

# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM

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Edited by  
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of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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Today, priests in each ward are organized into quorums of forty-eight or fewer members. The ward bishop presides over this quorum, with two priests called to assist him, and another as secretary. An adult adviser is also assigned by the bishop to teach and assist quorum members. As in all of the offices of the Aaronic Priesthood, members of this PRIESTHOOD QUORUM receive instruction to prepare them for ordination as elders in the Melchizedek Priesthood and for missionary service. Each priest is expected to emulate the example of Jesus Christ.

In addition to performing their priesthood duties, priests participate together in a variety of educational, recreational, and social activities (see YOUNG MEN). For example, the priests in a ward in the United States participate as a group in the Explorer program of the Boy Scouts of America (see SCOUTING). In social and service activities they often join with the Laurels, who are sixteen- to eighteen-year-old members of the YOUNG WOMEN organization of the Church.

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#### PRIESTCRAFT

The Book of Mormon says, "Priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion. . . . But the laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion; for if they labor for money they shall perish" (2 Ne. 26:29, 31). Inherent in this definition is the concern that Church leaders must labor to build ZION into the hearts of the people, and not for their personal aggrandizement or reward. When leaders "make merchandise" of men's souls (2 Pet. 2:3), they turn religion into a business, and pride, materialism, and unrighteous dominion follow.

Both in scripture and in literature priestcraft is condemned. Peter cursed Simon the sorcerer,

who wanted to purchase the priesthood for money (Acts 8:14–24). Dante's Peter castigates several popes and priests for not serving freely and for making a sewer of the sepulcher of Peter by selling priesthood appointment (*Paradiso* 27:22–57). Chaucer observed that greed for personal gain and glory often replaced genuine priesthood service ("General Prologue" and "Introduction to the Pardoner's Tale," *Canterbury Tales*). Milton's lines from *Lycidas* condemning a clergy who "for their bellies' sake, / Creep and intrude, and climb into the fold" (ll. 114–15) sum up the evil of priestcraft: "The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed, / But swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw, / Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread" (ll. 125–27).

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#### PRIESTHOOD

[*Other articles dealing with various aspects of the priesthood are Aaronic Priesthood; Authority; Brotherhood; Clergy; Godhood; Keys of the Priesthood; Lay Participation and Leadership; Levitical Priesthood; Magnifying One's Calling; Melchizedek Priesthood; Men, Roles of; Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood; Presidency, Concept of; Presiding High Priest; Priesthood Councils; and Priesthood Quorums.*

*On the specific offices of the priesthood, see Apostle; Bishop; Deacon, Aaronic Priesthood; Elder; High Priest; Patriarch; Priest, Aaronic Priesthood; Priesthood Offices; Prophet; Seventy; Teacher, Aaronic Priesthood.*

*For discussions of various priesthood ordinances, see Baptism; Baptismal Prayer; Children: Blessing of Children; Confirmation; Dedications; Father's Blessing; Laying on of Hands; Ordinances; Ordination to the Priesthood; Patriarchal Blessing; Priesthood Blessings; Rebaptism; Sacrament Prayers; Sealing; Setting Apart; Sick, Blessing the; Temple Ordinances.]*

**THE SOURCE OF PRIESTHOOD POWER.** Jesus Christ is the great High Priest of God; Christ is therefore the source of all true priesthood authority and power on this earth (Heb. 5–10). Man does not take such priesthood power unto himself; it must be conferred by God through his servants (Heb. 5:4; D&C 1:38).

Before the world was created, Jesus Christ, the great JEHOVAH and firstborn of God the Father in the spirit world, covenanted to use the power he had obtained from the Father to implement God's program for the eternal happiness of all God's children (cf. *TPJS*, p. 190). The actual name of the