

# Priesthood: "The Power of Godliness"

## Lesson 25

*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual,  
Published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Lesson 25, pp 140-144.*

**Purpose:** To help gain a greater understanding of the priesthood and seek the blessings that come from using it righteously.

**Preparation:** 1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures  
a. Doctrine and Covenants 84:33-44; 121:34-46.  
b. Doctrine and Covenants 107  
c. Our Heritage, pages 26-27.

### •Which of these things would be possible without the priesthood?

Most likely, none of the things class members have listed would be possible without the priesthood. For example, if class members express gratitude for eternal marriage, point out that this would not be possible without the sealing power of the priesthood. Even something as simple as unity in the Church would not be possible without prophets, apostles, and other priesthood leaders, who help us gain a "unity of the faith" (Ephesians 4:13; see also verses 10-12).

This lesson discusses the priesthood and some of the covenants and blessings that are associated with it.

## 1. Order in the restoration of the priesthood and its offices

The Aaronic Priesthood and the Melchizedek Priesthood were restored to the earth in 1829 (see lesson 8). Following the organization of the Church in 1830, the Lord gradually revealed priesthood offices, quorums, and councils as needed to provide leadership for the growth of the Church. The following time line summarizes this restoration.

Aaronic Priesthood:	15 May 1829 (D&C 13)
Melchizedek Priesthood:	May or June 1829 (D&C 128:20)
Apostles, elders, priests, teachers, and deacons:	April 1830 (D&C 20:38-60)
Bishop:	4 February 1831 (D&C 41:9-10)
High priests:	June 1831 (heading to D&C 52)
First Presidency:	1832-33 (D&C 81; 90)
Patriarch:	18 December 1833 (Teachings of the

High council:	Prophet Joseph Smith [1976], 38-39) 17 February 1834 (D&C 102)
Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:	1835 (D&C 107:23-24) Seventies: 1835 (D&C 107:25)
First Quorum of the Seventy:	1835 (D&C 107:26, 93-97)

In our day the Lord continues to give revelations about the organization and responsibilities of the priesthood to guide the growth of the Church. One example of this is the calling of Area Authority Seventies and the accompanying organization of the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Quorums of the Seventy in 1997 (see lesson 42, pages 247-48).

## 2. The oath and covenant of the priesthood

Write Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood on the chalkboard. In addition to revelations about priesthood offices and government, the Lord revealed principles about receiving and exercising the priesthood. For example, He revealed the oath and covenant of the priesthood, which is found in D&C 84:33-44. These verses outline (1) the covenants a man makes with the Lord when he receives the Melchizedek Priesthood and (2) the covenants the Lord makes with faithful Melchizedek Priesthood holders.

**Elder Carlos E. Asay** of the Seventy said: *"Of all the holy agreements pertaining to the gospel of Jesus Christ, few, if any, would transcend in importance the oath and covenant of the priesthood. It is certainly one of the most sacred agreements, for it involves the sharing of heavenly powers and man's upward reaching toward eternal goals"* (in Conference Report, Oct. 1985, 56; or Ensign, Nov. 1985, 43).

*"The blessings of the priesthood are not confined to men alone. These blessings are also poured out ... upon all the faithful women of the Church.... The Lord offers to his daughters every spiritual gift and blessing that can be obtained by his sons, for neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man in the Lord"* (Joseph Fielding Smith, in Conference Report, Apr. 1970, 59; or Improvement Era, June 1970, 66; see also Alma 32:23).

•Write "Priesthood holders covenant to" on the chalkboard. What do priesthood holders promise as part of the oath and covenant of the priesthood? (See D&C 84:33, 36, 39-44.

### Priesthood holders covenant to:

- Be faithful in obtaining the Aaronic Priesthood and the Melchizedek Priesthood (verse 33).

- b. Magnify their callings (verse 33).
- c. Receive the Lord's servants (verse 36).
- d. Give diligent heed to the words of eternal life (verses 43-44).

•What does it mean to magnify a calling? (See D&C 107:99; Jacob 1:17-19.)

**President Gordon B. Hinckley** said: *"We magnify our priesthood and enlarge our calling when we serve with diligence and enthusiasm in those responsibilities to which we are called by proper authority.... We magnify our calling, we enlarge the potential of our priesthood when we reach out to those in distress and give strength to those who falter.... We magnify our calling when we walk with honesty and integrity"* (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 63; or Ensign, May 1989, 48-49).

•How have you been blessed by someone who magnified his or her calling?  
As we magnify our callings, it is important that we find the correct balance so we do not neglect our families.

**Elder Neal A. Maxwell** of the Quorum of the Twelve said: *"Sometimes, unintentionally, even certain extracurricular Church activities, insensitively administered, can hamper family life. Instructively, after the resurrected Jesus taught the Nephites, He said, 'Go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said,' and pray and prepare 'for the morrow' (3 Nephi 17:3). Jesus did not say go to your civic clubs, town meetings, or even stake centers!"* (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 120; or Ensign, May 1994, 89).

•What does it mean to receive the Lord's servants? (D&C 84:36). As we accept the message and ordinances of the gospel from the Lord's servants, we also receive the Lord.

•Write "The Lord covenants to" on the chalkboard. What blessings does the Lord promise as part of the oath and covenant of the priesthood? (See D&C 84:33-34, 38, 42.)

#### The Lord covenants to:

- a. Sanctify us by the Spirit (verse 33).
- b. Renew our bodies (verse 33).
- c. Give us the blessings promised to Abraham and his posterity (verse 34).
- d. Make us His elect, or chosen (verse 34).
- e. Give us all that the Father has (verse 38).
- f. Give His angels charge over us (verse 42).

•The Lord promises that if we are faithful, we will become "the seed of Abraham ... and the elect of God" (D&C 84:33-34). What are the blessings and responsibilities of the seed of Abraham? (See Abraham 2:9-11.) Abraham 2:11 indicates that "all the families of the earth [will] be blessed" through the priesthood. How can this be accomplished?

•The crowning promise in the oath and covenant of the priesthood is that we can receive "all that [the] Father hath" (D&C 84:38). How can knowledge of this promise help us in times of adversity? How can it help us in times of plenty?

### 3. Principles for using the priesthood

D&C 121:34-46. In these verses the Lord reveals principles for using the priesthood. He also reveals promises to those who use it righteously. In addition to their application to priesthood holders, these principles apply generally to all human relationships. Therefore, they are also important for those who do not hold the priesthood.

