

Historical Background

“In a Kirtland High Council meeting on 18 January 1835, Joseph announced that the time had come to choose the Twelve Apostles as directed in Doctrine and Covenants 18:27, 37, and on February 8, Joseph instructed Brigham and Joseph young to call a conference the following Saturday, 14 February 1835, of all the participants of Zion’s Camp who lived close enough to Kirtland to attend. At that conference, Joseph announced that the purpose of the meeting was to select twelve Apostles from the brethren who had been part of Zion’s Camp. The conference sustained this proposal, and the meeting was adjourned for one hour and then reconvened, perhaps to allow the participants to gather their thoughts and prepare themselves. The First Presidency then laid hands on the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon—Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris—blessing and empowering them to select the Twelve. The first members of the Quorum of the Twelve in this dispensation were Thomas B. Marsh, David W. Patten, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, William E. McLellin, Parley P. Pratt, Luke S. Johnson, William Smith, Orson Pratt, John F. Boynton, and Lyman E. Johnson. They were placed in the Quorum in order of seniority according to age.

“On 28 February 1835, two weeks after the selection of the Twelve, Joseph Smith called the First Quorum of the Seventies with their seven presidents. These were also chosen from among those who had participated in Zion’s Camp. According to one of those selected, Joseph Young, Joseph Smith later said to the elders in Kirtland concerning the purpose of Zion’s Camp, ‘Brethren, some of you are angry with me, because you did not fight in Missouri; but let me tell you, God did not want you to fight. He could not organize His kingdom with twelve men to open the Gospel door to the nations of the earth, and with seventy men under their direction to follow in their tracks, unless he took them from a body of men who had offered their lives, and who had made as great a sacrifice as did Abraham. Now the Lord has got His Twelve and His Seventy, and there will be other quorums of Seventies called, who will make the sacrifice, and those who have not made their sacrifices and their offerings now, will make them hereafter.’ Zion’s Camp had not been about war at all (D&C 105:37-40). It had been about sacrifice, so that the highest quorums of the Church might be organized with men who had put all things in the Lord’s hands.

“Members of the Quorum of the Twelve met periodically with the Prophet until 12 March 1835, when it was decided that the Twelve should take a mission through the eastern states to the Atlantic Ocean. In preparation for this mission, they met again on March 28, and, after confessing their sins, they asked the Prophet to seek a revelation for them from the Lord: ‘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 [written] 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 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.’

“In compliance with this unanimous request of the Twelve Apostles, Joseph Smith inquired of the Lord and received by revelation Doctrine and Covenants 107:1-58.” [The majority of the other verses had already been received by the Prophet and were attached to this revelation for the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants] (Stephen E. Robinson, H. Dean Garrett, *A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2001] 4:7-9)

DC 107:1 There are, in the church, two priesthoods

We take it for granted that there are two priesthoods in the church of God. But should we? What does the rest of the world think about priesthood?

LeGrand Richards

The question might be asked: “Under which order of priesthood do the present Christian churches claim to operate—the Aaronic or Melchizedek?” A satisfactory answer to this question could not be expected from any of them. The only reason we are in a position to make proper explanation is that John the Baptist brought back to this earth the Aaronic, or Levitical, Priesthood and conferred it upon the heads of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. The apostles Peter, James, and John brought the Melchizedek Priesthood in like manner. All doubt and misunderstanding have thus been removed, and we are therefore able to understand the scriptures dealing with this important subject. Could there be any subject more important than to understand the meaning and purpose of the priesthood of God and how it is obtained, since it holds the keys and rights to officiate in his name and administer unto his children the saving ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ? How could anyone suppose that without this priesthood authority there could be any authorized Church of Jesus Christ upon the earth?

If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. (Heb. 7:11-12)

(*A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1950], 83.)

DC 107:2 the first is called the Melchizedek...because Melchizedek was such a great high priest

Now this Melchizedek was a king over the land of Salem; and his people had waxed strong in iniquity and abomination; yea, they had all gone astray; they were full of all manner of wickedness;

But Melchizedek having exercised mighty faith, and received the office of the high priesthood according to the holy order of God, did preach repentance unto his people, And behold, they did repent; and Melchizedek did establish peace in the land in his days; therefore he was called the prince of peace, for he was the king of Salem; and he did reign under his father.

Now, there were many before him, and also there were many afterwards, but none were greater; therefore, of him they have more particularly made mention. (Alma 13:17-19)

“It is almost impossible to imagine a greater tribute that the Lord could bestow upon another than to lovingly direct that the very order of the Son of God’s own priesthood be known by the name of one of his cherished servants. What a model, what an example the Lord has said is in Melchizedek! He stands as a type or example to all who accept the priesthood or who seek the peace and blessings it offers. All who honor the priesthood of God can join this ancient follower of Christ in declaring—as Melchizedek’s name indicates—‘My king is righteousness.’” (Dennis A. Wright, “ ‘None Were Greater’: A Restoration View of Melchizedek,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1998, 35)

DC 107:3 it was called *the Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God*

Priesthood power comes from the Lord Jesus Christ. Although Satan may claim his own priesthood, the Lord is the only source of this righteous power. It emanates from him to his servants through their diligent exercise of faith and righteousness. This Holy Priesthood is the same power by which the earth was created, it is the same power by which the planets move in their several orbits, and it is the same power by which our sun powers the solar system (DC 88:7-10). It is the same power which authorizes every ordinance in the church of God.

Orson Spencer (early convert and elder in the church)

Jesus said that “all power was given him in heaven and upon earth.” But how did he propose to exercise all that power which was given him both among the nations of the earth and in heaven? My answer is, that he proposed to do it through a delegation of power to the different orders of his priesthood. We are told distinctly what the priesthood consists of, which is established on the earth, viz., apostles, prophets, evangelists, etc. The heavenly order minister to the authorities of the earthly order. The ruling object to be accomplished by the latter is, the work of the ministry, the perfecting of the Saints, the edifying of the body of Christ. (*Letters Exhibiting the Most Prominent Doctrines of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon and Sons, 1891], 95.)

Joseph F. Smith

What is that Priesthood? It is nothing more and nothing less than divine authority committed unto man from God. That is the principle that we should honor. (*Gospel Doctrine: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Joseph F. Smith*, compiled by John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], 160.)

Gordon B. Hinckley

It is a tremendously humbling experience to realize that the Melchizedek Priesthood which we hold is after the order of the Son of God, and that we have responsibility and accountability to Him and our Eternal Father for all that we do in exercising the stewardship given us. What I say of myself concerning this matter is equally applicable to all who hold office in this the Church and kingdom of God. It is no simple or unimportant thing to wear the mantle of the holy priesthood in whatever office or at whatever level and in whatever responsibility we might be called to serve. (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997], 146.)

Ezra Taft Benson

No honor that will ever come to any of us conferred by men of the world, or any man-made honorable body, will ever approach in importance the great honor and blessing which came to us the day we were ordained to the holy Melchizedek Priesthood. This is a priceless blessing, an eternal blessing, and I hope and pray that we will honor it all the days of our lives. Wealth, power, position are as nothing, by comparison, to the honor and blessing which come through the priesthood of the Living God. (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], 223.)

DC 107:4 to avoid the too frequent repetition of his name

Boyd K. Packer

We can understand why that should be. The name of the priesthood is frequently talked about in meetings and lessons and is printed in handbooks and manuals. It would be irreverent to use informally the sacred title which includes the name of Deity. ("What Every Elder Should Know—and Every Sister as Well: A Primer on Principles of Priesthood Government," *Ensign*, Feb. 1993, 7)

Joseph Fielding Smith

From the very beginning of time, the sacred name of the Supreme Being has been held in the greatest reverence and respect by the servants of the Lord, We are informed that the true pronunciation of one of his names by the Hebrews was lost, because they scrupulously avoided mentioning it... There is nothing that should be held in more sacred reverence and respect than the name of the Supreme Being and the name of his beloved Son, our Redeemer. Satan puts it into the hearts of men to blaspheme the name of the Lord, and the more vulgar and obscene a man becomes the greater is his tendency to violate this sacred commandment. It seems a strange thing that characters of this kind are never satisfied to swear in the name of mortal men, but always in the name of Deity, which rebellion seems to be in keeping with their wickedness. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols., edited by Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-1956], 3: 121.)

DC 107:5 All other authorities or offices in the church are appendages to this priesthood

Joseph F. Smith

There is no office growing out of this Priesthood that is or can be greater than the Priesthood itself. It is from the Priesthood that the office derives its authority and power. No office gives authority to the Priesthood. No office adds to the power of the Priesthood. But, all offices in the Church derive their power, their virtue, their authority, from the Priesthood. If our brethren would get this principle thoroughly established in their minds, there would be less misunderstanding in relation to the functions of government in the Church than there is." (*Gospel Doctrine* [Deseret Book Co., 1939], p. 148.)

Boyd K. Packer

The priesthood is greater than any of its offices. When someone first receives the Aaronic or Melchizedek Priesthood, it is conferred upon them by the laying on of hands. After the priesthood has

been conferred upon him, he is ordained to an office in the priesthood. All offices derive their authority from the priesthood.

The priesthood is not divisible. An elder holds as much priesthood as an Apostle. (See D&C 20:38.) When a man receives the priesthood, he receives all of it. However, there are offices within the priesthood—divisions of authority and responsibility. One may exercise his priesthood according to the rights of the office to which he is ordained or set apart.

“The Melchizedek Priesthood holds the right of presidency, and has power and authority over all the offices in the church in all ages of the world, to administer in spiritual things.” (D&C 107:8.)

Whoever holds the Melchizedek Priesthood or higher priesthood holds all of the authority of the Aaronic or lesser priesthood as well. (“What Every Elder Should Know—and Every Sister as Well: A Primer on Principles of Priesthood Government,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1993, 8)

DC 107:9 The Presidency of the High Priesthood

Lorenzo Snow

It takes this council of three (the First Presidency) to constitute the presiding and governing authority of the Priesthood in the earth. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, constitute the Godhead and the matchless governing quorum over all the creations of the Father. Three men stand at the head of the Church on the earth. (*Conference Report, April 1898, Afternoon Session*)

DC 107:10 High priests...have a right to officiate in their own standing, under the direction of the presidency

John Taylor

This high priesthood, we are told, has held the right of presidency in all ages of the world. But there is a difference between the general powers of the priesthood, and the particular office and calling to which men are set apart; and you, when I tell you, will understand it very easily; for instance, the presidency of the priesthood, or the presidency of the church, are high priests. The Twelve are high priests. The presidents of stakes and their counselors, the high council of a stake, and of all the stakes, are high priests. The bishops are ordained and set apart through the high priesthood, and stand in the same capacity; and thus bishops and their counselors are high priests. Now, these things you all know. There is nothing mysterious about them.

