

# MISSION PRESIDENT'S

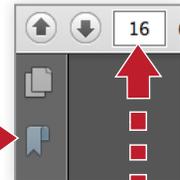
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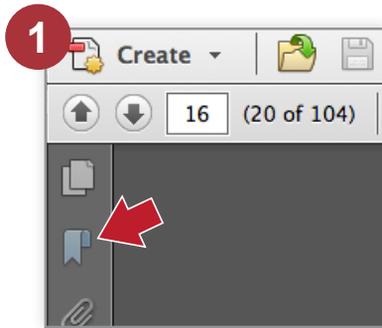


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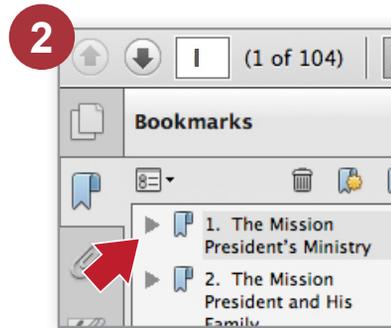
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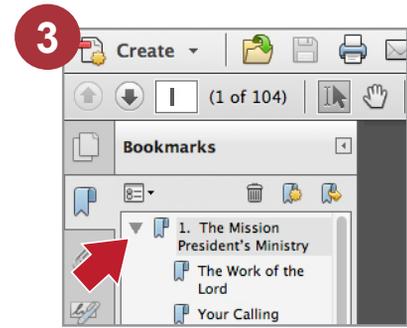
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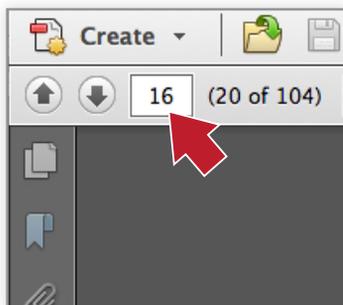


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# 1. The Mission President's Ministry

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## The Work of the Lord

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“And again, I say unto you, that whosoever ye shall send in my name, by the voice of your brethren, the Twelve, duly recommended and authorized by you, shall have power to open the door of my kingdom unto any nation whithersoever ye shall send them—

“Inasmuch as they shall humble themselves before me, and abide in my word, and hearken to the voice of my Spirit” (D&C 112:21–22).

*Additional scriptures:* John 15:16; Alma 12:25–34; 17:2–3; 23:6; 29:9–10; 36:24; D&C 1:4; 4:1–7; 12:6–8; 29:7; 42:11; 110:11; 124:128

God has declared, “This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). The central and crowning element of this work is the Atonement of Jesus Christ, through which immortality has been guaranteed and the path to eternal life opened to all mankind (see 2 Nephi 31:17–21). The Atonement is the source from which your call to proclaim repentance to the world flows: “For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him. . . . And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth! Wherefore, you are called to cry repentance unto this people” (D&C 18:11, 13–14; see verses 10–16; see also 2 Nephi 2:6–8).

From the foundation of the world, God instituted and proclaimed the divine plan by which each of His children could lay claim to the blessings of its central feature, the Atonement—by exercising faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repenting, entering the covenant of baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.

Throughout the dispensations of this earth, God has proclaimed this message to His children through His messengers (see Alma 12:28–30; 27:4; Moroni 7:28–32; D&C 42:6). In this dispensation the gospel of Jesus Christ was restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith with divine authority. You and your missionaries are among the “choice spirits who were reserved to come forth in the fulness of times to take part in laying the foundations of the great latter-day work” (D&C 138:53).

“The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth” (D&C 65:2).

You have been called by a prophet of God and set apart by one holding authority to confer upon you the keys to this great work for your mission. In all that you do, no matter how routine or mundane your tasks may occasionally seem, you should see yourself and your missionaries within this eternal perspective of our Heavenly Father's plan of salvation for His children.

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## Your Calling

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In your calling as a mission president, your major areas of responsibility are:

1. The well-being of you and your family (see chapter 2). Your family is your first and foremost responsibility.

2. The well-being of your missionaries (see chapters 4 and 5). The Lord has called the precious souls assigned to your mission to be His missionaries. As their mission president, you have a personal responsibility for them. To emphasize that responsibility, this handbook will frequently refer to them as "your missionaries."
3. Baptism, confirmation, and retention of converts (see chapter 6). You have been called to help your missionaries invite others to come unto Christ by helping them receive the restored gospel through faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end (see *Preach My Gospel*, page 1).
4. Supporting local leaders in activating less-active members (see chapter 8). Your calling is to increase the number of new converts and also to assist local Church leaders in establishing and strengthening the Church.
5. Presiding over member districts if any are organized in your mission (see chapter 9).

You have been given keys to preside over your missionaries and administer the work of sharing the gospel in your mission. Ultimately, the fruits of your labors as a mission president will be seen in the lives of your family, your missionaries, and families and individuals in your mission area. In this way the kingdom of God will grow stronger.

In addition to assessing whether you and your missionaries are helping people enter the covenant of baptism, you should ask yourself questions such as the following: Are my wife and family growing spiritually and finding joy in serving the Lord? Am I preparing my missionaries to be righteous fathers and mothers in Zion and to fulfill future leadership callings in the Church? Are more people attending sacrament meeting in our mission?

Such results are, of course, not always easy to measure and are influenced by many factors, but keep firmly in your mind that these are the types of results for which you are striving.

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## The Mission President's Roles

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**Husband and father.** Your family is your most important responsibility. You must devote adequate time, energy, and attention to caring for them physically, emotionally, and spiritually. You should ensure that the experience during your time in the mission is rewarding and inspiring for your wife, any children who accompany you to the field, and any family members who remain at home (see chapter 2).

**Missionary.** You and your wife have been set apart as missionaries. Like all missionaries, you will have opportunities to find and teach others, using the principles in *Preach My Gospel*. You can prepare people to be taught by your missionaries, just as you will ask other members to do. You can also teach side by side with your missionaries, invite your missionaries to teach investigators in the mission home, teach the gospel in investigator firesides and to other interested groups, and introduce the Church to people you meet.

**Teacher and trainer.** Teaching, training, and guiding your missionaries are among your most important duties. You can teach them through your example, by proselyting and teaching with them, by interviewing them, by developing the mission training plan, by teaching in zone conferences, by supervising training in zone conferences and district meetings, and by encouraging personal and companion study. Base your teaching on the scriptures, the *Missionary Handbook*, and *Preach My Gospel*. You are also responsible for training in member districts (much of which may be delegated to your counselors; see pages 59, 61). At the request of a stake president, you may help him train the members in his stake (see page 55).

**Counselor and judge.** You have a sacred responsibility for helping missionaries be successful and for ministering to their needs. You should normally interview each missionary once during each transfer cycle and counsel with your missionaries on other occasions as needed. If your mission includes member districts, you serve as a common judge in Israel for the members in those districts. You may convene disciplinary councils for members of member districts as needed (see page 62) or for missionaries as directed by a General Authority in the

Missionary Department (see page 27). In member districts, you interview missionary candidates and returning missionaries. You will also conduct temple recommend interviews (see page 61).

**Administrator.** The missionaries in the office handle a large part of the day-to-day administrative duties of the mission (see chapter 10) so that you can spend most of your time working directly with missionaries and members. You oversee their work. You cannot delegate the transferring of missionaries or the signing of checks.

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## Your Ministry

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Just as your missionaries minister to their investigators, you minister to your missionaries by strengthening their faith in Jesus Christ, inviting them to repent, and encouraging them to renew and keep covenants—all so that they might be blessed and guided by the Holy Spirit. In this important way, you set an example for your missionaries.

***Be an example of Christlike love, and express that love frequently to your missionaries, to members, and to others.*** Without charity for all people you cannot accomplish the work of the Lord in His way (see 1 Corinthians 13; Moroni 7:43–48). Teach your missionaries through your example how to love the people with whom they work. Pray “with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ” (Moroni 7:48).

***Seek increased faith to become an instrument in the Lord's hands to establish the Church.*** Your influence on missionaries, converts, and members directly affects conversion and retention. Develop plans and initiate actions that strengthen the faith of missionaries and members and help them make and keep commitments. Your righteous influence and example will give your missionaries a sense of purpose and a confidence in their own capacity to influence others.

***Emphasize that the first principles and ordinances of the gospel are the foundation of conversion, retention, and activation.*** You and your missionaries have been called to establish the Church, not just to increase the number of members. Emphasize retention and activation as well as baptism to teach your missionaries that you are committed to establishing the Church in a lasting way. Help your missionaries understand that making sure converts experience lasting conversion will reduce many retention and activation challenges. Help them see that their work in retention and activation is integral to their proselyting efforts.

***Teach the purpose of missionary work clearly and frequently.*** Your missionaries' purpose is to invite others to come unto Christ by helping them receive the restored gospel through faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end (see *Preach My Gospel*, page 1). Fulfilling this purpose includes preparing converts for priesthood ordination, temple ordinances, and continued service and growth in the Church. Make sure that intermediate goals are not mistaken for this greater purpose.

***Teach your missionaries to work closely with ward leaders and members in finding, teaching, retention, and activation.*** In all finding and teaching activities, members and missionaries need to work closely together. Teach your missionaries how to work with members to find more people to teach and how to include members in teaching their investigators. Also teach them how to work with bishops, who are responsible for the work of sharing the gospel in the ward, retaining new converts, and activating the less active.

***When you teach obedience, point your missionaries toward the Lord; help them rely on His merits through the Atonement and make their love for the Lord their greatest motivation.*** Teach and testify frequently of the Savior and express your love for Him. Encourage your missionaries to do the same. Explain clearly that the standards in the *Missionary Handbook* are established to help them keep their eyes single to the work of the Lord so that they can enjoy the companionship of the Holy Ghost (see D&C 88:67). Do not ignore or lightly dismiss disobedience. Help all your missionaries—especially those who are struggling—understand and feel what the Lord expects of them.

**Spend time with missionaries, members, and local priesthood leaders.** Follow the Savior's example by serving the people you seek to influence. Work closely with missionaries and missionary leaders, teach in missionary district meetings and other small groups, and get to know local priesthood leaders personally.

**Be bold and direct, and encourage your missionaries to be bold and direct.** Strive to follow Alma's counsel: "Use boldness, but not overbearance" (Alma 38:12). Be bold and direct while building on positive feelings, inspire rather than criticize, and show patience, kindness, and love (see D&C 4:5–6; 121:43). Give clear feedback on performance, and ask for greater efforts and better results.

Encourage your missionaries to seek and receive inspiration so that they can work with their investigators directly and boldly, with a firm conviction that they are representing the Lord. Challenge them to bear testimony and to ask for firm commitments as guided by the Spirit. Build their confidence in handling difficult tasks by providing opportunities to practice and by giving constructive feedback. Encourage direct approaches in finding and teaching investigators.

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## Sources of Assistance

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### *Personal Revelation*

Your greatest help will come from our Heavenly Father. You and your wife should seek His guidance through prayer and fasting, "by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118). Humbly seek the guidance of the Spirit, and live so that the Spirit will help you apply correct principles to the situations in your mission. Exercise your faith by acting promptly as the whisperings of the Spirit come to you.

The busy schedule of a mission president can make regular scripture study a particular challenge. Make sure that you have meaningful study in the scriptures each day (see Acts 17:11). Remember that scripture study opens the door for personal revelation.

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### *Area Presidency*

Under the direction of the Council of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, the Seventy are responsible for "building up the church and regulating all the affairs of the same in all nations" (D&C 107:34). As part of this responsibility, the members of the Seventy supervise the ecclesiastical areas within which missions are organized.

In this handbook the term *Area Presidency* refers to the members of the Presidency of the Seventy, who supervise areas in the United States and Canada, as well as the members of Area Presidencies in other parts of the world.

You report to and receive instruction and direction from your Area Presidency. Unless noted otherwise in this handbook, coordinate your dealings with Church headquarters through the Area Presidency.

If your mission is outside the United States and Canada, consult with the Area Presidency regarding special problems and difficulties, such as major transgressions, belated confessions, missionaries who ask to return home at their own insistence, and serious illnesses, accidents, or deaths. You should also inform the Missionary Department when such problems arise. If your mission is in the United States or Canada, you will normally work directly with the Missionary Department on such matters. On some matters you will consult with the member of the Presidency of the Seventy who supervises your area, in accordance with the policies of the Presidency.

**Mission tours.** Usually at least once a year a General Authority or an Area Seventy will tour the mission with you. The primary purposes of the tour are to counsel with and strengthen you and your wife, to teach and inspire the missionaries, and to assess the missionaries' spirituality and maturity.

The visiting authority will meet with you and your wife, some of the missionary leaders, and the mission office staff. He will also conduct training for all the missionaries in zone conferences. He may interview some of the missionaries and hold meetings and firesides with

members and investigators. He will focus on strengthening the missionaries, increasing convert baptisms, promoting efforts to establish the Church (including strengthening convert retention), and correcting any departures from established policies.

**Other interactions.** You will also meet with members of your Area Presidency during:

- Pre-mission orientation and training.
- Area mission presidents' seminars.
- Other interim meetings.
- Other visits to the mission (for example, for stake or district conferences).

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### *Coordinating Councils*

Coordinating councils are established to (1) instruct and edify priesthood leaders; (2) coordinate the work of stakes and missions in a balanced effort of conversion, retention, and activation; and (3) coordinate multistake matters. The agenda for a coordinating council meeting usually includes specific discussion about coordinating missionary work (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, page 60). These councils meet at least twice annually, once after April general conference and again after October general conference.

Area Presidencies are responsible for the organization and function of coordinating councils and may attend council meetings as they choose. They also determine which stake and mission presidents are included in each council, designate an Area Seventy as chairman for each council, and approve any others to be invited to attend council meetings. Frequently temple presidents will be invited to attend.

Within the guidelines for coordinating councils, stake, mission, and temple presidents should give input to the council chairman in preparing agendas and topics to be discussed in the councils. Stake and mission presidents should counsel together as equal participants in the council.

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### *Local Church Leaders*

Commit yourself to work in unity with the local leaders of the Church in your mission. They are a valuable source of information, experience, and wisdom.

You should have two counselors in the mission presidency, usually called from among the local members, who will be a major help to you in carrying out your responsibilities (see pages 11, 56, 59).

Develop close personal relationships with the stake presidents in your mission. Meet with them regularly, and express to them frequently your sincere desire to support them and to strengthen their stakes. Ask for their suggestions and recommendations on where missionaries may be assigned and how the work may best be conducted. There may be occasions when you will call on a stake president to assist you with an interview of a missionary (see page 19).

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### *Director for Temporal Affairs*

Each area has a director for temporal affairs, who supervises the area administration office and helps mission presidents with real-estate transactions, construction, operations and maintenance, record keeping, purchasing, finances, welfare services, distribution, and translation. Contact him for help in maintaining the mission home and office.

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### *Missionary Department*

The Missionary Department provides support to the priesthood line of the Church, including mission presidents and missionaries. The department also provides resources to encourage and support the missionary work of members.

Following your call, the Missionary Department will send you information and materials, including information about the seminar for new mission presidents. At the seminar, members of the First Presidency, the Twelve, and others give instruction.

A Missionary Department In-Field Services representative, who is a returned mission president, is assigned to assist you before and throughout your mission. You should handle routine administrative matters directly with him, including missionary travel arrangements and visa processing, insurance questions, security problems, inquiries regarding conditions in the

field, and similar issues. He will also be a resource for you in helping missionaries who are experiencing personal problems (see chapters 4 and 5).

When calling Church headquarters, mission presidents in the United States and Canada may use the Church's toll-free line (800-453-3860). When asked for the extension, enter the number 2 plus the last four digits of the regular phone number. (For example, for 240-2222, enter 2-2222.)

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*Internet Resources* Resources are available to mission presidents at the following password-protected Web site: [www.mormon.org/missionpresidents](http://www.mormon.org/missionpresidents). These resources include handbooks, guides, directories, policy and procedure statements, resources on *Preach My Gospel*, answers to questions, and proselyting ideas and resources. If you have not yet received a password or have forgotten your password, call 801-240-4357.

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*Returning Mission President* As you prepare to begin your assignment as a mission president, the returning mission president can answer questions about housing, living conditions, and schools in your mission and many other matters. You may contact him after he has received official notification that you will be succeeding him. You may also arrange for your wife to communicate with the returning president's wife.

When you meet with the returning president in the mission field, be sure to review the mission presidents' transition checklist with him (see page 79). As you meet with the president you are replacing, it is not necessary to discuss details of individual missionaries, except for serious health problems or other exceptional concerns (see page 77).

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*Handbooks* This handbook contains basic policies and guidelines established by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to help you lead your missionaries and direct the work. You and your wife should become thoroughly familiar with it.

You will find it useful to study this handbook regularly so that you can keep clearly in mind the principles, guidelines, and policies that the Church has established to govern your work.

This handbook also refers you to other basic resources that provide additional information: the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1: Stake Presidencies and Bishoprics* (35205); the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders* (35209); the *Missionary Handbook* (35996); *Preach My Gospel* (36617); the *Mission Office Administration* CD-ROM (50361); and the *Missionary Health Guide* (37012). Because most material in those handbooks is not repeated in the *Mission President's Handbook*, you should become thoroughly familiar with them.

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## 2. The Mission President and His Family

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### Introduction

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“And ye will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked; neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another, and serve the devil, who is the master of sin, or who is the evil spirit which hath been spoken of by our fathers, he being an enemy to all righteousness.

“But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another” (Mosiah 4:14–15).

*Additional scriptures:* Deuteronomy 11:18–19; Ephesians 5:25; 6:4; 1 Timothy 5:8; Enos 1:3; 3 Nephi 18:21; D&C 25:5–6; 68:25, 28; 93:40, 43, 50; Moses 6:58–62

Your calling as a mission president is one of the most demanding callings you will have in the Church. But even more demanding and more important is your eternal calling as a husband and father. You must continue to devote your time, your energy, and your attention to your family. No success in the mission is adequate compensation for failure in your family.

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### Your Own Well-Being

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In order to strengthen others, you must maintain your own spiritual and physical strength. As you lose yourself in serving others, take care not to neglect your own well-being. For example, you should:

- Set aside time each day for meaningful prayer and scripture study.
- Take time to plan.
- Exercise regularly.
- Take time each day to eat healthy, nutritious meals and maintain a balanced diet.
- Take time to rest both mind and body.

Maintain an appropriate balance between fulfilling the responsibilities and demands of being a husband, a father, and a mission president and taking care of your physical and spiritual well-being.

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### Husband and Father

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Because mission responsibilities take so much of your time and energy, you need to plan ways to maintain a close, growing relationship with your wife and a loving, nurturing relationship with your children. Consider the following:

- Schedule time to spend with your wife each week. Go to dinner or to cultural activities. Take walks together. Carefully guard this time, and do not let outside pressures interfere with it.
- Take great care to continue holding family home evening each week and family prayer and scripture study each day.

- Schedule your preparation day on a day when your children are not in school.
- Schedule time for family outings. Visit sites in the mission together. Go to cultural or athletic events together. It is appropriate to take a short annual vacation, within mission boundaries, with family members. Although the missionaries in the mission office should always know how to contact you in case of emergency, the missionaries in general do not need to know where you are. You may assign your counselors to assume some responsibilities for supervising the missionaries for the few days while you are away. You and your wife should remain within the mission boundaries unless otherwise authorized by the Area Presidency.
- Make sure your children enjoy many of the same activities and experiences that they would have at home.
- Schedule time to attend school events of family members. If your wife desires, she may participate in school activities or organizations.
- Include your children in mission activities to the extent that circumstances permit and that they desire. You may allow them to travel with you occasionally (for example, to stake conferences).
- When your wife is at home, she need not dress in the same manner that she would when among the missionaries.
- Do not expect your children to conform to a missionary lifestyle (for example, in regard to music and other entertainment). Allow them to meet the same expectations you would have for them at home.
- Adjust your schedule when necessary to meet family occasions. For example, you may decide to scale back your mission activities somewhat during the Christmas season so that you can spend more time with your family.

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## Your Family

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### *Your Wife's Roles*

**Wife and mother.** Caring for your family is your wife's primary responsibility. The number, ages, and needs of your children who are with you determine the extent to which she is involved in the mission. She is not expected to sacrifice family needs in order to participate in mission activities. If babysitting would be required for her to be involved in mission activities, she probably should participate only occasionally (see page 81).

**Your missionary companion.** Your wife is set apart as your missionary companion. As a missionary she may find, fellowship, and teach investigators. She may also teach the gospel in firesides and may introduce the gospel to people she meets in her daily activities. As your companion, she can provide support and counsel as you deal with challenges in the mission. She may counsel with you about conditions she observes, and you may ask for her input and suggestions. Be careful, however, not to burden her unduly with problems, especially with individual missionaries. She can often be a powerful influence for good when she focuses primarily on the positive in the missionaries. As you counsel with her, be careful to maintain confidences, especially in regard to confessions and other matters that missionaries ask you to keep confidential.

**Teacher of missionaries.** To the extent that her family responsibilities allow, your wife may participate in zone conferences and other meetings. She may teach doctrine, deliver spiritual messages, and offer instruction on such topics as nutrition, hygiene, health, and missionary attributes and skills. One of the most powerful ways your wife can teach missionaries is through her example—in her conduct, her dress and grooming, and the way she serves. Missionaries will see her as the ideal of a Latter-day Saint woman, wife, and mother. With you, she can teach how a husband and a wife can work as a team.

**Leader.** You may delegate to your wife specific responsibilities for sister missionaries and couples, inspections of missionary apartments, and other needs in the mission. If she is able, you should ask her to help you coordinate the medical care of your missionaries (see page 30).

If you supervise member districts, your wife may play a key role in teaching local Primary, Young Women, and Relief Society leaders, but she does not supervise the work of the auxiliaries.

Your wife can occasionally write notes to missionaries' parents to tell them what a missionary is accomplishing or to explain the condition of a missionary with health problems. Be careful, however, that you do not neglect this function yourself.

She can also recommend changes to the missionary clothing and information list sent to new missionaries by the Missionary Department (see page 64).

*Your Children*

Your children who live with you in the mission field can enjoy and benefit from associating with missionaries, getting to know nonmember friends and acquaintances, and experiencing a new culture.

Mission presidents' children normally are not set apart as missionaries and are not subject to the rules of conduct and dress that apply to full-time missionaries. They should, however, live exemplary lives, dress and groom modestly, and act appropriately.

Invite your children to participate—according to their ages, interests, and abilities—in fire-sides, missionary lessons, open houses, and events held at the mission home. They can friendship nonmembers and fellowship investigators and new converts. Teenagers approaching missionary age may work with full-time missionaries for short periods of time. With approval of the Missionary Department, the son or daughter of a mission president may receive a full-time mission call up to one year early. For other suggestions on how you can make your children's experience a positive one, see pages 7–8.

For guidelines on vehicle use by your children, see page 81.

*Membership Records*

Your family should attend the ward or branch in which the mission home is located. You should attend Church meetings with your family when other assignments permit. Your membership records should stay in your home ward unless your children accompany you to the mission. If they accompany you, your records and those of family members who accompany you should be sent to the ward where you live during your mission. Neither you nor your wife should have a calling in the ward or branch, including home or visiting teacher.

*The Family's Relationship with Missionaries*

Make sure the missionaries understand your family responsibilities. Preserve the mission home as your family residence, and protect the family's privacy there. Teach your missionaries, including those serving in the office, that they should come to the home only by invitation or after calling ahead. Make sure they feel welcome there when they visit.

*Leaving the Mission*

You and your wife are called to devote your full time and attention to serving the Lord in the mission field. Normally, mission presidents and their wives do not return home to visit during their term of service.

You and your wife should leave the mission only for meetings called by the Area Presidency. Requests for exceptions must be submitted in advance through the Area Presidency to the assigned member of the Quorum of the Twelve and coordinated with the Missionary Department. If more than one mission has headquarters in a metropolitan area, you and your wife may cross mission boundaries to conduct family and mission business.

As an exception to this policy, you may request permission for your wife to return home in connection with the marriage of one of your children or the funeral of a parent or child. Such a request should be submitted through the Area Presidency to the assigned member of the Twelve and coordinated with the Missionary Department.

If such travel is approved, it is at the family's expense. The Church may pay for travel required for health and medical reasons. Submit requests for the Church to pay for travel through your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative.

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*Family Finances*

While you are serving as a mission president, the Church reimburses the necessary living expenses of you, your wife, and your dependent children. For information on family finances, see pages 80–83.

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# 3. Organization

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## Introduction

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“A commandment I give unto you, that ye shall organize yourselves and appoint every man his stewardship” (D&C 104:11).

*Additional scriptures:* 1 Corinthians 12:27–31; D&C 28:13; 84:109–10; 88:119; 107:99; 109:8; 121:34–46; 132:8; 136:2–3, 15–16

A mission is organized on the same principles that govern the organization of the Church and its stakes and wards. Make sure your mission is deeply grounded in those principles. Help those who lead in your mission understand the sacred nature of their assignments. As you humbly seek the guidance of the Spirit, you will find understanding and wisdom in directing your mission organization.

Because the missionaries you assign to leadership positions are generally young and inexperienced in Church leadership, you are responsible for helping them become “mighty men in the faith of the Lord” who can inspire and minister to others (see Jarom 1:7). You are assisting in raising up a generation of leaders in the Lord’s kingdom. Make leadership training one of your primary concerns (see “Missionary Leadership” in the *Missionary Handbook*, pages 55–66).