•In D&C 121:34-40, the Lord reveals why some priesthood holders are not able to exercise the priesthood with power. According to these verses, what prevents them from doing this? (Answers could include setting their hearts on the things of the world, aspiring to the honors of men, attempting to cover sins, gratifying pride or vain ambition, and exercising unrighteous dominion.)

•What are some examples of caring too much for "the things of this world"? (D&C 121:35). How can seeking what the world offers keep us from receiving what the Lord offers? How can a person overcome this problem?

•What are some ways that people "exercise unrighteous dominion"? (D&C 121:39; see also verse 37). What are the consequences of doing this? How can a person overcome a tendency to exercise unrighteous dominion?

The priesthood may be used only in righteousness and a spirit of love as a means of serving and blessing others.

**Elder M. Russell Ballard** of the Quorum of the Twelve said: *"Those who hold the priesthood must never forget that they have no right to wield priesthood authority like a club over the heads of others in the family or in Church callings.... Any man who ... seeks to use the priesthood in any degree of unrighteousness in the Church or in the home simply does not understand the nature of his authority. Priesthood is for service, not servitude; compassion, not compulsion; caring, not control"* (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 105; or Ensign, Nov. 1993, 78).

•In D&C 121:41-42, the Lord reveals principles that will help priesthood holders exercise the priesthood with power. What are these principles? How can we apply these principles as we interact with family members, neighbors, associates at work, and others?

You may want to discuss how to apply these principles in specific situations, such as when helping a child make a decision or complete a task, when making decisions in Church councils, when someone has failed to fulfill an assignment, or when there are serious differences of opinion.

•What principles for giving correction or discipline are revealed in D&C 121:43-44? (Betimes means "promptly" or "soon." In the context of this passage, with sharpness means "clearly" or "precisely," not "severely" or "roughly.") What experiences in your life have confirmed the importance of these principles? How do the consequences of disciplining with love differ from the consequences of disciplining with anger?

•What does it mean to "let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly"? (D&C 121:45). How can we keep evil or unvirtuous thoughts out of our minds? (See D&C 27:15-18.) How can we more actively fill our minds with virtuous thoughts?

•What does the Lord promise if we are "full of charity" and "let virtue garnish [our] thoughts unceasingly"? (See D&C 121:45-46.) What does it mean to be confident in the presence of God? What blessings do we receive when the Holy Ghost is our constant companion?

While serving in the Quorum of the Twelve, **Elder Gordon B. Hinckley** said: *"It has been my privilege on various occasions to converse with Presidents of the United States and important men in other governments. At the close of each such occasion I have reflected on the rewarding experience of standing with confidence in the presence of an acknowledged leader. And then I have thought, what a wonderful thing, what a marvelous thing it would be to stand with confidence-unafraid and unashamed and unembarrassed-in the presence of God. This is the promise held out to every virtuous man and woman"* (in Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 66; or Improvement Era, Dec. 1970, 73).

**Conclusion:** Bear testimony of the importance of the priesthood. Express your gratitude for the oath and covenant of the priesthood and for the blessings the Lord promises if we are faithful. Encourage class members to seek more fully the blessings of the priesthood.

#### **Additional Teaching Ideas:**

#### **1. Presiding quorums in the Church**

An important part of the restoration of priesthood authority was the organization of the presiding quorums of the Church. Counselors had been called to assist the Prophet Joseph as early as March 1832 (D&C 81:1), and the First Presidency was formally organized one year later (see the heading to D&C 90). In February 1835, twelve men were called and ordained to be Apostles, and the Quorum of the Twelve was formed. Soon afterward, the Prophet organized the First Quorum of the Seventy.

•What are the responsibilities of members of the First Presidency? (See D&C 107:9, 22, 65-66, 78-81, 91-92; 112:30-32.)

•What are the responsibilities of members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles? (See D&C 107:23, 33, 35, 39, 58; 112:30-32.)

•What are the responsibilities of members of the Quorums of the Seventy? (See D&C 107:25-26, 34, 38, 97.)

•How are our lives blessed by the service of the presiding officers of the Church?

*Our Heritage, A Brief History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, pp 26-27.*

#### **Strengthening of the Priesthood** *Priesthood Offices Revealed*

As the Church increased in membership, the Prophet continued to receive revelation about priesthood offices. As directed by the Lord, he organized the First Presidency, made up of himself as the President and Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams as Counselors. He also organized the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the First Quorum of the Seventy. He called and ordained bishops and their counselors, high priests, patriarchs, high councils, seventies, and elders. He organized the Church's first stakes.

Inexperienced, newly baptized members were often overwhelmed by calls to serve. For example, Newel K. Whitney was called as the Church's second bishop in December of 1831, to serve in Kirtland when Edward Partridge became bishop of the Saints in Missouri. Newel did not feel that he was able to carry out the requirements of the office, even though the Prophet told him that the Lord had called him by revelation. So the Prophet said to him, "Go and ask Father for yourself." Newel went and knelt in humble supplication and heard a voice from heaven that said, "Thy strength is in me."<sup>5</sup> He accepted the call and served as a bishop for 18 years.

## **The Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood**

### **Section 84**

#### **Historical Background**

The Prophet Joseph Smith, who was in Kirtland at the time, recorded the following:

"As soon as I could arrange my affairs, I recommenced the translation of the Scriptures, and thus I spent most of the summer. In July, we received the first number of The Evening and Morning Star, which was a joyous treat to the Saints. Delightful, indeed, was it to contemplate that the little band of brethren had become so large, and grown so strong, in so short a time as to be able to issue a paper of their own, which contained not only some of the revelations, but other information also,-which would gratify and enlighten the humble inquirer after truth....

"The Elders during the month of September began to return from their missions to the Eastern States, and present the histories of their several stewardships in the Lord's vineyard; and while together in these seasons of joy, I inquired of the Lord, and received on the 22nd and 23rd of September [1832], the following revelation on Priesthood: [D&C 84]." (History of the Church, 1:273, 286-87.)

#### **Notes and Commentary**

#### **D&C 84:33-41. The Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood**

President Joseph Fielding Smith taught: "As all of us know, a covenant is a contract and an agreement between at least two parties. In the case of gospel covenants, the parties are the Lord in heaven and men on earth. Men agree to keep the commandments and the Lord promises to reward them accordingly. The gospel itself is the new and everlasting covenant and embraces all of the agreements, promises, and rewards which the Lord offers to his people.

"And so when we receive the Melchizedek Priesthood we do so by covenant. We solemnly promise to receive the priesthood, to magnify our callings in it, and to live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God. The Lord on his part promises us that if we keep the covenant, we shall receive all that the Father hath, which is life eternal. Can any of us conceive of a greater or more glorious agreement than this? ...