ALL PRIESTHOOD FUNCTIONS UNDER DIRECTION IN CHURCH CAPACITY.—There is another question associated with this matter. Because a man is a high priest, is he an apostle? No. Because a man is a high priest, is he the president of a stake, or the counselor to the president of a stake? No. Because he is a high priest, is he a bishop? No, not by any means. And so on, in all the various offices. The high priesthood holds the authority to administer in those ordinances, offices, and places, when they are appointed by the proper authorities, and at no other time; and while they are sustained also by the people... It is not because a man holds a certain class of priesthood that he is to administer in all the

offices of that priesthood. He administers in them only as he is called and set apart for that purpose. (*The Gospel Kingdom: Selections from the Writings and Discourses of John Taylor*, selected, arranged, and edited, with an introduction by G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1941], 202.)

DC 107:10 High priests...have a right to officiate...also in the office of an elder, priest...teacher, deacon, and member

This verse is historically significant not because of what it says but what it doesn't say. Up to the 1970's, every stake in the church ordained men to be Seventies. These men were given a charge to proclaim the gospel, and the office was considered inferior to that of High Priest. However, this verse never gives a High Priest authority over the Seventies. This verse helped **Elder Boyd K. Packer** understand how the Lord intended his church to organize this office of the priesthood.

"[An] area of concern with which many of the former Church leaders had worked, and to which Elder Packer and the Brethren gave concerted attention, was that of the proper role and place of the Seventy. Their concern came at a time when, even with the combined support groups of Assistants to the Twelve, Regional Representatives, and the Seventy, they were taxed to the limit in administering what had become a worldwide church...

"Laboring in faith and diligence, Brother Packer continued the quest, to know the Lord's will. He studied and pondered the passages in D&C 107 that pertain specifically to the Seventy. As he read and reread, verse 10 suddenly stood out as if it had been newly placed there: 'High priests after the order of the Melchizedek Priesthood have a right to officiate in their own standing, under the direction of the presidency, in administering spiritual things, and also in the office of an elder, priest, ... teacher, deacon, and member' (D&C 107:10).

"Elder Packer tells of the impact upon him:

It suddenly occurred to me that that was a verse on the Seventy that should be added to the others. The reason it had never been considered was that it did not mention the Seventy. And the significance of it was that it did not mention the Seventy.

I took it to Bruce McConkie first and read it to him in that context. It was the first time that he had ever seen it in that light. Because it very declaratively said that a high priest could not officiate in the office of a Seventy.

"Traditionally, the order of priesthood leadership had been listed deacon, teacher, priest, elder, seventy, high priest, Seventy, Apostle. Now the brethren could see how the Lord intended it to be: deacon, teacher, priest, elder, high priest, Seventy, Apostle, with the Seventy being listed only once. In that sequence, all scripture with reference to the Seventy quickly fell into place.

"From that newly highlighted scripture there came to the Brethren the understanding of the Lord's will relative to the Seventy. The call of a Seventy was not a local priesthood call; rather, it was henceforth to be as the Lord had said; the Seventy 'form a quorum equal in authority to that of the Twelve special

witnesses or Apostles' (D&C 107:26).” (Lucile C. Tate, *Boyd K. Packer: A Watchman on the Tower* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995], 235-237.)

DC 107:10 priest (of the Levitical order)

Few saints understand that anciently, there were Melchizedek Priesthood priests and there were Aaronic Priesthood priests. Hence it is necessary for the Lord to explain in this passage that he is referring to priests “of the Levitical order.” Indeed, there have been priests of the Melchizedek order and the scriptures speak of them not infrequently. Paul speaks of this office as part of the oath of the priesthood, wherein the Lord would say, “Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” (Hebrews 7:17). Notice that the Lord didn’t say, “thou art a high priest,” or “thou art an elder,” he said “thou art a priest...after the order of Melchisedec.”

Among the Nephites, there were no Levites. Therefore, all the priesthood held among them was of the Melchizedek order. The Book of Mormon frequently speaks of these priests. Alma said, “I would that ye should remember that the Lord God ordained *priests*, after his holy order, which was after the order of his Son, to teach these things unto the people” (Alma 13:1, italics added) From a careful study of the priesthood among the Nephites, we learn that there were likely four offices of the Melchizedek priesthood in ancient days: teacher, priest, elder, and high priest. (see Jacob 1:18, Mosiah 18:18; 25:19, Alma 4:7; 13:1-3; 6:1)

Joseph Fielding Smith

The Nephites did not officiate under the authority of the Aaronic Priesthood. They were not descendants of Aaron, and there were no Levites among them. There is no evidence in the Book of Mormon that they held the Aaronic Priesthood...but the Book of Mormon tells us definitely, in many places, that the priesthood which they held and under which they officiated was the Priesthood after the holy order, the order of the Son of God. This higher priesthood can officiate in every ordinance of the gospel, and Jacob and Joseph, for instance, were consecrated priests and teachers after this order. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 3, p. 86)

DC 107:13 the Priesthood of Aaron... was conferred upon Aaron and his seed

To be called of God, as was Aaron, is an important thing (Heb. 5:4). Aaron received commandment to be the presiding officer of the lesser priesthood when it was revealed in Moses’ day (Ex. 28:1). Prior to that time, there was no separation of the priesthood into two divisions. Subsequent to Aaron and his sons being washed with water, anointed with oil, and clothed in holy garments (Ex. 29), the lesser priesthood continued through his descendants by right of birth (Ex. 40:15).

That means that none of the subsequent generations needed to be ordained to the Aaronic priesthood. They held it by birthright:

And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine; Because all the firstborn are mine; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I

hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I am the Lord.
(Num 3:12-13)

They were not ordained priests at 16. Rather, at the age of 30, they were called to work in the tabernacle without an ordination (Num. 4:3).

DC 107:14 it is called the lesser priesthood... because it is an appendage to the greater

Orson Pratt

It is more especially called the lesser Priesthood, because those holding it, and being in possession of no higher authority can only obtain a certain portion or measure of the blessings that the Lord has in store for his people; it can proceed so far and no farther; it is limited in its nature, its power, its ordinances and its ministry. But when combined with the higher Priesthood after the order of Melchisedec, it then can receive all the blessings that are ordained of the Almighty to be bestowed upon his people in any dispensation. (*Journal of Discourses*, 18:363)

Boyd K. Packer

The fact that it is called the lesser priesthood does not diminish at all the importance of the Aaronic Priesthood. The Lord said it is necessary to the Melchizedek Priesthood. (See D&C 84:29.) Any holder of the higher priesthood should feel greatly honored to perform the ordinances of the Aaronic Priesthood, for they have great spiritual importance.

I have, as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, passed the sacrament. I assure you I have felt honored and humbled beyond expression to do what some might consider a routine task. ("The Aaronic Priesthood," *Ensign*, Nov 1981, 30)

DC 107:16 No man has legal right to this office...except he be a literal descendant of Aaron

Joseph F. Smith

We are also told that the office of a Bishop belongs to the lesser or Aaronic priesthood; and that whenever there are found in the Church legitimate descendants of Aaron, then the Bishops will be chosen from his seed, because this office belongs to them by right. And when a literal descendant of Aaron is found to officiate in the office of Bishop, he will do so without counselors. But he will be chosen and ordained and set apart to officiate in this office by those who hold the Melchizedek priesthood. He will not be able to seize the office by reason of his being a descendant of Aaron, any more than a person is entitled to any office in the priesthood because he is born in the Church. All persons have to be set apart and ordained to these offices and callings by those who hold the authority. So that if there was a descendant of Aaron here whom it was thought proper to choose to fill the office of Bishop in the Church, and to sit as a common judge in the midst of the people, he would have to be called and ordained to that office, and set apart to officiate in it, by the presiding officers of the Melchizedek priesthood. (Brian H. Stuy, ed., *Collected Discourses*, 5 vols. [Burbank, Calif., and Woodland Hills, Ut.: B.H.S. Publishing, 1987-1992], vol. 3, July 4th, 1892)

DC 107:18 the power and authority of the...Melchizedek Priesthood is to hold they keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church

Joseph Smith

There are two priesthoods spoken of in the scriptures, viz., the Melchizedek and the Aaronic or Levitical. 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.

Its institution was prior to “the foundation of this earth, or the morning stars sang together, or the Sons of God shouted for joy,” and is the highest and holiest priesthood, and is after the order of the Son of God, and all other priesthoods are only parts, ramifications, powers and blessings belonging to the same, and are held, controlled, and directed by it. It is the channel through which the Almighty commenced revealing his glory at the beginning of the creation of this earth, and through which he has continued to reveal himself to the children of men to the present time, and through which he will make known his purposes to the end of time. (*Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, compiled by Alma P. Burton [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977], 52.)

John Taylor

The priesthood has been restored, with which are connected all the blessings that ever were associated with any people upon the face of the earth; and if we know today so little in regard to the things of God, and the principles associated with eternity, with the heavens and with the angels, it is because we have not improved our privileges as we might, nor lived up to those principles which God has revealed unto us, and because we are not yet prepared for further advancement. (*The Gospel Kingdom: Selections from the Writings and Discourses of John Taylor*, selected, arranged, and edited, with an introduction by G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1941], 136 - 137.)

Joseph Fielding Smith

Priesthood is given us for two purposes, first, that we may ourselves receive exaltation, and, second, that we may be the means of helping others to obtain like blessings. (*The Way to Perfection* [1932], 221–22).

Spencer W. Kimball

Men require priesthood for exaltation. No man will ever reach godhood who does not hold the priesthood. (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, edited by Edward L. Kimball [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982], 51.)

DC 107:19 To have the privilege of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven

Wilford Woodruff

I would like to ask, if it was wrong to desire revelation? What business have we with this priesthood, if we have not power to receive revelation? What is the priesthood given for? If we do not have revelation, it is because we do not live as we should live, because we do not magnify our priesthood as we ought to; if we did we would not be without revelation, none would be barren or unfruitful. We have one man who holds the keys of the kingdom of God upon the earth, and it is his business to give the word of the Lord for the guidance of the Church. But here we have apostles and men of God, holding the holy priesthood, acting in behalf of the Church in different parts of this Territory...is it the right of such men to have revelation from the Lord to guide them in their operations? Yes, it is; and no man should undertake to act in positions affecting the interests of Zion, unless he lives so as to be guided and directed by revelations of God. (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 21: 298 - 299.)

