

March 31, 2003

To all Pastors:

The Central (U.S.A.) Mission Center Leadership Team is pleased to present information to assist in fulfilling the most sacred of responsibilities: the calling of members to serve in the priesthood of the Community of Christ. It has been our experience that this process often overwhelms pastors. It also is a challenging responsibility for Mission Center leadership.

The sensing in others of God's call to serve is, at its core, an experience with God's divine presence. It is through the touch of the spirit, which comes to each of us in so many different ways, that our testimony of the truth of the call gains its vitality and strength. It is important that the sense of calling felt by the pastor on behalf of the candidate, divinity of the calling experience, and testimony of the call's truth are not lost when sharing the priesthood call for formal consideration and action.

The Mission Center Council, Presidency, and Bishopric prepared office-specific "Recommendation for Ordination" forms to be used by pastors when contemplating priesthood calls and presenting them administratively for further action. Specifically, the purpose of each form is to...

- Assist pastors in recommending candidates for ordination by identifying areas to be considered in a divine process;
- Assist pastors by bringing into sharper focus, the differences in calling and responsibility of each priesthood office. This, in turn, should serve to further strengthen the pastor's testimony of the office of calling;
- Assist pastors in purposefully strengthening congregations by assessing the ministerial gifts and developmental needs of the candidate;
- Guide the Mission Center Council in gaining a richer understanding of the candidate and the confirmation of divine call.

Pastors should feel very comfortable in contacting Mission Center leadership with regard to any aspect of the priesthood calling process and the use of these forms. We hope pastors will see the forms as a way to strengthen and further articulate their testimony of the candidate's divine call to serve in the priesthood.

As leaders within the Central (U.S.A.) Mission Center, we wish to express to you our deepest gratitude for your service and extend our hands of support to you as a congregational pastor in the Church. We celebrate the commitment you've made to those members of your congregation, and we ask for God's continued blessings for you as you provide unique servant ministry within the Mission Center.

The Central (U.S.A.) Mission Center Leadership Team

Mission Center Council  
Mission Center Presidency  
Mission Center Bishopric