"To swear with an oath is the most solemn and binding form of speech known to the human tongue; and it was this type of language which the Father chose to have used in the great Messianic prophecy about Christ and the priesthood. Of him it says: 'The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.' (Ps. 110:4.)

"In explaining this Messianic prophecy, Paul says that Jesus had 'an unchangeable priesthood,' and that through it came 'the power of an endless life.' (See Heb. 7:24, 16.) Joseph Smith said that 'all those who are ordained unto this priesthood are made like unto the Son of God, abiding a priest continually,' that is, if they are faithful and true.

"And so Christ is the great prototype where priesthood is concerned, as he is with reference to baptism and all other things. And so, even as the Father swears with an oath that his Son shall inherit all things through the priesthood, so he swears with an oath that all of us who magnify our callings in that same priesthood shall receive all that the Father hath." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1970, pp. 91-92.) D&C 84:33. How Does One Magnify a Calling?

"What does it mean to magnify one's calling? According to Webster's Third New International Dictionary, 'to magnify' is 'to increase the importance of: cause to be held in greater esteem or respect ... to make greater.' One magnifies a calling

- By learning one's duty and executing it fully. (See D&C 107:99-100.)
- By giving one's best effort in assigned fields of labor.
- By consecrating one's time, talents, and means to the Lord's work as called upon by our leaders and the whisperings of the Spirit....
- By teaching and exemplifying truth." (Carlos E. Asay, in Conference Report, Oct. 1985, p. 57; or Ensign, Nov. 1985, p. 43.)

"In the words 'magnifying their calling,' far more seems to be implied than the mere attending of priesthood meetings, administering to the sacrament and the sick, and serving in Church work. Faithfulness to warrant the reception of the priesthood is a condition that perhaps all men do not meet. And the magnifying of their calling seems to imply a totalness which few, if any, men reach in mortality. Perfection of body and spirit seems to be included here." (Miracle of Forgiveness, p. 123.)

#### **D&C 84:34. What Does It Mean to "Become the Sons of Moses and of Aaron"?**

"Who are the sons of Aaron and Levi today? They are, by virtue of the blessings of the Almighty, those who are ordained by those who hold the authority to

officiate in the offices of the priesthood. It is written that those so ordained become the sons of Moses and Aaron." (Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 3:93.)

"'Sons of Moses,' and 'sons of Aaron' do not refer to their literal descendants only, for all who are faithful and obtain these Priesthoods, and magnify their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit and become the 'sons' of Moses and of Aaron, and the seed of Abraham, as well as the Church and Kingdom, and the elect of God (v. 34). Paul expresses this thought as follows, 'Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham' (Gal. 3:7)." (Smith and Sjodahl, Commentary, p. 504.)

#### **D&C 84:41. "Shall Not Have Forgiveness of Sins in This World nor in the World to Come"**

The verb received in verses 40-41 may imply much more than just being ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood. President Marion G. Romney said of this verse: "Now, I do not think this means that all who fail to magnify their callings in the priesthood will have committed the unpardonable sin, but I do think that priesthood bearers who have entered into the covenants that we enter into in the waters of baptism, in connection with the law of tithing, the Word of Wisdom, and the many other covenants we make-and then refuse to live up to these covenants will stand in jeopardy of losing the promise of eternal life." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1972, p. 112; or Ensign, July 1972, p. 99.)

#### **D&C 84:42. "I Have Given ... Mine Angels Charge Concerning You"**

Smith and Sjodahl said about this promise: "How important, then, that those who bear the Holy Priesthood should live so, that they are fit companions for angels!" (Commentary, p. 508; see also D&C 84:88; 109:22; Matthew 18:10; Psalm 91:11, which also refer to angels' watching over men).

### **Constitution of the Priesthood Section 121**

#### **Historical Background**

On 27 October 1838 Lilburn W. Boggs, governor of Missouri, issued an order that read in part: "The Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the state, if necessary for the public good" (History of the Church, 3:175). Four days later the Prophet and several leaders of the Church were betrayed into the hands of the Missourians at Far West, Missouri. For the next several weeks Joseph Smith and his associates were abused and insulted, forced to march to Independence and then to Richmond, and on 30 November 1838 incarcerated in

Liberty Jail in Missouri (see History of the Church, 3:188-89, 215). These men had not been convicted of any crime; nevertheless, they were held in the jail for several months.

The Prophet Joseph Smith and his companions (Hyrum Smith, Lyman Wight, Caleb Baldwin, Alexander McRae and, for part of the time, Sidney Rigdon) suffered greatly while they were held in the jail awaiting trial on false charges: "Many inhumanities were heaped upon them while they were there. Insufficient and improper food was their daily fare; at times only the inspiration of the Lord saved them from the indulgence of poisoned food, which all did not escape. [Alexander McRae said, 'We could not eat it until we were driven to it by hunger' (Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, 1:521).]

"The jail had no sleeping quarters, and thus they were forced to seek rest and recuperation on beds of straw placed on hardened plank and stone floors. They were suffered very little contact with the outside world, especially during the first month or so of their confinement. And this, at a crucial time when the Latter-day Saints were at the peak of persecution in Missouri, and were desperately in need of their prophet-leader." (Dyer, Refiner's Fire, pp. 275-76.)

Occasionally they were permitted visits at the jail from friends and were allowed to send and receive correspondence. Between 20 March and 25 March 1839, the Prophet Joseph dictated a lengthy communication that was signed by all the prisoners (actually there were two letters, although the Prophet identified the second as a continuation of the first). President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote of this correspondence: "This is one of the greatest letters that was ever penned by the hand of man. In fact it was the result of humble inspiration. It is a prayer and a prophecy and an answer by revelation from the Lord. None other but a noble soul filled with the spirit of love of Christ could have written such a letter. Considering [their sufferings], it is no wonder that the Prophet cried out in the anguish of his soul for relief. Yet, in his earnest pleading, there breathed a spirit of tolerance and love for his fellow man." (Church History and Modern Revelation, 2:176.)

Sections 121-23 were extracted from this communication and included in the 1876 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. The edition of the Doctrine and Covenants that included these three sections was sustained as scripture in the October 1880 conference of the Church. (For a full text of the letters, see History of the Church, 3:289-305.)

A published account of the letters in the Times and Seasons did not contain some parts of the original letters that are found in the Doctrine and Covenants. The Reorganized church pointed out this fact and challenged the Doctrine and Covenants account. The original letters, however, now located in the Church

archives, vindicate the account as published in the Doctrine and Covenants (see Deseret Evening News, 27 June 1896, p.4).

