



Council room in the Salt Lake Temple where the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and other General Authorities meet each Thursday.

cisions, and coordinate across subunit boundaries. Participation in councils helps prepare members for future leadership responsibilities.

Church councils are also convened for DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES. Such councils, which may be held at the ward, stake, or general Church level, consider serious infractions where individuals may need institutional help in the REPENTANCE process beyond the personal counseling of a leader or where excommunication or other disciplinary action may be necessary. Individual circumstances are considered by the council and the final decision is made by the bishop or president, with council ratification. Disciplinary councils are set up to protect both the individual and the Church by assigning council members to represent the interests of both parties (D&C 102:15).

J. BONNER RITCHIE

PRIESTHOOD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, STAKE AND WARD

The WARD priesthood executive committee (PEC) consists of the leaders of key ward organizations. The PEC generally meets weekly under the direction of the BISHOP and his counselors to direct and coordinate ward PRIESTHOOD programs that have been designed to promote the spiritual and temporal welfare of each individual and family in the

ward. This committee includes leaders of MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD quorums, who administer welfare (physical and material well-being), temple, missionary, and family history (genealogy) activities, and leaders responsible for youth priesthood programs. A ward executive secretary prepares each meeting's agenda, and the ward clerk records its minutes. The PEC also coordinates ward efforts to activate its members not regularly participating in the Church.

The PEC thus provides a forum for ward priesthood officers to foster the well-being of ward members; discuss applications of Church policy; participate in and sponsor leadership training; and report their stewardship concerns to the bishop, including problems discovered through monthly home teaching visits to congregation members.

The STAKE PRESIDENCY and HIGH COUNCIL compose the Stake Priesthood Executive Committee. They oversee the administration of all Church programs in the stake; consider issues that affect all wards in the stake; and approve nominations of members to be called for service in ward BISHOPRICS, stake priesthood quorums, and stake AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS. The stake PEC usually meets twice a month. The stake president presides and conducts. The stake executive secretary and stake clerk assist the stake presidency with the agenda and minutes of the meeting. Both the ward and stake priesthood executive committees are augmented periodically by leaders of the PRIMARY, YOUNG WOMEN, and RELIEF SOCIETY organizations to form two additional councils.

[See also Home Teaching; Ward Council.]

DAVID C. BRADFORD

PRIESTHOOD INTERVIEW

The Church has developed a system of regularly scheduled priesthood interviews for effective overseeing of delegated responsibilities. Commonly used in HOME TEACHING accountability (referred to as Home Teaching Interviews) and in other Church programs, these private meetings between a priesthood leader and a member who reports to him are designed to increase communication, resolve concerns, maintain accountability, build spirituality, and empower members to fulfill their responsibilities.

The interview typically begins with a prayer about the issues at hand, and the first few minutes are spent following up on assignments generated during the previous session. When assignments have not been completed, plans are made to ensure completion before the next meeting. Although the format for the remainder of the interview varies to fit the needs and circumstances, it might include the following: discussion and resolution of administrative or organizational problems; training in administrative and management skills; resolution of interpersonal problems; sharing information on what is happening in the organization, including success experiences; identification of individual and organizational needs; and discussion of personal problems as appropriate. The last matter on the agenda of a priesthood interview is often a review of new assignments generated during the meeting, ensuring mutual understanding and verifying the accuracy of the notes recorded.

The priesthood interview is widely used as an administrative procedure between levels of Church organization and assists Church leaders to “organize [themselves] and appoint every man his stewardship; that every man may give an account . . . of the stewardship which is appointed unto him” (D&C 104:11–12). Interviews are often scheduled on a monthly or quarterly basis at the initiative of the priesthood leader.

Research shows that applying the principles of interviews to secular organizations in the private and public sectors can produce a number of benefits. Employed by either religious or nonreligious organizations, such interviews can increase the quantity and quality of communication, build higher levels of trust, improve the organizational climate and group effectiveness, and prevent regression that normally follows team-building meetings. Managers also report that regular interviews consistently save them time by reducing unscheduled interruptions.

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PRIESTHOOD OFFICES

Priesthood offices are appointments or CALLINGS in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to serve in specified areas of PRIESTHOOD responsibility. Each priesthood office includes a specific set of rights and duties, in addition to responsibilities shared by all bearers of the priesthood. These offices provide needed service to the Church and its members and give priesthood bearers opportunities to learn and serve. Both are important in a church operated by LAY PARTICIPATION and LEADERSHIP.

All priesthood offices derive their AUTHORITY from the priesthood itself, which is greater than any of those offices. Hence, ORDINATION to an office does not increase an individual’s authority or power, but rather focuses the individual’s service in particular functions. When a person receives the priesthood by the LAYING-ON OF HANDS, he first has the priesthood *conferred* upon him, after which he is *ordained* to a specific office in the priesthood.

The four offices in the AARONIC PRIESTHOOD are DEACON, TEACHER, PRIEST, and BISHOP. The offices in the MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD include ELDER, HIGH PRIEST, PATRIARCH, SEVENTY, and APOSTLE. The general title “elder” is applied to all bearers of the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Hierarchy of priesthood authority is associated more with presiding PRIESTHOOD QUORUMS and presidencies and less with the offices of the Melchizedek Priesthood themselves. For example, although an elder and an apostle have different rights and responsibilities, they both hold the same priesthood (cf. 1 Pet. 5:1, in which the apostle Peter refers to himself as an elder).

Scriptural records show that priesthood offices were established in ancient as well as modern times, although it is not known in some cases what duties these officers had in earlier dispensations. MELCHIZEDEK was ordained to the office of high priest (JST Gen. 14:26–27; JST Heb. 7:3; Alma 13:14–18; D&C 84:14). MOSES consecrated AARON and his sons to minister “in the priest’s office” (Ex. 28:1, 41). Elders and seventies officiated in ancient Israel (Ex. 24:9–11; Num. 11:16). The Book of Mormon indicates that teachers, priests, and elders were ordained among the NEPHITES, and that a high priest presided over the Church (Mosiah 23:16–18; Alma 4:7; 5:3). The New Testament records that Church organization included priest-