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## A Documentary History of the Lord's Way of Watching Over the Church by the Priesthood Through the Ages

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A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF THE LORD'S WAY OF WATCHING OVER THE CHURCH  
BY THE PRIESTHOOD THROUGH THE AGES

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of Church History and Doctrine

Brigham Young University

L-2

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

by

Rex A. Anderson

August 1974

This thesis, by Rex A. Anderson, is accepted in its present form by the Department of Church History and Doctrine in the College of Religious Instruction of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

*Walter D. Bowen*

Walter D. Bowen, Committee Chairman

*A. Gary Anderson*

A. Gary Anderson, Committee Member

*Monte S. Nyman*

Monte S. Nyman, Department Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Typed by Robert & Sondra Jones

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to present to the reader a documentary history of the Lord's way of watching over the Church by the priesthood through the ages. This is accomplished by using quotations and summaries of statements made by various Church leaders on the function of watching over the Church, choronologically arranged. A general running history of this function will be found in the extensive summaries at the end of each chapter.

The reason for writing this type of history is to provide those who are concerned with, and those who are interested in the process of watching over the Church with concise documentary information, presented in a historical perspective. The Church Historical Department has listed home teaching as being a topic about which a history has not been written, and has suggested that such be considered as a thesis topic.

The reader will find the need for the function of watching over the Church in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 presents some of the earliest forms of watching over the people by the priesthood. Priesthood watchmen in the beginning of the last dispensation is covered in Chapter 4. Chapters 5 and 6 examine the process of ward teaching. The correlation program is covered in Chapter 7. From the correlation program came the process of home teaching. The pilot stages of home teaching are covered in Chapter 8. The final phase of ward teaching is the

topic of Chapter 9. Implementing the home teaching process throughout the Church is covered in Chapter 10. Chapters 11, 12, and 13 cover the development of the home teaching process from its beginning in January of 1964 through ten years of existence to January of 1974. The last chapter contains a summary of the entire text, from the time of Adam to the present (1974).

In the same month that the Church was organized, Joseph Smith received a revelation, recorded in the 20th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. In this revelation, the Lord enumerated the duties of the priesthood and watching over the Church. These watchmen were called teachers, and were to "Watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them."<sup>1</sup> In doing so the priesthood brethren called to be teachers were to "see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking; and see that all the members do their duty."<sup>2</sup>

The function of watching over the Church, regardless of what name it was called at the time, is simply the method of performing the functions enumerated in the revelation above.

The Lord gave the commandment to watch over the Church, and he has left it up to the authorities of the Church as to how it is to be done. The principle of watching over the Church by the priesthood has never changed, but the process has changed to meet the needs of the times. Therefore, this thesis covers the changes in the process of home teaching over a succession of years.

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<sup>1</sup>Doctrine and Covenants (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1962), 20:53.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 20:54-55.

## Chapter 2

### THE NEED FOR THE PRIESTHOOD TO WATCH OVER THE CHURCH

When Adam and Eve were placed upon the earth, they were taught the gospel; and the plan of redemption was made known unto them. It is recorded: "And Adam and Eve blessed the name of God, and they made all things known unto their sons and their daughters."<sup>1</sup> This they were strictly commanded to do.<sup>2</sup>

Although Adam and Eve made these things known to their sons and daughters, their children were free to make their own choices. And so they did, as recorded: "And Satan came among them, saying: Believe it not; and they believed it not, and they loved Satan more than God. And men began from that time forth to be carnal, sensual, and devilish."<sup>3</sup>

From the above scriptures, it is made clear that from the beginning of time parents have been commanded to teach the gospel to their children. It is also made clear that Satan (in) fighting against these teachings, and that many are following after him.

It was quite natural that when the Gospel was restored in these last days, the Lord commanded:

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<sup>1</sup>The Pearl of Great Price (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1962), Moses 5:12.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Moses 6:57-58.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Moses 5:13.



And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents. For this shall be a law unto the inhabitants of Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized. And their children shall be baptized for the remission of their sins when eight years old, and receive the laying on of the hands. And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord.<sup>4</sup>

And in another place, parents were commanded to bring up their children in light and truth.<sup>5</sup>

To see that parents were doing their duty which included teaching their children the Gospel, the Lord provided a watch-care system. This is given in the 20th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. In this revelation, the Lord calls upon the priesthood to watch over the Church to see that fathers are doing their duty. Members of the priesthood are commanded to:

. . . Watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them; and see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking; and see that the church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty.<sup>6</sup>

In the days of Joseph Smith, these watchmen were called teachers. They were to watch over the Church, which included seeing that parents teach the gospel to their children.

At the time the Church was organized, the Saints were also reminded that, "Satan is abroad in the land."<sup>7</sup> Apparently, not everyone heeded this warning because shortly thereafter, Frederick G.

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<sup>4</sup>The Doctrine and Covenants (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1962), 68:25-28.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 93:40.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 20:53-55.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 52:14.

Williams, a councilor to Joseph Smith, was counseled by the Lord: "I say unto you my servant Frederick G. Williams, . . . you have not taught your children light and truth, according to the commandments; and that wicked one hath power, as yet, over you, and this is the cause of your affliction."<sup>8</sup> Sidney Rigdon, Joseph's other counslor, was also having trouble with not keeping the commandments concerning his children.<sup>9</sup>

It is clear then, that when the Church was organized the Saints were commanded to bring up their children in light and truth by teaching them the gospel. The Lord provided a watch-care system to see that this was done. It is also clear that Satan was abroad in the land, and was having good success in leading the children of the Saints astray.

Coming up 140 years hence, into the 1970's, the Saints are still commanded to bring up their children in "light and truth." President Joseph Fielding Smith has counseled the Saints:

To all the families in Israel we say: The family is the most important organization in time or in eternity. Our purpose in life is to create for ourselves eternal family units. There is nothing that will ever come into your family life that is as important as the sealing blessings of the temple and then keeping the covenants made in connection with this order of celestial marriage.

To parents in the Church we say: Love each other with all your hearts. Keep the moral law and live the gospel. Bring up your children in light and truth: teach them the saving truths of the gospel; and make your home a heaven on earth, a place where the Spirit of the Lord may dwell and where righteousness may be enthroned in the heart of each member.

It is the will of the Lord to strengthen and preserve the family unit. We plead with fathers to take their rightful place as the head of the house. We ask mothers to sustain and support

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 93:41-42.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 93:44.

their husbands and to be lights to their children.<sup>10</sup>

And again, President Harold B. Lee has said the following in relation to the same subject:

. . . Our youth are in danger. Keep your home ties strong, brethren. See to it, as we have all tried to say, and as I have repeated it many times and some have quoted it in this conference, that 'the greatest of the Lord's work you brethren will ever do as fathers will be within the walls of your own home.' Don't neglect your wives, you brethren. Don't neglect your children. Take time for family home evening. Draw your children around about you. Teach them, guide them, and guard them. There was never a time when we needed so much the strength and the solidarity of the home.<sup>11</sup>

In the 1970's we find that the priesthood is still commanded to watch over the Church, as expressed by Marion G. Romney:

. . . as far as I know there has been no amendment to the revelation which puts the responsibility for Home Teaching on all priesthood bearers.

Home Teaching is the program designed by the Lord to implement the . . . instructions which the Lord gave priesthood bearers in the 20th Section of the Doctrine and Covenants.<sup>12</sup>

Although the principle of watching over the Church by the priesthood is still the same as it was in Joseph's day, the process has changed. Now, quorum presidents have the responsibility to teach fathers their duty, and these quorum presidents use home teachers to assist them, as noted in the quotations below:

In 1963, President McKay said: "The duty of each presidency

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<sup>10</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith, General Conference Address, Official Report of the One Hundred Forty-Second Annual General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 6, 8 and 9, 1972 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d.), p. 13, hereafter cited as Conference Report.

<sup>11</sup> Conference Report, April 7, 1973, p. 130.

<sup>12</sup> Marion G. Romney, "What is Home Teaching," Unpublished talk delivered at Mission Presidents Seminar, (Salt Lake City), June, 1968, copy in LDS Church Historical Department.

of a quorum is to meet with the members, to sit in council with them and to teach them their duty. I repeat--to sit in council with them and to teach them their duties."<sup>13</sup>

Further elaborating on this subject, Elder McConkie stated:

A quorum president is in direct line of responsibility. The father should learn his duty from his quorum president. . . .

But a quorum president is also an executive. He needs help and such is available. He appoints priesthood representatives, who are home teachers, to help him. . . .<sup>14</sup>

In another place, Elder McConkie said:

"Home teachers are priesthood representatives; and home teaching is the priesthood way of watching over the Church. Through it priesthood quorums guide and strengthen their members so they can perfect their families. . . ." <sup>15</sup>

The Saints in these last days have also been warned that the power of Satan is abroad in the land, perhaps more than ever before.

Elder Ezra Taft Benson expressed this fact in the following terms:

Never has the Church had a finer group of young people. They are choice spirits--sent to earth in this most challenging and important period of the world. Charged with the great responsibility of building up the kingdom of God on earth, they have an awesome challenge.

This great and momentous responsibility and challenge comes at a most difficult time. Never have the forces of evil been so insidious, widespread, and enticing. Everywhere there seems to be a cheapening, weakening, downgrading of all that is fine, good, and uplifting--all aimed at our youth while many of their

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<sup>13</sup>David O. McKay, "The Fundamental Basis For Home Teaching," The Improvement Era, LXVII (July, 1963), 614.

<sup>14</sup>Bruce R. McConkie, "Tools to Help the Quorum Achieve Its Goals," Unpublished talk delivered at Seminar for Regional Representatives, October 4, 1973, (Salt Lake City), copy in LDS Church Historical Department.

<sup>15</sup>Bruce R. McConkie, Unpublished talk delivered at Seminar for Regional Representatives, April, 1973 (Salt Lake City), copy in LDS Church Historical Department.

parents are lulled away into a false security as they enjoy their comfortable complacency.

All is not well in Zion. The inspired Book of Mormon prophets saw this day and, as watchmen on the towers, issued grave warnings. I quote:

"For behold, at that day shall he [the devil] rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good.

"And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well--and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.

"And behold, others he flattereth away, and he saith unto them: I am no devil, for there is none--and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is not deliverance. . . .

"Therefore, wo be unto him that is at ease in Zion!

"Wo be unto him that crieth: All is well!"<sup>16</sup>

Elder Benson has lifted up the voice of warning, saying:

We live in a wicked world. Never in our memory have the forces of evil been arrayed in such a deadly formation. The devil is well organized. Never in our day has he had so many emissaries working for him. Through his many agents, his satanic majesty has proclaimed his intentions to destroy one whole generation of our choice young people.

Evidence of the dastardly work of evil forces is increasingly evident. On every side we see the sad and heart-rending results. The devil-inspired destructive forces are present in our literature, in our art, in the movies, on the radio, in our dress, in our dances, on the TV screen, and even in our modern, so-called popular music. Satan uses many tools to weaken and destroy the home and family and especially our young people. Today, as never before, it seems the devil's thrust is directed at our youth.<sup>17</sup>

What are Satan's methods; and why does he choose the youth?

The answers to these two questions are found in the following:

A study of Satan's methods can alert us to his seductions. In his cunning he knows where and how to strike. It is in youth when his victims are most vulnerable. Youth is the springtime of life when all things are new. Youth is the spirit of adventure and awaking. It is a time of physical emerging when the body can attain the vigor and good health that may scorn the caution of temperance. Youth is a time of timelessness when the horizons of

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<sup>16</sup> Conference Report, October 1, 1971, p. 25.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

age often seem too distant to be noticed. Thus, the "now" generation forgets that the present will soon be the past that looks to a life in waste or a past rich in works. These are the ingredients in youth that makes Satan's plan of "play now and pay later" so irresistible. Yes, the devil uses many tools.<sup>18</sup>

Elder Benson mentions the following as some of Satan's most valuable tools:

"A state of confusion is an effective environment for Satan. There is much confusion today. He employs several methods to create it. One is the distortion of definitions. To describe a drug experience he uses the term 'mind expanding' rather than the more accurate description of 'reality shrinking.'

"Freedom, a word of noble tradition, is a favorite confuser. Riots, bombings, arson, and killings are committed in the name of freedom. Obscenities test the freedom of speech. Pornography, drugs, and immorality are claimed to be manifestations of personal freedom, along with mini-skirts and nudity. License and anarchy are products of these false freedoms.

"A confusion of definitions includes pornography. A child can identify it, yet some of the supposedly great legal minds of our time cannot define it.

"Tolerance is a word valuable in the service of Satan: Alexander Pope warned 200 years ago that:

"'Vice is a monster of so frightful mein  
As to be hated needs but to be seen:  
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

"An Essay on Man."

"Ridicule works well in collaboration with confusion. To confuse youth in its searching years, the cynic defends his degeneracy by ridiculing his critics with confusing metaphors. The words of the rock recording 'I Couldn't Get High,' then 'High on the Mountain Top' must be stricken from our songbooks. Scoffing in this manner may bring an easy laugh and a reassurance that all is well in Zion, but it is diabolically dishonest.

"The philosophy of relativism attacks the eternal principles of truth. The relativist will say, 'If one sees filthy implications in a popular song it is because he has a dirty mind.' The logic of this philosophy finds its fallacy in the word implications. No filth is implied in many of the lyrics. It is proclaimed.<sup>19</sup>

Considering the modern worldly pleasures of youth, Elder Benson notes:

"If there are any doubts as to the insidious evil of rock, —

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 26-27.

you can judge by its fruits. The well-publicized perversions of its practitioners alone are enough to condemn its influence. Its ultimate achievement is that contemporary phenomenon, the mammoth rock music festival. As these diseased celebrations mount into the hundreds, they infect youth by the hundreds of thousands. And where is there today a rock festival that is not also a drug festival, a sex festival, and a rebellion festival?" (Richard Nibley.)

The Spirit of the Lord blesses that which edifies and leads men to Christ. Would his Spirit bless with its presence these festering festivals of human degradation cured in LSD, marijuana, and Speed? Would he be pleased by the vulgar display of unashamed nudity and immorality? The speech of the rock festival is often obscene. Its music, crushing the sensibilities in a din of primitive idolatry, is in glorification of the physical to the debasement of the spirit. In the long panorama of man's history, these youthful rock music festivals are among Satan's greatest successes. The legendary orgies of Greece and Rome cannot compare to the monumental obscenities found in these cesspools of drugs, immorality, rebellion and pornographic sound.<sup>20</sup>

Likewise, David B. Haight has spoken on this same subject.

. . . This evil is influencing the rapid deterioration of our sacred, moral principles that seems to be sweeping the land. Some neighborhood movie houses now show films that neither parents nor society would have tolerated a few years ago. Hard-core pornography is now available at candy stores and supermarkets at popular prices.

In the brief period of the past ten years, this country and most of the free world have been converted into a space-age Sodom and Gomorrah, aided by some publishers, movie producers, and even some so-called educators. Moral principles have been eclipsed by the blind, ungodly pursuit of pleasure--pleasure at any price.<sup>21</sup>

If we are to save our children from this most powerful thrust by Satan, what would be necessary for us to do?

President Joseph F. Smith has said: "Not one child in a hundred would go astray, if the home environment, example and training, were in harmony with the truth in the gospel of Christ as revealed and taught

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>21</sup>Conference Report, April 7, 1973, pp. 83-84.

to the Latter-day Saints."<sup>22</sup> It is then, the home environment where the gospel can properly be taught to children. President McKay has said:

The home is the basis of a righteous life and no other instrumentality can take its place nor fulfill its essential functions. The problems of these difficult times cannot better be solved in any other place, by any other agency, by any other means, then by love and righteousness, precept and example, and devotion to duty in the home.<sup>23</sup>

To insure that this is done is the responsibility of the priesthood, through the function of home teaching, as Elder Romney reminds us:

Don't forget that home teaching is the basic means through which you get the saints to attend Sacrament Meeting; pray in their homes; settle their difficulties so there is no hardness with each other. This is the power; this is the army of the Lord--the priesthood. This is the army which can defeat the powers of evil in the earth, and banish Satan, and bring peace and happiness in the lives of men.<sup>24</sup>

May we conclude with a statement made by Elder Boyd K. Packer in which he stated:

There isn't any other way. All other activities are helpful. Some of them vital, but all are only part solutions. The only solution that can succeed is the one that relates directly to the family. Home Teachers are the ones authorized to work directly with the family.<sup>25</sup>

#### SUMMARY

From the time of Adam, parents have been commanded to teach

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<sup>22</sup>Joseph F. Smith, Gospel Doctrine (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1963), p. 302.

<sup>23</sup>David O. McKay, Stepping Stones to an Abundant Life (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1971), p. 276.

<sup>24</sup>Romney, op. cit.

<sup>25</sup>Boyd K. Packer, Unpublished talk delivered at Regional Representatives Seminar, October 2, 3, 1968 (Salt Lake City), copy in LDS Church Historical Department.



the gospel to their children. Also, from the time of Adam parents have been warned that Satan is abroad in the land. When the Church was restored, parents were still commanded to teach their children the gospel. The Lord also provided a watch-care system to see that this was done. In Joseph's day it was the ordained teacher who was called to watch over the Church. The Saints were also told that Satan is abroad in the land.

Today, in the nineteen seventies, parents are commanded to bring up their children in light and truth, and the commandment for the priesthood to watch over the Church is still in force. But today quorum presidents have the responsibility to teach fathers their duty, and they use home teachers to assist them in doing so. Although we have not had a finer group of young people in the Church than we have today, the youth have never had such an onslaught of temptation as they do in the present era. The youth today are the object of Satan's main thrust, and he has laid every trap for them that could be imagined.

The Lord outlines the way in which we can save our youth from this onslaught of Satan, and that is by bringing them up in the light and truth of the gospel in the home. The Lord has established a priesthood function of watching over the Church to see that parents do their duty in teaching their children the Gospel; today this function is known as home teaching.

## Chapter 3

### EARLY DAYS OF WATCHING OVER THE PEOPLE

#### BY THE PRIESTHOOD

Many different and varied ways of watching over the Church by the priesthood came and went before the inauguration of what we now know as home teaching. As we follow these proceedings down through history, we will note two common trends: First, the Lord set up procedures to meet the needs of the people; second, is that the Lord gave processes to the people which they were willing to receive.

In the first dispensation, that of Adam, the Lord instructed Adam and Eve to teach the gospel to their children.<sup>1</sup> ". . . and they made all things known unto their sons and their daughters."<sup>2</sup> The Lord has always instructed parents to teach the gospel to their children. Note the commandment the Lord gave to parents in this, our dispensation:

And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents.

For this shall be a law unto the inhabitants of Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized.

And their children shall be baptized for the remission of

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<sup>1</sup>The Pearl of Great Price (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1964), Moses 6:57-62.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Moses 5:12.

their sins when eight years old, and receive the laying on of the hands.

And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord.<sup>3</sup>

But, as we trace what we might call the duties of home teachers one should keep in mind the following:

Home Teaching should not be confused with the Lord's program for teaching the gospel in the home by parents. It is not intended, nor would it be proper, for Home Teachers to take the place of the family head in teaching the gospel in the home.<sup>4</sup>

Rather, home teachers are: "To assist, and supplement the efforts of the father and mother in bringing up their children 'in light and truth.'"<sup>5</sup>

Because there was just one family on earth in the early days of Adam and Eve, the Lord's method of governing and teaching the people naturally came through Adam who exercised his patriarchal responsibility. As time went on, and the family multiplied and began to branch out, Adam was called upon to use his authority as head of the family or patriarch. This authority was established and recognized by God, and was known as the patriarchal priesthood.<sup>6</sup> Therefore it was Adam's duty to provide, under the direction of God, the procedures necessary

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<sup>3</sup> Doctrine and Covenants (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1964), 68:25-28, hereafter cited as D&C.

<sup>4</sup> Marion G. Romney, "Home Teaching," unpublished talk delivered in General Conference Home Teaching meeting, April 8, 1966 (Salt Lake City), copy in LDS Church Historical Department.

<sup>5</sup> Deseret News, Church News [Salt Lake City], January 7, 1967, p. 7, hereafter cited as Church News.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith, Seek Ye Earnestly (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1972), pp. 23-24.

to assist the parents in teaching the gospel to their children.<sup>7</sup> The Patriarchal order of the priesthood was passed on from father to son, with the oldest son (normally) being called and ordained to that position, and assuming that position after the death of his father.<sup>8</sup>

The patriarchal order of the priesthood continued through the fathers until Moses; and then it was taken from the earth because:

The children of Israel rebelled; they showed themselves unworthy of this great honor, and the Lord in his anger denied them this fulness of priesthood with all the rites that would prepare them for the exaltation in his presence.<sup>9</sup>

The Lord told Moses to set apart the tribe of Levi to minister to the people before the Lord.<sup>10</sup> They were given the lesser priesthood:

. . . which priesthood holdeth the key of the ministering of angels and the preparatory gospel; Which gospel is the gospel of repentance and of baptism, and the remission of sins, and the law of carnal commandments, which the Lord in his wrath caused to continue with the house of Aaron among the children of Israel until John, whom God raised up, being filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb.<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, it was the Levites who were called upon to teach the people, to provide the processes, and to administer the ordinances of the preparatory gospel to the people.<sup>12</sup> However, between the time of Moses and the time of Christ, the Lord continued to bestow the Melchizedek Priesthood on certain individuals because of their righteousness. Because of the power and authority they held from God, these

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<sup>7</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith, Answers to Gospel Questions (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1960), III, p. 191.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1962), III, pp. 160-161.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>10</sup> Deuteronomy 10:8-9.

<sup>11</sup> D&C 84:26-27.

<sup>12</sup> Deuteronomy 17:9-11f.

individuals became known as Israel's prophets.<sup>13</sup> They also had the responsibility to warn, to minister to, and to teach the people.

The prophet Ezekiel was such a prophet, and was called to be a watchman over Israel. Home teachers of today may well consider the following charge given to Ezekiel:

. . . Son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.<sup>14</sup>

Lehi who took his family and emigrated to America was also a prophet. The Nephites had the Melchizedek Priesthood<sup>15</sup> and so probably functioned under the Patriarchal Order. But as the families grew and branched out, there became a need to add more ministers and teachers. Therefore, Nephi consecrated Jacob and Joseph to be priests and teachers over the people.<sup>16</sup> We would do well to take heed of what Jacob said concerning this calling:

And we did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence;

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<sup>13</sup>Smith, Seek Ye Earnestly, op. cit., p. 195-196.

<sup>14</sup>Ezekiel 33:7-9.

<sup>15</sup>Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, op. cit., III, p. 87.

<sup>16</sup>Book of Mormon (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1962), 2 Nephi 5:26.

wherefore, by laboring with our might their blood might not come upon our garments; otherwise their blood would come upon our garments, and we would not be found spotless at the last day.<sup>17</sup>

When Alma and his people returned to the land of Zarahemla, Alma ordained priests and teachers so that all the people would have the chance to hear the gospel.<sup>18</sup>

Elder Marion G. Romney said that in his studies of the Book of Mormon he: ". . . came to the conclusion that the Nephites did Home Teaching."<sup>19</sup> After quoting the words of Moroni in chapter six, verses one through seven, Elder Romney said: "In those verses you have practically the exact language that is in the 20th section of the Doctrine and Covenants."<sup>20</sup>

Christ received the Melchizedek Priesthood directly from God. While organizing His Church, He called and ordained twelve Apostles, an office which had not been on earth before.<sup>21</sup> This was to meet the needs of the times, and to this day serves the same function. The offices Christ had in his Church in the Apostolic period served a very important role, as explained by Paul, when he stated:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the

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<sup>17</sup>Jacob 1:19.

<sup>18</sup>Mosiah 25:19-21.

<sup>19</sup>Marion G. Romney, "What is Home Teaching," unpublished talk delivered at the Mission President's Seminar, (Salt Lake City, June, 1968), copy in LDS Church Historical Department.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Smith, Answers to Gospel Questions, op. cit., III, p. 191.

stature of the fulness of Christ:

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.<sup>22</sup>

In giving instruction to the elders of the early Church, Peter said:

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

Neither as being lords over God's Heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.<sup>23</sup>

Elder Romney has compared the above quotation to the 20th Section of the Doctrine and Covenants.<sup>24</sup>

After the death of the Apostles, apostasy entered into the Church. The Apostle Paul sensed this coming when he said: "Know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."<sup>25</sup> That these wolves would be their teachers is clearly shown, as the Apostle Peter warns: ". . . There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that brought them. . . ." <sup>26</sup>

As a result of these heresies, Paul mentions the following conditions which would prevail in the last days:

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters,

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<sup>22</sup>Ephesians 4:11-15.

<sup>23</sup>1 Peter 5:2-4.

<sup>24</sup>Romney, General Conference Home Teaching Meeting, April 8, 1966.

<sup>25</sup>Acts 20:29.

<sup>26</sup>2 Peter 2:1.

proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,  
Without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers,  
incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than  
lovers of God;

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof;  
from such turn away.<sup>27</sup>

That there would be a time of falling away from the truth  
before the second coming of our Lord is stated by Paul:

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not  
come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin  
be revealed, the son of perdition;

Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called  
God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple  
of God, shewing himself that he is God.<sup>28</sup>

This period of apostasy was not, however, to last forever, as  
prophesied by Isaiah:

Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near  
me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have  
removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is  
taught by the precept of men:

Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among  
this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom  
of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their  
prudent men shall be hid.<sup>29</sup>

The Apostle John also said that he: ". . . saw another angel  
fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach  
unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred,  
and tongue, and people."<sup>30</sup>

#### SUMMARY

In the days of Adam and the early fathers the Lord used the  
patriarchal system as a method of watching over the people by the

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<sup>27</sup> 2 Timothy 3:1-4.

<sup>28</sup> 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.

<sup>29</sup> Isaiah 29:13-14.

<sup>30</sup> Revelations 14:6.



priesthood. This lasted until Moses. Moses found it to be too much of a burden for him to watch over all Israel. He was therefore instructed to set apart the tribe of Levi to be the priests and teachers of the people.

Because of their unfaithfulness, when He took Moses, the Lord also took the higher priesthood away from Israel. But occasionally the Lord personally called and ordained prophets to this higher priesthood. These prophets were also given the charge to watch over the people.

The higher priesthood was brought back to the earth during the administration of Christ. He called and ordained Apostles, whom He instructed to call and ordain priests and teachers to watch over the people. But this didn't last long. Peter and Paul warned of an impending apostasy; and shortly after their deaths the apostasy was complete.

The apostasy wasn't to last forever, however, the Prophet Isaiah promised a marvelous work and a wonder would take place in the last days. And the Apostle John said that he saw an angel fly through the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell upon the earth.

## Chapter 4

### PRIESTHOOD WATCHMEN IN THE BEGINNING OF THE LAST DISPENSATION

The "marvelous work and a wonder" spoken of in Isaiah, 29:14, which was to confound the wisdom of the wise and prudent, came about in an unusual manner. While searching for which Church to join, (1820) Joseph Smith was caught up in the confusion of a religious revival in western New York. Shouts of "Lo here!" and "Lo there!" were pondered in his mind; "Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it?"<sup>1</sup> While laboring under these extreme difficulties, he one day read the Epistle of James, which says: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him."<sup>2</sup> Feeling he lacked sufficient wisdom to make the right choice, this young man put the scripture to a test. He went to the Lord in prayer, and while praying Joseph said that he saw and spoke with God. The Lord told him that the denominations of this day: ". . . draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power

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<sup>1</sup>The Pearl of Great Price (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1964), Joseph Smith 2:10.

<sup>2</sup>James 1:5.

thereof."<sup>3</sup>

Joseph was commanded to wait, and in process of time he would learn what to do. In a matter of time he had further visitations, as John prophesied that an angel would fly through the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell upon the earth. Joseph was eventually commanded to organize the Church. But before this time he and a friend, Oliver Cowdery, received the priesthood from heavenly messengers who held this power, and who were commanded to re-confer it again to men upon the earth.

Just before the Church was organized, in April of 1830, the Prophet received a revelation recorded in the 20th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. Of this revelation, Elder Marion G. Romney has said: "In some respects this revelation is similar to a constitution for a government, or to articles of incorporation for a corporation."<sup>4</sup> Concerning the relation of this revelation to watching over the Church, Elder Romney continued:

One part of the revelation recorded in the 20th Section, is titled: "The duty of the elders, priests, teachers, deacons, and members of the church of Christ." In this division, under the general charge to "watch over the church," the Lord specifies the duties of home teachers.

It is good to remember what the Lord said; to remember exactly what He said. What I am going to read to you now is the foundation of Home Teaching. The Lord said:

"The teacher's duty is to watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them;" verse 53

This is the overall charge the Lord gave to the priesthood of this Church. It was given before the Church was organized; before there were any priests, teachers, deacons or elders. This charge

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<sup>3</sup>The Pearl of Great Price, op. cit., Joseph Smith 2:19.

<sup>4</sup>Marion G. Romney, "What is Home Teaching," Unpublished talk delivered at Mission Presidents Seminar (Salt Lake City, June, 1968, copy in LDS Church Historical Department.

is in the nature of a constitutional provision. Each man who receives the priesthood has this responsibility imposed upon him as an incident to his accepting the priesthood. There is significance in the fact that it was given in this section where the first reference, in modern revelation, is made to elders, priests, teachers, and deacons. It is, therefore, a fundamental constitutional responsibility of all priesthood bearers "to watch over the Church always and be with and strengthen them."

Now, the overall responsibility is to "watch over the church." When? Always! Where? In the homes. Home Teachers "are to visit the house of each member." This is said in two paragraphs--the 47th and the 51st. The only difference in the two paragraphs is that in the 47th paragraph the Lord says "and exhort" and in the 51st paragraph He says "exhorting." It is the priests duty "to visit the house of each member." And what does he do when he gets there? He exhorts "them to pray vocally and in secret, and attend to all family duties." To encourage and inspire members "to attend to all family duties" is one of the great divisions of the responsibilities of Home Teachers.

A little further on, the Lord said it is the duty of the Home Teacher "to see that the church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty." (55) So this "watching over" embraces two general areas: Family duties and individual duties; to get families to attend to all of their duties and get all the members to do their duty.<sup>5</sup>

Elder Romney enumerates the specific duties of a home teacher as follows:

The first one mentioned is ". . . exhort them to pray vocally and in secret . . ." It is informative to read the Doctrine and Covenants and the Book of Mormon for the purpose of observing how often the Lord has told us to pray.

Six other specifics given in the 20th Section are:

- (1) "See that there is no iniquity in the Church;
- (2) "Neither hardness with each other;
- (3) "Neither lying;
- (4) "Backbiting;
- (5) "Nor evil speaking; and
- (6) "See that the church meet together often."

I think it ought always to be in our minds that the overall responsibility is 'to watch over the church always and be with and strengthen them.' When? Always! Where? In the homes! Visit the homes. The general responsibilities come under family duties and individual duties, and the specifics are pray vocally (and that would certainly include family prayer) and in secret, and 'see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking. And see that the

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

church meet together often. . . .' (vs 53-55)

. . . Such is the origin of Home Teaching. <sup>6</sup> It is a basic responsibility of the Priesthood of the Church.

One of the earliest recorded instances of home teaching is that given by Elder William Cahoon. This experience took place in Ohio and within a year or two after the revelation on watching over the Church was given. <sup>7</sup> Elder Cahoon said:

I was called and ordained to act as a teacher to visit the families of the Saints. I got along very well till I found that I was obliged to call and pay a visit to the Prophet. Being young, only about seventeen years of age, I felt my weakness in visiting the Prophet and his family in the capacity of a teacher. I almost felt like shrinking from duty. Finally I went to his door and knocked, and in a minute the Prophet came to the door. I stood there trembling, and said to him:

"Brother Joseph, I have come to visit you in the capacity of a teacher, if it is convenient for you.

He said "Brother William, come right in, I am glad to see you; sit down in that chair there and I will go and call my family in.

They soon came in and took seats. He then said, "Brother William, I submit myself and family into your hands," and then took his seat. "Now Brother William," said he "ask all the questions you feel like."

By this time all my fears and trembling had ceased, and I said, "Brother Joseph, are you trying to live your religion?"

He answered "Yes."

I then said "Do you pray in your family?"

He said "yes."

"Do you teach your family the principles of the gospel?"

He replied "Yes, I am trying to do it."

"Do you ask a blessing on your food?"

He answered "Yes."

"Are you trying to live in peace and harmony with all your family?"

He said that he was.

I then turned to Sister Emma, his wife, and said "Sister Emma, are you trying to live your religion? Do you teach your children to obey their parents. Do you try to teach them to pray?"

To all these questions she answered "Yes, I am trying to do so."

I then turned to Joseph and said, "I am now through with my questions as a teacher; and now if you have any instructions to

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Marion G. Romney, "Home Teaching," unpublished talk delivered in General Conference Home Teaching Meeting, (Salt Lake City, April 8, 1966) copy in LDS Church Historical Department.

give, I shall be happy to receive them."

He said "God bless you, Brother William; and if you are humble and faithful, you shall have power to settle all difficulties that may come before you in the capacity of a teacher."

I then left my parting blessing upon him and his family, as a teacher, and took my departure.<sup>8</sup>

Since the beginning of the first procedure for watching over the Church in this last dispensation, the process has undergone many and varied changes. In order to justify these changes, the reader is referred to a revelation given through President John Taylor in April of 1883. The Lord said:

. . . let not your hearts be troubled, neither be ye concerned about the management and organization of my Church and Priesthood and the accomplishment of my work. Fear me and observe my laws and I will reveal unto you, from time to time, through the channels that I have appointed, everything that shall be necessary for the future development and perfection of my Church, for the adjustment and rolling forth of my kingdom, and for the building up and the establishment of my Zion.<sup>9</sup>

As the revelation above stated, the Lord reveals from time to time the changes which are necessary at the time when they are necessary in watching over the Church. The remarks of President Joseph Fielding Smith gave these instructions:

Look to the Presidency and receive instruction. . . . Neither the President of the Church, nor the First Presidency, nor the united voice of the First Presidency and the Twelve will ever lead the saints astray, or send forth counsel to the world that is contrary to the mind and will of the Lord.

