

Part II—Policies and Procedures

4. Priesthood and Ordination

A. The Nature of Priesthood

Priesthood ministry within the church is thoroughly discussed in *The Priesthood Manual* (Herald House, 2004). It is a valuable reference for study of the history, theology, and functioning of priesthood. Certain procedural matters are refined from time to time. This edition of the *Church Administrator's Handbook* has precedence over previous editions and other previously published guidelines.

B. Calls to the Priesthood

Calls to the priesthood are initiated by jurisdictional officers in response to the spirit of discernment, wisdom, and divine direction and are authorized by a vote of the members in a conference of the appropriate church jurisdiction.

1. Calls to the office of high priest may be initiated by the First Presidency, Council of Twelve, and mission center presidents holding the office of high priest. All such calls must have the approval of the field apostle, the director of Field Ministries, the Council of Twelve, and the First Presidency before being submitted to the individual and the conference. Calls to the office of bishop are initiated by the First Presidency and are approved by the World Church Leadership Council. Calls to the office of evangelist are initiated through the Council of Twelve and approved by the First Presidency and the Council of Twelve. Seventies are called through the Council of Presidents of Seventy and approved by the First Presidency and World Church Leadership Council.
2. Procedures for processing calls to the priesthood in congregations are outlined on page 91.
3. Forms for recommending ordinations to the office of elder, priest, teacher, and deacon are available from mission center offices (see appendix). This form, or a photocopy of it, should be used in the processing of all priesthood calls. Older forms are now obsolete and should be discarded. Mission centers may also use additional forms to supplement those distributed by the World Church.
4. Those responsible for calling persons to priesthood office are encouraged to engage in prayerful reflection on the needs of the church for ministry, the movement of the Holy Spirit in the lives of potential candidates, and the ministerial gifts, talents, and commitment those potential candidates express in their lives. Calling officers are also encouraged to consult with other

experienced ministers who can be trusted with the confidentiality required by such discussions.

C. Preordination Expectations

1. Calling and Ordination:

A significant distinction exists between calling and ordination. Calling reflects the personal relationship between God and the person. Ordination is provided for when that calling is perceived by an appropriate administrative officer, is approved through designated channels, and is symbolized by the laying on of hands. Ordination provides formal authority to function within a specific priesthood office in the church. Acceptance of ordination implies a willingness to minister within a framework of expectations and standards developed by the church as a way of enriching priesthood ministry.

2. Financial Stewardship of Ordinands:

Church officers responsible for initiating priesthood calls are urged to give earnest consideration to each candidate's attitude toward financial stewardship principles along with other aspects of the gospel. Ideally, a candidate for ordination would contribute mission tithes in a balanced way, both local and to World Church purposes. Additionally, calling officers should carefully consider indications of poor personal financial management, such as apparent misuse of credit or indications of spending beyond one's means.

3. Legislative Approval:

All priesthood calls are to be submitted to a legislative conference, at the appropriate jurisdictional level, for approval (D. and C. 17:16). The purpose of this legislative approval is to allow the members of the church to express their willingness to accept the ministry to be offered by the candidate. Calls to the Aaronic priesthood and to the office of elder are approved by a congregational conference or by a mission center conference. Calls to the offices of seventy and high priest as well as to any of the specialized ministries which are part of the ministry of high priest (i.e., evangelist, bishop, etc.) are approved by a mission center conference or by the World Conference.

4. Training:

Before ordination, a candidate is expected to complete the Temple School courses SL 101 Introduction to Caring Ministries, SS 101 Introduction to Understanding Scripture or equivalent, and the course designed for the specific

priesthood office. After the first call to priesthood, SL 101 Introduction to Caring Ministries need not be repeated for subsequent calls, but a scripture course and an office-centered course should be taken each time. Where appropriate, an administrative officer may certify course equivalency for individuals who have met the basic requirements in other ways.

5. Designation and Candidacy:

A period of preparation exists between the time of administrative approval authorizing a call and when ordination takes place. This category of designation and candidacy for priesthood should not last more than one year; approval after that time is no longer valid unless extenuating circumstances are present. During this time a person is seen as having been called to service but not yet fully authorized by the church. This time will serve as a period of personal preparation, testimony, and guided practical experience.

D. Ordination

The sacrament of ordination is normally performed by two or more members of the priesthood authorized to ordain people to a specific office. Local circumstances may dictate that an ordination be performed by a single officiant, especially in areas where the church is still developing. The ordaining priesthood are chosen in consultation between the ordinand and the administrative officers.

High priests, elders, or priests may officiate in the ordination of Aaronic priesthood, and high priests and elders for the ordination of elders. High priests may be ordained by other high priests, including bishops and evangelists. Evangelists are normally ordained by members of the First Presidency or Council of Twelve, and bishops are ordained by members of the First Presidency or their designee, with any high priest eligible to assist in the ordination of either. Seventies are normally ordained by a member of the First Presidency, Council of Twelve, or presidents of Seventy, with any other high priest or seventy assisting.

Priesthood Licenses:

When ordinations have been performed they should immediately be reported to the Office of Membership Records by the congregational or mission center recorder. Once the ordination has been recorded, the World Church secretary will issue a priesthood license, which certifies the individual as an ordained minister. (In parts of the world where this procedure is impractical, the field apostle will establish an appropriate procedure to document the ordination of ministers.) This license should be surrendered when a priesthood member is silenced or released. Whether surrendered or not, the license is valid only when the priesthood member is authorized by the church to function. Licenses which have

been lost or damaged, may be replaced by sending a written request to the World Church secretary.

E. Priesthood Accountability

Priesthood is of a continuing nature. Priesthood authority is granted by the church as a privilege, with continuing expectations. One is called to enlarge and expand personal gifts in the process of ministry—in brief, to magnify one's calling. In recognition of these factors, continuing education and accountability for one's ministry are accepted by each ordinand as essential to fulfilling the call of God.

1. Personal Review:

Each member of the priesthood should review his or her own ministry and calling on a periodic basis. Such a review might include questions relating to areas of particular ministerial interest, needs for further development, and the degree of satisfaction in one's office and calling. Members of the priesthood have a right to discuss the issues involved in such a review with the pastor or the pastor's designee.

2. Administrative Review:

A pastor, or other administrative officer who supervises members of the priesthood, may initiate a similar discussion with a priesthood member as circumstances may suggest.

3. Change of Status:

If a personal or administrative review of a member of the priesthood suggests that a change of status is in order, the change of status should be reported in accordance with established procedures. (See below.)

4. Continuing Education:

Following ordination, individuals holding priesthood office are expected to be involved in the process of continuing education. At least two continuing education units (CEU—equivalent to two ten-hour Temple School courses, or two full-weekend workshops, or one four-day seminar or workshop) are considered normal expectations for each year. Temple School coordinators are available for consultation in regard to educational concerns and needs.

F. Priesthood Categories

In an effort to better classify the ways individual priesthood members are able to function, several categories of priesthood service have been defined.

1. Active:

This category describes the large body of priesthood members who provide ministry appropriate to their abilities, life's circumstances, and the congregation or other jurisdiction to which they are responsible. Continuing active status is the objective for all priesthood members.

2. Inactive:

The inactive priesthood status recognizes that personal and/or situational conditions may determine that the priesthood member cannot actively function in the office and calling for an indefinite period of time. Inactive status recognizes that there is no breach of the church's ethical or moral expectations for the personal conduct of priesthood members. This category carries no negative connotation on the person's church record. If there is cause for silence, the person will not be placed on inactive status.

a. The inactive priesthood status will usually be agreed between a priesthood member and the pastor or other supervising officer, and it may be requested at any time. Inactive priesthood members may retain their cards and may function in the office, including the performance of ordinances, with the permission of the pastor. Periodic interim reviews should be held to encourage return to active status.

b. If a priesthood member disagrees with the status her or she has been assigned, the decision can be appealed through the administrative line.

c. A priesthood member on inactive status may be reinstated to active status on approval of the pastor. When reinstatement is granted, the Office of Membership Records should be notified immediately.

3. Superannuation:

Superannuation is an honor in recognition of long and faithful service. Superannuation continues the authority to administer the sacraments pertaining to the office. However, such participation becomes permissive and voluntary. This honor is appropriate when permanent or long-term limitations prohibit one's full functioning in priesthood office. Such limitations may be related to age, increasing degrees of infirmity, or disabling conditions.

a. At any time, either the priesthood member or the supervising administrative officer may suggest superannuation.

b. When superannuation is agreed to by the priesthood member and the supervising officer, the procedure for approval depends on the office held. For members of the Aaronic priesthood and for elders, the request is transmitted to the mission center president and the field apostle. The field apostle informs the administrative officers and the Office of Membership Records of the final approval of superannuation. The Office of Membership Records will forward a certificate of superannuation to the mission center president.

c. For priesthood members serving in World Church quorums and orders (high priests, evangelists, bishops, and seventies) the request passes through the administrative

line as above, but is also reviewed by the director of Field Ministries and the First Presidency, in consultation with the quorum or order officer concerned. When these approvals have been received, the First Presidency informs all appropriate administrative officers and the Office of Membership Records of the final approval of the superannuation. The Office of Membership Records will forward a certificate of superannuation to the mission center president.

d. In all cases, the superannuation is effective on the date of the final administrative approval.

e. In most cases, it would be appropriate and fitting to present a superannuated minister with his or her certificate of superannuation at an appropriate gathering such as a mission center conference.

4. Release:

A member may choose to be released from the responsibility of priesthood for reasons of life's circumstances or personal conscience. All persons released from the priesthood should relinquish their priesthood license. Their status is the same as an unordained member.

a. *Voluntary Release.* Voluntary release is usually initiated by the priesthood member but may be suggested by the pastor or other administrative officer. The priesthood member should submit to the pastor a signed statement requesting release and enclose the priesthood card. The pastor should ensure that it is a mature decision, not prompted by the possibility of silence, and that there is no likelihood the individual will serve in that office in the foreseeable future. The pastor then prepares a letter endorsing the action and forwards all the material to the First Presidency, with a copy to the mission center president. This procedure was previously known as "voluntary silence," but the term "silence" is now used only in connection with disciplinary action for cause.

b. *Involuntary Release.* Involuntary release may be imposed for the following reasons: (1) three years' inactivity without evidence of any desire to return to active priesthood service; (2) the expressed or obvious intent of a priesthood member to be inactive indefinitely, even if release is not specifically requested; (3) active membership or participation in another church or religious group, without participation in the Community of Christ; (4) transfer to the nonaffiliated rolls; (5) placement on the unknown rolls for a period of three years.

c. *Procedures for Involuntary Release.* When involuntary release is initiated by a pastor, a letter should be written informing the priesthood member of the action that has been taken. This letter should be patterned after the following format, although it may be adapted as necessary:

[date]

[name and address of priesthood member]

Dear [name of priesthood member]:

In accordance with the policies of the church, I am obligated to release you from the priesthood office of [office]. I am taking this action because [state grounds]. You have been informed of the possibility of this step on previous occasions.

Release from the priesthood means that you no longer carry the privileges and responsibilities of your priesthood office. Please send me your priesthood license so that I can return it to the First Presidency. This action does not affect your membership status, and there is no sanction against you.

If you feel this action is unwarranted you have sixty days to appeal this decision to [name and address of next higher administrative officer].

More importantly, I would be most happy to talk with you if there is any way that I can assist you in returning to active participation in the life of the church. Reinstatement to your former office can be discussed on your request should you decide to return to active priesthood service.

Sincerely yours,
[name and jurisdiction]

cc: The First Presidency
mission center president
field apostle

A copy of this letter must be sent to the First Presidency so the release can be noted on the official records. As noted, this action may be appealed through the administrative line in the same manner as a silence.

d. *Reinstatement of Released Ministers.* A person who has been released from the priesthood may be reinstated to any office previously held. Initiation of such requests comes from the released person or from the pastor, after determining the commitment and personal stability of the individual and the acceptability of his or her ministry. The pastor discusses this step with the mission center president and then requests the First Presidency to provide information from the file, including a list of offices previously held. With this information in hand, the pastor meets with the individual to determine if there is a willingness to accept a return to priesthood responsibility and to a specific office. The released priesthood member and the pastor both write letters requesting reinstatement and enclosing all pertinent information. These are forwarded to the mission center president and transmitted through the administrative line for approval at each level. When the First Presidency takes

favorable action, a new license is issued and sent to the mission center president for delivery to the member. The minister is not reordained.

e. *New Calls for Released Ministers.* If a call to an office never held by the released priesthood member is in prospect, it should be handled exactly the same way that a new call for any other person is processed. Administrative reinstatement is not appropriate in this case.

f. *Release to Serve in a Different Office.* A priesthood member may request release for the purpose of serving in an office previously held but with a more narrow scope of responsibility than the one currently occupied. (For example, an elder may request release to accept the role of ministry in the office of priest, teacher, or deacon, if he or she has previously been ordained to those offices.) Such a request normally is initiated by the priesthood member, although it could occasionally be sensitively raised by the pastor or mission center president. Administratively, such requests are handled as a release from one office and reinstatement to a previous office and require the same approvals as any reinstatement.

5. Suspension:

The category of suspension is provided for those personal circumstances that may adversely affect an individual's ministry or make it unacceptable to a congregation. Divorce proceedings and other legal difficulties, such as criminal charges or bankruptcy, are illustrations of when suspension may be appropriate. This action is helpful to both the individual and the church in that the individual is not asked to offer ministry when in spiritual turmoil or during personal legal proceedings. No assumptions are made about guilt or innocence until the proceedings are concluded. It also protects the church because negative allegations, which are often made in such proceedings, could reflect adversely on the church.

It is premature to officially suspend a priesthood member just because the person is in marital counseling or having marital problems. A pastor should be alert and use the priesthood member's ministries with discretion if there are difficult circumstances, but suspension would be premature. Official suspension should be imposed at the time one of the parties has actually filed for divorce. Legal separation or other legally recognized initiation of the termination of marriage may be used to determine when to suspend.

The pastor, or other administrator acting to suspend, should write a letter advising the priesthood member of the suspension, clearly giving the reasons for suspension, and noting the specific time the suspension will be terminated. The end of the suspension period should be specified, either by date or at the outcome of certain proceedings. This letter may be patterned after the following model:

Dear [name of priesthood member]:

I have learned that you have [filed for divorce, filed for bankruptcy, been charged with criminal action]. Church procedures require that I suspend you from all priesthood activity while legal actions are in process. You will be suspended until [date, or proceedings are complete, rulings are made and the matter is not appealed].

By this action the church is not making any judgments about your guilt or innocence. Priesthood members in your circumstance are suspended automatically without prejudice, and we trust that the freedom from obligation to provide ministry to others will allow you to give full attention to your personal concerns.

At the conclusion of the suspension period, we will need to review your situation to determine the future course of your ministry.

Sincerely,
[name and jurisdiction of pastor]

cc: mission center president

During the suspension period the priesthood member refrains from functioning but keeps his or her priesthood license. A minister who continues to act in a ministerial capacity while under suspension is in “willful disregard of the properly exercised authority of a supervising administrative officer” and therefore subject to possible silence.

In a timely fashion the circumstances causing the suspension should be reviewed with the priesthood member under suspension. If the cause has been removed, all actions are completed and no continuing negative consequences are apparent, the suspension should be lifted. The lifting should be communicated by letter with copies to all those given copies in previous correspondence.

If the proceedings have resulted in a loss of the capacity to minister by reason of proven moral turpitude, conviction of a felony, misuse or abuse of priesthood privileges, or other disregard for the standards of Christian conduct, the priesthood member should be placed under silence.