For guidelines on the mission organization as it pertains to member districts, see chapter 9.

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## Mission Presidency

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Two experienced Melchizedek Priesthood holders serve as your counselors in the mission presidency. You should meet with them regularly, counseling and praying together in unity of the Spirit (see D&C 107:8, 18–19). They are a major resource in helping you carry out your responsibilities—primarily with members but also with missionaries.

To enable you to devote as much of your attention and energy as possible to your missionaries, you may ask your counselors to perform any of the following responsibilities:

- Oversee leadership development and administrative needs in member districts.
- Represent you in working with stake presidents and other local leaders (see page 56).
- Interview missionaries in urgent situations when you are unable to do so. However, they may not conduct interviews relating to missionaries’ worthiness (see page 19).
- Assist you in carrying out coordinating council decisions.
- Oversee some mission administrative functions, such as housing, medical care, referrals, travel, visas, vehicles, reports, or materials management.

You may also ask your counselors to assist you in teaching missionaries in zone conferences and other settings.

Recognize that your counselors are not called to serve full-time. Be sensitive to their other time commitments, including their families and their employment.

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### Calling and Releasing Counselors

As you talk with the president you are replacing, ask him about Melchizedek Priesthood holders in the mission who could serve as your counselors, including those who served as his counselors. As soon as possible, meet with these brethren individually to determine, under the guidance of the Spirit, who might be called to serve. If qualified local priesthood holders are not available, you may, with the authorization of the Area Presidency, call the husband in a missionary couple. Younger full-time missionaries do not serve as counselors. Procedures for recommending, calling, and setting apart counselors in the mission presidency are outlined in the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, page 56.

Before you are released, you should extend a formal release to your own counselors (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, page 48) and ask them to make themselves available to assist the new president, as he desires, until he can call counselors.

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## Missionary Organization

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Missionaries are organized to work in proselyting areas, districts, and zones. The boundaries of these units should normally be in accord with the boundaries of local wards and stakes. Separate districts or zones for sisters are not authorized.

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### Proselyting Areas

A proselyting area is a specific geographical area assigned to a missionary companionship. Help your missionaries recognize their responsibility for their areas. Encourage them to rely on the Spirit for inspiration on how they should conduct the work in their areas within established guidelines. Help them take initiative and be anxiously engaged in moving the work forward in their areas (see D&C 58:27–28; 107:99–100).

In organizing proselyting areas, consider ward and branch boundaries, distances, and ease of transportation. Each companionship, including those with missionary leaders, has a proselyting area. One missionary in each companionship is assigned as senior companion.

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### Districts

Generally two to four proselyting areas (four to eight missionaries) form a district. In organizing districts, consider ward and branch boundaries, geography, and ease of transportation. Because district leaders can be close to the other missionaries and can interact with them frequently, they fulfill a fundamental role in the success of the mission and of the missionaries. The elder assigned as district leader:

- Sets an example for the missionaries in his district through his study of the scriptures and the gospel, obedience, hard work, proselyting skills, and other aspects of missionary work.
- Carries a full proselyting load in his assigned area and works with faith and diligence to accomplish his proselyting purpose (see *Preach My Gospel*, page 1).
- Supervises, teaches, and inspires the missionaries in his district. He serves them in the same way he strives to serve his investigators—by strengthening their faith in Jesus Christ and inviting them to repent and keep their commitments so that they will enjoy the companionship of the Holy Ghost.
- Plans and conducts weekly district meetings (see *Preach My Gospel*, page ix).
- Conducts companion exchanges with the missionaries in his district (see *Missionary Handbook*, pages 63–65).
- Interviews baptismal candidates within his district, including candidates who have been taught by zone leaders in his district (see page 43).
- Looks after the well-being of the missionaries in his district, especially the sisters.
- Makes sure relationships between elders and sisters are in harmony with gospel teachings and missionary standards.

- Demonstrates effective planning.
- Follows up with the missionaries on referrals.
- Reports concerns to the zone leaders. If these concerns are confidential or urgent, he should report them directly to you.

The junior companion of a district leader should not be given any title.

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### *Zones*

Generally a zone consists of three to five districts, or 18 to 24 missionaries. In organizing zones, consider stake and ward boundaries, geography, and the ease and safety with which the zone leaders can travel to the districts.

Two experienced elders are assigned as zone leaders in each zone; one should be designated to take the lead. They have the same responsibilities in serving the missionaries in their zones as district leaders have in their districts. In addition, zone leaders teach the missionaries in the zone through companion exchanges, primarily with district leaders (see *Missionary Handbook*, pages 63–65); visits to district meetings; and presentations in zone conferences. They also interview baptismal candidates who have been taught by the district leaders in their zone.

Zone leaders are members of one of the districts in the zone and report their proselyting efforts to their district leader.

Zone leaders report to you, and you are responsible for training them. Your assistants help you in these duties. Much of this training takes place in zone leader councils (see page 49), companion exchanges (see page 50 in this handbook and pages 63–65 in the *Missionary Handbook*), and interviews (see page 51).

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### *Assistants to the President*

Two elders are assigned to serve as your assistants. They should be sensitive to the Spirit, humble, and respected by the other missionaries. They should have outstanding leadership and proselyting abilities. They may or may not finish their missions in this assignment. They help you:

- Plan, prepare, and present training for missionaries.
- Train zone leaders. They may conduct companion exchanges with zone leaders either in their own proselyting area or in the zone leaders' area.
- Conduct companion exchanges with other missionaries as you direct.

As with all missionaries, assistants must always be with a companion.

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### *Missionary Leadership*

Missionary leaders play a vital role in establishing the atmosphere of a mission. Under the inspiration of the Spirit, take great care as you determine leadership assignments. Select elders who are obedient, diligent, humble, and effective in their work. Look for those who rely on the direction of the Spirit and who have earned the respect of the other missionaries.

When full-time missionaries are assigned to leadership positions, including branch president, they are not set apart. The authority to act in any position in the mission is inherent in their setting apart as full-time missionaries. If they perform a function that requires priesthood keys, such as conducting a baptismal interview or presiding over a branch, they do so by assignment and the delegation of authority. You may give a missionary a priesthood blessing if he is given an especially challenging assignment.

Many of the young missionaries who serve in leadership positions in your mission are taking their first steps along a path of leadership service in the Church. The training of leaders should be one of your highest priorities (see chapter 7 in this handbook and pages 55–56 in the *Missionary Handbook*).

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### *Mascots*

It is inappropriate to have a mascot for a mission, a zone, or a district. Teach your missionaries to maintain the dignity of the Church, with Jesus Christ at its head, in all that they do.

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## Missionary Assignments

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### *Mission Complement*

The term *complement* refers to the number of missionaries and types of assignments authorized for your mission, not necessarily the number serving. All the missionaries you directly supervise are included in your mission complement. For example, your total mission complement might be 150 and might include subcomplements of 100 elders and 24 sisters in regular proselyting assignments, 10 elders working with a language-minority group, 8 sisters serving with an assignment in welfare services, 1 couple in the office, and 3 couples with an assignment in leadership. Missionaries you do not supervise (such as family history, humanitarian service, or CES) are not part of your complement but are included on your mission roster (see “Assignments for Couples and Sisters,” pages 15–16).

Every effort is made to keep the number of missionaries serving as near the authorized complement as possible, but various factors (such as the number and qualifications of missionaries being recommended, the number being released, visa procedures, and the needs of all missions worldwide) can cause the number of missionaries in your mission to fluctuate.

You receive a roster each month listing your mission’s complement and information about all missionaries assigned to your mission. Please review the roster carefully. If corrections are needed, update the information in the Mission Office System (see page 70), or send a corrected copy to the Missionary Department.

It is not unusual for a mission to have an uneven number of missionaries because of unexpected situations, such as illnesses or early releases. An additional missionary will be assigned as soon as possible, but several months will normally elapse between the assignment and the missionary’s arrival in the field. You can respond to such situations by:

- Assigning three missionaries to serve together. Help the missionaries recognize that a threesome offers positive opportunities.
- Assigning an additional missionary to work in the mission office.
- Adjusting missionaries’ release dates (see page 66).
- Arranging for a local member to serve temporarily. Occasionally you may need to consult with local stake presidents to identify a worthy, trusted member who could serve as a companion to a full-time missionary until the number of missionaries in the mission is again even (see “Training Opportunities for Prospective Missionaries,” page 15). If that period will be more than two transfer cycles, you may want to consider asking that more than one member be called. Ideally, the member would be a returned missionary; if not, a young man should be at least 18 years of age and a young woman should be at least 21 years of age.

If you feel that the complement needs to be modified, you should submit a request to the Area Presidency. If they endorse it, they will forward the request to the Missionary Department for consideration.

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### *Missionaries Serving among Language Minorities*

If a large population group in your mission does not speak the mission language, you should prayerfully determine to what extent the missionaries need to teach in the minority language. Consider the following questions:

- Does a minority-language ward or branch exist? How many members of the Church are there among the population of the minority group?
- Do local priesthood leaders support missionary work among this minority group? Will they be able to provide leadership and support to maintain this effort and fellowship new members?
- Can proselyting among the minority population be accomplished with ward missionaries or other members who speak the language?

- Could capable missionaries already in your mission become familiar with the culture and learn enough of the language to serve the group?
- Is the minority-language population large enough to support the full-time work of at least four missionaries?

If you conclude that your complement should be adjusted to include at least four missionaries assigned to serve in the minority language, you may submit a request through your Area Presidency, with their endorsement. Normally these missionaries already speak the mission language and are taught the minority language at a missionary training center.

If investigators cannot be taught in the mission language and member translators are not available, ward missionaries and other members should do all the proselyting. In such cases, the full-time missionary district leader still conducts the baptismal interview.

### *Training Opportunities for Prospective Missionaries*

You may work with local stake presidents to allow priest-age young men to serve a specified period of time (normally two or three weeks) in the mission. Each young man must commit himself to abide by all missionary standards and rules, including conduct, dress, and grooming. Make sure he understands that he must remain with his companion at all times. Limit such assignments, and take care that they do not interfere with or distract in any way from the full-time missionaries' work.

Such callings are restricted to members of the wards and branches in the mission. The stake president issues the call for a specified period and sets the member apart.

You make the final decision about whether a young man serves in this capacity. You should not accept members in these assignments if you do not feel the situation is appropriate.

The member is responsible for his own expenses except for housing.

Normally a member serving in the mission should not drive a mission vehicle. If it is necessary for one to drive, you should certify and designate him as the driver according to the same procedures used for full-time missionaries (see page 69).

### *Assignments for Couples and Sisters*

Couples and sisters ages 40 and older are normally given one of the following assignments in addition to the assignment to share the gospel with nonmembers. Some sisters under age 40 may also receive assignments described in this section.

**Leadership.** Senior missionaries can strengthen local units by teaching leadership principles, fellowshipping new converts, and working with the less active. Normally senior missionaries do not serve as presiding officers, but they may serve as counselors to help local members learn how to magnify their callings. They may serve temporarily as officers in member districts and branches that lack sufficient leadership (see page 60).

**Mission office.** Senior missionaries may serve in mission office positions (see pages 67–68).

**Visitors' centers and historic sites.** Usually at least two missionary couples are assigned to a center. One of the men receives a call from Church headquarters to serve for two years as director of the center. He and his wife receive specialized training for this assignment at a seminar before they begin to serve.

Young sisters may be assigned to serve in a visitors' center or at a historic site. They prepare for this assignment at a missionary training center. They generally serve half of each day at the center and the other half in an assigned proselyting area.

For detailed instructions on working with visitors' centers and historic sites, see pages 85–86.

**Church Educational System.** Couples may teach seminary or institute classes. They also work with local leaders to identify and enroll seminary and institute students, organize and carry out special activities, and appoint and train volunteer seminary and institute teachers. They may also teach or assist as needed at a Church school.

**Public affairs.** Couples may help with the public affairs efforts of the mission and in local units. For more information, see "Public Affairs," section 15 of the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2* (35209 and 35902) and the *Public Affairs Training Guide* (36122).

**Welfare services.** Couples and sisters may be assigned to help area and local leaders with such problems as poverty, disease, inadequate nutrition, unemployment, underemployment, illiteracy, and lack of education. They may also serve in humanitarian aid projects.

**Family history.** Senior missionaries may serve in family history facilities or teach family history to members in districts (and, with the approval of the Area Presidency, in stakes).

**Temples.** Senior missionaries may serve in temples as ordinance workers. Most such assignments are in temples outside the United States.

**Area administration offices.** Couples may be assigned to perform various functions in area administration offices, such as executive secretary to the Area Presidency, auditor, security guard, or welfare agent. Some of these missionaries may be assigned to missions, but others may be assigned to and supervised by the Area Presidency.

**Facilities management.** Couples may be assigned to assist in managing Church-owned facilities.

**Farm management.** Couples may be assigned to assist in improving Church-owned farm properties.

**Perpetual Education Fund.** Couples may be assigned to interview applicants and to help applicants initiate loans. They may also work with participants to help them graduate, find rewarding employment, and repay their loans.

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### *Supervising Missionary Couples*

Senior full-time missionaries are valuable resources in the Church. Many of them make great sacrifices to serve. They receive calls to perform a wide range of assignments that contribute to establishing and building the Church. You are the ecclesiastical leader for all senior missionaries on your mission roster, even if their primary function is under the supervision of a headquarters department or some agency other than the mission (such as the Church Educational System or a temple).

When couples arrive, help them feel at ease in the mission. Make sure they have a good meal and an opportunity to rest. As you interview them, express your love and your gratitude for their willingness to serve. Help them see the vision of the great service that they can perform. As you orient them, give special attention to the ways in which couples differ from younger missionaries, including different expectations for couples. Help them understand the ways in which you anticipate that they will function. Adapt your orientation to their particular circumstances.

Regardless of their specific assignments, encourage senior missionaries to seek and take advantage of opportunities to share the gospel with nonmembers. You may help them find ways they can work with nonmembers on evenings and weekends. If practical, they can have their own proselyting area so that they can feel a sense of responsibility for this part of their calling.

You may also ask couples with other assignments to assist in leadership training or activation during times when they are not involved with their regular assignment. You should make sure, however, that they are still able to accomplish the objectives of their regular assignment.

To meet the needs of the work in the mission, you may modify the assignment that a couple received with their call. Be sensitive, however, that many couples made themselves available for a mission call with a specific assignment in mind and that the departments are relying on the couples to perform important functions. You should inform the Missionary Department of any change in a couple's assignment.

**General suggestions.** Many senior missionaries face a degree of uncertainty in regard to the nature of their call and what is expected of them. It is important that you make sure they feel your love for them, your eagerness to have them in the mission, and your willingness to help them succeed.

You can help senior missionaries serve productively and experience joy in their callings by making use of their experience, skills, and abilities. Give them opportunities for meaningful service in which they can feel the Spirit of the Lord. When a missionary couple has been given an assignment because one of them has expertise in the assigned function, you should carefully consider how the spouse can give meaningful service as well.

Senior missionaries may have some anxiety because of false ideas about what is expected of them. They should not be required to meet the same standards in work hours or other missionary activities that are expected of younger missionaries. They may need rest periods during the day. They should be encouraged to set their own goals and schedules, based on their personal capacity and the requirements of their assignments. They will catch the spirit of missionary service as they follow the guidelines in the *Missionary Handbook* (for example, those on entertainment and recreation) and are involved in influencing people for good.

A couple should not leave their assigned area without authorization, and they should not leave the mission without authorization from the Area Presidency or Church headquarters. A couple may, at your discretion, stay in one area for their entire mission.

One of the great joys of their mission will be the opportunity of mingling with the younger missionaries. You should invite senior missionaries to attend zone conferences and other mission activities.

As practical, couples should be part of regular missionary districts and zones. When they are part of a district, they should report their work to their district leader. Help the district leaders understand how to work with couples, especially in regard to the more flexible expectations for couples.

As circumstances allow, you should occasionally bring couples together for special training sessions, testimony meetings, family home evenings, or social activities.

***Ecclesiastical and administrative support.*** Generally, you conduct all interviews for the missionaries who are on your mission roster, including interviews when they arrive, interviews during each transfer cycle, and release interviews. You also conduct temple recommend interviews for those whose recommends are about to expire.

For couples not under your direct supervision, regular interviews related to their work should be conducted by their immediate supervisors. Day-to-day supervision is also provided by the individual responsible for overseeing the assignment (such as a CES area director, a director for temporal affairs, or a farm manager). As assigned by the Area Presidency, you assist in meeting medical, transportation, and other personal needs for these missionaries.

Just before they are released, give each couple a warm, personal interview. Express your love and gratitude for their valiant service. Help them review and take joy in the things they have accomplished through the strength of the Lord. Encourage them to continue to give service in the Church, and ask them to encourage other couples to make themselves available for full-time missionary service. Make sure to send each couple's stake president a personal letter regarding the couple's service and a release certificate. Send these early enough that the stake president can present the letter and the certificate to the couple when he releases them from their call.

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### *Church-Service Missionaries*

Where there are large concentrations of members, many assignments in which couples serve may be filled by local couples called as Church-service missionaries. Church-service missionaries serve 8 to 31 hours a week and live in their own homes. You may consult with stake presidents in your mission to identify members who might be called as Church-service missionaries. (See *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, pages 102–3.)

Couples living at home who will serve 32 hours or more a week should be called as full-time missionaries through the normal missionary recommendation process.

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## 4. Conduct of Missionaries

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### Introduction

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“What manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am” (3 Nephi 27:27).

*Additional scriptures:* Deuteronomy 4:29; John 14:15; 1 John 3:1–3; 1 Nephi 17:3; 2 Nephi 4:26–35; Mosiah 3:19; 24:15; Alma 2:28; 5:16, 27–28; 26:27; Helaman 3:35; D&C 50:10–12, 26–29; 58:26–33; 64:34; 81:5; 88:63; 121:34–46

After your responsibility for your family, your highest responsibility as a mission president is to care for your missionaries. Ask the Lord each day to guide you to missionaries who may need your help.

The missionaries assigned to your mission have been called of God through a prophet. Some arrive in the field well prepared and with a great capacity to fulfill their calling. Some may struggle to meet the high expectations that are placed on full-time missionaries. As you love them, encourage them, teach them, and counsel with them, you have the privilege to help each of these precious souls find growth and joy in their service and a satisfaction that can last throughout their lives.

As you work patiently with your missionaries, strive always to look on their hearts (see 1 Samuel 16:7) and build and strengthen them. Repeatedly express your love for them and your confidence in them. Help them increase their vision of what they are capable of achieving, and strive to help each of them reach that level. Teach them the power of the Atonement in overcoming their weaknesses, mistakes, and transgressions. As they humbly come unto Christ and rely on His merits, He will “make weak things become strong unto them” (Ether 12:27; see also 2 Nephi 31:19).

You are helping the Lord prepare a generation of leaders, of fathers and mothers in the Church. Your efforts in this area of your calling will have as profound an effect on the kingdom of God as anything you do.

In these guidelines, references to the Area Presidency apply primarily to missions in international areas. If your mission is in the United States or Canada, you will normally interact directly with the Missionary Department, unless directed otherwise. In some situations you will work with the member of the Presidency of the Seventy who supervises the area.

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### Interviewing Missionaries

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One of the most powerful ways you can strengthen and support your missionaries is through interviews. Personal interviews are excellent opportunities to express your love, receive an accounting of personal progress and the progress of the work, identify needs, and give personal counsel and direction to help your missionaries grow and succeed in their callings. Through these interviews you can minister to your missionaries individually, help them minister to those with whom they work, and teach them principles that will enable them to enjoy the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

You should interview each missionary when he or she arrives in the mission, at least once every transfer cycle during the mission, and just before he or she returns home (see pages 64–66). For guidelines on temple recommend interviews for missionaries, see page 28.

Each missionary deserves a personal, unhurried interview. If a missionary needs additional counsel but time is not available, ask him or her to return after other interviews have been completed or make an appointment for another visit.

Whenever you become aware of a pressing need, contact the missionary immediately and arrange for an interview as soon as possible. Be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit in recognizing these needs.

If a missionary has an urgent need that does not involve worthiness and you are not able to conduct a timely interview, you may ask one of your counselors or the local stake president to conduct an interview for you and to counsel with you immediately afterward.

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### *Preparing to Interview*

Earning the missionaries' trust is an important prerequisite to effective interviewing. Build trust by maintaining a positive, constructive attitude. Let love fill your thoughts about each missionary, and express that love to them frequently. Demonstrate genuine respect, interest, courtesy, and confidence toward each of them. Be generous in giving sincere praise and encouragement.

Know each one of your missionaries well. Seek to discover the special qualities, experiences, and interests of each, and find ways to establish personal relationships with them, including learning about their families.

Cultivate an atmosphere that helps the missionaries feel comfortable sharing their concerns with you. Help each missionary feel that he or she is your primary interest during the interview. Be sure to schedule enough time for each interview and prevent interruptions. Your missionaries must know that you will be available to give them your undivided attention when they need you.

Conduct interviews in a private, comfortable place that establishes a positive, approachable, nonconfrontational atmosphere. Be sensitive to the special circumstances of interviewing sisters, and take appropriate measures (see *Church Handbook of Instruction, Book 1, page 26*).

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### *Listening*

During interviews, encourage your missionaries to express their thoughts and feelings:

- Show that you want to listen. Let the missionaries do the talking. Do not interrupt their responses, and do not be afraid of silence. Be patient.
- Ask questions that require more than a yes or no response. Use actions and phrases to encourage the missionaries to speak.
- Restate the essence of what the missionaries have said to make sure that you understand what they are saying and feeling. Seek to clarify the feelings or attitudes behind the words or actions. Do not judge hastily.
- Be aware of how you express yourself nonverbally. For example, folded arms may imply rejection, and leaning back in your chair with your hands behind your head can communicate detachment or self-absorption. Leaning forward in a relaxed way can express interest.

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### *Counseling*

Your missionaries look to you as a source of love, wisdom, experience, and inspiration. Always strive to be sensitive to the impact that you can have on them. Prayerfully and repeatedly ponder Doctrine and Covenants 121:34–46, where the Lord teaches the Prophet Joseph Smith how those in positions of authority can righteously influence others for good.

Be open to the promptings of the Spirit, and follow the example of the Savior during His ministry to the Nephites. For example, you can pray with your missionaries, specifically pray for them, and invite them to pray (see 3 Nephi 17:17; 18:16; 19:16–17). You can teach them from the scriptures (see 3 Nephi 22–23), and you can give them priesthood blessings (see 3 Nephi 17:21).

As you counsel with missionaries, help them make their own commitments to do what is right. Do not manipulate them into merely accepting what you want them to do. Help them

recognize the wisdom and power in following the correct path and willingly commit themselves to good decisions.

Occasionally missionaries may need professional counseling. For guidelines on helping missionaries with emotional challenges, see the mission presidents' Web site (see page 6).

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### *Maintaining Confidentiality*

You have a solemn duty to keep confidential all information that missionaries share about themselves in interviews and confessions (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, page 27).

If missionaries fear that a transgression or a private matter will become known to others, they may hesitate to confess or seek counsel. Help them understand that you will keep the things discussed in interviews confidential. However, if a serious transgression is involved that could jeopardize a missionary's status, explain that the matter must be reviewed with other priesthood leaders, such as the home stake president or the Area Presidency, as needed.

All missionaries—especially assistants to the president, zone and district leaders, and those in the office—must maintain confidentiality by not talking to others about private matters. Missionaries should never conduct worthiness interviews with other missionaries. Confessions should be referred to you.

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## The Principle of Obedience

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As a mission president, you want your missionaries to find the peace, joy, and power that come from obedience to the Lord, to gospel principles, to the commandments, to the standards of missionary conduct, to mission rules, and to the direction of priesthood leaders. Help them recognize that standards, rules, and guidelines, such as those in the *Missionary Handbook*, provide essential guidance for those who desire to serve the Lord with all their heart (see Proverbs 6:23).

Help your missionaries understand that mission rules are based on gospel principles and years of experience in missionary labors. Help them understand why they should be obedient. They should recognize why mission rules are important for their safety, well-being, and success and should know that you expect them to obey both the spirit and the letter of those rules. Ask missionaries who struggle with obedience to prayerfully ask the Lord what He expects of them.

Missionaries' behavior may indicate the degree to which they value the principle of obedience and the principles upon which the rules are based. View problems in missionary conduct as opportunities to teach principles more clearly. Encourage heartfelt obedience to the Lord, not merely outward compliance with the expectations of others (see D&C 64:34).

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### *The Missionary Handbook*

The *Missionary Handbook* presents basic standards and guidelines that help missionaries keep their focus on their mission and their eye single to the Lord so that they can enjoy the companionship of the Holy Ghost (see D&C 88:67–68). You should become thoroughly familiar with the *Missionary Handbook*. Help your missionaries understand that when they obey the standards in the handbook, they demonstrate their love for the Lord (see John 14:15) and receive protection from danger.

Be cautious about creating additional rules or expanding the standards established by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the *Missionary Handbook* and *Preach My Gospel*. When in rare instances additional standards or rules are required to meet unique local circumstances, keep them to a minimum. Make sure they are grounded in the principles of the *Missionary Handbook* and *Preach My Gospel*.

Periodically review with your missionaries the standards in the *Missionary Handbook*. Teach directly from the handbook in zone conferences, interviews, and other settings.