. . . The voice of the First Presidency, and the united voice of those others who hold with them the keys of the kingdom, shall always guide the saints and the world in those paths where the Lord wants them to be.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>William F. Cahoon, The Juvenile Instructor, XXVII (Salt Lake City, August, 1892), 492-493.

<sup>9</sup>James R. Clark, Messages of the First Presidency (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), II, p. 354.

<sup>10</sup>Deseret News, Church News [Salt Lake City], April 15, 1972, p. 8.

At the end of his address he bore testimony, saying:

I testify that if we shall look to the First Presidency and follow their counsel and direction no power on earth can stay our course as a church; and as individuals we shall gain peace in this life and be inheritors of eternal glory in the world to come.<sup>11</sup>

At the inception of the function of watching over the Church in this last dispensation, it was the ordained teacher who watched over the Church, as the experience of Elder Cahoon indicated. Other bearers of the Priesthood shared in this responsibility, but were exempt for the following reasons:

It will be understood that Elders, Priests, Teachers, and Deacons, all have authority to privately visit the members of the Church, and instruct them in all their duties. But as the Elders and Priests are expected, when called upon, to travel, preach the Gospel, baptize, &c., the Teachers and Deacons, not being under the same responsibility to do this, are "appointed to watch over the Church, to be standing ministers unto the Church." --Doc. and Cov., sec. iv., par. 22. As the duties of the Elder are more numerous than those of the Priest, it generally occurs that the Priest has considerable time for the purpose of watching over and visiting the members of the Church but he may not have so much time for this as the Teacher, and as the Deacon is generally charged with the care of the physical and temporal comfort of the Church, especially in their assemblies, it naturally follows that the chief burden of visiting, watching over, and teaching the Saints, lies on the Teacher. Hence the revelation says that the Teacher is "to watch over the Church always, and be with and strengthen them."<sup>12</sup>

On their way west, the priests and teachers were called upon to:

". . . Go round and visit all the Saints to know why all did not attend unto their duties as to prayer at the appointed times and if all was going on in peace and harmony with them one with the other."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>"Elders, Priests, Teachers, and Deacons," Millennial Star XV (May 1853), 323, hereafter cited as Millennial Star.

<sup>13</sup>"Emigration Company Journal," George Bowering, Clerk, August 17, 1851, located in Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

Shortly after entering the valley of the Great Salt Lake, Brigham Young, in a meeting with the Church leaders, said:

I instructed Bishop Newel K. Whitney to organize the lesser Priesthood. I advised that the best High Priests, the most substantial men, be set apart to act as teachers under their Bishops or presidents, so that the Bishops might have their wards perfectly visited, and that the High Priests might take young men with them, that they might also get experience in teaching. The Bishops' counselors also might act as teachers in their wards.<sup>14</sup>

Speaking of President Young's attitude towards his own teachers, Orson F. Whitney said:

. . . The President received the teachers with kindness and consideration. After they had explained the purpose of their visit and had made such inquiries as they thought proper, they then asked him for advice. The President propounded some questions to himself, and answered them. This was one of the questions. "Brother Brigham, does your household keep the Word of Wisdom, or do they allow the coffeepot to master them?" This question was followed by other questions addressed to himself. The answers which he gave supplied all of the information the teachers needed and served as a good example to them.<sup>15</sup>

During the Mormon Reformation of 1856-57, the teachers played a very important part. They were given a series of questions called a "catechism" to use in finding out if the Saints were doing their duty. They were to make such inquiries of their families as the following: "Have you taken the name of diety in vain? Have you been intoxicated with strong drink? Do you teach your family the gospel of Salvation."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>"History of Salt Lake Stake," February 16, 1849, located in the LDS Church Historical Department.

<sup>15</sup>Orson F. Whitney, The Improvement Era, L (July, 1947), 479. Hereafter cited as Era.

<sup>16</sup>"Luman Shurtliff Diary," copy in Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.



It is said of John Taylor that he: ". . . received the ward teachers with the same defference and respect that he would receive royal visitors.<sup>17</sup> But he was sometimes disappointed in his teachers, saying:

. . . The Teachers sometimes come to visit us and sometimes they do not. I do not know how it is with you, but they rarely visit me. When they do come, am I pleased to see them? Yes. I call my family together, and then addressing the Teachers I say to them; "Brethren, we are all very glad to see you, we are ready to listen to you and if you have any instructions for us we shall be happy to hear you." These are my feelings with regard to men who act as Teachers. And are they prepared to teach me? Yes. If I have been negligent or careless, they will enquire into it; and the same with the members of my family. Or are there ill feelings existing among any of the members of the household; or between them and our neighbor. If so, they should find out. It is their business to know whether I and my family are living our religion or not; and the same with everybody else's family in the Church. But how is it now? They come perhaps once in three months or nine months as the case may be. And when they do come they have a few words and questions which to say the least, are very formal. Is that the spirit and calling of a Teacher? No! They should be full of the light and revelation of God, quick to discover everything and know everybody and their standing in their jurisdiction. And they would too if they performed their duties and were faithful to the welfare of the people. What is the result? The wards are not attended to. What follows? We have drinking in our midst. Yes, Elders and High Priests and Seventies are tempted to drink and humiliate themselves before God and the people. We have others that break the Sabbath, and others that swear, and blaspheme the name of God. We have others that lie and cheat.<sup>18</sup>

President Taylor counseled the Saints:

. . . when the Teachers visit you, do not think that you are High Priests and that they are only Teachers hardly worthy of your attention. They are your Teachers, and you should reverence them. And if you expect to be honored in your calling, you must honor them in theirs. When the Teachers come to visit me I am pleased to see them; and I call together the members of my family that may be in the homes at the time, to hear what they have to

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<sup>17</sup> Era, op. cit.

<sup>18</sup> John Taylor, Address delivered at Farmington, June 17, 1877, Journal of Discourses, reporter George F. Gibbs, XIX (London, England; 1877), pp. 54-55, hereafter cited as JD.

say to us. And I tell them to talk freely and plainly to us, to myself, my wives and children; in other words, to do their duty as Teachers, and then I will help them to carry out their instructions. This is how I feel towards our Teachers.<sup>19</sup>

Elder Erastus Snow, of the Quorum of the Twelve, said:

. . . It is the duty of the Teachers to report to their Bishops the relative standing of those under their supervision--whether their houses are houses of order--whether the wife is good to the husband, and the husband is good to his wife--whether the children are obedient to their parents, and whether the parents are training their children in the way they should walk,--if there is strife where there should be peace, if there are jealousy and discord where love and unity should exist,--whether the mother poisons the mind of her daughter instead of teaching her correct principles; in short--whether the house is what it should be--a house of God.<sup>20</sup>

During the administration of John Taylor, priests began to work regularly with the teachers in visiting the homes of the members.

President Taylor said:

The Priests ought to be full of the Holy Ghost, and should be full of intelligence to act as watchmen over the people, trying to stop ill feelings, evil actions, etc. The Teachers ought to assist them, and visit from house to house, and see that no iniquity prevails.<sup>21</sup>

During the administration of John Taylor, the Saints were suffering severe persecution at the hands of the United States Government because of the Saints adamant belief in polygamy. The First Presidency wrote on April 8th, 1887:

Much depends in these days of trial upon those who bear the lesser priesthood. They have opportunities which are of unequalled advantage. They visit or should visit the people at their homes. They talk to them by their firesides. They can see their inner lives, and learn where they need strengthening and guiding in order to be more efficient Latter-day Saints. When priests and teachers understand their duties and seek to enjoy the spirit of their offices, they can do an immense amount of good; for they are brought directly into contact with the people. They learn their wants, are made familiar with their weaknesses, and are in a position to check the growth of evil tendencies in parents and in children.

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<sup>19</sup> JD. XXI, p. 367.

<sup>20</sup> JD. XXIX, p. 13.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

There is, in many instances, doubtless, too much formality in the character of these visits--a disposition to drop into routine and to ask stereotyped questions, without conversing in a way to bring out the real feelings and spirit of the households which they visit. Visits of this character are comparatively barren of results. To make them as productive of good as they should be, live, active men should be used as priests and teachers. The best ability in the various wards can find ample field for usefulness in performing these duties. Young men who have not had experience should be associated with those who have had experience, and they should be impressed with the importance of seeking for the Spirit of God to rest upon them in power, to dictate to them the very thing that should be said to the family which they visit. The teachings which might be appropriate to one family would not perhaps be so suitable for another family. Therefore, the necessity of having the guidance of the Spirit of God is apparent.<sup>22</sup>

Likewise, in April of 1889, the Millennial Star published an article which stated:

The objects for which the office of Teacher was placed in the Church cannot be attained by the person who holds it going around his district in a rush, as a matter of form, to enable him to subsequently report that he has gone through his field and "found all the Saints about as usual."

Entering the houses of the Saints and talking about the weather, the crops, business and other people's affairs, will not accomplish the desired end.<sup>23</sup>

Around the turn of the century, the function of watching over the Church became very lax. It was largely in the hands of local leaders, and perhaps they didn't all have the same feeling about the principle of watching over the Church. In the October Conference of 1900, Elder M. W. Merrill said:

. . . Every ward in the Church is supposed to have efficient men to labor as Teachers among the people. I believe that this important organization in the ward is in many instances, materially neglected. If the duties of Teachers were carried out as the Lord designed they should be, we would see a marked improvement in the

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<sup>22</sup> John Taylor, The Gospel Kingdom (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1964), pp. 158-159.

<sup>23</sup> Millennial Star LI, (April 15, 1889), 229.

midst of the people. These Teachers are not confined to spiritual things. They can talk and advise about temporal things also. In many instances, however, Teachers' visits are hurried over while in others they are put off till the last day before the Bishop requires him to report, and then he hurries around and does not take the time that ought to be taken.<sup>23</sup>

In fact, he said: "I have heard people say, 'we have not seen a Teacher in our house for a year,' or for six months."

In the late eighteen hundreds and early nineteen hundreds, the priests and teachers who watched over the Church began to be referred to as "acting teachers" doing ward teaching.<sup>26</sup>

#### SUMMARY

It was between the years of 1820 and 1830 that the heavens were opened, and the Church, with the true priesthood, was again given to men on earth. By command of God, the Church was again organized upon the earth, in April of 1830.

About the same time the Church was organized, the Lord gave a revelation recorded in the 20th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. In this revelation is given the instructions concerning the duties of the priesthood, and within these duties are enumerated the prime responsibilities of the priesthood, that is to: "Watch over the Church Always."

It was only a short time after the organization of the Church that we find accounts of watching over the Church. Because of the

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<sup>24</sup> M. W. Merrill, General Conference Address, Official Report of the Thirty-First Semi Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 5, 6, and 7, 1900 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d.), p. 47.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>26</sup> Era, XII (February, 1909), 321.

small number of Saints and the older age of the teachers, it was, at first, the ordained teacher who watched over the homes of the Saints. But as membership increased, the priests were asked to join the teacher in this responsibility.

During these early days, the teachers generally had a list of questions which they asked the Saints concerning their duties. These questions were of a personal nature and some Saints were offended by them. The questions also became so routine that numbers of the teachers did not obtain their full intent. Both the Saints and the teachers were warned from time to time concerning the significance of these questions. The Saints were instructed that it was the duty of their teachers to learn whether or not they were doing their duty. On the other hand, the teachers were asked to be more tactful in learning if the Saints were doing their duty.

During the trek west, the teachers were used to inquire into the conduct of the Saints, why they didn't attend to their prayers and other duties.

Then, shortly after entering into the valley of the Great Salt Lake, Brigham Young instructed the bishops to organize their wards and send teachers forth among the Saints. During the Church Reformation of 1856-1857, the teachers were called upon to see if the Saints were doing their duty.

During the administrations of John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff, the U.S. Government bore considerable pressure upon the Saints because of their belief in polygamy. Because of these pressures the leaders of the Church were forced into exile to avoid imprisonment. Without their leaders to guide them, the Saints began to shirk their duties,

watching over the Church was one of these duties. President John Taylor found it necessary to continually remind the priesthood brethren that they were neglecting a most important duty.

It was during the late nineteenth century that the priests and teachers who were assigned to watch over the Church began to be referred to as acting teachers.

From the arrival of the Saints in the Valley of The Great Salt Lake on through the early nineteen hundreds, the function of watching over the Church was largely in the hands of local leaders. But, as time went on, the Presiding Authorities of the Church began to give more and more direction to watching over the Church, as will be seen in the next chapter.

## Chapter 5

### THE BEGINNING OF THE WARD TEACHING PROCESS

A new movement began in the Priesthood in April of 1908. This was the beginning of what we could call the first correlation program. The main stress of the new program was to reorganize the priesthood with all of its necessary functions. The proper age for ordinations in the Aaronic Priesthood was decided upon; priesthood meeting was to be held regularly on every Monday; and a course of study was outlined for the various priesthood quorums. It was suggested that special priesthood stake conferences be held three times a year, and that a General Authority preside at every conference. By 1912, David O. McKay was the chairman of this correlation committee.<sup>1</sup>

Included in the correlation movement was increased stress upon what now became known as ward teaching. At the October conference of 1911 ward teaching was the main topic. At this conference, Elder Read Smoot said:

. . . I believe that one of the weaknesses in our Church work today is the neglect of ward teachers to regularly visit the homes of our people. It is true that we are all teachers, but there are certain men selected in every ward whose special duty it is to visit the homes of members of the Church. It is the teacher's duty to call at every home, no matter what position the head of the house occupies, whether it be the President of the Church, a member of the quorum of the Twelve, the president of a stake, bishop of a ward, or the humblest member in the ward. As soon as the

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<sup>1</sup>Jerry "J" Rose, "The Correlation Program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints During the Twentieth Century" (unpublished Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1973), pp. 10-12.

teacher enters the door of a home, if it is the home of a Latter-day Saint, the family should be called together for instruction. The teacher then presides, and it is his duty to expound the principles of the gospel, to inquire as to the faith of each member of the family; whether they are attending to their prayers, whether there is anything in their home life contrary to the teachings of the Church and the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. From the reports we receive, there are homes that are not visited once a year. This is not as God intended. I plead with the bishopric of every ward where such a condition exists, to rectify it as quickly as possible. Instruct your teachers to visit every home at least once a month, and oftener if necessary. I believe that if this is done there will be a reformation in the lives of many.<sup>2</sup>

In relation to these remarks, Elder Francis M. Lyman said:

. . . I am not sure but I think it was Elder Smoot, who dropped the thought that we are all teachers. If you remember and will read this scripture, it is right here, I need not give much time to speak in regard to it, but you can study it for yourselves, in the twentieth section of the Doctrine and Covenants. . . .<sup>3</sup>

Elder Hyrum M. Smith spoke quite extensively upon the subject of ward teaching. Within these remarks, he admonished the Saints:

We have been informed that it is the teacher's duty to be a watchman over the Church, to strengthen them, and to see that there is no iniquity in the Church, neither backbiting nor evil speaking, and to see that the people attend to their family duties and their Church duties. Brethren, we who are called to be teachers, many of us at least, have not as fully as we should have done, performed the labor allotted unto us.<sup>4</sup>

It appears that many of the Saints were not cooperating with their ward teachers as they should. Because of this, Elder Hyrum M. Smith said:

I have been informed by some teachers that there are some members of the Church who object to the teachers inquiring into their personal lives, and conduct, and questioning them about

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<sup>2</sup>Reed Smoot, General Conference Address, Official Report of the Thirty-Fifth Semi Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 6, 7, and 8, 1911 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d.), p. 27, hereafter cited as Conference Report.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 40.



their faith in the gospel and their obedience in keeping the commandments of God considering them impertinent and unnecessary. Well, now, you Latter-day Saints, if there are any who take such a position as that, you are in error, you are mistaken, and you don't understand the rights of the Priesthood as you should, nor the object of the coming of the teachers to our homes, as you should, neither have you the proper spirit in your own heart, if you resent the good will of the teachers when they ask these questions in order to find out your condition, that they may help you and bless you, and be a strength and a power to you in helping you to overcome the weaknesses of the flesh. You cannot show disrespect to the Priesthood without bringing upon yourselves the displeasure of the Lord. Most of us men in the Church hold the Priesthood ourselves, and if a teacher comes into my house and he holds a lesser office in the Priesthood than I, and for that reason or any other I resent his making inquiry into my personal life and conduct, and standing in the Church, I disrespect the Priesthood. If I disrespect the Priesthood as it is held by another, I dishonor the Priesthood as I may hold it myself, and I should not do that. We should respect the Priesthood and honor it, no matter who holds it, and especially should we honor and respect a man who endeavors to magnify his calling in the midst of the Saints.<sup>5</sup>

Speaking about the same problem, President Joseph F. Smith further emphasized:

There are just a few words that I desire to say in relation to the subject on which some of the brethren have dwelt this morning, which I have no doubt they perfectly understand, but which, so far as I have heard, they omitted to say, and that is this: that the teachers who visit our homes do not come to visit us as Elders, Seventies, or High Priests, or Apostles or Presidents. The teachers have jurisdiction over the membership of the Church, or the members of the Church, and when they come to visit us as members of the Church, and not as officers or members of the Priesthood.

Consequently it is the duty of all members of the Church, no matter who they are or what Priesthood they hold, nor what office they hold in the Church,--it is their duty to disrobe themselves, if you please, of all authority except the right of membership, for it is the duty and prerogative of the teacher to inquire into the standing of members of the Church. Now, if we will only bear that in mind we will have no difficulty at all with reference to our 'high and mighty' positions in the Church.

When the teachers visit us we will remember that we are simply members of the Church, and it is the duty of the teachers to visit the members and to teach the members and to instruct the members of the Church, and to see that the members of the Church have no

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

hard feelings, one against another; that the members of the Church are united in their family capacities, and that they are in fellowship with the people of God, with their neighbors and with all mankind, and especially that they are in fellowship with God. That is the duty of the teacher, and when we keep that in mind everything respecting the duties and authority of the teachers will be plain and clear to us. I want to say this too, that if somebody should happen to mount upon the 'high horse' of his authority in the Church, it will be very becoming in the teacher to gently take him off his 'high horse' and bring him down to the level of his membership, and to let him understand that he (the teacher) is there to teach him as a member of the Church, and not as an officer of it. The teacher has a right to inquire into the performance of the duties of all members and learn whether they are doing their duty as members in all things, or not.<sup>6</sup>

At the October conference of 1912, the General Committee on Priesthood Outlines, under the direction of David O. McKay, made the following suggestions and recommendations, which were ordered published:

We consider this an opportune occasion to call the attention of the priesthood to the importance of the work of ward teaching; the necessity of organizing and maintaining, in every ward, a system adapted to our present-day needs, and to place before the priesthood information obtained by the General Committee on Priesthood Outlines, and the Presiding Bishop's Office concerning the progress made in some stakes of Zion with this important and beneficent movement in the Church.

. . . We are gratified to report that there had been developed in some of the stakes and wards a system of supervising and directing the work of ward teachers that is bringing about a gratifying improvement in all that pertains to the spiritual and temporal welfare of stakes and wards.

The work of teaching the principles of the gospel within the boundaries of Zion devolves upon all who bear the Priesthood. It certainly pertains more specifically to the priests than to the teachers, for the Lord states (Doctrine and Covenants 20): 'The priest's duty is to preach, teach, expound, exhort, and baptize, and administer the sacrament, and visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret, and attend to all family duties. \*\*\* In all these duties the priest is to assist the elder if occasion requires.' It is also 'the duty of the elder to watch over the Church.' The responsibility of the calling of the Seventies and High Priests, while they are peculiarly missionaries

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

and presiding officers, should make them, when not engaged abroad or in the presiding positions, active in this work at home.

The priests, elders, seventies and high priests of the Church, when called to labor in bearing the gospel directly to the homes of the people, should not consider that they are called away from their own responsibilities to take up the work of a lesser office in the Aaronic Priesthood. Ward teaching is a calling, just as missionary work abroad is a calling, and no quorum is solely responsible for the performance of this duty.<sup>7</sup>

In the above quotation it can be seen that as early as 1912 all priesthood bearers were being considered as potential priesthood watchmen.

Seen in the following is another phase of ward teaching:

Another phase of ward teaching, illustrating its difference from the temporal duties of the ordained teacher, is the custom adopted in some wards of having the teachers visit also regularly the homes of non-members who are willing to receive them, as well as those of members. . . .<sup>8</sup>

Specific suggestions also given to ward and stake leaders in directing the function of ward teaching were:

Proper supervision should insure the work being done at regular times during the month, instead of being left till the last few days, and then only partially done. In some wards, experienced and energetic brethren have been chosen, to supervise several districts. In other cases, the ward has been divided into three divisions, the bishop and his counselors each holding himself responsible for one of these. Some of the bishops require weekly, written reports from each pair of teachers, in order that they may be able to put new help into the district, if found necessary. This insures each family an actual visit, and not merely a hurried call. But in the stakes where the best work is being done, the bishops are not left with the whole responsibility.

The presidencies of stakes should take an active interest in this work, not only for the purpose of overseeing and encouraging bishops in this important labor but for establishing uniformity in the work the ward teachers, which shall be adapted to the local conditions of each stake.

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<sup>7</sup>David O. McKay, The Improvement Era, XV (November, 1912), 79-80, hereafter cited as Era.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

In some stakes a high council committee, consisting in some instances of one high councilor to each ward, keeps in immediate touch with the work. . . .

As the quantity of the work increases it seems certain to us that the standard of quality will be improved. To secure this, teachers should not be asked to visit too great a number of families. Eight seems to be about the limit, if one hour's time is spent with each family. This would require one night a week, two visits being made each night. By reducing the size of the districts, the labor is distributed among a larger number of the priesthood of the ward, and the teachers are thus able to spend more time with each family.

In order to improve the quality of work, it has been tried in a number of wards, and found desirable, to assign a subject for each month. Preparation is made on this by the teachers, and when they go to the homes of the people, they do so with the instruction to take up with the family the subject for the month, unless they are directed by the Spirit to consider some other matter. Frivolities, gossip and light conversation will thus be replaced by instruction, and by discussion of the gospel.

The bishop should receive written reports from each district weekly, or, if a monthly report is made, it should be handed to him early enough to allow him time to consider it carefully prior to the monthly teachers' meeting. Such report should contain the number of families in the ward; the number who have been visited during the month, and the general condition found; also a report of the births, deaths, marriages, departure from and arrival of members in the district, and such similar information.

If such a plan is adopted, he can utilize most of the time of the teachers' meeting in a discussion of the topic for the coming month, and the preparation of the teachers for their labors.

Some of the stakes have printed each month and distributed to the wards a little outline that helps in the preparation of the topic to be considered. This is handed to the family at each monthly visit with the explanation that next month, unless something more important arises, the teachers will discuss the matter contained therein. In the homes where spiritual and intellectual fires are burning brightly, this method provides the certainty of interesting, successful visits.

The quality of teaching can be improved also by choosing more experienced men for the work. We see no reason why the most capable men in the ward cannot be secured to teach, nor why such men should not be glad to do their part in this labor. . . . That does not prevent younger men, who hold the Aaronic Priesthood, from being employed also. In fact, every priest should be asked to work in this calling, but it provides that the people shall receive benefit from the visit and the inexperienced young men will be properly trained.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 80-81.

The following admonition was given to the faithful ward teachers:

That there is a profound necessity for intelligent teaching, by men endowed with the Holy Spirit, is apparent to all. To the homes of many of the Saints must be carried a large part of the spiritual food that they receive, for the record of attendance at sacrament meetings in a number of wards is regrettably low. In many homes the teachers find it desirable not alone to converse with the people, but to hold cottage meetings to which the neighbors may be invited. In this way, the gospel is carried to the people who would not otherwise receive it. There are many fathers and mothers who themselves are well grounded in the faith, but who for some reason cannot influence their children as they desire. The visit of the ward teachers offers a fine opportunity for them to gather their children in, and have them listen to the doctrines of the gospel presented differently, and often more effectively, than they themselves have presented them.<sup>10</sup>

Good ward teaching was expected to produce the following results:

Where teaching is intelligently and persistently followed, month by month, there is a marked improvement in the attendance at sacrament meetings, and a better feeling of sympathy and fellowship in the ward; the attendance at the meetings of the auxiliary organizations is increased, and the payment of tithes and offerings is made more faithfully than before.<sup>11</sup>

Ward and stake leaders were instructed:

. . . . By labor, the presiding authorities of wards and stakes must implant one element in the teachers that is essential to real success. This is a love for the work. It cannot be looked upon as drudgery, and draw from a man his best efforts. It is an important part of the redemption of mankind; in some respects, even more important than missionary work abroad. It should command the best ability among the priesthood.<sup>12</sup>

The reason behind the new change in watching over the Church by the priesthood is noted:

It is not with the thought that ward teaching has failed in accomplishing the purpose of its institution in the Church, but for the purpose of stimulating greater activity in a field that offers rich returns for persistent and intelligent labor by the Priesthood, that these suggestions are offered. As each year goes by the character of the ward teachers' work is being improved.

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 81-82.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid, 82.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

In some stakes, it has reached a high state indeed. When it is properly performed, we believe there will be a great spiritual awakening in Zion.<sup>13</sup>

In conclusion the committee summarized the following:

1. That ward teaching is a calling in the priesthood.
2. That ward teaching requires the most experienced men in the ward. High priests, seventies and elders should look upon it as one of the most important duties of their calling.
3. That the presidency of each stake of Zion should take up an active campaign in their respective stakes for the improvement of this work.
4. That the presidency and high council decide upon and adopt a system in harmony with the ideas outlined in this address, suitable to their local conditions.
5. That where local conditions will permit, a high councilor should be assigned to aid and advise the bishop of each ward.
6. That the bishopric of each ward organize the ward into districts of about eight families, more or less, as local conditions may render it necessary.
7. That the bishopric call to their aid the best men in the ward to labor as ward teachers, and that every young man holding the office of priest be appointed to labor in this calling, associated with an older and experienced person.
8. That a teacher's monthly report meeting be held during the last week of every month, or the first week of the following month.
9. That every family in the ward or district be visited once a month.
10. That the teachers of each district make a written report of their labors and deliver to the bishop; this report to contain the number of families in the district, the number visited, a statement of births, marriages, deaths, arrivals in and removals from the ward; and other information that may be required by the bishop.
11. That the bishopric instruct the teachers on the subjects to discuss at their next visit, unless the teacher is otherwise directed by the Holy Spirit.
12. The essential element in the success of ward teaching is love for the work to be developed in the hearts of the teachers themselves through the example of, and the energy displayed by, the presidency of the stake, high council and bishoprics of wards.<sup>14</sup>

A great deal of good came from the increased stress upon ward teaching. As early as December of 1912, the Brethren reported ". . . a number of wards have taken up the subject with new zeal, and have

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 82-83.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 83.

succeeded admirably in the matter of visiting the people each month."<sup>15</sup>

Within a year of the inauguration of the new ward teaching program the First Presidency announced: "A larger percentage of the members received the benefits of home teaching than has been usual for many years, and non-members have not been neglected in these house-to-house ministrations. . . . Attendance at the Ward Sacramental meetings has been increased and a greater interest in the performance of Church duties has been aroused."<sup>16</sup>

Some of the brethren of the priesthood were still of the opinion that ward teaching belonged to the Aaronic Priesthood. In order to straighten out this error, President Joseph F. Smith made the following comment in the April conference of 1914:

We have had called to our attention, recently, the fact that some men who are of long standing in the Church--indeed, some of them born and reared in the Church, and who are occupying prominent positions in some of the quorums of the Priesthood--when the presidents of their branches or bishops of the wards in which they live call upon them to visit the Saints, teach the principles of the gospel and perform the duties of teachers, they coolly inform their bishops that they have graduated from that calling and refuse to act as teachers. Brother Charles W. Penrose is eighty-two years of age. I am going on seventy-six, and I believe that I am older than several of these good men who have graduated from the duties in the lesser Priesthood, and I want to tell them and you that we are not too old to act as teachers, if you will call us to do it--not one of us. There is never a time, there never will come a time to those who hold the Priesthood in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, when men can say of themselves that they have done enough. So long as life lasts, and so long as we possess ability to do good, to labor for the upbuilding of Zion, and for the benefit of the human family, we ought, with willingness to yield with alacrity to the requirements made of us to do our

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<sup>15</sup> Era, XV (December, 1912), 175.

<sup>16</sup> James R. Clark, Messages of the First Presidency (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1970), IV, p. 295.

duty, little or great.<sup>17</sup>

In August of 1914, the Era came out with a list of suggestions for ward teaching discussion subjects. It read: "The bishops will find that the assignment of subjects to the ward teachers will add greatly to the quality and efficiency of the teaching, and will add interest to the work."<sup>18</sup> By 1914, it was reported that: "For stake authorities of the Church to prepare subjects at different times for the teachers in the various wards of the stake, is an idea that is gaining popularity in a number of stakes."<sup>19</sup> Many of the stakes were at this time printing small leaflets containing the discussion topic for the month.

Additional instructions to ward teachers were printed in the Era for March of 1915, they may be summarized as follows:

The Lord has decreed that his people shall come to a unity of the faith.

He has restored the priesthood that the gospel principles may be taught, gospel ordinances be performed.

He requires the teaching of the people in their homes, which duty rests upon all those holding the priesthood.<sup>20</sup>

Here again, the duties of ward teaching in regard to all priesthood holders is emphasized. Specific instructions were given to bishops:

The bishop must secure a complete and correct census of his ward.

If possible, from the priesthood, giving preference to the most

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<sup>17</sup> Joseph F. Smith, Gospel Doctrine (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1963), p. 188.

<sup>18</sup> Era, XVII (August, 1914), 992.

<sup>19</sup> Era, XVII (December, 1914), 173.

<sup>20</sup> Era, XVIII (March, 1915), 442.



able, but including ordained teachers and priests, he should secure enough teachers to permit the districting of the ward so that each pair of teachers shall have about six families to visit. In such case it is reasonable to expect that those called upon to be teachers will willingly respond as they will recognize that the duty imposed will not interfere with other duties resting upon them, nor become burdensome.

The bishopric, while not being given a district, shall nevertheless lead out in the work of visiting teaching the people in their homes.

Each member of the bishopric to be responsible for seeing the teaching is done in his particular division of the ward--or where the ward is so large that it would require more than three divisions, the division presidents be appointed, charged with such responsibility.

Each pair of teachers to be provided with a 'monthly report book' and charged with filing with the bishop promptly, on or before the Sunday preceding the monthly meeting night, a full report of his activities and failures.

The bishop shall take such steps as may be necessary to have done, before the monthly meeting night, what those reports show has not been done, so that one hundred percent of visits shall be made each month.

The bishop shall cause to be abstracted the reports, including items of special interest to the whole corps.

He should designate some certain night as the official visiting night upon which the people have a right to expect the teachers. Every teacher should prepare himself for this labor by prayer and study.<sup>21</sup>

Specific instruction was also given to ward teachers in regard to their duty:

Each pair of teachers should know the members of their flock--ascertaining as to their attendance at quorum or other organization meetings, from the rolls thereof, studying their characters and characteristics, noting their environments, their line of work, sounding their souls by the power of the Spirit, and striving unceasingly to demonstrate to them that they are interested in their welfare, anxious to benefit and bless them, and willing to serve them, thus winning their confidence and love.

Enter their homes as teachers in very deed, teachers of the gospel, and with a special message from the bishop, in addition to meeting the individual needs they have observed.

Praying with the family whenever opportunity offers.

As a rule making the minimum time for a visit thirty minutes.

Being on hand to assist in time of trouble and distress.

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 443.

Settling difficulties without recourse upon the bishop if possible.

Striving to make visits suit the convenience of the people.

Note the coming into the ward of new people and advising the bishop of such, whether they are in your district or not.

Calling upon new comers in your own district at the earliest practicable date.

Attend sacrament meetings and look out for your flock.

Make special efforts to meet and introduce to the bishop and others, new members.

Be prompt in making out and sending in monthly reports.

Be regular in attending the monthly meetings, and taking active part therein.<sup>22</sup>

If ward leaders and ward teachers followed the above program, they were expected to get the following results:

A greater interest in the gospel on the part of the members of the ward, and increased activity in Church work, such as:

More praying in the homes.

Increased attendance at the sacrament meetings of the ward.

Larger enrollment in the quorums of the priesthood, and in the auxiliary associations, with more regular and greater attendance.

A better observance of the Word of Wisdom.

More unity between the members of families and of the ward.

A stricter observance of tithe-paying, with the consequent reduction in the list of non-tithepayers.

Less privation among the poor because of the increased fast offerings of the people.

Better physical conditions in and around the ward buildings owing to increased contributions to the ward maintenance fund.

More marriages in the Temple--fewer strictly civil marriages and members marrying non-members.

More scripture reading in the homes.<sup>23</sup>

In the April conference of 1915, President Joseph F. Smith expressed his feelings about ward teaching to the Saints; he said:

I don't know of any duty that is more sacred, or more necessary, if it is carried out as it should be, than the duties of the teachers who visit the homes of the people, who pray with them, who admonish them to virtue and honor, to unity, to love, and to faith in and fidelity to the cause of Zion; who strive to settle uncertainties in the minds of the people and bring them to the standard of knowledge that they should possess in the gospel of Jesus Christ. May all the people open their doors, call in the members

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 443-444.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 442.

of their families, and respect the visit of the teachers to their homes, and join with them in striving to bring about a better condition, if possible, in the home than ordinarily exists. If you can advance, try to aid the teachers to help you make that advancement.<sup>24</sup>

By the October conference of 1915, President Joseph F. Smith was able to report:

I am glad to say that the policy to do ward teaching that has been urged upon the bishops and upon the bishops' counselors, and teachers is being carried out to a greater extent than heretofore. It is advised that the bishops and their counselors themselves, by the aid of the teachers called to their assistance in their wards, shall visit every family within their ward, advise with them, and look after their temporal and their spiritual well-being.<sup>25</sup>

And then he gave the following list of questions which were to be used by the ward teachers:

. . . These are the questions that we should put to the inhabitants and the home-makers in Zion, to the family organization in the Church. Is the husband and the father conducting himself in such a way as to be worthy of the affection and confidence of his whole family? Is his conduct and his dealings with them such as will secure to him their unstinted love and approval? Are the father and the mother living peacefully together, without strife or contention? Do the children live harmoniously and peacefully together in their homes, and are they taught to be peaceful and gentle with their neighbors' children? All these things should be taught by the teachers in the various wards, and by the bishops, visiting every house as far as possible, confirming the labors of the teachers in this work of love for the benefits of the inhabitants of Zion.<sup>26</sup>

In the October conference of 1915, David O. McKay said in regard to ward teaching:

. . . I saw in my mind's eye an army of approximately twenty thousand men on whom rests the great responsibility of carrying the gospel message of peace to every fireside throughout Zion. Those who comprise this army are the ward teachers.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Joseph F. Smith, op. cit., p. 189.