## Notes and Commentary

### D&C 121:34. Who Are Those Who Are Called?

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith explained: "I take it that every man who is ordained to an office in the priesthood has been called. The Lord is willing that any man should serve him." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1945, p. 97.)

Elder Bruce R. McConkie indicated: "To be called is to be a member of the Church and kingdom of God on earth; it is to be numbered with the saints; it is to accept the gospel and receive the everlasting covenant; it is to have part and lot in the earthly Zion; it is to be born again, to be a son or a daughter of the Lord Jesus Christ; to have membership in the household of faith; it is to be on the path leading to eternal life and to have the hope of eternal glory; it is to have a conditional promise of eternal life; it is to be an inheritor of all the blessings of the gospel, provided there is continued obedience to the laws and ordinances thereof.

"Within this over-all framework, there are individual calls to positions of trust and responsibility, but these are simply assignments to labor on the Lord's errand, in particular places, for a time and a season. The call itself is to the gospel cause; it is not reserved for apostles and prophets or for the great and mighty in Israel; it is for all the members of the kingdom." (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 3:326.)

### D&C 121:34-40. "Why Are They Not Chosen?"

President N. Eldon Tanner interpreted this passage as referring to those who fail to magnify their priesthood or who use it as it should not be used: "I know of many cases where a man has gradually failed to magnify his priesthood and moved away from activity in the Church. As a result, a man who has been very active loses his testimony and the Spirit of the Lord withdraws from him, and he begins to criticize those in authority, and to persecute the saints, apostatize, and fight against God." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1970, p. 52.)

President Tanner later said: "We must not be nearly dependable, but always dependable. Let us be faithful in the little things, as well as the big ones. Can I be depended upon to fill every assignment, whether it be for a two-and-a-half minute talk, home teaching, a visit to the sick, or a call as a stake or full-time missionary?

"Remember, .. there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen?

"'Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, ...' (D&C 121:34-35), and they are not dependable." ("Dependability," Ensign, Apr. 1974, p. 5.)

Doctrine and Covenants 121:34-35 shows how our attitudes and actions determine whether we are chosen:

When the hearts of men:

1. Are set on the things of the world, or
2. Aspire to the honors of men,

They will act in ways detrimental to spiritual growth, including:

1. Covering their sins.
2. Gratifying their pride and vain ambitions.
3. Exercising unrighteous dominion over others.

These actions cause:

1. The heavens to withdraw themselves.
2. The Spirit of the Lord to be grieved.
3. A withdrawal of power and authority.

This can also be stated positively: When the hearts of men:

1. Are set on the things of God, and
2. Aspire to God's approval,

They will act in ways beneficial to spiritual growth, including:

1. Repenting of their sins.
2. Humbling themselves.
3. Seeking the kingdom of God first.
4. Exercising love and charity toward others.

These actions cause:

1. The heavens to draw near.
2. The Spirit of the Lord to be near.
3. An increase in power and authority.

### D&C 121:38. What Does It Mean to Kick against the Pricks?

Elder Howard W. Hunter explained: "This proverbial expression of kicking against the pricks usually refers to the ox goad which was a piece of pointed iron stuck in the end of a stick used to urge the ox while drawing the plow. Sometimes a stubborn ox will kick back against the goad only to receive its sharpness more

severely. It has become a proverb to signify the absurdity of rebelling against lawful authority." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1964, p. 108.)

### **D&C 121:39. Why Do Most People Have Difficulty Handling Power and Authority?**

Elder Orson F. Whitney noted: "All men who hold position do not abuse its privileges, and the man who serves God humbly and faithfully never will, for the moment he yielded to the temptation so to do, that moment would he cease to serve the Lord; but there are many, alas! who sadly misuse the functions of their office, and prostitute every power and privilege to the gratification of self and the injury and embarrassment of their fellow men. It is dangerous to put some men into power. They swell up and become so distended with the ideas of their greatness and importance, that we are forcibly reminded of so many inflated toy balloons, which the slightest prick of a pin would burst and ruin forever. A very small office and a very little authority is sufficient to intoxicate some men and render them entirely unfit for duty." (In Rich, Scrapbook of Mormon Literature, 2:511-12.)

### **D&C 121:41-46. A Guide to Increased Priesthood Power and Influence**

Following the principles in these verses allows the priesthood holder to receive greater power. If a priesthood holder senses this power withdrawing because of the presence of compulsion, contention, disunity, or rebellion, he should immediately evaluate his actions to be sure he has not been exercising unrighteous dominion.

There is a relationship between home and priesthood duties. President Hugh B. Brown said: "I should like to say to you fathers tonight that our conduct in our homes determines in large measure our worthiness to hold and exercise the priesthood, which is the power of God delegated to man. Almost any man can make a good showing when on parade before the public, but one's integrity is tested when 'off duty.' The real man is seen and known in the comparative solitude of the home. An office or title will not erase a fault nor guarantee a virtue." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1962, p. 88.)

And though these verses refer to the priesthood, their principles apply to all who serve in the Church, family, or society at large.

### **D&C 121:43. What Does "Betimes" Mean?**

Many people assume the word betimes means "occasionally" or "sometimes," but this is not its primary meaning. To reprove betimes means to do so "at an early time,... in good time, in due time; while there is yet time, before it is too late.... in a short time, soon, speedily" (Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "betimes").

## **The Organization of Priesthood Quorums**

### **Section 107**

#### **Historical Background**

On 14 February 1835 the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, under the direction of Joseph Smith, chose the first Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in this dispensation. On 12 March 1835, during a meeting of the Twelve, Elders Orson Hyde and William E. M'Lellin, acting as clerks, recorded the following: "This evening the Twelve assembled, and the Council was opened by President Joseph Smith, Jun., and he proposed we take our first mission through the Eastern States, to the Atlantic Ocean, and hold conferences in the vicinity of the several branches of the Church for the purpose of regulating all things necessary for their welfare. "It was proposed that the Twelve leave Kirtland on the 4th day of May, which was unanimously agreed to." (History of the Church, 2:209.)

On 28 March 1835 Elders Hyde and M'Lellin wrote: "This afternoon the Twelve met in council, and had a time of general confession. On reviewing our past course we are satisfied, and feel to confess also, that we have not realized the importance of our calling to that degree that we ought; we have been light-minded and vain, and in many things have done wrong. For all these things we have asked the forgiveness of our heavenly Father; and wherein we have grieved or wounded the feelings of the Presidency, we ask their forgiveness. The time when we are about to separate is near; and when we shall meet again, God only knows; we therefore feel to ask of him whom we have acknowledged to be our Prophet and Seer, that he inquire of God for us, and obtain a revelation, (if consistent) that we may look upon it when we are separated, that our hearts may be comforted. Our worthiness has not inspired us to make this request, but our unworthiness. We have unitedly asked God our heavenly Father to grant unto us through His Seer, a revelation of His mind and will concerning our duty [during] the coming season, even a great revelation, that will enlarge our hearts, comfort us in adversity, and brighten our hopes amidst the powers of darkness." (History of the Church, 2:209-10.)