**Language.** Most young missionaries have deeply established speech patterns that include colloquial speech and slang. It is also common for missionaries to develop their own missionary slang, such as “greenie,” “comp,” “DL,” “AP,” “Prez,” or similar terms. Teach your missionaries that refined and dignified language will help them stand out as different from the world. Their words will affect how they act and will foster the confidence of Church members and investigators. Emphasize to your missionaries the importance of always addressing each other as “Elder” or “Sister.” (See *Missionary Handbook*, pages 8–10.)

You should address this matter periodically and in a positive manner. Missionary leaders should be exemplary and should help the other missionaries use appropriate language.

Teach your missionaries the appropriate language of prayer in the mission language and, as appropriate, in their native language. Help them understand how the language of prayer shows reverence for God.

**Dress and grooming.** Missionaries arrive in the mission expecting to follow established standards. Occasionally their companions, other missionaries, or members may lead them to lower those standards.

Help your missionaries remain committed to maintaining high standards of dress and grooming that are in keeping with their sacred calling and that will identify them as representatives of the Lord. Emphasize that the standards outlined in their missionary call packet and in the *Missionary Handbook* (see pages 10–13) have been established by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Be sensitive to fads and fashions that may arise among the missionaries, and be clear in discouraging them.

**Temple garment.** Most young missionaries do not yet have much experience wearing the temple garment. You should review with them periodically the guidelines in the temple recommend book. In particular, missionaries should understand that the garment should be handled and worn with respect at all times and that it should not be removed for activities (including those on preparation day) that might reasonably be done with the garment worn under clothing. The garment should never be left on the floor; when garments need to be washed, they should be placed in a laundry basket or bag until they can be properly washed and dried (see *Missionary Handbook*, pages 23–24).

**Music.** Music plays an important role in the lives of many young people. It can be a powerful influence that promotes and strengthens spirituality, or it can dull missionaries’ sensitivity to the Spirit and expose them to the influences of the world.

The leaders of the Church have established general guidelines on missionaries’ use of music (see *Missionary Handbook*, pages 25–26). Help your missionaries understand what these guidelines mean for them personally. Teach them the importance of rising above worldly influences as they strive to keep their minds and hearts single to the glory of God. Be open in addressing their questions about specific types of music, and be clear in the direction you give. Be sensitive to missionaries’ becoming too preoccupied with music. Music should support their focus on the Lord and His work, not become a focus itself.

**Companion relationships.** The responsibility to remain with a companion at all times is one of the unique requirements of a mission. Some missionaries may struggle adjusting to this situation. You should frequently review with your missionaries the standards on companion relationships (see *Missionary Handbook*, pages 29–33).

In particular, help your missionaries understand that they must never compromise, even in the smallest way, on the rule that companions are never alone (not even in chapels or other meeting places). They must always remain within eyesight and hearing of each other. Help them recognize that situations that may initially seem harmless can lead to serious problems. Help them understand that they bear a personal responsibility for their companions and that a missionary who knowingly allows his or her companion to behave inappropriately or commit a serious transgression may also be subject to disciplinary action.

Emphasize to your missionaries that they should report any improper conduct or dangerous situations to you immediately. Some missionaries may feel that it is disloyal to a companion to report such problems to you. Help them understand that their loyalty is first to the Lord, then to you as their mission president, and then to their companion. Help them understand that they demonstrate real maturity and genuine friendship when they ask you for help at the first sign of improper behavior.

You can help companions who are struggling in their relationship with each other. Teach them how to resolve conflicts and differences in a constructive way. Make it clear that you are eager to help and support them, but emphasize that they are responsible for solving their own difficulties. Teach them to take their difficulties to the Lord.

Help missionaries understand that the Spirit of the Lord will not function effectively in a contentious relationship (see 3 Nephi 11:29; D&C 38:27). Ask them to set aside their self-concern and become more concerned for the welfare of others, including their companions. Encourage companions to focus on the positive qualities in each other and to look for ways in which they can learn from each other. Emphasize the importance of selfless service. Encourage them to seek the gift of charity for others, especially for their companions (see Moroni 7:45–48). Point out that learning to get along with a missionary companion will help them prepare for relationships throughout their lives, including marriage.

Teach your missionaries that companionship problems are not normally a sufficient reason for a transfer and that transfers do not always solve problems. Remind them that transfers always affect more than just two missionaries. They must not let their interpersonal struggles disrupt the work of the Lord.

For further suggestions on helping missionaries who are experiencing companionship difficulties, see the guidelines on working with missionaries with emotional challenges on the mission presidents' Web site (see page 6).

***Relationships with others.*** Teach your missionaries the importance of strictly following the standards in the *Missionary Handbook* on relationships with others (see pages 29–38). Make sure they know that you will not tolerate any deviation from those standards. Act immediately if you become aware of violations. Never modify those rules, including those on teaching, visiting, or accepting rides from people of the opposite sex. Discuss with your missionaries how they can maintain the standards while still accomplishing their work. Do not assume that individuals over or under certain ages cannot present a danger to missionaries.

Be aware of any situations that may be inappropriate, and act immediately on the promptings of the Spirit in such matters. Emphasize to your missionaries that they must immediately report to you any flirtatious or aggressive behavior they encounter, regardless of the other person's age. Whenever an inappropriate situation arises, you should consider a prompt transfer for the safety of the missionary, even if the missionary is not the cause of the problem.

Missionaries are encouraged to maintain contact with converts whom they have helped come into the Church (see *Missionary Handbook*, pages 36–37). They should also encourage new members to develop friendships with members in their ward and stake, who will always be there to support and encourage them. If the convert is a single person of the opposite sex, the missionaries should obtain your counsel and authorization for ongoing communication. You should be sensitive to relationships that could be inappropriate or dangerous. In some cases, the missionaries' contact and support may need to wait until they return home.

Explain to your missionaries that a disciplinary council may be required in cases of fornication or "anything like unto it" (see D&C 59:6). Disciplinary action may also be taken if a missionary knowingly allows his companion to commit a serious transgression.

***Communication with their families.*** Missionaries may telephone their parents or guardians at Christmas and on one other occasion during the year, usually Mother's Day or another significant holiday (see *Missionary Handbook*, page 37). You should not deprive missionaries of this opportunity. You should, however, teach them that these calls should not distract them

from their service. Encourage your missionaries to keep their calls short and to focus on sharing their missionary experiences with family members and bearing testimony.

Missionaries should also write to their immediate family (usually parents or guardians and siblings) each week on preparation day. Encourage them to share testimony and spiritual experiences with their family.

As an alternative to regular mail, missionaries may communicate with their family on preparation day by e-mail, according to guidelines that you establish under the direction of your Area Presidency (see *Missionary Handbook*, pages 20–21). Instruct your missionaries to exercise great care in using a computer for this purpose. They should not spend excessive time on the computer, and they should not use Internet sites or services that you have not authorized.

Normally you should not prohibit missionaries from sending and receiving e-mail in communicating with immediate family. However, you may need to restrict individual missionaries who have abused the privilege. If you feel that local circumstances warrant an exception to this policy, counsel with your Area Presidency.

Carefully monitor the facilities that your missionaries use for e-mail. Ask local Church leaders to help you identify respectable places consistent with the standards of the Church.

Occasionally family members, friends, and acquaintances may desire to visit missionaries. Such visits are discouraged (see *Missionary Handbook*, pages 37–38). Generally they are very distracting for the missionaries (including companions and others) and can disrupt the work. If people ask to visit missionaries, you should, in a spirit of kindness, explain that such visits are discouraged and help them understand the reasons.

Also help your missionaries understand the importance of maintaining singleness of heart and of mind in focusing on their work. Ask them to sensitively discourage visits from others without creating misunderstandings or hard feelings.

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*Resolving  
Obedience  
Problems  
in the Field*

Most of your missionaries will be faithful to their callings and anxious to be obedient to everything that is asked of them. Some may find it difficult to keep all the standards, but they will constantly try to improve. You should expect your missionaries to be fully obedient, but you should also give them every opportunity to resolve small problems.

When discipline is needed, you should be firm and clear in your expectations, but you should also be loving, constructive, encouraging, and patient (see D&C 121:43). Try to solve problems in the most gentle way. Do not correct a missionary in the presence of others (even missionary leaders), and avoid ultimatums.

Recognize, however, that failure to correct disobedience can affect both the individual missionary and also the attitude toward obedience in the entire mission. Tolerating disobedience can cause missionaries to misunderstand what the Lord expects of them.

Prayerfully seek the guidance of the Lord in disciplining missionaries, both in responding to and preventing disobedience. Help missionaries recognize that heartfelt obedience reflects their love for the Lord and qualifies them to enjoy the companionship of the Spirit (see D&C 42:29; 121:34–37).

If discipline is needed, make sure the solution matches the infraction. For example, you might ask a missionary to report progress in his or her weekly letter to you. You might give specific reading assignments and ask for a written report of what was read. In more serious cases, you might consider taking a missionary's temple recommend for a short period. To avoid causing unnecessary attention among other missionaries or affecting the confidence of members, you should not normally instruct a missionary not to take the sacrament.

You may transfer a missionary to be closer to mission headquarters so that you can spend more time with him or her and observe progress more closely.

If a missionary refuses to follow counsel, repeatedly violates rules, or becomes involved in behavior that could threaten his or her standing in the Church, you should act immediately to help him or her. Contact your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative

and the missionary's home stake president. They can involve the bishop, the parents, and others who could help the missionary (including youth leaders, seminary teachers, other family members, or a girlfriend). In less serious cases of improper conduct, however, you may want to work with a missionary for weeks or even months before recommending that he or she be sent home.

Occasionally, after all the work of companions, missionary leaders, and your personal involvement, a missionary may be consistently disobedient or even rebellious. Such behavior needs to be resolved (see "Persistent Disobedience," page 26).

**Flirtations.** Immediately interview any missionary involved in a flirtatious, romantic, or otherwise inappropriate relationship, and investigate the matter thoroughly. If you discover a serious transgression, see the guidelines under "Serious In-Field Transgressions" in this chapter (pages 26–27).

If the missionary has not committed a serious transgression and demonstrates a repentant attitude, you may put him or her on informal probation. Discuss with the missionary the sacred nature of the missionary calling and the eternal consequences of our actions. Immediately transfer the missionary away from the other person involved. It is very unwise to leave the missionary in the area, even if the situation seems to be under control. Explain that the missionary may have absolutely no contact—written, verbal, or in person—with the other person. The missionary must immediately report to you any contact from the other person.

If a member is involved, ask the appropriate priesthood leaders to interview him or her, verify what the missionary says, give counsel, and take appropriate action. The member should agree not to contact the missionary in any way.

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## Dealing with Special Difficulties

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Special problems are handled through the Missionary Department. In international areas you should first consult with the Area Presidency. You should inform the Area Presidency of serious illnesses or accidents, belated confessions, major transgressions, or deaths of missionaries and then discuss the matter with your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative.

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### *Morale*

If you observe—through weekly letters, personal interviews, or reports from missionary leaders—that missionaries are suffering from low morale (such as homesickness, a lack of confidence, or discouragement), the following suggestions may be helpful:

- Express your understanding, love, and support. Listen to their concerns, and find ways to inspire and encourage them.
- Strengthen their faith in the Lord by bearing testimony, reading scriptures with them, and giving priesthood blessings.
- Teach that praying, fasting, studying the scriptures, living the commandments, obeying mission rules, and immersing themselves in missionary work can help them overcome discouragement and homesickness.
- Help them have and recognize spiritual experiences, and remind them of times when they have felt the Spirit.
- Help them understand that as they stop worrying about themselves and lose themselves in serving others, discouragement will be replaced by the joy of service.
- Teach them how they can experience greater success in their calling.
- Send them notes of encouragement and appreciation.
- Assign them to proselyting areas closer to mission headquarters so that you can contact and counsel them more frequently.
- Assign them to companions who are especially loving, supportive, and successful.

- Seek counsel from home priesthood leaders, family, and others as appropriate.

For guidelines on helping missionaries who experience common emotional challenges, visit the mission presidents' Web site (see page 6).

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*Missionaries  
Returning Home  
at Their Own  
Insistence*

Some missionaries suffer from homesickness or discouragement. Others suffer from a lack of confidence. Some may have difficulty leaving the cares of the world behind. Such missionaries might ask to go home. These concerns are generally most acute during the first 90 days of a missionary's service.

You can identify and resolve many of these concerns during your initial interviews with missionaries. Explain that such feelings are common in the early weeks, especially on weekends or holidays, and may recur at other times. Help them understand how to combat negative feelings, and make sure they know that you are always ready to give encouragement and counsel.

If a missionary is determined to return home, seek counsel from the Area Presidency and discuss the situation with your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative. To help a struggling missionary, you may invite him or her to visit the mission home, or you may arrange for a visit to the home of a priesthood leader in the area where the missionary is serving. The atmosphere there, plus a personal interview and a priesthood blessing, often can restore sagging spirits. Your wife can often have an influence in strengthening a missionary.

Help the missionary understand that deciding to return home is a very serious matter but that the final decision is his or hers.

Ask the missionary to talk with his or her parents, bishop, or stake president. You should learn what they say so that you can build on it. If the home priesthood leaders know that the family wants the missionary to continue serving, make sure the missionary calls home. Even if the parents were not originally in favor of the mission, they may want their missionary to finish what he or she has started. Parents or priesthood leaders may recommend other people who can help, such as a friend (including a girlfriend if she will be supportive), a youth leader, a seminary teacher, or a returned missionary.

Some struggling missionaries respond well to a "test period." You might give a missionary an assignment suited to his or her needs. Then you could say, "Try it for three months. If you feel the same way, we'll call the Area Presidency (or Church headquarters) about your request." You might also ask the missionary to stay at least until the next transfer so that the work will not be disrupted and his or her companion will not need to be transferred.

Explain that if the missionary returns home at his or her own insistence, the missionary and the family are to reimburse the Church for the cost of the return trip home.

If after counseling with the Area Presidency, all efforts fail and a missionary insists on going home, ask your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative for further instructions. You should not feel personally responsible when a missionary goes home early after you have done all you can.

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*Missing  
Missionaries*

Missionaries who leave their companions may be gone for only a few minutes or for a much longer time. You do not need to contact your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative if a missionary returns quickly. You should, however, discuss with the missionary the seriousness of his or her action. Determine why the missionary left and what happened while he or she was gone.

If a missionary does not return within a short time, you should:

- Assign someone to be with the companion.
- Talk with the current companion and with past companions, landlords, members, and others to obtain important information, including: When was the missionary last seen? Did he or she leave a note? How was the missionary dressed? What personal belongings are gone? Approximately how much money does the missionary have? Is the missionary particularly

friendly with a person or family in the area or in the mission? Is a mission car or bicycle missing? Does the missionary have his or her passport?

- Call your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative and the Area Presidency with as much information as possible. (You should contact local law enforcement agencies only if you suspect foul play and only after you have talked with your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative.)
- Check airline, train, and bus terminals.
- Call the missionary's stake president, and ask him to notify the bishop, the parents, and any friends the missionary might try to contact. Ask the stake president to call you immediately if he obtains any information on where the missionary may be.

When the missionary has been found, notify your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative, the stake president, and the Area Presidency. Interview the missionary thoroughly to evaluate his or her worthiness and desire to continue serving. You should then call your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative for further instructions. If the missionary has not committed any serious transgression and if his or her attitude is proper, the missionary may likely remain in the mission. The missionary should know, however, that he or she could be released for any subsequent absence.

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*Persistent  
Disobedience*

If a missionary remains disobedient or has engaged in serious misconduct, a disciplinary council may be authorized, particularly if the misconduct has persisted for a long time or has become widely known. However, based on your recommendations and those of the Area Presidency and the missionary's stake president, other actions may be suggested, such as:

- Reassigning the missionary to another mission.
- Releasing the missionary without a disciplinary council.
- Allowing the missionary to remain in your mission.

In each of these options, the missionary may be placed on informal probation.

A missionary who deliberately allows another missionary to commit a serious transgression may also be sent home (with or without a disciplinary council), placed on formal or informal probation, or reassigned.

A missionary may be scheduled to travel through Salt Lake City or the area headquarters for an interview with a General Authority to evaluate whether he or she should be released or reassigned to another mission.

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*Serious In-Field  
Transgressions*

When you discover that a missionary has committed a serious transgression in the field, you should:

- Interview the missionary to find out the exact nature of the transgression, what led to it, how often it happened, where the companion was, and who else was involved.
- While you investigate, move the missionary to mission headquarters. It is unwise to leave the missionary in the area in which the transgression took place.
- Verify the facts to the extent possible, including the ages and Church membership of other people involved, the frequency and duration of the transgressions, and the extent to which the transgressions are known among missionaries and others. Interview current and past companions as appropriate.
- Inform the Area Presidency.
- Inform your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative and make a recommendation. You will receive instructions on how to proceed.

A disciplinary council may be convened for a full-time missionary only with the authorization of a General Authority in the Missionary Department. If the General Authority authorizes you to convene a disciplinary council, you should follow the instructions for a disciplinary council

in a stake, except that a high council does not participate (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, pages 110–18).

Young elders do not participate in the council. You may ask your counselors in the mission presidency, the husband in a missionary couple, or members of local stake presidencies, bishoprics, and district and branch presidencies to take part on the council.

The Lord has said that He “cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance” (D&C 1:31). You too cannot condone serious transgression. You should, however, temper your judgments with compassion. Severe action may not promote the eternal welfare of the missionary. Rely on inspiration from Heavenly Father to arrive at a compassionate and just decision. In most instances, disfellowshipment or formal probation will be the most appropriate course of action in helping the missionary through the repentance process, but excommunication may be appropriate at times. (See “Save the Souls of Transgressors,” *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, page 105.)

Unless there are unusual circumstances, the missionary will be released and sent home.

You must review the decision of the disciplinary council with your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative. Both you and the missionary should talk with his or her parents. Notify the home stake president of the council’s decision, and ask him to inform the bishop. The Church pays the travel expenses of missionaries sent home because of transgression.

*Belated Confessions of Pre-Mission Transgressions*

Occasionally missionaries in the field are touched sufficiently by the Spirit that they recognize the need to confess a transgression that took place before their mission but was not resolved with home priesthood leaders.

In cases involving less serious transgressions, you can often resolve the matter yourself, perhaps in consultation with the Area Presidency.

Unless there are unusual circumstances, a missionary who has committed a serious transgression will be sent home. These transgressions include fornication, oral sex, homosexual acts, other sex perversion, child abuse, drug abuse, and serious violations of civil law.

Interview the missionary thoroughly to gather all the facts, including details of the involvement of others, their age and Church membership, and the frequency and duration of the transgressions. Then review the case with a member of the Area Presidency, the missionary’s stake president, and your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative, who will present the case to a General Authority in the Missionary Department.

The final decision to send a missionary home early is made by this General Authority. In such cases you should coordinate that decision and the return travel with your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative. He or you should inform the home stake president. You should have the missionary inform his or her parents.

If you, the Area Presidency, and the stake president agree in recommending that the missionary remain in the field, you may request an exception through your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative. Before you request such an exception, discuss with him the criteria that must be met before an exception is considered.

*Temple Recommends of Missionaries Released Early*

If a missionary is sent home early because of a belated confession or a disciplinary action, you should retrieve his or her recommend. The stake president and the bishop may issue a new temple recommend when the person is worthy.

*Deaths*

One of the most difficult challenges that a mission president may experience is the death of a missionary. If a missionary dies in the field, you should immediately call your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative and the Area Presidency. The Missionary Department representative will help you proceed with the necessary steps.

For guidelines on the death of a missionary’s immediate family member, see the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, page 99.

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## Temple Attendance by Missionaries

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The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve have authorized full-time missionaries to attend the temple occasionally if a temple is within a reasonable travel distance.

If a temple is available to your mission, you should establish a policy on temple attendance, in coordination with the local temple president. If the temple is nearby but outside your mission boundaries, this policy must be approved by your Area Presidency, and you should review it with them periodically. In the United States and Canada, new mission presidents should review the policy, once they are familiar with the situation, with the member of the Presidency of the Seventy who supervises the area.

The policy should be based on the following guidelines:

- Missionaries should attend the temple only with your approval. That attendance should not be too frequent. Their current calling is to serve the living, not to do work for the dead.
- Temple visits should be on preparation day. If the temple is closed on preparation day, you may change preparation day to another day (other than Saturday). Missionaries should not move necessary tasks, such as shopping, doing laundry, or writing home, to other days of the week so that they have more time on preparation day for temple attendance. They should be able to resume proselyting by the regularly established time in the evening.
- Overnight temple excursions are not authorized.
- All-mission temple excursions are not authorized unless the Area Presidency approves such an event.
- Missionaries should inform their district leaders or zone leaders when they are going to the temple. In some circumstances, you may want to require missionaries to ask your permission for each visit.

The opportunity to go to the temple should be applied equally to all missionaries within these guidelines. It should not be used as an incentive or reward.

Generally missionaries should be allowed to attend the temple when their converts receive their own endowments or are sealed, as long as their attendance is within these guidelines.

All temples, including small temples, have a limited supply of temple clothing for full-time missionaries. Do not ask your missionaries to bring their own temple clothing with them on their missions.

Be sensitive to the impact of the missionaries' attendance on the temple, especially on a small temple. You may wish to consult with the temple president.

For guidelines on temple attendance by missionaries who are traveling home, see page 67.

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### *Temple Recommend Interviews*

Endowed full-time missionaries should always be worthy and have a valid temple recommend, whether or not they are able to attend the temple during their missions. Ask your missionaries to let you know if their recommends are about to expire during their missions. For those who are not yet endowed, you should still verify their worthiness in regular interviews. As directed by the Spirit, you should periodically include worthiness in your personal interviews with each missionary.

As part of your interview with missionaries who are returning home, you should conduct a worthiness interview and ensure that all qualified, endowed missionaries have a valid recommend (see page 66).

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## Patriarchal Blessings

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Occasionally a missionary may arrive in the mission who has not had the opportunity to receive a patriarchal blessing. You are authorized to conduct a worthiness interview and issue a recommend to such a missionary. To make arrangements for the blessing, contact the stake president in the nearest stake in which there is a patriarch who can give the blessing in a language the missionary can understand. The missionary should receive the blessing in a language he or she can understand, since it is difficult to convey the inspired depth of meaning and feeling of a blessing if it is in another language and requires interpretation.

If there are no stakes in your mission or if there are no patriarchs within the mission boundaries who can give the blessing in a language that the missionary understands well enough, the missionary may need to wait until he or she is released to receive a patriarchal blessing. If the missionary will be returning home to an area where there are no patriarchs, you may arrange for him or her to receive a blessing near the end of the mission.

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## Community Service

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Missionaries should follow the Savior's example by seeking to serve others, particularly non-members. They should participate in both planned activities and spontaneous service. Missionaries should serve because of a sincere desire to help others, and they should take advantage of teaching opportunities that arise from their service.

In seeking opportunities for planned service activities in the community, missionaries should work with local Church leaders to identify worthwhile projects. Make sure your missionaries understand that they must receive your approval for planned service activities (see the guidelines for appropriate activities in the *Missionary Handbook*, pages 39–40).

Because of the increasing legal complexities surrounding relationships with children, missionaries should not participate in service activities in schools or day-care centers. They should not participate in other service activities involving children unless other adults will be present at all times. Missionaries also should not babysit for members, investigators, or others.

For additional guidelines on service, see *Preach My Gospel*, pages 168–70.

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# 5. Missionary Health and Safety

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## Introduction

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“And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones;

“And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;

“And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint” (D&C 89:18–20).

**Additional scriptures:** Leviticus 25:18; Proverbs 1:33; 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 6:19–20; 3 John 1:2; Mosiah 4:27; Alma 57:26; D&C 38:30; 42:43–44; 50:46; 59:18–20; 88:124

One of your basic responsibilities is the health and safety of your missionaries.

The well-being of the body and the well-being of the spirit are interrelated (see 1 Corinthians 6:19–20). Health problems can affect a missionary’s spirit, lead to discouragement, and interfere with the progress of the work.

Teach your missionaries to be responsible for their own health and safety. Teach them the roles of faith, listening to the promptings of the Spirit, and priesthood blessings in caring for their health and safety. Help them understand that obeying the commandments, including the standards in the *Missionary Handbook*, will protect them from many dangers. Recognize that inspiration is also an important part of your care for their health and safety.

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## Health Care in the Mission

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If practical, you should ask your wife to help you coordinate the health care of your missionaries. She generally knows the missionaries well and will feel a personal concern for their welfare. This responsibility should not interfere with her responsibility for caring for your family. You may also designate the wife in a missionary couple or an older sister missionary to assist with this function.

You could designate an individual with health care experience to help you and your wife with specific health issues. This person may be a local member, a local physician who is not a member, or a missionary. If possible, this person should be a family practitioner or internal medicine specialist but could be any physician, physician’s assistant, nurse practitioner, or nurse.

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## Health Resources

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### *Area Medical Advisers*

Area medical advisers are health care professionals who have been called as missionaries and assigned to coordinate health matters within an area. If assigned by the Area Presidency, they may also help members improve their health conditions. They may be asked to:

- Teach the missionaries good health practices and policies during visits to missions.
- Counsel with mission presidents as health problems arise among missionaries.
- Visit health facilities and physicians to determine the best resources available for missionaries.

- Establish cooperative relationships with local physicians and hospitals.
- Review health care rendered, monitoring the quality of service and appropriateness of costs.
- Report monthly to the Area Presidency and Missionary Department Health Services and discuss any concerns.