Suspension is, in general, not subject to appeal because it is normally temporary and has a stated termination time. However, if the suspended priesthood member feels it has been misapplied, he or she may appeal to the next higher administrative officer on the grounds of misapplication of suspension. Examples of such misapplication are: failure to give written notice, divorce proceedings have not been filed, or no termination of suspension is specified.

6. Silence:

The silencing of priesthood members is an administrative procedure by which authority to represent the church as an ordained minister is withdrawn. Silence is for cause and usually involves need for frequent and specialized ministry. Silenced members are required to relinquish their priesthood license and may not function as priesthood members. Silencing is an administrative action that does not affect membership status and is not within the jurisdiction of the civil or church courts.

a. *Ministerial Standards.* Ministers are charged with the personal responsibility of maintaining the highest standards of Christian conduct. This would require that the minister maintain a good reputation, especially with respect to prompt payment of financial obligations, propriety of social behavior, and a positive attitude toward the church institution and its members, avoiding extreme positions of a critical and disruptive nature. In actions of silence for unchristian conduct, the administrative officer should be precise in the identification of the particular act of unchristian conduct and state specifically how or why the behavior is unchristian.

b. *Grounds for Silence.* Grounds for silencing may include but not be limited to any one or more of the following (WCR 1192, adopted April 11, 1986):

- Conviction of a felony or other serious crime. A serious crime shall be defined as any criminal offense punishable by imprisonment for one year or more.
- Conduct constituting moral turpitude. “Moral turpitude” shall be defined as a depraved or immoral act contrary to generally accepted standards of Christian conduct as understood according to the teachings of the church.
- Willful disregard of church law, administration, or the properly exercised authority of a supervising administrative officer. “Willful” shall be defined as deliberate, voluntary, or intentional conduct. “Church law and administration” shall be defined as the composite of the directives expressed in the scriptures, as interpreted by the First Presidency with respect to church doctrine and disciplines, *World Conference Resolutions*, *The Priesthood Manual*, *Church Administrator’s Handbook*, and any subsequently published documents that relate to the above described directives. “Supervising administrative officers” shall be defined as those duly elected or appointed priesthood members who exercise greater administrative authority than the priesthood member to be silenced.
- Willful failure to preserve or maintain a shared confidence. The confidentiality of communication in the performance of ministry must be preserved.

The breaching of that trust may in some cases cause irreparable harm. In other cases the sharing of a confidential statement may facilitate pastoral care. The judgment of the minister is critical in this regard.

- Misuse or abuse of priesthood privileges: seeking to promote a product or service or other personal gain by presenting oneself as a priesthood member.
- Such other disregard for the standards of Christian conduct as may result in loss of power to minister effectively.

c. *Rights of Silenced Ministers.* Ministers who have been silenced have the right to adequate notice, the right to present a defense, the right to be informed of the procedures involved, and the right to appeal. The following principles will apply:

- *Written notice.* The minister to be silenced shall be given written notice of the silence, including a concise statement describing one or more grounds for silencing and the facts supporting each ground; a written description of the appeal process; the right to be heard at the appellate level; the right to present relevant evidence at the appellate level to support the appeal; and the right to appeal on grounds that a substantial error was committed. The notice should follow approximately the following form:

Date

[*Name and address of priesthood member*]

Dear [*name of priesthood member*]:

In accordance with the policies of the church, it is my duty to inform you that effective immediately you are placed under ministerial silence. As such, you will not be permitted to serve or function in the priesthood of the church. Please surrender your priesthood card immediately so that it can be transmitted to the office of the First Presidency.

The silence imposed upon you comes about because of the following grounds: [*State specifically the grounds and any accompanying information, e.g. date, time, place, etc.*]

Reconciling ministry was attempted on [*state date(s) of attempts at reconciling ministry and those involved*].

To date, such ministry has not proved successful in eliminating the need for silence. This silence is not invalidated by failure to achieve redemptive ministry, and redemptive ministry cannot be considered a prerequisite for silence.

Silencing is an administrative procedure, and no church court is involved. Your membership rights and status are not in question. Because this is an administrative procedure, you may not use nonmembers to formally assist you as counsel. Civil courts do not have jurisdiction over this matter. You have the right to appeal this action if you believe a substantial error has been committed, and you will have full opportunity to be heard and present relevant evidence to support your position.

You have sixty (60) days from the date this notice is received to appeal this action. Your appeal should be to the next highest administrative officer, who is [name, title, and address].

In your letter of appeal, you should set forth in plain, concise language the reason for the appeal and whether you wish to have a personal hearing before the appeals officer. You have the right to be represented by the church member of your choice.

It is my desire to assist you in the process of reconciliation. I pray that God's rich blessings will be upon you at this difficult time. If you do not understand anything in this letter, feel free to contact me.

Very sincerely yours,
[*Name of silencing officer*]

cc: First Presidency
field apostle
mission center president

A copy of this letter with all available supporting information should be sent immediately to the First Presidency and to each officer in the administrative line.

- *Ministerial labor.* Ideally, the silencing officer should meet personally with the minister to provide information about the silence and its ramifications and to deliver the letter of silence. If a personal meeting is not possible, then the silence may be imposed by letter only, sent by certified mail or its equivalent, deliverable to the addressee only, return receipt requested. The silence is not invalidated by failure of the silencing officer to meet with the minister being silenced. The silence is invalidated if the minister being silenced is not sent written notice of the silence, stating his or her right to be heard and to speak in his or her defense. Refusal to accept the written notice does not invalidate the silence. Although redemptive ministry is important and should be attempted if at all possible, failure to bring such ministry does not invalidate the silence.

- *Ministerial function after silence.* Upon receiving notice of the silence action, the silenced minister shall refrain from functioning in that priesthood office until the silence has been terminated. A pending appeal shall not suspend the operation of the silence, unless so ordered by the appellate officer.
- *Consultations.* In order to preserve the integrity of an appeal, a silencing officer should not discuss specific details of the silence with supervising administrative officers. Such counsel should necessarily be of a broad, procedural nature.
- *Appeal from silence.* The silenced minister has the right to appeal to the next higher supervising administrative officer within sixty (60) days of notification of the initial silence. The appeal should be made by letter and should confirm the silence, the desire to appeal, and the specific reasons for the appeal. Related matters may also be included in the letter.

While an appeal is pending, the minister affected is still under silence.

Should a hearing date be scheduled, but the appealing party not appear, or if the appellant has been requested to file evidence in support of the appeal and has failed to do so, the matter will be decided on the basis of whatever evidence the appellate officer has available in the record.

When an appeal is filed with the next higher administrative officer, that officer may notify the First Presidency who will provide information from the file detailing the reasons silence was imposed and available evidence in the case.

If the minister appealing feels the need of assistance, such assistance must be obtained from within the membership of the church.

After hearing and reviewing all of the evidence, the appellate officer shall, without unreasonable delay, notify the silenced minister, administrative officers, and the First Presidency in writing as to whether the silence is upheld and the specific reasons therefore. This letter should also contain information about the right to appeal to the next administrative level.

Either the silenced minister or silencing officer may appeal an adverse ruling until all levels of appeal are exhausted. The decision of the highest supervisory administrative officer shall be final. In the event the original silence is imposed by the First Presidency, the silenced minister's right to appeal is governed by Doctrine and Covenants 104 and 122.

d. *Time Limit for Silences.* A silencing action shall not be barred by lapse of time except as follows: (1) Failure of the silencing officer to act within a reasonable time after gaining knowledge of the grounds for silence may be procedural grounds on appeal for dismissal of the silence, and (2) in no event shall a silencing action be commenced later than five years after the commission of a silenceable offense.

e. *Ministry by a Minister in Transgression.* A minister has the right to function within the limits of established policies and procedures until officially placed under silence. The official acts of ministers performed while in transgression are nonetheless valid unless official silence has been imposed by proper authority (WCR 90).

f. *Valid Silences.* Partial or temporary silences are different from temporary suspension in divorce or legal actions (see page 62) and are not valid. Administrators do not have the right to "pocket silence" a minister—that is, to remove ministerial authority without imposing official silence—unless the action is governed by the procedures for ministerial suspension. In this way the right to appeal is protected. All silences must be reported to the First Presidency; they should never be considered a jurisdictional matter only.

g. *Obtaining Information Regarding Silenced Ministers.* Information regarding silenced ministers may be obtained by the proper administrative officers from the office of the First Presidency. It is privileged information, and confidentiality is respected.

h. *Reinstatement of Silenced Ministers.* A silenced minister may be reinstated to any office previously held. This action is initiated by written request to the current presiding officer or at the initiative of the presiding officer. Careful review of the reasons for silence is necessary to assure that the cause of the silence has been substantially removed. In addition, there should be reasonable assurance that the ministry of the reinstated priesthood member will be accepted by the church. The presiding officer should convey the request in writing through the proper administrative channels to the First Presidency, who will consult with the past and/or present officers concerned and determine whether reinstatement is appropriate. It will be given consideration by the First Presidency after receiving written recommendations from each officer in the administrative line. On approval, a new priesthood card will be issued.

A new priesthood call for a minister under silence may not be processed without accompanying assurance that the priesthood member under silence is eligible to be reinstated, and that the reinstatement would be approved at all levels.

i. *Priesthood of Those Reinstated to Church Membership.* On reinstatement to church membership after voluntary withdrawal, former priesthood members are in the "released" category, unless a silence was in place at the time of withdrawal. If an excommunicated member is reinstated to full membership, priesthood status will be that of "silence." In all such cases, reinstatement of priesthood is a separate action from membership reinstatement, and follows normal procedures as outlined above (WCR 922). If a former priesthood member has been expelled from the church, and is subsequently readmitted through rebaptism or administrative action, priesthood reinstatement may not be considered. Such people should be ordained to the priesthood only after the most searching inquiry, and on the basis of a new recommendation by the appropriate presiding ministers (Standing High Council, December 13, 1973).

5. Setting Apart

A. Purpose of Setting Apart

The setting apart of certain church officers is provided as a way of affirming and symbolizing the support of the body for those persons who have been chosen to serve in significant leadership roles. It acknowledges that such service is a sacred trust involving both divine authority and common consent.

B. Who Is Set Apart?

In *congregations*, pastors should be set apart. In *mission centers*, mission center presidents and mission center financial officers are set apart to their respective responsibilities. Where mission center presidents and financial officers have counselors, the counselors may be set apart at the discretion of the officer to whom they are a counselor. At the World Church level, *quorum* presidents and their counselors should continue to be set apart according to the provisions of WCR 109 (April 8, 1870).

C. The Setting Apart Service

The worship service when the setting apart occurs should be timely with regard to assumption of office. It is appropriate for pastors to be set apart in congregations.

Mission center presidents and financial officers (and their counselors, if appropriate) should be set apart in a mission center conference, or at some other appropriate setting that involves representatives of the constituent congregations.

D. Officiating Ministers

In general the officiating ministers in the setting apart worship should represent the next jurisdiction level. Pastors may be set apart by the mission center president, mission center financial officer, one of their counselors, or a member of the mission center council holding an office in the Melchisedec priesthood. High priests—including evangelists and bishops—and seventies are members of World Church quorums and are always appropriate officiating ministers for services of setting apart.

E. Continuing Service

Once an officer has been set apart to a particular function, it is not necessary to repeat the setting apart if that person is elected for another continuous term. If reelected to the same position after the intervening period when another has served, it would be appropriate to set the officer apart at the beginning of the new term.

6. The Sacraments

The Community of Christ recognizes eight sacraments, as follows:

1. Administration to the Sick
2. Baptism
3. Blessing of Children
4. Confirmation
5. Evangelist's Blessing
6. Marriage
7. Ordination
8. Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

A. Administration to the Sick (Laying on of Hands for the Sick)

Any person who suffers from illness or injury may request that the elders of the church offer a sacramental prayer, anointing him or her with oil in the name of the Lord (James 5:14). The prayer is accompanied by the laying on of hands, and is often spoken of as "administration." The sacrament may be performed publicly in the context of worship, but is usually performed in the privacy of a home, hospital room, or quiet area of the church. Two members of the

Melchisedec priesthood customarily perform it, although one elder or three may participate. The sacrament may be preceded by brief periods of counsel or pastoral comfort. However, the sacrament itself consists of anointing the head with consecrated olive oil, the anointing statement, and the prayer of confirmation.

Traditionally, one elder anoints with consecrated oil and places hands on the head of the person while praying briefly the anointing statement. The second elder then joins the first in placing his or her hands on the person's head while offering the prayer of confirmation.

Sufficient olive oil should be used in anointing for it to be felt, but only one or two drops are required. Anointing should be on the top of the forehead area. The anointing of other body parts, especially open wounds, is not permissible.

While a few family members or loved ones may join the elders in surrounding the person's bedside or chair, the practice of many people holding onto the person is discouraged.

To consecrate olive oil the cap should be removed from the vial or bottle and a prayer offered by a member of the Melchisedec priesthood. Oil should not be consecrated

in large quantities then divided into smaller portions and distributed. No church law or tradition authorizes the use of consecrated oil by those who are not elders.

B. Baptism

Baptism is the universally recognized act of commitment to Christian discipleship. In the tradition of the Community of Christ, the combined acts of baptism and confirmation constitute entrance not only into the larger Christian fellowship, but also into denominational membership.

The prerequisites for baptism are found in Doctrine and Covenants 17:7. Candidates for baptism must be eight years of age or older. They should be properly instructed in Christian discipleship, with the instruction appropriate to the candidate's age and capacity to comprehend. Instruction may be both before and after the baptism (D. and C. 17:18). All baptisms are to be approved in advance by the pastor (D. and C. 120: 4a, 125: 14, WCR 705).

Baptism should occur within the context of a specially planned service of worship, and is held either in a facility equipped with a baptismal font or equivalent, or outdoors at a safe and appropriate body of water.

Aaronic priests or members of the Melchisedec priesthood perform baptisms. There should be only one performing minister unless the candidate's size or health dictates otherwise. Baptisms within the Community of Christ are by bodily immersion. The minister is to use the words prescribed by Doctrine and Covenants 17:21: "...[C]alling him or her by name: Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." Church tradition recognizes the use of the word "Spirit" instead of "Ghost" but no other word substitutions.

All baptisms and confirmations should be reported through the congregational or mission center recorder.

Rebaptism is provided only for members who have been expelled from the church and is permitted after approval of the pastor, mission center president, field apostle, and First Presidency, with the authorization of the Standing High Council.

C. Blessing of Children

Jesus called for children to be brought to him for special attention and blessing. In that tradition, the church continues to provide for a sacramental prayer offered on behalf of infants and young children.

The sacrament consists of a prayer. It is to be offered by a member of the Melchisedec priesthood. Tradition calls for the parents to bring the child forward and for one elder to hold the child, if small, while another elder places his or her hands on the child and offers the prayer of blessing. The parents often stand next to the officiating elders. If the child is older, a parent who is seated in a chair may hold

him or her, or the child may sit alone in the chair. The sacrament is often performed within the child's first few weeks of life, although it may be performed on an older child, up to the time of the child's eighth birthday (WCR 701). As a child approaches the age of eight, it is more appropriate to focus on preparing the child for baptism than to provide for a sacramental blessing.

There is no required formula for the prayer, but it is appropriate to include a statement of thanksgiving, blessing, recognition of the importance of family and friends in the nurture of the child, and recognition of the role of the congregation in instructing and supporting the child.

The blessing of a child is traditionally a public event held in the context of a congregational worship service specially planned for that purpose. Other settings may be provided for. The pastor is to be sensitive to parents who wish for a child to be blessed on a specific day, balancing the need for planning time with the wishes of the family.

The blessing is not a part of the baptismal sacrament or entrance ritual into the denomination. Any child under the age of eight is a candidate for blessing. This sacrament is not appropriate for children once they have reached the age of eight. Blessings should be reported through the congregational or mission center recorder.