The Prophet Joseph did inquire of the Lord and on 28 March 1835 received verses 1-52, 56-58 of this section. The other verses were revealed at different times. (See History of the Church, 2:210; Smith, Teachings, pp. 38-39.)

#### **Notes and Commentary**

### **D&C 107:1. What Is the Relationship of the Two Priesthoods?**

The Prophet Joseph Smith clarified the relationship between the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods: "Answer to the question, Was the Priesthood of

Melchizedek taken away when Moses died? All Priesthood is Melchizedek, but there are different portions or degrees of it. That portion which brought Moses to speak with God face to face was taken away; but that which brought the ministry of angels remained. All the prophets had the Melchizedek Priesthood and were ordained by God himself." (Teachings, pp. 180-81.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith also taught, "Although there are two Priesthoods, yet the Melchizedek Priesthood comprehends the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood, and is the grand head, and holds the highest authority which pertains to the Priesthood, and the keys of the Kingdom of God in all ages of the world to the latest posterity on the earth, and is the channel through which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation, and every important matter is revealed from heaven" (History of the Church, 4:207; see also D&C 107:14).

### **D&C 107:1. Are the Aaronic and Levitical Priesthoods the Same?**

Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: "When the Lord first gave the law of carnal commandments, the preparatory gospel, to school Israel for a future time when again they could enjoy the gospel fulness, of necessity a lesser order of priesthood was conferred to administer the lesser law. (Heb. 7:12; Inspired Version, Ex. 34:1-2.) This lesser priesthood (D. & C. 85:11) was conferred upon Aaron and his sons after him (Ex. 28; 29; 30; Lev. 1:11; 3:2; 13:2; Num. 18), as 'an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations.' (Ex. 40:15; Num. 25:10-13.) It was also conferred upon substantially the whole house of Levi who were between 30 and 50 years of age. (Num. 3; 4.) Hence it is called the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood; the two names are synonymous. (D. & C. 107:1, 6, 10.)

"Aaron and his sons after him held the key of the Aaronic Priesthood and acted in the full majesty and power of this Levitical order; many of their functions were comparable to those of bishops and priests in this dispensation. Though the rest of the ordained Levites held the fulness of the Aaronic Priesthood (Heb. 7:5) and participated in the offering of sacrifices, they did not hold the keys of the Aaronic ministry; many of their functions were comparable to those of teachers and deacons in this dispensation. (Num. 3; 4; 2 Chron. 29; Mal. 3:3; D. & C. 13; Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 3, pp. 111-114.)" (Mormon Doctrine, pp. 9-10.)

### **D&C 107:5. The Priesthood Is Greater Than Any of Its Offices**

Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: "The priesthood is greater than any of its offices. No office adds any power, dignity, or authority to the priesthood. All offices derive their rights, prerogatives, graces, and powers from the priesthood. This principle may be diagramed by dividing a circle into segments. The priesthood is the circle; the segments of the circle are the callings or offices in the priesthood. Anyone who

serves in a segment of the circle must possess the power of the whole circle. No one can hold an office in the priesthood without first holding the priesthood.

"Thus it is that priesthood is conferred upon worthy individuals, and they are then ordained to offices in the priesthood; and thus it is that all offices in the priesthood and in the Church are specifically designated as appendages to the priesthood; that is, they grow out of the priesthood, they are supplemental to it, they are less than the priesthood in importance. (D. & C. 84:29-30; 107:5.) It follows that it is greater and more important to hold the Melchizedek Priesthood, for instance, than it is to hold any office in that priesthood....

"Further, there is no advancement from one office to another within the Melchizedek Priesthood. Every elder holds as much priesthood as an apostle or as the President of the Church, though these latter officers hold greater administrative assignments in the kingdom. It follows, also, that any holder of the Melchizedek Priesthood could perform any priestly function he was appointed to do by the one holding the keys of the kingdom." (Mormon Doctrine, pp. 595-96.)

D&C 107:8-12. The Importance of the Presidency of the Melchizedek Priesthood The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that the Lord reveals His will through the presidency of the Melchizedek Priesthood, meaning the First Presidency: "The Melchizedek High Priesthood was no other than the Priesthood of the Son of God; ... there are certain ordinances which belong to the Priesthood, from which flow certain results; and the Presidents or Presidency are over the Church; and revelations of the mind and will of God to the Church, are to come through the Presidency. This is the order of heaven, and the power and privilege of this Priesthood." (History of the Church, 2:477.)

### **D&C 107:15-17. A Literal Descendant of Aaron Has the Right to Be Presiding Bishop of the Church**

Notes and Commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 68:15-21 gives an explanation of this doctrine.

### **D&C 107:18. The Melchizedek Priesthood Holds the "Keys of All the Spiritual Blessings of the Church"**

President Spencer W. Kimball said of the Melchizedek Priesthood: "It is the means whereby the Lord acts through men to save souls. Without this priesthood power, men are lost. Only through this power does man 'hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church,' enabling him to receive 'the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, to have the heavens opened' unto him (see D&C 107:18-19), enabling him to enter the new and everlasting covenant of marriage and to have his wife and children bound to him in an everlasting tie, enabling him to become a patriarch to



his posterity forever, and enabling him to receive a fullness of the blessings of the Lord." ("The Example of Abraham," Ensign, June 1975, p. 3.)  
D&C 107:18-19. What Blessings Can a Faithful Melchizedek Priesthood Holder Obtain?

"The higher Priesthood after the order of the Son of God, we are told, in a modern revelation [D&C 107:18-19], ... holds not only the power of the ministration of holy angels to be seen personally, but also the power of beholding the face of God the Father, that through the power and manifestations of the spirit of God and of his angels we may be prepared to enter into the presence of God the Father in the world to come, and enjoy continual communion with him, and be crowned with the glory of the celestial kingdom, to stand in our place and calling to all eternity, in connection with all those who hold the Priesthood in the eternal worlds." (Orson Pratt, in Journal of Discourses, 18:363; see also D&C 76:50-70; 84:19-22; Hebrews 12:22-24.)