The spouse of an area medical adviser usually travels with the adviser and may focus on such matters as nutrition, personal hygiene, cleanliness of living quarters, and reporting of health problems and needs. If the area medical adviser is a man, his wife may give attention to the health needs of sister missionaries.

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*Missionary  
Department  
Health Services*

The Missionary Department has a group of health professionals who oversee medical missionaries serving throughout the world and help mission presidents on health matters. Medical doctors are available 24 hours each day to advise mission presidents on health care needs of missionaries. You can contact a physician at the Missionary Department (801-240-6454) or through the Church operator (801-240-1000).

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*Missionary  
Medical*

Missionary Medical is a group of health professionals at Church headquarters who help mission presidents in the United States manage cases and process claims for health care reimbursement. Missionary Medical nurses are available 24 hours each day to provide advice and to authorize medications and professional care. You or someone you assign must contact Missionary Medical (800-777-1647) to preauthorize all health services except in life-threatening situations. Mission presidents outside the United States may also consult with Missionary Medical nurses as needed.

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## Health Care Principles

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*Medical History*

Become familiar with the medical histories of missionaries as they arrive in the field. Review the medical histories and physical-examination records in the missionary recommendation forms. Important information includes:

- Chronic health problems.
- Mental health problems.
- Preexisting injuries or illnesses.
- Medications required.
- Allergies.
- Special needs (diet, impairments).
- Blood type (if known).

If this information is not available in a missionary's records, obtain it directly from the missionary.

***Confidential nature of health information.*** As mission president, you have access to significant health information about your missionaries. This information is highly confidential. In many countries, strict laws regulate how such information is handled. You should disclose your missionaries' health information only on a need-to-know basis. Make sure that any individuals to whom you disclose such information also understand that it is confidential. You may want to discuss with the area administration office the local regulations governing health information.

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*Education*

Instruct all arriving missionaries on health issues unique to your mission, such as diet, special health risks, living conditions, appropriate dress for the climate, and sanitation. Provide guidelines on exercise and techniques for identifying and controlling stress. Emphasize the

importance of the *Missionary Health Guide* (37012), and specifically review the "Basic Health Guidelines" on pages 1–4 of that guide.

Health and safety principles and practices should be taught regularly at zone conferences and district meetings, including instruction on proper use of medication. The primary resources for this instruction should be the *Missionary Health Guide*, video presentations on bicycle and vehicle safety, and other approved materials.

Monitor the health problems reported so that they can be addressed during the health instruction at zone conferences or district meetings.

***Prevention of illness, disease, and accidents.*** Teach your missionaries general and mission-specific prevention practices, including:

- Diet and nutrition.
- Sanitation and personal hygiene, including safe food and water and hand washing.
- Exercise (30 minutes each day, following the guidelines in the *Missionary Health Guide*). Remind your missionaries that they must always stay with their companion in all activities, including exercise.
- Prevention of diseases that present a risk locally.
- Prevention of bicycle and automobile accidents.
- Other programs as designated by the Missionary Department or the Area Presidency.

Teach your missionaries to take special care to avoid injuries during preparation-day activities. They should not take part in activities that will make it difficult for them to serve with full strength the rest of the week. Remind them of the importance of warming up before physical activity, and encourage them to ask for protection from injury and accident in their regular prayers.

Ask local Church leaders to give guidelines on food handling and sanitation to those who feed missionaries.

Make sure your missionaries receive sufficient funds for adequate, nutritious food. Ensure that all missionary housing is inspected periodically to see that housing standards are met (see page 69).

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***Identifying Local Health Resources***

Identify competent health care providers and hospital facilities in your mission. In this effort you should work with the area medical adviser and the person in your mission whom you have asked to assist you and your wife with health issues (see page 30).

All health care for missionaries should be of the highest quality appropriate for the situation. The quality of a physician, a mental health provider, or a dentist can be assessed by type and location of training, expertise with health problems most often encountered by missionaries, sensitivity to the unique situation of missionaries (serving under modest and challenging circumstances), and personal characteristics, such as integrity, forthrightness, and professionalism.

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***Professional Care***

Instruct your missionaries that they must have your approval in advance for all visits to doctors, dentists, other health care providers, or hospitals.

However, in life-threatening situations they should seek competent medical care at once and then contact you as soon as possible. In such cases you should call your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative and the area medical adviser immediately, and the family should be contacted as soon as possible (see "Contacting the Missionary's Parents or Guardians," page 34). If at all possible, you should visit the missionary. If your mission is in the United States, you should also notify Missionary Medical.

Where local health care facilities are adequate, health care can be given in the field unless the missionary's ability to serve will be limited for a prolonged period of time (see "Medical Release or Leave of Absence," pages 34–35).

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*Alternative Care*      Chiropractic care must be approved by the missionary's family and the area medical adviser. In the United States, Missionary Medical authorizes the frequency and duration of such care. Visits to other alternative care providers (such as naturopaths, faith healers, acupuncturists, and homeopaths) are not approved.

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*Medications*      Any missionary who is on maintenance or long-term medication before beginning full-time missionary service must continue taking the medication unless otherwise advised by a qualified physician.

New medications prescribed for missionaries in the field should be carefully monitored by a competent health care provider.

Medications for treatment of mental health problems in the mission field must be approved by the family of the missionary and Missionary Department Health Services, even if the medication has been prescribed by a mental health professional. You should also consult with the home stake president. Once missionaries begin to take a medication, they must normally continue using it throughout their missions. You should monitor their health carefully.

Missionaries who are taking certain medications should not be allowed to drive a vehicle. If you have questions about this matter, consult with Missionary Department Health Services. Missionaries should not take their companions' medications or those recommended by non-professionals. They should, however, take a nonprescription daily multivitamin.

***Transporting medications to the field.*** Missionaries are authorized to take only their own prescription medications, eyeglasses, contacts, and special solutions to their missions. Any exceptions must be cleared through your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative. If missionaries are carrying prescription medication for someone else, they must also carry a letter from the MTC president or, at the Provo MTC, the director of health services.

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*Surgery*      Except in life-threatening situations, surgery for a missionary requires the approval of the area medical adviser, Missionary Department Health Services, and the missionary's parents. The home stake president should be consulted in this decision. If your mission is in the United States, you must also receive preauthorization from Missionary Medical. In most cases, missionaries should return home to receive nonemergency surgery that requires a long period of recovery, such as surgery that involves the heart, back, or knees.

Before any surgery is performed, you should speak with the surgeon (in person if possible) and be certain that the surgery is necessary. If possible, the area medical adviser should also consult with the surgeon. If you have a reasonable doubt about the surgery, consult with another surgeon. In all cases, consult with your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative, who can obtain advice from surgical specialists.

Elective surgery, such as cosmetic surgery and surgery involving tonsils, adenoids, cataracts, varicoceles, nasal septum, and umbilical hernia should not be performed on missionaries in the field. The only exception is plastic surgery following an accident.

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*Emotional Problems*      Some missionaries may have chronic emotional problems or may develop them in the field. Many of these problems can be resolved in the field with encouragement, support, counsel, proper medical help, and priesthood blessings.

Many missionaries experience some emotional challenges as they adapt to the stress of missionary life, including discouragement, feelings of depression, inability to sleep, nonspecific pains, or perfectionist feelings. Time and routine support can help them deal with these types of concerns. Teach missionaries that stress is normal, and help them learn how to minimize and cope with it. Exercise may reduce the occurrences or severity of such problems.

Guidelines on the most common emotional concerns are outlined on the mission presidents' Web site (see page 6).

Some missionaries have persistent mental health problems that require treatment. Obtain help through Missionary Department Health Services or LDS Family Services (if available). Problems that worsen or become unstable are normally best treated at home.

If a missionary enters the field on medication for mental health conditions, you must make sure he or she continues to take the medication for the duration of the mission unless otherwise authorized by a professional health care provider.

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*Contacting the  
Missionary's  
Parents or  
Guardians*

Notify a missionary's parents or guardians and priesthood leaders of any serious health concerns. They may have information that can help you in resolving issues. In many instances it is difficult for you to know in advance how they may react. Consider whether it might be best to have the stake president or bishop make the first contact with the parents or guardians.

When you speak directly to a missionary's parents or guardians about health matters, be sensitive to their feelings, and avoid creating unnecessary concern. In some instances the family may have a negative attitude about the missionary's serving. Be careful not to add to their feelings that the missionary should go home unnecessarily.

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*Contacting the  
Missionary  
Department*

When calling the Missionary Department or Missionary Medical about health problems, please be prepared with the following information:

- Nature and duration of the problem
- Fever, pain, and location of pain
- New or recurring problem
- The missionary's capacity to work
- Diagnosis (in medical terminology, if possible)
- Treatment or medication received
- Treatment plan

If a complete evaluation by a Missionary Department medical consultant is necessary, send available medical and hospital records, including X-rays and lab tests, to Missionary Department Health Services (see page 31).

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*Medical Release or  
Leave of Absence*

Missionaries who are given a medical release are released from their missions. If it is later determined that they are able to resume missionary service, their calls are reinstated. Missionaries who return home on a medical leave of absence are still full-time missionaries and are expected to maintain missionary standards to the extent possible. They are under the supervision of their stake president until they return to the mission, are assigned to another mission, or receive a medical release. When missionaries are ready to resume missionary service, the stake president coordinates their return with the Missionary Department In-Field Services representative.

When reasonable, medical problems should be treated in the mission field. For significant illnesses or accidents that could affect a missionary's ability to remain in the field, consult with the area medical adviser or the person in the mission you have asked to assist you and your wife with medical matters (see page 30).

Medical releases and leaves require the approval of the Missionary Department. Before submitting a recommendation, consider the following guidelines:

- Discuss alternatives with your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative and the missionary's priesthood leaders and parents. The Church respects the wishes of parents who insist that their missionary return home for treatment.

- If the illness or surgery is life-threatening or potentially disabling, the missionary should normally be given a medical release so that the parents or guardians can choose the physician and facilities and be present to comfort and support the missionary.
- If you have any doubt about the competency of local medical personnel or the adequacy of local facilities, you should move the missionary to a location where he or she can receive proper care.
- Consider the length of recovery. A recuperating missionary may create challenges for you, but the challenges facing a missionary on medical leave may be greater.
- Missionaries may be released early if their health condition would keep them from performing meaningful missionary work during the remainder of their missions.

If, after consulting with the area medical adviser, you believe a medical leave of absence or release is best for the missionary, ask the physician who is treating the missionary for a written recommendation. Then ask your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative for instructions.

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*Medical Expenses* See page 74.

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## Safety

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Circumstances that can affect missionaries' safety and welfare may include the following:

- Security issues: civil disturbance, crime, extortion, kidnapping, terrorism, war
- Natural disasters: fire, earthquake, flooding, tornado, hurricane, typhoon
- Economic issues: labor strikes, unemployment, monetary crises, bank failures or closures
- Communication issues: serious mail interruption, telephone and electrical failures
- Health issues: food and water contamination, medical emergencies, epidemics, radiation, bioterrorism
- Travel issues: accidents, airline strikes or bankruptcy

Emphasize to your missionaries the importance of always being representatives of the Lord in their actions, appearance, and language. Teach them—without needlessly alarming them—how to avoid dangerous situations. Review with them regularly the guidelines under “Security” in the *Missionary Handbook* (pages 51–53). Instruct them to immediately report to you all suspicious activities (including people who watch them closely or ask probing questions) and all security incidents.

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### *Emergency Action Plan*

You should be prepared to act quickly in an emergency. Each mission should have an emergency action plan, based on guidelines in section 3 of the *Church Safety, Health, and Environmental Manual* (see the mission presidents' Web site). Review your plan annually, and give copies to the Area Presidency, Church Security, and your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative.

Teach your missionaries what to do in an emergency, and make a copy of the plan available in each proselyting area in the mission. Be careful not to create alarm among the missionaries when you discuss this topic.

Always keep a current list of addresses and phone numbers of all missionaries, as well as phone numbers of the Area Presidency, neighboring mission presidents, and local stake presidents and bishops.

If your mission is outside the United States and Canada, work with the administration office to maintain good relations with embassies and consulates of the missionaries' home countries.

You may need to register missionaries from countries outside the mission with their embassy or consulate when they arrive in the mission. If the administration office staff is unable to do so, meet periodically with embassy or consulate officials to discuss evacuation procedures. You should follow the evacuation procedures established for your area by the U.S. State Department (or the host country government) and your administration office.

As part of your emergency action plan, maintain a confidential, detailed plan to evacuate missionaries from areas of your mission or from the entire mission. Each new mission president should review the plan with the Area Presidency, and then submit it to the Missionary Department. If details of the plan change, make sure the Area Presidency, Church Security, and the Missionary Department receive updated copies.

Consider what actions may be necessary in local, national, and multinational crises. In a local crisis, for example, you may need to move only a few missionaries from one area in the mission to another. During a national crisis, all foreign missionaries may need to be evacuated from a country.

Establish an alternative way (such as citizen band or ham radio) to communicate with the missionaries, the Area Presidency, your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative, neighboring mission presidents, embassies or consulates, and other agencies. Within the mission, district and zone leaders are normally the primary means of communicating with the missionaries under their jurisdiction.

Outline the steps to be taken in an emergency:

- Gather information from missionaries, local priesthood leaders, and government or private agencies (such as embassies, consulates, the Red Cross, or the Red Crescent).
- Inform the Area Presidency, and contact your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative (by phone, e-mail, or fax) immediately to report:
  - a. A description of the emergency (cause, location, magnitude, and other pertinent information).
  - b. Casualties among missionaries (including names, conditions, and locations).
  - c. The needs of missionaries for medical assistance, food, water, clothing, and shelter.
  - d. Recommendations on how to meet needs, how to maintain communication, and whether to evacuate missionaries.
  - e. Threats made to missionaries, your family, or Church property.
  - f. The extent of damage to the mission home and office and missionary apartments.
  - g. Any information you gather about members and Church buildings.
- Select locations to which missionaries could be moved.
- Specify how missionaries will be transported out of an area or out of the country, outlining alternatives. Take into account requirements for missionaries in their own country. The administration office may assist you in this process.

The Missionary Department will notify the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve, and Church agencies that need to be involved. The Missionary Department will communicate with you either directly or through the Area Presidency.

Whenever you determine that an emergency is likely, inform the Area Presidency and your Missionary Department In-Field Services representative, and begin to take action under their guidance.

You should review the mission emergency plan with your successor when you meet with him.

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# 6. Proselyting

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## Introduction

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“And ye shall go forth in the power of my Spirit, preaching my gospel, two by two, in my name, lifting up your voices as with the sound of a trump, declaring my word like unto angels of God.

“And ye shall go forth baptizing with water, saying: Repent ye, repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

“. . . And inasmuch as ye shall find them that will receive you ye shall build up my church in every region” (D&C 42:6–8).

**Additional scriptures:** D&C 1:4; 36:4–7; 50:13–14, 17–22; 58:64; 66:5; 124:128; 133:8, 37

The Lord has commanded His Church and its members to proclaim His gospel to all people. The fundamental objective of the Church in proclaiming the gospel is the spiritual conversion of families and individuals. We invite others to come unto Christ by helping them receive the restored gospel through faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end (see *Preach My Gospel*, page 1).

We seek out the Lord’s elect, who “hear [His] voice and harden not their hearts” (D&C 29:7). We help them prepare to enter into and keep sacred covenants by meeting the standards that the Lord has established: “All those who humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized, and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and witness before the church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end, and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into his church” (D&C 20:37).

To baptize people without proper preparation and conversion does harm to the individuals and the Church (see 2 Peter 2:20–21).

As people repent and are baptized and confirmed, they need the help of members and missionaries to “press forward with a steadfastness in Christ” (2 Nephi 31:20). Convert retention involves fellowshiping new members and helping them progress in gospel living so that they receive the ordinances and covenants of the temple and continue their preparations to receive eternal life.

Members and missionaries should use all available resources to “remember” and “nourish” those who have been “received unto baptism” (see Moroni 6:4). Working together, members and missionaries should provide constant, patient support and encouragement to new members to help them keep their baptismal covenant through obedience to the commandments and service in the Church.

Accomplishing these goals requires the diligent efforts and close cooperation of members, local leaders, and missionaries. Promoting these cooperative relationships in finding and teaching investigators and fellowshiping new members should be one of your primary objectives.

The proselyting program of the Church, as directed by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, is outlined in *Preach My Gospel*. Help your missionaries apply the principles of this program and develop the understanding, the capacity, and the spiritual power to become

powerful instruments in the hand of God (see Alma 29:9). In this way they will be able to help more people come unto Christ and experience the joy of the gospel.

Do not create additional programs that might compete with or distract from the principles and guidelines in *Preach My Gospel*.

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## Goal Setting, Planning, and Reporting

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To effectively accomplish their purpose, missionaries need to use wisely the sacred resource of time given them by their Heavenly Father. Carefully study chapter 8 of *Preach My Gospel* so that you clearly understand and can effectively teach missionaries the process of goal setting, planning, and reporting. Teach your missionaries that setting goals can help them exercise faith and focus their efforts. Teach them that planning flows from those goals, thus helping them meet the spiritual needs of the people with whom they are working.

During regular interviews with each missionary, review the area book and the missionary's daily planner (see the suggestions for mission presidents in *Preach My Gospel*, page 153). In this setting you can review the missionary's personal and companionship goals while discussing the progress of investigators and recent converts.

District and zone leaders should review these same tools during companion exchanges and district meetings. They can counsel with the missionaries, offering suggestions and guidance on how they can help their investigators progress.

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### Key Indicators

The key indicators point to crucial elements in missionaries' work of helping people come unto Christ (see *Preach My Gospel*, pages 138–39). They should not be seen merely as numbers to be reported but rather should point attention to real people. The key indicators help your missionaries evaluate their work and make goals and plans to help others progress toward conversion.

Similarly, you should use the key indicators to assess progress in general, identify training needs, and set mission goals and objectives. It is helpful to analyze the relationships among the numbers that the missionaries report. For example, if missionaries report many more progressing investigators than investigators attending sacrament meeting, you may need to teach your missionaries how to help investigators progress, how to help them make and keep commitments, or perhaps how to help them attend church.

You receive information on the key indicators each week in the Missionary Weekly Report forms (36991) and the weekly Call-In Summary Report forms (36984). The mission office staff uses the Mission Office System key indicator software to send the mission totals to Church headquarters (see page 70).

Take care that missionaries do not artificially inflate any of the key indicators by emphasizing them inappropriately. They should not be elevated to an end in themselves but should be used as the way to help souls come unto Christ and to establish the Church. Help your missionaries understand that the ultimate value of the key indicators lies in how they lead to conversion and stronger Church units (for example, in increased sacrament meeting attendance or increased numbers of live endowments). Do not use the key indicators or any other statistics to set quotas, offer rewards, or impose penalties.

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## Finding

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Missionaries need to understand that their success in nearly every other phase of their work depends on the productivity of the combined finding efforts of missionaries and members. They should develop a strong commitment to make those efforts as effective as possible.

Finding should be an integral part of everything they do. They should seek finding opportunities in their teaching, baptizing, retention, activation, and service activities.

Chapter 9 of *Preach My Gospel* presents doctrines and principles on finding people to teach. It also offers suggestions on how to apply those principles. Help your missionaries understand how to apply these basic principles of finding. Help them develop the ability to apply the basic teaching principles in finding situations. These principles are outlined in chapters 4–5 and 10–11 of *Preach My Gospel*.

Because finding is so important, regularly include principles on finding in your training program. A clear approach to finding will help missionaries be more productive.

Strengthen your missionaries' understanding, capacity, and spiritual power to find people to teach. Set an example in finding people to teach.

Help your missionaries identify finding methods that are most fruitful in your mission. Take care, however, not to eliminate any valid finding method. For example, do not let your missionaries focus so intensely on finding through members that they neglect finding through their own efforts, including street contacting and tracting. Each approach brings missionaries in contact with various groups of people; avoiding some approaches reduces the opportunity to meet certain people.

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### *Finding through Members*

All Church members have a covenant responsibility to share the gospel (see Mosiah 18:8–10; D&C 88:81). Members have a lasting influence on their friends. People who have close friends who are Latter-day Saints are generally much more willing to accept the invitation to be taught. Their member friends can be a powerful influence in helping them be baptized and confirmed and then remain active. Thus, one of the best ways to improve convert retention is by finding through members.

Missionaries can play an important role in helping members (especially leaders) prepare and ask people to be taught. In all finding activities, close cooperation between missionaries and members is essential (see *Preach My Gospel*, pages 160–62).

Help your missionaries understand the bishop's responsibility for directing missionary work in the ward. Teach them how to work effectively with local leaders, especially in priesthood executive committee, ward council, and weekly coordination meetings (see First Presidency letters, Feb. 28 and Mar. 28, 2002; *Missionary Work in the Ward* [00047]; *Preach My Gospel*, chapter 13).

Your regular meetings with the stake presidents in your mission are key to coordinating the work of your missionaries and the members (see pages 55–56). Whenever you work with and speak to members, strive to strengthen unity, cooperation, and coordination between missionaries and members. Seek to build their faith in the Savior, and express appreciation for all they do to share the gospel.

Under the direction of the bishop and in coordination with the ward mission leader, missionaries may visit members in their homes to teach gospel principles, help them feel the Spirit, encourage and strengthen them, and show them how they can share the gospel with friends and acquaintances (see *Preach My Gospel*, pages 160–62).

The weekly missionary coordination meeting provides an opportunity for full-time missionaries and ward leaders to coordinate their missionary, retention, and activation efforts. The Progress Record form (36985) is a major resource in this coordination. This meeting is conducted by the ward mission leader. It is attended by the full-time missionaries (where possible), the ward missionaries, an assistant in the high priests group leadership, a counselor in the elders quorum presidency, and a counselor in the Relief Society presidency (see *Preach My Gospel*, page 219).

Emphasize to your missionaries the importance of earning the members' trust and confidence by acting at all times with an eye single to the glory of the Lord. The members should be able to recognize that the missionaries are sensitive to the Spirit, competent in teaching the gospel,

and diligent in hard work and strict obedience. As you work with the members, take every opportunity to build their confidence in your missionaries.

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*Finding through  
Their Own Efforts*

While helping members find people for them to teach, missionaries should always remember that they are responsible for finding their own teaching opportunities as well.

The Lord taught His elders, "It is not needful for this whole company of mine elders to be moving swiftly upon the waters, whilst the inhabitants on either side are perishing in unbelief" (D&C 61:3; see also D&C 58:47). Teach your missionaries that they should always be finding through their own efforts. They should regularly include tracting and street contacting with the other finding approaches that they use and should talk with people wherever they go (see *Preach My Gospel*, pages 156–58, 167).

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*Using the Media*

The media are powerful tools in the work of bringing the Church "out of obscurity and out of darkness" (D&C 1:30). Articles and programs about missionaries, the gospel, family history, the Book of Mormon, welfare, and community service can foster positive attitudes toward the Church (see *Preach My Gospel*, pages 163–65).

Missionary-oriented media resources include television and radio commercials and programs, newspaper and magazine advertisements, and pass-along cards.

In some countries the Church presents gospel messages in the media designed to obtain referrals. These messages give nonmembers an opportunity to request an offered item and a visit by the missionaries. Referrals are processed either at Church headquarters or locally in countries outside the United States and Canada and are sent electronically to missions and stakes.

If you have questions about media efforts, contact the Missionary Department Media Division (801-240-4386).

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*Response  
to Referrals*

Referrals from Church headquarters are forwarded to missions only when the people have agreed to receive a visit from missionaries. For referrals received from within the mission, make sure the nonmembers have expressed the same willingness for the missionaries to visit them. If the nonmembers live outside mission boundaries, the referral secretary should send the referrals to the Missionary Department immediately.

Those who have asked for a media offering or have agreed to a member's invitation have usually felt the Spirit. They should be visited as soon as possible—preferably within 24 hours—while they still remember that feeling. You should monitor how promptly your missionaries respond to referrals according to the following guidelines:

- The mission referral secretary should send each referral to the missionaries the same day it is received in the office.
- The missionaries should visit the nonmembers within 24 hours.
- If referrals are distributed through the Internet to wards, the missionaries should coordinate daily with the ward mission leader or other designated individual to see that those who sent the referrals are visited promptly.
- The missionaries should report the results of their visits promptly to the referral secretary.

Encourage stake leaders to teach ward missionaries to work with your missionaries in visiting and following through on these referrals. Whenever possible, a ward missionary should accompany the full-time missionaries when they respond to referrals, especially where transportation is a challenge. The full-time missionaries should keep the ward mission leader informed of the results of referral visits.

Ask local leaders to encourage Church members who request media offerings to obtain them through regular Church channels rather than from the missionaries.

If possible, you should review the status of referrals with the referral secretary each week.

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## Teaching

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### *Teaching by the Spirit*

Missionaries are to teach the message of the restored gospel in such a way that the Spirit may direct both them and those they are teaching. The First Presidency has emphasized that missionaries should speak from the heart in their own words, not give memorized recitations (see *Preach My Gospel*, pages 29–30). You should not require that they memorize lessons to be presented to investigators. (For guidelines on training missionaries, see chapter 7 of this handbook.)

Chapter 3 of *Preach My Gospel* contains the lessons that missionaries are to teach. Chapters 4, 10, and 11 present doctrines, principles, and suggestions on teaching. Carefully study these chapters so that you understand them clearly and can effectively train your missionaries. Make practical training in teaching a frequent part of zone conferences (see pages 49–50 in this handbook).