D. Confirmation

Confirmation is the second portion of the entrance act into the Community of Christ. It consists of a prayer offered by one of two officiating ministers, both of whom place their hands on the head of the candidate. Only members of the Melchisedec priesthood perform confirmation.

The prayer of confirmation acknowledges the presence of God through the Holy Spirit in the life of the candidate. The prayer should include recognition of membership status within the Community of Christ, and often contains words of blessing, encouragement, and counsel.

Confirmation is linked with baptism by water. The two sacraments should be performed without great time lapse between the two. Baptisms and confirmations should be reported through the congregational or mission center recorder.

E. Evangelist's Blessing

The evangelist's blessing (formerly called patriarchal blessing) is a prayer (usually recorded and transcribed) offered by a member of the Order of Evangelists. It is performed in a home, chapel, or other appropriate site. The blessing is not held in the context of a public worship experience. The blessing is performed by one evangelist, who places his or her hands on the head of the candidate and delivers words of thanksgiving, affirmation, counsel, life direction, and blessing. Before the blessing, the evangelist and candidate arrange to meet for conversation and instruc-

tion. Any person eight years of age or older is a candidate for the sacrament, although the blessing is rarely offered for someone who has not reached adolescence.

A transcript of the blessing is provided to the candidate by the evangelist.

In addition to the sacrament, evangelists may be called upon to offer special prayers of blessing upon individuals, families, and congregations. The evangelist works within guidelines provided by the Order of Evangelists in giving this specialized ministry.

F. Marriage

Marriage is traditionally defined as a sacred covenant between a man and a woman seeking to make a lifelong commitment of mutual support, love, and faithfulness to one another. The marriage sacrament is usually celebrated in a public wedding ceremony held in a church facility or other appropriate site. The ceremony is a carefully crafted service of worship planned in the context of premarital counseling offered by the officiating minister or designee. Aaronic priests and members of the Melchisedec priesthood are eligible to perform a wedding ceremony, subject to any legal restrictions of the governmental jurisdiction in which the wedding is to occur.

While the structure and degree of formality of the wedding service will vary according to local custom and personal preference, the sacrament as celebrated in the Community of Christ should be in harmony with Doctrine and Covenants 111:2b. Thus, during the exchange of vows, the couple should be asked, “Do you both mutually agree to be each other’s companions, husband and wife, observing the legal rights belonging to this condition; that is, keeping yourselves wholly for each other, and from all others, during your lives?” After answering in the affirmative, the officiating minister pronounces the couple married, and typically offers this blessing: “May God add his blessings and keep you to fulfill your covenants from henceforth and forever. Amen”

For information concerning marriage standards, preparation, reporting requirements, legal elements, marital discord, termination, remarriage, and other related topics, see Section 17, “Marriage.”

Marriages should be reported through the congregational or mission center recorder, and the officiant should follow all reporting requirements established by the civil authorities.

G. Ordination

Two members of the priesthood authorized to ordain men and women to that office traditionally perform the sacrament of ordination to priesthood. The sacrament is performed as a prayer, with the officiating ministers placing their hands on the head of the ordinand. The prayer pronounces the ordination and office, and is often a statement of thanksgiving, counsel, and bless-

ing. Ordination occurs in the setting of a planned service of worship in which the sacrament is the focal worship element. The officiating ministers are selected in consultation between the ordinand and the supervising administrative officer. (In some developing areas of the church, circumstances may suggest that ordinations be performed by a single officiant.)

Aaronic priests and members of the Melchisedec priesthood may officiate at the ordinations of members of the Aaronic priesthood, and high priests and elders at the ordination of elders. High priests may be ordained by other high priests, including bishops and evangelists. Members of the Council of Twelve or First Presidency or their designee normally ordain evangelists, with any high priest eligible to assist. A member of the First Presidency, Council of Twelve, or Council of Presidents of Seventy normally ordains to the office of seventy, with any other high priest or seventy assisting. Members of the First Presidency normally ordain bishops, assisted by another high priest.

The officiating minister should ensure that the ordination is reported immediately to the Office of Membership Records so that the ordinand receives a priesthood license, certifying the person as an ordained minister.

For information related to priesthood calls, expectations, review, and status, see Section 4, “Priesthood and Ordination.”

H. Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper

The Lord’s Supper (often called Communion or Eucharist) is the act of partaking of bread and wine in symbolic remembrance of the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The act is to conform to the established practices of the church, and is traditionally celebrated on the first Sunday of the month, but may be held more frequently as circumstances dictate.

The sacrament consists of the prayers of blessing on the bread and wine (D. and C. 17:22d and 23b), as the participants kneel, followed by the eating of sacramental bread and drinking of sacramental wine. The sacrament is normally held in the context of a public worship service, and is often preceded by a Communion message or statement. Moreover, it is tradition that an oblation offering for the benefit of the poor and needy be received at a Communion service.

Aaronic priests and members of the Melchisedec priesthood offer the Communion prayers and serve the elements. The Communion prayers are to be offered using the words traditionally prescribed in Doctrine and Covenants 17:22d and 23b or using alternative prayers approved by the First Presidency in accordance with WCR 1282. (See appendix.)

Communion wine should be unfermented grape juice, water, or a culturally appropriate substitute where grapes are not readily available (D. and C. 86:1c; 26:1b, WCR 702). The grape juice and bread may be either homemade or commercially prepared.

Bread and wine used in the sacrament are blessed for those who partake of it at the time of the service and with the understanding of its purpose. The blessing does not relate to later use and does not change the element or composition of the bread or wine (WCR 172).

All committed Christians are free to participate in the sacrament as offered in the Community of Christ. The serving ministers should not attempt to determine who should or who should not partake. The decision is left to the participant. Children of family members within the Com-

munity of Christ should not partake until such time as they are baptized and confirmed.

The Communion elements may be served either at the same time or one after the other. Ordained and unordained persons may prepare the emblems, set the Communion table, remove any covering linens, and handle the emblems and serving items.

When taking the Communion to persons not able to be at the worship service, prayers of blessing on the bread and wine may be repeated, but is left to the discretion of the presiding minister.

7. Policy and Procedures for the Prevention and Intervention of Sexual Misconduct

Overview

- A. Sexual misconduct is a violation of a sacred trust and an abuse of power.
- B. Church personnel shall comply with all applicable governmental laws regarding sexual abuse, including child abuse reporting laws.
- C. Allegations of child abuse should be reported immediately to civil authorities with the church's investigation to follow or be concurrent with civil inquiry.
- D. The church's investigation of alleged sexual misconduct shall be for the purpose of determining its own response, with the intention of protecting all involved from further risk, either of abuse or unfounded allegations. The church's primary concern is for those harmed by the abuse.
- E. When sexual misconduct has occurred, the church's actions will be directed to the healing of victims, prevention of further offenses, and treatment of the offender. Treatment is complex and should not be attempted by people who lack experience and credentials.
- F. The church will implement measures to minimize the risks of sexual misconduct by its personnel.
- G. The church will offer educational materials and programs to its personnel on a regular basis.
- H. The church will safeguard the legal rights of people involved in cases of alleged sexual misconduct.
- I. There shall be no limitation of time beyond which the church will not accept information regarding sexual misconduct incidents.
- J. When a pattern of pedophilic activity is identified, the church will apprise local church leaders where the abuser currently resides.
- K. Individuals admitting guilt or found guilty by a court of law will be suspended immediately from any ministerial or leadership role within the church.
- L. Before permitting any abuser to resume any ministerial or leadership responsibilities, the church will require assurances of substantial treatment success over an extended period of time. (*Note: In cases of significant abuse, the church may withhold the right to serve in ministerial and leadership responsibilities indefinitely.*)

I. Introduction and Policy Intentions

The church is firmly committed to the pastoral care of people in all areas of need. This policy concerns the church's response to a particular area of need: sexual abuse and misconduct. The intent of the policy statement is to establish procedures that aid in prevention and remediation of sexual misconduct incidents within the church. This policy applies to all people serving the church whether in a volunteer, affiliate, or paid capacity. The intention of the church in outlining these procedures is to exercise its moral and ethical mandate, to comply with laws of the land, and to demonstrate pastoral concern for the victim, the victim's family, the accused, and the offender.

Sexual abuse of children or adults is unlawful, immoral, and a serious offense to the dignity of the human person as created by God. The church does not condone abusive sexual behavior or sexual misconduct in any form, and emphasizes that such behavior can never be seen as arising out of the duties or employment of people serving the church.

II. Definitions

Adult Sexual Abuse: Adult sexual abuse is the sexual exploitation of a person who has reached the legal age of majority, by another person or persons. Such abuse may include both contact or noncontact sexual incidents. The church shall also accept any other definitions applicable by law.

Child Sexual Abuse: Child sexual abuse is defined as the sexual exploitation of a person under age eighteen for the gratification of another person or persons. Sexual abuse may include contact or noncontact sexual incidents. The church shall also accept any other definitions applicable by law.

Church: This title refers to the Community of Christ.

Church Personnel or Personnel: Church personnel are the officers, employees, volunteers, affiliates, or any other persons, paid or unpaid, who work for or represent the church in its events or activities.

Minister: "Minister" refers to all members of the priesthood and all officers or leaders in the church. "Officers" and "leaders" signifies any position of authority including all elected or appointed positions.

Qualified Professional (for sexual abuse therapy): A qualified professional is a social worker, counselor, psychologist, or psychiatrist with a minimum of a master's degree in the field. Ideally, this professional should have experience in treatment of sexual abuse, sexual assault, or treatment of perpetrators, as pertinent to the case. Children should be

treated by professionals specializing in child sexual abuse, with a knowledge of play and art therapy techniques. Licensed professionals should be sought if licensing is available in the geographic area in which the incident is addressed.

Sexual Assault: Rape, as defined by law, of any person. (The church shall also accept any other definitions applicable by law.) Sexual assault is always a form of sexual abuse.

Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment is the use of one's authority or power either explicitly or implicitly, to coerce another into unwanted sexual relations or to punish another for his or her refusal; or the creation of an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment through verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual Misconduct: Sexual misconduct is defined as any sexualized behavior or contact, including, but not limited to, adult sexual abuse, child sexual abuse, sexual assault, and sexual harassment, in which the minister takes advantage of the vulnerability of another in the ministerial relationship to engage in or to suggest sexual behavior with the minister.

State: The state is the applicable government of the land, whether local, regional, or national.

III. Policy

- A. Sexual misconduct by ministers will not be tolerated. Ministers of the church will be informed that the ministerial relationship presupposes the minister will serve in the best interests of the other person and that sexualized behavior is not appropriate to a ministerial relationship; that the minister is always responsible to not abuse his or her authority and power, even if sexualized behavior is initiated by the other person; that by definition the other person in the ministerial relationship is vulnerable to abuse and when this vulnerability is taken advantage of, the minister is in violation of a sacred trust; and that in the ministerial relationship there is an imbalance of power and authority, with the minister having greater authority and expected trust, thus any possibility of meaningful consent by the other person to sexual behavior is precluded.
- B. The church recognizes sexual abuse as a crime according to all applicable laws of the land, as well as immoral and harmful to individuals and society. The church supports the state in its efforts to address particularly the sexual abuse of children and adults. All people serving the church are to comply with all applicable laws, including any pertinent child abuse reporting laws. All personnel shall also comply with internal reporting procedures set forth by the church.
- C. The church's role in a case of alleged child sexual abuse shall not usurp that of the state. Any investigation by the church into an alleged child sexual abuse

will parallel rather than precede or preclude reporting to and investigation by the proper authorities. The church's role is to report alleged or suspected child sexual abuse made known to it, allowing for prompt investigation through proper legal channels, rather than to attempt to independently determine guilt or innocence of those people involved. Knowing that failure to report to authorities could result in loss of physical evidence or undermine the state's investigative process, reports shall be made immediately to proper authorities outside the church after an alleged incident of abuse becomes known.

- D. Due to the nature of sexual abuse, valid instances of such abuse may not be prosecutable and not all acts of sexual misconduct will constitute a crime. The church's own investigation shall be for the purpose of determining its own response to the allegations. Where the evidence is unclear, the church shall reserve the right to take whatever steps it determines prudent to reduce any potential risk, regardless of the legal status of the case. No such actions shall imply judgment regarding guilt or innocence of those involved in the case, but shall represent the high priority of protecting all involved from further risk, either of abuse or unfounded allegations.
- E. When a sexual misconduct offense is found to have been committed by a person affiliated with the church, the church's actions will be based on promoting the healing of victims, preventing further offenses, and encouraging adequate treatment/monitoring of the offender. The church's role is to support the healing of all people involved in an allegation or incident of abuse, which role can best be performed by referral to experts in the field of abuse treatment.

Sexual abuse treatment is complex and should not be attempted by people who lack experience and credentials in the field. The pastoral-counseling role should be one of facilitating and encouraging the use of appropriate treatment resources in the community, while providing emotional support to those involved.

Where appropriate and authorized by the person in treatment, the church may choose to share information or collaborate with mental health professionals regarding treatment.

- E. The church will implement measures to minimize the risks of sexual misconduct by its personnel: by designating a supervisor to each minister and encouraging consultation; by encouraging collegial contact between ministers to avoid isolation; by developing and implementing clear policies, ethical guidelines, and expectations for all ministers; by providing clear job descriptions; by conducting regular performance evaluations for all ministers based on their job descriptions; by

ensuring that ministers' workloads remain reasonable; by providing resources for referral of individuals to other agencies; and by providing continuing education for all ministers regarding ethics.

The church shall encourage addressing any incidents of sexual abuse in an open and straightforward manner, while protecting the privacy of the victim(s). In all public contacts or questioning regarding the abuse, the church shall emphasize that the church's primary concern is for those harmed by the abuse.

- G. The church will regularly offer applicable educational materials and programs on this policy and/or the topic of sexual misconduct to its personnel. All personnel are encouraged to seek additional education to increase their understanding of sexual abuse.
- H. The church will work to safeguard the legal rights of people involved in a case of alleged sexual abuse. The church will never ask a victim to give up any legal rights.
- I. Understanding that the circumstances of sexual abuse, especially in the case of child sexual abuse, often preclude timely and complete reporting, the church will accept information regarding sexual abuse incidents regardless of the time frame in which the abuse occurred. Likewise, any church personnel who engage in sexual abuse while serving as representatives of the church shall be held accountable for their actions, according to church policies and laws, without a time limitation. (*Note: Administrative officers should not make assumptions about whether a statute of limitations applies to criminal matters. Statutes of limitations vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. If administrative officers are considering not reporting an incident because a statute of limitations may apply, Legal Services should be contacted before a decision is made.*)
- J. When the victim of abuse is a minor, it is the policy of the church to report the abuse to legal authorities, local church leaders, and Legal Services at World Church headquarters. Regardless of age, such reports are to be acted on promptly, following reporting procedures just as in the case of a current instance of abuse, to the extent that such reports are accepted by legal authorities. The church will also take prompt internal investigative actions and notify local church leaders in the area where the alleged abuser currently resides, of the suspected past abuse.
- K. To facilitate the healing process, the church will respond in a manner that promotes justice and safety for victims, and provides a structure that aids perpetrators in taking responsibility for and changing their behaviors. For this reason, individuals admitting guilt, or found guilty by a court of law of child sexual abuse or adult sexual assault, will be immediately removed

from any ministerial or leadership role within the church. Church authorities shall also reserve the right to suspend the ministerial or leadership responsibilities of anyone involved in an allegation of sexual misconduct while an investigation takes place, or if the church's own investigation determines such actions are prudent, regardless of a court determination or confession of guilt.