DC 107:19 to commune with the general assembly and church of the Firstborn

Orson Pratt

The higher Priesthood after the order of the Son of God, we are told, in a modern revelation, holds the power to commune with the Church of the First-born that are in heaven, and that too not in a spiritual sense alone; or, as some would infer, to commune with them without receiving any revelation, to commune with them without beholding their personages; but in the literal sense, even the same as one many communes with another. It 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. (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 18: 363 - 364.)

DC 107:19 to enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father, and Jesus

Orson Pratt

Now, this has troubled the minds of some of the Latter-day Saints. "How is it, (say they) that Joseph lived, after having seen the face of the Father, after having heard the words of His mouth, after the Father had said unto him, 'He is my beloved Son, hear ye him.'"

If you had thought upon this other subject, namely, that Joseph had been already ordained before this world was made—to what Priesthood? To the Priesthood after the Order of an Endless Life, a Priesthood that is everlasting, a Priesthood handed down, that had no beginning, a Priesthood after the holiest Order of God, a Priesthood that was after the Order of His Only Begotten Son. If you had only reflected that that same Priesthood had been conferred upon him in the councils of the holy ones before the world was made, and that he was ordained to come forth in this dispensation of the fulness

of times to hold the keys of authority and power of that high and holy Priesthood—that he was ordained to come forth and perform the work that God intended to accomplish in the latter times, then the mystery would have been cleared up to your minds. He was not without the Priesthood in reality; but was a man chosen, a man ordained, a man appointed from before the foundation of this world, to come forth in the fulness of times to introduce the last dispensation among the children of men; to come in order to organize that kingdom, that was predicted by the ancient Prophets, that should stand forever; to come to fulfill the great and glorious work of preparation for the coming of the Son of God to reign in righteousness upon the earth; he could see the face of God the Father and live. (*Journal of Discourses*, 22:29-30)

Bruce R. McConkie

Everything connected with the Melchizedek Priesthood is designed to prepare men for eternal life in the presence of God. That preparation goes on in this life. Hence, as the revealed word attests, those who hold this holy order “have the privilege of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, to have the heavens opened unto them, to commune with the general assembly and church of the firstborn, and to enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.” (D&C 107:19.) This priesthood prepares men to see both the Father and the Son. “This greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God.” And it was because ancient Israel refused to use this holy priesthood to prepare themselves to see God that the Lord “took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also.” (D&C 84:19, 25.) (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985], 495.)

Bruce R. McConkie

Clearly no spiritual blessing is available to mortal man on earth that can compare with personal communion and converse with the Gods of heaven. Such attainments on the part of the prophets of old are the very things that set them apart above all their fellows. Keys open doors; keys are the directing and controlling power where priestly things are concerned. Thus, through the priesthood the door may be opened and the way provided for men to see the Father and the Son. From all of this it follows, automatically and axiomatically, that if and when the holy priesthood operates to the full in the life of any man, he will receive its great and full blessings, which are that rending of the heavens and that parting of the veil of which we now speak. (*The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978], 588.)

Spencer W. Kimball

It is an event of supreme importance to man in this dispensation, for the priesthood is the power and authority of God delegated to man on earth to act in all things pertaining to the salvation of men. 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.

My dear brothers and sisters, reflect for a moment on the vast magnitude of the blessings promised to those who are valiant in their priesthood callings: “For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies.

“They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God.” (D&C 84:33–34.)

The elect of God! A moment’s reflection ought to convince us that no sacrifice would be too great if a man and woman and their family could qualify to be the elect of God! These promises of great blessings are conditional, however... One is ordained to the priesthood with a conditional promise; one is married and sealed in the temple on condition of his faithfulness. And so far as I know there is nothing—no blessing in the world—that anyone can receive except through faithfulness. (“The Example of Abraham,” *Ensign*, June 1975, 3-4)

DC 107:20 The power and authority of the lesser, or Aaronic Priesthood...

See also commentary for D&C 13.

John Taylor

The lesser priesthood is a part of, or an appendage to the greater, or the Melchizedek priesthood, and has power in administering outward ordinances. The lesser or Aaronic priesthood can make appointments for the greater in preaching; can baptize, administer the sacrament, attend to the tithing, buy lands, settle people on possessions, divide inheritances, look after the poor, take care of the properties of the church, attend generally to temporal affairs; act as common judges in Israel, and assist in ordinances of the temple, under the direction of the greater or Melchizedek priesthood. They hold the keys of the ministering of angels and administer in outward ordinances, *the letter of the gospel*, and the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. (*The Gospel Kingdom: Selections from the Writings and Discourses of John Taylor*, selected, arranged, and edited, with an introduction by G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1941], 155.)

DC 107:22 three Presiding High Priests... upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the church

Charles W. Penrose

Does the Lord say there that some man is to appoint his brother, or his uncle, or his son, to preside over the Church? No. "Three presiding High Priests, chosen by the body," upheld and sustained by the vote and faith and fellowship of the Church, form the First Presidency, That is how the Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ was established, by the revelation and commandment of God. That is how it has continued from that time until the present. (*Conference Report*, October 1905, Second Day,—Morning Session 97)

George P. Lee

I pray that every Latter-day Saint will let his prayers ascend into the ears of our Father in Heaven day and night, whether praying in family circles or in private places, for the Lord to sustain His leaders and people as we work to build up a Zion and to fulfill His promises. I pray that every Latter-day Saint will pray for the First Presidency of this Church and pray for His Apostles and leaders. Let us uphold them by our faith, works, and hopes. History will record one day that President Gordon B. Hinckley was one of the strongest counselors the Church ever had. Let us uphold him by our faith and by our prayers. (“Can There Any Good Thing Come Out of Nazareth?” *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 24)

Harold B. Lee

I repeat what I have said on other occasions, that I most fervently seek to be upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayers of all the faithful Saints everywhere, and I pledge to you that as you pray for me, I will earnestly try to so live that the Lord can answer your prayers through me. (*Decisions for Successful Living* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1973], 241)

James E. Faust

Brethren, I have been a member of the First Presidency for only a few days. It seems as though before I had this calling I had limited vision, but I have now put on glasses that allow me to see more clearly, in a small way, the magnitude of the responsibility of the President of the Church. I am afraid I am like the aristocrat who wore a monocle in one eye. Of him it was said, “He could see more than he could comprehend.” The men who see most clearly the big picture are these giants of the Lord, President Hinckley and President Monson, who have served many years faithfully as counselors to the previous Presidents of the Church. (“Responsibilities of Shepherds,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 47)

DC 107:23 the Twelve Apostles... special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world

“The word Apostle is derived from a Greek word meaning ‘one sent forth’ (see Bible Dictionary, “Apostle,” 612). Such an appointment requires a divine commission and priesthood authority. This office relates to the special responsibilities to take the gospel to all the peoples of the earth and their unique commission to assist in the overseership of the Church. This word was not applied to the early patriarchs and prophets of God who led His people through their ages; rather, it was restricted for those called as special witnesses of the name of Jesus Christ, His Atonement, and His Resurrection. It pertains likewise to those who carry the same responsibilities in the dispensation of the fulness of times.” (Edward J. Brandt, *Ensign*, July 1999, 14–15)

Lorenzo Snow

It becomes proper for me to explain some essential qualifications of an Apostle.

First, an Apostle must possess a divine knowledge, by revelation from God, that Jesus lives—that He is the Son of the living God.

Secondly, he must be divinely authorized to promise the Holy Ghost; a divine principle that reveals the things of God, making known His will and purposes, leading into all truth, and showing things to come, as declared by the Savior.

Thirdly, he is commissioned by the power of God to administer the sacred ordinances of the gospel, which are confirmed to each individual by a divine testimony. Thousands of people now dwelling in these mountain vales, who received these ordinances through my administrations, are living witnesses of the truth of this statement. (*The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow*, edited by Clyde J. Williams [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1984], 84)

Boyd K. Packer.

The Twelve Apostles “are called to be ... special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world.” Each carries that certain witness that Jesus is the Christ. (“The Twelve Apostles,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 7)

Howard W. Hunter

I am overcome with gratitude for the revelations which have established the marvelous system by which his Church is governed. Each man who is ordained an Apostle and set apart as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve is sustained as a prophet, seer, and revelator. The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, called and ordained to hold the keys of the priesthood, have the authority and responsibility to govern the Church, to administer its ordinances, to teach its doctrine, and to establish and maintain its practices. (*The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, edited by Clyde J. Williams [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], 227)

DC 107:24 they form a quorum, equal in authority and power to the three presidents

Joseph F. Smith

Let me call your attention to this principle. The Lord has not established in the Church two heads, two presiding quorums to run parallel with each other. He has established an order in this Priesthood, which is absolutely indestructible so long as there is a single man holding this Priesthood and exercising the rights and functions thereof in righteousness. The meaning of this passage is simply this: When, from death or any cause, there is no First Presidency, then the authority of presidency rests upon the Twelve Apostles. It does not mean that their authority is equal to the authority of the First Presidency while there is a First Presidency. Such would breed confusion and disorder. There could be no presidency under circumstances of this kind.

Therefore, the equality of the authority of the Twelve Apostles with that of the First Presidency manifests itself when they are called to exercise that authority in the absence of the First Presidency. Yet it has been contended, so we have been credibly informed, that it was wrong to organize the First Presidency after the death of the Prophet Joseph; that the Twelve Apostles should have been the presiding council of the Church, and that there should have been an executive committee appointed out of the Twelve to conduct the affairs of the Church...

(quotes D&C 107:25-26).

Would anybody think for a moment of contending that, because the authority of the First Presidency, the authority of the Twelve Apostles, and the authority of the Seventy was equal, therefore there was a triple-headed presidency of the Church, and that it was necessary that all three of these councils of the Priesthood should exercise in equal power and authority the presidency at one and the same time? Why, that would be nonsense, and would absolutely destroy the principle of government. It would be only in case of the destruction of the Presidency of the Church and of the Twelve Apostles that the Seventy could come forth and exercise authority equal with that of the Twelve in the absence of the First Presidency, and of the First Presidency when the church is fully organized.

And every decision made by either of these quorums, must be by the unanimous voice of the same; that is, every member in each quorum must be agreed to its decisions, in order to make their decisions of the same power or validity one with the other.

(A majority may form a quorum, when circumstances render it impossible to be otherwise.)

Unless this is the case, their decisions are not entitled to the same blessings which the decisions of a quorum of three Presidents were anciently, who were ordained after the order of Melchisedek, and were righteous and holy men (D&C 107:27-29).

