New York, but April 6 was the day given them by revelation to organize formally as a church, in compliance with laws regulating the creation of new churches in New York State. It appears that the legal requirements were checked and steps taken to comply with New York law prior to the organization. The law required notice on two successive sabbaths, nomination and election of three to nine trustees, and nomination of two members to preside at the election (Carmack, p. 16). These steps assured formal status to the fledgling Church, validating property and ecclesiastical actions in the eyes of the state. Joseph Smith’s official history reports his conclusion that the organizers held the meeting agreeable to the laws of the country (see JOSEPH SMITH—HISTORY). There is no record of any challenge to the action, and thereafter the Church conducted both religious rites and business transactions on a regular basis.

The organizational meeting commenced with prayer. The small congregation, made up of about fifty men and women, unanimously voted approval to organize a new church and elected Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, Peter Whitmer, Jr., Samuel H. Smith, and David Whitmer as trustees. They also unanimously...