- L. Knowing that people who sexually abuse are often addicted to and rationalize their behaviors, the church will require a written recommendation of substantial treatment success by a qualified professional in the field before considering whether a perpetrator of abuse should be allowed to resume any leadership or ministerial responsibilities if resumption of such responsibilities is advisable. The church understands that a minimum of several years of treatment, with ongoing monitoring/checkups, is necessary to the healing of most people who sexually abuse. The church also understands that due to the addictive nature of sexually abusive behavior, any leadership or ministerial roles that are resumed must, of necessity, be limited to actions performed in public or in conjunction with another representative of the church, in order to support the maintenance of healthy behaviors by a former perpetrator. Any other recommendations made regarding the extent of activities of the former perpetrator by the treatment provider will also be strictly followed.
- M. All personnel who provide ministry or leadership of an interpersonal nature shall be asked to read and abide by this policy.

IV. Procedures for Receiving and Handling Complaints of Sexual Misconduct

A. Preface:

Procedures for receiving and handling complaints will be administered uniformly and evenhandedly to honor the victim's need for healing, to prevent further acts of misconduct, and to exonerate the accused if a complaint is unfounded. Complaints may be filed with any officer of the church. Anyone making an allegation of sexual misconduct will be received in a respectful and caring way. Care will be taken to deal fairly and promptly with all those involved: the aggrieved and the family of the aggrieved, the accused and the family of the accused, the congregation, and others. The jurisdictional administrator should be alert in any type of case to the need for consultation with the attorney for the World Church.

B. Receiving a Complaint:

When sexual misconduct is alleged against a minister, the following procedures will be followed (after contacting Legal Services at World Church headquarters):

1. The jurisdictional administrator will be contacted and informed immediately by the officer receiving the complaint. (For purposes of these procedures, the jurisdictional administrator will be the mission center president. If a mission center president or higher administrative officer is accused, the jurisdictional administrator will be the next highest administrative officer.)
2. The administrator will supervise the intervention strategy and will designate two people, preferably one male and one female, to investigate the complaint. Appropriate criteria for selecting investigators are incident-specific; please contact Legal Services for assistance in making this determination.
3. The administrator will meet with the designated investigating officers and the aggrieved person to explain the policy and process that will be followed, offer a support person to the aggrieved, and solicit from the aggrieved person a clear written statement of the experience and the complaint. The administrator will solicit written permission from the aggrieved person (or the parent or guardian of a minor victim) in order to use the written complaint and his or her name in discussion with the accused. The administrator and the investigating officers will also attempt to determine whether this is a single complaint or whether others have experienced this form of sexual abuse by the accused.
4. The administrator will meet with the investigating officers and the accused to present him or her with the formal written complaint, to explain the policy and process that will be followed, to hear his or her verbal response to the grievance, to request a written response, and to advise the accused that the investigating officers will investigate the charges. The fact that the accused may deny the allegations and attempt to discredit the person making the complaint should not be allowed to prevent the administrator and the investigating officers from carrying out their responsibilities and to attempt to discover the truth, i.e., whether the accused probably did or did not engage in the behavior charged in the complaint.
5. If a child is the alleged victim, the administrator will immediately report the suspicion to child welfare authorities, observing any local legal requirements.
6. The aggrieved person is not asked to meet with the accused at this stage, although the possibility of such a meeting should not be ruled out if deemed appropriate.

7. Even when the aggrieved person chooses not to follow through with a formal complaint, the administrator can confront the accused and carry out appropriate investigative and disciplinary action to protect others in the future.

C. Investigation:

1. The investigating officers will gather information in order to form an opinion as to whether there is probable cause, that is, a reasonable ground for belief in the existence of facts warranting the complaint, and report the same to the administrator.
2. After careful consideration of a complaint, if there is no cause to believe the complaint is valid, the administrator should cease the process and respond with care and concern to the person placing the complaint (i.e., recommend counseling and an occasion for reconciliation). In addition, a record of the proceedings and the disposition of the complaint should be forwarded to the First Presidency for the file of the person accused. If the accused so chooses, a public statement may be used to exonerate him or her.
3. If the administrator believes there is probable cause for guilt based on information from the investigating officers, the administrator shall then, if he or she has not already done so, suspend the ministerial or leadership responsibilities of the accused. During suspension there shall be a cessation of all ministerial and leadership duties.
4. All rights of due process under the laws of the church, through its administrative procedures, will be extended to the accused. Nothing in these procedures shall deny the accused his or her rights under the church's administrative appeals process then in place.

D. Action Steps:

1. If, in the opinion of the administrator, the complaint is finally substantiated, the administrator shall discipline the minister by removal from office and consider the appropriateness of church court action if the minister is unrepentant. The administrator, in consultation with the First Presidency, may notify the congregation or other appropriate jurisdictions of the church by way of a letter to the membership outlining the nature of the complaint received, the process followed to substantiate the complaint, and the finding of the investigation. The administrator may provide an open meeting in the congregation or other appropriate jurisdiction for purposes of education, clarifying facts, and permitting feelings to be expressed. The administrator or designee will meet with victims to evaluate and provide ministries of restoration and justice.

2. If the complaint is not valid, the supervising officer will exonerate the accused and take steps out of consideration to the accused that will restore his or her relationship to the church.
3. Whether the accused is guilty or not, the administrator will offer caring and supportive ministries to the family of the accused to reduce their suffering and maintain well-being.
4. If the accused is guilty, the church will require treatment for and restitution from the perpetrator. Should the perpetrator not participate in a plan of treatment or restitution, church court action should be considered.
5. The church will determine whether after treatment, restitution, and the victim's experience of restoration, appropriate supervision can be given or limits established that would restore the perpetrator to service and prevent future misconduct.

V. Preventive Strategies

A. Education:

Church members and leadership should become educated as to the nature and magnitude of the problem of sexual misconduct; what the spiritual, psychological, physical, legal, and social consequences might be; what may be done to reduce or eliminate the problem; and how the victim, perpetrator, and congregation can receive help. Education may be through Temple School, *Herald* articles, seminars, workshops, classes, retreats, reunions, written materials, newsletters, and other communicative means. Leaders should encourage a positive understanding of human sexuality and images of the human body; negative images contribute to exploitive sexuality and sexual abuse. Ministers should take the lead in exemplary attitudes and outlook.

B. Congregational Programs:

The church should encourage, in cooperation with appropriate and professional resource persons and entities, programs in the congregations that help members become aware of, understand, discuss, and seek help for the problems of sexual violence so widespread in our society. The church must "break through" the conspiracy of silence about sexual violence so it can fulfill its redemptive ministry to victims.

C. Designation of Trusted Advisors:

Congregations should consider the designation of one or more people (in addition to elected officers) who are well known and respected, as the ones to whom victims or potential victims of sexual abuse can go. These designated people should be ones with whom victims or potential

victims would feel free to talk. They should be familiar with church policy and procedures and trained on the issues of ministerial sexual misconduct.

D. Ministers' Support:

Ministers are not immune from the pressures of today's increasingly stressful and chaotic culture. Sometimes the stress can lead to dysfunction in the life of the minister, who may use poor judgment and behave in ways that are damaging to others. The jurisdictions of the church, through priesthood and leadership training, should minimize the possibility of dysfunction by supporting the personal and ministerial health of the leadership, and press for initial and continuing training in greater ethical sensitivity and clarity on the part of the minister.

E. Screening Process:

A screening process should be established for all paid employees of the church and all volunteer workers who serve as ministers. While such a process to some may seem personally invasive, it will be of substantial benefit to the church in its ongoing effort to provide a safe environment for its children and youth. The procedures used should consist of personal interviews, questionnaires, reference and public record verifications when and as appropriate. (See "Protection of Children and Youth.")

VI. Ministry of Restoration and Justice

The jurisdictional administrator on behalf of the church is responsible for extending the ministry of restoration and justice to victims and abusers. The church's tradition requires it to make justice where there has been injustice and to bring healing and wholeness where there is brokenness. The church and its sacraments are based on an understanding of covenant, not only between the individual and God but between the body of the church and God. The task of the church is to minister to the victim in such a way that the victim is freed from or healed of the abuse that should not have occurred. Asking the victim or the church to extend forgiveness without first facilitating the healing and justice-making process is inappropriate. Treatment alone is not a sufficient response for the one who has committed sexual abuse, because the violation of sacred trust and misuse of power is so grievous that what is lost may never be fully restored. The following ministries of healing and justice, though imperfect, may bring opportunities for the restoring of trust so that at least partial healing for the victim and abuser may take place. The supervising minister is responsible for seeing that such ministries are in place.

A. Truth Telling:

Silence allows abuse to continue. Truth telling is not just fact telling, but is an expression of the emotional, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of those involved, and that experience must be heard.

B. Acknowledging the Violation:

The feelings and the experience of the victim must not only be heard and understood, but the victim must be assured that what happened was abusive and should never have happened. If the church listens to the victim's account but never condemns the alleged behavior, it is in essence sanctioning the behavior and participating in the injustice. This ministry goes beyond simply saying, "We believe you," but also understands the nature of the harm done, that there is regret that it happened, and that the victim is not at fault and should not assume guilt. Setting in motion the appropriate procedures as soon as a complaint is made can provide a partial acknowledgment of the violation.

C. Compassion:

Compassion means "suffering with," or empathy. Unfortunately, accounts heard of another's suffering at times can be explained away, minimized, or avoided emotionally. Instead, supervising ministers must listen empathetically and communicate their emotions about what the victim tells them, be present to his or her pain, and help counteract the isolation a victim often feels. Compassion creates a connection between the church and the victim, which is the first step toward healing the brokenness brought about by the abuse. Compassion restores the connection between the church and the victim, which was broken by the abuse.

D. Protecting the Vulnerable:

Once the church is aware of the potential of abuse, it must do whatever it can to prevent it. If a minister is accused of sexual abuse, steps should be taken to prevent further harm. To do otherwise is to collude in the harm. Suspending the minister from his or her duties until the

complaint is adjudicated may be one means of protecting the vulnerable.

E. Accountability:

The church is accountable to its people. When leaders violate their roles, the institutional church should confront them officially and impose consequences based on misconduct. Holding an offender accountable is the first step in restoring him or her to health. It is also essential for the victim's healing.

F. Restitution:

It is improbable that the broken relationship can ever be fully restored, but often the victim can identify how restitution can be made. Restitution does not mean necessarily that the relationship will be fixed, nor that what has been taken away will be returned to the rightful owner, nor payment for damages. Restitution is an opportunity for the abuser to acknowledge the harm done and extend help to repair the damage. This has a symbolic value and, in cases in which the need for payment or reimbursement of monetary costs is significant, is a very practical benefit.

G. Vindication:

Vindication for the victim is the ultimate goal of justice. Vindication means "to set free." When a violation has occurred, the key to physical, emotional, and spiritual healing is to be set free from the suffering it created. It is important that the supervising minister, on behalf of the church, explore with victims what must occur for healing to take place in their lives. Since the church's primary concern is for the victim, the needs and experience of the victim should be seriously considered and support and counseling provided as needed to deal with the experience.

Note: The categories in section VI of this chapter were developed by the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, Seattle, Washington. Additional materials from the center were useful in the development of this policy. (Adopted by the Standing High Council, January 20, 1994)

8. Protection of Children and Youth

Introduction

The protection of children and youth is an important part of the church's ministry. For the purposes of this policy, abuse is defined as "bringing harm to a young person (under age 18) that occurs immediately or through accumulated effects over a period of time."

There are four basic categories of abuse:

- **Neglect** occurs when harm is caused by withholding life's necessities. The ability to provide the necessities, but failing to do so, is the factor separating neglect from the effects of poverty.
- **Emotional abuse** occurs when young people are consistently told they are of no worth and never will be. Name calling and threatening harm or injury are forms of emotional abuse.
- **Physical abuse** is the bodily injury of a person.
- **Sexual abuse** is any sexual activity between a young person and an adult, or between young people when there is an unequal distribution of power. This includes exposing a young person to sexual activity or pornography without their direct participation.

Abuse occurs in every part of society. Church families and church programs are not exempt from abusive situations. In addition youth workers are not exempt from being misunderstood, or from being falsely accused of child abuse. Therefore, the church has established a six-point strategy to reduce the risk of abuse.

Safeguarding Children and Youth and Those Who Minister with Them

The following principles form the foundation of the church's program for protecting children and youth and those who minister with them.

A. Education:

Congregations can receive support in presenting educational programs on child abuse from local social service agencies. Mission center training should consist of programs to assist congregations in preventing and dealing with situations of child abuse.

B. Selection:

The selection of adults to share in ministries with young people is critically important. The church is morally and legally duty-bound to have *all* potential youth workers go through an application and screening procedure *before* they begin sharing ministry.

C. Training:

Training for youth workers is also of critical importance. Congregations that find it difficult to offer training locally should involve their youth workers in training events at the mission center level. Training is also available from Fore-front Ministries at World Church headquarters.

D. Protection Barriers:

Protection barriers are a key element in the church's program to safeguard children and youth. The barriers that will be most helpful are:

- **Two-deep leadership**—two registered youth workers are required at all times when supervising children and youth. Coed groups and activities must have coed leadership.
- **Visible one-to-one contact**—all contact with children and youth should be in view of other adults and young people.
- **Respect of privacy**—youth workers need to respect the privacy of young people in camp living situations, and they should protect their own privacy as well.
- **Appropriate dress**—dress codes should take into consideration the Christ-centered nature of all church programs.
- **Constructive discipline**—discipline should be constructive and reflect Christian values. Corporal punishment is *never* permitted.
- **Appropriate physical contact**—physical contact between young people and youth workers is an area where great wisdom *must* be exercised at all times. Physical contact should always be for the benefit of the young person.
- **Youth worker assistants**—youth ages 15-20 *must* be registered and given training, and must be under the direct supervision of a registered youth worker.

Assuring that these principles are well known and followed by all who minister with children and youth will enhance the quality of ministry overall and provide protection of those involved in children's and youth ministries.

E. Prompt Reporting:

Young people should be encouraged to *report* any improper behavior. Adults in the church are encouraged to teach children and youth the following:

- Young people need to *recognize* situations that place them at risk of abuse, how abusers operate, and that anyone can be an abuser.
- Young people need to know that if they *resist*, most abusers will leave them alone.

- Young people must *report* any attempted or actual abuse to their youth leader or pastor. They should be given the assurance that when they report attempted or actual molestations, they are helping protect themselves as well as other young people from further abuse and that they will not be blamed for what may have occurred.

Congregations should contact local social agencies or World Church Forefront Ministries for additional information on assisting young people to avoid abusive situations.

F. Swift Action:

Swift action in dealing with suspected abuse is essential. Every administrative officer should be aware of the church policy on ministerial sexual misconduct. Youth workers who suspect abuse, or who receive abuse reports, are *required* to inform their administrative supervisor (pastor, camp director, mission center president) immediately. All states and provinces in the U.S. and Canada have laws requiring the reporting of suspected cases of child abuse. Similar jurisdictions in other nations typically have similar laws. Know and abide by the requirements for your area. For those individuals who receive a report of abuse or molestation, the responsibility for reporting that information is twofold:

- the incident must be reported to the appropriate civil authorities as specified by law, and
- the incident must be reported to the administrative officer concerned.

Administrative supervisors are required to remove any youth worker suspected of abuse from any contact with young people. The alleged offender will not be eligible to participate in any program or ministry with children or youth present until completely exonerated of the accusations.

Youth Worker Selection and Screening Process

The six principles for protecting children and youth and those who minister with them are important to the church's ministry with children and youth. Screening those who will work with children and youth is central to the protection of both parties. The following screening process will be used to screen all people who work with children or youth in the church or in church-related activities and programs.

