

pansions of the responsibilities assigned to stakes. Stake conferences are held semiannually, with stake presidents responsible for presiding when Regional Representatives or General Authorities are not present. Other functions formerly performed by General Authorities but now assigned to stake presidents include issuing temple recommends, setting apart counselors in the stake presidency and missionaries, ordaining bishops and stake patriarchs, and giving special temple recommend clearances.

Stake officers have primary responsibility for training ward priesthood and auxiliary officers. Stake presidencies recommend new bishops to the General Authorities and, with their high councils, train ward bishoprics and quorum leaders. Under the direction of the stake presidency and the high council, stake auxiliary leaders hold regular leadership meetings to train their counterparts at the ward level (*see* LEADERSHIP TRAINING). Stake presidencies and high councils continue to serve as the major judicial organization of the Church and conduct DISCIPLINARY COUNCILS for members who have committed serious sins.

New stakes are created when the membership of an existing stake becomes too large or when Church numbers and leadership strength in a mission district where a stake has not previously existed reach a level that justifies its organization



Interior of the St. George Tabernacle in St. George, Utah, built 1863–1875 and regular site of local stake conferences, concerts, and community events. Courtesy Utah State Historical Society.

(Kimball, p. 11). This process has accelerated greatly since the mid-twentieth century, with stakes being organized in many nations. Before 1840, 11 stakes had been established in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois. In 1870 there were 12, all located in Utah. By 1882 the number had grown to 27, and by 1940, to 177. The 321 stakes in 1960 included one in Mexico and 19 in English-speaking countries outside the United States. In 1991 there were over 1,800 stakes worldwide, with almost weekly additions.

Stake presidents are called by revelation and set apart by a General Authority under the direction of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. They are sustained by the membership of the stake in the stake conference following their call. After a period of service (often about ten years), they are released from their assignment and a replacement is selected in the same manner.

[*See also* Area, Area Presidency; Bishop, History of the Office; Organization: Contemporary; Region, Regional Representative; Ward; Stake President, Stake Presidency.]

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## STAKE PRESIDENT, STAKE PRESIDENCY

The Church officer who presides over several WARDS (congregations) that comprise a STAKE is the stake president. A stake president is selected

by the General Authority assigned by the Quorum of Twelve Apostles to preside at that stake's conference. He typically interviews many MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD leaders in the stake and then seeks inspiration from God to determine whom to call. The General Authority calls the stake president and instructs him to nominate two counselors who are interviewed and called. These three men constitute the stake presidency. They serve voluntarily, receiving no financial remuneration from the Church. Counselors to the stake president advise and assist him in his responsibilities and counsel with him in decision making. As with all officers in the Church, members of the stake presidency must be sustained by the vote of the members over whom they preside (D&C 20:65; *see* COMMON CONSENT). Each stake president supervises and is responsible for the progress of the Church in his stake, including all Church activities, callings, ORDINANCES performed, and programs.

Members of the stake presidency hold the office of HIGH PRIEST, and they serve as the presidency of the high priest quorum and supervise all Melchizedek Priesthood quorums. This means they hold the proper priesthood authority to act as the Lord's agent in behalf of the members (*see* KEYS OF THE PRIESTHOOD).

What the stake president performs and authorizes within the scope of his calling is recognized as official and binding by the Church. For example, the stake president authorizes ordinations of worthy men to offices in the Melchizedek Priesthood, such as ELDER and high priest. He submits to the FIRST PRESIDENCY for their approval the names of men to be called as BISHOPS. When the approval is granted, the stake president issues the call and ordains the man a bishop, after he has been sustained by his ward. The stake president calls the presidents of the women's organizations of the stake. He sets them apart after they have been sustained by vote of the stake. Both stake and full-time MISSIONARIES are SET APART and later released by stake presidents. With a few exceptions, stake presidents may delegate to their counselors, or to high councilors, the authority to perform ordinances, issue calls to serve, ordain others to priesthood offices, and give spiritual blessings. Stake presidencies are to draw upon the scriptures and are to seek inspiration through prayer. The stake president is the one ultimately responsible for decisions made, but the stake presidency is to act as a unified quorum when decisions

are made and actions taken. The stake presidency is accountable to members of the General Authorities of the Church for the administration of their stake.

During semi-annual stake conferences, members of the stake gather to hear instruction and inspirational messages from the stake presidency and other leaders. Stake presidents provide additional spiritual direction through counseling individuals and families and by visiting members' homes.

The stake president also presides over certain council meetings in which the spiritual welfare of Church members is the focus, such as meetings to address the needs of the poor or to prepare for emergencies, or councils that conduct DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES for Church members who have transgressed fundamental standards of the gospel. Through personal interviews, stake presidencies certify the worthiness of members to enter TEMPLES and to be ordained to Melchizedek Priesthood offices, after they have been recommended to the stake president by their bishop. Bishops are to report their stewardship and the welfare of their congregations to their stake president.

Stake presidents are charged with fiscal responsibility for the stake. CLERKS are called to help with RECORD KEEPING and payments, but the expenditures of all wards, priesthood quorums, and AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS within the stake are the responsibility of the stake president. Financial assistance provided to needy individuals is administered by ward bishops, supervised by the stake president. In addition, since most wards meet in Church-owned buildings, the maintenance and operation of all physical facilities in the stake fall under the auspices of the stake president.

The stake president serves until he is released. As is the case with all callings in the Church, he neither campaigns for the position nor chooses the time of his release.

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## STANDARD WORKS

Standard works are the books accepted by Latter-day Saints as SCRIPTURE: the BIBLE, BOOK OF