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C I R C U L A R  
OF THE  
F I R S T P R E S I D E N C Y

OF THE

*Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

TO THE PRESIDENCY OF THE VARIOUS STAKES OF ZION, TO THE BISHOPS OF THE  
DIFFERENT WARDS AND TO ALL THE OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH;  
GREETING:

*BELOVED SAINTS:*

As we are now organizing the Stakes of Zion in these mountains and setting in order the quorums of the priesthood, we think it proper to give some general instructions to secure uniformity and concert of action in the church.

Under the direction of the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles the presidency of the various Stakes will have the general supervision of all matters pertaining to the church within the limits of their Stakes; and every one of the seventies, of the high priests, the elders and the lesser priesthood, as well as the members, within those limits should be governed in all righteousness by that presidency. It is the duty of those who preside over Stakes to seek for and receive counsel from the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles, and, under their direction, to see that every Ward is thoroughly organized with a bishop and two counselors—who must be high priests and set apart to preside as the bishop and counselors—and with the priests, teachers and deacons assigned their duties by the bishops as ministers to the Wards; also, that every family, no matter how far removed from settlements, is recognized and numbered with the people of the nearest Ward. It is expected that every member of the church will have his name enrolled in the church record of the Ward and Stake in which he lives, or else he will not be recognized as a member of the church. Many persons have claimed fellowship in the church who have not lived according to the requirements of the gospel; but this should no longer be permitted. The laws of the Lord must be more strictly enforced, and such persons must repent and bring forth the fruits of righteousness in their lives, or be severed from the church. If persons professing to be members of the church be guilty of lying, drunkenness, sabbath-breaking, profanity, defrauding or backbiting their neighbors,

or any other kind of wickedness or unrighteous dealing, they should be visited by the teachers of the Ward in which they reside, and their wrongs be pointed out to them in the spirit of meekness and brotherly kindness, and they be exhorted to repent. If they should persist in their wrongdoing, then their cases should be brought before the bishop and his counselors, and they should be cited to appear to answer the charges made against them. If, upon proper and sufficient testimony, it should appear that they have been guilty of acts which are in violation of the law of God, and they will not repent, then they should be expelled from the church, and their names be no longer numbered among the Saints. If teachers, priests and bishops, or other officers, suffer iniquity to exist in the church, in districts where they preside, without taking action against it, they become partakers of other men's sins and they are unworthy of their positions. If an officer of the church will not perform his duty faithfully, he should be removed and another be appointed in his stead.

There are small settlements where only a few families reside—too few to be organized as a Ward. For such a settlement the bishop, to whose Ward it belongs, should appoint a priest to preside, if there is one; if there is not, a teacher can be appointed to take charge of the church affairs in the settlement. But if there is neither a priest nor a teacher, and there should be a high priest or seventy who is suitable he can be called upon to act for the time being in the capacity of a priest. In every settlement, however small, meetings and Sunday schools should be strictly maintained.

In organizing the various Stakes, there will be a president and two counselors selected in each Stake to preside over the high priests who reside there. There is no limit to the number that shall compose a quorum of high priests. They may number but a few, or they may number thousands; therefore one presidency in a Stake is sufficient for them, and in holding quorum meetings they should meet in a Stake capacity and not in Wards.

The seventies can meet with the high priests, or with the elders, as they may choose, they being a traveling ministry; but when it is necessary for the transaction of business of a missionary character, they can meet in the capacity of a quorum, otherwise they are like any other elders or members of the church, and are under the direction of their bishops.

The elders should be organized in quorums each numbering ninety-six, and where there are more than enough for one quorum and not enough for two they can continue to meet as one quorum until the necessary number to organize another quorum are ordained.

When forty-eight priests are ordained they should be organized as a quorum; twenty-four teachers constitute a quorum, and twelve deacons. Should there be an excess of these numbers in any place, and yet not sufficient to form another quorum, they will meet, as in the case of the elders, with their brethren as one quorum until there are enough to form another quorum.