At the heart of any children's/youth ministry are the adults who willingly give time, talent, and self to young people. Adults who view involvement with young people as a *ministry* are the key to successfully meeting the needs of children and youth.

The guiding principle for all programs of ministry with children and youth in the Community of Christ is stated as follows:

Only registered youth workers will be used in the church's children and youth programs and ministries. Reg-

istered youth worker assistants will only be used under the supervision of a registered youth worker.

Steps in the Screening Process:

1. ***The purpose of the selection process is explained to the applicant.*** This step helps to determine how best to use the applicant's gifts and talents and helps assure the physical, emotional, and spiritual safety of the young people involved.
2. ***The applicant completes the registration application.*** All questions on the form must be answered.
3. ***The completed application will be reviewed by the appropriate church officer.*** References are checked. The applicant's current pastor or former pastor if the applicant is new to the congregation, and two other personal references will be contacted. Persons may not serve as references or check references for members of their own family. The church officer then signs the Record of Contact form indicating their recommendations about the person applying to be a registered youth worker.
4. ***The applicant is interviewed.*** After the application review has been completed, the applicant is interviewed by the appropriate church officer, or their designate. The interview is critical and no applicant can become registered without being interviewed. When the interview is complete, the interviewer must sign the Statement of Personal Interviewer, indicating they either recommend or do not recommend the applicant as a youth worker.
5. ***The administrative officer reviews the application, references, and interviewer's statements,*** and indicates his or her approval or disapproval of the application. If the administrative officer is satisfied that the applicant is of good character, and that they have the qualities needed to serve as a registered youth worker, they will sign the endorsement statement on the Statement of Church Officer.
6. ***The application is reviewed by the mission center president.*** After completion and review by the church officer, the application and all related papers are forwarded to the mission center president. Mission center presidents then sign to indicate their approval or their disapproval of the applicant as a registered youth worker. All forms are then forwarded to Forefront Ministries.
7. ***Final approval of the application is given by Forefront Ministries,*** in consultation with the First Presidency and Legal Services. All applications and supporting documents are kept confidential.

Follow Up:

Only registered youth workers will be used in church youth programs, with the exception of guest ministers from other denominations. Reports on who is currently a regis-

tered youth worker or youth worker assistant are available from the church's membership database. Online recorders, pastors, or congregational financial officers can run these reports. Otherwise, these reports are available from the mission center recorder. To ensure quality, safe programs, it is appropriate to ask people to register even if they are not

currently serving in ministry with children and youth. This allows for substitutes or replacements without jeopardizing the ongoing safety of a program. This would include those who are not directly responsible for ministry with children and youth, but who serve in close relationship, such as cooks at camps and all priesthood.

9. Planning and Conducting Conferences

Additional questions on this policy should be addressed to Forefront Ministries, 1001 West Walnut, Independence, MO 64050 or by e-mail to youthworker@CofChrist.org.

The church has a long tradition of coming together in conferences to transact the business of the church, to worship, and to fellowship together. Conferences are held at the congregational, mission center, and World Church levels.

Conferences are the legislative bodies of the church. They may be regular or special. Generally, regular conferences shall be held annually or otherwise as agreed upon by those who constitute their membership. They may represent the church at large, a mission center, or a congregation. They are subject to the jurisdiction of the First Presidency, members of the Council of Twelve, and appropriate mission center presidents or congregational pastors.¹

World Conference:

The World Conference is the highest legislative body in the church. The World Conference is composed of delegates elected by mission center conferences as well as members of the First Presidency, the Council of Twelve Apostles, the presiding evangelist, the Presiding Bishopric, the church secretary, the presidency of the Quorum of High Priests, and the presidents of Seventy. The First Presidency presides over a World Conference. Information on the basis for delegate representation can be found in the Bylaws of the Community of Christ in Article IV, Section 2.

Field Jurisdiction Conferences:

Conferences of mission centers or congregations are regular gatherings authorized by a congregation, a mission center, or by the presiding officer of these jurisdictions. The member of the Council of Twelve who has administrative supervision may also call a conference if the need arises. These conferences have to do with the common interests of the church members within the specified areas. Mission centers have the option of providing for delegate conferences. In such cases the mission center conference is authorized to determine the basis for representation.²

Special Conferences:

Special conferences may be called by the First Presidency for the World Conference; by the mission center president

for mission center conferences; and by the pastor for congregational conferences. In emergencies special conferences may also be called by the supervising administrative officer having jurisdiction. The call for special conferences shall specify the purpose of the conference and only business mentioned in the call of the conference may be transacted.³

Congregational Conferences:

Congregational conferences shall be convened at least once annually and at such other times as are determined by action of the body. Congregations may consider legislation relating to congregational affairs. They may also consider legislation relating to the affairs of their mission center and recommend its enactment by that mission center's conference. No action by a congregational conference can be out of harmony with actions taken by higher jurisdictional conferences. All congregational conferences shall be scheduled by the pastor in cooperation with the mission center president. The mission center president shall receive adequate notice and should be invited to offer any suggestions or nominations he or she may desire to present. In emergencies, and especially when a congregational pastor is incapacitated or the congregation shall have fallen into disorder, the mission center president may request or call a congregational conference; in this or any other necessary situation the mission center president may recommend procedure, present nominations for office, or do such other things as will best protect the interests of the church. When these interests shall require, the mission center president may take over direction of the congregation for a time, administering the work thereafter—either directly or indirectly—until a more permanent arrangement can be made. If the mission center president is thought to have proceeded unlawfully in any of these matters, appeal is to the supervising field apostle.⁴

Mission Center Conferences:

Unless specific agreement has been given by the field apostle, mission center conferences should meet at least annually. These conferences are authorized to transact business relating to the enhancement of ministry and expansion of the work within the mission center. Enactments of a mission center conference are confined to matters of concern to the mission center, including the

approval of mission center budgets, the election of World Conference delegates, and the approval of legislation to be proposed for World Conference consideration. Mission center conference actions shall be in harmony with, and subject to, World Conference action and subject to the advice of the World Church officers concerned. Mission centers may convene special conferences as needed. If, in the determination of the mission center president in consultation with the field apostle, the mission center is unable to convene a mission center conference at least annually, then the mission center council shall be responsible for establishing procedures through which necessary conference decisions shall be made subject to the approval of the field apostle within World Church guidelines and policies. Mission centers have the option of providing for delegate conferences. In such cases the mission center conference is authorized to determine the basis for representation.

The field apostle shall receive notice of the mission center conference and should be invited to offer any suggestions or nominations he or she may desire to present. In emergencies, and especially when a mission center president is incapacitated or the mission center shall have fallen into disorder, the field apostle may request or call a mission center conference; in this or any other necessary situation the field apostle may recommend procedure, present nominations for office, or do such other things as will best protect the interests of the church. When these interests shall require, the field apostle may take over direction of the mission center for a time, administering the work thereafter—either directly or indirectly—until a more permanent arrangement can be made. If the field apostle is thought to have proceeded inappropriately in any of these matters, appeal may be made to the director of Field Ministries.⁵

Notice of Conferences:

Normally notice of all congregational conferences should be given to the members of the congregation at least two weeks before congregational conference and should also be sent to the mission center president and to such other officers as might be concerned with the business to be transacted.⁶ Normally notice of all mission center conferences should be given to the various congregational pastors within the mission center at least four weeks before the mission center conference and should also be sent to the supervising field apostle and to such other officers as might be concerned with the business to be transacted.⁷

Quorum:

For the transacting of all business at a congregational or mission center conference, unless otherwise provided by the conference, six or more members present at any properly called meeting shall constitute a quorum.⁸

Presiding:

The pastor presides over congregational conferences. At the request of the pastor, or in the pastor's absence, the counselors may preside. The mission center president presides over the mission center conference. At his or her request or absence, another member of the mission center staff may be chosen to preside. Members of the First Presidency, Council of Twelve, or their authorized representatives may be asked to preside at any congregational or mission center conference as a courtesy or in view of special circumstances.⁹

It is the responsibility of presiding officers to bring to the attention of the body such matters as may require consideration or action; to enforce observance of the rules of order with decorum and propriety; to secure, as far as possible, a due respect and regard for the laws governing the church as contained in the scriptures, mission center, and World Conference enactments, as well as administrative procedures approved by the First Presidency.¹⁰

Emerging Congregations:

Emerging congregations (which may include groups such as house churches, expansion groups, cell groups, etc.) are by definition not fully self-sufficient and require significant support from other congregations or the mission center. The groups may have conferences from time to time as necessary with the approval of the mission center president.¹¹

Sample Agenda for a Congregational Conference:

Presiding officers should prepare the agenda for the conference carefully and should provide the agenda in advance, if possible, to the conference members. A typical congregational conference could be organized as follows:

1. *Call to Order*
2. *Opening Ceremonies:* (Opening hymn, scripture reading, invocation)
3. *Introduction of Guests:* Any mission center or World Church guests should be introduced. Time should be allotted for these persons to briefly address the conference.
4. *Presentation and Approval of the Minutes:* Minutes of the last meeting should be read by the conference secretary if not printed and distributed. It is always better to print and distribute the minutes so all can review them carefully. The chair should ask for corrections and approve the minutes by unanimous consent with no need to receive a specific motion.
5. *Reports of Officers:* Any elected or appointed officers should be allowed to report any items that are necessary to the conference. If an officer wishes to make a

- report he or she should check with the presiding officer before the meeting begins. Reports, when given, should be in the following order:
- a. *Presiding Officer*
 - b. *Counselors and/or Associate Pastor(s)*
 - c. *Secretary* (This should normally consist of correspondence directed to the conference.)
 - d. *Financial Officer* (This should be a brief summary of the current financial situation. Questions may be asked by the congregation. No action should be taken to “receive,” “accept,” or “approve” the financial report. If the *annual* financial report is given, it should be detailed and already audited before presentation to the conference. The auditor’s report is then accepted on motion by the conference, and on the financial report. With this action, the financial report becomes part of the minutes.)
6. *Reports of Ministry Teams or Commissions:* (Leadership, Worship, Christian Education, Pastoral Care, Stewardship, Community Outreach, Missionary, Communications, etc.)
 7. *Reports of Special Committees:* Any committees appointed to do specific tasks should report in the order in which they were created.
 8. *Special Orders:* Any item that *must* be acted upon at the business meeting is a special order for that meeting. Such items might include:
 - a. The Fiscal Year Budget
 - b. The Election of Officers
 - c. The Election of Delegates to Higher Jurisdictional Conferences
 - d. Approval or Recommendations for Ordination
 9. *Unfinished Business:* Any items that were not completed at the end of the previous meeting are unfinished business for the current meeting.
 10. *General Orders:* Any item that was postponed to this meeting by the vote of a previous conference is a General Order for the current meeting.
 11. *New Business:* Any proposals that have been turned in ahead of the meeting should be taken up first. At regular conferences the chair should always ask, “*Is there any other new business to be brought before the conference?*” This is any member’s opportunity to introduce items of business. New business is not in order at a special conference unless notice of the business is given in the call of the meeting.
 12. *Announcements*
 13. *Adjournment:* The chair asks: “*Is there any further business to come before the conference?*” If there is, it is handled. If not, the chair says: “*There being no further business to come before the conference, the conference is adjourned.*” The chair does not need to call for a motion to adjourn from the assembly. The chair should simply declare the meeting adjourned when there is no further business.
- Further information on planning and conducting a business meeting can be found in *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised (10th edition)*. In nations where this resource is not widely used, the field apostle may designate other appropriate resources if they are available.

Notes

1. Bylaws of the Community of Christ, Article IV, Section 1.
2. Ibid., Article IV, Section 3.
3. Ibid., Article IV, Section 4.
4. Ibid., Article V, Section 3.
5. Ibid., Article VI, Section 5.
6. Ibid., Article V, Section 4.
7. Ibid., Article VI, Section 6.
8. Ibid., Article V, Section 5, and Article VI, Section 7.
9. Ibid., Article V, Section 6, and Article VI, Section 8.
10. Ibid., Article V, Section 7, and Article VI, Section 9.
11. Ibid., Article V, Section 9.

10. Ministerial Ethics

A. Ethics

Ethics can be defined as behavior that flows from our deepest commitments and beliefs. Just as parents should consistently act in ways that reflect their best understandings of what benefits children throughout their lives, so also should priesthood members act in ways that reflect life in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

B. Rules

Rules are often thought to be an appropriate expression of ethics. In many respects, ethical behavior in any aspect of life can be thought of in terms of general principles or rules that describe the kinds of behavior that are expected. Nevertheless, no single set of rules can ever perfectly describe ethical behavior. Life is full of examples of rules being broken for ethical purposes (lying to protect someone who is in danger) and rules being followed for unethical purposes (using a “technicality” for one’s benefit and another’s misfortune).

C. Ethical Principles

Certain ethical principles may be helpful, however, to help define ethical behavior by members of the priesthood. The principles that follow should guide priesthood members as they consider their role as ministers. In addition, certain policy statements relating to ethical concerns will also be noted.

1. Church members should accept ministerial callings on the basis of a sincere desire to be of service to God and to the purposes for which the church exists. Ministerial callings should not be understood as a way of obtaining higher status or as a reward for hard work.
2. Priesthood members should serve actively in their respective offices to the extent to which they are physically and psychologically able. Priesthood members should seek to be good stewards of their time, talents, and treasure.
3. Priesthood members should seek to increase their effectiveness through ongoing training and education.
4. While no one is without sin, priesthood members should seek to live an exemplary life, observing civil laws and behavior expectations of their respective communities.
5. Priesthood members should be able to qualify in the church’s registered youth worker program.

6. Priesthood members should observe principles of the following policy statements:

D. Priesthood and Promotion of Private Businesses

Members, and particularly priesthood, are discouraged from speculative investments and other questionable business ventures or their promotion. All people who may decide to invest in enterprises of this kind should do so only after thorough investigation as to the safety of the venture, according to sound business principles. Confidence in the ministerial position of another should never be a reason for making a financial investment (WCR 595).

Under no circumstance should the name of the church, or the names of its officers, its seals, its institutions, pictures of its buildings or personnel, or other aspects of church life be used to imply in any way that any business is “zioniac” in character or endorsed by the church unless it has actually been officially authorized.

Members of the priesthood should never use their priesthood office as a means of encouraging anyone to participate in any way in business ventures (Standing High Council, October 15, 1964).

E. Privileged Communications to a Minister

Ministers are expected to observe a high degree of confidentiality in those trust relationships wherein individuals come for counseling, support, or confessions. Such matters should never become the basis for idle conversation or gossip.

Occasionally, ministerial confidences become involved in church court procedures or civil actions. Generally speaking, ministers are not required to disclose to church court information they may have acquired during ministerial labor or counseling. There are a few exceptions, such as when dealing with conduct requiring “casting out” (D. and C. 42:7e) or functioning as an administrator in silencing actions, but this standard prevails in most cases.

Civil court actions can be more complicated. Different countries, and states and provinces within countries, have varying laws that apply to ministerial privilege. When involved in such matters, ministers should develop an awareness of how this is handled in their own jurisdictions so that they can function appropriately within the laws of the land.

The Standing High Council has approved a statement, “Privileged Communications to a Minister” (January 16, 1997), which is available upon request from the First Presidency.

11. Campgrounds

Campground associations typically manage campgrounds. Responsibility for programs occurring at campgrounds (reunions, camps, etc.) rests with the officers of mission centers sponsoring those programs. Legal Services at World Church headquarters has created a series of by-laws for campground associations to create more uniform governance of the church's campgrounds. Please contact mission center officers to establish or modify bylaws for campground associations.