<sup>25</sup> Conference Report, October, 1915, p. 5.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 6.      <sup>27</sup> Conference Report, October, 1916, p. 57.

He commented upon the fourth chapter of Ephesians, where Paul talks about the perfecting of the Saints and said:

The teacher, in the Church, holding the holy priesthood, have devolving upon them the great responsibility of perfecting the Saints, and of edifying the body of Christ. . . . No greater responsibility can rest upon any man, than to be a teacher of God's children.<sup>28</sup>

Within the above address, Elder McKay enumerated the following needs of a ward teacher:

The first thing to do, my brethren, is to look to yourselves, to see whether or not you are prepared to teach. . . .

Second, Is your heart free from backbiting, from fault-finding, from hard feelings one to another? . . . .

. . . Three other things should be kept in mind for thorough preparation. The first is a knowledge of those whom you are to teach: The second, a knowledge of what you are to teach; and third, a knowledge of how you are going to teach.<sup>29</sup>

Regarding the habit many of the ward teachers were developing of merely visiting once a month and reading the Bishop's message, Elder McKay said:

I have never understood just why we have limited our duties of teacher to a visit once a month. A visit is not teaching. Reading the outline as prepared by the bishop or the high council is not teaching. Just repeating some passages of scripture, or merely the telling of something to the members of the family in a home is not teaching. Teaching is the awakening of thought in the minds of those whom we visit, and the convincing of their souls of the truth of the message that we bring to them. . . . 'It is the duty of the teacher to watch over the Church always.' Not just once a month but always a teacher. . . .<sup>30</sup>

In April of 1933, the ward teaching messages began to be printed in The Improvement Era. Prefacing the first message was the statement:

Partly as an economy measure and partly because The Improvement Era goes into practically all of the homes of ward teachers, or

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 59-60.

should do, the monthly suggestion for ward teachers is to be printed in these pages. This will obviate the necessity of having them printed by the various stakes.<sup>31</sup>

The presiding Bishopric periodically gave instructions to the ward teachers through the pages of The Improvement Era. In October of 1936, the following instructions were given.

In order to obtain satisfactory ward teaching it is necessary (a) that those appointed to this important service shall be trained and qualified and imbued with the spirit of their calling; (b) that they shall systematically and spiritedly visit the families under their direction each month; and (c) that they shall render proper account of their work and receive appropriate encouragement in this service.<sup>32</sup>

In November of 1937, the ward teachers were cautioned to use tact in entering homes and learning about the conditions of the home:

He should upon entering the home of the Saints, familiarize himself with the conditions of the home life. This can be done mainly through observation. It is not always wisdom to be too inquisitive or to ask pointed questions concerning home life, habits, and personal matters. Every visit should be characterized by gentleness, kindness, and the spirit of brotherly love.  
. . . .<sup>33</sup>

The ward teacher, in effect, became a bishop to his homes, as explained in the December, 1937 Era:

From the viewpoint of Church government and operation, the ward teacher becomes, in effect, the extended arm of the bishop. He goes into the homes of ward members as the personal representative of the bishop. It is his duty to perform the same services, extend the same fellowship, and give the same teachings as though the bishop himself made the visit. He has the same obligations to concern himself with the temporal and spiritual welfare of the families in his district, as the bishop would have, if he made the visit in person.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Era, XXXVI (April, 1933), 360.

<sup>32</sup>Era, XXXIX (October, 1936), 626.

<sup>33</sup>Era, XL (November, 1937), 702.

<sup>34</sup>Era, (December, 1937), 774.

Or they were missionaries to their families as explained in the Era for January of 1938:

Ward Teachers are in reality missionaries to the members of the Church living within their own districts. True, we do not go into their homes to convert them to the Gospel, but in many cases our duty is to keep them converted by retaining their interest and in other cases by reconverting those whose inactivity has caused them to lose interest.<sup>35</sup>

In April of 1938, David O. McKay called the ward teachers to repentance. He said:

What does this responsible official--the Ward Teacher--now do under the present general practice? And in asking this question, and answering it, there is no thought of casting reflections, but we must face the facts. First, he visits once a month or less frequently. Yet he is appointed 'to watch over the Church always.' Second he either reads the message of the bishop, or leaves it for the family to read. Third, he asks few, if any, questions regarding the attitude toward Church doctrines. Fourth, he makes only cursory inquiry, if any at all, regarding their feelings towards other members of the Church. Fifth, seldom, if ever does he ask about attendance at Sacrament meetings, and yet that is one of his specifically assigned duties. Sixth, very few teachers keep personal records of individuals in the district regarding Church activity and assignments.<sup>36</sup>

He gave the following instructions to bearers of the priesthood in order to combat the above deficiencies.

. . . Divide the ward, as it is now, so that each group will contain, let us say, no more than five families. Assign to each group of five families one member of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and one member of the Teacher's quorum. Let that ordained Teacher--not Deacon; not Priest--whose duty it is, take care of the statistics, assist in reporting removals, arrivals, new appointments in quorums, auxiliaries, wards, and missions. He will be glad to do it, and he is capable of doing it. But the duty of the adult member is to watch over the Church always. For what purpose? To perform the six specific duties God has given him; viz., to guard, to strengthen, to arbitrate, to be exemplary, to admonish, and

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<sup>35</sup>Era, XLI (January, 1938), 43.

<sup>36</sup>Era, XLI (April, 1938), 200.

to lead. When he enters the home he enters authoritatively, and the father, or the mother if the father be absent, respectfully turns over the household to him. The Adult Teacher will take the lead in ascertaining by such authoritative visits the standing and attitude of each member of every family. Do not say that this is difficult or is making your duties more arduous. It is a necessary service and a privilege.

Some families do not need so much attention. You may already know of their circumstances and spiritual condition. You can casually call and find out how they feel and how harmoniously they are living with their neighbors and with the Church. But here is a young man in your district who is insolent, neglectful, sour, spiritually sick. Be with him to comfort him, to strengthen him, not on a formal visit alone, but at every opportunity you can make.<sup>37</sup>

A new report form was to be used which would list the number of families attending meetings, keeping the Word of Wisdom and attending to their duties.<sup>38</sup>

Prefacing the above changes are the words:

President McKay has long advocated a new concept of the work of the Ward Teacher, and has so preached at general, stake and ward Priesthood gatherings and conferences. Here, in brief, is his plan for a changed attitude in Ward Teaching--an attitude which will take care of the mere statistics and also perform the higher service of being genuinely interested and informed concerning the temporal and spiritual well-being of our people--and so, the Teacher "Watches Over the Church Always."<sup>39</sup>

Further suggestions for improving ward teaching were given in the Era for December of 1938:

The basis of successful ward teaching is the love which the teacher has for his fellow members, and his desire for their welfare. Successful results in this, as in every other branch of Church work, can be most effectively obtained by placing responsibility upon men, and then requiring at suitable intervals an accounting of the work done.

The suggestions here made have to do mainly with the getting of results. They are subdivided into six headings, as indicated hereunder:

(a) SELECTING WARD TEACHERS:

The bishopric in their meeting should discuss qualifications of men to be selected. Qualities desired are: Love of the

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 201.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

Gospel, knowledge of the principles, kindness, tact, charity, persistence. Though these qualities may be lacking they can be developed. The bishopric should personally and in a heart-to-heart way consult each teacher to be appointed and get this promise to undertake the work.

(b) INSTRUCTING WARD TEACHERS

The bishopric should instruct them at the time of their appointment relative to desirable qualities to be cultivated, as follows:

- Be clean--morally and physically.
- Live the Gospel.
- Seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- Pray together as companions before making visits.
- Be prepared on special message to be delivered to members.
- Gain a thorough knowledge of the Gospel principles and instructions of the authorities.
- Make the time of visit convenient to family.
- Study each family and each individual.
- Develop friendship for everyone visited.
- Endeavor to meet each member of the family.
- Make visits profitable to everyone.
- Encourage discussion by the family on the matters presented.
- Leave a blessing in every home.
- Make stay only long enough to gain necessary information, give necessary instruction and have such conversation on the subject as may be advisable.
- If the family is not at home, leave a card advising of the visit and inviting them to meeting.
- Seek the welfare of every family not only during visits but at all times.
- Make visits so interesting that the families will be glad to have return call.
- Keep careful record of visits made and information to be reported to bishopric.

(c) ORGANIZING OF WARD TEACHERS:

In some wards one member of the bishopric has general supervision of ward teaching. In others, the bishop as a whole has general supervision. In either case the teacher corps should be organized with division presiding Teachers in charge of several districts to block Teachers.

Division presiding Teacher, under the direction of the bishopric, assigns a pair of teachers to each district or block in his division. If, for any reason, one or more Teachers in his division cannot perform their work temporarily, he assigns others to this work or assists himself. He should visit with one or another pair of teachers to learn how they do their work and to advise with them as to methods of improvement. He should be a man of initiative of resourcefulness.

(d) CHECKING UP ON WARD TEACHERS:

At least once each week (preferably at ward Priesthood meeting) progress reports on ward teaching should be obtained



either directly from each pair of Teachers, or from the division presiding Teacher. . . .

In some wards roll is called in weekly Priesthood meeting of each pair of Teachers, and in answering one of each pair gives the number of families visited thus far. In others, the division president Teachers submit slips showing the progress made each week. In either case the bishopric is in touch with the progress of this important work. This procedure need not require more than five or six minutes time in weekly Priesthood meetings. . . .

(c) REPORTS FROM WARD TEACHERS:

At the monthly teachers report meeting, to be held near the end of the month, either as a part of the weekly Priesthood meeting or as a separate meeting, report sheets should be turned in by each pair of Teachers, preferably through division presiding Teachers. . . .

(f) RESULTS TO BE EXPECTED

If the ward Teachers are performing their part properly the result obtained will be:

Increased attendance at Sacramental and other meetings.

Greater love and kindness of members for each other.

Increase of faith among members.

Decrease of transgression and trouble.<sup>40</sup>

In the conference of April, 1939, Bishop Joseph L. Wirthlin said: "There is no greater assignment to the Priesthood than watching over the Church."<sup>41</sup> And then to the members of the Church he said:

When these teachers visit our homes they should be received as representatives either of the presidency of the Church, the stake presidency, or the bishop of the ward. They should be regarded as servants of the Lord, receiving every courtesy.<sup>42</sup>

Likewise, while speaking in the conference of October of 1945, Bishop Wirthlin said:

. . . the teacher comes to our door, holding the same priesthood as the President of the Church or the president of the stake, or the bishop of the ward and, being the representative of the Lord, should receive a wholehearted welcome. If we will open our hearts and minds, these men as the instruments of the Lord will feed us the bread of life, and if there ever was a time when we

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<sup>40</sup>Era, XLI (December, 1938), pp. 745-747.

<sup>41</sup>Conference Report, April, 1939, p. 78.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

need divine direction and the bread of life, it is in this day of distraction and difficulty.<sup>43</sup>

In 1945 there was much stressed upon "watching over the Church" always. One message to ward teachers included the following:

It requires only a little thought to know that the Lord expects ward teachers to 'be with and strengthen them' whenever they need strength. . . . Really to 'strengthen them,' we must be 'with them' when they need us. Belated assistance, when the need has passed, excuses not the slothful.<sup>44</sup>

And in the conference of October 1945, Bishop Wirthlin said:

The Lord's delcaration to watch over the Church always entails the responsibility of being willing to visit and be with the Saints whenever necessary, which should eliminate from our thinking that teaching the people requires but one night a month. It might require two nights; it may require three nights it may require as many nights as are necessary to complete the assignment.<sup>45</sup>

Within the same address, Bishop Wirthlin said:

I am sure the time is coming, and it isn't too far distant, when the printed message, which has been placed in your hands and is known as the monthly ward teaching message, may be eliminated entirely, and we shall be back to teaching the people, relying upon the Lord's spirit and making careful, prayerful preparation in order to be fully qualified to carry out the mandate of perfecting the Saints, of bringing them to a unity of the faith through the elimination of iniquity, backbiting, evil speaking, and hardness with each other.<sup>46</sup>

In fulfillment of the above prediction by Bishop Wirthlin, in a little over a year, there appeared the following in The Improvement Era for December of 1946:

Each month for many years past there has appeared, on this page, the Ward Teachers Message for the ensuing month. The

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., October, 1945, pp. 105-106.

<sup>44</sup>Era, XLVIII (January, 1945), 34.

<sup>45</sup>Conference Report, October, 1945, p. 105.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 103.

message has also been printed in leaflet form and supplied for the personal use of ward teachers in making their monthly visits.

Hereafter, there will be no such message appearing on this page, neither will the leaflets be supplied as heretofore.

Ward teachers are now expected to go into the homes of the Saints prepared to teach as the Spirit of the Lord may suggest and as the revelations direct (see D. & C. 20-53-55). This will require some advance preparation and careful thought looking to the individual status and needs of members to be visited. This procedure should go far beyond the limitations which have developed, in many reported instances, by merely reading the leaflets heretofore supplied or leaving the leaflet for the family to read.<sup>47</sup>

#### SUMMARY

A new movement in the priesthood began in 1908. This was what we could call the first priesthood correlation program. Among the changes which took place in the priesthood was a complete reorganization of the function of watching over the Church, which, at that time, came to be known as ward teaching. This took place in 1912.

The new process of ward teaching made all priesthood bearers, with the exception of deacons, susceptible of being called to be ward teachers. It was stated that ward teaching is a calling in the priesthood.

Among the first changes to take place are the following: The stakes were invited to take up an active campaign to improve the function of watching over the Church. A high councilor was to be assigned to aid and advise each ward. The wards were to be organized into districts consisting of about eight families each. Melchizedek Priesthood holders were to be senior companions, and priests were to be the

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<sup>47</sup>Era, XLIX (December, 1946), 813.

junior companions. Members were to be visited at least once a month, and a monthly report meeting was to be held where ward teachers were to submit written reports. The bishops were to supply the teachers with the subjects to discuss with their assigned families. And it was emphasized that the essential element for success in ward teaching was a love for the work.

The new procedure of ward teaching met with immediate success with both ward teachers and their assigned families. However, some of the brethren were still of the opinion that ward teaching belonged to the Aaronic Priesthood. President Joseph F. Smith found the necessity of calling the scoffers to repentance.

By 1914, it was found that good success was had in using the ward teaching bishop's message. In March of 1915, the ward teaching process was given some additional changes. This time teachers as well as priests were to be used as junior companions. The ward was to be divided into districts comprising of six families each instead of eight. Each ward was to be divided, preferably into three divisions with a member of the bishopric in charge of each division. The ward teachers were to be provided with monthly report books, and the reports were to be turned in promptly before the monthly report meeting. These report meetings were to be held early enough so that the bishops could visit the families who were missed. A special night was to be set apart as the ward teaching night. The duties of the teacher "watching over his families," were again emphasized. They were to see who was attending their meetings, what trouble and distress the families were having, and to give the bishops message. This new

procedure was expected to bring increased success in ward teaching, with more members of the Church "doing their duty." The success was noted by President Joseph F. Smith in the October conference of that year.

In that same conference of October 1915, President Smith reiterated the questions which were to be used by the teachers in ascertaining whether or not the families were doing their duties.

David O. McKay, who had been chairman of the correlation committee, in the conference of 1916 enumerated the qualifications of a good ward teacher. He stressed the importance of watching over the Church "always."

Starting in April of 1933 the ward teachers' messages began to be printed in The Improvement Era, and this continued on through to 1946 when it was discontinued.

By 1938, David O. McKay found the necessity of calling the ward teachers to repentance. They were getting so that they only visited once a month, and the visit only entailed reading the bishop's message to the families--hardly really "watching over the Church always" as was intended.

To combat the above problems existing in ward teaching a few new changes were added (April 1938): The districts were to include no more than five families. The ordained teacher was to take care of the statistics, and the Melchizedek Priesthood member was to look into the spiritual and temporal welfare of the families; a new report form was to be used which would include information on whether or not the families were doing their duty.

In 1945 Bishop Wirthlin predicted that the ward teaching message would someday be done away with. And within a year of that time it was done away with. The ward teachers were told to teach by the Spirit, and to really "watch over the Church always."

## Chapter 6

### THE SECOND PHASE OF WARD TEACHING

Starting in January of 1947, the process of ward teaching was reorganized. The following was to be the ward teaching organization for the ward:

The bishop, as presiding authority and the one responsible for the spiritual and temporal welfare of his members, is the chairman. . . . The ward should be divided geographically into three districts, with each area having, if possible, an equal number of families. One member of the bishopric should be assigned to each of the three districts, and he will be directly responsible for ward teaching in his respective district.

To aid in the discharge of this responsibility, three district supervisors should be appointed, with one supervisor to assist each member of the bishopric. The district supervisor should endeavor to relieve the bishopric of as much of the detail work as is possible, following through on personal contacts, assignments, and check-ups.

The appointment of a secretary (assistant ward clerk) completes the organization of the ward committee. The secretary is responsible for the compiling of the ward report on a monthly basis, and to aid the bishopric, the quorums, the ward clerk, and the ward teachers with transfers, new arrivals, and any other information that will be of assistance in coordinating the work.<sup>1</sup>

The following was the new arrangement for stake ward teaching officers:

The stake committee on ward teaching, . . . is composed of the following members: Adviser, (member of the stake presidency); chairman, (member of the high council); three committee members, (selected at large); and the secretary.

One member of the stake presidency should serve as the adviser to the stake committee. He should keep this committee fully

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<sup>1</sup>The Presiding Bishopric, "Ward Teaching" The Improvement Era, L (January, 1947), 109, hereafter cited as Era.

organized and functioning at all times. Through this contact the stake presidency will be fully informed as to the current progress and success of the work, and in turn, the committee will be enlightened as to the desires of the stake presidency.

The chairman of the stake committee on ward teaching should be a member of the high council. He is directly responsible to the stake presidency for the conduct of the ward teaching program in the stake. It is his duty to supervise all the activities of the stake committee on ward teaching.

The three members of the stake committee, selected at large, should assist the chairman in the promotion of the program, accepting such responsibilities as the chairman may see fit to assign.

The appointment of the secretary of the stake committee on ward teaching completes the organization. It is the duty of the secretary to compile and assemble the reports and mail them to the Presiding Bishop's office each month.

The members of the stake committee should visit the wards, giving encouragement, checking to see that ward committees are organized properly, promoting harmony and cooperation between ward and stake committees, and aiding to stimulate the program where it is needed.<sup>2</sup>

The ward was to meet once a month for a ward teachers report meeting. Relative to this meeting, the following statement was made:

. . . This meeting should be held regularly as soon after the last day of the month as possible. The meeting should be of paramount importance to the bishop because it brings to him an account of the temporal and spiritual conditions of the ward membership, and will aid in planning for their individual and collective needs. Furthermore, it offers a real opportunity to stimulate ward teachers by teaching them the fundamentals of improved ward teaching.<sup>3</sup>

The stake committee on ward teaching was to meet once each month for discussion, and making of assignments.<sup>4</sup> For the ward organization the bishoprics responsibilities were clearly defined in these terms:

It is the duty of the bishopric to select and appoint the best qualified members of the Melchizedek Priesthood to do ward teaching. To assist in this important work, all worthy priests and teachers

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<sup>2</sup>Era, L (February, 1947), 109.

<sup>3</sup>Era, L (April, 1947), 109.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.



should be called into service.<sup>5</sup>

In the Era of August 1948, the members of the Church were told:

. . . . The Lord fully intended there should be cooperation from the family. Without it maximum results are not obtained. The revelation concerning the duties of the teachers is based upon "watching over" and "being with" the members. How could either be accomplished without the teacher's being admitted to the home in the spirit of friendliness and good will. The attitude in which the teacher is received into the home, will, to a large extent, determine the measure of his success. . . .<sup>6</sup>

Ward teaching has been aptly compared to the circulatory system:

Ward Teaching is as vital to the strengthening of the body of the Church as the circulatory system is to the human body. The perfectly organized circulatory system works unceasingly to penetrate and reach every organ and member of the human body. Through this medium all parts of the body may be nourished, purified, and strengthened. Perfect functioning of the body then, is dependent upon efficient circulation which reaches every member or organ of the body.

Ward teaching parallels, in function, the circulatory system of the human body. The divine injunction, "to watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them," is given directly to teachers. (D. & C. 20:53) In order to do this, ward teachers should circulate among the members of the Church with the intention of reaching every member residing in an assigned district. . . .

The body of the Church, like the human body, fails to function properly unless each member is spiritually alive and contributing to the Church by participating in some form of activity. If even one member dies spiritually, the Church is weakened, and, like the human body, there is danger of that influence being extended to others.<sup>7</sup>

By 1950, it was understood that:

. . . the ward teacher is an agent for each priesthood quorum and ward auxiliary. It is his responsibility to admonish high priests, seventies, elders, priests, teachers, and deacons to participate in priesthood activities and to live in compliance with

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.           <sup>6</sup>Era, LI (August, 1948), 521.

<sup>7</sup>Era, LII (April, 1949), 236.

the laws and ordinances of the gospel. It is his responsibility to encourage his people to attend auxiliary organizations and classes set up for their respective ages. He is interested in the entire Church program for all those entrusted to his care.<sup>8</sup>

Over the early 1950's the duties of ward teachers were reiterated through the medium of the Era and the Church News. The 1916 Conference talk on ward teaching by David O. McKay was also again published.<sup>9</sup>

In 1952 a study guide was issued to ward teachers. The topic of study for each month was also included in The Improvement Era.<sup>10</sup> These study guides included the topics which ward teachers were to discuss and study with their assigned families. Along with the Study Guide, the Leaders Handbook for ward teaching was also published in 1952.

The subject of ward teaching was again taken up by President McKay in the April conference of 1956. The President reminisced about the days of ward teaching in his childhood:

One day, when my brother and I were in our teens, we were ready to leave the barnyard and go out to the field for a load of hay. Father came out, shut the gate behind him, and then looking towards the sidewalk, saw two men coming towards the house. He recognized them as ward teachers. "Al" Sprague and Eli Trace. He said, "Boys, there are the ward teachers; tie up your team and come into the house." Though we demurred, we obeyed. Seated as a family, we heard our father say, "Now brethren, we are in your hands."

I give you the picture. Now I give you what the teacher said: he started with my father, who was the Bishop of the Ward, and asked him if he was doing his duty; if he was living in harmony with his neighbors; if he was sustaining the authorities. He asked

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<sup>8</sup>Era, LIII (December, 1950), 1039

<sup>9</sup>Era, LV (May, 1952), 356-359.

<sup>10</sup>Era, LIII (February, 1965), 114.

Mother questions about her duty, and he went from the parents to each child who sat around in that meeting.

Those teachers emphasized one part of their duty. First, Father submitted himself to them, for they came as his representatives and would be in every house. Their duty was to see that "each member does his duty." Now that takes tact and some of you say for teachers so to question the people gives offense. I grant you all that, and I am not going to discuss it. But the Lord has asked you to do just that thing. How you do it, the inspiration of the Lord must be prompt.<sup>11</sup>

President McKay then gave further examples of good ward teaching, and said:

Now tonight I should like to emphasize another phase of ward teaching--"watching over the Church always."

The teacher's duty is not performed when he goes only once a month to each house.<sup>12</sup>

Next, the President encouraged the ward teachers, that in:

. . . some way, wherever they are going, get in their company, get their confidence, take a hold of their arm--"watch over them always."

Those two things we can do, in addition to what the bishoprics are now asking you to do: teach them their duty, watch over them always and see that they attend to their meetings.<sup>13</sup>

During the late 1950's and early 1960's much instruction was given to reshape the ward teaching program. In May of 1956, the bishops were cautioned not to delegate authority for the choosing of ward teachers. They were told that it was their responsibility, and it was not to be delegated out.<sup>14</sup> A few wards were classifying too many of their families as non-accessible to ward teachers. Therefore,

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<sup>11</sup>David O. McKay, General Conference Address, Official Report of the One Hundred Twenty Seventh Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 6, 1956 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d.), p. 86.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>The Messenger (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, May, 1956), hereafter cited as Messenger.

a new definition was made of what could properly be called non-accessible.<sup>15</sup> Ward teachers were also advised not to "engage in selling or collecting while doing their teaching."<sup>16</sup> In May of 1957, the bishops were instructed that it was their duty to train the ward teachers.<sup>17</sup>

Ward teaching incorporated a new feature in July of 1957, which is shown in the following:

. . . a new feature in the promotion of effective ward teaching which began in the Improvement Era for July, 1957 and which will appear each month in the future.

In addition to the study guide published on the Presiding Bishopric's Page, as an aid to ward teachers, a special article prepared by one of the General Authorities of the Church will be published.

It is hoped that the stimulating message of each of our leaders will be faithfully read and discussed by each Latter-day family.<sup>18</sup>

In May of 1957, direction was given that telephone calls were not to be recorded as ward teaching visits." Although: "There can be no objection to telephone calls by ward teachers . . . such calls are not visits."<sup>19</sup>

When families first move into a ward the ward teachers were asked to visit them regardless of whether or not their records were yet in their new ward.<sup>20</sup>

It had been reported that some bishops were assigning senior Aaronic Priesthood holders to be ward teachers ". . . before they are fully prepared for this responsibility."<sup>21</sup> Bishops were asked to be

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<sup>15</sup>Messenger, June, 1956.

<sup>16</sup>Messenger, May, 1957.

<sup>17</sup>Messenger, September, 1957.

<sup>18</sup>Messenger, September, 1957.

<sup>19</sup>Messenger, November, 1957.

<sup>20</sup>Messenger, May, 1958.

<sup>21</sup>Messenger, October, 1958.

sure that the potential ward teacher was both worthy and prepared.

Double credit was not to be taken for two visits during one month, nor one visit towards the first or end of the month to count for a delinquent month. Teachers were told the: "Visits must be made during the appropriate month to be counted."<sup>22</sup>

It had been reported that wives were sometimes accompanying their husbands on ward teaching visits. Teachers were told: "This practice is clearly inconsistent with the order of the Church. Ward teaching is a function that has been specifically set aside for the Priesthood to fulfill."<sup>23</sup>

#### SUMMARY

The ward teaching process was again reorganized in January of 1947. By this time much of what was left to the discretion of the local authorities was eliminated. Both the stakes and the wards were to have ward teaching committees. Each stake was to have a chairman and three committee members, a member of the stake presidency was to serve as advisor to the committee. In the ward, the bishop was to be chairman, and the ward was to be divided into three districts, having one member of the bishopric in charge of each. Each district was also to have a district supervisor who was to work with a member of the bishopric in the discharge of ward teaching responsibilities. Both stakes and wards were to have committee secretaries, and both were to have a committee meeting once a month.

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<sup>22</sup>Messenger, July, 1960.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

Over the early 1950's the duties of the ward teachers were reiterated through the medium of the Era and the Church News.

In 1952, a study guide was issued to ward teachers. The topic of discussion for the month was also included in the Improvement Era. A handbook for leaders was also issued in 1952.

During the late 1950's and early 1960's much instruction was given to reshape the ward teaching program. Policies were established on such items as who should ward teach and teachers collecting funds.

## Chapter 7

### THE CHURCH CORRELATION PROGRAM,

#### A TIME FOR REFORM

In 1882, President John Taylor received a revelation in which the Lord stated:

Let the Presidency of my Church be one in all things; and let the Twelve also be one in all things; and let them all be one with me as I am one with the Father. . . .

And let the Presidents of Stakes also purify themselves, and the Priesthood and people of the Stakes over which they preside, and organize the Priesthood in their various Stakes according to my law, in all the various departments thereof, in the High Councils, in the Elders Quorums, and in the Bishops and their Councils, and in the Quorums of Priests, Teachers and Deacons; that every Quorum may be fully organized according to the order of my Church; and, then, let them inquire into the standing and fellowship of all that hold my Holy Priesthood in their several Stakes; and if they find those that are unworthy let them remove them, except they repent; for my Priesthood, whom I have called and whom I have sustained and honored, shall honor me and obey my laws, and the laws of my Holy Priesthood, or they shall not be considered worthy to hold my Priesthood, saith the Lord. And let my Priesthood humble themselves before me, and seek not their own will but my will; for if my Priesthood whom I have chosen, and called, and endowed with the spirit and gifts of their several callings, and with the powers thereof, do not acknowledge me I will not acknowledge them, saith the Lord; for I will be honored and obeyed by my Priesthood. And, then, I call upon my Priesthood, and upon all of my people to repent of all their sins and shortcomings, of their covetousness and pride and self will, and of all their iniquities wherein they sin against me; and to seek with all humility to fulfill my law, as my Priesthood, my Saints, and my people; and I call upon the heads of families to put their houses in order according to the law of God, and attend to the various duties and responsibilities associated therewith, and to purify themselves before me, and to purge out iniquity from their households. And I will bless and be with you, saith the Lord; and ye shall gather together in your holy places wherein ye assemble to call upon me, and ye shall ask for such things as are right, and I will hear your prayers, and my Spirit and power shall be with you, and my blessing shall rest upon you, upon your families, and your dwellings and your households, upon your flocks and herds and fields, your orchards and

vineyards, and upon all that pertains to you; and you shall be my people and I will be your God; and your enemies shall not have power nor dominion over you; for my word shall go forth, and my work shall be accomplished, and my Zion shall be established, and my rule and my power and my dominion shall prevail among my people, and all nations shall yet acknowledge me. Even so, Amen.<sup>1</sup>

As may well be seen in the above revelation, the Lord fully intended to get the Priesthood organized "according to the order of my Church." "For," He said: "I will be honored and obeyed by my Priesthood." And then he gave the commandment: ". . . seek with all humility to fulfill my law, as my priesthood, my saints, and my people; and I call upon the heads of families to put their houses in order according to the law of God. . . ." <sup>2</sup>

But, the Saints were then undergoing severe persecution because of their belief in polygamy. Many of the leaders were forced to go underground to avoid imprisonment. And thus the Priesthood was not fully organized at that time. But the revelation still remained in force. It was not until the Saints were freed from this persecution, and were back on their feet that the opportunity was provided to fulfill the revelation.

Thus, in 1908, what we might call the first Priesthood Correlation Committee was organized. And, as stated in Chapter 5, the following recommendations were made and approved, viz.: The main stress of the new program was to organize the priesthood with all its necessary functions. The proper age for ordinations in the Aaronic Priesthood was decided upon; Priesthood meeting was to be held regularly on every

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<sup>1</sup>James R. Clark, Messages of The First Presidency (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), II, pp. 348-349.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



Monday; and a course of study was outlined for the various priesthood quorums. It was suggested that special priesthood stake conferences be held three times a year, and a general authority preside at every conference. As also mentioned in Chapter 5, it was during this time (1912) that the ward teaching process got its initial thrust.

The Committee's report of April, 1912, stated:

There are 9,300 Teachers, 20,255 Deacons. In sixty seven wards there is only one ordained Teacher and in twenty-one not one Priest. In slightly over one third of the wards there is only one-half of a quorum of teachers, and in fifty wards there is half of a priests quorum or more. . . . We have failed to live up to the Lord's plan.<sup>3</sup>

These are among the reasons that in the revelation to John Taylor the Lord said:

And let the Presidents of Stakes also purify themselves, and the Priesthood and people of the Stakes over which they preside, and organize the Priesthood in their various Stakes according to my law, in all the various departments thereof, in the High Councils, in the Elders Quorums, and in the Bishops and their Councils, and in the Quorums of Priests, Teachers and Deacons; that every Quorum may be fully organized according to the order of my Church.  
 . . .<sup>4</sup>

Because of the new programs initiated at this time, it was not long before the above deficiencies enumerated by the Committee were corrected.<sup>5</sup> And because of the Committee's work further programs were initiated to bring more order to the priesthood and less duplication of materials for priesthood classes. This program continued until 1922 when it was decided that the job was done and the Committee's

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<sup>3</sup>"Aaronic Priesthood," The Improvement Era, XV (May, 1912), 637.

<sup>4</sup>Clark, op. cit.

<sup>5</sup>Jerry "J" Rose, "The Correlation Program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints During The Twentieth Century," (unpublished Masters thesis, Brigham Young University, 1973), p. 14.

services were no longer needed.<sup>6</sup>

Further attempts were made at correlation from 1922 through 1960; however, most of the work at correlating was made by the General Authorities without calling any particular committee.

But, by 1960:

. . . a person was living under six jurisdictions. The story was told of one fourteen year old boy who had four swimming parties arranged for him in one week, each by a different organization of the Church, vis, Teachers Quorum, Sunday School, MIA, Seminary. There was a definite need for some correlation of program and activities.<sup>7</sup>

On March 24, 1960, a letter was sent from the First Presidency to the General Priesthood Committee, which read:

We of the First Presidency have over the years felt the need of a correlation between and among the courses of study put out by the General Priesthood Committee and by the responsible heads of the other committees of the General Authorities for the instruction of the priesthood of the Church.<sup>8</sup>

The letter also stated that there was a need for further correlation of the Auxiliaries in the Church:

. . . We feel assured that if the whole Church curricula were viewed from the vantage point of what we might term the total purpose of each and all of these organizations, it would bring about such a collation and limitation of subjects and subject matters elaborated in the various Auxiliaries themselves in the matter of carrying out the purpose lying behind their creation and function.

