

LDS Growth Encyclopedia on Missionary Work and Church Growth (Missiology)

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Stake President

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Posted: September 28th, 2013

A stake president presides over one of the Church's approximately 3,000 stakes and provides overarching spiritual, ecclesiastical, and administrative support for members and leaders within his stake. Stake presidents are high priests in the Melchizedek Priesthood who live within the geographical boundaries of their stake and act as intermediaries between bishops and branch presidents and General Authorities.[1] General authorities interview potential candidates before extending a formal call. Stake presidents frequently serve as bishops prior to serving as a stake president and at times were counselors in a previous stake presidency. Stake presidents function as the presiding high priest and the high priest quorum president for an entire stake. Unlike the calling of mission president, stake president's wives do not have special responsibilities for administering to church leaders and members within the jurisdiction of their husband but nonetheless are involved in the process of their husband accepting the calling and providing him support at home and with the family as he attends to the large number of duties entailed with this calling. Following the end of his service, a stake president traditionally serves within his local congregation or in a stake position. The length of service for stake presidents varies from stake to stake as the Church does not have a predetermined length of time of service unlike some other callings such as mission president. On average, members who serve as stake presidents generally serve in this calling for approximately nine years.[2]

There are no set qualifications for a high priest in the Melchizedek Priesthood to serve as stake president other than living in harmony with LDS teachings and having some leadership experience. The age of stake presidents significantly varies by location. Some areas of the world with a recent church establishment have stake presidents younger than 30 years old. Stake presidents in most areas of the world range from 35 to 60. The LDS Church News reports information on newly organized stake presidencies including age, years of service, and employment status for individual stake presidency members.

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A stake presidency consists of a stake president and his two counselors who also reside within the geographical boundaries of the stake. Stake presidents select their counselors after accepting the calling. Stake presidents and their counselors attend to many administrative duties including ensuring church doctrines and teachings are taught correctly, interviewing and approving temple recommends, advancing prepared and worthy adult males to the Melchizedek Priesthood, interviewing and recommending members for full-time missionary service, performing church disciplinary action such as disfellowship and excommunication for members guilty of serious violations of church teachings and standards, mentoring and supporting bishops and branch presidents, and interviewing members for receiving patriarchal blessings. Stake presidency members attend ward conferences and provide specialized training to bishoprics, branch presidencies, and the high council to assist their efforts in meeting the ecclesiastical, spiritual, and social needs of ordinary members. Stake high councils assist the stake president and his counselors in meeting their administrative responsibilities in a stake.[3] Stake presidencies also propose the formation and consolidation of wards and branches within their stake. Plans for changing unit boundaries, forming and consolidating wards and branches, and reorganizing branch presidencies and bishoprics are submitted to area leaders for review and ultimately sent to Church Headquarters to grant approval. Some stake presidents appear to have authorization to organize dependent units such as member groups within their stake without approval from area authorities or General Authorities. A stake president presides over a stake conference in the absence of an area authority or General Authority.

Church employees oftentimes serve as stake presidents or as counselors in a stake presidency. The Church has generally had an overrepresentation of church employees in stake leadership positions outside the United States. Overrepresentation of church employees in stake presidencies occurs for different reasons by stake but is commonly due to church employees possessing greater church administrative training and gospel mentoring than ordinary priesthood holders, a shortage of active male members, and poverty and economic instability that has favored members who are employed by the Church. Tracking the

frequency and location of church employees serving in stake presidencies provides insight into the self-sufficiency of the Church and member activity rates in particular locations and regions. For example, church employees do not appear overrepresented in stake presidencies in North America and many countries in Europe but are highly overrepresented in stake presidencies in some countries in Latin America, Oceania, and Asia.

[1] Hinckley, Gordon. "The Stake President," General Conference, April 2000. https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2000/04/the-stake-president

[2] "Stake President," www.mormonnewsroom,org, retrieved 24 January 2013. http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/stake-president

[3] "Stake President," www.mormonnewsroom,org, retrieved 24 January 2013. http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/stake-president