The maintenance, administration, and development of each church campground should be carried out under the guidance of a campground board of directors that represents the congregations and/or mission center(s) concerned. These associations are governed by the bylaws available from Legal Services as stated above. This board of directors is responsible for the physical facilities of the campgrounds, but does not control the programs of camps, reunions, and retreats.

Plans for new development or extensive improvements should be submitted to World Church Real Estate Services for review and approval, and all contracts, leases or other agreements must be reviewed by Legal Services before signing. Camp facilities should be carefully developed and maintained in harmony with increasingly strict camping standards and local and national laws.

Insurance, safety, and other risk management matters should be addressed by contacting Risk Management Services at World Church headquarters.

Information on loans for the purchase, construction, expansion, major remodeling or maintenance of campground facilities can be found in the section on Houses of Worship.

When any piece of property is about to be sold or purchased, Legal Services should be contacted for procedural instructions and approval obtained before a real estate contract is signed.

12. Records Management

In the course of its work, the church produces a number of records, which may be in the form of paper documents, computer files, photographs, audio and video recordings, etc. Proper handling of these records is necessary for the preservation of important information and for the protection of the privacy of church members.

The church has established a Records Management Policy, which is available on the church's Web site at www.CofChrist.org/cfo#Records. The World Church records manager is available to congregations and mission centers for consultation. This section contains some basic principles that should always be kept in mind:

1. Records developed in the course of the church's ministry are the property of the church. This includes material

such as lists of members or participants in church programs and letters written by persons acting in an official capacity for the church.

2. Church records should be retained for a period of time as suggested in the Records Management Policy, and this policy should govern their ultimate disposition.

3. Personal information about church members, including their addresses and telephone numbers, is maintained for use in official church functions only.

Questions about interpretation and implementation of this policy or the church's record retention schedule and any related directives, procedures, or guidelines should be directed to the World Church records manager at headquarters. E-mail inquiries may be made to recordsmgmt@CofChrist.org.

13. Legal Issues

Legal Services provides a wide range of legal assistance and consultation for the general officers, quorums, departments, institutions, mission centers, congregations, and emerging congregations of the church worldwide. The information presented here is specifically oriented toward the United States. Similar issues arise in other nations, and Legal Services should be consulted about these issues wherever they arise. Mission center presidents and mission center financial officers outside the United States should work closely with the field apostle and Legal Services to ensure that appropriate legal advice is obtained and that local and national laws are observed. Legal Services may be contacted by e-mail at legalservices@CofChrist.org.

A. When a Lawsuit Is Filed

When a lawsuit is filed naming the church as a defendant, notice of the suit could be served on a church representative at headquarters. However, if a local jurisdiction is named as a defendant, the local pastor or administrator could be served, or the church's registered agent within the state or country. The following information will provide some instruction when members or leaders receive notice of legal action against the church. Outside the United States, contact the mission center president and the field apostle; they will coordinate contact with Legal Services.

1. Record the date and time of receipt on the document.

2. *Call Legal Services immediately.*
3. Forward all materials that accompany the summons (envelopes, wrappers, etc.) to Legal Services.
4. Do not talk with anyone except Legal Services, risk management, and other church leaders already involved in the case.
5. Share all details with Legal Services personnel. They are trained to keep all matters confidential.
6. Forward all documents and other related items to Legal Services; you may want to keep a copy for your files.

Legal Services has a response procedure; please immediately contact the legal office.

B. Real Estate Sales and/or Purchases

The Presiding Bishopric holds title to all church properties unless local law requires some other arrangement. If a congregation is considering either selling its present building and/or purchasing a new building or additional property there are procedures to be followed, as well as legislative (congregational) and administrative (mission center) approvals needed. The pastor, financial officer, or building committee member should contact Legal Services immediately once the decision to sell or purchase has been made. Legal Services will work with the congregational and mission center officers in obtaining approvals, review of listing agreements and offers to purchase. Legal Services will work directly with the title company and/or abstract company or attorney throughout the closing process.

Important and relating to any real estate is the topic of real estate taxes. Legal Services can be contacted for assistance on any real estate tax issue, some of which include:

- Real Estate Tax Exemption
- Criteria for Real Estate Tax Exemption
- Application for Tax Exemption
- Tax Notices

Outside the United States, other procedures may apply. Contact the mission center financial officer, who will coordinate contact with the appropriate offices at World Church headquarters.

C. Contracts and Agreements

Agreements and/or leases should be reviewed or prepared by legally qualified persons. In the United States, such documents must be prepared by Legal Services at headquarters. For other countries, the mission center financial officer and the mission center president must obtain professional legal advice in liaison with Legal Services to ensure that the correct procedure has been followed. For specific questions or a resource on contracts and agreements presenting many common questions and corresponding answers, contact

Legal Services at headquarters. Contracts approved by Legal Services will have an approval stamp.

D. State Sales and Use Tax Exemption

In the United States, sales and use tax exemptions are used to exempt a church from paying sales and use tax on purchases of supplies and/or equipment to be used by a congregation. This exemption is *not* to be used by an individual for personal purchases.

Sales and use tax exemptions for religious organizations vary from state to state. Some do not allow sales and use tax exemption for religious organizations, other states require each congregation to have its own exemption number, while other states have an “umbrella” exemption which covers every congregation within that state. Example: In the state of Missouri, the Community of Christ is required to have only one sales and use tax exemption number that can be used by all Community of Christ congregations within the state of Missouri, while the state of Iowa does not allow a religious exemption from sales and use tax.

Please contact Legal Services for information regarding your state’s requirements. Outside the United States, it is the responsibility of the mission center financial officer to ensure that appropriate laws and procedures are followed.

E. Protecting the Tax-Exempt Status of the Church and Campgrounds

In the United States and some other nations, governmental entities grant tax-exempt status to certain qualifying organizations. The church has such status, and losing tax-exempt status may cause a number of financial hardships. Without this status, the church or a campground could lose the following benefits:

- contributions to the church or campground would no longer be tax deductible;
- the church or campground would have to pay taxes on its net income;
- the state would likely require the church or campground to pay property and sales tax;
- the church or campground would lose its discounted mailing rate at the post office;
- 403(b) tax-sheltered annuities would be unavailable for church employees; and/or
- depending on the state, the church or campground could lose its exemption from unemployment taxes.

In addition, the exempt status can be revoked retroactively. This means that the IRS may audit contributors past tax returns on which a deduction for contributions was claimed. Contributors would lose those past deductions if the IRS retroactively removes the church’s exempt status.

Churches must meet the following requirements for exempt organizations to maintain their tax-exempt status:

1. The church must be organized and operated exclusively for exempt purposes.
2. No net earnings can go to a private individual.
3. No substantial efforts to lobby are permitted.
4. No political campaigning is allowed.

Failure to meet these requirements can result in the IRS retroactively removing the church's tax-exempt status. If any mission center, congregation, or campground association has questions about tax-exempt status, please call Legal Services for assistance. Outside the United States, it is the responsibility of the mission center financial officer to ensure that appropriate laws and procedures are followed.

F. Copyright

There are specific restrictions regarding the use of copyright protected material under copyright law. These restrictions are intended to protect the rights of the author. The main purpose of copyright protection is to encourage and reward the creation of creative work. As the use of reproduction equipment becomes more widespread, piracy and theft have become an increasing problem. Individuals may be liable if they violate copyright law, and copyright holders have been suing individuals more frequently. Examples of copyright violations include copying and distributing handouts for Sunday school classes, copying and distributing music for worship services, displaying overheads with either the music or lyrics, and showing films without the permission of the copyright holder. Additionally, the copyright holder may sue the local congregation, mission center, and World Church for copyright violations. Copyright law is complicated, and many countries are parties to an international treaty on copyright law. The MCFO should obtain legal advice about what copyright laws apply and should do so in consultation with Legal Services. Legal Services can provide information and respond to any questions regarding compliance with copyright laws by calling Legal Services at World Church headquarters. In some nations where the church is established, international copyright laws may not be recognized or strictly enforced. Nevertheless, it is the church's policy to observe the principles of copyright wherever the church is established.

G. Employment Law and Church Administrators

The area of personnel law has become increasingly important in recent years for church leaders. Challenges to personnel decisions, more government regulation, and overall fears about liability exposure have expanded the awareness of churches that they need to be careful when making decisions involving hiring, supervision, and termination of personnel. Mission center, congregation, or campground association officials should obtain professional legal advice to ensure that employment laws are observed. Legal Services

should be contacted to ensure that the relevant areas of law are covered. In the United States, Legal Services should be contacted to discuss employment situations. The staff will be able to provide detailed information, documentation and assistance. Some of the common employment topics handled by Legal Services include:

- personnel policies
- personnel records
- conducting lawful interviews
- understanding and avoiding sexual harassment
- classification as employee or independent contractor
- terminating employees

Outside the United States, mission center presidents and mission center financial officers are responsible for insuring that applicable employment laws are observed.

H. Confidentiality and Privileged Communications

Ministry offered by the church, whether it is offered by ordained priesthood members or unordained church members, creates possibilities for the existence of confidentiality and privileged communications. The issue of privileged and confidential communications has both legal and ethical components. For information on and assistance in understanding the church's position regarding confidentiality and privileged communication, as well as guidance in dealing with confidentiality and privileged communications, please contact Legal Services at headquarters.

I. Prevention and Intervention of Sexual Misconduct

Section 9, "Policy and Procedures for the Prevention and Intervention of Sexual Misconduct," provides guidelines for responding to concerns in this area, particularly sections III, IV, and V. These guidelines should help to assure appropriate intervention to alleged incidents of abuse. For specific questions about legal aspects of these issues, please contact Legal Services.

J. Other Issues

There are a number of other issues about which Legal Services can provide information and assistance. For detailed information on the following topics, please contact Legal Services at World Church headquarters.

Employment Issues (in conjunction with Human Resources)

- Terminating employees
- Benefit questions
- Workers Compensation questions
- The Family Medical Leave Act
- Health Insurance Portability and Accessibility Act (HIPAA questions)

Releases

- Event releases
- Photo releases
- Activity releases
- Volunteer releases

Immigration questions

- Business visas
- Student visas

Unrelated Business Income

- Fund-raising activities
- Use of tax-exempt status
- Rental of facilities (income from renting a building to either a non-profit or for-profit group does not create unrelated business income in the United States as long as no services, such as meals or maid service, are provided as part of the rental.)

Taxes

- Use of tax-exempt status
- Protecting tax-exempt status
- State sales and use tax exemption
- Real estate tax exemption

Ministerial Malpractice

- Clergy privilege
- Reporting child abuse

Contracts and Agreements

- Consulting
- Services
- Purchase
- Construction
- Software

Other

- Campgrounds

14. Risk Management Services

Risk Management Services supports the church by helping to minimize the frequency and adverse effects of accidental loss. Our primary objective is to actively work with jurisdictions and affiliates to protect members and friends of the church as well as church assets.

Risk Management Services provides a *Risk Management Information Manual* that can be found on the church's Web site (<http://www.CofChrist.org/cfo#Risk>). This manual contains guidelines and information that address various risk management issues encountered on a daily basis by congregations, jurisdictions, mission centers and church affiliates.

Some of the information found in this manual includes the church's property and casualty insurance coverage, guidelines for higher-risk activities, contractor insurance

and bonding requirements, instructions on how to report an insured claim or accident, information concerning use of church-owned and non-owned vehicles, volunteer worker and activity accident insurance and reporting procedures, insurance requirements for outside entities using church facilities or grounds, lifeguard requirements, camp nursing requirements, etc.

For questions and clarification on any risk management requirement or procedure, please contact Risk Management Services at headquarters. In case of an emergency or if a situation develops outside normal business hours, call the following number: 1-816-853-0012. Outside the United States and Canada, contact the mission center president or the field apostle. Risk Management may be contacted by e-mail at riskmanagement@CofChrist.org.

15. Fiscal Issues

While the following information relates specifically to the United States, every congregation and mission center should aspire to observe the larger principles described in this section. Where departures from these principles are necessary, it is the responsibility of the field apostle to work with the Presiding Bishopric and the mission center financial officer to develop principles and procedures that are appropriate to the situation and faithful to the concept of stewardship.

A. Access to Financial Information

Internal church financial information, such as contribu-

tions received by mission centers and congregations and oblation assistance provided to individuals or families, is sensitive in nature. Access to it is usually limited to the officers in the administrative line who either handle or oversee the handling of such funds. In mission centers, these persons include the mission center financial officer, assistant financial officer, and accounting and bookkeeping staff (if any), and may include the mission center president. In congregations, they usually include the congregation financial officer and assistant financial officer (if any), as well as the mission center president, financial officer, and assistant financial officer. The pastor may also have access to internal congregation financial information if she or he so desires.

B. Confidentiality

Officers who have access to internal church financial information must treat it with utmost discretion and confidentiality. It should usually be disclosed only to those mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Mission center and congregation financial information is sometimes reported publicly. For example, the mission center may give periodic updates and/or an end-of-year recap of its income to its congregations, and the congregation may provide similar information to its members. In such cases, individual contributors should not be identified and the kinds and amounts of their contributions should not be disclosed.

Oblation assistance to individuals or families is particularly sensitive and requires exceptional confidentiality. Only mission center and congregation administrative and financial officers should know about such cases. The mission center financial officer may report to the mission center on the total contributions to oblation by members of the mission center. Questions about oblation should be directed to oblation@CofChrist.org.

C. Church Accounts

Church funds should be deposited and kept in appropriate financial/investment accounts: mission center funds, congregation funds, and campground association funds in checking, savings, and investment accounts belonging to the mission center, congregation, and campground association respectively. All accounts should be opened and maintained in the name of the church and not in the name of an individual. Church funds shall not be used under any circumstance to provide personal loans.

Each bank account should have at least two signatories, officers who are authorized to deposit, transfer, pay, and otherwise handle the funds that it contains. On mission center accounts, the signatories should be the mission center financial officer and assistant financial officer (if any), plus the presiding bishop of the World Church. On congregation accounts, they should be the congregation financial officer, and assistant financial officer (if any), plus the mission center financial officer. It is advisable that a husband and wife should usually not be signatories on the same church account as well as other family members. Following these guidelines enables the financial officer to attain proper balance of powers relative to the financial matters of the congregation or mission center. MCFO approval is required to have multiple family members as signatories on congregational bank accounts.

Funds may be deposited, transferred, paid, or otherwise handled upon the signature of one signatory.

D. Tax Identification Number

In the United States, the church is considered a business organization for tax purposes. The World Church and each

U.S. mission center must therefore have its own unique federal tax identification number, known as an Employer Identification Number (EIN). Similar requirements may exist in other nations.

In the United States, an EIN is required for opening an account with a financial institution, withholding taxes and reporting wages for church employees, and making payments to independent contractors. Mission centers, congregations, and campground associations should not use the World Church's EIN. A congregation or campground association may use its mission center's EIN to open accounts but must have its own EIN to withhold taxes and report wages for church employees and to make payments to independent contractors of more than \$600 per year. Any congregation or campground association that does not already have an EIN should contact its mission center financial officer for help in applying for one.

E. Investments

In the United States, the World Church maintains the Affiliate Investment Pool, a professionally managed investment fund that earns competitive rates of return. Mission centers, congregations, and campground associations may participate in the Affiliate Investment Pool account. A minimum deposit is required, and information can be obtained through the application procedures. All funds, as well as any earnings on them, are held in a separate account in the name of that jurisdiction and may be added to or withdrawn at any time. Additional information on the Affiliate Investment Pool, the types of investments available, rates of return, investment philosophy and application procedures may be obtained by contacting Fiscal Services at Community of Christ World Headquarters, 1001 W. Walnut, Independence, MO 64050 or by calling Fiscal Services at headquarters.

