Appendix 9

Letters of the Presiding Bishopric

The role and duties of the Presiding Bishopric of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints change as the Church grows and needs dictate. The following excerpts were selected from many available documents to illustrate a few of the responsibilities of the Presiding Bishopric.

Consecration of Property, 1832

Following is an excerpt from a formal document labeled a “Lease of inheritance in Jackson Co. and loan of property there.” It is dated October 12, 1832, and signed by Edward Partridge, Bishop. A printed form was used; words in brackets indicate the handwritten parts. Spelling and punctuation are preserved as in the original.

BE IT KNOWN, THAT I, [Edward Partridge—]

Of Jackson county, and state of Missouri, bishop of the church of Christ, organized according to law, and established by the revelations of the Lord, on the 6th day of April, 1830, have leased, and by these presents do lease unto [Joseph Knight Junr] of Jackson county, and state of Missouri, a member of said church, the following described parcel of land, being a part of section No. [thirty three] township No. [forty nine] range No. [thirty three] situated in Jackson county, and state of Missouri, and is bounded as follows, viz:—

[Beginning forty two rods E. from the N. W. corner of Sd. Sec. thence E. on the N. line of the Sd. Sec ten rods, thence S. 5½° W. thirty rods twenty one L. thence W. six rods to land leased to N. Knight, thence N. thirty six rods to the place of beginning, containing one acre and eighty one hundredths be the same more or less.]

And also have loaned the following described property, viz:— [Sundry articles of crockery, tinware, knives, forks and spoons valued nine dollars forty three cents,— Sundry articles of iron ware and household furniture valued twelve dollars ninety two cents,— one bed and bedding, valued nineteen dollars,—Sundry articles of clothing valued twenty two dollars thirteen cents,— grain valued seven dollars,— Sundry articles of joiner tools valued twenty dollars forty four cents.—one cow valued twelve dollars.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the above described property by him the said [Joseph Knight Junr. —] to be used and occupied as to him shall seem meet and proper. And as a consideration for the use of the above described property unto the said [Edward Partridge—] bishop of said church, or his successor in office, of myself and family. . . .
Spiritual Welfare of Young Men Ages 18 and Over

August 31, 1973

To all Stake Presidents, Mission and District Presidents, Bishops and Branch Presidents

Dear Brethren:

The October 1972 Priesthood Bulletin (item No. 1) contained the following policy statement:

At the age of eighteen, Aaronic Priesthood bearers may be ordained to the office of an Elder in the Melchizedek Priesthood or transferred to the prospective elders program. If, in the judgment of the bishop, such qualifying circumstances as date of graduation from high school, individual maturation, or peer group association seem to indicate a need for a postponement, a young man may remain in the priests quorum until such circumstances change, or until the young man becomes nineteen.

This policy should be applied in the new correlated reporting system when determining the organization that is responsible for reporting the activities of eighteen-year-old men. If the eighteen-year-old is not ordained to the office of an elder, or transferred to the prospective elders program, he continues to be the responsibility of the priests quorum and is listed on the Priests Quorum roll. As soon as he reaches nineteen, he should either be ordained an elder, if worthy, or transferred to the prospective elders program. . . .

The prime concern of all leaders must be the welfare, spirituality and improvement of the individual.

Sincerely,

THE PRESIDING BISHOPRIC
Victor L. Brown
H. Burke Peterson
Vaughn J. Featherstone

Utah Flood Disaster Aid

14 June 1983

To Executive Administrators, Regional Representatives, Stake Presidents and Bishops in Utah

Dear Brethren:

As a result of the flood disaster in Utah each stake president and bishop should carefully apply the concepts outlined in the First Presidency’s letter
of 10 June 1983 entitled "Rebuilding and Giving Service Following Disasters." Give particular attention to:

"The responsibility for each member’s spiritual, social, emotional, physical or economic well-being rests first with the member, second upon the family, and third, upon the Church."

When disaster assistance is requested by members, the bishop and stake president should handle these requests using normal procedures for obtaining and handling fast-offering funds as outlined in the Church Financial Records booklet. . . .

We trust this will help priesthood leaders administer fast-offering assistance where required and needed.

Sincerely your brethren,

THE PRESIDING BISHOPRIC
Victor L. Brown
H. Burke Peterson
J. Richard Clarke

Implementing the Budget Allowance Program; Sacred Nature of Tithing Funds

5 December 1989

To General Authorities, Regional Representatives, and Stake Presidents in the United States and Canada

Dear Brethren:

Local Unit Budget Allowance Program

On 15 November 1989 the First Presidency announced a new method of providing financial support for wards and stakes in the United States and Canada. This plan provides a budget allowance for stakes and wards from general Church funds and eliminates the need for local units to receive or to seek budget contributions from their members.

The announcement letter indicated additional instructions concerning the plan would be forthcoming. Attached are the materials priesthood leaders will need in order to implement the budget allowance program. . . .

Any questions concerning the program should first be directed to the stake president. In the event a question remains, stake presidents may make inquiry at Church headquarters. . . .

Church members should be reminded of the blessings associated with the payment of an honest tithe. They should also be encouraged to care for the poor by being generous in their fast offering contributions and should feel their responsibility to financially support missionary activities.

Tithing funds, by their very nature, are sacred. Priesthood and auxiliary leaders must be wise stewards over the budget allowance given them
to ensure sacred funds are used to bless people and further gospel purposes. . . .

As this new program is implemented, all priesthood leaders are asked to be sensitive to the broad interests of the entire Church rather than the provincial concerns of a local unit.

May our Father in Heaven’s blessings be with you as you implement this important new program and apply the principles associated with it.

Sincerely your brethren,

THE PRESIDING BISHOPRIC
Robert D. Hales
Henry B. Eyring
Glenn L. Pace

Guidelines for New Meetinghouse Projects

1 February 1991

To General Authorities, Regional Representatives, Stake and District Presidents, Bishops and Branch Presidents

Dear Brethren:

Approval has been given to new guidelines for local units to qualify for a meetinghouse project. These new guidelines are attached and are effective with the receipt of this letter.

Because of budget limitations, it is possible some requests for projects which fully meet the guidelines may not be undertaken when requested. Area Presidencies will give priority to projects within approved budgets. In some areas, Area Presidencies may also use additional requirements to assist in establishing priorities. . . .

These guidelines are designed to encourage priesthood leaders to use meetinghouse facilities more fully in meeting the Church’s ever-expanding needs.

Sincerely your brethren,

THE PRESIDING BISHOPRIC
Robert D. Hales
Henry B. Eyring
Glenn L. Pace