THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
OFFICE OF THE FIRST PRESIDENCY
47 EAST SOUTH TEMPLE STREET, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84150-1000

November 3, 2004

To: General Authorities; Area Authority Seventies; Stake, Mission, and District Presidents; Bishops and Branch Presidents

Dear Brethren:

High Priests' Responsibility for Prospective Elders

Effective immediately, responsibility for the progress of prospective elders is transferred to the high priests. Where there are no high priests or insufficient numbers of them, the elders quorum will retain this responsibility.

This change will further ensure that each prospective elder has a friend to fellowship him into the brotherhood of the priesthood. The change will also balance workloads better between elders quorums and high priests groups. As presiding high priest, the bishop continues to oversee and coordinate the efforts of the high priests group leader and elders quorum president in this work.

Sincerely yours,

Gordon B. Hinckley
Thomas S. Monson
James E. Faust

The First Presidency

This letter is being translated and will be distributed to units identified as Albanian, Armenian, Bulgarian, Cambodian, Chinese, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Estonian, Fijian, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Icelandic, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Kiribati, Korean, Latvian, Lithuanian, Mongolian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Samoan, Serbian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Tahitian, Thai, Tongan, and Ukrainian units. Distribution in these languages will be complete within two weeks. Leaders of units in the United States and Canada may request copies from the Salt Lake Mail Operations Center (ext. 21990). Leaders in other areas of the world may request copies in these languages from local service centers. If leaders need it in languages not listed above, they may contact the Area Presidency who can forward requests to Project Coordination at Church headquarters (ext. 22933). 24721

High Priests' Responsibility for Prospective Elders

November 3, 2004

The following guidelines are intended to help local priesthood leaders work more effectively with prospective elders. It is recognized that units of the Church are at different stages of development and have different needs. Local leaders should seek inspiration in implementing these guidelines, adapting them according to the needs and capacities of the units.

Home Teaching

Where possible, high priests should be given the responsibility for home teaching prospective elders. Home teachers should give special emphasis to developing friendships with assigned prospective elders and finding ways to nurture and help them. When a good relationship already exists between an elder and a prospective elder, it is not necessary to assign high priests as his home teachers. (The full-time missionaries may also be invited to assist local priesthood brethren with this responsibility.)

The bishop should counsel with quorum and group leaders to determine if a prospective elder should be assigned as a home teaching companion to an elder or a high priest. Otherwise, Aaronic Priesthood young men (teachers and priests) should serve as junior companions to Melchizedek Priesthood holders.

The bishop should be kept informed about the status of prospective elders through regular meetings, interviews, and reports.

Attendance

"The bishop consults with quorum and group leaders and each prospective elder to determine whether the [prospective elder] should meet with the elders quorum or the high priests group for instruction and activities. Each prospective elder is listed on the roll of the elders quorum or high priests group according to this determination" (*Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders* [1998], 168).

When a prospective elder meets with the elders quorum, his home teacher should attend elders quorum meetings with him as other Church assignments permit. High priests who attend elders quorum meetings with prospective elders continue to report to the high priests group leader.

Other

Older prospective elders who hold the Aaronic Priesthood and become active in the Church should be ordained elders, but they may meet with the high priests group (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2,* 168). Typically, "brethren are ordained high priests when they are called to a stake presidency, high council, or bishopric or when otherwise determined by the stake president" (*Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2,* 162).

High priests and elders should continue to separate for group or quorum meetings after priesthood meeting opening exercises. In some very small units, the high priests group and elders quorum may combine for instruction, but the two groups should not be considered one quorum. A high priest should not be called to serve as president of an elders quorum (see D&C 124:133–137; *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2,* 164).