We would therefore commend to you brethren of The General Priesthood Committee the beginning of an exhaustive, prayerful study and consideration of this entire subject, with the co-operative assistance of the Auxiliaries themselves so that the Church might reap the maximum harvest from the devotion of

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 15-22.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 70-71.

<sup>8</sup>Harold B. Lee, General Conference Address, Official Report of the One Hundred Thirty-Third Annual General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 6, 1963 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d.), p. 82, hereafter cited as Conference Report.

the faith, intelligence, skill and knowledge of our various Auxiliary Organizations and Priesthood Committees.

This is your authority to employ such necessary technical help as you might need to bring this about. We shall await your report.<sup>9</sup>

Elder Harold B. Lee, who became Chairman of the Priesthood Correlation Committee, said: "What a soul-searching assignment that was."<sup>10</sup> Elder Lee continued:

In that same letter they called attention to the fact that the membership of the Church might be divided into three groups: the children's group, under 12 years of age; the youth group, from 12 to the 20's and the adults, from the youth group on through life.

That is what set us to a study of this whole plan that we now speak of as correlation.<sup>11</sup>

Elder Lee stated that it was significant that such a correlation program as this should come under the direction of President McKay: that President McKay had been chairman of the General Priesthood Committee when a like study was conducted about forty years ago.<sup>12</sup> A study by the priesthood correlation committee was made in 1920, and then again in 1938. And so, as Elder Lee stated: "This means that for a matter of forty years at least, this subject of correlation has been close to the President's mind and in his thoughts as something very essential and desirable."<sup>13</sup> Elder Lee said:

I found an apt illustration which illustrates the importance of this periodical re-examination and re-appraisal. In history there is found recorded the account of a famed debate known as the Webster-Hayne Debate in Congress in which Daniel Webster made this statement that seems to apply to the point I want to make. Said

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 82-83.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>11</sup> Conference Report, September 30, 1967, p. 67.

<sup>12</sup> Conference Report, October, 1961, p. 83.

<sup>13</sup> Conference Report, April 6, 1963, p. 83.

Daniel Webster:

"Mr. President, when the mariner has been tossed about for many days in thick weather on an unknown sea, he naturally avails himself of the first pause in the storm, the earliest glance of the sun to take his latitude and ascertain how far the elements have driven him from his true course. Let us imitate this prudence and before we float on the waves of this debate refer to the point from which we departed, that we may at least be able to conjecture where we now are."<sup>14</sup>

And then:

Paraphrasing the words of Webster: "We are to again see how far we have departed from the true course that we may at least conjecture where we now are."<sup>15</sup>

Concerning the present study, Elder Lee said:

The key to the whole correlation movement, . . . is set forth in this statement made by the Presidency a few years ago. I quote:

"The home is the basis of a righteous life and no other instrumentality can take its place nor fulfill its essential functions; the utmost the auxiliaries can do is to aid the home in its problems, giving special aid and succor where such is necessary, that in aiding the home the auxiliaries may well consider thinking of home-life of the people as having three periods, the first from birth to twelve years of age or the childhood period; then the youth period from twelve years up to the early twenties; and then adulthood, from the early twenties on to the end of life."<sup>16</sup>

In the October conference of 1961, when this correlation program was first introduced to the Church, Elder Lee said:

With that as the key and the letter given from the First Presidency as the blueprint, it is the feeling now of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve, after reviewing these studies, that there should be presently more coordination and correlation between the activities and programs of the various priesthood quorums and auxiliary organizations and the educational system of the Church. They have decided, therefore, that there should be established an all-Church co-ordinating council and three co-ordinating committees: one for the children, one for the youth, and one for adults. This council and the three committees will correlate all auxiliaries and priesthood quorums which the

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<sup>14</sup>Conference Report, October, 1961, p. 78.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Conference Report, April 6, 1963, p. 82.

brethren have now suggested should include missionary instructions and activities for the entire Church.<sup>17</sup>

There also enters another key into the correlation program, as stated by Elder Lee:

President McKay gave us the key to our search for what we should do in these matters. In discussing a matter pertaining to the missions, he said this: "Now in changing our policy here, let us keep as near as we can to the revelations of the Lord, and we will never be wrong if we do that. . . ."<sup>17</sup>

That injunction from the President took us into a study of all that the Lord has said about the place of the priesthood and how it should operate in the kingdom.<sup>18</sup>

With that injunction, Elder Lee introduced the Church correlation program:

I should like to introduce the thoughts which I shall express by reading a text that to me has particular significance. I quote from the words of the Apostle Paul, speaking of the different organizations of the Church within what he called "the body of Christ," by which he meant the Church:

"For the body is not one member, but many.

"If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body?

"And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

"But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. . . .

"But now are they many members, yet but one body.

"And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. . . .

". . . but God hath tempered the body together, . . . .

"That there should be no schism in the body: but that the members should have the same care one for another. . . .

"And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, . . . then . . . helps [and] governments. . . ." (See 1 Cor. 12:14-28)

In the great, modern-day revelation on Church government, the Lord concludes with this statement:

"Behold, this is the way that mine apostles, in ancient days, built up my church unto me.

"Therefore, let every man stand in his own office, and labor

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<sup>17</sup> Conference Report, October, 1961, p. 77.

<sup>18</sup> Conference Report, September 30, 1967, p. 101.

in his own calling; and let not the head say unto the feet it hath no need of the feet; for without the feet how shall the body be able to stand?

"Also the body hath need of every member, that all may be edified together, that the system may be kept perfect." (D&C 84:108-110)

Obviously, as you think about those scriptures, they were given to impress the need for the consistent and continued consultations and correlations of the various subdivisions, the priesthood quorums and the auxiliaries and all other units within the kingdom of God for at least four reasons:

First, that each organization was to have its specific function, and it was not to usurp the field of the other, which would be like the eye saying to the hand, "I have no need of thee."

Second, that each sub-division is of equal importance in the work of salvation, just as each part of the physical body is essential to a complete human being.

Third, that all may be edified or educated together; and

Fourth, that the system may be kept perfect, or in other words, that within the framework of the Lord's plan of organization for the salvation of his children, the Church will perform as a perfectly organized human body, with every member functioning as it was intended.<sup>19</sup>

In their studies on the correlation work, Elder Lee said:

. . . President Joseph F. Smith seems to have visioned the time when the priesthood would do much more than it has been doing. In his opening address at the April conference of 1906, he said:

"We expect to see the day, if we live long enough (and if some of us do not live long enough to see it, there are others who will), when every council of the priesthood in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will understand its duty; will assume its own responsibility, will magnify its calling, and fill its place in the Church, to the uttermost, according to the intelligence and ability possessed by it. When that day shall come there will not be so much necessity for work that is now being done by the auxiliary organizations, because it will be done by the regular quorums of the priesthood. . . ."20

Perhaps it may be wondered why the brethren were requested to stay close to the scriptures, and why the Lord did not come forth with a completely new revelation upon the subject of priesthood correlation.

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<sup>19</sup> Conference Report, October, 1961, p. 79.

<sup>20</sup> Conference Report, October, 6, 1962, p. 77.

With this in mind, the reader is reminded of the statement of Joseph Smith: "We never inquire at the hand of God for special revelation only in case of there being no previous revelation to suit the case.

. . . "21

Speaking about the divine revelation given in the correlation program, Elder Lee has said:

President McKay, as I now come to announce the first tangible step forward that the Church will see on a church-wide basis, I am reminded of something you said when you came to the first regional meeting of the church welfare plan held in 1936 down in the old Pioneer Stake Hall where all the stake presidents of this area were called together. You sat through an hour or two of what must have been somewhat of a painful discussion of the details of beginning this far-reaching new welfare movement. You asked no questions, you made no comment, but at the conclusion you made this statement in something of a parable which I should like to apply tonight to this correlation movement.

"An engineer pulled his train into a station one dark and stormy night, and while the engineer was out oiling his engine and getting ready for the next run, a timid passenger left his place in the train and walked up to the engineer and asked, 'Aren't you afraid to pull your train out into the dark tonight, raining and storming like it is?' Without looking up, the engineer replied, 'I am not pulling my engine out into the dark tonight.' 'Why,' said the passenger, 'it's pitch dark outside the lights of the station. I should think that with the responsibility of these four or five hundred passengers depending upon your handling of the train, you would be a nervous wreck.'

'For an answer the engineer pointed up to the bright headlight and he said, 'Do you see that light up there? That throws out an intense white light a thousand yards ahead on the track. When I pull out of the station tonight, I will be running my engine only to the first circle of that light, a thousand yards away, and when I get to the outer circle of that light it will still be out another thousand yards in front of me. All through this dark night I will not be running in one foot of darkness all the way.'

Then President McKay said, 'Now brethren, the first goal of this welfare program is October 1936, the first harvest time. That is the first circle of light. And when we get to October, the light will be out ahead of us, and I can promise you one thing, that all through this night of uncertainty when we are trying to establish

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<sup>21</sup> Joseph Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1961), I, p. 339.

the security of our people in a temporal way, this Church will be running in light of the revelations that come from God, all the way."<sup>22</sup>

Going to the edge of the light can be seen in the following statement by Elder Lee:

When we made our first preliminary report, which we have done step by step as we have advanced since that first assignment, President McKay said in a meeting with the Presidency and the Council of the Twelve. 'This is in the right direction, and should go forward.' Encouraged by that, then, we took the next step.<sup>23</sup>

The first step in the correlation program was the creation of an all-Church coordinating council, which was announced in October of 1961, viz:

. . . The all-Church co-ordinating council will be composed of a chairman, who will be one of the Council of the Twelve, and three General Authorities, all of whom will be members of the twelve: one representing the children, one representing youth, and one representing the adults, and a secretary. The three General Authorities will be the chairmen of their respective committees. There will be a secretary and secretaries from each of the co-ordinating committees, the presiding Bishop, a member of the Melchizedek Priesthood committee, an executive of the Church educational system, the president of superintendent of the following auxiliaries: Relief Society, Sunday School, YMMIA, YWMLA, and the Primary Association.

The function of the all-Church coordinating council is to formulate policy which will govern the planning, the writing, co-ordination, and implementation of the entire Church curriculum.<sup>24</sup>

Elder Lee said:

In the adoption of such a program, we may possibly and hopefully look forward to the consolidation and simplification of church curricula, church publications, church buildings, church meetings, and many other important aspects of the Lord's work.<sup>25</sup>

Elder Richard L. Evans said that it had been designed by the

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<sup>22</sup> Conference Report, October 6, 1962, pp. 79-80.

<sup>23</sup> Conference Report, April 6, 1963, p. 83.

<sup>24</sup> Conference Report, October, 1961, p. 80.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



Correlation Committee, and approved by the First Presidency: "That the gospel be taught as completely as possible at least three times during these three age levels of Life: Children, youth, and adults."<sup>26</sup>

And, in further explaining the program, he said:

In general, it is proposed to preserve the traditions, names, influence, experience, objectives, and activities of the various organizations, but all to be directed through the priesthood and co-ordinated not only at the level of the General Authorities and general board, but co-ordinated through the stake presidencies in the stakes and through the bishoprics in the wards, in a way whereby competition and inadvertent duplication will be avoided, and in such a way that each young woman and each young man will grow up with an opportunity to know what he needs to know, and to do what he needs to do, without overloading him or pulling him two ways at once.<sup>27</sup>

The next step, which was announced in the October conference of 1962, was the creation of a program of priesthood correlation, as outlined by Elder Marion G. Romney: "Through a program of priesthood correlation, we bearers of the priesthood must increase our efforts to encourage, teach, and inspire the Saints to become 'partakers of the divine nature. . . .'"<sup>28</sup>

He said that priesthood correlation contemplates all that is now being done in ward teaching, and much more. It was to include: visiting every family by two priesthood bearers; building spiritual and temporal strength in Melchizedek Priesthood bearers; working with inactive priesthood bearers; fellowshiping new converts, and encouraging parents to do their duty in teaching their children the gospel.<sup>29</sup>

Elder Harold B. Lee mentioned that:

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<sup>26</sup>Conference Report, October 6, 1962, p. 74.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., pp. 74-75.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 78.

At the conferences during the last half of the year, attended by general authorities, the priesthood correlation or the enlargement of ward teaching as Elder Romney has explained it . . . will be stressed.<sup>30</sup>

More on the above priesthood correlation program (home teaching as we know it today) will be discussed, including the above mentioned address by Elder Romney in Chapter 10.

Elder Marion G. Romney said in relation to the correlation program:

. . . fourteen representative stakes were selected and since then have been experimenting with programs which they themselves have developed within certain prescribed guidelines. . . . The results have been most encouraging.

. . . It is anticipated that a program will be perfected, approved, and presented at stake conferences to each stake in the Church during the last of 1963, with the program to go into operation throughout the Church in January, 1964.<sup>31</sup>

It is all together fitting that we should end this chapter with the statement of President David O. McKay:

While Elder Lee and the other members of the twelve were presenting the outline of the great correlation work now in preparation, a passage of scripture came to my mind, which I shall quote, if I can, which will summarize the purpose of all this work:

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors, and teachers;

"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. . . ." (Eph. 4:11-13)

That is what these brethren have in mind. That is what you brethren of the priesthood, assembled in these vast congregations tonight, have in mind, because you are servants of the Most High, and he has given you the responsibility of perfecting the Saints, of working in the ministry, for edifying the Saints of God, and the object is the perfecting of the individual.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

## SUMMARY

In 1882 the Lord gave a revelation through President John Taylor in which instructions were given to organize the priesthood according to the "order of the Church." But, due to the severe persecution the Saints were then undergoing because of their belief in polygamy, compliance was postponed until the Saints were freed from this persecution.

By 1908 the Saints were living in more prosperous times. At that time the first presidency called what we could call the first priesthood correlation committee into action. From the report of this committee, it was found that much work was needed to get the priesthood back into its proper "order." Within a matter of time the appropriate recommendations were made and acted upon. And, at that time, the priesthood was again re-aligned according to the revelations of the Lord. This first period of correlation lasted until 1922 when the job was completed.

As time went on there again came a need for priesthood correlation. This was in the 1960's. Therefore, in the beginning of 1960, the First Presidency appointed the Twelve the responsibility of getting the priesthood back in its proper order. This was to prove to be the time when all Church organizations would be brought under the priesthood. President Joseph F. Smith prophesied that the time would some day come when the priesthood would assume its full responsibility in regard to this matter.

Two important keys were used in the new correlation program. One key stipulated that: "The home is the basis of a righteous life

and no other instrumentality can take its place nor fulfill its essential functions;" all the auxiliaries can do is to aid the home. The home life was divided into three periods: childhood, youth, and adult. The second key called for using the scriptures when making changes in the programs.

With the above injunctions in mind the correlation committee set about to organize all the auxiliaries under the priesthood, and to co-ordinate all programs so that there would be no duplication; and so that the gospel would be taught three times in each period of a persons life, viz., childhood, youth, and adult.

In 1962 another step was added by the correlation committee, that of priesthood correlation, or, as we know it today, home teaching. This function was to do much more than ward teaching, it was to see that the Saints did their whole duty in respect to living the gospel in their homes.

The correlation program continues to this day to incorporate more and more steps in getting the priesthood in to its proper order, as the Lord intended. The goal of the correlation program, as stated by President McKay, is to perfect the Saints by perfecting the individual.

From this initial phase of Church correlation, we now move into one of the functions that came under the correlation program, that of home teaching, in 1962, known as priesthood correlation.

## Chapter 8

### PRIESTHOOD HOME TEACHING IN THE PILOT STAGE

As explained in the last chapter, Elder Marion G. Romney, in the conference of October, 1962, said that fourteen representative stakes had been chosen, and had been experimenting, within prescribed guidelines, with new programs. He also mentioned that the results of these experiments were encouraging, and that it was anticipated that the programs would be perfected to the extent that they could be introduced to the Church in the last half of 1963, and be put into operation starting in January of 1964.<sup>1</sup>

One of these fourteen representative stakes chosen to experiment with new programs was Emigration Stake in Salt Lake City. This stake became, as it will be evidenced throughout this chapter, the pioneer of the pilot stakes in trying out the home teaching function. Therefore, a close examination of the Emigration Stake minutes will be made throughout this chapter.

On April 17, 1961, the Emigration Stake President informed the High Council of his having been called, along with thirteen other stake presidents, to the office of Elder Mark E. Petersen. There "a number of the brethren outlined a proposed 'Priesthood

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<sup>1</sup>Marion G. Romney, General Conference Address, Official Report of the One Hundred Thirty-Second Semi Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 6, 1962 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d.), p. 77, hereafter cited as Conference Report.

Correlation Program.' The purpose of the program is to improve the type and broaden the scope of the present ward teaching program."<sup>2</sup>

Many aspects of the process were discussed, and the stake president asked for suggestions concerning "watchmen" assignments.

"It was suggested that 'watchmen' be called 'visitors' and that they be assigned to contact members of their own quorums."<sup>3</sup> It was also decided that the target date for starting the program would be June 1, 1961.<sup>4</sup>

More concerning the priesthood correlation (home teaching) process was discussed on the 24th of April. Within the discussion ". . . it was suggested that instead of 'Watchmen' being used for these visitors the name 'Guardian', 'Shepherd' or 'Correlator' be used."<sup>5</sup>

On the 30th of April the process was introduced to the Emigration Stake bishops. It was mentioned that the wards were achieving a high percentage of ward teaching, but that, in many cases, these were just visits and the quality needed to be improved. It was felt that the new process would help in this respect.<sup>6</sup>

Further discussion was held in the ensuing days in preparation for presentation to the priesthood on May 8th. So, on the 8th of May, the "Priesthood Correlation Program" was presented to the priesthood

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<sup>2</sup>Minutes of the Emigration Stake High Council Meetings, pt. I, April 17, 1961, located in the LDS Church Historical Department, Salt Lake City, hereafter cited as Em. Minutes.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.      <sup>4</sup>Ibid.      <sup>5</sup>Em. Minutes, April 24, 1961.

<sup>6</sup>Em. Minutes, April 20, 1961.

of the Emigration Stake. By this time the name of "Watchmen" was pretty well settled upon.<sup>7</sup>

In introducing the process to the priesthood, the stake president said that all priesthood holders were to be bishop's counselors in effect. The Stake Ward Teaching Supervisor said "that we should feel that we have adopted these families as our own and if approached with this attitude and spirit they feel this also."<sup>8</sup>

On the 15th of May the final details of the priesthood correlation process were discussed.<sup>9</sup> And in the high council meeting of May 22nd, the stake president announced that Elder Marion G. Romney would be present at the general stake priesthood meeting of the 29th to assist in presenting the priesthood correlation program as outlined by the General Authorities to the priesthood of the stake.<sup>10</sup>

By the 19th of June, the priesthood correlation process was being referred to as the "family teaching program."<sup>11</sup>

In the high council meeting of September 11, the stake president announced:

. . . that a meeting had been called by the General Authorities on September 29th for stakes to report on their progress in the Family Visiting Program. He asked for comments on problems and suggestions that could be presented at that time. During the meeting it was brought out that more coordination was needed between leaders, quorums and auxiliaries and that there were numerous problems in reporting.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Em. Minutes, May 8, 1961.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Em. Minutes, May 15, 1961.

<sup>10</sup>Em. Minutes, May, 22, 1961.

<sup>11</sup>Em. Minutes, June 19, 1961.

<sup>12</sup>Em. Minutes, September 11, 1961.

On the 18th of September, the stake president:

Reported that during the General Conference just passed a meeting was held for General Authorities and presidents of stakes who are working out the new family teaching program. Stake presidents were urged to give more time and attention to this program. It was felt that it would be one more year before this program would be introduced to the Church in general.<sup>13</sup>

The report on the meeting of September 29th with the General Authorities was given by the Emigration Stake, President on October 9th:

He said the presiding brethern had decided that these 14 stakes should continue the program through 1962 before they would decide on a plan for the entire church. Also, the brethern concluded that the program must remain under the jurisdiction of the bishops rather than under the priesthood quorums. Prior to next April General Conference the fourteen stake presidents must submit a full set of statistics covering church activity for six months prior to the institution of the family teaching program and a similar set covering the same activities for the six months immediately following. Permission was given authorizing use of a complete priesthood meeting each month, if necessary, for the family teaching, preparation and report meetings.<sup>14</sup>

In the high council meeting of October 23rd, it was suggested that "by January 1, 1962, a booklet be distributed to family teachers showing specific instructions and duties of family teachers and ward and stake committees on family teaching."<sup>15</sup>

Therefore, in the next high council meeting the stake president said that a handbook of instructions for family teachers would be ready by the first of the year.<sup>16</sup>

The handbook was prepared and discussed in the high council meeting of December 4th. Following is a brief synopsis of that booklet:

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<sup>13</sup>Em. Minutes, September 18, 1961.

<sup>14</sup>Em. Minutes, October 9, 1961.

<sup>15</sup>Em. Minutes, October 23, 1961.

<sup>16</sup>Em. Minutes, November 6, 1961.



Family Teaching now correlates into one united undertaking many activities. Family Teaching involves working constantly with the members and means much more than making a visit once a month to the home. It includes the following activities:

1. Periodic visits to the family (formerly ward teaching).
2. Labors with Melchizedek Priesthood bearers to build spiritual and temporal strength.
3. Visiting and laboring with inactive or over-age members of the Aaronic Priesthood under 21.
4. Visiting and laboring with senior members of the Aaronic Priesthood to activate and assimilate them and their families.
5. Fellowshiping new converts into ward activities.
6. Seeing that all members are active and that each does his duty at home and in the church. . . .

Work of Family Teachers does not relieve auxiliary officers and teachers and others of their responsibility for working with members of the church. However, all reactivation visits should be correlated through the family teachers to avoid overlapping and duplication of effort. . . .<sup>17</sup>

The handbook also detailed the following:

Family Teachers are ambassadors for the Bishopric, for the Priesthood quorum, and--insofar as leaders of the auxiliaries may desire--for the auxiliary organizations.

Family teaching provides a two-way communication system, through which information moves from leaders to the homes, and from the homes to the appropriate leaders.<sup>18</sup>

The stake committee on family teaching included a chairman, who was a member of the high council, a high councilman who was assigned to work with each ward, and a secretary.<sup>19</sup>

The ward organization included the bishop, who was chairman, and who was responsible for the Aaronic Priesthood in the family teaching program, his first counselor who was responsible for the high priests and seventies, and his second counselor who was responsible for the elders. The ward family teaching committee included the bishopric, Melchizedek Priesthood quorum leaders, Aaronic Priesthood

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<sup>17</sup> Family Teaching Handbook (Salt Lake City: Emigration Stake, January 1, 1961), p. 1, copy located in LDS Church Historical Department.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

advisors, and a secretary.<sup>20</sup>

The bishop's responsibilities included: approving the calling of family teachers and their assignments, conducting confidential interviews with teachers who have delicate matters to report, calling and presiding at family teaching committee training and report meetings.

Each Melchizedek Priesthood quorum president or group leader automatically became the family teaching supervisor for the division encompassing his quorum. The elders were to be divided into two divisions, with one division under the direction of the quorum president, and the other under the direction of a counselor in the presidency.

The objective for the Family Teachers was to: "bring those to whom they are assigned into faithful observance of all gospel standards and the performance of their full duty in the Church."<sup>21</sup>

As far as was possible, each quorum was to be responsible for the family teaching of their own members. And no special message was to be provided. Rather, from a list of suggestions included in the booklet, the "teachers" were to choose those topics for discussion which met the individual needs of their families.<sup>22</sup>

The visits were to be made during the first week of each month. The teacher was to get close to the individual members of each family, so that he could properly "watch" over the Church and "strengthen them" where they needed strengthening. It was stated that: "You haven't

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 3-6.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 10-12.

done family teaching if you discuss only the weather, politics, or time of the day."<sup>23</sup>

The teacher was asked:

In case there are special needs and problems, don't let the regular teaching visit be your only contact with the family during the month. In case of illness, if death should come, or if there are other temporal or spiritual conditions that require your help, make as many contacts as wisdom dictates.<sup>24</sup>

On January 15, 1962, the Emigration Stake President reported that the Stake Presidency had presented a copy of the family teaching guide to Marion G. Romney. He said that Elder Romney was pleased with the plan.<sup>25</sup>

In the high council meeting of March 26, 1962, it was reported that on April 4th, the Emigration Stake family teaching plan "would be presented to the committee of the General Authorities and representatives of the stakes assigned to test the new program."<sup>26</sup>

The report of the above meeting was given on April 9th. In this meeting with the General Authorities, Emigration Stake was instructed to continue with the present program as written, and that the family teaching process was to take top priority.<sup>27</sup>

Changes in the family teaching outline were suggested in the high council meeting of May 21st.<sup>28</sup> These changes were incorporated in a new edition of the teaching plan<sup>29</sup> which was distributed on July 2nd. Family teachers were also instructed to work close with the

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>25</sup>Em. Minutes, pt. 2, January 15, 1962.

<sup>26</sup>Em. Minutes, March 26, 1962.

<sup>27</sup>Em. Minutes, March 19, 1962

<sup>28</sup>Em. Minutes, April 19, 1962

<sup>29</sup>Em. Minutes, June 23, 1962.

genealogical home teachers.<sup>30</sup>

By November of 1962 the stake family teaching committee was furnishing the family teachers with topics for discussion with their families.<sup>31</sup> And by December the topic for discussion was encouraging families to hold "home nights" regularly.<sup>32</sup>

A change was also made in the selecting of family teachers in December. The bishops were instructed not to delegate the assigning of family teachers to the division supervisors.<sup>33</sup>

At the high council meeting of Emigration Stake, on February 4, 1963, the stake president gave instructions that each ward bishop was to have every family teacher make out and turn in to his supervisor a written family teaching report. He also spoke on the importance of the personal interview with the family teachers. He said that, for the balance of the experimental period, it would be permissible for each ward bishopric to prepare a uniform message for the family teachers to take to their families, if they so desire.<sup>34</sup>

#### SUMMARY

There were fourteen representative stakes chosen to experiment with the new programs of the correlation movement, which were outlined by the General Authorities. Emigration Stake was one of the most forward looking of these stakes in the development of home teaching.

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<sup>30</sup>Em. Minutes, July 2, 1962.

<sup>31</sup>Em. Minutes, November 26, 1962.

<sup>32</sup>Em. Minutes, December 3, 1962.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Em. Minutes, February 4, 1963.

Early in 1961, the fourteen stake presidents were called to meet with the General Authorities, where the priesthood correlation (home teaching) process was discussed, along with other Church correlation programs.

Many names were used in referring to future home teachers; "Watchmen," "Guardian," "Shepherd," "Correlator," etc. The first name to be settled upon was, "Watchmen." And then, by the 19th of June, 1961, the name was changed to "Family Teacher."

It was suggested that a booklet of instructions on home teaching be compiled and printed; and by the first of 1962 the booklet was being distributed to priesthood leaders of the stake.

The booklet was presented to Elder Marion G. Romney sometime in the middle of January. And then presented to the General Authorities, and the representatives of the other stakes involved in the experimental program on April 4, 1962.

## Chapter 9

### THE FINAL PHASE OF WARD TEACHING

While the pioneering stages of the home teaching function were in process, there were also some changes being made in the ward teaching process. If the transition from ward teaching to home teaching was to be a smooth one, then it would be necessary to increase the quality of the ward teaching process. As President Romney put it when introducing the home teaching process. "As I conceive our assignment from the Presidency and the Twelve, it is to get out into the Church and lift the saints to a higher standard of devotion to the Gospel."<sup>1</sup>

Beginning in January of 1961, the authorities of the Church began to place increased emphasis upon the ward teaching process. Most of this emphasis, or increased emphasis, came through the medium of the Church News. In the first part of January, 1961, an article was published entitled: "Ward Teachers: Religion is your message." In this article, ward teachers were warned to avoid political discussions. They were told that religion was their message.<sup>2</sup> Another issue of the Church News put out near the end of January, gave

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<sup>1</sup>Marion G. Romney, unpublished talk delivered at Priesthood Home Teaching Seminar, August 9, 1963 (Salt Lake City), copy in LDS Church Historical Department.

<sup>2</sup>Deseret News, Church News [Salt Lake City], January 7, 1961, p. 13, hereafter cited as Church News.

encouragement to ward teachers. Ward teachers were asked to personally prepare themselves to teach by observing the following guidelines:

Making ready should consist of a series of well planned steps. Each ward teacher's mental attitude should be correct. . . . Regular attendance at ward teachers' report meeting is another requisite. It is here where he receives instruction that keeps him properly informed concerning the bishopric's desires pertaining to policies that should apply when representing the bishopric. . . .

Preparation should also include a period of planning by the senior companion and his junior colleague together before setting out to make their visits. They should pray together asking the Lord to invoke a blessing upon them and also upon those whom they watch over. They should examine the permanent roll and record of families to note approaching anniversaries, baptisms, ordinations, advancements, promotions, graduations, and other events that should receive appropriate recognition and commendation.

Ward teachers should be very careful to observe any indication of physical, mental or financial distress. They should also give consideration to special needs.<sup>3</sup>

In the above quotation much emphasis is laid on the whole duty of the ward teacher, that is, to watch over the family: to observe special events like birthdays and baptisms; and to make note of physical, mental, and financial distress.

One ward teaching program which came into prominence in January of 1961 was the correlation of ward teaching and senior members of the Aaronic Priesthood. With the advent of this new program, the bishop's district was to be composed of all senior Aaronic Priesthood holders. In this program senior Aaronic Priesthood holders, if found worthy and willing, could be called to serve as ward teachers.<sup>4</sup>

The Improvement Era for February of 1961 also contained information on quality teaching. In this article, the reader will note

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<sup>3</sup>Church News, January 28, 1961, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

increased emphasis being placed on the ward teacher to fully implement the ward teaching process on behalf of his families, viz:

Ward teaching reports call for a high measure of quantity ward teaching activity. It is, however, left to each individual ward teacher or each pair of ward teachers to evaluate subjectively the quality of their ward teaching visits by using the measuring rod found on the inside of the back cover of the Study Guide and Report Book for ward teachers, entitled "Duties of Ward Teachers."

Success in the ward teaching program is dependent upon the quality of the ward teaching visits as well as the number and percentage of families visited. Quantity ward teaching is much easier to measure for report purposes than quality ward teaching. It is not difficult to report that a given visit has or has not been made. It is, on the other hand, almost impossible to make an objective report of the excellence of ward teacher performance. . . .

Perhaps the best evaluation for quality teaching should be subjective on the part of each pair of ward teachers. They should match their performance with the revealed and stated duties and responsibilities of ward teachers. Their stamp of approval will be an inner feeling of satisfaction for a job well done.<sup>5</sup>

Along with the duties referred to above, ward teachers were to ask themselves the following questions:

Do we really love the people we are called to visit? Do we know each member of each family by name? Do we know their problems, desires, their aspirations? Are we prepared to bring them all into the conversation and lesson discussion? Do our enthusiasm and message inspire faith in every member?

Have we prepared for each individual visit? Do we have a specific objective for each visit? Do we have something important to leave with each family? Have we prepared the regular message well so that it can be given with power?

Have we invited the Lord in prayer to attend and help us with our ward teaching assignment? Do we lean heavily upon him for inspiration? Were our prayer and the prayer with the families real prayers?

The monthly report measures the quantity of our ward teaching, The Lord leaves it to each of the ward teachers to evaluate the quality of our visits. Be sure that our performance each month is in line with his expectations.<sup>6</sup>

In the Church News of February 4th, an article on ward teaching encouraged teachers to draw near to their families. The following

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<sup>5</sup>The Improvement Era, LXIV (February, 1961), 13.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.



action was suggested:

If one or more members of the family are absent, it automatically suggests that inquiry be made about them. If they are away from home, it should be determined where they are, how they are and if they are to be away for an extended period. The information may suggest a letter or some other method of follow-up.

. . . .  
Perhaps one practice that is more endearing is to visit families when there is illness. If a member is ill at home or hospitalized, a call is always appreciated and very appropriate. Members do appreciate knowing that others are thinking of them when they are in distress.

Ward teachers should be the first to call on a family where there has been misfortune. They should share sorrows as well as joys.<sup>7</sup>

On February 11th, the Church News carried an article on the importance of the interview by the bishopric before assigning new ward teachers: "One of the purposes of such an interview is to tell each ward teacher just what is expected of him by the bishopric."<sup>8</sup> The article mentioned that the duties of ward teachers are inside the back cover of the study guide.

It is also suggested that ward teachers review these duties periodically to remind them of the variety of responsibilities that are theirs. Members frequently complain that teaching is too often done in a perfunctory manner. Ward teachers sometimes give the impression they are making the visit to please the bishop and enable the ward to make a good record percentage wise. This kind of teaching is not effective.<sup>9</sup>

Again the ward teacher is reminded of his specific duties, which are enumerated on the inside of the back cover of the Ward Teaching Study Guide. This article seems to be the follow up of the article printed in the Era for February on quality ward teaching.

An article giving additional instruction for ward teaching

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<sup>7</sup>Church News, February 4, 1961, p. 13.

<sup>8</sup>Church News, February 11, 1961, p. 13.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

senior members of the Aaronic Priesthood was printed in the Church News for February 23, 1961. The article stated:

The co-ordinating of the program for senior members of the Aaronic Priesthood and ward teaching automatically increases the number serving on the ward committee for senior members of the Aaronic Priesthood. All senior ward teaching companions in the bishop's division who are assigned to visit families that include senior members of the Aaronic Priesthood and male members over 21 now belong to this committee.

It is expected that each of these brethren will attend the monthly council meeting of the ward committee for senior members of the Aaronic Priesthood.<sup>9</sup>

The year 1961 was one of the years of increased emphasis in reactivation of inactive members. Quite naturally, this greatly involved the ward teaching process, as we have seen in the above article.