In the work of organizing, the Stakes and Wards should first receive attention. After their general presiding officers have been selected and ordained, and the lists of the various officers in the Stake have been col-

lected and the number of each kind in each Ward is known, then the quorums should be organized. In organizing them, if there should not be a sufficient number for a quorum in one Ward, then they should be taken from others contiguous to it and most convenient for communication and meetings. The officers who are designed to form a quorum should be called together and the most suitable men should be selected for presidents and counselors. In organizing a quorum of priests a bishop is the proper person to preside over them. In organizing quorums of teachers and deacons the presidents and their counselors should be selected from their own number. Seventies, high priests and elders who are called to act in the offices of the lesser priesthood should not be numbered in the quorums of that priesthood; but their names should be recorded in their own quorums, though when called upon by the bishops they should be willing to act in the offices of the lesser priesthood until priests, teachers and deacons of the necessary experience are found. When priests and teachers visit the Saints, according to the instructions in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, the experienced priest or teacher should have as a companion a young man, so that the latter may have the opportunity of learning the duties of his calling, and becoming thoroughly wise and efficient in the discharge thereof.

Once in every three months a conference of the officers and members of each Stake will be held, and it will be the duty of the Apostles to attend these as often as practicable. The Twelve have been relieved from presiding over districts, and they will devote themselves to traveling and preaching the gospel to the people, and see that the officers in the several Stakes do their duty. To prevent loss of time, and to save unnecessary labor in traveling, the dates upon which conferences will be held should be so arranged that one will succeed another in a manner most convenient for visiting, which will be attended to in due time. At these quarterly conferences reports should be made, giving the number of members and officers, with the offices the latter hold, the number of families, the number of ordinations, of baptisms, of excommunications and births and deaths, with the sex and age of both the latter, and a report of the condition and ability, with regard to temporal affairs, of the members of the Ward, and the percentage or amount of tithing which they pay, and such other information as shall make the record of each Stake a complete one. In each Ward a record of all these matters must be kept, and before the holding of each quarterly conference, a transcript of these records should be handed to the president of the Stake, whose duty it will be to compile the same for record. A report from each quarterly conference should be made by the president of each Stake to the First Presidency.

In each Ward there should be kept a record of all cases brought before the bishop's court for trial and adjudication, with a copy of the complaint and the decision. The proceedings of each case as recorded should be read by the clerk, after the trial, to the bishop and his counselors, so that they may be satisfied of their correctness. Should an appeal be taken from the bishop's court to the High Council, a transcript of the proceedings can be sent to that council.

No member who moves from one Ward to another should be received

into fellowship and be recognized as a member in good standing in the Ward to which he moves, without he brings with him a letter of recommendation from the presiding authorities in the Ward where he has resided.

It has been the practice in many places for the presidents of high priests and seventies to take members of other quorums, and sometimes persons who held no priesthood, and ordain them into their quorums, and this too very frequently without consulting any one in authority, not even the presidents of the quorums to which these persons rightfully belonged. Because of this practice it has been a difficult thing to keep young men in the elders' quorum or in any of the quorums of the lesser priesthood; and when deacons, teachers and priests have been wanted it has generally been the case that seventies and high priests have had to be taken to act in those offices. It would be excellent training for the young men if they had the opportunity of acting in the offices of the lesser priesthood. They would thereby obtain very valuable experience, and when they obtain the Melchisedec priesthood they would be likely to place a higher value upon it. We desire it to be distinctly understood, therefore, that hereafter when seventies and high priests are to be ordained, it must be under the direction of the First Presidency or the Twelve. Whenever it may be deemed proper to ordain men to these offices the proper authority can be consulted respecting their ordination. The presidents will see that this counsel is observed in their respective Stakes.

In consequence of it having been thought more convenient in some of the Stakes for the tithing to be concentrated in one place, and for one bishop to receive reports from others and keep charge of the tithing, &c., the idea has grown up that such a bishop is a presiding bishop, and in many places he has been so regarded. This idea is an incorrect one. Brother Edward Hunter is the only one who acts as presiding bishop in the church.

It is designed, as we have already said, that under the direction of the First Presidency and the Twelve, the presidents of each Stake will preside over the High Council and have general charge of the affairs of the Stake, and through the proper officers will see that the members of the Stake do their duty. But we do not expect them to take personal charge of the tithing, unless especially appointed to do so, as the duties of their calling will require too much of their attention to have them perform this duty. They should, however, instruct the Saints respecting the payment of tithing and impress upon them the necessity of being punctual and strict in performing this duty, as well as in bringing forward their offerings to the poor. The bishops in each Ward will act under their direction and counsel, and they will see that they do their duty and take proper care of the tithing and that no waste of this property shall occur in places under their jurisdiction; for this is the duty of a bishop, to receive and care for the tithing. Respecting the management of tithing in the various Stakes we shall give such instruction from time to time as may be needed.