Help your missionaries understand that improving their language ability will strengthen their capacity to teach with the Spirit. As their language ability grows, they will be better able to express the thoughts and feelings that come to them. In addition, they will be better able to focus their attention on their investigators rather than on what they themselves are trying to say.

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### *Using the Book of Mormon*

The Book of Mormon is convincing evidence of the divinity of Jesus Christ and the Restoration of His Church through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Receiving a testimony through the Holy Ghost that the Book of Mormon is true is essential in the conversion process. Your missionaries need to develop the ability to use the Book of Mormon clearly and powerfully in their work (see *Preach My Gospel*, chapter 5). Consider having your missionaries memorize the great promise in Moroni 10:3–5.

Each month, a limited number of copies of the Book of Mormon is provided to each mission. Teach your missionaries how to make wise use of these books by:

- Loaning them to nonmembers who agree to read in the book and pray about what they have read.
- Giving them to nonmembers in special situations (if the mission has an adequate supply) and in response to referrals from media campaigns.

Missionaries should not ask their families or other members for books or for money to purchase copies.

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## Baptizing and Confirming

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The policies stated here supplement those stated in the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, pages 32–37 and *Preach My Gospel*, pages 203–10. Because you hold the keys to convert baptisms in your mission, it is essential that you become thoroughly familiar with these policies.

Teach your missionaries the principles and guidelines outlined in Doctrine and Covenants 20:37, in this handbook on pages 41–44, and in *Preach My Gospel*, chapter 12. Also teach them the principles in the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, pages 32–37 that relate to their responsibilities.

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### *Baptism Policies*

A convert baptism is the baptism of any person nine years of age or older or an eight-year-old whose parents are both nonmembers. The baptism of an excommunicated person is not a convert baptism and requires authorization by the presiding officer in a ward, branch, stake, or district disciplinary council (or, in certain cases, by the First Presidency), not by a full-time missionary (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, pages 120–21).

***Baptism of a minor.*** A minor child, as defined by local laws, may be baptized only if the custodial parent(s) or legal guardian(s) consent, preferably in writing, and if there is clear evidence that he or she understands the baptismal covenant and will make every effort to keep

it through obedience to the commandments, including faithfully attending Church meetings (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, page 33).

***Baptism of people who have been cohabiting out of wedlock.*** A baptismal candidate who has been cohabiting with a person of the opposite gender out of wedlock must either marry the other person or cease living with the other person before he or she can be baptized.

***Baptism of people involved in an abortion.*** A person who has submitted to, performed, arranged for, paid for, encouraged, or consented to an abortion may be baptized only after you have interviewed him or her. In considering whether such a person should be baptized, you should be guided by the principles in Doctrine and Covenants 20:37, 68–69. If necessary, you may authorize one of your counselors to conduct this interview. Each interview must be authorized separately. The counselor conducting the interview reports to you, and you may then authorize or deny the baptism.

***Persons who have been convicted of crimes.*** Persons who have been convicted of crimes are not baptized until they complete their terms of imprisonment. Those who have been convicted of felonies or any crimes of immoral character should not be baptized until they have also completed their terms of parole or probation resulting from their convictions (unless the First Presidency has granted an exception). You should coordinate with local priesthood leaders to help such individuals do everything they can to become worthy of baptism.

***Persons who have committed murder.*** As used here, *murder* refers to the deliberate and unjustified taking of human life and would require First Presidency consideration. It does not include police or military action in the line of duty. Abortion is not defined as murder for this purpose.

A person who has been convicted of murder or who has confessed to this transgression, even in private confessions to a priesthood leader, may not be baptized unless the First Presidency gives permission. Before submitting a written request to baptize such a person, you should personally conduct a thorough, searching interview. In cases where the facts are publicly known, you should also seek the counsel of local priesthood leaders. Be sure that the candidate has done all he or she can do to meet the requirements in D&C 20:37, particularly “manifest[ing] by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins.” You might, therefore, ask the person to continue in active investigation for several months before submitting a request for exception.

For further guidelines, see the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, page 34. For counsel on the general policy, you may consult with your Area Presidency. For specific cases, if you believe an exception to policy is appropriate, you should submit a request for approval to the Office of the First Presidency.

***Baptism of people who live outside organized missions.*** Missionaries must be sensitive to the special challenges facing new converts who will return to countries where missions have not been established. In some countries it is a violation of the law to change religions, and baptism may endanger the individual and the future of the Church in that country.

If you have any question whether such individuals should be taught or baptized, consult with your Area Presidency. If a person who lives outside an organized mission is baptized and then returns home, notify the Area Presidency so contact can be maintained with the member.

***Baptism of family members by a father.*** Other family members’ baptisms should not be delayed to allow the father to baptize them after he receives the priesthood (see *Preach My Gospel*, page 207).

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## ***Baptismal Interviews***

Instructions for conducting baptismal interviews, including the interview questions, are listed in *Preach My Gospel*, pages 205–8. You should personally teach district and zone leaders how to interview candidates for baptism. Emphasize to these leaders that they should regularly review the guidelines in *Preach My Gospel*.

The district leader interviews baptismal candidates prepared by missionaries in his district, including the candidates of zone leaders working in the district. One of the zone leaders

interviews candidates who were taught by the district leader. If the district leader or the zone leaders who supervise the area where the candidate resides are not available, you may authorize another missionary leader to conduct the interview.

Conducting baptismal interviews requires spiritual sensitivity and maturity. To the extent possible, authorize missionaries to conduct these interviews who are sufficiently mature to fulfill the assignment appropriately. Help your missionary leaders rise to this high standard so that the sacred ordinance of baptism can be administered properly.

If a candidate has been involved in a serious crime, an abortion, or a homosexual transgression, the baptism requires your authorization after you conduct a searching interview of the candidate. If a person has committed murder or undergone an elective transsexual operation, First Presidency approval is required (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, page 34).

Although each candidate should meet the bishop before baptism, the bishop does not interview the candidate for baptism or determine the candidate's worthiness.

It is essential, however, that the missionaries and the bishop work together in unity. The First Presidency has emphasized that the bishop is responsible for overseeing missionary work in the ward, including finding, teaching, baptizing, and confirming (see First Presidency letter, Feb. 28, 2002). Missionaries should involve the bishop in their work with baptismal candidates as early as possible.

Retention of converts becomes a greater challenge if the bishop is not in harmony with the baptism. Express to the stake presidents and bishops in your mission your desire to resolve any concerns about whether an investigator is prepared to be baptized. Help your missionaries understand how to resolve early any concerns that a bishop might have.

### *Baptism and Confirmation Record*

The Baptism and Confirmation Record (35919) becomes the basis for the new member's official membership record. Therefore, you should emphasize to your missionaries that the form must be completed accurately and legibly, and they must carefully follow the instructions included with the Baptism and Confirmation Record, including distribution of the copies. You may find it helpful to review these instructions periodically with missionaries and with local leaders. Make sure missionaries understand that it is essential that the person conducting the baptismal service receive the appropriate copies of the form before the meeting.

The membership record is created from the information submitted through the Convert Data Entry system in the mission office, not by the ward. Until this process is completed, an individual is not considered a member of the Church, and the convert baptism is not included in the mission record. The mission office staff should regularly follow up to make sure that baptism and confirmation records are complete and accurate.

### *Performing the Ordinances of Baptism and Confirmation*

Convert baptismal services are normally conducted under the direction of the bishopric. The ward mission leader plans the baptismal service in coordination with the missionaries who taught the investigator. A member of the bishopric usually presides at the service, and he or the ward mission leader usually conducts the service.

If more than one ward is involved, the stake presidency usually assigns the high councilor who assists them with missionary work or a bishop to organize and conduct the service. Normally a member of the stake presidency presides at the service. If one of them cannot attend, they may authorize the high councilor or bishop to preside.

Work closely with local leaders to ensure that baptismal fonts are readily available for baptismal services. Teach your missionaries to be sensitive to the needs of both members and investigators as they schedule baptismal services (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, page 34).

For additional guidelines on baptismal services and on the ordinance of baptism, see the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, pages 34–36; *Book 2*, pages 253–54; and *Preach My Gospel*, pages 208–9.

A person becomes a member of the Church only after the ordinances of baptism and confirmation are both completed. Through the reception of the Holy Ghost, the process of cleansing

and sanctification begins to take effect in converts' lives (see 2 Nephi 31:17; Alma 5:54; 3 Nephi 27:20; Moroni 6:4).

The ordinance of confirmation is performed under the direction of the bishop. He ensures that converts are confirmed in a sacrament meeting of the ward in which they reside, preferably the Sunday following their baptism. Converts are not confirmed at the baptismal service. Teach your missionaries to work closely with the ward mission leader and the bishop to make sure each new convert is confirmed without undue delay.

For additional guidelines on confirmation, see the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, pages 36–37; *Book 2*, page 254; and *Preach My Gospel*, page 210.

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## Retention of New Converts

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All members should look to the temple as the great symbol of their membership. The goal in retention is to help new members prepare to enter into the sacred covenants of the temple and endure to the end.

Although the primary responsibility for new converts rests with the local leaders and members, you and your missionaries share a great responsibility for the welfare of the people you have helped come unto Christ. Full-time missionaries are to join with ward missionaries to teach again the first four lessons and to teach lesson 5 (see chapter 3 in *Preach My Gospel*). They should also work closely with the bishop and the ward mission leader to see that new converts take the next steps—including priesthood ordinations and callings—along the path to eternal life. Ward leaders determine whether ward missionaries or full-time missionaries lead out in teaching and how long the full-time missionaries are involved (see *Preach My Gospel*, pages 82, 213–17).

As you meet with stake presidents in your regular meetings, in coordinating council meetings, and in other settings, work closely with them to make sure the retention efforts of the members and the missionaries are closely coordinated. Encourage the stake presidents to follow through with the bishops in monitoring and strengthening the retention of each convert and in making sure that confirmation and priesthood ordination are not unnecessarily delayed.

Stake presidents and bishops have been asked to monitor the progress of new members, in terms of the following indicators:

### *Short-Term Indicators*

- Attended at least two sacrament meetings last month.
- Male converts ages 12 and older received the Aaronic Priesthood within six months after baptism.
- Participated in a Church responsibility (which usually includes family history work) during the first six months after baptism.
- Paid tithing during the first six months after baptism.

### *Long-Term Indicators*

- Holds a calling appropriate to experience in the Church.
- Attended an average of at least two sacrament meetings each month during the past year.
- Paid a full tithe during the first full year of membership.
- Male converts ages 18 and older received the Melchizedek Priesthood by the end of the second full year of membership.
- Endowed when appropriate. For guidelines, see the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, page 77.

Teach your missionaries the importance of convert retention, and train them how to support and encourage new converts. Also teach them to work with local leaders and members in this process. Help them understand that they share responsibility for strengthening converts in the Church. Although they may not be able to continue to visit converts, missionaries are encouraged to write to them occasionally and give them encouragement (see *Missionary Handbook*, pages 36–37). After missionaries have been transferred from a ward or branch, they should consult with you before corresponding with converts of the opposite sex. As you counsel with your missionaries on such situations, you should be sensitive to potentially inappropriate relationships. Establish guidelines that will protect the missionary and the convert while strengthening the new member.

For guidelines on fellowshipping and retention of new converts, see *Preach My Gospel*, pages 213–17.

***Priesthood ordination of male converts.*** Each newly baptized male member 12 years of age or older should be prepared to receive the Aaronic Priesthood within a reasonable period after baptism. The bishop determines when the ordination should occur. Before the new member can be ordained, the bishop must interview him. This interview occurs after baptism; it should not be combined with any visits with the bishop before the baptism. The member also must be sustained by a vote of ward members in a sacrament meeting.

Male converts 16 years of age or older are ordained to the office of priest. Those who are at least 18 years old may be ordained to the office of elder after they have served as priests and demonstrated their worthiness; no specific waiting period is required. (See *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, page 40.)

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## Activation

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If local leaders ask for additional help, full-time missionaries may help them work with less-active members (see page 57).

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# 7. Training of Missionaries

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## Introduction

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“And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom.

“Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand; . . .

“That ye may be prepared in all things when I shall send you again to magnify the calling whereunto I have called you, and the mission with which I have commissioned you” (D&C 88:77–78, 80).

**Additional scriptures:** D&C 11:21–22; 38:23; 78:11; 84:85; 88:77, 118–19; 105:9–10; 107:99; 132:3; 138:36–37

In the training of missionaries, both the teacher and the missionary should feel and recognize the Spirit. Rely on the Lord to assist you as you help your missionaries become powerful instruments in His hands (see Alma 29:9).

You should help your missionaries qualify to receive the Spirit, who will show them where to go, what to do, and what to say and will enable them to teach with power and authority. You should also help them develop the attributes and skills through which they can magnify their calling (see 1 Corinthians 2:1–4; D&C 42:14; 50:13–22; 84:85; 112:28). Strive to be an example of those attributes and skills, in particular those emphasized in *Preach My Gospel*, chapter 6.

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## *Preach My Gospel*

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*Preach My Gospel* and its supporting materials have been designed to give missionaries greater responsibility and greater flexibility to teach by the Spirit. Your missionaries have been called of God and promised great resources of power. You have been called to help them rise to these expectations. Have faith in the promises the Lord has made to you and your missionaries.

You should not produce additional materials or programs or have your missionaries study other resources.

At the end of most chapters in *Preach My Gospel* is a section titled “Ideas for Study and Application.” This section contains suggestions for the mission president, as well as many specific suggestions for personal and companion study, district meetings, and zone conferences. Become familiar with these suggestions, and apply them according to the circumstances and needs in your mission.

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## Missionary Training Centers

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Training at missionary training centers is based on the scriptures and *Preach My Gospel*, with emphasis on learning and teaching the doctrine of the lessons in chapter 3. Missionaries also learn their purpose, as discussed in chapter 1, and principles of teaching by the Spirit, as described in chapter 10. They learn to apply these principles as they practice teaching the lessons

in varying lengths and levels of detail so that they can teach them to anyone in any circumstance. Particular importance is placed on inviting people to make and keep commitments, as taught in chapter 11. Missionaries use the planning principles and become familiar with the planning tools described in chapter 8. Those who are learning to speak their mission language also receive a basic foundation in that language and the tools that will help them continue learning the language in the mission field, as outlined in chapter 7.

Missionary training centers provide a foundation for missionary life as missionaries learn and apply the principles in the *Missionary Handbook*.

Missionary training centers lay the groundwork upon which you should build. Each missionary should strengthen his or her capacity and abilities and make a commitment to continue learning in the mission field. Of course, individual missionaries will vary. Your opportunity is to help each one continue to grow and improve.

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## Determining In-Field Training Needs

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The purpose of in-field training is to build on MTC training through application, evaluation, and refinement to help missionaries learn and apply *Preach My Gospel*.

You can best identify training needs by listening to the promptings of the Spirit as you personally work with and observe missionaries—for example, as they study, plan, find, teach, and work with members (see “Helping Your Missionaries Apply What They Learn” on page 53). Although you cannot work with all the missionaries, work with a variety of them, not just with leaders or the strongest missionaries. The Lord will guide you as you strive to “be with and strengthen them” (see D&C 20:53).

As a result of their experiences working with the missionaries, your assistants and zone and district leaders can provide valuable insights. You can also identify training needs as you review weekly reports, interview the missionaries, and receive input from priesthood leaders and other members. In addition, you may also ask the missionaries frequently to assess their own application of the principles in *Preach My Gospel*.

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## New Missionaries

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### *Orientation of New Missionaries*

When missionaries arrive in a mission, they often have not had much sleep and are anxious about the new and unknown experiences that are ahead of them. Take care to reassure them, reduce their stress, and allow them to rest if necessary. Help them begin to feel at ease in the mission.

Conduct a warm, personal interview with each missionary. Express your love for and trust in them and your eagerness to help them succeed.

Hold an orientation for missionaries when they arrive. Depending on the circumstances in your mission, this orientation should last one day to one and one-half days. Help them strengthen their vision of the work—that they are on the Lord’s errand and that He will help them.

Help your missionaries understand what is important to you. Teach them obedience, faith, and hard work. Reassure them that you love them and are grateful for their service. Introduce them to mission organization, policies, standards of conduct, health and safety guidelines (including vehicle and bicycle safety), and the history and culture of the area. Missionaries should learn how to report their progress and how to manage their personal finances.

Focus on the essential teaching skills and attributes that the missionaries have been learning in *Preach My Gospel*. Emphasize that effective missionaries continually study *Preach My Gospel* throughout their missions. You may also want to stress the importance of studying, planning,

finding, and improving in the mission language. This orientation could include the bearing of testimonies.

The orientation period also provides an opportunity to complete essential temporal tasks, such as establishing bank accounts and certifying driving privileges.

**Missionaries who do not attend a missionary training center.** Provide initial training for missionaries who do not attend a missionary training center. Your assistants, zone leaders, office staff, and counselors may assist you. Contact the Missionary Department for a suggested outline and materials for this training (801-422-6960).

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### *The First Companionship*

One of the greatest expressions of trust that you can give a missionary is to assign him or her as a trainer of a new missionary. A missionary's first companion will have a profound, lasting influence on the development of the missionary's attitude and habits. Give special consideration, therefore, to those you assign to train new missionaries. Choose only outstanding missionaries to serve as trainers.

Training the trainers of new missionaries should be an integral part of your training plan. Teach them to:

- Recognize that their assignment is a sacred trust—from you and from the Lord. Ask them to commit themselves to set the highest example of obedience and effective proselyting and to do everything in their power to help their companions begin their missions positively.
- Help new missionaries adapt to missionary life. Trainers should follow the daily schedule diligently (see *Preach My Gospel*, page viii), read daily in the *Missionary Handbook* with the new missionaries, and obey all mission rules.
- Hold companion study daily and help the new missionaries develop and improve basic missionary skills discussed in *Preach My Gospel*. The scripture boxes and activities should be strongly emphasized with new missionaries.
- Hold daily and weekly planning sessions to help new missionaries learn how to plan to help investigators progress toward conversion (see *Preach My Gospel*, pages 147–50).
- Make sure the new missionaries participate fully as contributing members of their companionships. Trainers must, from the very beginning, give new missionaries the opportunity to take some part in each phase of the work, even if they are somewhat hesitant or are not yet strong in language or other skills.

Instruct trainers that on their first full day with their new companion, they should spend sufficient time in companion study and daily planning to thoroughly introduce the new missionary to the area, daily and weekly goals, the needs of investigators, current finding activities, and work with members.

Trainers report to their district leaders and to you on the progress of the new missionaries.

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## Mission Training Plan

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You should develop a mission training plan (for a suggested format, see page 87). It should be based on the scriptures and *Preach My Gospel* and should enable you to organize training opportunities so that they complement and build on one another. It should also enable you to provide direction to missionary leaders for the training they will conduct. Because of the continual flow of missionaries into and out of the mission, your training plan should be based on the need for coordinated training and for regular repetition of basic topics, especially topics from *Preach My Gospel*.

Training plans should cover a period of several months and should be organized according to transfer cycles—the periods between normal transfer dates. They should be structured around a zone leader council and zone conferences every transfer cycle and missionary district

meetings every week. You can build a long-term mission training plan by organizing a series of training plans—one for each transfer cycle.

Each of these training experiences should be spiritually uplifting—a time for missionaries to be renewed in their faith in the Lord, in their desire to serve with all their heart, and in their determination to fulfill their purpose as missionaries.

Allowing for adjustments according to the needs of the missionaries and the direction of the Spirit, plan the following common elements for each of these training meetings:

**Doctrine.** The discussion should usually focus on a doctrine from one of the lessons in chapter 3 of *Preach My Gospel*. Use the scriptures as the main text. Long lectures are generally less effective in teaching missionaries. Involve them in the discussion.

**Preach My Gospel.** Present practical training on a principle from *Preach My Gospel*, using the pattern described under “Training Model” (see pages 52–53 in this handbook) and the suggestions at the end of each chapter of *Preach My Gospel*. Help your missionaries see how they can apply in their current area what you are teaching them.

**Health and safety.** Regularly review such matters as nutrition, sanitation, vehicle and bicycle safety, and security (see pages 31–32, 35).

**Accountability.** Give the missionaries opportunities to report on the progress in their area (investigators’ status and needs, key indicators, follow-up on previous training).

**Talks and testimonies from missionaries.** You might assign topics for talks in advance, based on the doctrine or principle from *Preach My Gospel* that will be addressed. Missionaries may share testimonies as appropriate.

**Review.** Ask the missionaries to report on their experiences in applying what they learned at the last meeting. They could also practice again what was covered in that meeting.

**Other.** As appropriate for the missionaries’ needs, you may include other matters, such as language and cultural instruction, dress and grooming standards, or discussion of mission rules in the *Missionary Handbook* (see pages 20–23 in this handbook).

Select topics based on the direction of the Spirit and counsel from your assistants and from other leaders. Normally the assistants help you in teaching the zone leader council. They and the zone leaders are then able to help you train the missionaries in zone conferences and provide direction to district leaders for district meetings.

### Zone Leader Council

Where possible, you should hold a zone leader council every transfer cycle to train zone leaders and prepare for the upcoming zone conferences. In addition to the topics listed in the previous section, this meeting could include the following activities:

**Reports on previous training.** Ask the zone leaders to report on the application of the previous training and on the results seen in each zone.

**Zone conference preparation and follow-up.** Discuss how missionaries can prepare for zone conference training and how district leaders can build on it in district meetings and companion exchanges. Distribute a copy of your training plan, and discuss it so that the training can be carried out consistently in all training settings.

**Zone leaders’ observations.** Discuss the zone leaders’ suggestions on needs and challenges in the mission.

**Direction from the mission president.** Regularly include leadership training as you teach the leaders.

### Zone Conferences

You preside over zone conferences, which are usually held once every transfer cycle and may involve one or more zones. You are assisted, as you determine, by the zone leaders and your assistants.

Base your teaching on *Preach My Gospel* (particularly the ideas at the end of each chapter), and help your missionaries see how they can apply what you teach them in their own proselyting.

Draw upon examples, experiences, and instruction from missionaries who are successfully applying principles in *Preach My Gospel*.

Be sure to allow for opportunities for the zone leaders to teach, train, and inspire the missionaries in their zone. If more than one zone is participating, time should be scheduled during the conference for each pair of zone leaders to meet with their zone.

Following zone conference, you should meet briefly with the zone leaders and district leaders to make sure they understand how they are to follow through on what has been taught and how they will report back. This can also be a good opportunity for brief leadership training.

As part of zone conferences, you may occasionally hold special sessions for sisters, senior missionaries, or district leaders. Your wife may assist you in all these meetings. You may also conduct some of your regular interviews with missionaries before or after zone conferences. Your participation in the conference is essential, so do not allow interviews to pull you out of the meetings.

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### *District Meetings*

District leaders conduct district meetings each week on a day you select. Depending on local circumstances, the zone leaders may conduct training in each district once each transfer cycle.

Include in your mission training plan the specific points from *Preach My Gospel* (including the activities within chapters and the suggestions at the end of each chapter) that you would like district and zone leaders to address in district meetings. These points may build on or review those addressed in zone conference, or they may help the missionaries prepare for the next zone conference. For guidelines on district meetings, see *Preach My Gospel*, page ix.

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### *Companion Exchanges*

The purpose of companion exchanges is for leaders to provide practical training as they work with other missionaries. Companion exchanges give leaders opportunities to demonstrate principles and practices of effective missionary work and to reinforce what was learned in zone conference (see *Missionary Handbook*, pages 63–65).

Normally at least once each transfer cycle, district leaders conduct companion exchanges with each elder in their district, and zone leaders conduct companion exchanges with each district leader in their zone. The assistants to the president regularly conduct companion exchanges with zone leaders. Under your direction and coordinating with district leaders, zone leaders and assistants to the president may also work with other elders.

During a companion exchange, the missionaries can work in the proselyting area of either missionary. Typically, the leader's companion and the companion of the other missionary work in the other proselyting area. Exchanges generally last at least 24 hours to provide an opportunity for comprehensive training, especially in applying the principles from *Preach My Gospel*. At the end of the exchange, goals and plans should be made to help the missionaries develop and grow. The leader should report to you the results of the exchange.

Help your missionaries understand that companion exchanges are intended for training by leaders, not merely for changing companions for a time, either to spend time with a friend or to get away from a companion.

Missionaries do not normally go on companion exchanges with members unless they have so many appointments that they cannot cover them without each missionary going with a member.

**Training of sisters.** Sisters are not to participate in companion exchanges with elders. As needed for training, you may assign strong, experienced sisters to conduct companion exchanges with other sisters. Their companions should work together, usually in the same proselyting area, depending on the distances involved. (See *Missionary Handbook*, page 65.)

In such cases you should make sure the sister conducting the exchange understands the principles and guidelines governing companion exchanges. She should report to you on the results of the experience. Ensure that the district leader of the sister being trained knows about the companion exchange and any goals and plans that were made.

No titles should be given to sisters who are given such an assignment, and no formal organization should be created.

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### Interviews

In your regular interviews with your missionaries, you have opportunities to teach them how to become instruments in the Lord's hands in bringing more people unto Christ. You may ask questions about their understanding and application of current training. In this process, it is helpful periodically to review their study journals, daily planners, and area books. Many good suggestions for interviews are found at the end of each chapter in *Preach My Gospel*.

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### Daily Study and Planning

The most frequent and fundamental training opportunity occurs daily in each missionary apartment. Encourage missionaries throughout their missions to strive to continually improve themselves and to make good use of the study schedule that has been established for them (see *Missionary Handbook*, pages 15–16). They will seldom have a comparable opportunity during the rest of their lives. Ask them to participate in personal, companion, and language study (if appropriate) every day of their mission.