It was found that not all stakes were abiding by the instructions given in the Handbook for Leaders. An attempt to correct this error was made in the Church News of March 11th, the article stated:

The Handbook for Leaders in Ward Teaching recommends a stake committee composed of five members. The chairman should be a member of the high council. There should be three members selected at large. . . .

However, there are a number of stakes whose organization varies from the one recommended in the handbook. One of the most common departures is the appointment of one member from each ward to serve as a member at large, thus increasing this group from the stipulated three members at large to anywhere from five to ten members depending on how many wards there are in the stake.

The reason offered is usually the stock answer, "It gives each ward representation on the committee." This, of course is unnecessary. In fact, in some instances, it is a handicap because it makes the committee unwieldy. In addition it does not pinpoint responsibility. Instead of assigning the responsibilities to the three members at large as recommended in the handbook, each member of the enlarged committee is told he is expected to promote all phases of the program. The end result is that often no one promotes the program as it should be done.

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<sup>10</sup>  
Church News, February 23, 1961, p. 13.

Another weakness that develops from the foregoing type of organization is that each member is made responsible as a member of the committee for his home ward, with the result that no visiting is done by members of the stake committee to other wards. With this type of operation, there is little chance of discovering strong and weak points of the program in each ward.

Another impairment, is that sometimes in the enlarged committee, each member becomes interested chiefly in his own ward and loses the over-all stake interest and view point. Some stake leaders justify the enlarged committee because of the number of wards in the stake. It should be remembered that whether there are five or twenty wards in the stake, the president has only two counselors. A stake president who had been eminently successful in the ward teaching program for many years was asked this question, "What has been the key to your success?" His reply was, "If you follow the program you cannot fail."

We commend his words to all.<sup>11</sup>

The Church News of April 8th contained an article on ward teaching entitled "Vision, A Component of Quality Teaching." This article was about the importance of a ward teacher catching the vision of the work. It stated: "The teacher who has vision possesses imaginative resources. He seizes opportunities which others do not see. He learns the needs of those whom he teaches. He knows what to teach and when to teach it."<sup>12</sup>

In May an article appeared in the Church News which emphasized the importance of quality leadership in improving ward teaching. It stated: "The spirit of enthusiasm filters from the top down--never from the bottom up."<sup>13</sup> The article continued:

. . . The stake presidency should leave no doubt in the mind of anyone about being solidly behind this program.

They should organize a strong stake committee on ward teaching, composed of members whose leadership ability is proven. The stake presidency should meet with this committee and explain

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<sup>11</sup>Church News, March 11, 1961, p. 13.

<sup>12</sup>Church News, April 8, 1961, p. 18.

<sup>13</sup>Church News, May 13, 1961, p. 16.

the standards to be maintained and work out the goals they expect to achieve. One member of the stake presidency should work with the stake committee in an advisory capacity. The chairman should advise this member or the presidency regularly pertaining to the progress made and any problems needing the attention of the stake presidency.<sup>14</sup>

There was also stress placed upon frequently mentioning ward teaching in the various conferences in order to improve and strengthen the process within the stake.

After the article in the Church News emphasizing the leadership of the stake presidency, the next article to appear stressed the importance of the leadership of the bishopric, of what is essential for effective ward teaching. The article stated the following:

Recently we discussed some of the features of quality leadership in the ward teaching program on a stake level. We should like now to discuss the importance of quality leadership in this program on a ward level. The key to quality ward teaching rests with the bishopric. The success of the program is determined by how closely they work with this great Priesthood activity. . . .

The first responsibility of the bishopric is to acquire the spirit of the work themselves. Without it, they do not inspire others. The second step is to set up a strong organization by appointing capable division supervisor, a ward teaching clerk, a ward teaching instructor and assigning faithful ward teachers. Each of the fore-going should be interviewed and his duties thoroughly explained. Each person should be told what is expected of him.

In this program there is need for perpetual training processes. Periodic interviews are necessary. Instruction and counseling may be given on an individual or collective basis. Checkup is also vital. Where there is demonstration of devotion, commendation should be given. Where there is evidence of negligence, or indifference, there should be encouragement.<sup>15</sup>

Along in July of 1961, the ward teachers were warned of "Summer Lethargy." It was "recommended that ward teachers put forth extra

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Church News, June 17, 1961, p. 16.

effort to build up attendance at Sacrament Meeting during the summer months."<sup>16</sup> Extra effort to keep activity up during the summer was required because: "It is during this season when some people fall into the habit of absenting themselves from this important meeting."<sup>17</sup>

There was a problem noted in the July 29th issue of the Church News:

It is reported that some bishoprics are not making use of the written reports submitted by ward teachers each month. This is unfortunate because these reports were designed to bring to the bishopric useful information pertaining to the temporal and spiritual welfare of members of the ward. Bishoprics should study these reports before report meeting and list on the face of each one those items which need attention.

If this procedure is followed, it will accomplish at least two things: (1) It will necessitate completing all visits by ward teachers before report meeting. (2) It will remind ward teachers to submit an accurate report of conditions as they find them in each home.

How well ward teachers carry out this assignment will depend upon the bishopric. . . .

The written report gives the bishopric some measure of control over the time when visiting is completed, and the thoroughness or the quality of the teaching.<sup>18</sup>

Another problem in the ward teaching program was noted in the Church News of August 12th, viz;

Through observation we have learned that the monthly meeting of the ward committee on ward teaching has, in some instances, become very routine in nature. Some bishoprics are merely going through the motions in conducting this meeting without giving any stimulation to the program. This meeting is designed to keep the bishopric in close touch with all phases of the program. It is here where a comprehensive analysis of the program should be made.<sup>19</sup>

The article gave instruction on what should be done to increase the effectiveness of the ward teacher's report meeting, and the ideas

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<sup>16</sup>Church News, July 15, 1961, p. 13.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Church News, July 29, 1961, p. 13.

<sup>19</sup>Church News, August 12, 1961, p. 13.

given for improvement in the past Church News articles were brought up. The article concluded: "It is recommended that bishoprics take advantage of stimulating the ward teaching program through holding worthwhile monthly meetings of the ward committee."<sup>20</sup>

Much instruction was given in the Church News of August 19, 1964, by the Presiding Bishopric. The personal interview was again stressed as being an important item of preparation for prospective ward teachers. The following objective of the ward teaching program was pointed out:

Bishoprics are the guardians of the flock and ward teachers are appointed to assist them in watching over the members. Each pair of ward teachers, in the words of President McKay, constitutes a representative of the bishopric to the families of the district they are assigned to visit.<sup>21</sup>

Aside from representing the bishopric, an additional responsibility is emphasized. This was to be brought up in the ward teachers' interview, viz: "The interview should emphasize that ward teachers are not only personal representatives of the bishopric, but they are agents for each priesthood quorum and group and ward auxiliary organization."<sup>22</sup>

Here, one of the main differences between the ward teaching process and the home teaching process was being incorporated into the ward teaching process in its final phases. That is, that the ward teacher is a representative of the priesthood quorum, and also of the auxiliary programs, as well as of the bishop. But it is not to be

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>21</sup>Church News, August 19, 1961, p. 13.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

forgotten that: "There should also be the lofty concept that ward teachers represent the stake president, the President of the Church and the Master."<sup>23</sup>

When President McKay gave the assignment: "Every member a missionary," it placed additional responsibility upon ward teachers, as emphasized in the Church News of September 9th. This article stated:

While every member of the Church is expected to reflect in his life the ideals of the Church, ward teachers are obligated to set the example of living the Gospel daily and to emphasize to members the importance of this phase of missionary endeavor.<sup>24</sup>

In the November 25th issue of the Church News, the question was asked: "Who will be the ward teachers of tomorrow?" And then the answer followed: "Most of them will be the young men who are junior ward teachers today."<sup>25</sup> Emphasis was placed upon the responsibility of senior companions to train their junior companions in the calling as ward teachers.

Bishoprics were again admonished about holding ward teacher interviews in the Church News for December 2, 1961. Bishoprics were told: "The more frequently ward teachers are interviewed, the more sure members of the bishopric can be of the quality of the teaching."<sup>26</sup> Again, in the issue of the Church News for December 9th, the stake leaders were given the following directions: "The importance of more frequent interviewing of ward teachers is one thing that should be

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid.      <sup>24</sup>Church News, September 9, 1961, p. 13.

<sup>25</sup>Church News, November 25, 1961, p. 10.

<sup>26</sup>Church News, December 2, 1961, p. 10.

emphasized to the bishopric."<sup>27</sup>

As the new year began, (1962) the ward teachers were asked to watch for new members who moved into their wards. They were also asked to assist in locating families whose records were on pink membership forms--those who were in the ward on a temporary basis. It was also "expected that ward teachers will visit members of the Church regularly even though their membership records are not on file in the wards."<sup>28</sup>

While doing ward teaching, the teachers were not to collect funds. It was said that:

One of the objectives of ward teaching is to promote good will between ward teachers and the families they visit each month. The chances of maintaining favorable relationships are less when ward teachers are asked to collect funds.<sup>29</sup>

There also was noted a problem in February of 1962, viz:

There is a practice in some wards to appoint more division supervisors than are needed. The Handbook for Leaders in Ward Teaching recommends three division supervisors.

The reason given for increasing the number of division supervisors are: (1) a large ward or, (2) a transient problem. The number of counselors in a bishopric is never increased because of the size of the ward or the complexity of the problems. So it should be with the division supervisors in the ward teaching program.<sup>30</sup>

In March of 1962, it was asked that ward teaching be reviewed in the ward conferences because: "Ward teaching is an important

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<sup>27</sup>Church News, December 9, 1961, p. 10.

<sup>28</sup>Church News, January 13, 1962, p. 10.

<sup>29</sup>The Messenger, (Salt Lake City: The Presiding Bishopric of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, January, 1962), hereafter cited as Messenger.

<sup>30</sup>Messenger, February, 1962.



priesthood program and should receive the same consideration as other programs during ward conference."<sup>31</sup>

The Church News for April 21st gave the charge to ward teachers to safeguard members. As the article stated:

The Lord has given to members of the priesthood the responsibility of 'watching over the Church.' (D. & C. 20:42, 53-54). . . . Ward teachers are expected to be concerned about the welfare of the Church as a whole. It is their duty to advance its interest, uphold its doctrines, defend its principles and sustain its leaders.

The interests of the Church include working to achieve its aims, objectives, and purposes collectively as well as individually. It means not only endorsing its programs, but promoting them wherever they go. In essence ward teachers are shareholders in a great institution and partners with the Master in building up his Kingdom.<sup>32</sup>

The ward teachers were also charged to defend the faith and to teach members to be loyal to the faith.

In the issue of the Church News for May 12, 1962, ward teachers were reminded to aid their families in daily living. The article included the following:

President McKay describes each pair of ward teachers as a virtual bishopric to the families they visit. . . . Ward teachers are expected to demonstrate an interest closely akin to that of parents in each child and brotherly concern for each adult. While most ward teaching is done on a family group basis, close attention should be given to each individual member and especially those who have problems.<sup>33</sup>

More and more encouragement was continually being given to ward teachers to get them to realize and catch the vision of their true responsibility in regard to their families.

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<sup>31</sup>Church News, March 3, 1962, p. 10.

<sup>32</sup>Church News, April 21, 1962, p. 10.

<sup>33</sup>Church News, May 12, 1962, p. 10.

In May, the ward teachers were urged to set up objectives with their families. It was said that: "The capable ward teacher has to go outside himself and enter into the lives of those whom he teaches."<sup>34</sup>

Starting in June of 1962, ward teachers were instructed, through the medium of the Church News, to give support to the various programs of the Church. In the issue of June 2nd, they were urged to support the genealogy program.<sup>35</sup>

In the Church News of June 16th, ward teachers were urged to support the Sunday School. In this article, put out by the Presiding Bishopric, ward teachers were given the following instructions:

Every ward teacher is expected to support the Sunday School by attending himself. He needs the blessings he obtains here. He should be in attendance to observe who of the members of his district are present. He should compliment those who are present and give prompt encouragement to those who do not do so. Routine invitation is not enough. The urgency of the matter should be discussed with parents and children. It should be pointed out that when father and mother attend Sunday School there is seldom a problem with the children. Urging attendance at Sunday School fulfills another of the responsibilities of ward teachers in seeing "that all the members do their duty."<sup>36</sup>

In the Church News, which came out on June 30, 1962, the ward teachers were called upon to support the Relief Society program. It was said that:

The Relief Society functions as an arm of the priesthood. . . . Is it any surprise that ward teachers are expected to give wholehearted support to this wonderful organization? It is their duty to enthusiastically encourage every wife and mother to become an active member of the Relief Society. Ward teachers who do not urge the women of their district to become members

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<sup>34</sup> Church News, May 19, 1962, p. 10.

<sup>35</sup> Church News, June 2, 1962, p. 12.

<sup>36</sup> Church News, June 16, 1962, p. 10.

are remiss in the performance of duty.<sup>37</sup>

In July, the instruction given ward teachers, through the medium of the Church News, concerned the organizational structure of ward teaching. On the 7th of July 1962, the following comments were made on the initial interview of prospective ward teachers by members by the bishopric:

One of the most important features of successful ward teaching is the manner in which ward teachers are inducted into the program. It is the responsibility of the bishop to see that all prospective ward teachers are properly instructed in a preliminary interview before they are officially assigned. Since bishops' counselors share this responsibility with the bishop, all three should sit down together and work out a uniform system of interviewing and instructing these members of the priesthood.

There should be a discussion of those things which give ward teachers the proper vision of their responsibilities. The following are some of the matters that should be given attention: (1) why ward teaching, (2) define the duties of a ward teacher, (3) inspire him with lofty aims, (4) tell him how to set up objectives, (5) emphasize the importance of adequate preparation and (6) explain the rewarding nature of faithful service.

It should be emphasized that ward teaching is not a man-made program. Neither is it a menial task. It had its origin before the Church was organized in a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith. The Lord exhorted members of the Priesthood to perform this duty. (D. & C. 20:42, 47, 53-55.) It is designed to reach the fireside of each member family a minimum of once each month. Its purpose is to safeguard the home and the individual from forces of evil. As representatives of the bishopric, ward teachers are responsible for the temporal and spiritual welfare of each member of their district.

It is the duty of ward teachers to be concerned about the welfare of the Church generally, but specifically about the well-being of those whom they are assigned to watch over. If they are unemployed they should help them secure employment. If they are ill, visit them. If they are bowed in sorrow, comfort them. If in trouble, ward teachers are to assist them in the solution of distressing problems. It is the duty of ward teachers to win the confidence of the members. Confidence is the prerequisite to conversion. Ward teaching provides the opportunity to render service that is practical, intimate and helpful. If done as the Lord intended it fills members with a sense of obligation to do their duty. Ward teachers should constantly think of ways and

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<sup>37</sup> Church News, June 30, 1962, p. 10.

means to promote the interests of the members. They should demonstrate in good deeds that they are their "brother's keeper."<sup>38</sup>

In the middle of July, instructions were given on the duties of division supervisors. They were given the following direction:

The division supervisor is a key man in the ward teaching program. His appointment to serve in this capacity is on a level with quorum and auxiliary organization leaders in the ward. He is to assist one member of the bishopric in directing the program in one of the three divisions into which the ward is divided.<sup>39</sup>

In the issue of the Church News for July 21, 1962, encouragement was given to bishoprics on selecting ward teaching supervisors. They were advised to select supervisors from among the ranks of the ward teachers in their wards.<sup>40</sup> In August, ward teachers were asked to promote the MIA program in the following words:

Ward teachers are remiss if they do not encourage members to avail themselves of the MIA programs. They should constantly be on the alert to urge youth to take advantage of the training made available to them through the MIA. . . .

Youths need this training and ward teachers should do all they can to make sure they receive it.<sup>41</sup>

The Church News for August 25th contained the "fourfold obligation" of every ward teacher: "Every ward teacher has a fourfold obligation to fulfill: (1) To his Maker; (2) To those whom he is appointed to watch over; (3) To those who supervise his work, and (4) to himself." And in regard to this obligation, the following was emphasized:

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<sup>38</sup>Church News, July 7, 1962, p. 10.

<sup>39</sup>Church News, July 14, 1962, p. 10.

<sup>40</sup>Church News, July 21, 1962, p. 10.

<sup>41</sup>Church News, August 4, 1962, p. 10.

One cannot refuse to serve as a ward teacher and at the same time honor the Priesthood of God. It was the Lord who exhorted members of the priesthood to watch over the Church "always" and his power is not magnified unless this duty is faithfully discharged.

The mandate to members of the priesthood "to see that all the members do their duty" is exacting. It makes the ward teacher responsible for the temporal and spiritual welfare of those whom the bishop assigns him to watch over. It requires a fatherly and parental interest in the well-being of all members of the district. If they are suffering physical or mental distress, he should make every effort to alleviate any pain of body or mind. He should strive to safeguard their homes against the encroachment of any evil influence. He should teach the Gospel to those who do not understand it. He should explain the need of repentance to those who are amiss in the performance of duty. If he sincerely demonstrates interest in and a love for those whom he watches over, he can expect a reasonable measure of success.<sup>42</sup>

In September, the ward teachers were reminded to visit their families early in the month: there is no such thing as "make-up visits." Ward teachers received the following instructions:

Credit for ward teaching visits is to be taken for the actual month in which those visits are made. There is no such thing in the ward teaching program as make-up visits for a previous month. We continue to recommend that ward teaching be done in the first part of the month. It is obvious that a more consistent quality of teaching is done when we demonstrate a direct interest in the program by visiting all families early each month.

Each family should feel that their ward teachers love them and are genuinely interested in their welfare. End-of-the-month visits suggest to the members that the primary purpose for the visit is to complete records. Ward teachers have a solemn responsibility to visit those families to whom they are assigned early in the month and teach them the gospel in the spirit of love.<sup>43</sup>

More on watching over the Church was given in the Church News for September of 1962. The following was stated: "In watching over the Church, ward teachers are under obligation to give personal

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<sup>42</sup>Church News, August 25, 1962, p. 10.

<sup>43</sup>Messenger, September, 1962.

attention to each member of their district. The extent of this attention should depend somewhat upon the activity of each member."<sup>44</sup>

Therefore:

It is suggested that ward teachers take time to review their approach, keeping in mind that more time should be devoted to giving special attention to members and families who are inactive. Secondly, demonstrate sincere personal interest in these members. Finally, give repeated invitations to time to participate in Church activities.<sup>45</sup>

The importance of the ward teacher's calling was given in the Church News for October 6th. It was emphasized that: "The position of ward teacher is not one of special calling that may be accepted or declined as we choose without consequence. It is a priesthood responsibility."<sup>46</sup> At the end of October another article was published in the Church News about training junior companions to be the ward teachers of tomorrow.<sup>47</sup> The same theme was taken up by the Church News of November 17th.<sup>48</sup>

Effective in January of 1963, there were added five new columns to the ward teaching report. The additional columns were to: (1) Bring to the attention of the bishopric members who were ill, (2) Direct attention to those who were living away from home, (3) Focus the attention of the bishopric and ward teachers on children over eight years of age who were unbaptized, (4 & 5) Focus upon genealogical

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<sup>44</sup>Church News, September 22, 1962, p. 10.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Church News, October 6, 1962, p. 13.

<sup>47</sup>Church News, October 27, 1962.

<sup>48</sup>Church News, November 17, 1962, p. 10.

work.<sup>49</sup>

The Church News for the end of January asked ward teachers to set goals for their families.<sup>50</sup>

After the first couple of months in 1963 had passed, there was little more emphasis placed upon the ward teaching process. It was between this time and the end of 1963 that the ward teaching process was phased out and the introductory stages of the home teaching process were phased in.

#### SUMMARY

While the home teaching process was in its pioneering stages, an effort was being made to improve the ward teaching process so that there would be no drastic change when the home teaching process was begun. The period of time for such a change was between January 1961 and about March of 1963.

Most of the encouragement for improving the ward teaching process came by way of the Church News, although other sources were occasionally used. Emphasis was mainly placed upon the "whole" duty of the ward teacher, which was printed on the back cover of the Ward Teaching Study Guide.

Ward teachers were continually reminded to improve the quality of their ward teaching, that it might come up on a par with the quantity of ward teaching being done. Much encouragement was also given

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<sup>49</sup>Church News, December 1, 1962, p. 10.

<sup>50</sup>Church News, January 26, 1963, p. 10.

to bishoprics on the importance of the initial interview with potential ward teachers. They were also reminded of the importance of periodic follow-up interviews to encourage quality ward teaching.

In succeeding articles, stakes were reminded to follow the program as outlined in the Handbook for Leaders; ward teachers were given encouragement to catch the vision of ward teaching; ward teaching was to be one of the topics to occupy time in ward conferences; and leaders were encouraged to mention ward teaching often in the various ward and stake meetings.

Bishoprics were reminded to make use of the written reports submitted by ward teachers. Bishoprics were also encouraged to improve the quality of the ward committee on ward teaching functions.

There began to be emphasis placed on the idea that ward teachers represented the priesthood quorums as well as the auxiliaries of the ward, a concept which was basic to the new home teaching process. The new concept of "Every member a missionary" also placed increased responsibility upon the heads of ward teachers.

Ward teachers were urged to support each of the Church programs, and to encourage attendance at such. The duties of stake officers, bishoprics, and ward teaching supervisors, in regard to the ward teaching process, were continually being emphasized. Ward teachers were asked to review their approach, and to set goals for their families.



## Chapter 10

### IMPLEMENTING HOME TEACHING THROUGHOUT THE CHURCH

Family teaching, then referred to as priesthood correlation, was first introduced to the Church membership in the general conference of October, 1962.

In introducing this process, Elder Marion G. Romney said:

Through a program of priesthood correlation, we bearers of the priesthood must increase our efforts to encourage, teach, and inspire the Saints to become "partakers of the divine nature," to use Peter's phrase, through obedience to the sanctifying principles of the gospel.<sup>1</sup>

While explaining priesthood correlation to the Saints, Elder Romney also stated:

Now, priesthood correlation, as we are using the term here, contemplates all that is now being done in ward teaching and much more. It unites under one undertaking many activities. It requires that attention be given to every member of every family, particularly to those who need special encouragement to live the gospel. It means much more than a perfunctory visit once a month. It includes:

1. Periodic visits to every family by two priesthood bearers;
2. Laboring with Melchizedek Priesthood bearers to build spiritual and temporal "strength";
3. Laboring with inactive and over age members of the Aaronic Priesthood under 21;
4. Activating and bringing into full church participation senior members of the Aaronic Priesthood and their families;
5. Fellowshiping and bringing into full activity recent

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<sup>1</sup>Marion G. Romney, Conference Address, Official Report of the One Hundred Thirty-Second Semi Annual General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 6, 1962 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d.), p. 77, hereafter cited as Conference Report.

converts, new arrivals, and all inactive church members;

6. Encouraging all parents and other family heads to maintain genuine Latter-day Saint homes in which are practiced and taught the sanctifying principles of the gospel. It aims to bring all parents to a realization of President McKay's statement that "The character of the child is formed largely during the first twelve years of his life. . . ."

It is anticipated that priesthood correlation will include ward teaching, fellowshipping, activating inactive bearers in the priesthood, both Melchizedek and Aaronic.

It will be the responsibility of the two brethren who visit homes under the priesthood correlation program to familiarize themselves with the spiritual status of each member in every family assigned to them. It will be their responsibility to make sure that infants are blessed; that children are baptized at eight years of age; that boys are worthy and qualified to be ordained to that priesthood at 12 years of age and that they are so ordained; that they move through the grades of the priesthood in proper order; that candidates for marriage are properly taught the importance and sanctity of temple marriage and the church standards which will qualify them for it, to the end that they will be married in the temple.

It will be the responsibility of the two visiting brethren to know the available church activities for each family member and encourage him to avail himself of them. . . .

In brief, it is the hope that through priesthood correlation the responsibility which the Lord placed upon the elders, priests, and teachers at the time the Church was organized will be discharged.<sup>2</sup>

And in connection with section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants, President Romney said:

By some it has been thought that some of the directions given in the revelation referred only to ordained teachers. It would seem however, that the responsibility has been placed on every bearer of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and the priests as well as upon the teachers. For in the revelation the Lord says that the elder's calling is ". . . to teach, expound, exhort, baptize, and watch over the church. . . ." That's the responsibility of the elders (which as above explained includes all bearers of the Melchizedek Priesthood). Then the Lord says that it is the priest's duty to help him in certain activities--not the whole scope of the elder's responsibility, but he says it is the priest's duty to ". . . visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret and attend to all family duties. . . . And he is to take the lead of meetings when there

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 77-78.

is no elder present. . . ." And then he repeats, "And visits the house of each member, exhorting them to pray vocally and in secret and attend to all family duties. . . ."

In all these duties the priest is to assist the elder. . . .

And then the teacher's duty is to help also, but not in as wide a scope as the priest, but, "The teacher's duty is to watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them:

"And see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking:

"And see that the church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty." (See D&C 20:28, 42, 47, 49, 51-55.)

We hope to develop a program in this priesthood correlation through which all these responsibilities will be discharged.<sup>3</sup>

And then speaking to the priesthood, he said:

. . . When we have seen that every member of the Church does his duty, we think we will be able to stand approved before the Lord.

This is a tremendous undertaking. It will take training of teachers. It will take a new determination. It will mean that every priesthood member will have to be a man of courage. Someone had said that the courageous man finds a way and that the ordinary man finds an excuse. No man that holds the priesthood wants to be just an ordinary man.

"Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence.

"He that is slothful shall not be counted worthy to stand, and he that learns not his duty and shows himself not approved shall not be worthy to stand. . . ." (Ibid., 107:99-100).

And again:

"Wherefore, (says the Lord) lift up your hearts and rejoice, and gird up your loins, and take upon you my whole armor, that ye may be able to withstand the evil day, having done all, that ye may be able to stand.

"Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, which I have sent mine angels to commit unto you;

"Taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked;

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of my Spirit, which I will pour out upon you, and my word which I reveal unto you, and be agreed as touching all things whatsoever ye ask of me, and be faithful until I come, and ye shall be caught up, that where I am ye shall be also. (D&C 27:15-18.)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 78-79.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 79.

Home teaching then, as explained by Elder Romney in the passage above, is to prepare the members of the Church to meet and receive the Lord at his coming.

Elder Lee, at the same conference, concluded with:

I bear you my solemn witness that I know that God is directing this work today, and if we can get the priesthood now to come alive and to put into full gear the full strength of the priesthood, we shall see some of the most wonderful developments and some of the greatest things happen to the forces which the Lord can set in motion that we have ever known in this dispensation.<sup>5</sup>

Sometime in the early part of 1963, a Family Teacher's Guide was printed by the Church. This manual was almost a reprint of the Emigration Stake's Family Teacher's Handbook, which was written under the guidelines set up by the General Authorities, and was used by the pilot stakes (see Chapter 8). The Family Teacher's Guide,<sup>6</sup> however, was never issued to the Church as a whole because of the up-and-coming changes about to take place.

The correlation program was the subject taken up in the conference of April, 1963. Elder Lee said: "Here now we will show you the introduction of what we are calling the priesthood Home Teaching program."<sup>7</sup> In relation to this new name, President Lee has said:

The name of home teaching was given to this movement, to distinguish it from ward teaching. When this was discussed with President McKay, some suggested we should call them watchmen-- "priesthood watchmen"--but the President wisely counseled that we had better not let the membership of the Church think of the priesthood as detectives, that it would be better to call them

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>6</sup>Family Teaching Guide (Salt Lake City: Priesthood Home Teaching Committee of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1963).

<sup>7</sup>Conference Report, April 6, 1963, p. 86.

the priesthood home teachers.

The Genealogical representatives called our attention to the fact that home teachers was the title they gave to their genealogical workers in the wards. The President then advised that these genealogical workers be called family teachers, a name that is more descriptive of the work of genealogical visitors to the homes in each ward.

Continuing with the conference of April, 1963, Elder Lee said:

. . . This is a program which we are going to study now in great detail as we come out to your stake conferences, so I shall only speak in headlines here tonight. . . .

This new program is to be introduced and taught during the last two quarters of 1963 and will be inaugurated in full scale, January 1, 1964. This phase of the work is known as "Home Teaching." This designation was made after prayerful discussion by the Co-ordination Council and by the First Presidency and the Twelve to emphasize an enlargement of the scope of responsibility previously in what we have called "Ward Teaching." Emphasis on the responsibilities of the entire priesthood to "watch over the Church" as commanded in the early revelations--to be concerned with the whole family as a group and as individuals.

In each stake there will be set up a Home Teaching committee as you will see . . . which will consist of the stake presidency, the general secretary for Home Teaching, who will be one of the high councilmen who is also a member of the stake Melchizedek Priesthood committee, and an assistant stake clerk for Home Teaching.

Under the supervision of the stake Home Teaching committee, . . . in each ward there will be a ward Home Teaching committee, consisting of the ward bishopric, an assistant ward clerk for ward teaching, and a high priest's group leader, the seventy's president or group leader, and the elder's president. Now this will constitute the core of those who now will go out to "watch over the Church." Priesthood group leaders will confer with the bishop, and the bishop will in turn determine who shall be assigned to work with certain families. These Home Teachers will then report back to their priesthood group leader or president, who in turn, will report to the bishop. . . .<sup>9</sup>

He then explained that high priests would home teach to high

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<sup>8</sup>Conference Report, September 30, 1967, p. 100.

<sup>9</sup>Conference Report, April 6, 1963, pp. 86-87.

priests, seventies home teach seventies, and elders home teach elders, all of which may be accompanied by a junior companion from the Aaronic Priesthood. In the case of the Aaronic Priesthood over twenty-one, the general secretary for that group was to work with their home teachers.<sup>10</sup>

President Lee continued:

. . . Auxiliary leaders will assist priesthood leaders in the Home Teaching program as directed by the stake and ward priesthood leadership. This meeting of priesthood and auxiliary leaders will constitute what will be called the Ward Council. You stake presidents have been holding a monthly meeting with this group of ward leaders. This meeting has been known by different names--ward officers meeting, ward faculty meeting, ward correlation meeting, etc.--but will now be known as a Ward Council meeting where representatives of all auxiliaries may be invited to meet with priesthood representatives. In cases of special need . . . the bishop will make adjustments in assignments as necessary; for example, there may be women assigned to go with their husbands on occasion or there may be called specialists from priesthood or auxiliary organizations where they are having a particular problem with a boy or girl or a man or woman, as the case might be.<sup>11</sup>

Elder Lee then explained the qualifications and duties of a home teacher:

Home Teaching is one of our most urgent and most rewarding opportunities to nurture and inspire, to counsel and direct our Father's children in all that pertains to life. Through the priesthood quorums, and under the Bishop's direction, Home Teaching takes the message of the gospel, the message of life and salvation and brotherly love, into the home wherein lies the first and foremost opportunity for teaching in the Church.

"Three things should be kept in mind in thorough preparation for Home Teaching:

"First, knowledge of those whom you are to teach. . . . Methods and messages should vary according to each individual, and according to his problems and needs.

"To perform fully our duty as a Home Teacher we would need to be continually aware to the attitudes, the activities and interests, the problems, the employment, the health, the happiness, the plans and purposes, the physical and temporal and

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

spiritual needs and circumstances of everyone--of every child, every youth, and every adult in the homes and families who have been placed in our trust and care as a bearer of the priesthood and as a representative of the bishop.

"Second, is a knowledge of what you are to teach. It is the Home Teacher's duty to teach that Jesus the Christ is the Redeemer of the world, and that Joseph Smith and his successors are prophets of God, and that the gospel has been restored, and that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is being divinely led and offers happiness, eternal life and exaltation for all who are willing to learn and to live its principles. . . .

"Third, is a knowledge of how we are going to teach. . . . The Home Teacher should 'visit the house of each member' and 'teach, expound,' and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret and attend and strengthen them'--and this means always--however and whenever and with whatever may be necessary.

"Home Teaching is a divine service, a divine call. It is our duty as Home Teachers to carry the divine spirit into every home and heart. . . ."

There, then, you will see a home centered, priesthood centered responsibility in which every member of the priesthood is expected to function.

No one holding the priesthood is to be exempt from a bishop's assignment to work in this program.<sup>12</sup>

He gave the following admonitions:

. . . We must expect opposition, and sometimes that opposition may come from inside, but remember what the Prophet Joseph Smith our early leader said: "The nearer a person approaches the Lord, the greater the power will be manifested by the Adversary to prevent the accomplishment of his purpose. . . ."13

Hereafter the Church was to put out additional information so as to groom the priesthood for this new assignment.

In May of 1963, the Melchizedek Priesthood section of the Era contained an article entitled "The Home Teacher." In this article the ward organizational responsibilities were more fully explained; and also, the duties of the Home teachers. Highlighting this article was the following:

. . . The bishop is the active head of the new approach, with

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 87-88.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

the close support of the quorum leaders. He will direct the assignments and the calls to teach, but he will call upon the presidencies of the quorum members. There will be a close coordination of this effort. . . .

Under the direction of this unified leadership, the "home teachers" will be given responsibility for the families in their care. This responsibility will cover the whole range of their spiritual, physical, and mental well-being. This pair of home teachers carries the aweinspiring task now to "watch over the church . . . and be with and strengthen them." In their hands is the complete program.<sup>14</sup>

Announcement was made in the first part of May, 1963, of the choosing of twenty-four Church leaders to the committee on home teaching. It read in part:

The 24 prominent churchmen called to the committee by the First Presidency will serve under the direction of Elder Marion G. Romney of the Council of the Twelve, chairman, and Elder Alvin R. Dyer, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve, managing director of the Priesthood Home Teaching Committee.

They will form the stake conference staff, visiting conferences beginning June 1 and 9, which will emphasize the Home Teaching program.<sup>15</sup>

A meeting for these home teaching representatives was held in the Church Administration Building on May 15, 1963. The following was some of the instructions which were given by President McKay:

It is the duty of each presidency of a quorum to meet with the members, to sit in council, and teach them their duty. I repeat--to sit in council with them and to teach them their duties.