We are now building three Temples—one in this city, one in Manti and one in Logan—which we are desirous to have completed as early as practicable. The need of them is greatly felt by all the Saints; but if we shall

succeed in erecting them as quickly as we desire, there must be prompt and correct payment of tithing and Temple offerings on their part. In labors of this character, which are of such great importance to ourselves, our progenitors and our posterity, we should work with the greatest cheerfulness and liberality. The Lord whom we serve is amply able to reward us for all we do, and he requires us to work in his service with zeal and alacrity, trusting in him for the blessing.

Among the many duties which devolve upon us, there is none that should receive more careful and constant attention than the education of our children. They are numerous, and if properly trained will become a great blessing to the inhabitants of the earth. Parents should take time—if not every day, at least as often as they can and not allow many days to elapse—to call their families together and interrogate them respecting their associations, their words, actions, &c., and teach them the principles of the gospel. They should send them regularly to day and Sunday schools and furnish them every possible facility for gaining a sound and thorough education, and especially in the principles of the gospel and the history of the church. The teachers to whom we entrust our children for education should be faithful Latter-day Saints, sound in doctrine and thoroughly imbued with a love of Zion. In this way we can rear up a generation of men and women who shall love and maintain truth and righteousness in the earth.

Our school books should not be imported from abroad. They should be compiled and published here, and they should contain those lessons that would have the effect to teach the children the true principles in regard to our Father in heaven and his Son Jesus Christ, our Savior, and all true sciences. We trust the day is not far distant when we shall have school books of this kind. In the meantime we suggest that as few as possible of the kinds now in use be bought for our children.

In order that children may have the opportunity to partake of the sacrament, and be taught the value and importance of that ordinance, we desire the bishops and their counselors in the various Wards to administer the sacrament every Sunday morning in the Sunday schools. In settlements where there are Meeting Houses sufficiently spacious to admit of children attending the public meetings on Sunday afternoon, we suggest that they be encouraged to go there. If it should not require too much walking, they might assemble first at the place where the Sunday school is held, and from there walk, under the guidance of their superintendents and teachers, to the meeting. But whether this be done or not, they should have seats set apart for them to occupy in the Meeting House, and while there they should be in charge of their teachers. These seats should be made very comfortable, so that the children will not get uneasy; the children should be waited upon with water to drink. This need not interfere with the administration of the sacrament in the schools; for though some of the children may partake of it there and at meeting also, others would miss it altogether if they did not partake of it in the school room. The proper observance of the Lord's day would be greatly increased among the rising generation if this were to become a custom in all our settlements. At the present time this day is not properly respected by old and young.

Too many look upon it as a day for the enjoyment of worldly pleasure, and not for the worship of God. Many children who attend Sunday schools in the morning think they have the right to play the remainder of the day, and they act accordingly, frequently to the annoyance of the well-disposed.

Children who are capable of repentance should be baptized when they reach the proper age, according to the revelations. Up to that age they are entitled to the sacrament.

It is very desirable that the children in the Sunday schools should be taught the art of singing. The cultivation of this art will make the schools more attractive to the children themselves and add greatly to the pleasure of parents and all connected with the schools. And if in our Ward meetings and conferences congregational singing were encouraged and practised more than it is, our worship would be no less acceptable to the Lord, to his angels and to the Saints themselves.

In connection with the education of our children the importance of training the youth of both sexes to regular occupations and habits of industry cannot be too strongly urged upon the people. Every young man and young woman, whose physical ability will admit of it, should be taught to be skilled workers in those trades and pursuits adapted to the sex of each. Young men who follow farming and stock-raising should learn these pursuits thoroughly; so also with those who become mechanics, they should spare no pains to be skillful. Young women, beside learning house-keeping in its various branches, should attend to the cultivation of silk, and clothe themselves in it, and acquire a knowledge of braiding and making straw hats and cutting out and making clothing for themselves and the other sex, and at the same time not neglect those accomplishments which are an adornment to themselves and render home so attractive. This is a field of labor in which the Relief Societies can operate to great advantage.