**Evening planning session.** Each evening after 9:00, missionaries plan their activities for the following day and identify what they need to study the next day in personal and companion study to prepare to meet the needs of those they are teaching.

**Personal study.** Missionaries study the gospel individually for one hour each day. Effective study will help them fulfill their purpose as missionaries and strengthen their testimonies of the gospel of Jesus Christ (see *Preach My Gospel*, pages viii–ix). The Book of Mormon should be a regular part of their personal study.

**Companion study.** For one additional hour each day, missionary companions study together the scriptures and *Preach My Gospel* (see *Preach My Gospel*, page ix). They confirm their plans for the day and prepare for the specific teaching and finding activities planned for that day.

**Language study.** Missionaries who are learning a language study the language for an additional 30–60 minutes each day. *Preach My Gospel* includes suggestions for effective language study (see *Preach My Gospel*, chapter 7).

Missionaries' personal and companion study should be oriented, at least in part, to help them meet the needs of their investigators and should follow the direction of the Spirit. Long-range study programs that are mandated—whether for the whole mission or for a district or zone—interfere with these important objectives. Avoid any tendency to create such programs.

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### Other In-Field Training

You may want to periodically conduct training sessions for the zone leaders and district leaders or for trainers of new missionaries. You might teach them, for example, how to use the key indicators, how to conduct companion exchanges, how to conduct baptismal interviews, how to work with local Church leaders, or how to help others set goals without imposing quotas.

You may conduct other in-field training as needed. For example, missionaries with special assignments (such as welfare services), couples and senior sisters, and missionaries serving in or near visitors' centers may need specialized training. Missionaries serving in visitors' centers also receive regular training from the director of the center (see pages 85–86).

You should not hold missionwide conferences or sisters' conferences without the approval of the Area Presidency. The benefits of gathering large groups of missionaries together usually are outweighed by such factors as cost, travel safety, and disruption of the regular proselyting schedule. Even in geographically compact missions where costs and travel safety may not be issues, gathering many missionaries in one location may be unwise.

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## Training Principles

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As you develop and carry out training in your mission, consider the following guidelines:

- Seek the Lord's guidance.
- Discuss with your missionaries how they can apply what you are teaching them to accomplish their purpose (see *Preach My Gospel*, page 1).
- Personally participate in much of the training, including teaching doctrine, demonstrating how to teach missionary lessons, and giving feedback.
- Teach doctrines from chapter 3 of *Preach My Gospel* in every training meeting. Also teach regularly from the other chapters in *Preach My Gospel*.
- Use existing, approved materials. Your primary printed resources in teaching missionaries are the scriptures, the *Missionary Handbook*, *Preach My Gospel*, and the *Missionary Health Guide*. The "Ideas for Study and Application" section at the end of most chapters of *Preach My Gospel* will be particularly helpful.
- Repeat and reinforce training regularly. You should repeat key topics at least every six months, or as need dictates.
- Ask the missionaries to report on how they have used what they have learned.
- Emphasize to the assistants, zone leaders, district leaders, and trainers of new missionaries that they need to exemplify the proselyting principles and practices presented in *Preach My Gospel*.
- Occasionally invite local priesthood leaders to attend zone conference training. Invite them to speak and to encourage the missionaries.
- Use the training model to help missionaries improve in their ability to teach and proselyte (see the following section).

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### Training Model

Missionaries learn best how to work successfully when in-field training is based on the following five steps:

**Explain.** Explain what you want the missionaries to know or do. Using the scriptures, help them recognize the importance of the principle or procedure. Refer frequently to *Preach My Gospel* so that in their personal and companion study they can be reminded of what you have taught. Include your missionaries in the presentation by asking them to read, by asking them questions as you teach, and by using prerecorded segments on audiocassettes, CDs, videocassettes, or DVDs. Ask questions that encourage them to express their thoughts and feelings.

**Demonstrate.** Show examples of what you want them to learn (how they might teach a particular doctrine or apply a principle or skill). You may, for example, use role-playing activities, DVDs, videocassettes, CDs, or audiocassettes. Keep the demonstration simple and focused on the skill. Do not always leave the demonstration to others. You should be involved in the demonstration frequently.

**Practice.** Practice is generally one of the most important parts of training. Be sure you give this step adequate time. Missionaries can practice in pairs. They may also practice in threesomes, with one missionary acting as the investigator, another practicing the skill, and a third giving feedback.

*Preach My Gospel* provides some examples of practice situations. Create additional situations based on the missionaries' common experiences.

Allow enough time for all the missionaries to practice. Have the missionaries change roles with each new practice situation.

While the missionaries practice, you and missionary leaders should observe, give positive and corrective feedback, teach, and offer encouragement. Help them practice with faith and sensitivity to the direction of the Spirit. Do not let them criticize each other.

*Evaluate.* During and after each practice exercise, have the missionaries evaluate how they applied the principles from *Preach My Gospel* and identify what they can do to improve.

*Re-practice.* Allow time for repeated practice and self-evaluation so that the missionaries can apply what they have learned. Encourage the missionaries to apply what they learn in their work.

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## Helping Your Missionaries Apply What They Learn

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You should assume that your missionaries sincerely want to improve and apply what you teach them. However, many may not have seen in action the principles presented in *Preach My Gospel* and in zone conferences and district meetings. They may apply only a small part of what was intended but mistakenly believe that they are doing everything they need to do. In many cases their vision needs to be lifted.

As you and your missionary leaders humbly seek to understand how the principles of *Preach My Gospel* should be applied, you will be able to show your missionaries how they can most effectively apply these principles to accomplish their purpose. You will also be inspired regarding future training for zone conferences.

In addition to conducting zone leader councils and zone conferences, you are encouraged to work personally with selected missionaries as they carry out the wide range of their normal activities. The extent to which you can do this will depend on your own personal circumstances and the circumstances in your mission.

As your missionaries begin to catch a vision of what they can accomplish with the Lord's help, they will be better able to share this vision with others.

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## Giving Direction to Missionaries' Proselyting and Preparation

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Missionaries are qualified and "certified" by virtue of their call. With the guidance of the Holy Ghost as a constant teacher (see John 14:26), they have the potential to contribute immediately to the success of the work. Avoid the attitude in your mission that missionaries are not ready to do the Lord's will until they have satisfied other requirements.

Missionaries arrive in the mission field with varying levels of skills, capacities, discipline, work habits, and experience in the Church. Young missionaries often benefit from a degree of structure in both their proselyting labors and their personal preparation. This structure helps them raise their vision, exercise faith, focus on matters that make a difference, accelerate their learning, and work with greater diligence and enthusiasm. Whatever structure you establish in your mission must be carefully balanced with the need for personal initiative and the workings of the Spirit.

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### *Standards of Excellence in Proselyting*

To help your missionaries lift their vision and improve their efforts in their proselyting work, you may establish standards of excellence that focus on the key indicators (see *Preach My Gospel*, page 146). For example, you might determine that for your missionaries to be effective, the mission standards should specify numbers of new investigators, of people attending sacrament meeting, of investigators with a baptism date, and of lessons with members present each week. These standards provide a frame of reference for missionaries as they set their own goals and make their own plans. Standards should not be treated as quotas for all missionaries. The value of these standards, as with the key indicators themselves, lies in how they help missionaries focus their efforts and exercise their faith to lead investigators to conversion.

Be careful not to focus undue attention on achieving specific numbers. Teach missionary leaders how they can help missionaries set goals based on these standards and commit themselves with willing hearts to these goals. The standards should foster planning and growth and should not be used to judge or categorize missionaries.

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*Personal  
Preparation*

The Lord expects missionaries to “learn [their] duty, and to act in the office in which [they are] appointed, in all diligence” (D&C 107:99), to “serve him with all [their] heart, might, mind and strength” (D&C 4:2), and to become as the Savior is (see 3 Nephi 27:27).

You may establish guidelines to give direction and encouragement to your missionaries—especially new missionaries—in their personal study and preparation. Design guidelines to help your missionaries capture a vision of their own capacity and the Lord’s expectations. Base your guidelines on *Preach My Gospel*. They should encourage all missionaries to become self-motivated and self-directed and find joy and satisfaction in continual growth.

Help your missionaries avoid the attitude that once they have accomplished certain requirements, they no longer need to exert themselves. It is not enough, for example, to read *Preach My Gospel* once and think they have learned all the important principles they will need in order to fulfill their purpose. Help them develop the attitude that learning, study, and personal growth are lifelong endeavors. Also teach them how to report their progress to their leaders and to you in interviews and weekly letters.

From time to time, missionaries encounter situations that present them with exceptional opportunities to grow and improve. These opportunities often come in the form of such challenges as overcoming homesickness, learning a mission language, being assigned to a difficult area, having a challenging companion or investigator, working through discouragement, or receiving a leadership assignment.

In personal interviews you can help individual missionaries take advantage of these opportunities for growth by helping them identify areas in which they may need to become stronger. In counseling together, you and the missionaries might identify specific topics to study in the scriptures, sections or activities in *Preach My Gospel*, or scriptures to memorize. You might also help them develop plans and activities to strengthen their goal-setting and planning skills, their work habits, or their language ability. Help them seek the Lord’s guidance on how they can best grow to meet the challenges they face. As prompted by the Spirit, you may give such missionaries priesthood blessings.

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# 8. Working with Stakes and Wards

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## Introduction

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“For Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness; her borders must be enlarged; her stakes must be strengthened; yea, verily I say unto you, Zion must arise and put on her beautiful garments” (D&C 82:14).

*Additional scriptures:* 1 Corinthians 1:10; Mosiah 18:21; D&C 38:27; 96:1; 133:8–9

You have been called not only to help the children of God come unto Christ, but to build and strengthen the Church in your mission. One of the tests of the success of your labors is whether the units of the Church in your mission area are stronger. For example, is sacrament meeting attendance growing? Are the numbers of living endowments increasing? In this dimension of your calling, you work closely with stake presidents, bishops, and other Church leaders to help them strengthen their units and their members.

Moreover, in moving forward the work of conversion itself, a close, mutually supportive relationship between missionaries and members is essential. Establish this type of relationship with local leaders and members. Then teach your missionaries how to foster such relationships. When members are involved in finding, teaching, and fellowshiping investigators, new converts will be much more likely to remain faithful and active in the Church. In addition, powerful, effective missionaries are a major resource for local leaders and members in fulfilling their responsibility for sharing the gospel.

As you work with stake presidents and bishops, you should become familiar with the guidelines in *Missionary Work in the Ward* (00047) and in *Preach My Gospel*, chapter 13.

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## Working with Local Leaders

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A major resource in strengthening relationships with local leaders is a regular meeting with each stake president in the mission. If practical, it is helpful for you to meet with each of them monthly. For guidelines on matters to be discussed in these meetings, see the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, page 4.

As you meet with stake presidents in your regular meetings, in coordinating council meetings, and in other settings, you should:

- Frequently express your love for them and ask them how you can help them. Make sure they recognize that you are eager to work closely with them in strengthening the Church in their units.
- Offer to help them train ward missionaries, ward and stake leaders, and members, emphasizing the basic proselyting principles and practices in *Preach My Gospel*.
- Ask them to encourage ward mission leaders and members to provide teaching opportunities for full-time missionaries and to fellowship new converts.
- Encourage them to emphasize the bishop’s responsibility for directing missionary work in the ward and developing a ward mission plan (see *Preach My Gospel*, page 220).
- Encourage them to discuss the following in their monthly interviews with bishops: the Progress Record form for the ward; goals and plans for individual investigators, new

members, and less-active members; and the ward mission plan. Review with them the status of the weekly missionary coordination meetings in their wards.

In addition, as you work with stake presidents and bishops, help them understand:

- The standards, rules, goals, and schedules that you expect of your missionaries, as well as the terminology and the resources (such as the Progress Record form) that the missionaries use in their work. Encourage them to become familiar with the *Missionary Handbook* and *Preach My Gospel*. Ask stake presidents to encourage the bishops in their stakes to establish joint goals with the missionaries.
- How ward missionaries can assist the full-time missionaries. Ward missionaries should prepare and ask people to be taught by the full-time missionaries. They may teach, encourage, and support other members in their efforts to prepare and ask people to be taught. Ward missionaries may also accompany missionaries when teaching investigators, especially if the investigators are not being taught in another member's home or fellowshipped by another member. They may also participate with the missionaries in teaching new members and less-active members. (You should also teach your missionaries how they can help the ward missionaries succeed in their calling.)
- The importance of close coordination between ward leaders and the full-time missionaries. Ward mission leaders should conduct weekly coordination meetings with the full-time missionaries (see page 39; *Preach My Gospel*, page 219). Where possible, encourage bishops to invite missionaries to attend the parts of priesthood executive committee and ward council meetings in which missionary work and activation are discussed.
- The requirements for baptism. They should know the policies on baptism and confirmation outlined in the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, pages 32–37; in this handbook on pages 41–42; and in chapter 12 of *Preach My Gospel*. They should also understand who is responsible for interviewing candidates for baptism (see pages 42–43 in this handbook) and for planning and conducting baptismal services (see pages 43–44 in this handbook; *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, pages 34–36; *Preach My Gospel*, pages 208–9). You and the stake president decide together how often and under what circumstances stake buildings are made available for baptismal services.
- The responsibility for retaining new converts. Show local leaders that retaining converts is a high priority for you. As you meet with stake presidents and bishops, review New Member Report forms (available in Church record-keeping software) and Progress Record forms to assess how well local units are fellowshipping new converts. Discuss how your missionaries can help local leaders work with new members.

It is essential that you, the stake presidents, and the bishops are in harmony on the baptisms of the candidates your missionaries are preparing for baptism.

In special situations where a missionary is experiencing difficulties (other than worthiness issues) and needs urgent attention, you may ask the stake president to conduct an interview and then consult with you.

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### *Counselors in the Mission Presidency*

In addition to representing you in meetings with stake presidents, your counselors in the mission presidency can help you work with stake leaders in other ways, such as strengthening member-missionary work and, at the invitation of the stake president, teaching stake and ward leaders, especially ward mission leaders. At the invitation of the stake presidency and with your concurrence, your counselors may participate in stake conferences, giving talks and conducting training for leaders and members.

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## Teaching Your Missionaries How to Work with Local Leaders

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Help your missionaries understand the bishop's responsibility for directing the work of finding, teaching, baptizing and confirming, and fellowshiping investigators in the ward (see First Presidency letter, Feb. 28, 2002). Teach them how to work unitedly and effectively with bishops and ward mission leaders, especially how they can best participate in weekly missionary coordination meetings and in meetings of the priesthood executive committee and ward council when the bishop invites them to attend those meetings.

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## Activation

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Full-time missionaries may assist local leaders in bringing less-active members back into full participation in the Church (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, page 4).

The bishop directs full-time missionaries' assistance in activation, and the ward mission leader coordinates these efforts with the priesthood quorums. Full-time missionaries should make sure they coordinate with the ward mission leader all their work with less-active members.

At the bishop's request, full-time missionary elders may assist in home teaching less-active members and part-member families. Sister missionaries may assist in visiting teaching these members. Such visits are most fruitful when the missionaries are accompanied by a member.

Teach your missionaries that in addition to strengthening the wards, working with less-active members is one of the most fruitful ways of finding nonmembers to teach.

Teach your missionaries how to work with less-active members and how to find investigators through their activation efforts. Help them recognize that they are called to assist in establishing and building up the Church. They should see all that they do, including baptizing converts and working with the less active, within this larger perspective.

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## Meals and Housing with Members

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### *Meals*

You should decide jointly with the stake presidents in your mission whether and to what extent members will provide meals for missionaries. If missionaries do have meals with members, you and the stake presidents should ensure that:

- Circumstances are appropriate for both the missionaries and the members.
- Meals are prepared according to sanitary standards that you establish.
- Missionaries do not eat at the same home frequently.
- Visits do not last longer than an hour.
- Missionaries leave the members' homes early enough that the visits do not interfere with prime proselyting time.

If missionaries have meals with members, the ward mission leader coordinates the visits. Encourage local leaders not to use sign-up lists but rather to ask those to participate who would be blessed most by the association with the missionaries, especially part-member and less-active families.

Teach your missionaries to use these visits to encourage and support members in preparing and asking others to be taught the gospel. They should teach gospel messages, share experiences, and pray with the members to help them feel the spirit of missionary work and a greater enthusiasm for sharing the gospel.

Emphasize to your missionaries that meals with members or others are a privilege, not a right. Teach them to express appreciation, to behave courteously, and to observe etiquette and local customs.

Meals with members can help missionaries develop closer relationships with the members and can provide an opportunity to strengthen members in their missionary efforts. It can also be helpful in reducing missionary expenses.

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### *Housing*

You should jointly decide with the stake presidents whether and to what extent missionaries are housed in members' homes. You may also ask for the assistance of local leaders in identifying homes of members or nonmembers where missionaries may be housed. For guidelines on missionary housing, see the Mission President's Housing Checklist in the "Housing" section of *Mission Office Administration*. See also page 69 in this handbook.

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# 9. Supervising Member Districts

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## Introduction

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“Thou art called to labor in my vineyard, and to build up my church, and to bring forth Zion, that it may rejoice upon the hills and flourish” (D&C 39:13).

*Additional scriptures:* D&C 1:30; 18:5; 78:13–14; 109:59

You preside over all member districts in your mission. Your goal is to prepare the units, the leaders, and the members for the full blessings of becoming a stake. Your counselors help you fulfill your responsibilities for member districts and can perform most of these duties.

District and branch presidents follow instructions for stake presidents and bishops in the *Church Handbook of Instructions*, unless guidelines in that handbook or this handbook state otherwise. If you believe the procedures need to be modified in your mission, consult with your Area Presidency.

Full-time missionaries should not be called to serve as priesthood leaders in local Church units unless worthy priesthood holders are unavailable.

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## Mission Presidency

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Two Melchizedek Priesthood bearers serve as your counselors in the mission presidency (see page 11).

You should conduct regular presidency meetings. Under your direction, your counselors should:

- Love the members and strengthen them in keeping their covenants.
- Supervise district presidencies and other leaders.
- Make recommendations on meeting needs of member districts.
- Help member districts prepare to become stakes, especially through leadership training.

Your counselors can also assist you in your work with stakes (see page 56). By carrying a major part of the workload in supervising member districts and in working with stakes, your counselors make it possible for you to spend more time strengthening and training the full-time missionaries.

Your counselors may be reimbursed for reasonable travel required to supervise member districts. This reimbursement comes from the mission president’s travel account in the mission operating budget, so you should ensure that adequate funds are budgeted for this purpose.

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### *Mission Executive Secretary*

You may call a Melchizedek Priesthood bearer to serve as mission executive secretary. He helps the presidency by organizing and following through on administrative details. Your counselors or the mission clerk may fulfill these duties if the workload does not justify calling an executive secretary.

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## Mission Officers

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For details on calling mission, district, and branch officers, refer to the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, pages 56–58.

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### *Mission Clerk*

If your mission includes member districts, you may call a Melchizedek Priesthood bearer to serve as mission clerk. He instructs district clerks and, if assigned, branch clerks. The mission financial secretary may assist him, if necessary. The clerk may receive instruction from the Member and Statistical Records representative in the local administration office.

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### *District President*

In each member district a Melchizedek Priesthood bearer is called as district president. He serves much like a stake president and holds the keys needed to preside (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, page xiii; *Book 2*, page 161), with the following exceptions:

- He does not deal directly with General Authorities but works through the mission presidency.
- He is not the president of a high priests quorum (such quorums are organized only in stakes), but he does preside over all priesthood bearers in the district.
- He cannot ordain high priests or bishops or set apart full-time missionaries, but with your approval he can set apart branch presidents and ordain elders.
- He does not release full-time missionaries returning to the district unless you authorize him to do so because travel or time constraints make it impossible for you to release them.
- He can convene a disciplinary council only with your authorization (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, page 106).
- He does not conduct temple recommend interviews or sign temple recommends (see “Temple Recommends,” page 61).

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### *Branch President*

In each branch a Melchizedek Priesthood bearer is called as branch president. He has most of the same duties as a bishop (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, xiii). He may convene a disciplinary council only with your authorization (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, page 106).

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### *Other Officers*

All other branch and district officers have duties similar to their ward and stake counterparts.

Missionary couples may on occasion, with the approval of the mission president, serve in branch leadership positions, but it is generally preferable for them to serve in a training capacity to help the local members fulfill these responsibilities. Younger full-time missionaries may, in rare cases, serve in branch leadership positions. However, such assignments require the approval of the mission president and should be made only after thoughtful and prayerful consideration of all other options. If either couples or younger missionaries are given such assignments, they should serve only until a member can be called.

When full-time missionaries are assigned to leadership positions, including branch president, they are not set apart. The authority to act in any position in the mission is inherent in their setting apart as full-time missionaries. If they perform a function that requires priesthood keys, such as conducting a baptismal interview or presiding over a branch, they do so by assignment and the delegation of authority. You may give a missionary a priesthood blessing if he is given an especially challenging assignment.

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## Melchizedek Priesthood Organization

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Where possible, an elders quorum is organized in each branch. An elders quorum president is called to direct the elders in proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming

the dead. The quorum president reports to the district presidency and correlates his work with the branch president. As more elders are ordained, two counselors, a quorum secretary, and other quorum officers may be called.

All Melchizedek Priesthood bearers and prospective elders in a branch meet with the quorum.

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## Member Meetings

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District and branch meetings are patterned after those held in stakes and wards (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, section 7).

### *Meetings of Member Districts*

District conferences are held twice each year. You preside at district conferences unless a General Authority or an assigned Area Seventy is present. When you cannot attend, assign one of your counselors to preside.

In most cases your counselors work with the district presidency and the district council to plan leadership training in the district. You and your counselors may visit leadership meetings to monitor and encourage leadership development. You may also conduct training. The Church does not pay transportation costs for members to attend district conferences.

A branch conference is held in each branch once each year. Normally the district president or one of your counselors, if assigned, presides. You may also attend and preside at branch conferences. You should ensure that the district presidency (or the mission presidency, if you choose) meets with the branch presidency to review the status of individuals and organizations, teach the leaders in their responsibilities, and make plans for strengthening the branch and its members.

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## Calling of Full-Time Missionaries

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You conduct interviews with prospective full-time missionaries, submit the missionary recommendation papers, and set apart those who have been called. If it is not possible for you to set apart newly called missionaries, you may assign one of your counselors to do so.

You and your counselors should make the calling of full-time missionaries a high priority as you work with member districts. As districts prepare to become stakes, returned missionaries are a vital resource in building strong priesthood leadership.

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## Recommends

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### *Temple Recommends*

Temple recommends are issued as outlined in the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, pages 75–79. You or one of your counselors interviews applicants after the branch president has interviewed them. Both you or one of your counselors and the branch president sign the recommend of worthy applicants. The district president does not conduct temple recommend interviews or sign recommends.

You personally interview members who are receiving their own endowment and members who are being married or sealed in the temple.

### *Patriarchal Blessing Recommends*

Stake patriarchs may give patriarchal blessings to members of member districts who have valid patriarchal blessing recommends. The recommends must be signed by the branch or district president and the mission president (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, pages 42–44).

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## Disciplinary Councils

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District presidents refer to you any district members whose transgressions may require a disciplinary council (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, page 106).

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## Changes in Member Districts and Branches

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For procedures on creating a branch, changing branch boundaries, changing branch names, transferring branches, or discontinuing branches, see the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, section 18.

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## Record Keeping

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Record-keeping procedures in member districts and branches are similar to those in stakes and wards (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, section 15).

Ensure that district and branch leaders are taught how to use the information in Church records and reports. You may request assistance from the Member and Statistical Records representative in the administration office.

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### *Membership Records*

Guidelines on handling membership records are found in the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, pages 145–51. If you have questions, contact the local administration office.

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### *Auditing*

Audits in member districts are conducted according to the guidelines in the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, pages 140–41, 148, 161–62.

If there are not enough qualified auditors in a member district, you should organize a mission audit committee to recommend individuals from other districts or stakes. The committee is organized like a stake audit committee.

If an audit uncovers any audit exceptions, the district or mission audit committee should review them with the mission presidency and the district presidency. All audit exceptions should be corrected within 30 days.

For missions in the United States and Canada, procedures for member district audits are on the Stake or District Financial Audit form (34246). Procedures for branch audits are on the Ward or Branch Financial Audit form (34244). For missions outside the United States and Canada, procedures for member district audits are on the Stake or District Financial Audit form (36742) and procedures for branch audits are on the Ward or Branch Financial Audit form (36741).

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## Physical Facilities

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Your responsibilities for physical facilities in a member district are similar to those of a stake president. For information, see the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, section 17.

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## Members in Isolated Areas

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If families or individuals live in isolated areas and cannot regularly participate in a ward or branch, you may be designated as their priesthood leader. In such cases, you should refer to the instructions on pages 16–17 in the *Family Guidebook* (31180).

If two or more Latter-day Saint families live in an isolated area where they cannot be effectively administered within a regular branch, you may organize them into a small branch. The mission keeps their membership records. You or one of your counselors in the mission presidency should (1) provide priesthood leadership for these members, ministering to their needs; (2) ensure that ordinances are performed appropriately and that records are maintained and submitted; and (3) visit them occasionally as circumstances allow. Help these members use the basic unit program to enjoy the blessings of the Church. Refer to the *Basic Unit Program Guidebook* (36717), the *Family Guidebook* (31180), the *Branch Guidebook* (31179), the *Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders' Guidebook* (31178), and the *Teaching Guidebook* (34595) for details on this program. (See also *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, page 76.)