The Presiding Bishopric, based on insurance requirements, has established a maximum amount of \$100,000 that mission centers, congregations, and campground associations may hold outside the Affiliate Investment Pool. The specific dollar amount is subject to change and can be confirmed by Fiscal Services or the MCFO. United States-based mission centers, congregations, and campground associations with cash and investments beyond normal operating funds and that total more than \$100,000 must place them in the Affiliate Investment Pool. It is recommended that jurisdictions with cash and investments beyond normal operating funds but less than \$100,000, place these funds in the Affiliate Investment Pool or an insured financial/investment account. Such accounts must be in the name of the church and have at least two signatories, as provided in the section entitled "Church Accounts."

The Presiding Bishopric, in conjunction with the MCFO for the country, will establish investment policies for mission centers, congregations, and campground associations

located outside the United States. These policies are available through the MCFO.

F. Required Financial Procedures

The basic required financial procedures for mission centers, congregations, and campground associations are budgets, record keeping and reporting, contributions, and audits. The financial officer receives and holds all money and property that is contributed to her or his jurisdiction; gives receipts for them to their contributors; disburses funds according to an approved budget; and maintains a sound system of financial records that accurately describe the transactions that she or he makes. Each mission center should have in place an approved set of internal control procedures that address each of these areas.

1. Budgets:

Each mission center, congregation, and campground association should have a budget that supports a program of ministry that is designed to achieve the mission of the church in its particular area. Its administrative and financial officers first prepare a proposed budget that is within the limits of potential funding, and then submit it to the appropriate leadership group (mission center council, congregation council, or campground board) for further consideration. The recommended budget that is developed is presented to the appropriate legislative body for final approval. This process should invite and encourage the general membership to review, understand, comment upon, and ultimately endorse both the program of ministry and the supporting budget for their jurisdiction. The funds of the mission center, congregation, and campground association are received and disbursed according to the approved budget.

2. Record Keeping and Reporting:

Each financial officer should maintain records that accurately describe how the funds of her or his mission center, congregation, or campground association were received and disbursed according to the approved budget. Monthly financial reports in sufficient detail should be provided to the membership, informing them of the progress that has been made toward meeting the budget goals.

3. Contributions:

Contributions from individuals are the main method of funding the mission of the church in local congregations. The following policies apply to the United States. Similar procedures may apply in other nations. Contact the mission center financial officer.

Cash Contributions: In the United States, a set of envelopes is mailed each month to any individual or married couple that wants to use them to make their offerings. Each contributor should be given a receipt for her or his

contribution. There are two methods for doing so. Congregations that use the Shelby system to enter contributions should also produce quarterly statements to be given to the contributor that list the funds that have been contributed. Congregations that do not use Shelby enter their contribution data onto the “Contributors Monthly Statement” form. This is a three-part form: one part is sent to the contributor, the second part is kept by the financial officer, and the third part is sent to Fiscal Services. The parts received by Fiscal Services are entered into the Shelby system to provide a database of giving by all contributors. To obtain information on processing of contributions and reporting of contributions, contact Fiscal Services at Community of Christ World Headquarters, 1001 W. Walnut, Independence, MO 64050 or by calling Fiscal Services at headquarters.

Non-Cash Contribution: A congregation may receive non-cash contributions such as organs, pianos, and other equipment. An acknowledgment of such a contribution should be provided to the contributor using Form 165—Statement of Acceptance of Non-Cash Contribution. This form is available from Fiscal Services. Contributions of securities (stocks and bonds) require precise handling to ensure the most beneficial tax treatment for the contributor. Acceptance of contributions of real estate must be considered carefully as there are potential liability issues in taking ownership. Before accepting either a security or real estate contribution, contact Fiscal Services for assistance with appropriate methods to process the contribution.

Major and Deferred Gifts: Major gifts are defined as gifts that require significant planning before the gift due to complex situations or the desire to take advantage of U.S. tax benefits. Deferred gifts are gifts created now, but not expected to come to the church until sometime in the future. A good example of a deferred gift is a gift through a will or living trust. Both types of gifts are typically complicated and require significant planning and effort. The church has a team called Estate and Financial Planning Ministries that provides specialized ministry in gift, estate, and financial planning, using a variety of tools and techniques. These services are offered at no cost to the donor and are provided in a confidential manner. Financial officers are encouraged to either contact Estate and Financial Planning Ministries on the donor's behalf or have the donor contact this team directly at World Church headquarters for assistance in gifts of this nature. Estate and Financial Planning Ministries may be contacted by e-mail at efpm@CofChrist.org.

Procedures for receipting contributions in other countries, not identified above, are the responsibility of the MCFO and the Presiding Bishopric.

4. Audits:

An audit is an examination of the financial officer's records to determine whether they accurately describe

the transactions that she or he made, whether her or his receipts and disbursements were consistent with the approved budget, and whether the balances that she or he shows to be on hand are correct. The mission center president, congregation pastor, or campground association board

chair should arrange for an audit to be performed at the close of each fiscal year. Audit guidelines, procedures, and information may be found at www.CofChrist.org/cfo#Audits.

Fiscal Services may be contacted by e-mail at fiscalservices@CofChrist.org.

16. Houses of Worship

Building programs of congregations, mission centers, and campground associations are assisted and enhanced by the ministry of the Presiding Bishopric through Real Estate Services and the Houses of Worship Revolving Fund (HWRF) program. Real Estate Services may be reached by calling headquarters or by e-mail at realestate@CofChrist.org. Information is also available at www.CofChrist.org/cfo#RealEstate. The HWRF program is designed to bring the resources, assistance, and experience of the World Church to the congregation by reinforcing the relationship between the local congregation and the facility planning and trustee role of the Presiding Bishopric. All building projects, site purchases, or sales of property shall have the prior approval of the Presiding Bishopric.

A. Building Programs

To initiate a building program, a simple “Letter of Intent” is to be created and transmitted to Real Estate Services, with a copy to mission center administrative officers and to the field apostle. This action should be taken as soon as it is probable that such a building program is likely to be pursued.

When the congregation has completed their initial planning, they will forward to Real Estate Services information regarding the building project, the financing plan, and the necessary approvals.

The description of the building project should include a discussion of the congregation’s vision/mission and plan for ministry, and how the proposed project will support the mission of the congregation. The proposed improvements will be described, along with preliminary building plans if they are available.

The financing plan will include the estimated cost of the project, a summary of the resources available, and a completed HWRF loan application (if needed). Results of a capital campaign or a discussion of the congregation’s ability to repay the loan must also be submitted before a loan can be approved.

Legislative and administrative approvals include a copy of the minutes of the congregational business meeting granting approval to the building project and the financing plan, and letters of support of that action from the presid-

ing and financial officers at the congregation and mission center. Copies of all building programs should be directed to the field apostle for their review and approval.

When this information is submitted, the Presiding Bishopric, through Real Estate Services, will evaluate the building and financing plans as appropriate for the scope of each project. Once approval for a building project has been given by the Presiding Bishopric, it will still be necessary for construction contracts, insurance and bonding documents, and final versions of the building and financing plans to be reviewed and approved by World Church officers.

Campgrounds or other cross-jurisdictional associations will need to secure administrative and legislative approval from all affected jurisdictions. If any questions arise about the nature or extent of needed approvals, Real Estate Services should be contacted by the jurisdiction initiating the building program to ensure that all needed approvals are gathered before submission of the building program.

B. Houses of Worship Revolving Fund Loan Terms and Incentives

Houses of Worship Revolving Fund loans are made to congregations, emerging congregations, campground associations, and mission centers for the purchase, construction, expansion, or major remodeling of their church facilities, or for major maintenance items which are immediately needed to protect the church’s capital investment and beyond the ability of the congregation or campground to fund.

The World Church is the only authorized lender for any congregation or mission center seeking a loan as part of the financing plan for a building program. Rates and terms for HWRF loans are set by the Presiding Bishopric and are kept favorable to the congregation. Congregations should plan to commit a significant portion of the project costs before the construction or purchase, and supplement congregational resources only if needed. Current information regarding loan policies and guidelines can be received by contacting Real Estate Services. Approval of each loan is based on the following criteria:

- availability of Houses of Worship Revolving Funds;

- demonstrated ability to repay the loan, including the completion of a capital campaign, if necessary;
- application of the net proceeds from the sale of existing property (where applicable) to reduce the amount borrowed;
- satisfaction of the World Church insurance and bonding requirements by all contractors involved in the project;
- placement and maintenance of the congregational insurance program within the World Church Insurance Program; and
- full compliance with the approval process designated by the Presiding Bishopric.

Once approved, a loan commitment shall be effective for a limited period. If construction or remodeling does not begin within that period, a loan commitment extension for additional time must be requested by the congregation, campground, or mission center seeking the loan. It is possible that financial conditions and/or administrative personnel may have changed and a new application will be required.

C. Houses of Worship Revolving Fund “Special” Loans

Houses of Worship Revolving Fund “special” loans are made to campground associations for the purchase,

construction, expansion, major remodeling, or major maintenance costs of their facilities. These “special” loans are also made to congregations and emerging congregations for major maintenance items which are beyond the ability of the congregation to fund and which are necessary to protect the church’s capital investment. Congregations are encouraged to provide in their budgets sufficient reserves to avoid the necessity of relying on “special” loans to maintain their facilities. The rates and terms of HWRF “special” loans differ from those of regular loans. Contact Real Estate Services if you wish to explore a “special” loan.

D. Capital Campaigns

A capital campaign is an intensive effort to raise a significant amount of money in relatively short period of time in order to fund a major building project. There are several important principles to consider when planning a capital campaign. Real Estate Services is available to discuss the design and execution of a capital campaign with congregational leaders.

17. Marriage

A. Standards of Marriage

The 1984 World Conference approved a resolution (WCR 1182) that provides a positive affirmation of marriage and an emphasis on competent pastoral care and supportive ministry to people in a marriage or in the process of terminating a marriage. The following are a series of principles highlighted in that World Conference resolution:

1. Marriage is ordained of God (D. and C. 49:3a; 150:10; Genesis 2:27-30).
2. Monogamy is the basic principle on which Christian married life is built (D. and C. 150:10a).
3. The church expects that husband and wife will remain married to each other as long as they both live (D. and C. 111; 26:4b).
4. Marriage is a sacred covenant between husband and wife in which the church participates with sanction, blessing, and guidance. The relationship becomes sacred when it expresses the nature of God and God’s participation in their lives.
5. The church reaffirms marriage as an institution, a covenant, a sacrament ordained of God, and a legal contract.

6. The church highly recommends to the parties contemplating marriage to obtain premarital instruction and to make adequate preparation for the responsibilities and relationships required of marriage (WCR 972).
7. The church upholds the validity of a legal marriage authorized by civil and other religious authorities and affirms the potential worth of the sacred relationships that can result.
8. As a legal contract, marriage imparts to both parties certain prescribed rights and duties that are generally enforceable in various states and nations of the world.
9. The church recognizes that in some cases either or both partners have legal and/or moral grounds for termination of marriage.
10. In case of termination of marriage where acts of unchristian conduct may have occurred, specific administrative or judicial action may be required with healing and reconciling ministry as a primary goal. Priesthood status will also require administrative review.
11. The remarriage of a person whose previous marriage has been terminated should be approached with the

same careful consideration and preparation as that appropriate for every marriage.

B. Preparation for Marriage

1. All programs of the church should teach and support Christian values, such as the worth of persons, loyalty, trust, and fidelity of covenants. All of these are essential in the establishment of a marriage based on enduring love and lifelong commitment.
2. Marriage preparation should begin six months to one year before the marriage ceremony. While exceptions may occur, adequate emotional space must be provided for premarital discussions between the church officiating minister (the ordained priest or elder who accepts a request to perform a wedding ceremony) and the couple. Tools such as *A Guide to Premarital Discussions* by Dennis Clinefelter (available through Temple School) and the *FOCCUS* inventory (available through Peace and Justice Ministries) are very helpful. Topics to be addressed should include:
 - Lifestyle and expectations
 - Friends and interests
 - Personality match
 - Personal issues
 - Communication
 - Problem solving
 - Religion and values
 - Parenting issues
 - Extended family issues
 - Sexuality issues
 - Financial issues
 - Readiness issues
 - Marriage covenant
 - Key problem indicators
 - Family of origin
 - Dual careers
 - Interfaith marriage
 - Remarriage
3. Ministry of referral: The need to recognize the limitations of the minister in the counseling role cannot be too strongly stated. If a couple demonstrates issues that exceed the minister's training, it is important that they be referred to appropriate professionals. The two tools most beneficial to ministers as they offer the ministry of referral is a referral file and adequate self-awareness. Lack of either tool poses the risk of harm to the couple, the minister, and the church. Referral is a necessary extension of pastoral care in which the minister creates a bridge between the individuals in need of help and the referral source. After the referral takes place, it is crucial that the minister keep in touch and continue to offer pastoral care. Finally, referral is not pastoral failure. It is often the most

important expression of pastoral concern that a competent minister can offer an individual or a couple.

4. The sacredness and dignity of the marriage service should be preserved by carefully designing all elements of the service to create a spirit of worship. The actual structure of the service may vary according to local custom and personal preference.

C. Legal Elements of Marriage and Termination of Marriage

1. The church recognizes all legally performed marriages. All marriage services, civil or religious, should be entered into with the same covenantal spirit as found in Doctrine and Covenants 111:2b. Those married in a civil ceremony may request to share their commitment with family and friends in the setting of a church service. A priesthood member who receives such a request should make this opportunity available, coordinating the service with the pastor. All ministers should become familiar with the laws applicable in the civil jurisdiction where the marriage will take place. All marriages of members should be reported to the Office of Membership Records through the local recorder.
2. As a legal contract, marriage preserves individual rights, both real and implied. Officiating ministers should discuss the legal implications with the couple before the marriage ceremony. (For information concerning legal rights and responsibilities consult an attorney, a barrister's association, or civil law authority.) When the church becomes aware that these rights have been violated, it is the responsibility of the minister to offer reconciling guidance and in extreme situations such as personal abuse, desertion, or felonious crime, encourage the person(s) to seek legal counsel. Under all circumstances, ministry should be continued with the individuals involved as much as conditions permit. If the marriage is terminated, a statistical record should be made by the local recorder at the congregational level. Its intention is to report the change in marital status of the members involved.
3. After the matter is heard by the court, in some areas an interlocutory decree of divorce is granted that provides that the divorce does not become final until the end of a specified time.
 - a. During this waiting period neither party to the marriage covenant is legally free to remarry. Inasmuch as they are still married people, both parties should govern themselves accordingly in their individual relations with other people.
 - b. The couple and the ministers of the church are urged to regard this waiting period as an oppor-

tunity for further efforts toward reconciliation (Standing High Council, March 18, 1965).

4. The language of WCR 1182 does not provide authorization for ministers of the Community of Christ to perform marriages between two persons of the same sex, even in jurisdictions where such marriages are legally valid. The resolution does, however, provide for the recognition of legally valid marriages. Thus, a same-sex marriage may be entered into the church records as a legal fact, just as in other instances where the church recognizes legally valid marriages that it may not choose to solemnize.

D. Ministry in Marital Difficulties

Ministry to strengthen marriages is much needed. When strains develop within a marriage the church has opportunity to bring supportive, healing ministry to those in need. Such ministry requires basic personal skills, a referral file, and helpful insight granted through the Holy Spirit.