The organization of young men and young women into Mutual Improvement Societies in each settlement should be effected, where they do not already exist, as quickly as possible. When properly conducted they will be the means of doing a great amount of good, and they should be encouraged and aided in their meetings by all presiding officers.

Every settlement should be provided with a library for general reading, and great care should be taken in the selection of books, so as to have those of the most useful and instructive character. Works upon architecture and gardening should receive special attention, and no library should be without several works of this description. By the aid of these works a better taste for buildings and other improvements will be developed, and the effect will soon be visible in the improved style of dwellings which will be erected all over the Territory.

The proper combination of labor, so as to furnish employment to all, to fill our markets with the products of our own skill, to develop home industries and all the resources of our country, and to obviate the necessity of importing from abroad, is a subject of such vast and pressing importance that it should call into exercise the best business and organizing talent we have in our midst. This is a matter of supreme importance to us as a people. Every man who has any authority or influence with the

people, or who has any wisdom in arranging for or organizing branches of business should keep this great subject in view and use all his efforts to make us a self-sustaining people. We have Zion to build up, and this should call into active exercise all the talent and energies of the Latter-day Saints. In building it up we build up ourselves. To advance its interests should be the aim of all our lives. To do this in the best manner should be the constant study and effort of every Latter-day Saint. We have urged the great importance of the principles of the United Order upon the people for this purpose. They are before us, and until we obey them we can not become the people the Lord designs we should be. Nothing can be plainer than that many of our present modes of doing business are wrong. How can a people prosper who raise raw products, such as wool and hides, as we do, and send the greater portion of them away to be manufactured elsewhere? We have skilled workmen and surplus labor, and yet not only do the workmen of other communities get pay for making woolen goods, boots, shoes, harness, &c., for us; but they charge us for carrying away our products and shipping them back to us in a manufactured form. With laborers and mechanics complaining of dull times and scarcity of labor, and hundreds of young men growing up without trades, we import doors, window sashes, wash-boards, brooms, broom handles, matches, house furniture, wagons, carriages, farming machinery and numberless articles in iron and other metals, and, incredible as it may seem, even salt is imported and sold here.

Lead is our principal mineral product here. In its crude state it costs but a few cents per pound; but it is sent east and brought back manufactured into white lead, piping and many other articles of use for which we pay enormously increased prices. The difference between its original price and that at which we buy it in its manufactured form we pay to the workmen and dealers of other places and to railroad companies.

There is scarcely an article of food that we use that cannot be produced here; but with fat stock on the range, for which there is little or no sale and that are the prey of thieves, there are some of our settlements where the people cannot buy fresh beef! Pork is imported by the quantity, while with any degree of care—if we must have this for food in addition to our beef, mutton, fowls and fish with which our country abounds—thousands of hogs might be raised upon lucerne, for which our soil is admirably adapted. Horses and other stock are being constantly imported into our Territory from other places, while with the exercise of ordinary good management we could have an abundance of every kind to sell. We should be careful and preserve from deterioration our thoroughbred animals—of which there are now a great many in our Territory—and by care in their selection and propagation improve them. It costs no more to raise a good horse, ox, cow, or sheep than it does a poor one, and why cannot we exercise a little common sense and ordinary care and raise the valuable instead of the worthless?

From our abundant crops of potatoes starch might be manufactured to supply our markets; from our fat stock tallow to make into candles and soap, from their hides leather and glue, and from our grapes raisins to supply the entire Territory. In fact we have all the elements around us to make us a happy and wealthy people; all that is necessary is the

skill to organize them. The Lord has done and is doing all he has promised. Will we do our part? Here is a field for the exercise of the greatest talents. No one need complain because of the lack of opportunities for usefulness. They are here on every side of us. Apostles, seventies, high priests, elders, bishops and all the lesser priesthood have the most ample scope for the exercise of all their powers and abilities. The redemption of Zion is before us to accomplish, and the Lord invites all to take part in bringing it about. One of the great hindrances in the way of our accomplishing this great work is selfishness—a narrow, contracted, self-defeating selfishness. The question too frequently asked, if an enterprise for the good and prosperity of Zion be proposed, is: "Will it pay?" This is the selfishness of those who have means. The welfare of Zion is the secondary consideration, the immediate dividend is the first; while Zion should be the first consideration, and the dividend the second; for it is the Lord who giveth the increase.

