

light of these newly announced priesthood councils:

"But speaking the truth in love, may [we] grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

"From whom the whole body *fityly joined together* and compacted by that which *every joint supplieth*, according to the *effectual working* in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4:15-16; italics added).

Please note now, brothers and sisters, the whole body is compacted by that which every *joint* or *council* supplies. With this action today, we are completing the *linkage* of the

priesthood chain both ecclesiastically and temporally. We know that you leaders will give strength to and will benefit from participation in priesthood councils at your several levels.

May the Lord richly bless you in carrying forth this great work of establishing Zion and preparing us for the Lord's eventual rule on earth. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Tanner

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

He will be followed by Bishop Victor L. Brown, Presiding Bishop of the Church.

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren and sisters, as President Tanner has announced, we are pleased to announce today some developments affecting area and local Church administration. May I say at the outset that what you will see and hear is the result of months of prayerful study and deliberation. This presentation about Church councils is *not* a new program, but it is a reemphasis of a principle based on the scriptures and on traditional Church government procedures. Some of you who live in the United States will recognize in this presentation nothing more than what is already being done at your interim meetings.

Because this is such an important matter, I will stay with a written text, using visuals as needed. As I begin, however, I want you to know that this presentation has the whole-hearted endorsement of the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve, the First Quorum of the Seventy, and the Presiding Bishopric. We have no doubt that what we are presenting to you today will greatly

facilitate communication and unity at various Church levels and help move the kingdom forward.

Church government through councils

Some background may be helpful so you can more completely understand the significance of these developments.

Throughout the history of the Church, it has been a practice that essentially ecclesiastical matters be administered by the Quorum of the Twelve and that essentially temporal affairs be administered by the Presiding Bishopric. This practice continues to this day.

You are all, of course, familiar with the traditional administrative channel of authority to the field from the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve, the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, Area Supervisors, Regional Representatives, stake presidents, and bishops. This channel of authority remains unchanged.

More recently, because of the need to carefully manage temporal matters in the field, approval was given to have a Presiding Bishopric area supervisor in certain countries of the world. He has worked in close cooperation with the General Authority Area Supervisor and has reported his responsibilities on temporal matters to the Presiding Bishopric, who in turn report to the First Presidency.

The principle we desire to reemphasize was well expressed by President Stephen L. Richards, first counselor to President David O. McKay, in these words:

"As I conceive it, the genius of our Church government is government through *councils*. The Council of the Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, the Council of the Stake Presidency . . . the Council of the Bishopric. . . . I have had enough experience to know the value of councils. . . . I see the wisdom, God's wisdom, in creating councils: to govern his Kingdom. In the spirit under which we labor, men can get together with seemingly divergent views and far different backgrounds, and under the operation of that spirit, by counseling together, they can arrive at an accord." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1953, p. 86.)

The First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric have determined to organize council meetings at the general Church level, the area level, and the region level. These councils will be called the Church Coordinating Council (at the general level), area council, multiregion council (*only* if needed), region council, and the presently existing stake and ward correlation councils.

We have felt that in order to be effective, these councils need to be *comprehensive* in representing *all* Church programs so that there will be a *correlating, coordinating, planning, and resolving* body at each of these levels. These councils, properly

organized and functioning, assure a unified approach to the management of ecclesiastical and temporal affairs.

It has also been determined that the General Authority Area Supervisor's title will be changed to *executive administrator*, and outside of the United States and Canada, the Presiding Bishopric area supervisor's title will be changed to *director for temporal affairs*. These title changes take effect immediately. In the United States and Canada the Presiding Bishopric will appoint individuals either from Church headquarters or from the local area to represent and manage temporal activities.

Now may I say a word to all who will participate in the administration of these councils at the area, region, and other local levels. The Twelve continue to be vitally interested in temporal matters; the Presiding Bishopric continue to be vitally concerned with ecclesiastical matters. To us it is one great program. This division of responsibility is intended for administrative convenience. All things are spiritual to the Lord (see D&C 29:34).

I'll now speak briefly about each of these councils at the respective levels.

First: The Church Coordinating Council

This council is comprised of the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric.

The Presidents of the First Quorum of the Seventy will be invited to attend the meetings of this council and will also be invited to the General Welfare Services Committee.

The Church Coordinating Council will set policy, authorize exceptions to policy, authorize implementation, and resolve any difficulties which remain unresolved at the area council level.

Communications between the Church Coordinating Council and

area administrations will proceed through the ecclesiastical and temporal lines.