. . . . The quorums should foster fellowship, fraternity, brotherhood, and love as a group. Individually, they should give service to the presidency, and it is the duty of the presidency to bring about unity in the membership of the quorum.<sup>16</sup>

They were told that they were subject to the bishop as members

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<sup>14</sup>"The Home Teacher" The Improvement Era, LXVII (May, 1963), 405, hereafter cited as Era.

<sup>15</sup>Deseret News, Church News, [Salt Lake City] May 11, 1963, pp. 6, 13-14, hereafter cited as Church News.

<sup>16</sup>Era, LXVI (July, 1963), 614.



of the ward, but not as quorum members. Thus he explained that as a quorum they were subject to the quorum president, who was under the direction of the stake president.

President McKay continued

How are you going to apply this to home teaching . . . just the same as we have emphasized the importance of the members of the quorum teaching their members, but with these brethren having the assistance of the Lesser Priesthood and all members working "For the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ . . ."

It is right to have the home teacher carry his responsibility of looking after the welfare of each individual.<sup>17</sup>

The following was a statement made in the Church News concerning the above meeting:

The committee members spent the day being instructed in the details of the new home teaching program which Elder Romney explained they will have the responsibility of introducing into each stake of the Church during the next six months. The new program is to be put in operation throughout the Church on January 1. . . .

The Era for August, 1963, carried an article entitled "The Priesthood and The Home Teacher." Within this article is the following:

We are about to embark on a new application of our age-long relationships to this immense and awinspiring revelation of God's will to usward. We now undertake to give new emphasis to the old principle that we are our brother's keeper.<sup>19</sup>

It was stated that in the past the physical welfare of our brother was of the utmost importance, but: "Today we march forth to feed the spirit as well as the body."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 615.

<sup>18</sup> Church News, May 18, 1963, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> Era, LXVI (August, 1963), 693.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

A Priesthood Home Teaching Seminar was held on August 9, 1963, for the Home Teaching Committee of the Church. While at this meeting, and while speaking of the importance of the home teaching process, President Joseph Fielding Smith said:

I have in mind now the words of Isaiah speaking of our day and in the future, that the time would come when it would not be necessary for any man to teach his neighbor, for they would all know the Lord from the least of them to the greatest of them, I hope that time is coming before too many years pass away.

As I travel in the stakes of Zion and meet with our church members I discover we are a long way, if I read the signs correctly, when that time will come when it will not be necessary for one member to teach another member because they will all know the truth. Before that time can come, we must stir up our people to the importance of their duties and responsibilities.<sup>21</sup>

And he gave the following charge:

Now, you brethren are called upon to go out into the stakes of Zion and try to encourage the people holding the priesthood to prepare themselves by study and by faith. I am sure that the time will come which the Lord has declared through some of His ancient prophets, when it won't be necessary for one man to teach his neighbor because they know the Lord. But we, who are called to this important duty and responsibility to teach our people, must go forth among our people and encourage them, particularly the men who hold the priesthood, to prepare themselves by study and faith to know the Lord and keep His commandments.  
 . . .<sup>22</sup>

The Chairman of the Home Teaching Committee, Elder Romney, spoke on the objectives of the home teaching process. He said in part:

. . . As I conceive our assignment from the Presidency and the Twelve, it is to get out into the Church and lift the saints to a higher standard of devotion to the Gospel. A tremendous task.

One of our immediate objectives is to bring every Priesthood

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<sup>21</sup>President Joseph Fielding Smith, Unpublished talk delivered at Priesthood Home Teaching Seminar (Salt Lake City, August 9, 1963), copy in LDS Church Historical Department.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

bearer to the realization that in accepting ordination to the Priesthood he commits himself to a life time of dedicated service in the task assigned to the Priesthood when the Church was organized. The nature of that service is recorded in the 20th Section of the Doctrine and Covenants.<sup>23</sup>

Elder Romney then went through section 20 and enumerated the duties of the priesthood. After which he said:

The foregoing instructions from the 20th Section of the Doctrine and Covenants may be said to be our constitution.

Our basic obligation is well set out in President McKay's foreward to our Priesthood Home Teaching Manual, titled, "A Devine Service." As I studied it over and over again, it seems to me that it covers about everything; so, although you have it in your books, I am going to read from and comment upon it.

"Home Teaching is one of our most urgent and most rewarding opportunities to nurture and inspire. To counsel and direct our Father's children in all that pertains to life. Through the Priesthood quorums, and under the bishop's direction, home Teaching takes the message of the gospel, the message of life and salvation and brotherly love, into the home, wherein lies the first and foremost opportunity for teaching in the Church.<sup>24</sup>

Elder Romney gave the following commentary on this first thing to be kept in mind:

Now brethren, I think you have done a good work already. I have been with some of you and I have heard reports about others of you, nevertheless, I want to emphasize again the fact that in order to accomplish the work assigned to us, we must impress the stake, ward and priesthood leaders to whom we present the Home Teaching Program that for the Home Teachers to know the people assigned to them is an absolute must. Each pair of teachers should become intimately acquainted with every child, youth and adult in the family to whom they are assigned and have in them the same personal interest they have in the members of their own families. When this is accomplished, it will be a long step toward the accomplishment of our objective. It will be a tremendous lift to the Church to just get the Home Teachers to become so acquainted.

"As each family is different from another, so each individual in the family differs from others. Methods and messages should vary according to each individual, and according to his problems and

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<sup>23</sup>Marion G. Romney, Unpublished talk delivered at Priesthood Home Teaching Seminar (Salt Lake City, August 9, 1963), copy in the LDS Church Historical Department.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

needs." I will not attempt to comment much upon this statement. It is beautifully put. It suggests unlimited possibilities to the dedicated Home Teacher. How different will be the performance of Home Teachers acting under this concept from that of a so-called teacher who once called at my home on a cold night just before Christmas. Hat in hand, which he refused to let me hang up, he shifted nervously when I asked him to sit down and give us his message. "Well, I'll tell you, Brother Romney," he responded, "it's cold outside. I left my car engine running so I won't stop. I just stopped in so I can tell the Bishop I have made my calls." I won't tell you my reaction, but I do express the expectation that Home Teaching will be different.

"To perform fully our duty as a Home Teacher we should be continually aware of the attitudes, the activities and interests, the problems, the employment, the health, the happiness, the plans and purposes, the physical, temporal and spiritual needs and circumstances of everyone--of every child, every youth, and every adult in the homes and families who have been placed in our trust and care as a bearer of the Priesthood and as a representative of the bishop."

Now one of the points we must put over clearly to stake presidents is to know the members of our families. Then stake presidents must get it over to the bishops and the Priesthood leaders. Then the bishops and Priesthood leaders must get it over to every Home Teacher.<sup>25</sup>

The second thing home teachers were to have was "a knowledge of what they are to teach."<sup>26</sup> Elder Romney said:

Such knowledge, as I see it, is what President Smith was talking about, knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and that it is the only plan of eternal life. Home Teachers should have a feeling of urgency about the importance of knowing and living the Gospel. Our lives are fleeting, and we must live the Gospel while we are here. There is no other way to check the downward trend of our society. Even though there may not be enough people accept and comply with the principles of the Gospel to save the nations, still thousands and millions of individuals will be saved, if they live the Gospel. Hence the urgency. This we must get over to the people. It isn't enough to merely engage in some activities in the Church. We must have a knowledge of the Gospel and dedicate our lives to living it. This we must teach.

. . . So much for the first two things President McKay says we should keep in mind in preparation for Home Teaching.<sup>27</sup>

The third thing Elder Romney commented upon was "a knowledge of how we are going to teach."<sup>28</sup> He stated:

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

This brings us to a consideration of the methods by which we can get the saints to accept and profit by what the Church offers for their benefit by way of knowledge of and training in the Gospel.

"If we may take some language from the Doctrine and Covenants, and apply it to this purpose, the Home Teacher should 'visit the house of each member' and 'teach, expound' and exhort each to pray vocally and in secret; to attend to all family duties and 'watch over the Church always, and be with and strengthen them'-- and this means always--however, and whenever, and with whatever may be necessary.

"Home Teaching is a divine service, a divine call. It is out duty as Home Teachers to carry the divine spirit into every home and heart. To love the work and do our best will bring unbounded peace, joy and satisfaction to a noble, dedicated teacher of God's Children."<sup>29</sup>

In regard to these things he had commented upon Elder Romney said:

Now we would like to bring every Priesthood bearer of the Church to a knowledge of these things and inspire in him a desire to go into their homes and lift the people. Everybody that is touched by the Gospel is improved. There is no other people on the earth who live as righteous as do the Latter-day Saints. But as President Smith said this morning, we are a long way from that day when we don't need one brother to teach the other.<sup>30</sup>

In conclusion, Elder Romney noted:

We brought you here today so that you may exchange ideas among yourselves. We may not teach you very much new, but we are going to try to stimulate you. We hope you will stimulate each other. We expect that during the rest of this year you can put this program over in every stake. You brethren will have a lot of work to do, not only in stake conferences between now and the first of the year, but we are now in a process of organizing a follow-up program. It isn't far enough along to be announced, but we are going to have you go back into these stakes during the six months when you are attending stake conferences and follow through to see that this program so ably outlined by President McKay in his forward which I have just read is implemented in all the stakes and in the lives of all the Priesthood. Just think what it will mean when all of us, including the stake, ward and Priesthood leaders and the Home Teachers, get the spirit of the work and a feeling of responsibility for the perfection of the lives of the saints.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

On the 24th of August, announcement was made of the appointment of two more members to the home teaching committee.<sup>32</sup> And then four more members were added, as announced on the 7th of September.<sup>33</sup>

Some mission presidents had been concerned about whether or not home teaching should be used in the missions. Because of their uncertainty, the First Presidency informed the mission presidents: "It is to be hoped that the Mission Presidents will put this program into operation insofar as the saints in their missions are prepared to implement it."<sup>34</sup>

Sometime in the middle of November, 1963, four booklets on home teaching were sent out to the ward and stake priesthood leaders.<sup>35</sup>

Below are the titles and a brief synopsis of each. For further information, the reader is invited to see the complete works:

Priesthood Correlation In Home Teaching Handbook: This book covers the following: what home teaching is--this is the regular handbook which home teachers were to use. It outlines the organization of home teaching; gives specific suggestions for preparing and making the visit; and then explains the tools which are to be used by the home teacher, report forms, oral evaluation, etc.<sup>36</sup>

Instruction To Leaders Manual: This booklet outlines the

<sup>32</sup>Church News, August 24, 1963, p. 3.

<sup>33</sup>Church News, September 7, 1963, p. 3.

<sup>34</sup>The First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, circular letter to Mission Presidents, September 4, 1963, copy in LDS Church Historical Department.

<sup>35</sup>Church News, November 30, 1963 p. 3.

<sup>36</sup>Priesthood Correlation In Home Teaching, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1963).

home teaching process for the stakes and wards. The leaders are told how to set up the process within their areas. The duties and responsibilities of the different stake and ward officers are explained. Instructions are given on how to conduct and administer training sessions for the home teacher. And the home teaching handbook is to be the basic text for the training course.<sup>37</sup>

Priesthood Home Teaching Handbook: This is the manual of instructions for home teachers. The stake and ward home teaching organizations are explained. The duties and responsibilities of the home teacher are given and suggestions on home teaching are stated.<sup>38</sup>

Initial Training For Priesthood Home Teachers: In the introduction to this booklet the following important information is given:

The New Home Teaching Program will replace the ward teaching system starting January 1, 1964. This program emphasized that every family head is responsible for the spiritual welfare of his family and that it is the responsibility of the priesthood, through the Home Teachers, to make available all of the resources of the Church to every Church member and to help each member in achieving his spiritual goals.

The Priesthood Home Teachers are to go into the homes and build a truly personal relationship with each family member--characterized by mutual trust, love, equality and concern. The final success of this program depends on the degree to which every Home Teacher can put into practice the basic ideals that we are truly our brother's keeper and that we should love our neighbors as ourselves.<sup>39</sup>

This manual contains three lessons. In the first lesson:

The general functions of the Home Teacher are reviewed, with

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<sup>37</sup>Instruction To Leaders, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1963), pp. 1-2.

<sup>38</sup>Priesthood Home Teaching Handbook, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1963).

<sup>39</sup>Initial Training For Priesthood Home Teachers, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1963).

an effort to establish a model of a good Home Teaching relationship as a guide to the Home Teacher. . . .

In the second lesson, emphasis is given two ways of successfully overcoming problems which would hinder us from doing effective Home Teaching. . . .

The third lesson provides orientation on the system of reporting Home Teaching.<sup>40</sup>

The above mentioned orientation lessons were to be given in place of the regular priesthood course of study for the last three weeks of 1963. Priesthood leaders, who would be in charge of home teaching were to be the instructors for these lessons.<sup>41</sup>

The Era for November carried two articles which emphasized the importance of, and gave the principle functions of the home teacher.

In the first article, mention was made of the former responsibilities of the bishop:

. . . But with the inauguration of the home teaching program on January first, the home teachers will truly become his assistants and representatives. In this most vital work each pair of home teachers becomes, in a sense, the bishop to the families they are assigned. They are responsible for the bishop's work to increase the activity and spirituality of the people.<sup>42</sup>

The monthly home visit was called the key to the activity of the teachers. The responsibilities of the home teacher for the new member were given. It was also shown how the bishop could correlate the new program with the auxiliaries--in special cases where the auxiliaries could do the most good. The second article stated:

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>41</sup>The First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, circular letter to Stake Presidents, October 18, 1963, copy in LDS Church Historical Department.

<sup>42</sup>Era, LXVI (November, 1963), 911.



"The home teacher assists the bishop to maintain his relation with the family and assists the family to keep in touch with the ward, and the many activities it offers to the family."<sup>43</sup>

The seven fundamental functions of the home teacher were enumerated:

One: That the home teacher visit the homes to which he is assigned as many times as are necessary.

Two: as the home teacher calls at the homes in his care, he will be in harmony with the head of the home--the father. . . . The home teacher does not usurp the position of the father; he supplements him and constantly consults him as to how he can be of greater assistance.

Three: all work in the church should strengthen the home and the relationships of parents and children. The home teacher will best serve when he knows these relationships and the practices which will improve them. . . .

Four: some home teachers will be challenged to fellowship newly baptized members. . . . They will need to be guided and helped to search out the riches of the doctrine and to find new friendships each at his own age level. . . .

Five: if we speak of duty we speak of activity. If one is active he is usually doing his duty. It will take some observation to discover where the need for help lies. . . . One of the greatest needs in the field of activity is the stimulation of parental responsibility for children and their development.

Six: the church provides excellent auxiliary organizations whose programs of study and activity provide spiritual and social development by practice in organized work and play. These supplement the work of the priesthood. . . . The home teacher guides the efforts of these important organizations to help the family. He correlates the work of recruiting and satisfying the needs of the various members of the family.

Seven: the home teacher will regularly report to his priesthood leader, who in turn will keep the bishop informed.<sup>44</sup>

Official notice was given for commencement of the home teaching function in the Priesthood Messenger of November, 1963. The following admonition was given:

Throughout the Church there is great enthusiasm for commencing this program. We discourage, however, any stake or ward from prematurely introducing this program since no report books

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 993.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

or record sheets will be available except for use after January 1. There is still much to be done in training and preparing all Home Teachers.<sup>45</sup>

Instruction was also given concerning the calling and preparing of home teachers for their forth coming assignments.<sup>46</sup>

Prior to beginning the process of home teaching, all the Church publications came out with articles endorsing the new function. The first was the Relief Society Magazine. At the conclusion of the article was the following: "The General Board of Relief Society gives its full allegiance to the home teaching program and enlists the support and active cooperation of every Relief Society member."<sup>47</sup>

The Children's Friend came out with an article in December of 1963 endorsing home teaching in the following words: "The Primary, through the Ward council, will render assistance to the quorum, the bishop, and the home teachers in strengthening the home."<sup>48</sup>

The December Era had an article on the challenge. It was said that the challenge is one of the best tools the home teacher could use in assisting his families. This article gave the following three challenges to home teachers:

First to learn all he can about the family.

Second, to seek by knowledge and prayerful thought the best

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<sup>45</sup>The Messenger (Salt Lake City: The Presiding Bishopric of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, November, 1963).

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>"Relief Society Supports Priesthood Home Teaching Program" The Relief Society Magazine, L (November, 1963), 823.

<sup>48</sup>"Home Teaching" Children's Friend, LXII (December, 1963), 40.

way to meet a given situation and improve it.

Third, to accept from the bishop the challenges which are to the bishop's mind important and to work at them with might and main.<sup>49</sup>

Through the medium of the Church News there was a change noted in the case of women acting as home teaching companions. The instructions were:

Women are not to be assigned regularly as companions. Only in special cases where it is clear that their services are needed, or where they are requested to accompany their husbands, should they be so assigned. In these cases they should be companions to their husbands only.<sup>50</sup>

It is of interest to note that as the different articles concerning home teaching came out in 1963, there was great emphasis placed upon getting ready for the beginning on January 1, 1964. An example is the following: "After January 1, 1964, the priesthood home teachers will become known in the home of every family in the Church."<sup>51</sup>

#### SUMMARY

Home teaching was first introduced to the Church in October of 1962. At this time it was merely referred to as the Priesthood correlation program.

President Romney outlined the process of home teaching. He placed special emphases on the duties of the home teacher, indicating that home teaching had a much broader scope than the old ward

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<sup>49</sup>Era, LXVI (December, 1963), 1121.

<sup>50</sup>Church News, December 21, 1963, p. 14.

<sup>51</sup>Era, LXVI (December, 1963), 1121.

teaching process. He also made it clear that the responsibility to do home teaching falls upon the shoulders of all who hold the priesthood.

Sometime in the early part of 1963 a family teacher's guide was printed by the Church, but was never issued to the members because of the up and coming changes in the process. This manual closely followed the Emigration Stake Family Teaching Handbook.

Home teaching was again taken up in the conference of April, 1963. It was at this conference that the name "home teaching," was given to the new process by President McKay. This, however, was the name of the genealogical teachers. It was therefore thought best to call the genealogical visitors "Family Teachers."

Much instruction was given at this conference about watching over the Church. And it was stated that home teaching would be introduced to the church during the last two quarters of 1963, and be inaugurated in fullscale, January 1, 1964.

Many articles preparing the leaders and the home for receiving the new function were published in the priesthood section of the Era.

During the early part of 1963, a committee was called to serve on the home teaching process. They were given much instructional advice in a seminar on home teaching on the 9th of August.

During the middle of November, 1963, four booklets on home teaching were distributed to the stakes and wards of the Church. These were Priesthood Correlation In Home Teaching Handbook, Instruction To Leaders Manual, Initial Training For Priesthood Home Teachers,

and Priesthood Home Teaching Handbook.

The lessons in the Initial Training were to be presented in place of the regular priesthood lessons, during the last three weeks of 1963.

The Era continued to carry articles which gave instructions and emphasized the importance of priesthood home teaching. As the year neared to a close, the other Church publications also carried articles which endorsed the new function.

The last instructions given in 1963 was that women were not to be assigned regularly as home teaching companions.

## Chapter 11

### THE BEGINNING YEARS OF HOME TEACHING

As can be seen by the previous three chapters, the home teaching process was not a spur-of-the-moment idea, nor a crash program. The revelations concerning home teaching came within the development of the Church correlation program. In April of 1963, it was announced that home teaching would be inaugurated in full scale on January 1, 1964. So the Saints were given plenty of time to prepare for that day. Then in the later part of 1963, the materials were shipped to the various priesthood leaders. Lessons of orientation were given in the last half of December of 1963; and the Church published, through its periodicals, many and various helps and hints for the future home teachers. With all that in mind, when January 1, 1964, came the brethren of the priesthood were ready to begin the new process.

There were further developments to come, as the Lord is continually perfecting the Saints to the extent that they are willing to be perfected.

It might here be recollected the quote made by Elder Harold B. Lee from President David O. McKay of continually moving on within the light as the light progresses on through time (Chapter 7).

During the first three months of 1964, further detailed instructions on the mechanics and the spirit of the home teacher's

call were given in the weekly priesthood meetings of all Melchizedek priesthood quorums.<sup>1</sup>

It was emphasized in the Church News of January 11, 1964, that:

The new Home Teacher now represents both the Bishop and the priesthood quorum so that he becomes in effect a personal bishop to that family. . . .

Home Teaching is a newly emphasized priesthood responsibility for quorum members. It is one in which they become responsible for the spiritual and temporal welfare of one another.<sup>2</sup>

In February, Priesthood leaders were again warned of the following:

Women are not to be assigned regularly as companions. Only in special cases where it is clear that their services are needed, or where they are required to accompany their husbands, should they be so assigned. In these cases they should be companions to their husbands only.<sup>3</sup>

The correlation of the home teaching process necessitated that home teaching manuals be printed into many different languages. By the end of February, 1964, Elder Dyer was able to report that: "Most of the languages now have their manuals, and others are going forward."<sup>4</sup>

In the Melchizedek Priesthood section of the Era of May 1964, quorum presidencies were warned: "While the Home Teachers represent the quorum presidencies the obligation of presidencies to become acquainted with the character, qualifications, and attitudes of all

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<sup>1</sup>Deseret News, Church News [Salt Lake City], January 11, 1964, p. 7, hereafter cited as Church News.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>The Improvement Era, LXVII (February, 1964), 119, hereafter cited as Era.

<sup>4</sup>Church News, February 22, 1964, p. 10.

quorum members remains unchanged.<sup>5</sup>

Information was also given concerning how much of a load was to be given to ward and stake leaders:

In assigning Home Teaching responsibilities to stake presidencies, high councilors, bishoprics, and other officers with heavy administrative responsibilities, care should be taken not to assign them problem cases which will require so much of their time that they will not be able properly to take care of their other important duties. They should, however, be available to give special attention to such cases where, in the opinion of the Home Teacher and the bishop, it is necessary.

Quorum or group leaders should personally visit homes of new quorum members as they move into the ward before Home Teachers are assigned.

As an ultimate result of the efforts of quorum presidencies and the Home Teachers, families should be inspired to conform to church standards including honesty, morality, fasting, payment of a full tithe and fast offering, keeping the Sabbath day holy, keeping the Word of Wisdom, attending Sacrament meeting, supporting church authorities, and living the gospel in its fulness. The measure of the effectiveness of the Home Teaching will be the continued improvement of the individual members in living church standards.

All activities should stem from these expressed fundamentals.<sup>6</sup>

In August a discrepancy was noticed in that there was some doubt as to the position of Aaronic priesthood bearers doing home teaching. It was noted:

There seems to be a peculiar philosophy in some stakes that Home Teaching is not a program for members of the Aaronic Priesthood. To dispel any such notion, we urge you to read the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 20 which contains a clear pronouncement from the Lord to the effect that it is the duty of the teachers and priests to actively participate in such activities. Where there are more teachers and priests than needed the senior home teacher may have two boys assigned, with whom he can alternate in visiting the assigned homes.<sup>7</sup>

In the Relief Society Conference of October, 1964, Elder

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<sup>5</sup>Era, LXVII (May, 1964), 408.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>The Messenger (Salt Lake City: The Presiding Bishopric of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, August, 1964).



Lee told the sisters: "We have never thought to give direction or instruction that the home teaching program would discontinue the visiting teaching program of the Relief Society."<sup>8</sup>

He told the sisters that the Relief Society was to correlate with the home teachers, and especially in compassionate service, the sisters would be called upon to assist the home teachers. The correlation between the two programs was to be done in the ward council meeting, under the direction of the bishop.<sup>9</sup>

At this conference, Elder Lee also answered the question as to why many of the problems arose concerning the correlation program:

. . . We have had some confusion, as you can understand, when a new program is announced, there is always some lack of comprehension in the beginning of any new program or plan.

We try to explain with the best vocabulary we have, which is sometimes very limited; and then, unfortunately, the people who listen have a worse vocabulary to listen with than we have to talk with, and with that limited equipment we try to get across a few ideas.<sup>10</sup>

While making report in the general conference of October, 1964, on the correlation program, Harold B. Lee noted:

We have witnessed a tendency to use in some cases the correlation program of home teaching, for example, as the "whipping boy" for any deficiencies in the performance of the various organizations as compared to its previous figures, and some would have us believe that it is the home teaching program that has caused that downgrading of comparative statistical figures.<sup>11</sup>

And he laid the blame thusly:

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<sup>8</sup>Harold B. Lee, "Place of Mothers In The Plan of Teaching The Gospel In The Home", Relief Society Magazine, LII (January, 1965), 11.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.                   <sup>10</sup>Church News, October 24, 1964, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup>Harold B. Lee, General Conference Address, Official Report of the One Hundred Thirty-Fourth Semi Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 3, 1962 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d.), p. 81.

The real fault in many cases is with the leader who in the monthly ward council meeting should have aided in perfecting the most effective correlation of his particular organization with home teaching.<sup>12</sup>

Due to a misunderstanding, the following was given on October 24, 1964:

There is a misunderstanding by Home Teaching leaders as to the correct method of taking credit for oral evaluations made by Home Teachers to priesthood leaders. Home Teachers who visit five families are given credit by the Priesthood Leader for only one oral evaluation instead of one for each family visited one or more times during the month. It is intended that there shall always be one oral evaluation for each family visited as indicated. This method of reporting personalizes the oral evaluation on each member with a problem.<sup>13</sup>

At the end of the year the Church ~~prublished~~ published an additional manual, entitled, Suggestions for Home Teachers. This booklet suggested lesson topics which a home teacher could use with his families. There was one lesson topic given for December of 1964, and one for each month of 1965. Examples of these suggestions are as follows: family home evening, encouraging members to own the standard works, and how the scriptures may be used in the family home evening.<sup>14</sup>

Beginning in January of 1965, the new family home evening program was launched on a Church-wide basis. It was the duty of the home teachers to distribute the manuals for the new program. It was also the duty of the home teachers to explain the home evening

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Church News, October 24, 1964, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup>Suggestions For Home Teachers (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1964).

program to their families, as well as to help them implement it in their lives.<sup>15</sup> Another program to get under way in January of 1965 was the following:

To establish better communications between stake presidencies and the Home Teaching Committee of the Church, representatives will be assigned to attend stake conferences and regional meetings to work closely with you in this program. You are encouraged to give these representatives all cooperation possible.<sup>16</sup>

The importance of the oral evaluation was also noted in these words:

Oral evaluation is the heart of the Home Teaching Program and should be conducted on all levels as outlined in the Handbook. Priesthood leaders should schedule these interviews with each senior home teacher of his group, at which time he should give an oral evaluation on each family. Private interviews are necessary so as to insure the keeping of confidences. The priesthood leader should then privately review with the bishopric the condition of each family in his quorum with special attention to individual members who have problems.<sup>17</sup>

In April of 1965, notice was given of the appointment of Regional Home Teaching Chairmen. These Regional Chairmen were to conduct Regional Home Teaching meetings with stake presidents. They were to function under the direction of a Priesthood Home Teaching representative. They were also to "be the contact for correspondence within the region for such information as the Priesthood Home Teaching Representative would want to send on regional matters."<sup>18</sup>

Another priesthood home teaching handbook was published by the Church in June of 1965 entitled: Conducting the Oral Evaluation.

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<sup>15</sup>Church News, October 24, 1964, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup>Priesthood Bulletin (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1965).

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>18</sup>Bulletin, April, 1965, p. 3.

This book covered the following:

The purpose and philosophy of the oral evaluation interview was explained in Chapter Number 1. Chapter 2 is specifically devoted to analysis of his [the home teacher's] attitude and emotional and spiritual make up.

Fundamental to any plan conception is the process of getting the facts. This is covered in Chapter 3, which also emphasizes the family Record and Work Sheet to encourage "knowing your families" better. . . . Some elementary interview techniques were introduced in . . . Chapter 4. . . . The heart of the problem-solving work toward the exaltation of the families we serve is found in Chapter 5--"Making the Diagnosis," Chapter 6--"Planning the Strategy." Chapter 7--"Written Plans are More Effective," and Chapter 8--"Planning appropriate Challenges."

Two additional lessons were devoted to motivation of the Home Teacher, by teaching upgrading principles of human leadership to the priesthood leaders (Chapters 9 and 10). A most important lesson on follow-up and necessity of a new, monthly re-evaluation, followed in Chapter 11.<sup>19</sup>

The Era for October 1965, had an article on the similarity between home teachers and football players. Highlighting this article was the following:

. . . The home teacher must be alert to watch for changes. In those homes where the heads of families are not active and where constant visiting seemingly gets one nowhere, then is the time to report to the "quarterback," who is the group leader of quorum president. He surveys the situation; they talk it over and earnestly try to find openings, to discover means of reaching the head of the house.

For the discouraged home teacher who feels that he is making no progress, the oral evaluation can be the best means he may have available to discover what is the trouble.<sup>20</sup>

A special home teaching session of general conference was held in April, 1966. Elder Marion G. Romney, who conducted the session, said: "The time has come for each bearer of the priesthood to put

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<sup>19</sup> Conducting The Oral Evaluation (Salt Lake City: The Priesthood Home Teaching Committee of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1968), pp. 78-79.

<sup>20</sup> Era, LXVIII (October, 1965), 905.

on the 'full armor of Christ' with respect to Home Teaching."<sup>21</sup>  
 Elder Romney said that it was not intended that the home teacher should take the place of the father as head of the family. President Tanner said that the reason for such significance being placed upon this program was that there never had been such a need for home teachers and the role of the father in the home as there is today.<sup>22</sup>

L. Brent Goates, a member of the Priesthood Home Teaching Committee, published an article in the Era of October, 1966. He stated:

In the months ahead a renewed effort will be made throughout the Church to increase communication between parents and home teachers. Particular emphasis will be placed on recognizing the unique and presiding role of every father as the patriarch to his family. Regardless of the level of his activity in the Church, he stands at the head of his home. . . .

. . . The home teacher is a first line of defense behind the parents and is their strong ally in helping to bring their children back safely to the presence of our Heavenly Father. Everything that is necessary to the accomplishment of this divine mission is the duty of the home teacher, acting in concert with the parents in the home.<sup>23</sup>

#### SUMMARY

The home teaching process got off to a good start on January 1, 1964. The home teachers were reminded that they became, in fact, a personal bishop to their families.

There were a few problems that had to be ironed out as the process progressed. One was that the priesthood brethren had to be reminded that women were not to be used as home teaching companions

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<sup>21</sup>Church News, April 19, 1966, p. 16.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.      <sup>23</sup>Era, LXIX (October, 1966), 875.

except in very limited and specified instances. Another was that quorum presidencies were reminded that they were still obligated to visit new members as they moved into the ward. Stake and ward leaders were found bogged down with difficult home teaching assignments, which kept them from doing justice to their callings. Therefore, it was urged that they be given a light home teaching load. In the Relief Society, the sisters were reminded that home teaching did not discontinue their visiting teacher program. Some home teachers were even getting the idea that they were to take the place of the father in the homes.

President Lee said that one reason people were having so much difficulty was that they were misinterpreting and misunderstanding the directions given. He also said that there was the tendency to make home teaching a "whipping boy" for deficiencies in the various organizations. He said that the real fault was in the leader who did not use the monthly ward council to correlate with home teaching.

Home teaching manuals were printed in the various languages in order to meet the expectencies of the correlation program. This was not completed until after the home teaching process had begun. Two manuals: Suggestions for Home Teachers and Conducting the Oral Evaluation, were not put out until the home teaching process was more than a year old.

The home teachers received a lot of admonishment about magnifying their callings. They were likened unto a football team and were also encouraged to "put on the full armor of Christ in respect to home teaching."

It was promised that in the months ahead a renewed effort would be made to improve the communication between home teachers and parents.

## Chapter 12

### THE REVITALIZING YEARS OF THE HOME

#### TEACHING PROCESS

The year of 1967 was to be the time for reviewing and strengthening the home teaching process. It was announced in a letter from the First Presidency to stake presidents and bishops on December 28, 1966, and then put into the Church News by the home teaching committee on January 7, 1967. This was pursuant to action taken by the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve on September 22, 1966. The following was stated in the Church News:

A double-barreled program to emphasize and strengthen the Home Teaching program will be inaugurated this month throughout the church. . . .

The program involves:

1. A monthly general ward priesthood meeting to be held on the last Sunday of each month for the first eight months of 1967. No separation for departments will occur on this Sunday.

2. A stake priesthood meeting in the first quarter of the year devoted to Home Teaching following a program outlined by the general committee. . . .

"These meetings," reports the general committee, "Are designed for the purpose of training and motivating Home Teachers and priesthood leaders. If well prepared and ably presented by competent teachers, the lesson materials for these meetings should answer many questions and provide valuable training and inspiration for all Home Teachers."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, circular letter to presidents of stakes and bishops of wards, December 28, 1966, copy in LDS Church Historical Department.

<sup>2</sup>Deseret News, Church News [Salt Lake City], January 7, 1967, p. 6, hereafter cited as Church News.



The lessons were to be given to all priesthood bearers in the ward, Melchizedek and Aaronic meeting jointly: held each month from January through August, 1967.<sup>3</sup>

The first lesson was entitled: "The Home, The Father, The Mother, The Home Teacher." The following important instructions to the home teacher were enumerated;

In revelation given to the prophet Joseph Smith in April, 1830, the Lord defines the functions and specifies the duties of the offices and members of the Priesthood.

The duties of the Elders (including Apostles), he said, "are to preach, expound, exhort, baptize, and watch over the Church." The Priest's duty is to preach, teach, expound, exhort, and baptize, and administer the sacrament, and to visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret and attend to all family duties."

From this revelation, we learn several important things;

1. That all who hold the priesthood are expected to watch over and teach the Church;

2. That every family is to be assigned to home teachers;

3. That every family is to be visited;

4. That the home teacher is responsible for attendance at Church meetings, (the enlistment work of the Church thus becoming primarily his responsibility);

5. That the consent of the father is a prerequisite for the home teachers to work with their families. . . .

6. That, in receiving the priesthood each individual assumes the responsibility for doing home teaching and

7. That, in doing home teaching, the home teacher is performing a service and duty given him directly by the Lord and not a duty or service that originated in the mind of the Bishop or Priesthood Leader who calls him and assigns families to him.