The workman who is employed asks the largest and best wages; he takes all he can, regardless of the difficulties his employer has in carrying on his business, and the enterprise is soon broken down. This is the selfishness of the poor. What is the result? The elements around us go to waste, manufacturing fails to pay and becomes unpopular, trade languishes, enterprise is checked and but few make any improvements unless they are obliged to do so, and many of our people are unemployed.

How long shall this condition of affairs continue? From this organization of the Stakes and Wards in which we are now engaged we hope to see a great improvement in all these matters. We hope to see the various officers active in the discharge of their duties, and by their precepts, example, management and energy infuse such spirit and life into the people that a great change for the better will be visible in every Ward and settlement in our land. The Saints should be taught to respect their obligations, to pay their debts and to avoid contracting them.

We have repeatedly urged upon the Saints the great importance of laying up their grain in store-houses, and not selling off each year all the products of their fields. We are deeply impressed at the present time to again urge this counsel upon the attention of all the officers and members of the church. It is so important that all should give heed to it. We should never be without a few years' supply of grain, so that if grasshoppers, or drought, or other visitation should cut off our crops for one year, or a succession of years, we could still live and prosecute our labors upon the temples and other works that we have to do. Famines will visit the earth, according to the word of the Lord. Our own nation will suffer therefrom, and, knowing these things as we do, we should prepare for them. Store-houses should be built in which grain can be safely kept. We think the best method of storing grain, so as to have it keep sweet and sound for years, is to put it up in long, narrow boxes which will hold from fifty to two hundred pounds each. Many of the people remember the boxes which were made in this city to hold flour during the move in 1858. In those boxes flour has been kept sweet and wholesome for eighteen years. The advantage of using such boxes is, the bulk of grain is not sufficient to cause it to heat, as they can be piled up in such a man-



ner that the air can circulate freely around them and be free from the ravages of mice.

To avoid hurtful competition and the people underselling each other, we suggest the establishing of a depot or commission house in each settlement or ward, where all kinds of merchandise and products that are for sale can be left or be reported to the person in charge. When properly conducted, those wishing to purchase, can apply there, and be informed whether what they wish is for sale in the settlement and at what price. Then if a thousand bushels of oats, or other product or article is sold, those who have it for sale can share *pro rata* in the proceeds of what is sold. By this means equity in trade can be preserved and the interests of all be consulted, and not, as too frequently at present, one person be induced to bid against another to the disadvantage and loss of the community. The person who might be selected to take charge of such a depot, could afford to watch the markets, and in many instances, contract for the sale of products in bulk at prices that would be much more remunerative than if each owner were selling for himself.

Finally, the presidents of the different Stakes should make arrangements to travel and visit as frequently as possible the various Wards under their jurisdiction, and elders, sound in doctrine and full of the Spirit of the Lord, should be appointed to preach from time to time, that our meetings may be more interesting and instructive. And all the officers of the church should constantly keep in mind, and in the exercise of the duties of their offices in the midst of the people act upon, the teachings and counsel of the Prophet Joseph Smith, contained in Sec. CXXI, pages 386-7, in the new edition of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants :

34. Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen ?

35. Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson—

36. That the rights of the Priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.

37. That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion, or compulsion, upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, *Amen to the Priesthood*, or the authority of that man—

38. Behold! ere he is aware, he is left unto himself, to kick against the pricks; to persecute the Saints, and to fight against God.

39. We have learned, by sad experience, that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion.

40. Hence many are called, but few are chosen.

41. No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the Priesthood, only by persuasion, by long suffering, by gentleness, and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

42. By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile.

43. Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost, and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reprov'd, least he esteem thee to be his enemy;

44. That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death;

45. Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly, then shall thy confidence wax

strong in the presence of God, and the doctrine of the Priesthood shall distill upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

46. The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth, and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever.

BRIGHAM YOUNG,  
JOHN W. YOUNG,  
DANIEL H. WELLS.

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah Territory, July 11th, 1877.