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*Members Serving  
in the Military*

For guidelines on your responsibility for members of districts who serve in the military and for members serving at a military installation within the area of a district, see the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, section 14.

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# 10. Mission Administration

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## Introduction

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“And now, behold, I give unto you a commandment, that when ye are assembled together ye shall instruct and edify each other, that ye may know how to act and direct my church, how to act upon the points of my law and commandments, which I have given” (D&C 43:8).

*Additional scriptures:* D&C 28:13; 29:34; 72:5–6; 85:1–2; 88:119; 104:11; 127:9; 132:8

In addition to your ministering work with missionaries and with members, you administer an office and temporal affairs, including a budget and physical facilities. You are responsible for overseeing the resources of the Church so that they are managed wisely and according to their proper purpose.

Recognize, however, that temporal matters have a spiritual dimension. For example, the mission budget comes from sacred tithing funds, and the missionary support funds that you distribute to your missionaries reflect the sacrifices of faithful Church members. Efficient record keeping will enable you to identify and meet the needs of your missionaries and of the work in general. An orderly mission office will enable you and your missionaries to build and strengthen a climate in the mission in which the Spirit can work to greatest effect.

Strive always to make your mission a house of order and to keep in mind the spiritual dimension of your temporal responsibilities.

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## Missionary Arrivals, Transfers, and Releases

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### *Newly Called Missionaries*

As each missionary is assigned to your mission, the Missionary Department sends you the recommendation form and a photograph of the missionary. Send each newly called missionary a brief letter of greeting. Please do not include in the letter a list of items to bring to the mission field, extensive study requirements, or other specific suggestions.

The Missionary Department sends each missionary information on finances, clothing, and the mission. Any recommendations to change this information should be submitted to Prefield Services in the Missionary Department, with the endorsement of the Area Presidency.

Do not ask missionaries to bring with them to the field anything other than their own personal belongings. In unusual circumstances you may submit to the Missionary Department requests for medicines and other health-related items that are not available in the mission (see page 33).

Contact the priesthood leaders of newly called missionaries only if you need to coordinate visa and travel arrangements or if you have any questions regarding a missionary’s medical history or needs. Make sure all visas are kept current.

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### *Arrival of Missionaries*

As missionaries arrive in the mission, interview each one and hold an orientation. During the initial interview, build rapport with, encourage, strengthen, and challenge the missionary. You might, for example, do the following:

- Express your love and appreciation.
- Ask questions that will help you get to know the missionary.

- Review the work in the mission.
- Emphasize the importance of relying on the Spirit, being strictly obedient, and working diligently.
- Discuss some common challenges that missionaries face during the first few weeks of their missions (such as homesickness, hesitation to leap into the work, discouragement).
- Explain the importance of losing oneself in serving God and His children.
- Answer any questions the missionary may have.
- Bear your testimony and pray together.

During this interview you should ascertain whether there have been any sins or misdeeds that should have been resolved with priesthood authorities but have not been resolved. Do not, however, probe into matters that have already been resolved with priesthood leaders at home.

See “Orientation of New Missionaries” on pages 47–48 for suggestions on what to include in this orientation.

When you tell the new missionaries about their first assignments, help them feel the inspiration associated with their individual assignments. Help them catch a vision of what the Lord expects of them as they work in their areas with their new companions. Help them feel excitement for the community and for their companions. You may have a dinner for the new missionaries before they travel to their first assignments; a testimony meeting may be part of the occasion.

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### *Assigning and Transferring Missionaries*

As you assign missionaries to proselyting areas, seek inspiration and evaluate carefully the needs of each missionary and of the mission. Your assistants and other missionary leaders may make suggestions, but only you can assign or transfer missionaries.

Consider the following principles as you assign missionaries:

- Assign missionaries to work in the most highly populated areas, where the potential for developing strong Church leadership is the greatest. The work may then move outward from these centers of strength. Consult with the stake presidents on the number and location of missionaries assigned to work in their stakes.
- Assign missionaries to areas where members take an active part in missionary work.
- Assign strong missionaries to serve as companions to missionaries who need support (see D&C 84:106). Avoid assigning two struggling missionaries to serve together as companions.
- Give missionaries a variety of experiences.
- Transfer missionaries as infrequently as possible. Senior companions in particular need to stay in their areas long enough (perhaps six to eight months) to earn the confidence of local leaders and members and develop a strong, cooperative working relationship with them.
- Obtain approval from your Area Presidency before assigning missionaries to open proselyting areas where there are no Church units.
- If possible, avoid transferring both missionaries from a proselyting area at the same time. Withdraw missionaries from an area only when absolutely necessary.

A transfer board—organized by districts and zones and containing the name, picture, and assignment of each missionary—can help you plan transfers.

Arrange transfers so that missionaries can move quickly, without unnecessarily disrupting the work. If possible, missionaries should not travel alone or wait alone for a new companion.

Requests for a missionary in one mission to conclude his or her mission as the companion of a relative in a different mission are not approved. A missionary’s sibling who is preparing to serve a mission may not serve for any period of time as companion to the missionary.

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*Releasing  
Missionaries*

To maintain an even number of missionaries and meet other mission needs, you may adjust a missionary's release date. Early releases or extensions for other reasons should be rare exceptions. The adjusted date must be within 30 days of the anniversary (24 months for elders and 18 months for sisters) of the missionary's start date, as shown on the roster from the Missionary Department. Other adjustments of release dates require approval by the Missionary Department.

Consult with the parents and stake president to determine whether an early release or an extension would be inconvenient or cause difficulties.

Send a release certificate to each missionary's stake president a few weeks before the release date. Also, send letters to the stake president, bishop, and parents outlining the missionary's accomplishments and expressing appreciation for his or her service.

All full-time missionaries—except those released at their own insistence or because of transgression or belated confession—should receive a release certificate. Those who are released early receive the same release certificate as other missionaries. There are no categories of release (such as honorable or dishonorable).

**Release interview.** You should interview all missionaries as they leave the mission. This interview is an important opportunity to bless your missionaries for the rest of their lives; do not allow it to become routine or hasty. Commend them for their service and offer inspired counsel. Review with them how they have grown and what they have learned during their missions. Discuss how they can maintain and build on their strengths. Emphasize the importance of daily scripture study and prayer; keeping the Sabbath day holy; participating in temple work; sharing the gospel; obeying all the commandments (including the law of chastity, the law of tithing, and the Word of Wisdom); making goals and plans; and serving faithfully in the Church. Help them set goals that will enable them to enjoy the guidance of the Spirit constantly in their lives and continue the spiritual growth that they have experienced during their missions.

Emphasize temple marriage, but do not recommend that missionaries be married within a specific time. Encourage them to actively search for an eternal companion, and remind them that the decision to marry must be based on prayer and the guidance of the Spirit.

Instruct missionaries to preach and testify of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Restoration of the gospel when they are invited to speak in Church meetings after their return. Encourage them to participate in Institute of Religion programs, even if they are not attending school. Give each missionary a copy of the pamphlet for returning missionaries.

As part of your release interview with returning missionaries, you should conduct a worthiness interview and ensure that all qualified, endowed missionaries have a valid temple recommend. Recommends for returning missionaries require the signatures of only the missionary and the mission president.

Explain that missionaries should observe mission rules until they are officially released by their stake president at home. They should contact their stake president and bishop immediately when they arrive home and should express a desire to serve.

Instruct missionaries returning to their home country from another country to understand and obey customs regulations. Missionaries must not purchase illegal items. They must make full disclosure of all items they take home. Customs regulations can be obtained from a consulate or embassy.

Normally you should hold a dinner for departing missionaries before they leave the mission. A testimony meeting followed by final words of love, appreciation, counsel, and testimony from you and your wife are often a memorable part of the experience.

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*Travel of  
Returning  
Missionaries*

The mission office should begin planning travel arrangements at least three months before each missionary's release date. For details on arranging the travel of returning missionaries, see the "Travel" section of the *Mission Office Administration* CD-ROM.

If possible, missionaries should not travel home alone.

Missionaries should travel directly home from their missions. Any other travel is permitted only when the missionary is accompanied by at least one of his or her parents or guardians. The Church discourages parents from picking up their missionary. However, if they do request this privilege, make sure the parents understand that:

- Their plans must be based on the release date you establish.
- They should not request a change in the release date to accommodate other travel plans or commitments.
- They should inform you and the Church Travel Office at least three months in advance if they plan to travel with their missionary.
- They are expected to make their own arrangements, including travel, lodging, and meals. You are not expected to host parents in the mission home or make any other arrangements for them.

Make sure returning missionaries understand that they are not to impose on members, missionaries, or other missions as they travel and that they are to dress and conduct themselves as missionaries.

### *Attending a Temple*

With the Area Presidency's authorization, you may approve returning missionaries' requests to go to a temple if the temple is in the country where they have been serving or is on the route home. The trip to the temple must not require major modification of a missionary's itinerary. The missionary pays any additional travel costs that result from this temple trip. If such costs would be burdensome to those supporting the missionary, you should not approve the trip.

### *Health Concerns*

Tuberculosis continues to be a major disease in many parts of the world and has reemerged in most countries. In order to protect themselves, their families, and their communities, newly released missionaries should be tested if tuberculosis testing is available in their home area. You should give the white copy of the Missionary Tuberculosis Screening Report form (31966) to all returning missionaries and encourage them to be tested. After the test has been completed, the missionary should send the form to the address on the form. Distribute copies of the form according to the instructions on the form.

Counsel any returning missionaries who have health concerns to have a thorough medical examination as soon as possible after they return home. Missionaries whose homes are located in the United States and who need medical attention following their release should communicate immediately with Missionary Medical at 800-777-1647 or 801-578-5650. Notify the Missionary Department in writing of any missionary who does not return home completely healthy.

## **The Mission Office**

Generally four missionaries serve in the mission office—the mission secretary, the mission financial secretary, and two others.

If available, full-time missionary couples, senior sisters, or local members may perform mission office functions. This allows younger missionaries to devote their efforts to proselyting and other assignments.

You should assign the following functions to those serving in the office: missionary housing, missionary travel (including visas), outgoing correspondence, finances, vehicles, computers, referrals, and incoming mail. You should also assign someone in the office to keep the mission annual history (see the "Record Keeping and Correspondence" section of *Mission Office Administration*).

For details on these administrative responsibilities, see *Mission Office Administration*. Each section in that guide begins with an "Overview of Responsibilities," which includes a brief list of

your duties in each administrative area. Become familiar with these responsibilities so that you can efficiently direct the work of the missionaries in the office.

Young single sisters do not serve in the office. Young elders serving in the office normally serve about five to six months. The financial secretary may serve longer, perhaps as long as eight months. Young elders should not finish their missions serving in the office. A missionary couple assigned to serve in the office normally spends their entire mission in that assignment.

Although your assistants may spend some time in the office, they should not be regarded as office staff. They should spend a large part of their time proselyting and training other missionaries in the field (see page 13).

Give special care to selecting and supervising the mission financial secretary, whose duties are especially demanding and important. Consider the following possibilities:

- The husband or wife in a missionary couple. While one serves as financial secretary, the other fills another assignment in the mission office.
- A single elder, ideally with financial experience. It is important that he not finish his mission in the office, so that he can still be available in the mission to answer questions that his successor may have.
- A qualified local member. The member may be called either to instruct and counsel the financial secretary or to serve as the financial secretary if the member can be in the office during normal business hours.

A new financial secretary should receive enough instruction from the former financial secretary, from you, or from other knowledgeable people to perform the work properly. See "Training a New Financial Secretary" in the "Finances" section of *Mission Office Administration*.

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### *Proselyting by Missionaries Serving in the Office*

The missionaries serving in the office should maintain a strong proselyting spirit and should proselyte in the evenings, on weekends, and during any other times that can be made available. The office should be closed at a specified time each day, early enough to allow for a full evening of proselyting, as well as on weekends and holidays.

Missionaries serving in the office should be exemplary in appearance, attitude, conduct, spirituality, and effectiveness. They can have a powerful influence on the rest of the mission by their attitude and their effectiveness in teaching and baptizing. You should not normally assign sick missionaries or missionaries who are struggling or disobedient to serve in the mission office.

Each missionary in the office has an assigned companion, and each companionship is assigned to a specific proselyting area. They take part in the zone conferences of the zones in which their proselyting areas are located.

You can help the missionaries in the office continue to enjoy the rewards and joys of sharing the gospel by emphasizing their essential responsibility for proselyting. You should reduce paperwork, not create additional reports, and avoid any tendency to expand their nonproselyting duties. Look for ways to get them out of the office to proselyte as much as feasible.

The missionaries serving in the office have preparation day on the day you decide the office should be closed. They should assist with housekeeping duties in the office.

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## **Communications from Church Headquarters**

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Church headquarters must be able to reach all mission presidents as quickly as possible. Arrange for a person (not an answering machine) to be able to answer a telephone call to the mission office, the mission home, or your cell phone at all times.

E-mail in the mission office should be opened at least once a day. Urgent messages should be brought to your attention immediately, even if you are traveling.

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## Missionary Housing

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You are responsible for approving all missionary housing (see the *Missionary Handbook*, pages 45–46, and the Mission President’s Housing Checklist in the “Housing” section of *Mission Office Administration*). You must also approve any exceptions to the approved standards. Instruct your missionaries to inform you promptly of any changes in their housing environment, especially if the accommodations are no longer in harmony with the approved standards.

Preferably only one companionship should occupy each missionary living accommodation. For various reasons (including excessive rental costs or difficulties obtaining housing), you may need to house four missionaries together in one location, but this arrangement should be the exception.

Housing represents a major part of missionary support costs. You should make every effort to reduce these costs.

You should ensure that missionary quarters are inspected regularly by you, your wife, or others you designate (see “Inspecting Apartments” in the “Housing” section of *Mission Office Administration*).

You should establish maintenance guidelines for missionary living quarters (see the Cleaning and Maintenance Job Chart in the “Housing” section of *Mission Office Administration*). Instruct your missionaries to inform the mission office of any needed repairs. Emphasize that they are personally responsible for repair costs for damage caused by their misconduct or negligence. They must leave apartments or homes in good condition so that housing deposits will be returned to the mission.

You and the mission housing coordinator should carefully monitor utility and maintenance costs of missionary housing.

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## Missionary Transportation

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### *Automobiles*

After examining each missionary’s driving record, you should certify whether he or she may drive a mission vehicle. Make sure that the missionaries you certify are properly licensed according to local laws and that only those you have certified are allowed to drive. You should also select the designated driver in each companionship who is authorized to drive the car; this should be the missionary with the better driving record, not necessarily the senior companion. Missionaries who are taking a medication that could impair their ability to drive safely should not be assigned as designated drivers (see page 33).

Make sure all missionary drivers understand what is expected of them before you allow them to drive.

Teach your missionaries that driving is a privilege and that the privilege will be revoked if it is misused. When a missionary is the cause of a serious preventable accident, his or her driving privilege is revoked for the duration of the mission. Exceptions must be approved by the Missionary Department. You should revoke driving privileges for reckless driving or other inappropriate behavior.

Conduct a monthly vehicle maintenance and accident review committee meeting (see the “Vehicles” section of *Mission Office Administration*).

You are responsible for training missionaries to be safe, responsible drivers. Regularly conduct vehicle safety training (including safety videos and discussions) in zone conferences. Frequently review with your missionaries the rules and guidelines on vehicle safety in the “Vehicles” section of *Mission Office Administration*.

Emphasize to your missionaries the importance of keeping within the established mileage limitations. Review mileage reports regularly.

Vehicles should be inspected at each zone conference.

When serving in their country of residence, couples and single women ages 40 and older take their own vehicles with them. They are responsible for maintaining their vehicles, including insurance, repairs, and fuel. These missionaries will be given a travel allowance for the expense of driving their own vehicles to or from the field.

If a couple is provided a mission vehicle for full-time use on their mission, they should pay a monthly use fee, plus fuel.

For further information on vehicle policies and procedures, including driving classifications, mileage limitations, safety, and maintenance expenses, see the "Vehicles" section of *Mission Office Administration*.

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### *Bicycles*

Missionaries purchase bicycles and bicycle helmets with their personal funds. Work with your missionaries to help them keep their bicycle expenses to a minimum.

When missionaries are on their bikes, they should always wear bicycle helmets that meet the approved guidelines. Show the bicycle safety video and review bicycle maintenance procedures and safety principles in zone conferences or other meetings.

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## Resources and Supplies

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### *Computer Programs*

The Mission Office System (MOS) is the computer program for managing such information as mission organization, housing, finances, and referrals. It also enables missions to electronically distribute missionary support funds, receive and track referrals from Church headquarters, record key indicators, and track visas. For more information, refer to the MOS online help.

The Convert Data Entry (CDE) system is the computer program by which convert baptism information is submitted and membership records are created.

The Missionary Auto Tracking System (MATS) is a computer program that enables the mission vehicle coordinator to control vehicle and driver management. It is not available in all countries.

Missions should not develop their own computer software. Creating such software wastes time and effort, cannot be supported by administration offices, is seldom documented for subsequent users, and quickly becomes obsolete. You should ensure that the guidelines in the "Computers" section of *Mission Office Administration* are followed.

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### *Electronic Equipment*

For lists of electronic equipment and computer equipment approved for use in missions, see the "Computers" section of *Mission Office Administration*. If exceptions are necessary, such as in unusual security situations, submit requests through the Area Presidency to the Missionary Department.

Missionaries should not use the office computers or the office e-mail address to send or receive personal e-mail.

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### *Cellular Phones*

**Mission presidents.** A cellular phone is authorized for you. If desired, an additional phone is authorized for your wife.

When you are driving, use the phone only in hands-free mode, and make sure it does not distract you. Make sure you are using it in harmony with local laws. If road conditions demand higher attention than usual, pull off the road when you talk on the phone, even when using hands-free equipment.

If you do not have a hands-free phone in your vehicle, call the Missionary Department at 801-240-6333.

**Full-time missionaries.** One cellular phone is authorized to be shared by the assistants to the president. Cellular phones are not normally approved for other missionaries. If you feel that any missionaries require a cellular phone (for example, for safety reasons), submit a request to the Area Presidency (in international areas only). Exceptions to this policy are not normally approved for missions in the United States and Canada.

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*Literature  
and Media*

Your mission supply manager can order items for proselyting and for media campaigns, as well as other Church materials, from the Church distribution center that serves your mission. If materials are not available from the local center, contact the local administration office. You should review and sign all order forms.

Whenever possible, proselyting literature and supplies should be sent to the missionaries' apartments. Missionaries in the United States and Canada may order directly from Distribution Services (800-537-5971).

Neither the mission office nor missionaries' apartments should be overstocked with literature or supplies. Review the inventory of proselyting supplies with the supply manager at least monthly, using the Mission Literature and Supplies Worksheet. To view this information and to obtain information on ordering and distributing supplies, see the "Supplies" section of *Mission Office Administration*.

Copies of the Book of Mormon are allocated through the General Book of Mormon Fund. To obtain additional copies, see the "Supplies" section of *Mission Office Administration*.

You are not authorized to develop, produce, use, distribute, or promote materials that have not been approved through the regular Church correlation procedure. Although you may create and use specific training aids for use in zone conferences and other training settings, you should not devote time, effort, or money to developing materials that replace or supplement materials approved by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Any exceptions to this policy must be endorsed by the Area Presidency and approved at Church headquarters.

Do not request or order materials—including commercially or privately published books, brochures, or audiovisual items—from non-Church sources. If you receive such materials from any source other than Church headquarters or your Area Presidency, you should discard them. Do not endorse unauthorized materials. Because you are an official representative of the Church, your endorsement is regarded by many as an endorsement by the Church.

**Translation of Church materials.** You are not authorized to have materials translated locally. Translation requests must be endorsed by the Area Presidency and approved at Church headquarters.

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*Ministerial  
Certificates and  
Name Tags*

Ministerial certificates and name tags are issued to all missionaries who enter missionary training centers. Replacement certificates and tags or those for missionaries who did not attend an MTC may be ordered from the MTC Bookstore, 2005 North 900 East, Provo, Utah 84604 (801-422-3772). Name tags should not include the mission name. Missionaries should not order additional name tags to give as gifts or souvenirs.

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*Report Forms*

Missionaries should use only authorized forms (see *Preach My Gospel*, chapter 8). Do not develop reporting and planning forms or use the mission budget to print or duplicate unauthorized forms.

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*Newsletter*

A newsletter (no more than one sheet of paper printed on both sides) may be published, generally each month, to inform and inspire missionaries. You are responsible for its contents and appearance. (See the "Record Keeping and Correspondence" section of *Mission Office Administration*.)

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*Other Mission Publications* You should not produce yearbooks or similar documents for distribution to missionaries, parents, or others. They can require time and expense in production, distribution, and use.

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## Mission Correspondence, Reports, and Files

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*Official Correspondence* As mission president, you are to review and sign all official correspondence from the mission office. The mission secretary is not authorized to sign for you. You should also handle all communications with General Authorities or Church headquarters and personally review all e-mail from the mission.

Official correspondence from the mission office should always be on letterhead stationery. For information on mission correspondence and ordering stationery and business cards, see the "Record Keeping and Correspondence" section of *Mission Office Administration*.

**E-mail.** The e-mail service LDSMail enables you to send and receive secure e-mail. If you do not have this service and would like to set it up, contact Mission Computer Support in the Missionary Department (801-240-3000).

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*Reports* Review and sign all financial and vehicle reports. Also sign and send updated mission rosters to the administration office monthly. Ensure that all other reports, including the mission annual history, are submitted on time. For information on the reports for which you are responsible, see the "Record Keeping and Correspondence" section of *Mission Office Administration*.

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*Files* In many countries, strict laws govern information on individuals that is kept by other parties and how that information is used. Discuss with the local administration office such regulations in your mission area.

Mission files are generally organized into three main categories: mission administrative files, mission president's personal files, and confidential files.

**Mission administrative files.** *Mission Office Administration* lists the administrative files that are to be kept by each mission (see "Record Keeping and Correspondence").

If you are responsible for member units or isolated members, information on membership records can be found on pages 62–63 of this handbook.

**Mission president's personal files.** You should create a filing system that works for you. Possible file categories include correspondence, proselyting ideas, historical items, and instructions from Church headquarters or the Area Presidency. Keep all such files from the previous mission president, and then destroy them when you leave. Leave your files for the president who replaces you. The main exceptions are historical files (which should be submitted to the Church Archives in the Family and Church History Department) and files that have been placed on hold by the Office of General Counsel.

**Confidential files.** Store confidential files apart from all other files. Only you should have access to them. Records of disfellowshipments or excommunications are not kept in the mission but are sent to the Office of the First Presidency. If needed later, copies may be requested from Confidential Records at Church headquarters (801-240-2053).

For guidelines on discarding files, see the "Record Keeping and Correspondence" section of *Mission Office Administration*.

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## Mission Finances

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You are responsible for all mission finances. You should assign a trustworthy, competent financial secretary to assist you (see pages 67–68). Both you and the financial secretary should

be familiar with the basic financial principles in the “Finances” section of *Mission Office Administration*.

Each mission is served by an administration office, and an accountant in that office is designated to work with the mission.

It is essential that you ensure that:

- All mission expenses stay within budget.
- You personally authorize all payments, either by signing a check, reviewing and approving credit card statements, or personally entering the Mission Office System password for electronic transfers of funds.
- Every payment is supported by an invoice or bill or by a written justification.
- Any questions about payments are resolved.
- All financial data are completed and submitted promptly.

A financial checklist is available on page 84. You should discuss it with the financial secretary each month to review the financial status of the mission.

Mission expenditures fall into four main categories:

- Office administration
- Vehicles
- Missionary support (including housing and utilities)
- Missionary medical care

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### *Office Administration*

The mission operating budget is used to pay administrative costs, such as office supplies and equipment, postage, and travel for you and your wife.

In the United States and Canada, near the end of each year Church headquarters prepares an annual mission operating budget proposal for the coming year and sends it to you for your review. If any changes are necessary, you should submit a proposed revision.

If your mission is outside the United States and Canada, the administration office will send you materials for preparing the annual operating budget in July or August. After you have prepared your request, submit it to the administration office. The staff will review it and obtain the approval of the Area Presidency.

Report problems and concerns related to mission operating budgets, including mission vehicles, to the Area Presidency and the Missionary Department.

The administration office provides monthly financial statements that report expenditures by expense account for the month and for the year. Review your budget status each month by comparing the percent of budget spent in each account with the percent of the year that has passed. You should be able to account for large discrepancies between those two percentages. (For example, you may have greater expenses in the summer than in the winter in the Buildings and Grounds Maintenance account.) If you find a significant discrepancy, work with the financial secretary to provide an adequate explanation and a plan to correct the problem.

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### *Vehicles*

The vehicle budget is managed in the administration office, but you should make sure vehicle expenses are appropriate. Where possible, work to reduce expenses and the number of vehicles. For details on vehicle expenses, see the “Vehicles” section of *Mission Office Administration*.

For information on vehicle expenses of couples and sisters ages 40 and older, see page 70.

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### *Missionary Support*

You are responsible for the temporal support of the missionaries assigned to your mission. Each mission receives funds to provide for each missionary’s essential needs. These funds

represent the sacrifices of family, friends, wards, and stakes. They should be used only for needs related to missionary service, such as food, housing, transportation, and essential personal care items. Pre-mission expenses and expenses not directly related to missionary service, such as bicycles, clothing, gifts, souvenirs, cameras, and film, should be paid from the personal funds of the missionaries or their families.

