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New leader is known for devotion



By Brooke Adams
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The new leader of the Apostolic United Brethren, Utah's second-largest polygamous group, is a quiet man of few words who is unlikely to be as comfortable in the public spotlight as his predecessor.

But J. LaMoine Jenson shares with Owen A. Allred, who died Monday, a humble nature and long-standing dedication to serving his people.

Jenson, 70, has served on the AUB's presiding council for 36 years. The council voted unanimously two years ago that he would succeed Allred, bypassing a more senior member who is in poor health and agreed with the decision, council members say.

He will lead about 5,000 to 7,500 AUB members who live in the Salt Lake Valley as well as in such locales as Ozumba, Mexico; Mesa, Ariz.; Cedar City and Rocky Ridge, Utah; Lovell, Wyo.; Pinesdale, Mont.; and Britain.

Jenson is a native of Cache Valley, which his ancestors helped settle. His family left the area in the late 1940s after they were ostracized for refusing to sign a loyalty oath required by LDS Church leaders. The oath included a pledge to not practice or preach polygamy, which the LDS Church abandoned in 1890. LDS Church founder Joseph Smith disclosed plural marriage as a divinely sanctioned principle in 1843.

Jenson grew up in the Salt Lake Valley and graduated from Jordan High School in 1953. He has worked in the building materials industry since then.

He was called as a member of the AUB's priesthood council in 1969 by then head Rulon C. Allred, following in the footsteps of his father, Eslie D. Jenson, who served on the council under early leader Joseph W. Musser.

Jenson's name appeared at the bottom of a paid advertisement published in *The Salt Lake Tribune* in 1980 by Fundamentalist Mormons critical of LDS Church leaders for dropping "the will or word of God" as given by past prophets to become "acceptable to the world." While not mentioned in the nearly half-page ad, fundamentalists hold abandonment of polygamy and the 1978 acceptance of blacks into the LDS Church priesthood as errors by the mainstream Mormon church.

Associates say that, like Allred, Jenson believes people are free to marry whomever they want, but he does not permit minors to marry. Jenson encourages his congregation to "be industrious and provide for their own families," said David Watson, a member of the AUB's presiding council. Watson said Jenson also will continue a policy of open "dialogue and communication with state agencies."