What does this mean? Simply this: When the decision of three presidents, who are called to the presiding position in the Church, is a united decision, each president agreeing with the other, it is valid, and equal to any decision that was ever rendered by any presiding authority in the Church of God. It means that in the absence of the First Presidency, and the Twelve Apostles being called upon to exercise the functions of presidency in the Church, a decision on their part must be a unanimous decision to make it equal with a decision of the three Presidents of the Church. It further means, that in the event of the non-existence of the First Presidency and the Twelve, then the Seventy being called upon to exercise the presiding function, a decision rendered by them must be a unanimous decision, in order to make it equal with a decision of the Twelve or of the First Presidency. It cannot mean anything else. It cannot mean that when the First Presidency render a decision, on which they are agreed, the Twelve Apostles can rise up and render another decision on which they are united, and their decision be equal with that of the First Presidency. That would result in confusion, and would be destructive of the organization of the Church. Nor can the Seventies rise up, while the Presidency and Twelve live, and render a decision which would be equal before the Church with that of the First Presidency, or with that of the Twelve, in case they were presiding. (Brian H. Stuy, ed., *Collected Discourses*, 5 vols. [Burbank, Calif., and Woodland Hills, Ut.: B.H.S. Publishing, 1987-1992], vol. 5, April 4, 1897)

DC 107:27 every decision made by either of these quorums must be by the unanimous voice of the same

Rulon G. Craven

During the time I served as secretary to the Twelve, I observed these men whom our Father in Heaven has called as special witnesses of his Son Jesus Christ.

The Thursday morning meetings in the upper room of the temple were always a special experience for me. My heart was often filled with emotion as I listened to the members of the Twelve pray to their Father in Heaven, remembering these are the Twelve Apostles, chosen by our Father in Heaven and sustained by the Saints as prophets, seers, and revelators.

As President Hunter would lead the Twelve through the agenda, I was continually reminded of section 107, verse 27, of the Doctrine and Covenants, which reads, "And every decision made by either of these quorums must be by the unanimous voice of the same; that is, every member in each quorum must be agreed to its decisions, in order to make their decisions of the same power or validity one with the other." [D&C 107:27]

The members of the Twelve strive to live according to the promptings of the Spirit. They speak their mind. However, they are also good listeners and speak when moved upon by the Holy Spirit. Their posture in quorum meetings is to listen and sense the directing power of the Spirit, which always leads to a unity of decision. I marveled as I watched the directing power of the Spirit touch the minds and hearts of the members of the Twelve, influencing the decision-making process. ("Prophets," *Ensign*, May 1991, 28)

Gordon B. Hinckley

There is unity in the First Presidency of the Church. There is unity between the Presidency and the Twelve, perfect unity. There is unity among the members of the First Quorum of the Seventy and the Presiding Bishopric. I am somewhat familiar with the history of this Church, and I do not hesitate to say that there has never been greater unity in its leading councils and the relationships of those councils one to another, than there is today. ("Special Witnesses for Christ," *Ensign*, May 1984, 51)

DC 107:25 the Seventy are also called to preach the gospel, and to be especial witnesses

"Although the Twelve were described as 'special witnesses' ("D&C 107:23D&C 107:23), the seventy were to be 'especial witnesses' (v. 25). *Special* and *especial* are synonymous, and so no distinction is intended." (Richard O. Cowan, *Answers to Your Questions About the Doctrine and Covenants* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1996], 125)

Gordon B. Hinckley

As Seventies they are called to preach the gospel and to be especial witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ as set forth in the revelations. Though all Seventies have equal scriptural authority, members of the First and Second Quorums are designated General Authorities, while members of the Third, Fourth, and Fifth are designated Area Authorities.

Although the ordination to the office of Seventy is without term, a Seventy is called to serve in a quorum for a designated period of years. At the conclusion of this service, he will return to activity in his respective ward and stake and will meet with his high priests group.

We welcome most warmly these Brethren into quorum membership and activity. They have our confidence, our love, and our esteem.

With these respective quorums in place, we have established a pattern under which the Church may grow to any size with an organization of Area Presidencies and Area Authority Seventies, chosen and working across the world according to need. (“May We Be Faithful and True,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 6)

John K. Carmack

Now, as to the calling, the awesome calling which has come. The Seventy are called to preach the gospel and to be especial witnesses unto the Gentiles and all the world. As I have searched my heart, I think the only qualification I can think of—and I believe I speak on behalf of my brethren—is that we have an especially strong witness of this work. (“Upheld by the Prayers of the Church,” *Ensign*, May 1984, 75)

DC 107:27 every decision... must be by the unanimous voice of the same

“This principle of unanimity is a profound blessing to the entire Church. As **Elder James E. Faust** said, it ‘provides a check on bias and personal idiosyncrasies. It ensures that God rules through the Spirit, not man through majority or compromise. It ensures that the best wisdom and experience is focused on an issue before the deep, unassailable impressions of revealed direction are received. It guards against the foibles of man.’” (*In Conference Report*, October 1989, p. 11) (Brent L. Top, Larry E. Dahl, and Walter D. Bowen, *Follow the Living Prophets* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993], 61)

James E. Faust

The Lord made it clear that in the presiding quorums, every decision "must be by the unanimous voice of the same; that is, every member in each quorum must be agreed to its decisions" (D&C 107:27). This means that after frank and open discussion, decisions are reached in council under the direction of the presiding officer, who has the ultimate authority to decide. That decision is then sustained, because our unity comes from full agreement with righteous principles and also from our general response to the operation of the Spirit of God. (*Finding Light in a Dark World* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1995], 119 - 120)

DC 107:29 a quorum of three presidents were anciently... ordained after the order of Melchizedek

Can you think of any of these ancient First Presidencies? Peter, James, and John come to mind but usually the scriptures use the term *anciently* referring to the pre-Christian era. Who were these ancient First Presidencies? The answer is, “we don’t know.” Probably the three men who visited Abraham held this position, “And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood my him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground.” (Gen. 18:2) These men had come from Salem (Jerusalem) with the priesthood of Melchizedek. Certainly, their communication with Abraham was more significant than just predicting the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. But our scriptures don’t contain the whole story.

Perhaps there were three presiding high priests among the Midianites as well. This is the lineage by which Moses' father in law, Jethro, received the priesthood. The point is that great and holy men were ordained to this high and holy calling and we have no record of their ministries. Our scriptural record is incomplete—especially when it comes to the higher priesthood and the higher ordinances. Joseph Smith knew of these great quorums, but didn't identify them.

Joseph Smith

But to return to the subject of order; in ancient days councils were conducted with such strict propriety, that no one was allowed to whisper, be weary, leave the room, or get uneasy in the least, until the voice of the Lord, by revelation, or the voice of the council by the Spirit, was obtained, which has not been observed in this Church to the present time. It was understood in ancient days, that if one man could stay in council, another could; and if the president could spend his time, the members could also; but in our councils, generally, one will be uneasy, another asleep; one praying, another not; one's mind on the business of the council, and another thinking on something else. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, selected and arranged by Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976], 69)

DC 107:30 The decisions of these quorums... are to be made in all righteousness, in holiness, and lowliness of heart

Gordon B. Hinckley

I add by way of personal testimony that during the twenty years I served as a member of the Council of the Twelve and during the nearly thirteen years that I have served in the First Presidency, there has never been a major action taken where this procedure was not observed. . . . Out of this very process of men speaking their minds has come a sifting and winnowing of ideas and concepts. But I have never observed serious discord or personal enmity among my Brethren. I have, rather, observed a beautiful and remarkable thing—the coming together, under the directing influence of the Holy Spirit and under the power of revelation, of divergent views until there is total harmony and full agreement.

I know of no other governing body of any kind of which this might be said... The Brethren would not be inclined to do anything which they feel would be out of harmony with the attitude, feelings, and position of their beloved leader, the prophet of the Lord. (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997], 84 - 85)

DC 107:32 in case that any decision of these quorums is made in unrighteousness...

Joseph F. Smith

In other words, there can be no appeal from the decision of the First Presidency of the Church, except their decision be rendered in unrighteousness, and without love, and charity, etc., and in that case the appeal would have to be taken to the assembled bodies of the Priesthood. It means that when the Twelve Apostles are acting as Presidents of the Church, and they render a decision affecting the welfare of the Church, or on doctrine, there is absolutely no appeal from their decision, excepting it is rendered in unrighteousness. And the same would apply, of necessity, to a decision rendered by the Seventy in

the absence of the First Presidency and Twelve,—if such a thing could be thought of at all. Thus how glorious and how perfect is the organization of the Priesthood which God Almighty has established in the earth for the last time. And it is the duty of men who bear this Priesthood to study it, and to learn the principle of government, and each to understand his duty and his place, and keep himself in his place and in the line of his duty. Then there will be no clashing, no contention, and no disorder in the house of God; for the house of God is a house of order. (Brian H. Stuy, ed., *Collected Discourses*, 5 vols. [Burbank, Calif., and Woodland Hills, Ut.: B.H.S. Publishing, 1987-1992], vol. 5, April 4, 1897)

DC 107:33 The Twelve are a Traveling Presiding High Council

Boyd K. Packer

I am no different from the Brethren of the Twelve and the Seventy and the Bishopric with whom I have served for these 47 years when I tell you that the records show I have been in Mexico and Central and South America more than 75 times, in Europe over 50 times, Canada 25 times, the islands of the Pacific 10 times, Asia 10 times, and Africa 4 times; also China twice; to Israel, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the Dominican Republic, India, Pakistan, Egypt, Indonesia, and many, many other places around the globe. Others have traveled even more than that. (“The Twelve,” *Ensign*, May 2008, 83–87)

DC 107:33 The Twelve... officiate in the name of the Lord, under the direction of the Presidency of the Church

Orson Pratt

Much might be said of the First Presidency, which quorum presides over all the Church of God; and much might be said in relation to the duties of the Twelve, not only as a traveling High Council, but in regard to the setting in order of the various offices in Zion. We might talk a great deal about that. We, as the Twelve, have been fulfilling both of these duties, traveling abroad and sending abroad, and also setting in order the councils of the Priesthood in the midst of Zion, as the revelation required of us. In so doing, we have acted for a short time as a Presiding Council in the midst of the Church of God. We did so upon the death of the Prophet Joseph. The Spirit of God wrought upon his servants, that during our administration for some three or four years after the death of Brother Joseph, the First Presidency was not organized. Did the Council of the Twelve forget it? No. Did they ignore it? No; they all the time had their minds fixed upon the revelation which God had given showing that the Council of the First Presidency was the supreme Council and authority in the Church, and that the Twelve could not act in that supreme authority and power only as the First Presidency was made vacant. This Quorum was reorganized some three or four years after the death of the Prophet. (*Journal of Discourses*, 22:36-37)

DC 107:34, 38 The Seventy are to act... under the direction of the Twelve

John A. Widstoe

The order of the Seventy is a special calling of Elders for the preaching of the Gospel in all the world, under the direction of the Twelve Apostles. A quorum consists of seventy members, of which seven are chosen as presidents. The difference between the Seventies and the Elders is that the former are

"traveling ministers" and the latter are "standing ministers" to the Church. Seventies are to travel if needs be in the preaching of the Gospel, whereas Elders and other officers of the Church have the responsibility of building up the Church in the wards and branches of the Church. They have the same authority as the Elders in performing Priesthood ordinances. (D&C 107:34-39.)