Exercise great care in allocating, distributing, and monitoring these sacred funds. Ensure that they are used wisely and that the missionaries' needs are met. Teach your missionaries periodically the guidelines on finances in the *Missionary Handbook* (pages 43–45).

Support funds are not to be used for missionary couples or missionaries who do not report directly to you, such as temple, family history, or Church-service missionaries. These missionaries pay all their expenses from their own resources. Couples serving in the mission office and others with special assignments do not receive any reimbursement for travel or personal vehicle expenses, even if they are on mission business.

A request for a change in support funds should be submitted to the Area Presidency for their endorsement. The Area Presidency then submits it to the Missionary Department for review and approval. Changes should be requested infrequently and only when permanent increases in routine monthly costs (rent, food, utilities, and transportation) are needed.

When additional support funds are required or extra funds are needed for large, one-time expenses or for special projects, such as furnishing many apartments, you may request funds through your Area Presidency. Make such requests in advance by preparing a detailed justification and an explanation of how the funds will be used. After endorsing the request, the Area Presidency forwards it to the Missionary Department for final approval.

**Special needs.** A small budget in the Charitable Assistance Account (see “Charitable Assistance or Special Needs Accounts” in the “Finances” section of *Mission Office Administration*) may be used to purchase bicycles or clothes, as needed, for missionaries who are not in the equalized missionary contribution program. Do not use this money for missionary needs that can be supplied by families or home wards or stakes.

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### *Missionary Medical Care*

The Church pays for treatment of illnesses or injuries that arise during a mission, including prescription medications. Missionaries pay a co-payment for office visits and prescriptions. Missionaries and their families are responsible for expenses related to regular dental or optical care. Missionaries use support funds received from the mission to purchase nonprescription medicines.

In the United States all bills for authorized services should be sent to Missionary Medical, which will promptly pay those bills. Missionary Medical will forward bills for care of medical conditions that existed before the mission to the missionary's stake president for coordination of payment. In international areas the mission pays medical providers.

For further guidelines on paying missionaries' medical expenses, see the “Medical” section of *Mission Office Administration* and the guidelines on the mission presidents' Web site (see page 6).

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### *Hiring Employees*

Normally a mission should not have employees except for domestic help.

Improperly hired or paid employees pose a serious legal and financial liability to the Church and to you personally.

All hiring of employees must be approved in advance at either Church headquarters for missions in the United States and Canada (801-240-3735) or the administration office in other areas. You must work closely with Church headquarters or the administration office in regard to all issues relating to employees, including payment.

Wages, payroll taxes, and benefits for domestic help in the United States and Canada are charged to a Church headquarters budget. If your mission is outside the United States and Canada, you should discuss the procedure for payments with the human resource director in the administration office.

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### *Requesting and Receiving Contributions*

Approved Church programs are provided with funding to meet Church growth and assist worthy individuals as needed. Under no circumstances should you solicit contributions or donations from friends, family, Church members, or missionaries. Occasionally someone may offer to contribute money, equipment, or other items to be used at a mission president's discretion. Accepting such donations can lead to unauthorized solicitations or to unauthorized or nonbudgeted programs that successors cannot continue. If someone offers such contributions, counsel the individual to contribute to the General Missionary Fund or another approved donation category, either through his or her ward or directly to the Missionary Department. In the case of donations in kind, consult the Missionary Department.

Do not purchase equipment or pay for projects with your personal funds.

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### *Mission Financial Reviews*

In missions outside the United States and Canada, area administration office personnel and other assigned individuals visit the mission annually to provide financial assistance, assist in preparing budgets, conduct audits, and train financial secretaries as needed.

For missions in the United States and Canada, a mission financial audit, using materials provided by the Missionary Department, is performed early each year by a qualified local Church member. You should identify such an individual in consultation with local stake presidents. The member's stake president assigns the member to conduct the audit. It normally takes one person a full day to complete an audit, so you may want to consider assigning two people to work together on an audit. You should review and sign the audit report and send it to the Missionary Department.

Report any serious problems immediately to the Area Presidency, the area controller, and the Missionary Department. If an irregularity is discovered, you should investigate the matter personally, without involving missionaries. Do not involve civil authorities unless the Area Presidency or the Missionary Department instructs you to do so.

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## **Missionary Expenses**

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Mission policies should promote thrift and provident living in the use of missionary support funds. Help your missionaries establish and follow a basic budget to manage their money.

Remember the following guidelines:

- Do not require missionaries to pay for anything other than necessary living expenses.
- Do not require missionaries to purchase clothing or other materials that are not included in the authorized clothing and information list.
- Do not collect money for special funds or unauthorized projects or for items such as mission jewelry, yearbooks, Christmas cards, T-shirts, or prizes for achieving mission goals.
- Avoid granting loans. If there is an emergency, loans to missionaries must be repaid within 60 days. This period allows enough time for missionaries to receive funds from home. See that loans are repaid before missionaries return home.
- Teach your missionaries that they should use personal funds to pay for clothing, bicycles (including maintenance), souvenirs, cameras, film, or other items not directly related to their missionary service.
- Instruct missionaries to return excess support funds not used during the mission.
- While teaching missionaries to be wise and frugal in their spending, take care that they have enough money to eat a balanced, nutritious diet. No missionary should be required to go without food in order to save money.

For a more detailed explanation of missionary support, see the "Finances" section of *Mission Office Administration*.



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# Transition of Mission Presidents

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## First Days in the Mission Field

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The returning president will transfer responsibility for the mission to you around July 1. (You should decide together on the specific date well in advance.) You should not tour the mission with the returning president, but you should discuss with him the items on the transition checklist (see page 79). This meeting should normally be limited to about two to three hours. Generally you should not discuss specific missionaries' problems except serious health problems or informal probations. The missionaries should feel that they have the opportunity for a fresh start with a new president.

You and your wife should get your family settled as quickly as possible. Be sensitive to the adjustments family members may have to make, especially during the first months.

A change of mission presidents is a challenging time for missionaries. To foster stability and the confidence of the missionaries, you should make as few changes as possible during the first months, unless you encounter a situation that is not in harmony with established policy.

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### *"Meet the President" Meetings*

As soon as possible—within the first week if possible—you should tour the mission and hold a series of "Meet the President" meetings so that all the missionaries can meet you. These meetings are crucial to help the missionaries see continuity in leadership and to make a smooth transition. During these meetings you can express your love for the missionaries and help them begin to look to you as their president. You can emphasize the basic matters that are important to you, such as prayerfully studying the gospel, obeying mission rules, and working diligently.

Your wife and, if practical, your children should accompany you on this first round of meetings.

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### *First Interviews*

Interview each missionary as soon as possible—before the next transfers if at all possible. Before you interview missionaries, read their latest weekly reports and study their pictures on the transfer board to become familiar with their names and faces. In these interviews, express your love for them and your confidence in them. Praise them for their work, share your enthusiasm with them, and build them spiritually.

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### *Additional Transition Actions*

As soon as practical, you should meet with the stake and district presidents in the mission. Express your appreciation for their support and your desire to work unitedly with them to strengthen the Church and the people they serve.

Within your first few months in the mission, review the mission emergency action plan and the temple attendance policy. When you feel you understand the circumstances governing each of these matters, discuss them with the Area Presidency. If you need to make changes in the emergency action plan, send a copy to the Missionary Department.

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## Concluding the Mission

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As your mission draws to a close, you will be asked to report the following information:

- What did you do to increase your missionaries' spirituality and prepare them for future service in the Church?
- Describe successful efforts to increase the number and retention of convert baptisms.
- What suggestions do you have to improve assistance from the Missionary Department and others?
- What are the most significant challenges that your successor will face in your mission?

You and your wife should prepare your family for the transition from the mission field. You can also prepare your missionaries for the change in leadership by announcing the name and arrival date of the new president and helping them begin to think of your successor as their president (for example, by praying for him and his family). Encourage them to continue to work hard during the transition, and ensure that experienced leaders are in position for the new president. Work with the administration office or the Facilities Management Group to make sure the mission home is in good condition and is ready before the arrival of the new president's family.

Before the new president arrives, prepare a brief written report on the items on the transition checklist (see page 79) and resolve any missionary probations, if appropriate.

You should also coordinate with the Area Presidency to have an Area Seventy host a welcoming reception or dinner for local priesthood leaders to meet the new president.

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# Transition Checklist

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The returning president should share the following information with the new president:

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## Before the New President Arrives

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- Maps of the area, including a map of the mission with zone boundaries
- Information about local schools, including addresses and telephone numbers, if appropriate
- Typical schedules for weeks of missionary arrivals and departures and for a typical month
- Health information, such as the availability of medicines and treatment
- A mission roster
- Information about the mission home (including, if possible, a video recording of the home)

If the new president is not a native of the country, he should also receive the following information:

- Instructions on receiving and sending letters and packages, including pertinent addresses
- Potability of water and other health issues
- Climate and clothing needs
- Local customs

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## After the New President Arrives

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### Organization and Administration

- Assistants to the president
- Missionaries who are serving in the office
- Mission budget (including current status)
- Key statistics (such as baptisms and retention)
- Licenses, visas, and other legal matters
- Mission emergency action plan
- Temple attendance policy

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### Missionaries and Their Work

- Couples serving in the mission
- Proselyting approaches
- Training plan

- Serious health problems of specific missionaries
- Special disciplinary situations, including missionaries on informal probation

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### Districts and Stakes

- Responsibilities for member districts and other members
- Relationships with stake and ward leaders
- Telephone numbers of local leaders

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### Logistics

- Important items on the new mission president's schedule for the first month
- Name, address, and telephone number of the local bishop
- Name, address, and telephone number of the director for temporal affairs and the local Facilities Management representative
- Tour of the mission home and mission office
- Location of fuses, gas controls, water shut-off valves, and similar details in the mission home
- Telephone numbers of repairmen and other frequent contacts
- Travel considerations (such as modes of travel, road maps, distances, times, and accommodations)
- Local services (such as addresses and telephone numbers of grocery stores, gas stations, schools, ward buildings, pharmacies, doctors, and hospitals)
- Domestic help—names, duties, wages, and supplies needed (see page 74)

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### Other

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- \_\_\_\_\_
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# Family Finances

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### *Monthly Reimbursement of Living Expenses*

While you are serving as mission president, the Church reimburses the necessary living expenses for you, your wife, and your dependent children. Dependent children are defined as those who are under age 26, have not been married, and are not employed full-time. Living expenses include food, clothing, household supplies, family activities, dry cleaning, personal long-distance calls to family, and modest gifts (for example, Christmas, birthdays, or anniversary).

In addition, the following are provided or reimbursed:

- Medical expenses—including dental and eye care, but not orthodontics or elective or cosmetic surgery—if not covered by personal health insurance. In unusual situations when orthodontic care is needed, consult with the Missionary Department (801-240-3070). If you have dependent children living away from home in the United States who need medical treatment, you should consult Missionary Medical in advance (800-777-1647 or 801-578-5650). Missionary Medical can assist in arranging treatment and monitoring the situation.
- Support for children serving full-time missions, when requested.
- One round trip for each unmarried child under age 26 to visit you in the mission if he or she did not accompany you to the field.
- Elementary and secondary school expenses for tuition, fees, books, and materials. Reasonable expenses for extracurricular activities and for music or dance lessons may be reimbursed.
- Undergraduate tuition at an accredited college or university that offers two- or four-year degrees. Tuition is waived at Church-owned schools. Tuition at other schools is reimbursed after the classes have been successfully completed. The tuition reimbursement will not exceed the equivalent of current tuition at Brigham Young University, regardless of the actual tuition cost. Students must meet the same standards for enrollment as others; the Missionary Department does not facilitate acceptance into Church-owned schools.

The following higher-education expenses are not reimbursed: college application fees, college entrance exams, preparatory or remedial classes (or English for the TOEFL exam), nontuition fees, books, expenses for graduate degrees, and similar expenses.

The amount of any funds reimbursed to you should be kept strictly confidential and should not be discussed with missionaries, other mission presidents, friends, or family members.

For any questions regarding your family finances, the education of your children, or the change of a child's status because of a mission call, marriage, graduation, or full-time employment, please call the Missionary Department (801-240-3070).

### *Joint Bank Account*

A joint personal bank account at Church headquarters is established for you and your wife. Your monthly reimbursements are deposited into this account, which can be accessed by a debit card, electronic transfers, or regular checking. Other arrangements may be made for mission presidents from outside the United States who are serving in countries with different legal requirements.

You should not open a local bank account for personal funds received from the Church unless absolutely necessary, especially if the account would produce interest (and thus raise income-tax questions). Contact the Missionary Department (801-240-3070) or the area administration office for guidance if you believe a local bank account is needed.

**Accounting for reimbursements.** Keep a current register of all debit charges, electronic transfers, and checks charged to the joint bank account. Balance your checkbook to your bank account at least monthly to verify the authenticity and accuracy of all charges to the account.

Each month retain in an envelope all receipts and charge slips as proof of expenses. If you lose or misplace a receipt, include in the envelope a note providing the date and an explanation of the expense on a piece of paper. Keep this envelope in a confidential file, separate from mission office operating expenses and available for review by representatives from Church headquarters, if necessary for tax or legal purposes.

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*Housing,  
Transportation,  
and Insurance*

**Mission home.** Your mission home is either owned or leased by the Church. Mission homes are selected, furnished, and decorated to be versatile and to meet the needs of a variety of mission presidents over an extended period of time. As a result, your mission home may be larger or smaller than your needs or than the home to which you are accustomed. The Church tries to avoid remodeling or redecorating mission homes with each change of mission presidents. Any maintenance needed for the home should be done before a new president arrives. A Facilities Maintenance Group representative inspects the home annually with you to determine any major maintenance or replacement needs.

The mission office pays such mission home expenses as:

- Rent (if leased), utilities, telephones, and Internet connection.
- Maintenance, including gardening and repair or replacement of household items. If a mission home outside the United States and Canada has large lawn and garden areas, a gardener may occasionally be hired. In the United States and Canada the grounds are maintained through the Facilities Maintenance Group.
- One part-time housekeeper-cook (no more than a total of 20 hours per week).

Specific policies and procedures must be followed in hiring and paying domestic or any other help (see page 74). Failure to follow those procedures may create legal and financial liabilities for the Church and for you personally.

Caring for your family is your wife's primary responsibility. She should not feel an obligation to participate in mission activities at the expense of family needs. If a babysitter is needed occasionally so that she can participate in an activity, the cost of the babysitter may be reimbursed.

In the rare situations where missionaries live in the mission home, they should perform housekeeping duties for the areas that they use. Missionaries should never babysit.

**Transportation.** The Church provides one mission automobile assigned exclusively to the mission president. Although a vehicle is not permanently assigned to your wife, she may use any available mission vehicle for shopping, taking children to school, or other needs. Dependent children who are mature and careful drivers may occasionally drive a mission vehicle to assist your wife with family needs, if they are properly licensed, trained, and certified by you on the same basis as the missionaries.

The mission office pays the following transportation expenses:

- Fuel, oil, maintenance, and repair expenses for mission-owned vehicles.
- Travel expenses for you and your wife as you supervise the mission, including the costs of meals and lodging. Normally the mission office reimburses you for the travel expenses of your children as they travel with you to meet the missionaries during the first month and during the final month of your mission. On other occasions when they travel with you, their expenses are paid from your personal reimbursement of living expenses.

**Insurance premiums.** Medical expenses for you and your family are paid from Church funds. Maintaining any medical insurance you have can therefore reduce medical costs to the Church. Missionary Medical (800-777-1647 or 801-578-5650) contacts mission presidents before they begin their missions to discuss whether each president should keep his personal

health insurance policy in force during his mission. In such circumstances the Church reimburses the president for the health insurance premium.

The Church provides a US\$50,000 travel policy on you and a US\$25,000 policy on your wife. These policies cover loss of life, limb, or sight and apply when you and your wife are traveling to fulfill Church responsibilities. If you currently have or desire additional term life insurance, premium costs may be reimbursed up to a maximum of US\$100 a month or the cost for US\$250,000 face value of level term insurance, whichever is less.

The cost of personal health and life insurance premiums is reimbursed to you in your account. You are responsible for making payments to the insurance provider.

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*Expenses  
Not Paid by  
the Church*

The following are some expenses that are not considered part of your necessary living expenses in the mission and thus are not reimbursed to you. You must pay for them from your own funds.

- Travel to or from the mission beyond the single approved trip to the mission and from the mission for you, your wife, your unmarried dependent children who accompany you, and other unmarried children under age 26 who visit you during your mission. For the policy on travel for health reasons, see page 10.
- Retirement of personal debt, including taxes or insurance associated with real estate or personal property.
- Personal investment management.
- Personal or family disability insurance.
- Personal computers and any similar electronic equipment.
- Purchase or rental of a private automobile or any expenses related to its use (fuel, oil, maintenance, repair, or liability insurance).
- Theft or loss of personal items during the mission. (Personal property loss insurance may be obtained from a company specializing in international coverage.)
- Any domestic, yard, or vehicle services performed by family members.
- Costs for storage of your personal items while you are on your mission.

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*Tax Issues*

Because you are engaged in volunteer religious service, no employer-employee relationship exists between you and the Church. As a result, any funds reimbursed to you from the Church are not considered income for tax purposes; they are not reported to the government, and taxes are not withheld with regard to these funds.

In countries where a tax return is required, the Church Tax Division (801-240-5208) or the local Office of General Counsel can assist you.

To avoid raising unnecessary tax questions, please follow these guidelines closely:

- Do not share information on funds you receive from the Church with those who help you with financial or tax matters. Any exceptions should be discussed with the Church Tax Division.
- Never represent in any way that you are paid for your service.
- If you are required to file an income-tax report for other purposes, do not list any funds you receive from the Church, regardless of where you serve or where you hold citizenship.

Because selling or renting your home can create significant tax issues, seek assistance from a tax expert.

If you have any questions about tax matters, contact the Church Tax Division, which has tax rulings and research that support the validity of not reporting as income the funds you receive as mission president. Because most tax advisers are not aware of this information, their advice may be incorrect.

---

*Tithing and Other Offerings* You do not pay tithing on money reimbursed to you by the Church.

If you have income that should be tithed, you should normally pay tithing to the ward where your membership records are located (see page 9).

However, if you are serving outside your own country and your membership records are in the ward where you are residing, you should generally make tithing contributions directly to Church headquarters. (For questions about contributing tithing directly to headquarters, call 801-240-3060.)

Fast offerings and other contributions may be paid to either the ward where you are residing or your home ward, as seems appropriate to you.

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*Donations* See page 75.

# Monthly Financial Checklist

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You are responsible for all mission finances. Discuss this checklist with your financial secretary at least monthly.

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### Mission Reports

- Have all reports been sent this month?
- Is the mission roster correct? If corrections are needed, has the information in the Mission Office System been updated (see page 70), or has a corrected copy been sent to the Missionary Department?

### Mission Budget

- Is the financial statement within budget this month?
- Will the mission finish the year within budget?

### Mission Expenses

- Have I approved payment of all invoices?
- Have all invoices been paid on time?
- Did all checks and credit card transactions have supporting documents?

### Missionary Support Fund

- Are the missionaries receiving their support funds on time?
- Are year-to-date missionary support expenses within budget?
- Will the mission stay within the approved support budget this year?
- Is the support budget adequate? If not, should we request that it be increased?

### International Missionary Medical

- Have all missionary medical bills been paid on time?
- Are medical reimbursements being requested where appropriate?

### Missionary Housing

- Have any missionary apartments been closed? If so, have security deposits been returned?
- Are all missionary apartments furnished appropriately and in good condition?
- Is the number of missionaries in each apartment appropriate? Are there empty apartments in the mission?

### Missionary Short-Term Loans

- Are all loans being repaid as agreed by the missionaries? Are any loans past the 60-day due date?

### Mission Office

- Are office and mission supplies being maintained appropriately?
- Is office equipment adequate and in good condition?
- Is the petty-cash fund being managed correctly?
- Are office and vehicle purchase cards being managed correctly?

### Financial Secretary

- Does the mission financial secretary feel well trained? Is he or she completing all required tasks?
- Is it time to train a new financial secretary before the current secretary leaves this position?

### Cash Receipts

- Are funds deposited at least weekly?
- Are receipts prepared as soon as money is received?
- Are proceeds from the sale of vehicles immediately sent to the administration office?

# Visitors' Center Program

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These guidelines describe the basic policies and procedures that govern the functions and activities of full-time missionaries assigned to a visitors' center or historic site. In this document, the term *center* refers to both visitors' centers and historic sites.

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## Organization

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**Reporting.** Each visitors' center is assigned to a mission. As mission president, you are the ecclesiastical leader for all missionaries assigned to the center in your mission. You should interview them each transfer cycle. Directors of visitors' centers and historic sites report directly to the Missionary Department on all nonecclesiastical matters.

**The director.** A full-time missionary couple is called to serve for a two-year term, with the husband as the director of the center. They should receive no other assignment. Because the director is part of the mission leadership, he should attend zone leader training and other meetings at your invitation.

**Couples.** A few other full-time missionary couples (usually no more than two) are also assigned to work in the center so that at least one priesthood holder is always on duty when the center is open. These couples may be assigned to conduct tours and teach the gospel in the center. During times when they are not assigned to be on duty at the center, the director assigns them to perform related tasks (for example, promotional or administrative functions). You may also assign them to fulfill leadership or activation functions in a local ward as their health and circumstances permit.

**Budget.** The center operating budget is separate from the mission budget and is managed by the director. The budget is submitted through you, but the director counsels directly with the Missionary Department regarding this budget.

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## Sister Missionaries

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**Supervision and accountability.** Young full-time sister missionaries are assigned to serve in visitors' centers and some historic sites. They receive from the director their day-to-day supervision, schedule, and assignments for activities in the center. Each week the director briefly discusses with each missionary her goals and other issues affecting her work in the center.

**New missionaries.** Because visitors' center missionaries receive a specific call to serve in a visitors' center, you should assign these sisters to begin their missions in the visitors' center.

**Proselyting areas.** Young sister missionaries assigned to a center are also assigned to a proselyting area. They should be scheduled to work in the center on a six-hour shift each day of the week except preparation day. They should spend the other six hours proselyting in their own area.

**District and zone assignments.** All missionaries assigned to serve in a visitors' center should belong to regular missionary districts and zones and should attend district meetings and zone conferences. The center should always be staffed, even when the missionaries are attending district and zone meetings. The missionaries might be assigned to different zones, or local ward missionaries might assist when needed.

**Complement.** The complement is the number of missionaries approved to be assigned to the center. A few more sisters than are needed to staff the center are called as visitors' center missionaries. This allows you the option of assigning a sister to a proselyting area away from the center sometime during her mission. For example, if 18 sisters are needed to staff the center, a total of 22 might be called, allowing you to have 4 sisters assigned away from the center at any one time. You should counsel with the director on transfer decisions affecting the visitors' center.

**Sister missionaries who were not called to serve in visitors' centers.** You should not assign to the center a sister missionary who was not called and trained as a visitors' center missionary. Such an assignment should be a rare exception and should be made only after you have counseled with the director.

**Permanent change of assignment away from the visitors' center.** Do not transfer visitors' center missionaries permanently away from the center, except to resolve problems that cannot be resolved in any other way. Although you may feel that a sister's strengths would make her useful in another assignment, you should realize that these sisters have been called for very specific purposes—to advance the image of the Church—and they should spend only part of their time in regular proselyting assignments.

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## Training

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**Missionary training center.** Visitors' center missionaries receive special preservice training in the Provo Missionary Training Center.

**Mission president's responsibility.** You should ensure that visitors' center missionaries receive ongoing training in proselyting skills, based on *Preach My Gospel*. You should regularly (perhaps monthly) train them during their weekly training meeting. You should also teach the missionaries to follow approved policies and approved outlines of tours.

**Visitors' center trainers.** After counseling with the director, you should assign two sister missionaries to serve as visitors' center trainers. Their duties include assisting the director in conducting weekly training meetings, observing and giving feedback to other sisters serving in the center, and particularly helping new missionaries become proficient in as short a time as possible. Visitors' center trainers do not normally serve as companions to each other or to new missionaries.

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## Promotion

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**Firesides.** The director may invite local stake presidents to hold monthly missionary-oriented firesides in the visitors' center. He may also coordinate with you to hold regular investigator firesides at the center. You and the director should encourage priesthood leaders, members, and missionaries to bring less-active members, investigators, and other nonmember friends to the center.

**Other promotion.** The director is responsible for a promotional program that will increase the number of visitors at the center. He should seek membership in local tourism councils to promote the center. He should organize and chair a committee to promote the site. This committee should assist in organizing and carrying out promotional efforts, including open houses, ward nights, seasonal events, local media campaigns, brochure placement, and directional signs. Visitors' center missionaries may receive assignments to speak in sacrament meetings and other member meetings to encourage members to bring their friends to the center. While proselyting, visitors' center missionaries and other missionaries should take advantage of opportunities to invite people to the center.

# Sample Mission Training Plan

For guidelines on developing and carrying out a mission training plan, see pages 48–54.

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Transfer Period: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Doctrine

*Preach My Gospel*

Health and Safety

Talks and Testimonies

Accountability

Other

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Zone Leader Council

Zone Conference

District Meetings

Companion Exchanges

Training of Trainers and District Leaders

Interviews



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