#### **D&C 107:22. By What Body Is the President of the Church Chosen?**

President Harold B. Lee told the assembly at a general conference: "All members of the First Presidency and the Twelve are regularly sustained as 'prophets, seers, and revelators,' as you have done today. This means that any one of the apostles, so chosen and ordained, could preside over the Church if he were 'chosen by the body [which has been interpreted to mean, the entire Quorum of the Twelve], appointed and ordained to that office, and upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the church,' to quote from a revelation on this subject, on one condition, and that being that he was the senior member, or the president, of that body. (See D&C 107:22.)" (In Conference Report, Apr. 1970, p. 123.)

#### **D&C 107:20. The Keys of the Aaronic Priesthood**

See Notes and Commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 13.

#### **D&C 107:22-26. Are the Quorum of the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and the First Quorum of the Seventy Equal in Authority?**

Smith and Sjodahl explained that "there can never be two or three quorums of equal authority at the same time; therefore in the revelation where it reads that the Twelve Apostles form a quorum equal in authority with the First Presidency, and that the Seventies form a quorum equal in authority with the Twelve, it should be understood that this condition of equality could prevail only when the ranking quorum is no longer in existence, through death or otherwise. When the First Presidency becomes disorganized on the death of the President, then the Apostles become the presiding quorum, or council, of the Church with all the power to

organize again the First Presidency, when they fall back again as the second ranking quorum of the Church. So with the Seventies, they would become equal only on the condition that the first two quorums ceased to exist. In regard to the Seventies, this provision, of course, concerns the first quorum of the Seventies." (Commentary, p. 700.)

#### **D&C 107:23. In What Way Are the Twelve Apostles Special Witnesses?**

President Joseph Fielding Smith said of the Twelve Apostles: "These twelve men are endowed with the power and responsibility to serve as the special witnesses for Christ. They are entitled to have the inspiration and necessary guidance of the Holy Ghost to fit and qualify them for this important mission.

"All men may, by virtue of the priesthood and the gift of the Holy Ghost, become witnesses for Christ. In fact that is just what every elder in the Church should be, but there is a special calling which is given to the Twelve special witnesses that separates them from other elders of the Church in the nature of their calling as witnesses. These twelve men [as a quorum] hold the fulness of authority, keys, and priesthood, to open up the way for the preaching of the gospel to every nation, kindred, and tongue. Others who go forth go under their direction and are subject unto them. This work of proselyting is in their hands, and under the counsel of the First Presidency they are called upon to conduct all the affairs of the Church and the preaching of the gospel to every creature." (Doctrines of Salvation, 3:146.)

#### **D&C 107:27-32. The Importance of Unity**

President Lorenzo Snow described the unity in the leading councils of the Church: "Here are my counselors. We are one. We are united.... And here we have twelve men sitting in front with us-Twelve Apostles. There are many of these that you know.... We are united together. We do not quarrel with each other. We do not slander one another, but we go where counsel requires and we are heart and soul together. What for? Not to make ourselves rich, not to make ourselves wealthy, but to see what we can accomplish in the interests of the people, and we are laboring continually to see what we can do. We come together every week and we talk about what we can do for the people." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1900, p. 5.)

#### **D&C 107:32. How Is a Decision of One of the Leading Quorums Evaluated?**

If a decision of one of the leading quorums of the Church is thought to have been made in unrighteousness, the matter may be brought before "a general assembly of the several quorums" (D&C 107:32), which is the combined assembly of the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and the First Quorum of the

Seventy. These bodies are the "spiritual authorities of the church" (v. 32), and the only appeal from a decision of one of these quorums is to this combined assembly.

### **D&C 107:33-34, 38. What Is the Relationship between the Duties of the Twelve and Those of the Seventy?**

Although both the Quorum of the Twelve and the First Quorum of the Seventy are to carry the gospel to the world, their specific duties are different, as Elder Howard W. Hunter outlined: "With the rapid growth of the Church and the heavy demands on the Twelve to provide leadership and administration and teach all nations, it becomes clear why the Lord has directed the building up of the First Quorum of the Seventy. The recent decision to do so by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve reminds us of an interesting historical parallel of an episode recorded by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles. The foreign or Hellenistic Jews in Jerusalem were complaining that their widows were being neglected and not taken care of like the widows of the native Jews. When the apostles heard of this murmuring, a significant thing happened: [Acts 6:2-4j].

"In other words, the Twelve told the meeting that it was not reasonable for them to leave their important office of teaching the gospel to provide for the daily welfare of the widows and serve their tables. There were other good men who could look after these duties so the Twelve could continue to devote themselves to the charge of teaching the gospel to all persons. The result of the decision to call others to assist with the details was this: [Acts 6:7]....

"In December 1978, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve made a similar determination that it was no longer advisable for the Twelve to occupy their time in the details of administration of the many Church departments. They delegated seven men, designated as the presidents of the First Quorum of the Seventy, to give supervision to these details so that the Twelve could devote their full energies to the overall direction of the work, and, as directed by the Doctrine and Covenants, 'To build up the church, and regulate all the affairs of the same in all nations' [D&C 107:33].

"I fully believe that in the near future we will see some of the greatest advancements in spreading the gospel to all nations that have ever taken place in this dispensation or any previous dispensation. I am sure that we will be able to look back in retrospect-as a result of the decision recently made-and record as Luke did, 'And the word of God increased' [Acts 6:7]." ("All Are Alike unto God," in Speeches of the Year, 1979 [Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1980], pp. 34-35.)

### **D&C 107:36-37. Standing High Councils and the High Council in Zion**

"At the time this Revelation was given, there were two standing High Councils in the Church: One in Kirtland, organized February 17th, 1834, and one in Clay County, Mo., organized July 3rd, the same year" (Smith and Sjodahl, Commentary, p. 702).

President John Taylor explained: "In Kirtland, Ohio, a great many things were revealed through the Prophet.... The High Council in Kirtland was presided over by Joseph Smith and his Counselors; and hence there were some things associated with this that were quite peculiar in themselves. It is stated that when they were at a loss to find out anything pertaining to any principles that might come before them in their councils, that the presidency were to inquire of the Lord and get revelation on those subjects that were difficult for them to comprehend." (In Journal of Discourses, 19:241.)

After the Missouri high council was organized, the Prophet said that "if I should now be taken away, I had accomplished the great work the Lord had laid before me, and that which I had desired of the Lord; and that I had done my duty in organizing the High Council, through which council the will of the Lord might be known on all important occasions, in the building up of Zion, and establishing truth in the earth" (History of the Church, 2:124).