The Seventies are to constitute traveling quorums, to go into all the earth, whithersoever the Twelve Apostles shall call them. (*Priesthood and Church Government* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], 115)

Harold B. Lee

I think you will see in what has gone forward in the last few years that now as never before in our recollection, the seventies have been given a major role in the missionary work of the Church. Perhaps the door has opened as widely as it has ever been for the work of the seventies, and we thank the Lord for the work of our leaders in the seventies quorums. (*Conference Report*, October 1967, pp.98-108)

DC 107:35 The Twelve hold the priesthood keys to open the doors of the nations for the preaching of the gospel

The Twelve are the ambassadors to the nations. They routinely travel to speak with leaders of foreign nations to encourage them to open their doors to the preaching of the gospel. That is their specific responsibility.

Those who lived during the Cold War period could hardly imagine the gospel being preached behind the iron curtain. Now the missionaries are busy spreading the gospel there. Sometimes we might be faithless about the Lord's ability to open the nations for the preaching of the gospel, but in reality, the Twelve hold the keys to open these doors. The rate limiting factor is our preparedness, the number of our missionaries, etc., not that the leaders of other nations won't allow it. It doesn't depend on culture, politics, language, or economics; it depends on the Priesthood. The missionaries will be in every nation of the earth as soon as there are enough missionaries because all the Twelve need to do is "turn the key" they hold as apostles, "the Twelve... shall have power to open the door of my kingdom unto any nation whithersoever ye shall send them." (D&C 112:21)

DC 107:35 first unto the Gentiles and then unto the Jews

Joseph Fielding Smith

The true calling of the apostles of Jesus Christ is to hold the fulness of the priesthood and to proclaim the gospel in all the world. They hold the keys, to open the door by the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and first unto the Gentiles and then unto the Jews. In this dispensation there is a reversal of this commandment given to the Twelve in former days; then they were commanded to go first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles. The Lord said that in these last days the first should be last and the last should be first. Since the restoration of the gospel it has been carried to the Gentile nations, and soon it will be taken to the Jews. Fulfilment of prophecy indicates that the days, or "times of the Gentiles," are

about fulfilled, and the days of Judah are now at hand. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols., edited by Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-1956], 3: 144)

DC 107:36 The standing high council, at the stakes of Zion, for a quorum equal in authority... to the traveling high council

This provision of priesthood authority, it would seem, has never needed to be exercised. The text seems to indicate that the collective authority of all the Stake High Councils of the Church could form a quorum of authority equal to the Twelve Apostles. The order of the Priesthood, then, is that these quorums have equal authority upon dissolution of their governing quorum. If the First Presidency is dissolved, the Twelve preside. If these two quorums dissolve, then the authority of the Church would rest with the Seventy. Even a collection of High Councils from all the stakes of Zion could, if needed, act as a governing body with general authority, even though these individual councils have no authority outside their respective stakes.

DC 107:37 The high council in Zion form a quorum equal in authority... to the councils of the Twelve at the stakes of Zion

The Missouri high council at the time of this revelation was to be considered equal in authority to the high councils of other stakes. At the time, there was only one other stake, in Kirtland.

“At the time this revelation was given, there were two standing high councils in the Church. The one in Kirtland was presided over by Joseph Smith and the First Presidency. The other, in Missouri, was presided over by what was called ‘the Presidency of the Church in Zion,’ consisting of David Whitmer, William W. Phelps, and John Whitmer. These two standing councils were not exactly equivalent to modern stake presidencies and high councils but were considered at that time to be general authorities presiding over domestic affairs of the two main bodies of the Saints, while the Twelve and the Seventy focused on the preaching of the gospel to the world.” (Stephen E. Robinson, H. Dean Garrett, *A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2001] 4:24)

This passage will again be significant when the center stake of Zion is organized as described in the revelations.

DC 107:38 It is the duty of the traveling high council (the Twelve) to call upon the Seventy

Howard W. Hunter

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:

Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. (Acts 6:2–4.)

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:

And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith (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). ("All Are Alike unto God," *Ensign*, June 1979, 73-74)

DC 107:39 It is the duty of the Twelve...to ordain evangelical ministers (patriarchs)

Joseph Smith

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, etc. (*History of the Church*, 3:381.)

Ezra Taft Benson

As defined by revelation, an evangelical minister is a patriarch. The Twelve have responsibility of approving all patriarchs in the world. Stake presidents may recommend calls and ordain a patriarch when approved by the Quorum of the Twelve. Approval of the calls of all patriarchs rests with the Quorum of the Twelve. (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], 144)

Joseph Fielding Smith

I am not sure that I know precisely why the words "evangelical ministers" were used, rather than the word "patriarchs." It seems, however, significant to me that the term here used suggests very definitely the spiritual nature of the patriarchal office. It is not an administrative office, it is not an executive office, it is a spiritual office.

The old patriarchs, of course, lived under a patriarchal system of government. The head of the family was, actually the head of their government, and that continued for a good many generations. We no longer live under a patriarchal form of government. Our civil government is greatly different. The Prophet Joseph Smith, in a meeting with the Twelve, explains specifically that "evangelical ministers" means "patriarchs." (*Conference Report*, October 1944, Evening Meeting 110)

DC 107:40 this priesthood was confirmed to be handed down from father to son

“According to Joseph Smith, the divine patriarchal order which the Saints were required to build in the last days was instituted on earth in the days of Adam, the Ancient of Days, and came down to later generations by lineage through a chosen seed. Being an eternal order in which regenerated men were made priests and kings unto God, it functioned as a divine system of government among the people of God in the early ages of the world. After the flood, the same order centered in Abraham and continued through his family to the house of Israel among whom God again endeavored to establish the divine family order. But when Israel failed in her divine calling and crucified her king, the gentiles were grafted into the eternal family. However, they too departed from the gospel plan, and the purposes of God waited until the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times, when all things would be gathered together in Christ—in the divine patriarchal order. (Hyrum L. Andrus, *Doctrines of the Kingdom* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1973], 490)

Ezra Taft Benson

The order of priesthood spoken of in the scriptures is sometimes referred to as the patriarchal order because it came down from father to son.

But this order is otherwise described in modern revelation as an order of family government where a man and woman enter into a covenant with God—just as did Adam and Eve—to be sealed for eternity, to have posterity, and to do the will and work of God throughout their mortality.

If a couple are true to their covenants, they are entitled to the blessing of the highest degree of the celestial kingdom. These covenants today can only be entered into by going to the House of the Lord.

Adam followed this order and brought his posterity into the presence of God. He is the great example for us to follow. (*Ensign*, Aug. 1985, 9)

DC 107:42 Seth... received the promise of God by his father

“According to LDS sources, Seth was born after numerous other children (Moses 5:2-3), was ordained at age sixty-nine by Adam, and became patriarchal leader after the death of his father (D&C 107:41-42).

“Following the murder of Abel, Seth inherited the birthright of the patriarchal order of the high priesthood because of his righteousness (D&C 107:40-43), taking Abel's place (Gen. 4:25; Moses 6:2)... (quotes D&C 107:40-42)... He ‘offered an acceptable sacrifice, like unto his brother Abel,’ with the result that ‘God revealed himself unto Seth’ (Moses 6:3). Apocryphal texts, seeking patterns for the ministry of the expected messiah, focus on notions of Seth's leadership in the premortal life, his complete

obedience, and his role as father and patriarch of the covenant race (Brown, p. 278).” (*Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1-4 vols., edited by Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1299)

DC 107:43 he (Seth) was a perfect man

Nobody’s perfect, right? How can the scriptures say that Seth was a perfect man? Well, he is not the only one. Noah and Job are also listed as being perfect (see Gen. 6:9, Job 1:1). What does this mean?

Russell M. Nelson

James gave a practical standard by which mortal perfection could be measured. He said, “If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.” (James 3:2)

Scriptures have described Noah, Seth, and Job as perfect men. (Gen. 6:9, D&C 107:43, Job 1:1) No doubt the same term might apply to a large number of faithful disciples in various dispensations. Alma said that “there were many, exceedingly great many,” (Alma 13:12) who were pure before the Lord.

This does not mean that these people never made mistakes or never had need of correction. The process of perfection includes challenges to overcome and steps to repentance that may be very painful. There is a proper place for chastisement in the molding of character, for we know that “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.”

Mortal perfection can be achieved as we try to perform every duty, keep every law, and strive to be as perfect in our sphere as our Heavenly Father is in his. If we do the best we can, the Lord will bless us according to our deeds and the desires of our hearts. (“Perfection Pending,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 86)

DC 107:42 his likeness was the express likeness of his father

“God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female create he them.” (Gen. 1:26) What does that mean? Well, for centuries religious authorities have denied God any physical form, certainly not a human one! The language is all figurative, so they say. Yet, the language of the scriptures means what it says. As usual, modern day revelation makes the meaning crystal clear. If Seth looked so much like his father that age was the only distinguishing characteristic, then to be created in the image of God must mean the same resemblance of physical form. God is not an amorphous spiritual blob.

“Adam's son Seth was to him as Christ was to the Father. Of Seth the scriptures say he ‘was a perfect man, and his likeness was the express likeness of his father, insomuch that he seemed to be like unto his father in all things, and could be distinguished from him only by his age’ (D&C 107:43). Paul described Christ as being in the ‘express image’ of his father (Hebrews 1:3). Joseph Smith, to whom both the Father and the Son appeared, said they ‘exactly resembled each other in features and likeness’ (*History of the Church*, 4:536). (Joseph Fielding McConkie, *Gospel Symbolism* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1999], 147)

DC 107:44-52 Enos was ordained at the age of 134

The following table is given as a numerical representation of Gen. 5:3-31 and D&C 107:41-52. Section 107 gives the same chronology as Genesis 5 but focuses not on the son's age at birth but rather his age at ordination to the priesthood.

While we might assume that the priesthood was administered strictly in a father to son fashion, this is not the case. Adam was still alive even when Lamech was born. Section 107 explains that Adam ordained Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, and Methuselah at various ages and places (DC 107:41-52). Lamech was not ordained by his father but by Seth.