The Lord did not give the responsibility to do home teaching--to visit the house of each member--to the Bishop but to all holders of the priesthood.

Home teachers, therefore, should not assume that in performing this great service they are primarily, or merely, assisting the Bishop and Priesthood Leader, or either of them, in the performance of their duties.<sup>4</sup>

The home teacher was instructed to always bear in mind:

1. That the father (or if the home is without a father, the mother) is the head of the family. . . .

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

2. That the consent of the father is a prerequisite to visiting and teaching. . . .

3. The home teachers enter the home as "Servants" and not "Lords" or "Masters. . . ."

4. The father should decide when and if prayer should be offered during the home teaching visit (although it may not be inappropriate for the home teacher to ask him if it is his desire. . . .

5. The Senior home teacher through a private interview with the father should secure (a) his permission to visit and teach his family; (b) his advice as to the needs of the family members; (c) his opinion as to how to meet these needs; (d) his full cooperation in the home teaching program as it relates to his home. . . .

6. Having thus consulted the father, the home teacher should respect his wishes and desires.

7. Visits to the home should, where appropriate, be made by previous appointment so as to be convenient to home teachers and family members.

8. The home teachers should in all their service be sincere, courteous, kind, considerate and loving--being the embodiment and exemplification of all the virtues they would seek to develop and encourage in the lives of their families.<sup>5</sup>

There was a follow up article on the father's role as head of the family published in the Church News of February 4, 1967, commenting on how the home teacher should work to establish this role. It was stated:

A. By correlating home visits through the father.

(Special note: Home teachers, if they have not already done so should at the earliest convenience, consult with the head of each family, gain his confidence, learn of special circumstances and needs of the family, determine the course of action, and agree upon the procedure to be followed by the head of the family and the Home Teachers.) . . .

B. The interview mentioned will be particularly helpful in homes of active families where Home Teachers traditionally "have nothing to do or to talk about."

C. In all his contacts with the family, it should be within the scope of the Home Teacher to help the father fully understand his position of "leadership" in the home. . . .<sup>6</sup>

The lesson for February, 1967 was on the call and assignment

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Church News, February 4, 1967, p. 7.

of the home teacher. It explained who makes the call to a potential home teacher. The call is to be made by a personal interview with the priesthood leader. It was explained that: "The Home Teacher is the priesthood representative between the Church and the family."<sup>7</sup> Harold B. Lee has said: "Home Teaching isn't just one of the programs. . . . Home Teaching is the instrument by which we see to it, through the priesthood, that every program in the Church is made available to parents and their children."<sup>8</sup>

An article entitled "When all Else Fails--Use Manual," was published in the Church News of February 18, 1967. The family record sheets, the monthly reports, and the planning report forms were explained. It stated: "Confidential matters regarding families should NOT be listed on the written report. Home Teachers should advise families to take up serious personal, confidential problems directly with the bishop."<sup>9</sup>

The lesson for March was on the responsibility of the call being from the Lord. It mentioned that: "Every person who receives the priesthood receives the authorities, powers, duties and responsibilities inherent in the priesthood, among which are the authority, power, duty and responsibility to act as a home teacher."<sup>10</sup> The various duties of the home teacher were enumerated and explained.

The lesson for April was on the need for good training. President McKay was reported as identifying the following three items

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<sup>7</sup>Church News, February 18, 1967, p. 12.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Church News, February 18, 1967, p. 12.

<sup>10</sup>Church News, March 18, 1967, p. 10.

as necessities in the preparation process: "(1) A knowledge of those whom we are to teach. (2) A knowledge of what we are to teach. (3) A knowledge of how we are to teach."<sup>11</sup>

The purpose and need for training of home teachers was further explained.

The lesson for May was on the oral evaluation. It said: Today the oral evaluation is regarded as the 'single most vital part of the Home Teaching Program.'<sup>12</sup> The advantages of the home teacher's oral evaluation with his priesthood leader were then summarized as follows:

- A. "It provides a regular, continuing training contact between the home teacher and his priesthood leader.
- B. It can be directed to the specific problems and needs of the home teacher and of the families for which he is responsible.
- C. It can include ideas received by the priesthood leader from his monthly oral evaluation with the bishop.
- D. It can fit the particular needs of each home teacher, thus, it can be as comprehensive or brief as the priesthood leader feels is necessary."<sup>13</sup>

In June, the lesson as published in the Church News, was on the "Challenge." The article explained:

The Challenge underlies the whole Home teaching Program. . . . It is to be given by the Home Teachers, together with sufficient motivation to create the desire to achieve it within a mutually agreed and definitely stated period of time.<sup>14</sup>

Challenges may be expressed as positive, passive, or implied. A challenge must be within reach of the person. As stated in the Church News:

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<sup>11</sup> Church News, April 22, 1967, p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> Church News, May 20, 1967, p. 10.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Church News, June 17, 1967, p. 10.

. . . Most goals and problems for which challenges are given can only eventually be solved by the individual himself, since it requires some action on his part.

We can help to motivate others, but a challenge is achieved only when the individual decides he wants to do something to better himself.<sup>15</sup>

The lesson for July of 1967, was on the use of the Ward Priesthood Executive Committee. It stated:

The bishop, as the presiding high priest, is responsible for the correlation of all Church activities in the ward. This he accomplishes through the meetings of the bishopric, the ward Priesthood Executive committee and the Ward Council.<sup>16</sup>

The organization of, the use of, and the correlation of the Ward Executive Committee were explained.

The last lesson, August 1967, was on the communication line. This lesson more or less climaxed the previous lessons. It encouraged and explained the correlation of the home teaching process.

In the Era for September, 1967, an article in the Melchizedek Priesthood section asked if the needs of the families were being met. The following instruction was given: "Before arriving at the home, the home teacher should have in mind the specific goals of these parents who have privately communicated with them their sacred hopes and ambitions for their family."<sup>17</sup>

And the home teacher was admonished: "Home teaching is much more than a monthly social visit. Home teachers have the sacred responsibility of preparing their assigned families to be worthy to enter into the presence of God."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Church News, July 15, 1967, p. 10.

<sup>17</sup> The Improvement Era, LXX (September 1967), 8, hereafter cited as Era.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

A seminar was held on home teaching on September 27, 1967. In this seminar, Bishop John H. Vandenberg gave some very important advice on how to stimulate home teachers and their families to do their duty in bringing about quality home teaching. Within his remarks he said:

If the home teacher will motivate his families by giving them a vision of how the Church can fill their needs, the family then assumes the weight of the responsibility. The family then can work with the home teacher, and the whole complexion of the relationship will change as the objective becomes a common one. In this relationship, the home teacher truly becomes a friend.<sup>19</sup>

Continuing, Bishop Vandenberg said:

Home teaching aims to exalt, through the priesthood, the individual and the family, beginning in the home. . . . The whole charge of leadership for Home Teaching will be strengthened if it is welded in an atmosphere of genuine friendship.<sup>20</sup>

Then he said:

What does it take to make and hold friends in Priesthood Home Teaching? May we suggest five points?

First, We Must Know Our Duty. . . . We shall be esteemed more as friends if we thoroughly know our duty in Home Teaching, and if we know, too, the duty of those whom we would motivate. . . .

Second, Know Your People. . . . We come to know our friends by becoming aware of their desires, needs, interests, etc. and by showing them how the gospel can satisfy such needs. . . .

Third, Be Interested In Them. . . . [Leaders] in the Home Teaching cause will respond to you as a friend if you show a concern in them personally. That is the heart of Home Teaching, to help exalt and give emphasis to the individual. Home Teaching does not aim to build programs. It strives to build individuals. . . .

Fourth, Take Time For Them. . . . Friendships take time. . . . Friendships cannot come without frequent association. . . . make your communications meaningful and do not become a nuisance. . . . Give your friend time to open up his heart by your opening up

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<sup>19</sup> John H. Vandenberg, "Be Friends" Unpublished talk delivered at Seminar for General Authorities and Regional Representatives, September 27, 1967 (Salt Lake City), copy in LDS Church Historical Department.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

yours. . . .

Fifth, Show Them the Way and the Joy of Pursuing It. . . . Home Teaching must be exciting, challenging, and joyous, and above all, successful. If it is not it fails. It deals in friendships. It aims to make friends--friends with our Eternal Father by keeping his commandments, with his Son Jesus the Christ, and with him who is called the Holy Ghost.<sup>21</sup>

Elder Harold B. Lee made a report from the Correlation Committee in the general conference of October, 1967. Within his remarks on home teaching, he said:

Home teaching, in essence, means that we consider separately each individual member of the family who constitutes the entire home personnel. Home teaching, as distinguished from ward teaching, is to help the parents with home problems in their efforts to teach their families the fundamentals of parental responsibility, as contrasted with merely bringing a message, a gospel message, to the entire family.<sup>22</sup>

A seminar on home teaching was held on April 3, 1968. In this meeting, Elder Romney outlined the home teaching process with the scriptures, and encouraged the brethren present to magnify their callings. Within his remarks he defined home teaching thusly: "I would say that Home Teaching is the method adopted by the Church to implement the instructions . . . . quoted from the 20th section, [of the D&C] which the Lord gave to elders, priests, teachers and deacons."<sup>23</sup>

At this same seminar, Elder Alvin R. Dyer pointed out the following:

There are two principles involved in Home Teaching pursuits. These are receiving and giving. It goes without saying that in

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Era, LXX (November, 1967), 66-67.

<sup>23</sup>Marion G. Romney, Unpublished talk delivered at Seminar for Regional Representatives of the Twelve, April 3, 1968 (Salt Lake City), copy in LDS Church Historical Department.

order to give we must receive. This procedure was clearly explained by the Lord to Hyrum Smith by revelation of the Prophet Joseph Smith. ". . . first seek to obtain my word and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men." (D&C 11:21.)

We must first do some receiving, or as the Lord has said, "obtain My word." In applying this to Home teaching, it means from sources already provided, found in the handbook and manuals.  
 . . .<sup>24</sup>

The manuals he indicated are the Home Teaching Handbook, Priesthood Correlation In Home Teaching and Conducting The Oral Evaluation.<sup>25</sup>

Rex C. Reeve, a member of the priesthood home teaching committee also spoke at this seminar. He gave the following encouragement to Regional Representatives, which is very applicable for any priesthood leader who has responsibility for home teaching. He said:

We need to have the conviction and be able to see that the PRIESTHOOD HOME TEACHING PRINCIPLE is the key to seeing that all the programs in the Church happen, including sacrament meeting attendance. We need to feel this strongly enough that we can get the stake or ward leader to REALLY see this, and actually BELIEVE it sufficiently to feel to use this great PRIESTHOOD HOME TEACHING PRINCIPLE.

The priesthood leader must really believe this--not just give it lip service--but believe it so strongly that he actually KNOWS it will produce the results. He must understand that the Priesthood Home Teaching Principle is not just another program of the Church but that it is THE WAY, through men magnifying their priesthood, to prepare and exalt our Father's Children in this, or any age of the Church.<sup>26</sup>

He concluded by saying: "There is NO doubt but that it works, if the leader can see the vision of it and has the faith and desire to put it into operation."<sup>27</sup>

A circular letter from the Council of the Twelve noted:

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.



Some home teachers have made it a practice, on occasion, to invite their assigned families to their homes or to special events for an evening of fellowship. In some cases, all the families assigned to a pair of home teachers have met together; others have invited them on an individual family basis to dinner and to participate in the home teacher's Family Home Evening. An evening together in a park or other outdoor recreation area with a well-planned but informal program can do wonders for welding friendships and winning the confidence of family members for their home teachers.<sup>28</sup>

The above practice was said to be commendable and highly recommended. However, it was noted that such visits: ". . . Should when used, not replace but supplement the regular visits to the homes and the other additional contacts with the families or family members."<sup>29</sup>

The same letter also noted:

It is the responsibility of those who bear the priesthood to "watch over the church always." This is a priesthood activity of great import. The Lord in revelation was very explicit that priesthood bearers visit periodically "The house of each member." The commission was to the righteous as well as the dilatory. The inactive were to be encouraged and motivated to activity. The righteous were to be kept in the path of righteousness by the Lord's appointed servants.<sup>30</sup>

In dealing with both the active and inactive the letter further directed:

It is a reasonable conclusion that some priesthood bearers are more capable, because of training, experience and temperament, to work with inactive people just as some are better able to influence youth than others. Home teachers should therefore be selected as far as possible and assigned to families for their potential ability to help the respective families with their problems.<sup>31</sup>

If some home teachers are to be appointed to work primarily

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<sup>28</sup> The Council of the Twelve of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, circular letter to Regional Representatives of the Twelve, May 21, 1968, copy in LDS Church Historical Department.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

with inactive families then:

It is understandable that those who work with inactive people or people with problems should be given less families to work with than those whose assigned families are active in the Church. It is sure that motivating inactive members to activity requires study, planning and more contracts than a single visit per month. In some cases, home teachers with other Church responsibilities may have but one or two families assigned to them. At the bishop's prayerful discretion, it may be that both senior and junior companions assigned to such families would be carefully chosen, adult priesthood bearers.

Home teachers assigned to active families may be assigned to eight, ten, or more families. The visits would be short and the problems of motivation relatively few.<sup>32</sup>

In another seminar held in June of 1968, Elder Romney traced the history of the home teaching process back to Joseph Smith, and explained the process by the scriptures.<sup>33</sup> Much of this talk has been quoted in Chapters 3 and 4.

An impressive talk was given by Elder Boyd K. Packer at another seminar held on October 2-3, 1968. Within his talk he said:

Home teaching is here to stay. . . . There isn't any other way. All other activities are helpful. Some of them vital, but all are only part solutions. The only solution that can succeed is the one that relates directly to the family. Home teachers are the ones authorized to work directly with the family.

Priesthood home teaching is fundamental to the success of all other activities. Without it they do not get into the home nor can they get family members to come out and participate fully.

We are bold enough to suggest that you may live to learn, that to neglect some of the other activities in favor of home teaching, in the long run is not to weaken them, but really to strengthen them.

Please know--we do not pretend that priesthood home teaching is an easy solution nor is it a quick one. We just know that it is the only one.

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Marion G. Romney, "What is Home Teaching?" Unpublished talk delivered at Mission Presidents Seminar, June, 1968 (Salt Lake City), copy in LDS Church Historical Department.

No one has ever pretended that home teaching is a snap. The only thing that has been represented about home teaching is that it is the right way, that it will succeed. That over the long course, where everything counts, it is the only way that can succeed. . . . We think, perhaps, that it may take a year--sometimes even longer. Anything that grows quickly ordinarily dies quickly. The mayfly, which grows to maturity in but a few hours, has a life span of but several more.

It is worth a year to build priesthood home teaching.

It is worth two, or ten or twenty.<sup>34</sup>

In a circular letter dated January 22, 1969, the First Presidency made known the new position of a stake executive secretary. It read: "The Executive Secretary (not a high councilor) will assume those responsibilities for Priesthood Home Teaching previously assigned to a member of the stake high council."<sup>35</sup>

In the general conference of April, 1969, Elder Marion G. Romney gave a talk on home teaching and family home evening. Within the instructions given, he said:

Some of the things that can be done through home teaching--and this is really the purpose of this talk tonight--to inspire obedience to the commandment to teach the gospel in the home, and particularly to hold the home evening as directed, are as follows:

To the stake presidents:

1. That under the leadership of the stake president, there be in every stake an evening--other than Sunday--designated and exclusively reserved as home evening. . . .
2. Let each stake president see to it that he himself regularly conducts a weekly home evening with his own family, and that he inspires each of his counselors, clerks, high councilors, and all members of his stake council to do likewise. . . .
3. That in their monthly oral evaluations, stake presidents motivate bishops and branch presidents to implement the family home evening program in their own homes and in their wards and

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<sup>34</sup>Boyd K. Packer, Unpublished talk delivered at Priesthood Home Teaching Seminar, October 2, 3, 1968 (Salt Lake City), copy in LDS Church Historical Department.

<sup>35</sup>The First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, circular letter to stake and Mission Presidents, January 22, 1969, copy in LDS Church Historical Department.

branches.

Now to the bishops:

4. Let every bishop and branch president not only conduct a weekly home evening with his own family, but also teach, exhort, and inspire his counselors, clerks, and ward council members that they follow his example.

5. That in their monthly oral evaluations with their priesthood leaders, bishops and branch presidents accomplish three things: One, inspire these leaders to conduct home evenings with their own families. Two, motivate them to inspire home teachers to hold home evenings with their own families, and to encourage the families, and to encourage the families they visit to hold home evenings. Three, bishops should, at these interviews, receive a report from each priesthood leader on the status of home teaching in the families for whom he is responsible.

6. Let every home teacher (a) regularly conduct with his own family the kind of a home evening he would be proud to have the families he visits use as an example, and (b) carry into the homes of his families he is assigned to visit such teaching, encouragement, and spirit as will inspire them to observe home evening. The home teacher should also render a complete report on each of his families to his priesthood leader each month in their interviews.

Such is the care we must exercise, brethren, as we watch over the Church, if we are to prevail "against the wiles of the devil. . . ." <sup>36</sup>

Elder Romney pointed out the powers of Satan, and the object of his main thrust in the following:

Satan, our enemy, is making an allout assault upon righteousness. His well-marshaled forces are legion. Our children and youth are the targets of his main thrust. They are everywhere subjected to wicked and vicious propaganda. Every place they turn, they are buffeted with evil, cunningly devised to deceive and to destroy every sacred thing and every righteous principle. . . .

If our children are to be sufficiently strengthened to stand against this satanic onslaught, they must be taught and trained in the home, as the Lord directed.

Let every priesthood bearer, in the majesty and power of his calling, set in order his own house; let him regularly observe home evening and otherwise bring up his 'children in light and truth' (D&C 93:40); exhort, encourage, and inspire his families that they follow his example. Then will the children of Zion be able to 'Arise and shine forth, that [her] light may be a standard for the nations.' (D&C 115:5). <sup>37</sup>

The Church News of April 19, 1969, contained an article from

<sup>36</sup> Era, LXXII (June, 1969), 96-97.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

Elder Romney, wherein he stated:

The duty to perform the service of a home teacher is inherent in the acceptance of ordination to the Melchizedek priesthood and to the office of Priest and Teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood. I cannot see how a priesthood bearer can willfully refuse to do home teaching without violating the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood.<sup>38</sup>

In the Church News of May 3, 1969, the home teacher was reminded of the importance of the eleven year old boy, that it was the responsibility of the home teacher, working in conjunction with the father, to prepare the boy for the priesthood, and to arrange for an interview between the boy and his bishop.<sup>39</sup>

Before a meeting of regional representatives, Presiding Bishop John H. Vandenberg said that home teachers should promote home evenings. A synopsis of this speech was published in the Church News of May 10, 1969. It said, in part, that the Bishop:

. . . outlined five principles the home teachers could use which should be effective with all fathers.

The first principle is using a heart-to-heart approach when talking to the father. . . .

. . . the second principle is paying attention to the children. . . .

"Another valuable principle," the bishop said, "is to show families how to hold their family Home Evenings. . . .

The fourth principle, Bishop Vandenberg outlines, was to honor the father as the presiding officer in the home. He said the home teachers should discuss privately with the father his role as head of the home. . . .

The final principle he outlined was to be positive, but not to preach. Instead share experiences, he said.<sup>40</sup>

In September of 1969, the Church published a series of small

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<sup>38</sup>Church News, April 19, 1969, p. 16.

<sup>39</sup>Church News, May 3, 1969, p. 4.

<sup>40</sup>Church News, May 10, 1969, pp. 3, 15.

pamphlets on suggestions to home teachers. The suggestions in the pamphlets are as follows: "How can I talk to children?"; "How can I encourage a child to go to primary?"; "How can I make a child's baptism seem important to him?"; "How can I talk to teens?"; "What can I do to help a boy entering or serving in the military service?"; "How can I discern what my families need so that I can help them?"; "How can I judge success in my home teaching?"; "Helping families understand what a family home evening is"; "How can I encourage families to hold home evenings?"; "How can I encourage families to improve home evenings?"; "How to encourage those without children to have family home evenings."<sup>41</sup>

This series of pamphlets contained valuable hints for the home teacher, and proved to be a real asset to those who made use of them.

In December of 1969, the Era carried an article by Elder Alvin R. Dyer on how an oral evaluation can help home teachers keep close to the families they visit.<sup>42</sup>

#### SUMMARY

The year of 1967 was a time of reviewing and strengthening the function of home teaching. Starting in January, and for the next eight months, the wards were to conduct monthly home teaching sessions in the regularly scheduled priesthood meetings.

The first lesson was a composite of what the next seven lessons were to be about. It was on the home, the father, the mother

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<sup>41</sup>Suggestions for Priesthood Home Teachers (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1969).

<sup>42</sup>Era, December, 1969, pp. 18-19.

and the home teacher. The main emphasis was on the importance of the position of the father in the home. Home teachers were admonished to recognize and honor the father in his position.

The lesson for February was on the call and assignment of home teachers, emphasizing the importance of the personal interview, and that the home teacher was the priesthood representative. The lesson for March was on the responsibility of the call being from the Lord. The lesson for April was on the purpose and need for good training of home teachers. The lesson for May was on the oral evaluation. It was emphasized that the oral evaluation was a time for training as well as a time for reporting. The lesson for June was on the use of and importance of the challenge in the home teaching process. The use of the Ward Executive Committee was the subject taken up in July: and the last lesson was on the home teaching line of communication.

In September, 1967, an article came out in the Era which encouraged home teachers to keep the goals set by their families. It was emphasized that home teaching is more than just a social visit because home teachers hold the responsibility of preparing their assigned families to enter into the presence of God.

In a seminar held in September, 1967, Bishop Vandenberg gave some important insights as to how we can get home teachers, and their leaders, to catch the vision of home teaching.

President Lee made a report from the correlation committee in October, 1967, wherein he gave further insight into the home teaching function.

In January of 1968, President McKay wrote an article for the Era wherein he outlined three needs of preparation for home teaching. Home teaching was taken up in the seminar of April, 1968, where President Romney used the scriptures to outline home teaching. Elder Dyer spoke on the importance of using the home teaching handbooks, and Rex C. Reeve encouraged home teaching leaders to catch the vision of the work.

A circular letter was sent out by the Council of the Twelve giving direction to leaders on how to regulate home teaching districts in accordance with the amount of activity of Church members.

At a seminar held in October of 1968, Elder Packer said that the home teaching process was the right way because it was the Lord's way even though it might take several years to perfect.

In January of 1969, the First Presidency made known the office and calling of the stake executive secretary. In the general conference of April, 1969, President Romney gave instructions on implementing the home evening program throughout the Church through home teaching channels.

In the Church News of April 19, 1969, home teachers were told that their calling to be home teachers was inherent in their calling to the priesthood; and in an article for May 10, they were reminded to prepare the eleven year old boy for the priesthood.

The Church News of May 10, 1969 published a summary of a meeting for regional representatives on home teaching. At this meeting, Bishop Vandenberg outlined the important steps for successful home teaching. In September, a series of pamphlets with helpful



hints for home teachers were sent out to the various wards; and in December, an article in the Era by Alvin R. Dyer emphasized the importance of the oral evaluation.

## Chapter 13

### THE PROGRESSING YEARS OF THE HOME TEACHING PROCESS

Elder Boyd K. Packer has said:

No one has ever pretended that home teaching is a snap. The only thing that has been represented about home teaching is that it is the right way, that it will succeed. That over the long course, where everything counts, it is the only way that can succeed.<sup>1</sup>

And so it is, as the years have come and gone, each has had its own special successes and problems. This was as it was in the early nineteen seventies. Continued stress was laid upon the home teaching process that it might fulfill its purposes.

In March of 1970, the stakes were asked to conduct a priesthood leadership meeting on home teaching, giving examples, of what quality home teaching was like. This was to help the leaders in home teaching to grasp the vision of the process.<sup>2</sup>

In May of 1970, the home teachers were offered additional aids to improve the quality of their visits. As recorded in the

#### Church News:

A series of "how to" brochures are now being distributed to

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<sup>1</sup>Boyd K. Packer, unpublished talk delivered At Priesthood Home Teaching Seminar, October 2, 3, 1968 (Salt Lake City), copy in L.D.S. Historical Department.

<sup>2</sup>"Outline for Melchizedek Priesthood Departmental Session of Priesthood Leadership Meeting," The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, March, 1970, copy in L.D.S. Church Historical Department.

home teachers to help them improve the quality of their visits.

The small pamphlets, which will fit into the home teaching binder, have been prepared by the Home Teaching Committee of the Church. They cover such subjects as talking to children and encouraging family home evenings.

Each is planned to aid the home teacher with a specific situation he may encounter as he visits with his families. . . .

These brochures now represent the voice of the Church to the home teacher.<sup>3</sup>

In August of 1970, notice was given that:

The priesthood home teaching reporting system has been revised and greatly simplified. The new reporting system will begin in September 1970. . . .

The home teaching reports will now be submitted early in the month that follows the month being reported. This will eliminate the present one-month delay.

Oral evaluations remain an essential and vital part of the program. Written reports will be sent in independently of these evaluations. Duplicate copies of reports that have been retained will serve as resource material for these evaluations. All oral evaluations that take place during the month being reported will be accounted for on the report for that month.<sup>4</sup>

Another priesthood leadership session was to be conducted in the stakes on home teaching in March of 1971. The objective of this session was: "To teach that home teaching is the vehicle that provides communication between organizations of the Church and the home in order that priesthood home teachers may perform their vital function."<sup>5</sup>

It was to be emphasized that:

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<sup>3</sup>Deseret News, Church News [Salt Lake City], May 23, 1970, p. 15, hereafter cited as Church News.

<sup>4</sup>The Priesthood Bulletin (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, August, 1970), p. 3, hereafter cited as Bulletin.

<sup>5</sup>"Stake Priesthood Leadership Meeting." The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, March, 1971, copy in L.D.S. Church Historical Department.

. . . home teaching is sometimes thought of as one of four priesthood programs, and as such, is considered to be an individual program such as the missionary program, the welfare program, and the genealogical program. This concept is inaccurate.

. . . It is not like the other three priesthood programs; rather it is a vehicle to take these three and other programs into the homes of the saints. Thus, home teaching is that means whereby all Church programs are taken into the homes.<sup>6</sup>

In April of 1971, the Church published a pamphlet entitled Essentials of Effective Priesthood Home Teaching Evaluations. This pamphlet was to be a guide for the oral evaluations between priesthood leader and home teacher; bishop and priesthood leader; stake president and bishop. The criterion for these meetings was under the following headings: "Prayer," "Praise," "Review," "Preview," and "Strengthen."<sup>7</sup>

There were two notable changes in the 1971 revision of the Home Teaching Handbook. One was concerning the oral evaluation: "The evaluations may be held at any time during the month. Each ward and stake should determine their own schedule." The other was that deacons could now serve as home teachers where there were not enough teachers or priests available.<sup>8</sup>

The Prospective Elder's program began in January of 1972. According to a letter of the First Presidency, as cited by the Church News:

The designation, "Aaronic Priesthood/Adult" will be discontinued, and all elders quorum presidencies or group leaders will

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Essentials of Effective Priesthood Home Teaching Evaluations (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April, 1971).

<sup>8</sup> Priesthood Home Teaching Handbook (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1971), pp. 14, 18.

assume the duties heretofore held by general secretaries of the Aaronic Priesthood/Adult, according to the letter.

Although the basic responsibility for home teaching remains with the bishop, elders quorums should be given the responsibility for teaching all prospective elders and their families. It's also urged that where feasible, prospective elders who hold the Aaronic Priesthood should be used as home teachers.<sup>9</sup>

This new program greatly increased the responsibility of elders quorum presidents, especially as it relates to home teaching, as explained by the article:

It should be understood that if elders presidents are to do the great work expected of them, they may well be next to the bishops, the most capable men in the wards.

Each elder's quorum president, with the assistance of his counselors, quorum secretaries and committee members, should be fully responsible to implement the quorum's responsibility for prospective elders, including home teaching evaluations, the letter stated.<sup>10</sup>

An article on the home teaching committee came out in the Church News of December 11, 1971. This article covered the committee in the following manner:

Each Tuesday afternoon the Priesthood Home Teaching Committee of the Church meets on the second Floor of the Church Office building to discuss the progress of home teaching throughout the church.

The meeting is usually held in the office of Elder Marion G. Romney of the Council of Twelve. He is chairman of the committee which also has responsibility for the Family Home Evening Program.

Elder Boyd K. Packer, also a member of the Council of Twelve, serves as managing director of the committee, while Presiding Bishop John H. Vandenberg is the committee's vice chairman.

Elder George D. Durant is executive secretary. Assisting are Lee Miller and Alma Gardner.

The five arrived early this week and were discussing home teaching in general when Elder Romney arrived, having just left another meeting.

The men rose as a group and Elder Romney welcomed each of

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<sup>9</sup>Church News, January 29, 1972, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

them individually.

As he began to move towards his chair, he began to speak:

"Home teaching is moving the way the Lord presented it to Joseph Smith before the Church was organized," he said.

"We are beginning to get the spirit of home teaching as He would have us do home teaching if He were here," Elder Romney continued, "But we haven't yet got the whole priesthood to wake up to their responsibility. We are moving slowly ahead. . . ."

Elder Packer commented on the value of evaluations in priesthood home teaching:

"In stakes where things are moving, they are having evaluations," he said. "Things are moving not only in priesthood home teaching, but in all priesthood and auxiliary activities," he added.

"Where full emphasis is placed on evaluation, channels are open from the individual family all the way up through the ranks of the priesthood leaders and back down to the family. . . ."

Bishop Vandenberg added that as the members of the Aaronic Priesthood youth do home teaching, they will have spiritual experiences.

"Holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood have a real obligation to train, use and develop the members of Aaronic Priesthood who are assigned to them as companions for home teaching." Bishop Vandenberg said.

He added that the young men also have a responsibility to assist the elders in this aspect of their work. Elder Durrant said that two new brochures in the series "Suggestions To Priesthood Home Teachers" are now available. . . .

Elder Miller stated that a reprint of the handbook of instructions for Priesthood Home Teaching has recently come off the press. . . .

After the meeting, Elder Durrant said, "There is always such a warm feeling of cooperation and love in our meetings. It is such a pleasure to work with these wonderful men. Although our meetings are short, we cover the planned agenda quickly and there is always a good feeling there."<sup>11</sup>

The above quotation is an excellent example of the regularly scheduled home teaching committee meetings. Notice the apparent satisfaction of President Romney when he said: "Home teaching is moving the way the Lord presented it to Joseph Smith." But he was a little disappointed when he said: "We are beginning to get the spirit of home teaching as He would have us do home teaching if He

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<sup>11</sup>Church News, December 11, 1971, pp. 3 - 4.

were here," Elder Romney continued, "but we haven't yet got the whole priesthood to wake up to their responsibility. We are moving slowly ahead."<sup>12</sup>

President Lee spoke along the same line in his address at a seminar in April of 1972. He said:

Maybe the home teacher should be charged more clearly to describe his mission to watch over--to strengthen--to see that members do their duty. There's our failure. They think themselves as teachers of the Gospel message only. Maybe we ought to be calling them home guardians or sentinels and to report their stewardship to the Fathers of the Ward. We must do something to change the emphasis from teaching to guardians watching over the Church kind of concept. Until we can get that into their minds, we are not going to do the kind of home teaching that is going to get results. I think something should be thought in that direction.<sup>13</sup>

And then he spoke on the importance of the oral evaluation as a means of strengthening the home teaching process in the following words:

Bishops are to evaluate the matters that should reflect accurately their fatherly concern after the quorum leaders make their evaluation to their bishops. Now the stake grandfathers--the stake presidents--not just counselors to accept with appreciation the Regional Representatives as overseers, over the flocks, but they are to make certain that the lambs and the sheep are safely into the "bed-ground" of the Lord, "for a defense from the wolves and a refuge from the storms" to quote the Lord's words. We have some time left to see that we get the lambs and the sheep into the "bed-ground" of the Lord before the wolves take them over and we can't reclaim them. Parents to home teacher, home teacher to bishops, bishops to stake presidents and then stake presidents to you Regional Representatives. Make sure that you are having those oral evaluations with your stake presidents to check on them. And then we are asking the Twelve to have oral evaluations with you and I think that most of you have now had a recent oral evaluation. The First Presidency are now going to have an oral evaluation from the

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Harold B. Lee, unpublished talk delivered at Seminar for Regional Representatives, April, 1972, pp. 8 - 9 (Salt Lake City), copy in L.D.S. Church Historical Department.

Twelve. In turn we must make certain that our stewardship is acceptable to the Lord.<sup>14</sup>

More assistance was given to the home teacher in the pages of the Ensign. The home teacher was to ask himself each of the following questions, and to think about the answer. By so doing, he would be preparing himself properly to fully "watch over the Church":

1. Have I, as a home teacher, knelt before the Lord in earnest supplication for the fathers and families assigned to me? Have I prayed with the fathers, individually and as appropriate, in seeking the Lord's guidance in establishing a proper relationship with them and their families? Have I and my priesthood leader knelt to present ourselves before the Lord to be his tools in strengthening the homes of the of the kingdom? Have my companion and I also sought the Lord's counsel?

2. Have I listened carefully to the instructions of my priesthood leader? Do I fully understand his spirit and his concern for the families under his responsibility?

3. Do I respect the sacred nature of the family unit by working through the father, even when the father is inactive or a non-member? Do I sit down with the father as often as needed? Do I listen to him? Do I encourage and praise and otherwise uplift him?

4. Am I constantly alert to ways of establishing and maintaining friendship and confidence with my assigned families?

5. Do I recognize that my calling and opportunity as a home teacher is to watch over and strengthen fathers of families? --that the Lord expects fathers and mothers first to teach the gospel to their families in regular family home evenings and daily as teaching moments arise?--that my companion and I may be asked to assist on special occasions?

6. Do I meditate and plan ways to strengthen and assist those members who are strong in the Church? For those who are new or perhaps not so strong?