"This indicates the importance attached to the organization of the High Council in Zion," wrote Smith and Sjodahl. "The standing High Councils in the various Stakes are presided over by the Stake presidency, and their jurisdiction is confined to the Stakes in which they are located." (Commentary, p. 703; see also Notes and Commentary on D&C 102:30-32 for an explanation of the relationship between stake high councils and the standing high council of the Church.)

"The Lord indicates that the High Council in Zion (Missouri) was to form a quorum equal in authority, in the affairs of the Church, to the councils of Twelve (High Councils) at the Stakes of Zion (vs. 37). And so today a High Council in any Stake of Zion is as important as that in any other Stake. The authority and power of any Stake High Council is local and confined to the boundaries of the Stake concerned." (Sperry, Compendium, p. 565.)

### **D&C 107:39. What Is an Evangelical Minister?**

The Prophet Joseph Smith said: "An Evangelist is a Patriarch, even the oldest man of the blood of Joseph or of the seed of Abraham. Wherever the Church of Christ is established in the earth, there should be a Patriarch for the benefit of the posterity of the Saints, as it was with Jacob in giving his patriarchal blessing unto his sons. [Genesis 48; 49:1-27.]" (History of the Church, 3:381.)

Patriarchs are ordained in each stake to give patriarchal blessings to the Saints living within the boundaries of that stake or to members who do not have a stake patriarch of their own.

**D&C 107:39-52. The Patriarchal Priesthood The patriarchal priesthood is passed by ordination from father to son. President Joseph Fielding Smith explained:**

"In this revelation [D&C 107] certain knowledge was revealed concerning the Patriarchal Priesthood and its descent from the beginning of time. Regarding this priesthood the Lord said: [D&C 107:39-43]....

. . . From Abraham the birthright went to Isaac and from him to Jacob, who was named Israel. From Israel it went to Joseph, the firstborn son of Rachel.... Therefore the birthright and the Patriarchal Priesthood continued through the seed of Joseph. Just why it was continued through Ephraim rather than through Manasseh, his older brother, we have not been informed, but we may be sure that the Lord had sufficient reason. From that time until now, this birthright has been vested in the descendants of Ephraim. [1 Chronicles 5:1-2; Jeremiah 31:9; D&C 133:30-34.]

"In the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times in which we live, the Lord revealed that this birthright of the first-born in Israel belonged to Joseph Smith, the father of the Prophet, and he was the first patriarch ordained in this dispensation. After his death the office and priesthood was conferred upon Hyrum Smith, the Prophet's oldest living brother." ("The Patriarchal Priesthood," Improvement Era, Nov. 1956, pp. 789, 852.)

Today the patriarchal order does not determine the organization of the Church as it did in earlier times, but in the celestial kingdom "the patriarchal order will be the order of government and rule" (McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 559).

**D&C 107:53-57. The Grand Council at Adam-ondi-Ahman**

One of the greatest meetings ever held was the meeting Adam called of his righteous posterity (see D&C 107:53-57). Sometime prior to the Second Coming of the Savior, a similar meeting will again be held in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman (see D&C 78; 116). Verses 53 through 55 of section 107 came from a blessing given by Joseph Smith Jr. to his father on 18 December 1833 (see Smith, Teachings, pp. 38-39).

**D&C 107:58-63. Presiding Officers Are Chosen from Quorums**

"The revealed word of God," said Elder James E. Talmage, "has provided for the establishment of presiding officers 'growing out of, or appointed of or from among those who are ordained to the several offices in these two priesthoods.' [D&C 107:21.] In accordance with the prevailing principles of order characteristic of all His work, the Lord has directed that the bearers of the Priesthood shall be organized into quorums, the better to aid them in learning and discharging the duties of their respective callings." (Articles of Faith, p. 209.)

**D&C 107:64-67,91. All Others in the Kingdom Are Subject to the President of the Church**

"The President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is president of the priesthood of God on earth.... All others within the kingdom of God are subject to his direction. Only he has the right to receive revelation for the entire body of the Church." (When Thou Art Converted, Strengthen Thy Brethren [Melchizedek Priesthood study guide, 1974], p. 110.)

Elder John Taylor said: "The president of the church presides over all patriarchs, presidents, and councils of the church; and this presidency does not depend so much upon genealogy as upon calling, order, and seniority" (Times and Seasons, 1 June 1845, p. 922; see also D&C 107:91-92).

**D&C 107:68-75. What Is the Duty of a Bishop?**

President Marion G. Romney said: "As originally given, the assignments pertaining to the office [of bishop] may be summarized in four major parts.

"First, the bishop was to receive the consecrations of the Saints and appoint unto them their inheritances (see D&C 42:31-34, 71-73; 51:13; 58:35; 72:2-6; 78; 82; 85:1).

"Second, the bishop was to be a judge unto the people, judging both their standing in the Church as well as their temporal needs if they had claim on the Church (see D&C 42:80-82; 58:17-18; 72:17; 107:72).

"Third, the bishop was to succor the poor, in both body and spirit, according to their needs (see D&C 38:35; 42:33-35, 39, 71; 70:7-8).

"Fourth, the bishop was to act as an agent for the Church doing whatever temporal business he was appointed to by the Lord through the First Presidency (see D&C 51:13-14; 84:112-13; 107:68, 71-72).

"As the Church grew and the Saints gained experience, the Lord distinguished between the responsibilities of the Presiding Bishop and local, or ward, bishops as

they have come to be known. Today, in the various handbooks of the priesthood, you will find four major categories of duties appointed unto the ward bishop. Except for those duties which are unique to the Presiding Bishopric of the Church and those which were made inoperative at the time the formal law of consecration was suspended, the role of the bishop today is essentially the same as was defined in these early revelations. Bishops have been given added responsibilities for the youth and as presiding high priest of the ward. However, of all of the bishop's assignments, as important as each one is, none is more important than care for the poor." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1979, p. 137; or Ensign, Nov. 1979, p. 94.)

#### **D&C 107:72, 74. In What Way Is a Bishop a "Judge in Israel"?**

President Spencer W. Kimball said of the bishop's role: "By virtue of his call and ordination and setting apart, he also becomes a judge in Israel and has the responsibility of making many decisions for his people which affect their progress and development and their life. He has control over their spiritual activities so that he can give them opportunities for growth and judge their accomplishments. He decides as to their worthiness and eligibility for certain blessings and privileges. He holds the key to all temples in the world and it is he who must turn that key to open the doors thereof to his members and through eternal marriage to life eternal....