1. The main objective of church ministry in marital difficulties is to bring spiritual insights that will strengthen the marriage ties. The approach is that of a healing ministry rather than an inquisitive or punishing one.
2. Because husband and wife are “one” in a unique sense, the difficulties that arise between them are frequently more intense and have more far-reaching consequences than difficulties that arise between members not married to each other and whose circumstances do not require the intimate day-to-day relationships involved in marriage. Because of this uniqueness, the responsibility for ministry in homes where there are marital difficulties should be recognized and accepted by those ministers most qualified. Priesthood members whose specific duty is in the field of home ministry should be encouraged to create a referral file that lists professionals and resources specifically to family issues in order to function more effectively.
3. Qualifications desirable for this ministry include self-awareness, spiritual maturity, sound judgment, genuine personal interest in those having difficulties, and such proficiency in pastoral counseling as may be developed through study, training, experience, and spiritual preparation. This type of ministry requires a high degree of wisdom, patience, humility, sympathy, and understanding. The counselor may be chosen either by pastoral assignment or by the parties involved. Often the selection is based on the amount of personal interest and confidence the counselees have in the specific minister.
4. The ideal situation for ministry is one in which personal interest, priesthood responsibility, and appropriate professional competence are combined in one person.

The ones assigned to minister should in all cases recognize personal limitations. Where there is a need for the ministry of referral, encouragement should be given to the parties involved to seek the services of professionals who are especially qualified in the area of need.

5. The marriage may be strengthened by competent guidance and participation in the full life of the church through consistent church attendance, personal and family worship, mutual participation in Christian service, and similar activities.
6. The presiding officer or other officer administratively concerned should keep free from involvement in the intimate details of the difficulty. Nevertheless, the officer should keep in close touch with the situation to be sure that the maximum support of the church is being made available.
7. In situations of marital stress when the possibility of divorce is raised, the minister must be very discreet, laboring for reconciliation, being careful not to intrude in what is a painful decision process.

E. Termination of Marriage

1. In some cases where marriage termination involves a member of the priesthood or unordained church leader (i.e., officially appointed or elected jurisdictional leaders), further administrative action may be required. The priesthood member or leader should be asked to refrain from public ministry until the legal termination process is completed. (Public ministry is defined as that which requires the person to pray, preside, teach, etc., in the presence of an officially assembled church group. In addition, for priesthood members, public ministry means situations that require administrative decisions within the jurisdiction.) Usually this limitation is temporary and continues only if further charges related to unchristian conduct are a part of the termination difficulties, or if the reputation of the person(s) precludes further acceptance of their ministry. No administrative report is required in this situation, unless a silence is imposed. (See “Suspension,” page 30.)
2. In extreme cases, administrative silence of priesthood members and/or question of membership may result because of the situation that has precipitated the marriage termination process. When charges of unchristian conduct are made covering such activities as adultery, desertion, murder, personal abuse, conviction of a felony, etc., the situation should be referred to the appropriate officer. Copies of the correspondence or procedures should be sent to the proper administrative officer, but no copies should be kept on file with the local jurisdiction. The minister consulting with the parties involved should keep in mind that reconciliation and healing ministries are

the most important consideration. Judgments are to be made only when it is part of the administrative or court action, and then only by the ministers charged with that responsibility.

F. Remarriage

When there is a request for marriage by a person previously married, careful consideration and marriage preparation (using resources such as the *FOCCUS* inventory) should be conducted. The officiating minister and pastor of the members desiring to be married must make a series of decisions when this request is made. This situation could raise some questions as to whether or not the marriage may take place by church authority. The following information is for guidance in these decisions:

1. There are a number of questions about the current intention and attitude of the couple.
 - a. Does the requesting couple understand the implications of their past experiences?
 - b. Are they responding to the spirit of reconciliation?
 - c. Are they approaching this marriage commitment with the intention of fulfilling their covenant relationship with God and each other?
2. Another important aspect of this decision is whether there are any past behaviors of either person that still adversely affect the attitude of congregation members toward the marriage. If so, additional ministry may be required with the couple and the congregation to strengthen congregational acceptance and support.
3. If there is an unresolved question about the past conduct of either of the individuals, the officiating minister may (with the knowledge of the couple) wish to contact previous pastors or other people who may provide additional information. In cases of previous ministerial silence or court procedure, there will be a record on file at World Church headquarters. The officiating minister may also wish to contact the First Presidency to determine if there are any extenuating circumstances that have been made part of the record.
4. If unchristian conduct has been alleged or proved and the people involved remain unreconciled, ministry of healing should be offered. Care must be taken so that unproved statements or rumors do not influence the decision to deny marriage in the church. If there is no proved behavior of unchristian conduct, or if reconciliation has occurred, the pastor of the members desiring to be married may give approval for the marriage to be performed. In rare instances when there is a difference of opinion between the officiating minister and

the pastor, or when approval is denied, an appeal may be made by the officiating minister to the next higher administrative officer.

5. If a decision to deny the right to be married by church authority is rendered, the officiating minister should consult with the couple regarding the conditions that are to prevail if approval to be married by church authority is given. There are a number of circumstances such as time, reconciliation, change of attitude, expressions of repentant spirit, etc., that provide opportunities for ministry to the couple. It is expected that even in this period of disappointment and perhaps anger, the officiating minister would extend pastoral care to the couple.
6. If administrative clearance is received, the officiating minister is free to continue the process of marriage preparation as in any other marriage, and to perform the marriage.

G. Unmarried Parents

When premarital intercourse results in a pregnancy and the question of the wisdom of marriage is raised, the following facts should be kept in mind.

1. Christian marriage is intended as a life partnership based on mutual affection and respect and on the fundamental Christian character of the parties. If such a basis for marriage exists, marriage is generally advisable. But if no such basis exists, marriage should not be advised just because of the pregnancy.
2. The welfare of the child conceived by the parties should be given major consideration in light of the specific circumstances. This consideration should include such matters as the legal status of the child, financial support, and prospective home situation after birth.
3. An equally major concern is the welfare of the parents. This includes the financial cost of the pregnancy but extends to the recovery of the parents to a stable lifestyle.
4. Each of the parties should be advised and helped to accept willingly the measure of responsibility that the total situation indicates.
5. Consultations should be had with appropriate social agencies.
6. Representatives of the church should familiarize themselves with laws concerning adoption and encourage full compliance in matters relating to adoption (Standing High Council, April 24, 1958).
7. Guidance to the church on the issue of abortion is outlined in the Standing High Council policy found in the appendix on page.

18. Membership

A. Baptism

The prerequisites for baptism are set forth in Doctrine and Covenants 17:7. It is important that those contemplating church membership be properly instructed. Instruction may be completed before baptism or may be continued between baptism and confirmation (D. and C. 17:18). All baptisms must be approved in advance by the congregational pastor (D. and C. 120:4a, 125:14, WCR 705).

The minister participating in a baptism is to use the precise words given in Doctrine and Covenants 17:21: "... calling him or her by name: Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen" (see WCR 48 and the section on Sacraments in this handbook).

For rebaptism of members expelled from the church, contact the First Presidency.

B. Confirmation

The sacraments of baptism and confirmation usually require separate services for full impact in the lives of candidates. Such separation permits more adequate attention to these distinctive worship experiences. Separation provides time for encouraging and instructing new members (D. and C. 17:18). It also provides opportunity for each person to prepare adequately for the importance of the confirmation service.

Nevertheless, these two phases of the "new birth," baptism and confirmation, belong together. Their unity will suffer from any considerable separation, because they are intended to support and dignify each other; therefore, the time lapse between baptism and confirmation should not be too long.

C. Membership Responsibility

A member temporarily residing near a congregation, but not enrolled there, is subject to the jurisdiction of that congregation, even though the member does not have voice and vote at congregational conference until enrolled locally (WCR 594).

D. Nonresident Members

Members of the church living within a mission center, but not close enough to a congregation to attend regularly, may be carried on a nonresident list. They are the direct responsibility of the mission center president. The mission center president may recommend the appointment of a nonresident pastor to assist to exercise pastoral and administrative jurisdiction.

E. Legislative Rights

Members' legislative rights are based on the principle of common consent (D. and C. 25:1b). Every member in good standing has voice and vote in the congregation, where enrolled and in the mission center conference, if one exists, unless the mission center has provided for a delegate conference. When elected as a delegate, a member has voice and vote in the mission center conference (where such have been established) or in the World Conference. The only requirement for selection as a delegate is membership in good standing (D. and C. 125:9). Membership in good standing means that a member has not been given the status of "excommunicated" by a church court.

F. Enrollment

Whenever possible, members should be enrolled in the congregation most convenient to their home. The wishes of members who desire to be enrolled in a different jurisdiction than their home area will usually be respected, unless objections are registered by the administrative officers. Members are responsible in their conduct to the jurisdiction most convenient to their home even though their recorded membership may be in another jurisdiction. (See "C" above.)

G. General Membership Category

Church members who do not wish to be affiliated with a specific congregation may be enrolled in the "general" membership category by which they will be recorded as members of their mission center, but not specifically affiliated with any congregation. Enrollment in the general category will be accomplished by transfer. Members enrolled there will have a status similar to those in the nonresident category. Members should not be transferred to this category if they attend their congregation at least twice a year, make a financial contribution, or express a desire to maintain their membership in the congregation. Members enrolled in the general category may be transferred back to a congregational unit on their request, as they would with any transfer.

This category has been developed to address the pastoral and administrative problems involved when a congregation has a large number of totally inactive members who have lost interest in the church. Enrollment in this category should not be interpreted as punishment for inactivity. Members enrolled in the general category are considered to be "in good standing." The priesthood status of ministers transferred to the general category should be carefully evaluated.

H. Nonaffiliated Status

In cases where jurisdictions are experiencing substantial disruption of normal legislative assemblies due to the participation of people involved in unauthorized groups, the appropriate jurisdictional officers may request the First Presidency to authorize a non-affiliated category for their jurisdiction. This is rarely approved and only in the most serious and difficult circumstances. Individuals transferred to the nonaffiliated category are to be notified in writing by the appropriate jurisdictional officer before their assignment to this category. People assigned to the nonaffiliated category are still members of the jurisdiction, but without voice and vote in legislative assemblies. Transfers from the nonaffiliated category and appeals relating to the assignment of individuals to this category are handled through the normal administrative line.

I. Transfers

Membership transfers from one jurisdiction to another within the church are accomplished by the recorder of a congregation or a mission center. A member who is transferring should give the information to the recorder or pastor of either the new or former jurisdiction. Other congregational or mission center officers should accomplish transfers through the recorder.

J. Unknowns

The World Church maintains an enrollment category of “unknown” for members whose whereabouts cannot be established by the local recorders after a diligent search. Transfers to the unknown category are not to be made for the purpose of cleaning the rolls, but are considered only when there is evidence of a thorough effort to locate the member. The Office of Membership Records has a checklist of steps to be taken before a transfer to the “unknown” category will be processed. It is important to remember that once a person is transferred to this list no one assumes regular pastoral responsibility for the member.

K. Withdrawals

Withdrawals from church membership are at the initiative of the member. Recorders and pastors should avoid letters or phone calls that have the effect of suggesting to inactive members that they should consider withdrawing. Withdrawal is not a device for easily cleaning up jurisdictional records.

The church does not give letters of membership transfer to other denominations. Church members desiring to be free to join other denominations may withdraw their membership.

Members determined to withdraw their names from the church rolls must submit their request in writing (WCR 981). Each individual wishing to withdraw should sign.

Parental consent is required for minors. A withdrawal is not generally processed without a personally signed request.

Members wishing to withdraw should give the signed form to the pastor, whose responsibility it is to provide for ministerial labor. This personal contact should be completed within thirty (30) days of receipt of the form. If the labor does not change the member's desire to withdraw, the pastor should sign the form authorizing the withdrawal.

The form should then be forwarded to the mission center president for signature, after which it is to be sent immediately to the office of the First Presidency for processing. Other officers in the administrative line (i.e., nonresident pastors, regional administrators, etc.) may sign this form if required by local circumstances.

Some members send their withdrawal requests directly to the First Presidency. When received, a letter of acknowledgment is directed to the member explaining that it is necessary to make contact with the presiding officer in whose area the member resides and that thirty-five days will be allowed for correspondence. The presiding officer is then notified that the member is seeking withdrawal and that ministerial contact is needed. Processing of the withdrawal is delayed for a period of days to provide for this ministry. If additional time is needed, the pastor should contact the office of the First Presidency. If the presiding officer does not report within the thirty-five-day time period, a member who has submitted a signed request will be removed from the rolls without further approvals (Standing High Council, September 27, 1969).

If a withdrawal request is approved, the officer forwarding the request will receive the confirmation of the withdrawal, and a certificate sent to the withdrawing member. The mission center president is notified of the action that has been taken.

Kind, affirmative ministry should be extended to all people desiring to withdraw from the church. If it is their firm conviction to separate themselves from the fellowship of the church, this request should be honored in a timely way. The member should be assured that he or she is invited to return to the church at any time through the process of reinstatement.

L. Reinstatements

People who have withdrawn their membership at their own request may be reinstated in the church at the discretion of the First Presidency (WCR 981). Reinstatement is an administrative action, and rebaptism is not appropriate.

Individuals desiring to be reinstated in their church membership should make a request in writing to the nearest administrative officer, usually the pastor. The officer may inquire of the First Presidency as to the circumstances of the withdrawal and visit personally with the individual regarding his or her current life situation and attitude toward participation in the church. A recommendation is then made through the administrative line, with each of-

ficer adding a recommendation and forwarding it. The First Presidency receives all of these recommendations and then reports its decision to the administrative officers involved. The field officer will inform the members when the reinstatement process has been completed.

Those who held priesthood at the time of withdrawal may be reinstated to membership, but have the ministerial status of “silence” or “release,” depending on the individual circumstances (WCR 922). Reinstatement of priesthood is a

separate administrative action and usually requires an additional time period after membership reinstatement.

For reinstatement of those who have been expelled or excommunicated, contact the First Presidency.

M. Questions

Questions may be addressed to memrec@CofChrist.org.

19. Ministry to Members in Military Service

The World Conference has recognized that members may work toward the church’s ministry of peace in many ways, including military service or conscientious objection to military service (WCR 1249). Because the church exists in many different nations and in many different circumstances, church members should reflect carefully on decisions to participate or to not participate in military service.

A. Service Members

Individuals who are members of military services should contact the coordinator of military ministry at headquarters to be provided special communications from the church and the Association for Ministry to the Military. They should also make sure that the recorder in the congregations where they are enrolled have their current address on file. This will assist the church in providing ministry in various ways.

Members in military service are encouraged to participate in congregations located near their military installation. We also understand that many military members choose to be active within their base chapel community instead of a local congregation because of their unique commonality of military service with others in the chapel, the closeness and convenience of the chapel community, and interconnectedness with other military members from other Protestant denominations. Whichever way service members choose to participate in worship it is important to stay in communication with the church if possible.

B. Congregations

Congregations with military facilities nearby should contact the chapel or the senior Protestant chaplain of the military installation from time to time with the current contact information for the congregation. This will allow the chaplain to refer inquiries. Because of the transient nature of service members, many will check local phone book listings for congregational contact information. Congregations are encouraged to assure their phone book listing is current. Members in the military may visit a congregation temporarily or transfer their membership for the period during which they are assigned to a particular base. Involvement in local congregations provides excellent opportunities for sharing life experiences.

Congregations are encouraged to communicate with deployed service members. If a congregation has members deployed someone should communicate with them at least once each month. Congregations that have no service members within the congregation but would like to offer support may sponsor a service member. Please contact the coordinator of military ministry for more information about how to become a sponsor.

C. Chaplains

The church is able to endorse full-time military chaplains in several nations, including the United States. To serve as a military chaplain, a member must meet certain educational and ministerial standards to receive the church’s endorsement. Members contemplating opportunities to provide ministry in this way should contact the coordinator of military ministry at World Church headquarters for more information.