The Church Coordinating Council will also set priorities (insofar as they desire to do so), so that area and region councils can function within guidelines. This will help us meet the urgent need to balance the distribution of available resources (both time and money) which are to be given to various Church programs and efforts. For example, suppose recommendations from the combined area councils of the Church show a need for 800 buildings during a given year, but the Church has only time and money resources for 600 buildings. The Church Coordinating Council would then determine where resources are needed most.

This council will also review and approve overall plans for ecclesiastical and temporal matters before policies are implemented.

Second: The Area Council

The primary council in the field for correlating, coordinating, planning, and resolving problems is the *area council*. This council will function under the direction of the executive administrator. The area council will consider items of local concern and will transmit headquarters-approved programs and activities to all regional and stake officers. The area council should meet at least quarterly.

Regional Representatives will attend the area council meetings and will work closely with the executive administrator. Regional Representatives will be line officers to the stake president, with certain exceptions which have been noted to them. In this system of councils, the Regional Representative is best viewed as an administrator. He now becomes accountable for administering Church affairs at the region level.

The area council will develop the strategic plan for the area—broad guidelines outlining major activities and objectives. Personnel on the temporal side will do the detailed planning work for temporal affairs. Regional Representatives, mission presidents (when invited), and stake presidents (when invited) will do detailed planning for ecclesiastical affairs. Both the executive administrator and appointed personnel for temporal affairs will present these overall plans to the area council for review and approval before such plans are implemented.

Let us look at the implementation of the area council internationally and then within the United States and Canada.

A. Area councils outside United States and Canada. Membership in the area council outside the United States and Canada will include: the executive administrator, the director for temporal affairs, and all Regional Representatives in the area.

Others invited to attend when items relating to their responsibilities are discussed will be the Welfare Services area manager, the Physical Facilities area manager, the Finance area manager, the Materials Management area manager, the Information Systems area manager, the Church Educational System area director, and a Church-service Public Communications area director. Mission presidents could be invited by the executive administrator, if needed.

The responsibilities of the executive administrator throughout the world will be—

1. To preside over and provide ecclesiastical leadership in the area.
2. To preside in all area council meetings.
3. To set priorities.
4. To control planning.
5. To regulate within policy.
6. To train.

The director for temporal affairs will have the responsibility to—

1. Manage operations to service ecclesiastical needs.
2. Assist in planning.
3. Provide technical services.
4. Assist in training.

While both the executive administrator (General Authority) and the director for temporal affairs (representing the Presiding Bishopric) have independent stewardships, they are to accomplish common ends. To coordinate all area affairs, an *executive committee* of the council is authorized outside the United States and Canada, composed of the executive administrator and the director for temporal affairs. They would *mutually* determine the council agenda, plan guidelines, and determine which temporal functions need to be represented at each quarterly council meeting. They will be assisted by a secretary. Through this cooperative effort their separate reporting relationships are respected, but common purposes are achieved. The executive committee will ordinarily meet weekly or as often as circumstances require.

Now a look at the area council in the United States and Canada.

B. Area councils within United States and Canada. Members of the area council will be the executive administrator and all Regional Representatives in the area. Mission presidents could be invited by the executive administrator if needed.

Others who may be invited to attend when items relating to their responsibilities are discussed are: the Welfare Services area director, a Church-service Public Communications area director, the Church Educational System area director, and others as necessary. Welfare services matters will not be discussed without the presence and participation of the Welfare Services area director.

The implementation of the area council within the United States and Canada will vary from the area council outside the United States and Canada since there are no directors for temporal affairs in the United States or in Canada. Consequently, headquarters departments, in consultation with the executive administrator, will assign designated individuals for the functions of Welfare Services and Physical Facilities. These individuals will work closely with the executive administrator and will attend the area council as needed. The Presiding Bishopric will assign personnel for temporal matters or approve invitations for headquarters staff to attend periodic area council meetings. These individuals assigned by the Presiding Bishopric will have the responsibility to—

1. Manage operations to service ecclesiastical needs.
2. Assist in planning.
3. Provide technical services.
4. Assist in training.

Third: The Multiregion and Region Councils

Welfare services activities require councils at the multiregion level. Let us now look at the multiregion council.

A. The multiregion council. Multiregion councils are authorized for welfare services activities. The executive administrator presides at these councils and procedures will parallel those of the area council. Membership on a multiregion council consists of the executive administrator, the Welfare Services area director (as he deems necessary), the Regional Representatives of the regions involved, and the multiregion Welfare Services director. A stake bishops' council chairman and a stake Relief Society president from one of the region councils, designated by the executive administrator,

Saturday, March 31

First Day

serve as members when welfare services matters are discussed. Multi-region councils meet on an "as needed" basis.

