

Age Requirement for Missionary Service Lowered

By Heather Whittle Wrigley

Church News and Events

At the opening of the 182nd Semiannual General Conference, President Thomas S. Monson announced that, effective immediately, men may begin serving missions at age 18 and women at age 19.

Later, at a press conference, Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles emphasized that the change is an option: “Young men and young women should not begin their service before they are ready spiritually and temporally,” he said. Such things as schooling, family

circumstances, and health still remain important considerations for the timing of missionary service.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that prospective missionaries may be recommended by their bishop and stake president for full-time service 120 days prior to their 18th birthday or to their availability date. Young men may enter the missionary training center (MTC) after graduating from high school or its equivalent and reaching 18 years of age. Women may enter after their 19th birthday.

Young men and women may now begin serving missions at ages 18 and 19, respectively, depending on individual circumstances and a determination by local priesthood leaders.

Prospective missionaries are being asked to enhance their pre-mission preparation prior to their time at the MTC.

“God is hastening His work,” Elder Holland said. “And He needs more and more willing and worthy missionaries to spread the light and the truth and the hope and the salvation of the gospel of Jesus Christ to an often dark and fearful world.”

Elder Holland said it is likely that additional missions will be created.

To help accommodate the anticipated increase in missionaries in missions around the world, time spent at the MTCs will be reduced by one-third for all missionaries. A recently implemented 12-week training course being administered in the mission field will help further prepare missionaries. ■

Read more by searching “missionary age requirement” on news.lds.org.



Teachings for Our Time

From October 2012 through March 2013, fourth-Sunday Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society lessons should be prepared from one or more talks given in the October 2012 general conference. In April 2013, talks may be selected from either the October 2012 or the April 2013 conference. Stake and district presidents should choose which talks will be used in their areas.

Learn more by reviewing the “Teachings for Our Time” section of the May 2012 *Liahona* or *Ensign*. ■