Patriarch	Age at heir's birth	Years after heir's birth	Age at ordination (DC 107)	Age at death	Estimated birth/death dates
Adam	130	800		930	4000-3070 BC
Seth	105	807	69	912	3870-2958 BC
Enos	90	815	134	905	3765-2860 BC
Cainan	70	840	87	910	3675-2765 BC
Mahalaleel	65	830	496	895	3605-2710 BC
Jared	162	800	200	962	3540-2578 BC
Enoch	65	300	25	365 (DC 107 suggests age of 430 before being translated)	3378-3013 BC (city taken up in 2948 BC according to D&C)
Methuselah	187	969	100	969	3313-2344 BC
Lamech	182	777	32	777	3126-2349 BC
Noah			10	950	2944-1994 BC

DC 107:52 Noah was ten years old when he was ordained

“Of [Noah], **Joseph Smith** said, ‘He stands next in authority to Adam in the Priesthood; he was called of God to this office, and was the father of all living in this day [i.e., after the flood], and to him was given the dominion.’ (*Teachings*, 157)

“In the above statement, the Prophet indicated that the primary reason why Noah stands next in authority to Adam in the priesthood of this earth is that he was the father of all living in his day. For this reason, his jurisdiction in the Patriarchal Priesthood differed from that of the patriarchs before him back to Adam. These earlier figures were patriarchs within the divine patriarchal order of their day, while Adam and Noah had patriarchal authority over the systems that were built up during and after their day. None of the patriarchs between Adam and Noah had the right, by actual parental authority, to preside over all men who lived on earth. Only Adam and Noah were truly fathers of all living during and after the day they lived.” (Hyrum L. Andrus, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Pearl of Great Price* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1967], 366)

DC 107:53 Three years previous to the death of Adam, he called the... righteous, into the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman

Joseph Smith

Christ is the Great High Priest; Adam next... I saw Adam in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman. He called together his children and blessed them with a patriarchal blessing. The Lord appeared in their midst, and he (Adam) blessed them all, and foretold what should befall them to the latest generation.

This is why Adam blessed his posterity; he wanted to bring them into the presence of God. They looked for a city, etc., "whose builder and maker is God." (Hebrews 11:10.) Moses sought to bring the children of Israel into the presence of God, through the power of the Priesthood, but he could not. In the first ages of the world they tried to establish the same thing; and there were Eliases raised up who tried to restore these very glories, but did not obtain them; but they prophesied of a day when this glory would be revealed. Paul spoke of the dispensation of the fullness of times, when God would gather together all things in one, etc.; and those men to whom these keys have been given, will have to be there; and they without us cannot be made perfect.

These men are in heaven, but their children are on the earth. Their bowels yearn over us. God sends down men for this reason. "And the Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that give offense and them that do iniquity." (Matt. 13:41) All these authoritative characters will come down and join hand in hand in bringing about this work. (*Teachings*, 158-159)

DC 107:54 And the Lord appeared unto them, and they rose up and blessed Adam

Ezra Taft Benson

How did Adam bring his descendants into the presence of the Lord?

The answer: Adam and his descendants entered into the priesthood order of God. Today we would say they went to the House of the Lord and received their blessings. (*Ensign*, Aug. 1985, 9)

DC 107:55 I have set thee to be at the head...thou art a prince over them forever

Orson Pratt

Where was that valley in which that grand patriarchal gathering was held? It was about fifty, sixty or seventy miles north of Jackson County, Missouri, where the Zion of the latter days will be built...

This man (Adam), will sit upon his throne, and ten thousand times ten thousand immortal beings—his children—will stand before him, with all their different grades of Priesthood, according to the order which God has appointed and ordained. Then every quorum of the Priesthood in this Latter-day Saint Church will find its place, and never until then. If we go behind the veil we will not see this perfect organization of the Saints of all generations until that period shall arrive. That will be before Jesus comes in his glory. Then we will find that there is a place for the First Presidency of this Church; for the Twelve Apostles called in this dispensation; for the twelve disciples that were called among the remnants of Joseph on this land in ancient times; for the Twelve that were called among the ten tribes of Israel in the north country; for the Twelve that were called in Palestine, who administered in the presence of our Savior; all the various quorums and councils of the Priesthood in every dispensation that has transpired since the days of Adam until the present time will find their places, according to the callings, gifts, blessings, ordinations and keys of Priesthood which the Lord Almighty has conferred upon them in their several generations. This, then, will be one of the grandest meetings that has ever transpired upon the face of our globe. What manner of persons ought you and I, my brethren and sisters, and all the people of God in the latter days to be, that we may be counted worthy to participate in the august assemblies that are to come from the eternal worlds. (*Journal of Discourses*, 17:187-188)

DC 107:56-57 Adam... predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation

Orson Pratt

The object of this grand meeting of our great ancestors, was that Adam might bestow a great Patriarchal blessing upon his descendants. Hence the righteous of his posterity were gathered on that occasion. He pronounced upon them his last blessing. They were favored on that occasion, for the Lord appeared unto them. This meeting was very interesting in its nature, and the Lord was very much interested, as well as the people. He appeared to this vast congregation, and imparted comfort to Adam in his old age. And Adam was filled with the Holy Ghost. Notwithstanding he was bowed down with age, being filled with the Holy Ghost, he predicted what should come to pass among his posterity to the latest generations. Hence he must have spoken concerning all the following dispensations, that were to be revealed from time to time to the children of men. He must have spoken concerning the spreading of his posterity after the days of Noah, and of the great work of God being established on the earth in the latter days, and concerning the second advent of the Son of God, concerning the great day of rest, the period when Satan should be bound. All these things were written in the Book of Enoch, who was present on that occasion. And this book is to be testified of, in due time, to the Saints of the last days. This will be one of the means by which God will fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah, that “the knowledge of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the great deep.” (*Journal of Discourses*, 16:48-49)

DC 107:58 the Twelve... ordain and set in order all the other officers of the church

Brigham Young

Now will it cause some of you to marvel that I was not ordained a High Priest before I was ordained an Apostle? Brother Kimball and myself were never ordained High Priests. How wonderful! I was going to say how little some of the brethren understood the Priesthood, after the Twelve were called. In our early career in this Church, on one occasion, in one of our Councils, we were telling about some of the Twelve wanting to ordain us High Priests, and what I said to Brother Patten when he wanted to ordain me in York State: said I, Brother Patten, wait until I can lift my hand to heaven and say, I have magnified the office of an Elder. After our conversation was over in the Council, some of the brethren began to query, and said we ought to be ordained High Priests; at the same time I did not consider that an Apostle needed to be ordained a High Priest, an Elder, or a Teacher. I did not express my views on the subject, at that time, but thought I would hear what brother Joseph would say about it. It was William E. McLellin who told Joseph that I and Heber were not ordained High Priests, and wanted to know if it should not be done. Said Joseph, "Will you insult the Priesthood? Is that all the knowledge you have of the office of an Apostle? Do you not know that the man who receives the Apostleship, receives all the keys that ever were, or that can be, conferred upon mortal man? What are you talking about? I am astonished!" Nothing more was said about it.

I have tried to show you, brethren, as briefly as possible, the order of the Priesthood. When a man is ordained to be an Apostle, his Priesthood is without beginning of days, or end of life, like the Priesthood of Melchizedek. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, selected and arranged by John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954], 141)

John Taylor

It [is] the duty of the Twelve "to ordain and set in order all the officers of the Church;" to see that the Church is "righted up" in all its various departments, and in the organization of its various quorums; where it is necessary that Stakes should be organized organize them; and to see that all the quorums and officers be placed in their proper position so that they will work harmoniously and according to the revelations and order of God. (*Journal of Discourses*, 19:51)

DC 107:68 the office of a bishop is in administering all temporal things

"The bishop should know the temporal circumstances of ward members and ensure that needy members receive proper care. It is not enough to respond only when asked for help. To serve effectively, the bishop should seek out the poor, the needy, the single parent, the aged, the disabled, the fatherless, the widowed, and others who have special needs.

"There are many ways for the bishop to identify needy ward members. One way is through promptings of the Spirit. The bishop should listen for the Spirit to prompt him to inquire about members' well-being and to reveal undisclosed needs.

"The bishop may also identify welfare needs during meetings of the ward priesthood executive committee, ward council, and ward welfare committee. Interviews with the elders quorum president, high priests group leader, and Relief society president also help him identify welfare needs." (*Church Handbook of Instructions*, 1998, Book 1, p. 14)

Marion G. Romney

Of all of the bishop's assignments, as important as each one is, none is more important than care for the poor.

There is only one common judge in each ward, only one man authorized to perceive the needs of the people, only one priesthood holder acting as the Lord's representative to succor the feeble knees and hands that hang down (see D&C 81:5). Perhaps the most pointed and clear summary of the bishop's assignment to care for the poor was given by **President J. Reuben Clark** when he said:

"To the bishop is given all the powers, and responsibilities which the Lord has specifically prescribed in the Doctrine and Covenants for the caring of the poor, to him go the funds necessary therefore, and to him are given the gifts and functions necessary for carrying on this work. No one else is charged with this duty and responsibility, no one else is endowed with the power and functions necessary for this work.

"... Thus 'by the word of the Lord the sole mandate to care for and the sole discretion in caring for, the poor of the Church is lodged in the bishop,' and short of actual transgression no one can call his action into question. 'It is his duty and his only to determine to whom, when, how, and how much shall be given to any member of his ward from Church funds and as ward help.

" 'This is his high and solemn obligation, imposed by the Lord Himself. The bishop cannot escape this duty; he cannot shirk it; he cannot pass it on to someone else, and so relieve himself. Whatever help he calls in, he is still responsible' " ("The Role of a Bishop in the Church Welfare Program," *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 94)

DC 107:74 Thus shall he be a judge, even a common judge

Gordon B. Hinckley

Now let me say a few words directly to the bishops who are with us this night. And much of what I say to you might be echoed to the stake presidents and others in similar callings. I hope you know that I carry in my heart a great feeling of love for you. I know that your people love you. Tremendous is your trust. In calling you, we have placed in you our total confidence. We expect you to stand as the presiding high priest of the ward, a counselor to the people, a defender and helper of those in trouble, a comfort to those in sorrow, a supplier to those in need. We expect you to stand as a guardian and protector of the doctrine that is taught in your ward, of the quality of the teaching, of the filling of the many offices which are necessary.