We shall now look at the composition of a region council.

B. The region council. Membership on a region council consists of the Regional Representative and stake presidents.

Others invited to attend, when items relating to their responsibilities are discussed, are the Welfare Services region agent, the Public Communications region directors, the Church Educational System region coordinator, and other representatives of ecclesiastical and temporal programs as necessary. A stake bishops' council chairman and a stake Relief Society president, designated by the Regional Representative, should attend when welfare services matters are discussed. Mission presidents could be invited with the approval of the executive administrator.

The region council will handle administration and correlation matters of a multiple-stake nature as well as communicate and implement all actions of the general Church, area, or multiregion council. Region council meetings will be held at least quarterly. For simplification and to avoid unnecessary travel, interim meetings may continue and could well become a meeting of the region council.

The Regional Representative performs duties paralleling those of the executive administrator in the area council.

In order to facilitate the work of the region council, it will be necessary to have a Church-service Welfare Services region agent who represents welfare services operations at the region level.

Fourth: Stake Councils

The composition of the stake correlation council and the stake wel-

fare services committee remains the same.

Fifth: Ward Councils

The same emphasis on Church councils applies at the ward level. Membership on the ward correlation council and the ward welfare services committee is not changed.

Again, the complete overview of the system of councils at the various levels will appear as illustrated.

Last: Family Councils

I mention family councils because of our persistent emphasis on family unity and family solidarity. By encouraging parents to hold family councils, we imitate in our homes a heavenly pattern.

Now a word to you, my brethren, the stake presidents.

This is a time of transition. Many of the duties affecting such activities as welfare services and public communications previously handled by stake presidents will now be handled by Regional Representatives. We do not want to have ongoing operations interrupted during this time of transition. Stake presidents and others presently responsible should go on doing what they are now doing in their region, multiregion or area assignments until they are officially released by the executive administrator. During the transition it may be necessary for executive administrators to meet with representatives of the Church Educational System, Public Communications, and especially the Welfare Services Department so that all aspects of the work (including the calling and releasing of Church-service personnel) may be carefully considered.

Now a concluding word.

There is a principle cited in the Doctrine and Covenants which, though directed specifically to the

leading quorums of the Church, applies to all councils in Church government. I quote from section 107:

"And every decision made by either of these quorums [and for our purposes we could substitute the word *council*] must be by the unanimous voice of the same; that is, every member in each quorum [council] must be agreed to its decisions. . . .

"The decisions of these quorums [or councils] . . . are to be made in all righteousness, in holiness, and lowliness of heart, meekness and long suffering, and in faith, and virtue, and knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity;

"Because the promise is, if these things abound in them they shall not be unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord." (D&C 107:27, 30, 31.)

This seems to me to be the pattern by which the Lord would have

us operate through priesthood councils at all levels of Church government. We must be one in all aspects of this work—ecclesiastically and temporally—for all things are spiritual to Him whom we acknowledge as Master. You can see that this is a great step toward achieving greater unity in managing the affairs of the Church. We, as priesthood holders, need to act in the manner which the Lord instructs in the revelation just quoted.

Brethren and sisters, we want you to know that our whole interest has been to do what is best for the kingdom. Today we are taking a step which *is* for the good of the kingdom. May the Lord bless us in our efforts as we implement this system of priesthood councils so that we, under the operation of the Spirit, may have greater unity, accord, and effectiveness in building the Lord's kingdom, which I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Bishop Victor L. Brown

My dear brothers and sisters, hope you have been able to grasp at least a small part of the significance associated with President Benson's presentation. It is a most significant step forward in Church government—one which will aid the priesthood to prepare for even greater Church growth than ever before. It will introduce a more effective level of planning and decision making than ever before. I stand in awe as I witness the hand of the Lord direct his servants in this, his kingdom. The introduction of councils at the region, multiregion, and area levels is a most important move. The Presiding Bishopric expresses its enthusiastic, wholehearted support of all that has been said.

As you are aware, the Presiding Bishopric, under the direction of the

First Presidency, has the responsibility for administering many of the temporal affairs of the Church. These include physical facilities, finance, welfare services, materials management, and information systems.

We administer this network of temporal functions to support and service priesthood needs and Church activities throughout the world. They are managed in the United States and Canada through our headquarters department managing directors and their management teams. A limited number of these departments are decentralized, such as Operations and Maintenance. Outside the United States and Canada these functions are all decentralized and are managed in each area of the world by directors for temporal affairs. Each area office