7. Am I conscientiously relaying special messages and fulfilling special assignments given to me by my priesthood leader and the bishop?

8. Have I made it a habit to greet my families as they attend their various meetings? Am I concerned when I notice their absence?

9. Do I have a plan for those families who have not yet been sealed as eternal units in the house of the Lord?

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid.



10. Am I aware of any father's need of assistance in establishing and maintaining effective family home evenings?

11. Am I available to my families, and do they seek me out for special assistance, such as illness, accident, death, or emergency transportation?

12. In general, am I always thinking of how I can help the fathers under my care magnify their priesthood by fully accepting their responsibilities as patriarchs of their families?<sup>15</sup>

In the general conference of October 8, 1972, Elder Boyd K. Packer spoke on the importance of the home teaching process. He gave the following illustration:

. . . some activities may have much more appeal, but there is none that is more important.

It is interesting that things so basic are taken so for granted. For example, there is within us a coursing supply of blood delivering nourishment to sustain the body, carrying away waste materials and armed with a protection against disease and infection. The blood supply is kept in motion by the incessant and dependable pumping of the heart. It is vital to life.

Ordinarily, however, a sliver in the finger gets more attention and is of more concern. No one pays much thought to the beating of the heart until there is the threat that it may be interrupted or stopped. It is then that we pay attention.

Home teaching, strangley enough, is taken so for granted that most members pay little attention to it, participating routinely, sometimes almost with annoyance. Through it, nevertheless, there comes to members of the Church a protection and a watch-care not known elsewhere.<sup>16</sup>

To those who take lightly their assignment as home teachers, he said:

I have heard men say in response to a question about their Church assignment, "I am only a home teacher."

Only a home teacher. Only a guardian of a flock. Only the one appointed where the ministry matters most. Only a servant of the Lord!<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>V. C. Frame, "Some Candid Questions For Home Teachers," The Ensign, II (September, 1972), 80-81, hereafter cited as Ensign.

<sup>16</sup>Boyd K. Packer, General Conference Address, Official Report of the One-Hundred Forty-Second Semi Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 8, 1972 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d.), p. 101.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

Elder James A. Cullimore took up the topic of home teaching the following day. He said: "In 1963 Home Teaching was introduced to the Church. This differed from Ward Teaching in that greater emphasis was placed on watching over the family, rather than just making a monthly visit."<sup>18</sup> But, he said, reluctantly:

. . . After nine years of Home Teaching, however, we are really still doing Ward Teaching. We are still prodding the Priesthood Home Teachers to "hurry and get your Home Teaching done, the month is nearly over." Even now the Home Teacher is heard to say, "If I really had a message to take to my families I could do my teaching."

These things indicate we really don't have the vision of "Watching over the Church." We might have a great record of percentage of homes visited each month, but the real test is, are we affecting the lives of the individual members of the family for good through our contacts? Are we respecting the sacred nature of the family unit by working with and through the father? Do we sit down with the father as often as needed? Do we listen to him? Do we encourage and praise and otherwise uplift him?

Our calling and opportunity as Home Teachers are to watch over and strengthen fathers of families--the Lord expects fathers and mothers first to teach the gospel to their families in regular Family Home Evenings and daily as teaching opportunities arise. Home Teachers may be asked to assist on special occasions.

We have been counseled that "The family, presided over by the priesthood holder, is the basic Church unit. We know as Home Teachers the order of the priesthood requires us to work with a family through the presiding authority in the family, the father. The father should be recognized in his position. The Lord holds him responsible for the righteous functions of his family in relation to other Church units and for the conducting of his family into eternal life. The Home Teacher working with and through the father strengthens his role and responsibility." Our thought as Home Teachers should always be, "How can I help the fathers under my care magnify their priesthood by fully accepting their responsibility as patriarchs of their families?"

We might put much effort into working with individuals in a family and eventually reach a child, but our real challenge is to work with the father in strengthening him that he might lead the entire family to Celestial Glory.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., James A. Cullimore, p. 163.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 164.

Elder Cullimore quoted Rex C. Reeves, a member of the home teaching committee, in the following:

Brother Rex Reeves gave us some wonderful direction when he said: "Priesthood Home Teachers must think in terms of needs of the family, not just taking a message. When the priesthood home teacher can see souls--not just another home to visit--and when he can feel the needs of individuals and, in his heart, when he can love them and has a yearning to help, he can give courage to struggling souls as they try to climb homeward in these perilous times.

"Priesthood home teaching is not just another program of the Church, something to get done so you can send the report in. It is a principle of action--the vehicle by which all of the programs of the Church are taken to the family and the individual, and in addition, it has the power to bless and guide and strengthen souls." (Rex Reeves, Regional Representative Seminar, Dec. 12, 1970.)<sup>20</sup>

Elder Cullimore concluded with:

When stake presidents, bishops, and priesthood leaders generally get the real concept and feeling of Home Teaching and let it be the vehicle by which all Church programs are taken to the family and the individuals, when families and individuals come to properly recognize and work with the Home Teachers, we will be able to give a much better account to ourselves in watching over the Church.<sup>21</sup>

In December, 1972 the name "oral evaluation" was replaced by the name "Personal Priesthood Interview."<sup>22</sup> This new name bespeaks the importance of the priesthood interview.

Quite an extensive article on "The Responsibilities of Home Teachers" by Marion G. Romney came out in the Ensign of March, 1973. President Romney said:

Home teaching has a very definite place in the Lord's three-phase program for teaching and encouraging his people to live the gospel.

As the first phase of the Lord's teaching program, he reveals the gospel to his prophets. . . .

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 165.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Bulletin, December, 1972, p. 3.

As the second phase of his teaching program, the Lord requires parents to teach the gospel to their children. . . .

For the third phase of his teaching program, the Lord has put the responsibility upon his church. To discharge this responsibility, the Church has organized and is now carrying on many institutions, organizations, and activities. Among them are priesthood quorums and priesthood meetings, sacrament meetings, genealogical and temple work, welfare and missionary activities, Church schools, institutes, seminaries, and auxiliary organizations and activities.

To encourage parents to teach the gospel in their homes, the Church has also prepared an excellent manual as a guide to be followed on family home evenings once a week.

Among the many programs and activities above mentioned, home teaching has not been named. Why? Because it must stand out in our understanding as being clearly distinguished from them.

Home teaching is not limited to a specific gospel principle or church activity. By divine injunction home teaching supports and sustains all home and church programs and activities for teaching the gospel.

What, then, is home teaching?

Home teaching, properly functioning, brings to the home of each member two priesthood bearers divinely commissioned and authoritatively called into the service by their priesthood leader and bishop. These home teachers--priesthood bearers--carry the heavy and glorious responsibility of representing the Lord Jesus Christ in looking after the welfare of each member and of encouraging and inspiring every member to discharge his duty, both family and church.<sup>23</sup>

President Romney listed the specific responsibilities of home teachers as:

First and foremost, to so live that they always enjoy the companionship of the Holy Ghost and act under his inspiration in the discharge of their home teaching responsibilities.

Second, to encourage and inspire every member to do his or her part to make and keep the home a truly Latter-day Saint home.

This would mean, among other things, that parents are sealed in the temple; that children not born under the covenant are sealed to parents; that future marriages are performed in the temple; that family prayers are regularly said night and morning; that secret prayers are said by every member with the consistency; that other gospel standards and practices are understood and complied with; that home evenings are regularly observed and the recommended lessons considered; that children are blessed and baptized in harmony with the revelations; that ordinations in the priesthood are merited and obtained in proper season; that priesthood bearers attend their priesthood meetings; that sacrament meeting attendance is regular; and that every member participate in the organizations and activities

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<sup>23</sup>The Ensign, III (March, 1973), 12.

sponsored by the Church for his or her temporal and spiritual development.

Home teachers respond willingly and without constraint in the spirit of love to the needs and wishes of the family and each of its members; they respond likewise to the counsel of their bishop and priesthood leaders.

Home teachers are divinely commissioned, having been called into service by their priesthood leader after he has consulted and agreed with the bishop. They are guided in that service by the home teaching program sponsored and directed by the General Authorities of the Church, under the counsel of the First Presidency. The service itself, however, and the responsibility to perform it, did not originate in the minds of any of these servants of the Lord. It originated in the mind of the Lord himself and was revealed by him.<sup>24</sup>

In conclusion he said:

I feel that the time has come for each bearer of the priesthood to put on the full armor of Christ with respect to home teaching; to stand up like a man of God and do his duty by visiting the home of every member entrusted to his care, as often as is necessary; and to encourage and inspire him to live his life as the Lord would have him live it.<sup>25</sup>

At a seminar held in April of 1973, Elder Bruce R. McConkie gave some very pertinent information on the function of home teaching.

He said:

Priesthood quorums are to train those who hold the priesthood in:

- a. How to teach and govern their families;
- b. How to administer the Church and the gospel; and
- c. How to gain eternal life.

Quorum presidents are "to sit in council" with their members, "to teach them their duty," and to lead them to eternal life in our Father's kingdom (D & C 107:85). . . .

Home teachers are Priesthood Representatives; and home teaching is the priesthood way of watching over the Church. Through it priesthood quorums guide and strengthen their members so they can perfect their families. Through it fathers, families, and individuals are so guided that they do their duty, keep the commandments, and gain salvation. Properly performed home teaching is the Lord's way of making all of the blessings of the gospel available to all the members of his kingdom.

The objective of priesthood correlation is to organize and to prosecute, in the Lord's way, the work he has assigned to his Church. All priesthood and auxiliary organizations and programs are to operate within the framework of priesthood correlation.

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 13.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 15.

There are three basic, governing principles involved:

a. The family is the most important organization in time and in eternity, and the family and the individual have the primary responsibility to do all the things which the Lord commanded and to operate all of the programs of the Church.

b. The Church and all its organizations are service agencies to help the family and the individual do the things they must do to gain peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come.

c. Home teaching is the vehicle which makes available to the family and the individual the help of the Church and all its organizations.

Home teachers are an essential part of the power line that transmits the mind and will of the Lord, through the channels he has ordained, to the family and the individual. If there is a break in this line, or if attempts are made to transmit the power of the gospel through auxiliary circuits, or fringe committees appointed for specific purposes, the Lord's people are denied the full blessings which a perfect organization perfectly operated would bring them.<sup>26</sup>

In the preceeding talk, Elder McConkie made it perfectly clear that the priesthood quorums, not just the bishop, and not just the auxiliaries are responsible to train the priesthood brethren how to teach and govern their families; how to administer the Church and the Gospel; and how to gain eternal life. It is the responsibility of quorum presidents "to sit in council," and to lead them to eternal life in the Father's kingdom.<sup>27</sup> Home teachers are priesthood representatives of quorum presidents, and through home teaching, the priesthood quorums guide and strengthen their members so they can perfect their families.

Elder McConkie also said: ". . . the family, not the Church, not the auxiliaries, is the most important organization in time and eternity. The Church and all its organizations are only service

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<sup>26</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, unpublished talk delivered at Seminar for Regional Representatives, April, 1973 (Salt Lake City) copy in L.D.S. Church Historical Department.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

organizations to help the family and the individual."<sup>28</sup> Therefore, the Church and all its programs are made for man, and not man for the Church. This concept has existed since the beginning of the world, but we have not always realized it enough to act upon it. The point Elder McConkie stressed was that "now" is the time to act upon it.

Elder McConkie concluded by saying:

We therefore conclude that we are concerned primarily with people and not with programs, and that home teaching is a process and not an end in itself, and that it is not and cannot be "done" until all those under our charge have perfected their lives and gained the full blessings of the gospel in time and in eternity.<sup>29</sup>

A major change was made in the home teaching reporting system beginning in September of 1973. The report form used between the home teacher and the priesthood leader, and the form used between the priesthood leader and the bishops were discontinued.<sup>30</sup> In their stead the Personal Priesthood Interview Planning and Report Form was to be used. The discontinuance of these two forms tended to eliminate the idea of doing home teaching for statistics sake only. Now it became necessary for both the home teacher and the priesthood leader to sit down together and frankly discuss the families, and the individual members thereof.

A change was also noted in June of 1973, when the Church was informed: ". . . high priests may be assigned as home teachers to assist the elders quorum in working with prospective elders."<sup>31</sup> In

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Bulletin, October, 1973, pp. 4-5.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

doing so: "High priests will attend the personal priesthood interview held by the elders quorum president to account for the families that are under the jurisdiction of the elders quorum."<sup>32</sup>

At a seminar held on October 4, 1973, Elder Bruce R. McConkie again spoke on the theme of home teaching. He said:

Service is essential to salvation. Let that be crystalized in our hearts. It is not sufficient to keep commandments, and let that stand alone, unless we read into such the fact that we are commanded to serve God with all our heart, <sup>33</sup> might, mind, and strength. Service is essential to salvation.

Notice how he said that, "Service is essential to Salvation." He then made reference to home teachers also. He said the following about priesthood quorums:

The Lord has given us priesthood quorum presidents whose duty it is "to teach" their members "according to the covenants" (D & C 107:89). These quorum presidents are to teach their quorum members how to magnify their calling; to train them in <sup>34</sup> their duties; and to teach them the doctrines of the kingdom.

To the question: "How does a priesthood quorum operate within the framework of priesthood correlation?"<sup>35</sup> Elder McConkie replied:

By conforming to these basic principles of priesthood correlation, and by using home teachers, who are priesthood representatives, in the way they were designed and intended to be used.

As President Harold B. Lee said six months ago in this seminar, "We have now called upon the priesthood quorums to assume the responsibilities, as the Lord has given it to them, 'to watch over the Church and to be with and strengthen them.'"<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, "Tools to Help the Quorum Achieve Its Goals," unpublished talk delivered at Seminar for Regional Representatives, October 4, 1973 (Salt Lake City), copy in L.D.S. Church Historical Department.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.



Elder McConkie then gave the position of the home teacher in the Church. He said:

Home teaching is a quorum responsibility, and home teachers are called by quorum presidents. We can define their role as that of priesthood representatives. They have a nominal responsibility to the bishop, but they go forth representing their quorum president. They are his agents, they serve the person who calls them and they make their priesthood evaluations to him, or to someone appointed by him. An elder's president, for instance, may need to appoint supervisors to aid him in handling personal priesthood interviews.<sup>37</sup>

What Elder McConkie is emphasizing is that home teachers represent their priesthood leaders and through them they assist the bishops. Bishops were not given the responsibility to watch over the Church. They are judges in Isreal, and fathers of their wards. It is the quorums, as explained by President Lee--in the previous quote by Elder McConkie--who have the responsibility of watching over the Church.

#### SUMMARY

The early 1970's were years of great strides in increasing the quality of home teaching; however, these strides came more by way of changes in process than actual progress.

In March of 1970, the stakes were asked to hold priesthood leadership meetings on what quality home teaching was like. The Church also sent out additional brochures to assist the home teachers. In August of 1970 the home teaching reporting system was revised and simplified.

Again, in 1971, stakes were asked to hold a priesthood

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

leadership session on home teaching. At this time, it was to be emphasized that home teaching is not one of the basic priesthood programs, but rather the means by which all the Church programs were correlated with the homes.

A revision of the Home Teaching Handbook to come out in 1971 included two major changes; one was that the oral evaluations could be held anytime during the month; the other change was that deacons could now serve as home teaching junior companions when enough teachers and priests were not available.

From an article on the home teaching committee, it was learned that home teaching was moving along the way the Lord intended it to move; but, it was noted, the whole priesthood had not yet awakened to their responsibility. President Lee spoke along the same line in April of 1972. He said that maybe home teachers needed to be more clearly charged with their responsibility. President Lee also traced the oral evaluation line from the father back to our Heavenly Father.

Through the pages of the Ensign and the Church News home teachers were given more specific charges regarding their responsibility. They were also given instructions and encouragement in regard to their responsibility.

In the October conference, Elder Packer spoke on the importance of home teaching. He instructed home teachers not to take their callings lightly. At the same conference, Elder Cullimore said that after nine years, home teachers were still doing ward teaching. He said that this indicated a lack of vision of what the responsibilities of the home teacher were. He gave instructions on

their responsibilities and admonished home teachers to grasp the vision of the process. He quoted Rex C. Reeves as saying: "Priesthood home teaching is not just another program of the Church, something to get done so you can send the report in. It is a principle of action--the vehicle by which all of the programs of the Church are taken to the family. . . ."

In December of 1972 the oral evaluation was renamed the personal priesthood interview.

The Ensign published an address by President Romney in which he enumerated the three phases of the Lord's program. These were: First, the Lord reveals his teaching program to the prophets; second, the Lord requires parents to teach the gospel to their children; third, the Lord has put the responsibility to teach the gospel upon the Church. He said that home teaching stands out from all the other Church programs because it is the vehicle by which the other programs are made available to the homes. He then enumerated the duties of the home teachers. He concluded by saying that: "I feel that the time has come for each bearer of the priesthood to put on the full armor of Christ with respect to home teaching. . . ."

At a seminar, held in April, 1973, Elder McConkie said that quorum presidents are to train those who hold the priesthood in how to teach and govern their families; how to administer the Church and the gospel; and how to gain eternal life. He said that: "Home teachers are Priesthood Representatives; and home teaching is the priesthood way of watching over the Church. Through it, priesthood quorums guide and strengthen their members so they can perfect their families." He said that there are three basic governing principles

involved in priesthood correlation. First: "The family is the most important organization in time and in eternity." The families have the responsibility to operate all the programs of the Church.

Second: The Church and all its organizations are service agencies to help the family and the individual. Third: "Home teaching is the vehicle which makes available to the family and the individual the help of the Church and all its organizations."

Elder McConkie made it clear that home teachers represent their quorum presidents. Elder McConkie also made it clear that home teaching is never done until the home teacher's families have reached the presence of God. He said, "We are concerned primarily with people and not with programs."

A major change in the home teaching reporting system came in September, 1973. The old report forms between home teacher and priesthood leader, and between priesthood leader and bishop were no longer to be used. The form, called the "Personal Priesthood Interview Planning and Report Form," was to be used in their place. This was to improve the reporting system. Now the evaluation was to truly be a "personal priesthood interview" between home teacher and priesthood leader.

At a seminar held in October of 1973, Elder McConkie again spoke on the home teaching process. He reiterated most of the items he covered in the past seminar. He repeated the idea that home teaching is a quorum responsibility, and that home teachers have a nominal responsibility to the bishop. This was not to detract from the position of the bishop; home teaching is still the bishop's main source of information and dissemination.

## Chapter 14

### SUMMARY

The principle of watching over the Church by the priesthood is the Lord's way of seeing that fathers do their duty, as well as to assist them in doing their duty. Part of this duty includes the responsibility of parents to teach their children the gospel.

The need for the gospel to be in the home has existed since it was given to Adam. Satan has also existed since Adam and has tried to lead the children of Adam astray. Therefore, the function of watching over the Church has continually been in demand to thwart the powers of Satan, and to exhalt the family.

In the days of Adam and the early Fathers, it was generally the oldest father who was called upon to exercise his patriachal responsibility in watching over the families. The fathers continued in this capacity until Moses. Moses was instructed to use the Levites to be the priests and teachers of the people. Because of wickedness, the Israelites soon apostatized from the Gospel and lost the priesthood. During the New Testament era Christ brought back the gospel and the priesthood. He instructed his Apostles to ordain priests and teachers and to give them charge to teach the people. But the teachers and priests became corrupt and the gospel and the priesthood were lost when the people went into a long period of apostasy.

The period of apostasy ended when Joseph Smith was called upon and given the keys of the priesthood to reorganize the Church again upon

the earth. At about the time the Church was organized, Joseph received a revelation on the duties of the priesthood. Within these duties was the call to watch over the Church.

Down through the years the process of watching over the Church by the priesthood has had many changes, although the principle to watch over the Church has always been the same.

In the forepart of this dispensation, because of the small number of Saints, it was the ordained teacher who watched over the Church; but as the Saints increased in number, the priests were asked to also perform the function of a teacher. During these early visits the teacher usually had a list of questions to ask members of the families in order to find out whether or not they were doing their duty.

During the trek west, teachers were used to check up on the conduct of members of the camp. Then shortly after the Saints arrived in the Great Salt Lake Valley, Brigham Young directed bishops to organize their wards and send forth teachers among the Saints.

When the Saints were suffering persecution for practicing polygamy, it became even more necessary for the teachers to watch over the Church in order to prevent apathy and apostasy.

During the late eighteen hundreds, priests and teachers who watched over the Church began to be referred to as acting teachers. During this time the function of watching over the Church was largely in the hands of the local Church leaders, but as time went on, the presiding authorities began to give more and more direction to this function.

A new movement in the priesthood began in 1908. This was

what we could call the first priesthood correlation program. This program brought about a complete reorganization of the function of watching over the Church; which, at that time, came to be known as ward teaching. This took place in 1921. The new ward teaching process made all bearers of the Melchizedek Priesthood susceptible to the call of a ward teacher. Stakes were invited to take up an active campaign to improve ward teaching, and a high councilor was to be assigned to aid and advise each ward. Wards were organized into districts consisting of about eight families each. Melchizedek Priesthood holders were to be senior companions, and priests were to be the junior companions. Members were to be visited at least once a month, and a monthly report meeting was to be held. Bishops were to supply the ward teachers with subjects to be discussed with their assigned families, and it was emphasized that the essential element for success in ward teaching was a love for the work. The new function of watching over the Church met with immediate success; however, some of the brethren were still of the opinion that ward teaching belonged to the Aaronic Priesthood.

Some changes came about in 1915. Teachers were also called to be junior companions along with the priests. Wards were now divided into districts comprising six families instead of eight, preferably into three divisions with a member of the bishopric in charge of each division. Teachers were to be provided with monthly report blanks, and reports were to be turned in before the monthly report meetings. These reports were to be turned in early enough so that the bishop could visit the families who were missed. The duties of ward teachers were re-emphasized; they were to see that the Saints were doing their

duty, as well as to deliver the monthly bishop's message. This new process was to bring increased success, and it was soon having good results.

Starting in 1933, the ward teacher's messages began to be printed in The Improvement Era. These messages were given each month until they were discontinued in 1946.

In 1938, the ward teachers were called to repentance for neglecting their duties. Some ward teachers had developed the practice of just visiting their families once a month and reading the bishop's message to them. To combat this problem, a few new changes were added. Districts were not to include more than five families; the ordained teacher was to take care of the statistics, and the Melchizedek Priesthood bearer was to be responsible for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the families. A new report form was also to be used which was to include information on whether or not families were doing their duties.

In 1946, the ward teaching message was stopped and ward teachers were told to preach by the spirit.

The ward teaching function was again reorganized in 1947. By this time much of what had been left to the discretion of local authorities was eliminated. Both stakes and wards were to have ward teaching committees. Each stake was to have a chairman and three committee members; a member of the stake presidency was to serve as advisor to the committee. In the ward, the bishop was to be chairman and the ward was to be divided into three districts, having one member of the bishopric in charge of each. Each district was to have a district supervisor who was under the supervision of a member of the bishopric. Both stakes



and wards were to have committee secretaries, and both were to have a committee meeting once a month.

Over the early 1950's the duties of the ward teachers were reiterated through the medium of The Era and the Church News. In 1952, a study guide was issued to ward teachers. The topic for discussion was also included in The Improvement Era. A hand book for leaders was also issued in 1952.

During the late 1950's and early 1960's, much instruction was given to reshape the ward teaching process, such as who should ward teach, and teachers not collecting funds.

The second era of priesthood correlation started in 1960. This program was to get the priesthood into its proper place as the Lord intended. By 1962, the priesthood included a new function which was to replace ward teaching, that of priesthood home teaching.

Before the process of priesthood home teaching went into effect, it was first developed and perfected on an experimental basis. Fourteen representative stakes were chosen to experiment with new programs set up by the General Authorities. The stake which was foremost in working with the home teaching function was Emigration Stake.

Many names were used in referring to future home teachers, such as "watchmen," "Guardian," and "Shepherds." The first name to be settled upon was "Watchmen," but this was soon changed to "family teachers." The name "home teacher" was not settled upon until just before home teaching went into effect in 1964.

Between the time that the process of home teaching was being developed, and the time it went into effect in 1964, there was a period of increased emphasis upon ward teaching. The bulk of this

emphasis was placed on upgrading the quality of ward teaching. Ward teachers were continually being reminded of their whole duty in respect to their families. Bishoprics were also reminded of their duties in respect to reports and interviewing ward teachers. Following the instructions given in the handbook was re-emphasized in regard to the duties of the home teacher. Emphasis began to be placed upon the idea that ward teachers represented the priesthood quorums, as well as the auxiliaries of the ward.

The function of home teaching was first announced on a Church-wide basis in October of 1962, and in April of 1963, it was announced that home teaching would be inaugurated throughout the Church beginning in January of 1964.

Much information was given before home teaching went into effect. Many manuals and handbooks came out which gave instructions on how the procedure was to be directed and handled. Priesthood leaders were now appointed to call home teachers, with the sanction of the bishop. And priesthood leaders were placed in charge of the home teaching within the jurisdiction of their own quorums. Information was to filter back to the bishops in priesthood executive meetings and ward council meetings.

Home teaching was the subject taken up in the ward priesthood meetings during the last three weeks of 1963. During this time there was also some question on assigning of women to be home teachers. The General Authorities said that women were not to be assigned as home teachers, and they should accompany their husbands on home teaching assignments only in specified situations.

The function of home teaching began in January of 1964. As

home teaching progressed, a few problems developed. One of the glaring problems was the mistaken idea that home teachers took the place of the father in presiding over the family. Another was that home teachers felt they had nothing to give when they had no assigned message. The home teachers received a lot of admonishment in respect to their assignment. They were asked to put on the full armor of Christ in respect to this calling.

The year 1967 was a time of reviewing and strengthening the home teaching process. Starting in January, and for the next eight months the wards were to conduct monthly home teaching training sessions in the regular priesthood meetings. These lessons were about such topics as the place of the father in the home, the call to be a home teacher, the oral evaluation, and the challenges.

Paralleling the lessons, various articles on the same topic were published in the Church News and Era giving additional instructions and encouragement. Also, throughout the years, seminars were held between General Authorities and Regional Representatives. These meetings were used as a means of giving information which was to be used in instructing and strengthening stake and ward leaders. It was pointed out in these meetings that home teaching was the Lord's way and therefore the right way, the only way ordained by the Lord to watch over the homes. They were also told that home teaching might take a number of years to perfect, but that it would be worth it.

Various articles continued to come out through the medium of the Church News and Era giving further instruction and admonition to home teachers. In the late 1960's and early 1970's various brochures were printed and sent out which gave instructions on such topics as,

how to help encourage the father in his role as patriarch to his family, and how to encourage young children to attend primary.

In the early part of 1970, the topic for a stake leadership meeting was on improving the quality of home teaching. This was again repeated in the early part of 1971. At this time it was emphasized that home teaching is not one of the basic priesthood programs, but rather, the means by which all the Church programs were taken into the homes.

In 1971, a revision of the Priesthood Home Teaching Handbook included two major changes: one was that oral evaluations could be held any time during the month; the other change was that deacons could be junior home teaching companions when enough teachers and priests were not available.

In January of 1972, the beginning of the prospective elders program placed an increased responsibility upon the elders quorum president, especially in regard to home teaching. Now it was the elders quorum president's responsibility, through his home teaching representatives, to watch over all potential elders who were above Aaronic Priesthood age.

In the early part of 1972, it was noted that home teaching was now moving along the way the Lord intended it to move, however, all the priesthood brethren had not yet caught the vision and awoke to the responsibility which was theirs. It was noted that perhaps home teachers ought to be more clearly charged with their responsibility.

Through the pages of the Ensign and the Church News, home teachers were given more specific charges regarding their responsibilities.

In October of 1972, it was noted that after nine years home teachers were still doing ward teaching. It was said that this indicated that home teachers do not yet realize their responsibilities. It was also stressed that home teaching is not just another program of the Church, something to get done so the brethren can hand in the report; but rather, it is a principle of action--the vehicle by which all the programs of the Church are taken to the family. In December of 1972, the oral evaluation was renamed the Personal Priesthood Interview.

In April of 1973, a major emphasis came out on the home teaching procedure. It was said that home teachers represent their quorum presidents. They only have a nominal responsibility to the bishop. However, home teaching was still the bishop's main source of getting and sending information. But they represent the one who calls them, their quorum presidents. This helped to clarify the responsibility of quorum presidents. They were told that it was their responsibility to teach the members of the quorums the covenants of the priesthood, how to govern their homes, and how to conduct their families into eternal life.

Further instruction on the responsibilities of home teachers continued to be given, and in September of 1973, a major change in reporting home teaching came out. This change helped to point out the necessity for home teachers and quorum presidents to sit down together and counsel together in relation to their homes and family members.

After ten years of its existence, what lies ahead for home teaching? One thing we can hope will occur is that home teachers will stop doing ward teaching, catch the vision, and truly become watchmen

over the Church. Elder James A. Cullimore said:

We really don't have the vision of "watching over the Church." We might have a great record of percentages of homes visited each month, but the real test is, are we affecting the lives of the individual members of the family for good through our contacts.<sup>1</sup>

Elder Romney reported: "Home teaching is moving the way the Lord presented it to Joseph Smith before the Church was organized." But, he noted, "We haven't got the whole priesthood to wake up to their responsibility."<sup>2</sup> Perhaps a new name will make the difference.

President Lee stated:

The priesthood visitors are to be thinking of a new name instead of teacher attached to these priesthood visitors. The ward teaching suggests that they are to go there to teach a gospel message, and that primarily isn't what we expect the home teachers of today to do. They are home visitors; they are priesthood home visitors to inquire into the health of the family and to see if they are doing their family duties, and if they are assuming their Church responsibilities.<sup>3</sup>

This was reiterated in a more recent meeting when President Lee said:

Maybe the home teacher should be charged more clearly to describe his mission to watch over--to strengthen--to see that members do their duty. There's our failure. They think themselves as teachers of the Gospel message only. Maybe we ought to be calling them home guardians or sentinels. . . . We must do something to change the emphasis from teaching to guardians watching

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<sup>1</sup>James A. Cullimore, General Conference Address, Official Report of the One Hundred Forty-Second Semi Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 6, 7, and 8, 1972 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d.), p. 164, hereafter cited as Conference Report.

<sup>2</sup>Deseret News, Church News, [Salt Lake City], December 11, 1971, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Harold B. Lee, unpublished talk delivered at Seminar for Regional Representatives, Salt Lake City, April 2, 3, 1969, copy in L.D.S. Church Historical Department

over the Church kind of concept.<sup>4</sup>

Elder McConkie uses the term "priesthood representatives" in defining what a home teacher is.<sup>5</sup>

As members of the Church progress more in understanding the principle of watching over the Church, the process will continue to change, always meeting the standards set by their needs; but whatever changes come in the process, we must never forget the principle. It is extremely important that the families be watched over by the priesthood. President Romney expressed the following:

Satan, our enemy, is making an all-out assault upon righteousness. His well-marshalled forces are legion. Our children and youth are the targets of his main thrust. They are everywhere subjected to wicked and vicious propaganda. Every place they turn, they are buffeted with evil, cunningly devised to deceive and to destroy every sacred thing and every righteous principle. . . .

If our children are to be sufficiently strengthened to stand against this satanic onslaught, they must be taught and trained in the home, as the Lord has directed.

Let every priesthood bearer, in the majesty and power of his calling, set in order his own house; let him regularly observe home evening and otherwise bring up his "Children in light and truth" (D & C 93:40);--let him accept a home teaching assignment and so faithfully visit, exhort, encourage, and inspire his families that they follow his example. Then will the children of Zion be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, and then will the Church begin to "arise and shine forth, that (her) light may be a standard for the nations" (D & C 115:5).<sup>6</sup>

This is the only way, as pointed out by Elder Boyd K. Packer when he explained:

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<sup>4</sup>Harold B. Lee, unpublished talk delivered at Seminar for Regional Representatives, Salt Lake City, April, 1972, copy in L.D.S. Church Historical Department.

<sup>5</sup>Bruce R. McConkie, unpublished talk delivered at Seminar for Regional Representatives, Salt Lake City, October 4, 1973, copy in L.D.S. Church Historical Department.

<sup>6</sup>Conference Report, April 5, 1969, p. 110.

Home teaching is here to stay . . . there isn't any other way. All other activities are helpful. Some of them vital, but all are only part solutions. The only solution that can succeed is the one that relates directly to the family. Home teachers are the ones authorized to work directly with the family.<sup>7</sup>

So in the end, as it appears to the author, it is all up to the members of the Church. The Lord will move no faster with them than they are ready to receive and to act upon what he has given them.

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<sup>7</sup>Boyd K. Packer, unpublished talk delivered at Priesthood Home Teaching Seminar, Salt Lake City, October 2, 3, 1968, copy in L.D.S. Church Historical Department.



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A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF THE LORD'S WAY OF WATCHING OVER THE CHURCH  
BY THE PRIESTHOOD THROUGH THE AGES

Rex A. Anderson

Department of Church History and Doctrine

M.A. Degree, August 1974

ABSTRACT

Since the days of Adam the Lord has called upon the priesthood to watch over the families: To see that fathers are doing their duty as patriarchs over their families, and to assist and encourage the fathers in this responsibility. Thus thwarting the efforts of Satan to lead the children of men astray. The principle has always been for the priesthood to watch over the families. But the process of how this is done has changed from time to time according to the needs of the people. This treatise covers the history of these changes in documentary form.

In the days of Adam and the early fathers watching over the families was done by the oldest patriarch; in Moses' day it was done by the Levites. Prophets were also called to watch over the people. Christ directed his Apostles to ordain priests and teachers to watch over the Church in his day. When the Church was reorganized the Lord gave a revelation through Joseph Smith which restored the commandment to watch over the families by the priesthood. The process has experienced a succession of changes over the years until we have what we call home teaching today.

COMMITTEE APPROVAL:



Walter D. Bowen, Committee Chairman



A. Gary Anderson, Committee Member



Monte S. Nyman, Department Chairman