"It is said: 'God's ways are not man's ways.' This man, the bishop, need not be schooled in all the fields of education, for he has access to the fountain of all knowledge. There is revelation, not only for the prophet, but for every worthy and righteous man. He is entitled to divine guidance in his own jurisdiction..... the bishop may draw on this limitless reservoir of knowledge and wisdom if he is in tune with his Maker." (New Era, Sept. 1978, pp. 16-17.)

#### **D&C 107:76. Who Can Try a Member of the First Presidency?**

"The bishop is a common judge in Israel, and members are amenable to his jurisdiction. In case of an accusation made against one of the First Presidency, the case would be tried before the presiding bishop and a council of high priests." (Smith, Church History and Modern Revelation, 2:21.)

Elder John A. Widtsoe said this disciplinary council would consist "of the Presiding Bishop with his two counselors, and twelve High Priests especially chosen for the purpose. It is a tribunal extraordinary, from which there is no appeal, to be convened if it should be necessary to try a member of the First Presidency for crime or neglect of duty." (Priesthood and Church Government, p. 212.)

#### **D&C 107:77-84. Church Disciplinary Councils**

Church disciplinary councils exist both to help individuals repent and to protect the innocent against false accusations. In some cases, especially where a prominent or noteworthy person is involved, a disciplinary council can help protect the Church's good name and moral influence.

President Joseph Fielding Smith further explained: "There are several councils in the Church. The traveling high council has jurisdiction in all the world. The high councils in stakes have jurisdiction in a judicial way in the stakes. The First Presidency may sit as an appellate council, and their decision is final. The Church is so organized that no member or officer, from the President to the last member received, is 'exempted from the justice and the laws of God.' The special ... council, presided over by the presiding bishopric has been called into existence several times. The Prophet Joseph Smith was tried before this council on charges made against him by Elder Sylvester Smith after the return of Zion's Camp. Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Frederick G. Williams were each tried by this tribunal." (Church History and Modern Revelation, 2:21; see also Notes and Commentary on D&C 102; Enrichment I in the Appendix.)

#### **D&C 107:85-90. Duties of Quorum Presidents**

Elder David O. McKay said: "Presidents of quorums: The Lord has said to you, as you will read in the 107th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, that it is your duty to meet with your quorum. If you are the president of a deacon's quorum, you are to meet with twelve deacons, and preside over them, to sit in counsel with them, and to teach them their duties. O, deacons, throughout the world! respond to that call. Do your duty, Bishops, you who hold the presidency of the Aaronic Priesthood; guide the young men in this activity. Are they slothful? Are they inactive? If they are, some of the results of inactivity mentioned before as befalling the idle individual will afflict the quorum in your ward. Mark it, it will not fulfill its place in the councils of the Church, unless it be active as a council, as a quorum. This is true of the Teachers, of the Priests, the Elders, the Seventies, the High Priests, and all." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1909, p. 92.)

#### **D&C 107:93-97. The Seventy and the Ministry**

The Prophet Joseph Smith wrote: "On the 28th of February, the Church in council assembled, commenced selecting certain individuals to be Seventies, from the number of those who went up to Zion with me in the camp ... to begin the organization of the first quorum of Seventies, according to the visions and revelations which I have received. The Seventies are to constitute traveling quorums, to go into all the earth, whithersoever the Twelve Apostles shall call them." (History of the Church, 2:201-2.)

"If the first Seventy are all employed, and there is a call for more laborers, it will be the duty of the seven presidents of the first Seventy to call and ordain other Seventy and send them forth to labor in the vineyard, until, if needs be, they set apart seven times seventy, and even until there are one hundred and forty-four thousand thus set apart for the ministry" (History of the Church, 2:221).

Although the First Quorum of the Seventy was organized by Joseph Smith, it did not continue to function as a quorum after the exodus to Utah. After the colonization of the West, quorums of seventies were organized in each stake; but on a general authority level, there was just the First Council of Seventy, or the First Seven Presidents of the Seventy.

Not until the time of President Spencer W. Kimball was the First Quorum of the Seventy organized again as an active, functioning quorum. This action was begun in the October 1975 conference, in which President Kimball said: "The First Quorum of the Seventy will be gradually organized, eventually with seventy members, the presidency of which will be made up of the seven members" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1975, p. 3; or Ensign, Nov. 1975, p. 4).

One year later, in the October 1976 conference, President Kimball took further action: "Today we shall present ... additional members of the First Quorum of the Seventy to you for your votes.... These changes ... bring to thirty-nine the total number in the First Quorum of the Seventy, thus providing a quorum to do business.

"With this move, the three governing quorums of the Church defined by the revelations,-the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve, and the First Quorum of the Seventy,-have been set in their places as revealed by the Lord. This will make it possible to handle efficiently the present heavy workload and to prepare for the increasing expansion and acceleration of the work, anticipating the day when the Lord will return to take direct charge of His church and kingdom." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1976, p. 10; or Ensign, Nov. 1976, p. 9.)

#### **D&C 107:98. Provisions by the Lord for General Leadership in Addition to the Three Presiding Quorums of the Church**

To meet the administrative needs of the Church as it grew, the Lord in this revelation provided for general Church leaders to be called in addition to the three presiding quorums of the Church. In the past these leaders have included the Assistants to the Quorum of the Twelve (1941-1976) and the Regional Representatives of the Twelve (1967-1995). Those called to these positions have been given administrative duties in the Lord's kingdom under the direction of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. (See Harold B. Lee, in Conference Report, Oct.

1967, pp. 101, 104-5; Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Oct. 1976, p. 10.)

#### **D&C 107:99-100. What Is the Responsibility of All Who Accept a Call to the Priesthood?**

President Henry D. Moyle stressed the importance of living up to priesthood duties: "I am sure it would be more pleasing to our Father in heaven to have us resign our positions-and that is not a practice which we commend in the Church-but nonetheless it seems preferable to neglecting our duties in the least detail. It gives us an awesome feeling to realize that we are dedicated to the work of the Lord, and having thus committed ourselves, it is not our privilege or our prerogative to violate his commandments, even the slightest of them. The Lord expects, and we expect it of ourselves, each one of us, to live out our lives here upon this earth in as complete conformity to the laws of God as we are capable. No means of rationalizing, no means of conjuring up excuses as to why we should do this or should not do the other, contrary to the will of our Heavenly Father, has any place in our lives." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1961, pp. 43-44.)

#### **D&C 107:100. What Does It Mean That the Slothful "Shall Not Be Counted Worthy to Stand"?**

Those who neglect their priesthood responsibilities will not be counted among the righteous who are worthy to stand in God's presence (see also Psalm 1:1-5; 24:3-4; Malachi 3:1-2; Luke 21:36; Alma 12:12-15; D&C 45:32).