You stand as a common judge in Israel. This is almost a terrifying responsibility. In some instances, you must determine even the eligibility of your people to be members of the Church. You must determine their worthiness to receive baptism, their worthiness to be ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood, their eligibility to serve missions, and above all, their qualifications to enter the house of the Lord and partake of the blessings there to be had. ("The Shepherds of the Flock," *Ensign*, May 1999, 53)

Boyd K. Packer

The interview for a temple recommend is conducted privately between the bishop and the Church member concerned. Here the member is asked searching questions about his personal conduct and worthiness and about his loyalty to the Church and its officers. The person must certify that he is morally clean and is keeping the Word of Wisdom, paying a full tithe, living in harmony with the teachings of the Church, and not maintaining any affiliation or sympathy with apostate groups. The bishop is instructed that confidentiality in handling these matters with each interviewee is of the utmost importance. ("The Holy Temple," *Ensign*, Feb. 1995, 32)

DC 107:76 a literal descendant of Aaron has a legal right to the presidency

Harold B. Lee

I had a big farm boy come to me declaring that he was a literal descendant of Aaron. I did not appear excited about that, and said that I supposed that there were thousands of literal descendants of Aaron if we knew where they were. He said, "I have come to claim my right to be the Presiding Bishop of the Church."

"Well," I said, "that's fine, only you have just neglected to understand one little scripture. If you will turn to D&C 68 of the D&C you will find the Lord saying something about how that was to be governed:

"A literal descendant of Aaron, also, must be designated by this Presidency, and found worthy, and anointed, and ordained under the hands of this Presidency, otherwise they are not legally authorized to officiate in their priesthood. (D&C 68:20.)

Now all you need to do if you are a literal descendant of Aaron is to go home and wait until President Grant sends for you. If he adjudges you worthy and he ordains you, then you can serve as the Presiding Bishop without counselors, but you have to wait until he calls you and so ordains you."

"Oh," he said, "I didn't understand that." Just a little simple principle that he had overlooked. He has to be chosen by the president and ordained no matter whether he is a literal descendant or not. (*BYU Speeches of the Year*, 1961 7.)

Joseph Fielding Smith

There are some men in the Church who have been blessed by patriarchs and pronounced descendants of Levi, but they have not made any claim to the office of bishop, for the revelation governing this situation says literal descendant of Aaron, not of Levi. There is evidently a great host of men who are descendants of Levi but not of Aaron.

The person spoken of in the revelations as having the right by lineage to the bishopric is the one who is the firstborn. By virtue of his birth he is entitled to hold "the keys or authority of the same." This has reference only to the one who presides over the Aaronic Priesthood. It has no reference whatever to bishops of wards. Further, such a one must be designated by the First Presidency of the Church and

receive his anointing and ordination under their hands. The revelation comes from the Presidency, not from the patriarch, to establish a claim to the right to preside in this office, In the absence of knowledge concerning such a descendant, any high priest, chosen by the Presidency, may hold the office of Presiding Bishop and serve with counselors. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols., edited by Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-1956], 3: 92)

DC 107:78 the most difficult cases of the church...shall be handed over... before the Presidency of the High Priesthood

At the time of this revelation, the Brethren would have understood this to mean that the First Presidency should deal with cases the Kirtland Bishop could not. Certainly, the First Presidency is the final authority on all church matters including church discipline, if needed.

However, this scripture makes more sense when examined at the stake level. The stake organization with 3 presiding high priests and a council of 12 high councilors is exactly analogous to the First Presidency and the Twelve. At the stake level, cases of church discipline which are beyond the bounds of a Bishop's Council come before the Stake Presidency and High Council. Whether a transgression is dealt with at the stake or ward level is ultimately at the discretion of the Stake President, but a disciplinary council which could result in the excommunication of a Melchizedek priesthood holder is generally held at the stake level. This is in perfect harmony with the word of the Lord as contained in this section.

DC 107:85 the duty of a president... is to preside... to sit in council with them, and to teach them their duty

D. Todd Christofferson

In the October general conference of 1982, **Elder Robert L. Backman** recounted the experience of a young man named Mark Peterson. Shortly after his ordination as a deacon, the deacons quorum presidency scheduled an appointment with Mark and his parents at their home.

"Promptly at the hour set, the doorbell rang. The members of the presidency stood on the porch, dressed in suits, white shirts, and ties, and each one carrying his scriptures.

"Sitting down with Mark and his parents, they began with prayer, then handed an agenda to everyone there.

"The president then opened the scriptures, having Mark and his father read those references which speak of the power of the Aaronic Priesthood, what it is, and the particular duties of a deacon.

"The president then spoke about Mark's particular responsibilities and duties: how he should dress, how he should pass the sacrament, act as a messenger, collect fast offerings. And then they asked him if he had any questions.

“At the end of the visit they welcomed him to the quorum and offered help whenever he needed it. As they left, Mark ... said to his Dad: ‘They were awesome!’ ” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 38)

The fraternity of priesthood quorums can indeed be awesome. (“The Priesthood Quorum,” *Ensign*, Nov 1998, 40)

Henry B. Eyring

I knew one Sunday that God had honored the charge to a young quorum president. I was teaching the deacons. I noticed an empty chair. There was a recording device sitting on the chair, and I could see that it was running. After the class, a boy sitting next to the empty chair picked up the recorder. As he started to leave the room, I asked him why he had recorded our discussion. He smiled and said that another deacon had told him that he wouldn’t be in the quorum that day. He was taking the recorder to his friend at home so that he could listen to our lesson.

I had trusted in the responsibility given to a young quorum president, so help from heaven came. The Spirit came to touch the members in that room and sent one of them to a friend to try to strengthen his faith and lead him to repentance. The deacon carrying the recorder had learned according to the covenants, and he reached out to help his friend and fellow member in the quorum. (*Ensign*, Nov 2006, 43–45)

DC 107:86 the duty of the president over the office of the teachers is to preside over twenty-four of the teachers

Thomas S. Monson

As a boy of fifteen I was called to preside over a quorum of teachers. Our adviser was interested in us, and we knew it. One day he said to me, “Tom, you enjoy raising pigeons, don’t you?”

I responded with a warm “Yes.”

Then he proffered, “How would you like me to give you a pair of purebred Birmingham Roller pigeons?”

This time I answered, “Yes, sir!” You see, the pigeons I had were just the common variety trapped on the roof of the Grant Elementary School.

He invited me to come to his home the next evening. The next day was one of the longest in my young life. I was awaiting my adviser’s return from work an hour before he arrived. He took me to his loft, which was in a small barn at the rear of his yard. As I looked at the most beautiful pigeons I had yet seen, he said, “Select any male, and I will give you a female which is different from any other pigeon in the world.” I made my selection. He then placed in my hand a tiny hen. I asked what made her so different. He responded, “Look carefully, and you’ll notice that she has but one eye.” Sure enough, one eye was missing, a cat having done the damage. “Take them home to your loft,” he counseled. “Keep them in for about ten days and then turn them out to see if they will remain at your place.”

I followed his instructions. Upon releasing them, the male pigeon strutted about the roof of the loft, then returned inside to eat. But the one-eyed female was gone in an instant. I called Harold, my adviser, and asked: "Did that one-eyed pigeon return to your loft?"

"Come on over," said he, "and we'll have a look."

As we walked from his kitchen door to the loft, my adviser commented, "Tom, you are the president of the teachers quorum." This I already knew. Then he added, "What are you going to do to activate Bob?"

I answered, "I'll have him at quorum meeting this week."

Then he reached up to a special nest and handed to me the one-eyed pigeon. "Keep her in a few days and try again." This I did, and once more she disappeared. Again the experience, "Come on over and we'll see if she returned here." Came the comment as we walked to the loft, "Congratulations on getting Bob to priesthood meeting. Now what are you and Bob going to do to activate Bill?"

"We'll have him there this week," I volunteered.

This experience was repeated over and over again. I was a grown man before I fully realized that, indeed, Harold, my adviser, had given me a special pigeon; the only bird in his loft he knew would return every time she was released. It was his inspired way of having an ideal personal priesthood interview with the teachers quorum president every two weeks. I owe a lot to that one-eyed pigeon. I owe more to that quorum adviser. He had the patience to help me prepare for opportunities which lay ahead. ("The Army of the Lord," *Ensign*, May 1979, 36)

DC 107:88 this president is to be a bishop

Thomas S. Monson

When I served as a bishop, I noted one Sunday morning that one of our priests was missing from the priesthood meeting. I left the quorum in the care of the adviser and visited Richard's home. His mother said he was working at the West Temple Garage. I drove to the garage in search of Richard and looked everywhere but could not find him. Suddenly, I had the inspiration to gaze down into the old-fashioned grease pit situated at the side of the station. From the darkness I could see two shining eyes. Then I heard Richard say: "You found me, Bishop! I'll come up." He never missed another priesthood meeting.

The family moved, and Richard moved with them. About a year later Bishop Arthur Spencer of the Wells Stake called and said that Richard was responding to a mission call to Mexico and asked if I would accept the family's invitation to speak at his farewell testimonial. At the meeting, when Richard responded, he mentioned that the turning point in his determination to fill a mission came one Sunday morning—not in the chapel, but as he gazed up from the depths of a dark grease pit and found his quorum president's outstretched hand. (*Ensign*, Nov 1984, 41)

Thomas S. Monson

The bishop, by revelation, is the president of the Aaronic Priesthood and is president of the priests in his ward. (See D&C 107:87–88.) He cannot delegate these God-given responsibilities. However, he can place accountability with his counselors and name as quorum advisers men who can touch the lives of boys—indeed, men who are models to follow. Were I a bishop tonight, I would turn to my second counselor and say: “Brother Balmforth, you have the duty to look after the deacons in the ward. Yours is the task to ensure that every boy is worthy and is ordained a teacher when he reaches his fourteenth birthday.” Then I would address my first counselor with the thought: “Brother Hemingway, yours is the duty to make certain that every teacher is worthy and is ordained a priest when he reaches sixteen. As the bishop, I will assume the task to so labor with the young men who are priests that they are worthy and are ordained elders as they embark on their missions.”

This, then, is our assignment: to save every boy, thereby assuring a worthy husband for each of our young women, strong Melchizedek Priesthood quorums, and a missionary force trained and capable of accomplishing what the Lord expects. (“The Aaronic Priesthood Pathway,” *Ensign*, Nov 1984, 41)

DC 107:89 the duty of the president over the office of elders

J. Richard Clarke

Elder Matthew Cowley once asked an elders quorum president how his elders were getting along as a quorum. “Do you do anything to help one another?” “Oh, yes,” was the response. “We’ve got a member of our quorum in the hospital in New Mexico. He was a vigorous young man, buying a farm, a hard worker with a lovely family. All of a sudden he was stricken.” That could have meant the end of his farm and family security.

The elders quorum president said, “That was our loss as much as for his wife and children. So we took over, and we’ve operated that farm. All he has to worry about is getting well.” (“To Honor the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, May 1991, 43)

Joseph B. Wirthlin

In the Columbus (Ohio) Westerville Ward, elders quorum president Gene Arnold held a special fireside for his quorum members on the importance of having a year’s supply of food and clothing. He challenged those in attendance to try to accomplish most of that task by the end of the year—several months away. He then went to work to help them do just that—through loving encouragement and by setting the example. Many families in the quorum achieved excellent progress on their food storage during those months. President Arnold also takes quorum members with him to the cannery at the bishops’ storehouse when he goes, and together they can their own food for their year’s supply.

Bill Myers, president of the elders quorum in Bloomington, Illinois, has focused on service projects for those in need. He and his fellow quorum members assisted a single ward member who had been disabled by a shoulder injury by putting a new roof on her house and helping her with some home repair...

Elders quorum president Terry Lenahan found that home teaching needed improvement when he was called to preside over the quorum in Woodstock, Georgia. He first identified all families assigned to his quorum and then organized the home teachers and Aaronic Priesthood junior companions into three home teaching teams under the supervision of the three members of the quorum presidency. He held special training sessions on home teaching as part of the regular quorum instruction to teach the brethren how to relate to families, how to fellowship inactive members, and how to carry out similar responsibilities. He and his counselors also concentrated on regular and effective home teaching interviews and careful follow-up and encouragement to individual home teachers. Home teaching statistics rose from 40 percent to 85 percent and higher. Effective training and interviews were his secrets to better home teaching.

Oduvaldo Salvador Amato, elders quorum president in the Aeroporto Ward of the Sao Paulo Brazil West Stake, is also diligent in strengthening home teaching in his quorum. When he was first called to preside over the elders quorum, only 20 percent of the families were being visited. He went to work to see that every family had home teachers and that the home teaching reporting was better organized. He says that the dramatic improvement in home teaching percentages in his quorum "is mostly due to better planning in presidency meetings and the total activity of the quorum as a whole."...

So much of this work depends on each individual priesthood bearer being diligent in his duties and obtaining the power of the priesthood in his life through personal worthiness. ("The Work of Our Priesthood Quorums," *Ensign*, Aug. 1984, 12)

DC 107:91-92 the duty of the President of the office of the high Priesthood is to preside over the whole church...like unto Moses

James E. Faust

The President of the Church directs the use of all of the keys and authority of the priesthood and is the only person who can exercise all of them, even though all of the ordained Apostles hold these keys, some of which are in latent form.

Brethren, I have been a member of the First Presidency for only a few days. It seems as though before I had this calling I had limited vision, but I have now put on glasses that allow me to see more clearly, in a small way, the magnitude of the responsibility of the President of the Church. I am afraid I am like the aristocrat who wore a monocle in one eye. Of him it was said, "He could see more than he could comprehend." The men who see most clearly the big picture are these giants of the Lord, President Hinckley and President Monson, who have served many years faithfully as counselors to the previous Presidents of the Church. (*Ensign*, May 1995, 47)

N. Eldon Tanner

It is most important that we, as members of the Church, accept without reservation President Lee as a prophet of God and as our leader. I am glad I can say that from the bottom of my heart with every bit of feeling I have. Let us listen to the prophet's voice and follow him, not blindly but by faith. As we do this,

we will never go astray. No holder of the priesthood can take it lightly. It is important that every member magnify his priesthood and realize that it is a great privilege and blessing to be able to hold the priesthood of God. (“The Priesthood and Its Presidency,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1973, 103)

DC 107:93-97 seven presidents are to choose other seventy besides the first

L. Aldin Porter

In the early days of the Restoration, the Lord made provision for the future growth of the Church when He said:

And these seven presidents are to choose other seventy. ...

And also other seventy, until seven times seventy, if the labor in the vineyard of necessity requires it.

And these seventy are to be traveling ministers, unto the Gentiles first and also unto the Jews (D&C 107:95–97).

The day came as prophesied in the scriptures when the work required that an additional Quorum of the Seventy be organized. This was done in April 1989, when **President Benson** said in the general priesthood session:

“With the continued rapid growth of the Church, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve have determined that the time has come to take additional steps to provide for the expansion and regulation of the Church. We announce, therefore, the organization of the Second Quorum of the Seventy to become effective immediately.

“The initial membership of the Second Quorum of the Seventy will be those General Authorities currently serving under a five-year call. Additional Brethren will be added to the Second Quorum of the Seventy from time to time and will serve as Seventies and as General Authorities also under a five-year call.”

The work continued to expand, and six years later, in preparation for further fulfillment of the role of the Seventies, **President Gordon B. Hinckley** said in the April 1995 general conference:

“Now in the ongoing of this work, administrative changes sometimes occur. The doctrine remains constant. But from time to time there are organizational and administrative changes made under provisions set forth in the revelations.

“For instance, twenty-eight years ago the First Presidency was inspired to call men to serve as regional representatives of the Twelve ... to train our stake and ward leaders in the programs of the Church that they in turn might train the membership in their responsibilities before the Lord.

“At that time there were 69 regional representatives. Today there are 284. The organization has become somewhat unwieldy...

“Now we announce the call of a new local officer to be known as an area authority. These will be high priests chosen from among past and present experienced Church leaders. They will continue with their

current employment, reside in their own homes, and serve on a Church-service basis. The term of their call will be flexible, generally for a period of approximately six years. They will be closely tied to the Area Presidencies. They will be fewer in number than have been the regional representatives. We are guided in setting up this new corps of area officers, as were our Brethren before us in the calling of regional representatives, by the provision contained in the revelation on priesthood, section 107 of the Doctrine and Covenants. After directions to the Twelve and the Seventy, the revelation states:

“ ‘Whereas other officers of the church, who belong not unto the Twelve, neither to the Seventy, are not under the responsibility to travel among all nations, but are to travel as their circumstances shall allow, notwithstanding they may hold as high and responsible offices in the church.’ ”

The call of Area Authorities was a preparatory step for what occurred just 24 months later. In the April 1997 general conference, President Hinckley announced that the Area Authorities would now be known as Area Authority Seventies. He said:

“They will continue with their present employment, reside in their own homes, and serve on a Church-service basis. Those residing in Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, and the Pacific will become members of the Third Quorum of Seventy. Those in Mexico, Central America, and South America will become members of the Fourth Quorum. Those residing in the United States and Canada will become members of the Fifth Quorum.

“They may be assigned to *(a)* preside at stake conferences and train stake presidencies, *(b)* create or reorganize stakes and set apart stake presidencies, *(c)* serve as counselors in Area Presidencies, *(d)* chair regional conference planning committees, *(e)* serve on area councils presided over by the Area Presidency, *(f)* tour missions and train mission presidents, and *(g)* complete other duties as assigned.

“Consistent with their ordination as Seventies, they become officers of the Church with a specific and definite tie to a quorum. While there will be only limited opportunities for them to come together in quorum meetings, the Presidents of the Seventy will communicate with them, will instruct them, receive reports, and do other things of that kind. They will now have a sense of belonging that they have not experienced up to this time. As Seventies they are called to preach the gospel and to be special witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ as set forth in the revelations. Though all Seventies have equal scriptural authority, members of the First and Second Quorums are designated General Authorities, while members of the Third, Fourth, and Fifth are designated Area Authorities.

“Although the ordination to the office of Seventy is without term, a Seventy is called to serve in a quorum for a designated period of years. At the conclusion of this service, he will return to activity in his respective ward and stake and will meet with his high priests group. ...

“With these respective quorums in place, we have established a pattern under which the Church may grow to any size with an organization of Area Presidencies and Area Authority Seventies, chosen and working across the world according to need.”

Today there are 276 members of the Seventy called, as the Lord has said, to “bear record of my name in all the world, wherever ... mine apostles, shall send them to prepare a way before my face” (D&C 124:139). These Seventies supervise the work of the Church under the direction of the Quorum of the Twelve in 28 areas scattered across the earth. The number of areas and quorums will certainly increase as the years pass and the work intensifies, but the organization is now in place to keep the administration of the Church close to the prophets, seers, and revelators whom the Lord has called to direct the work. (“A History of the Latter-day Seventy,” *Ensign*, Aug 2000, 15)

DC 107:99 now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed

Thomas S. Monson

Each priesthood holder attending this session tonight has a calling to serve, to put forth his best efforts in the work assigned to him. No assignment is menial in the work of the Lord, for each has eternal consequences. **President John Taylor** warned us, “If you do not magnify your callings, God will hold you responsible for those whom you might have saved had you done your duty.” [John Taylor, “Discourse,” *Deseret News*, Aug. 7, 1878, 2] And who of us can afford to be responsible for the delay of eternal life of a human soul? If great joy is the reward of saving one soul, then how terrible must be the remorse of those whose timid efforts have allowed a child of God to go unwarned or unaided so that he has to wait till a dependable servant of God comes along.

The old adage is ever true: “Do your duty, that is best; leave unto the Lord the rest.”

Most service given by priesthood holders is accomplished quietly, without fanfare. A friendly smile, a warm handclasp, a sincere testimony of truth can literally lift lives, change human nature, and save precious souls. (*Ensign*, Nov 2008, 60–62, 67–68)

Thomas S. Monson

Miracles are everywhere to be found when priesthood callings are magnified. When faith replaces doubt, when selfless service eliminates selfish striving, the power of God brings to pass His purposes.

The priesthood is not really so much a gift as it is a commission to serve, a privilege to lift, and an opportunity to bless the lives of others.

Brethren, let us who have responsibility with the Aaronic Priesthood young men not only provide them opportunities to learn but also set before them examples worthy of emulation.

For those of us who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood, our privilege to magnify our callings is ever present. We are shepherds watching over Israel. The hungry sheep look up, ready to be fed the bread of life. Are we prepared to feed the flock of God? It is imperative that we recognize the worth of a human soul, that we never give up on one of His precious sons. (*Ensign*, Nov 1999, 49)

DC 107:100 He that is slothful shall not be counted worthy to stand

Stephen L. Richards

The Priesthood is not static and a man's ordination to it is not a static investiture. There may be some men, however, who so regard it, for they seem to be so smug and content with their ordinations.

I can well imagine such a man going into the presence of the great Eternal Judge and saying in substance, "While I was on earth I was a High Priest. I come now to claim the reward of a High Priest." I think it is not difficult to suppose what may be his answer. He will likely be met with such questions as these, "What did you do when you were a High Priest? How did you use this great power which you held? Whom did you bless with it?" Upon his reply to such interrogatories as these will his reward be predicated. (*Conference Report*, April 1937, Second Day—Morning Meeting 46)