

CONTINUING REVELATION TO LATTER-DAY PROPHETS

D&C LESSON #42

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INTRODUCTION: One of the great realities of the restoration is the fact of communication between mortals and Immortals. Beginning with the vision in the grove and continuing on through the intervening years to this very day, we see evidence of continuous communication between God and his children. We have seen it in the unfolding of the revelations in the D&C and in the unfolding of the latter-day organization of the Kingdom of God on earth. President Faust said:

For many years, I have watched the process of continuous revelation which emanates from God through the keys, authority, and under direction of the President of the Church. I testify that this revelatory power has directed this work since April 6, 1830. That confirmation is the source of the greatest knowledge I have. I counsel and pray that all will heed the ongoing prophetic voice of this Church, revealing the word of God in our day. (James E. Faust, "The Prophetic Voice," Ensign, May 1996, 7)

Elder Boyd K. Packer presented a powerful example of a way in which the prophetic presence in the Church has been a blessing to the members.

The ultimate purpose of the adversary, who has "great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time," 1 is to disrupt, disturb, and destroy the home and the family. Like a ship without a rudder, without a compass, we drift from the family values which have anchored us in the past. Now we are caught in a current so strong that unless we correct our course, civilization as we know it will surely be wrecked to pieces. . . .

This crisis of the family is no surprise to the Church. We have certainly known what was coming. I know of no better testimony that we are led by prophets than our preparation for this present emergency.

The scriptures speak of prophets as "watch[men] upon the tower" who see "the enemy while he [is] yet afar off" (D&C 101:54) and who have

“beheld also things which were not visible to the natural eye ... [for] a seer hath the Lord raised up unto his people.” (Moses 8:36)

Thirty-three years ago the Brethren warned us of the disintegration of the family and told us to prepare. . . .

The weekly family home evening was introduced by the First Presidency . . .

Parents are provided with excellent materials for teaching their children, with a promise that the faithful will be blessed.

. . . all agencies of the Church have been reshaped in their relationship to one another and to the home.

. . . the entire curriculum of the Church was overhauled—based on scriptures, with excellent manuals for each course.

And years were spent preparing new editions of the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. . . .

We can only imagine where we would be if we were just now reacting to this terrible redefinition of the family. But that is not the case. We are not casting frantically about trying to decide what to do. We know what to do and what to teach. (Boyd K. Packer, “The Father and the Family,” *Ensign*, May 1994, pp.19,20)

1. Church CORRELATION

What is priesthood correlation? It is that system of Church administration in which we take all of the programs of the Church, wrap them in one package, operate them as one program, and involve all the members of the Church in that operation. It is a system which requires us to operate within the existing framework of the Church. The day is long since past in which we discover some problem and set up a committee or some other organization to solve it. Instead we use the revealed priesthood organization, which means that we use home teachers in the way set forth in section 20, and we correlate all priesthood and auxiliary operations through the ward priesthood

executive committee and the ward correlation council. President Harold B. Lee defined priesthood correlation as simply “putting the priesthood where the Lord put it and helping the family to function the way it should function.” (See “Correlation and Priesthood Genealogy” in *Genealogical Devotional Addresses*, 1968, Provo, Utah, Brigham Young University Press, 1969, p. 55; Bruce R. McConkie, “Only an Elder,” *Ensign*, June 1975, pp. 66–67)

This revealed effort of the Church to focus—to correlate—its organizations and capacities to accomplish the work of the restoration more effectively has had a discernible influence in all of our lives. Only consider the impact of such things as the current emphasis on the family, the organization of Church auxiliaries, the Church publications, and home teaching and you will begin to comprehend what the correlation program has meant to the welfare of the Church.

2. REVELATION EXTENDING THE BLESSINGS OF THE PRIESTHOOD TO EVERY WORTHY MALE MEMBER OF THE Church

Official Declaration #2 is worth a careful look. It constitutes one of the most dramatic revelations given in this dispensation.

Official Declaration 2

To Whom it May Concern:

On September 30, 1978, at the 148th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the following was presented by President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church:

In early June of this year, the First Presidency announced that a revelation had been received by President Spencer W. Kimball extending priesthood and temple blessings to all worthy male members of the Church. President Kimball has asked that I advise the conference that after he had received this revelation, which came to him after extended meditation and prayer in the sacred rooms of the holy temple, he presented it to his counselors, who accepted it and approved it. It was then presented to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who unanimously approved it, and was subsequently presented to all other

General Authorities, who likewise approved it unanimously.

President Kimball has asked that I now read this letter:

June 8, 1978

To all general and local priesthood officers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout the world:

Dear Brethren:

As we have witnessed the expansion of the work of the Lord over the earth, we have been grateful that people of many nations have responded to the message of the restored gospel, and have joined the Church in ever increasing numbers. This, in turn, has inspired us with a desire to extend to every worthy member of the Church all of the privileges and blessings which the gospel affords.

Aware of the promises made by the prophets and presidents of the Church who have preceded us that at some time, in God's eternal plan, all of our brethren who are worthy may receive the priesthood, and witnessing the faithfulness of those from whom the priesthood has been withheld, we have pleaded long and earnestly in behalf of these, our faithful brethren, spending many hours in the Upper Room of the Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance.

He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood, with power to exercise its divine authority, and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows therefrom, including the blessings of the temple. Accordingly, all worthy male members of the Church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard for race or color. Priesthood leaders are instructed to follow the policy of carefully interviewing all candidates for ordination to either the Aaronic or the Melchizedek Priesthood to insure that they meet the established standards for worthiness.

We declare with soberness that the Lord has now made known his will for the blessing of all his children throughout the earth who will

hearken to the voice of his authorized servants, and prepare themselves to receive every blessing of the gospel.

Sincerely Yours,
Spencer W. Kimball
N. Eldon Tanner
Marion G. Romney
The First Presidency

Recognizing Spencer W. Kimball as the prophet, seer, and revelator, and president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it is proposed that we as a constituent assembly accept this revelation as the word and will of the Lord. All in favor please signify by raising your right hand. Any opposed by the same sign.

The vote to sustain the foregoing motion was unanimous in the affirmative.

The earnest supplications of the brethren for the faithful long denied these priesthood blessings are now a matter of divine record. The response of the Lord to those petitions is now a matter of revelation. It is impossible to calculate the impact of this revelation on both sides of the veil. What a flood of rejoicing must have filled the courts on high when the vote was taken and the matter became a part of Church doctrine!

One member's story illustrates how important the priesthood is for each of us and our families and how grateful we might be for the opportunity to receive it. Joseph William Billy Johnson of Cape Coast, Ghana, first received literature about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1964. He knew that the Church doctrines he read in it were true, and he immediately began teaching them to his family, friends, and anyone else who would listen to him. It was not until four years later that he was able to obtain a copy of the Book of Mormon, to carefully read and pray about it, and to receive a witness of its truth. In letters to Salt Lake City, he had asked for more information about the Church and for missionaries to come to Africa to teach and baptize him. President McKay sent him literature and told him it was not yet time for missionaries to come to his country but that he should continue to study and have faith.

For 14 years Billy Johnson devoted himself to teaching the everlasting gospel and meeting with informal groups of believers. While strengthened by many spiritual experiences, he and members of these groups became discouraged when their pleadings for missionaries were not answered quickly.

During a particularly difficult period, Billy returned home one day much discouraged. As he struggled to obtain comfort and counsel from the Lord, he felt impressed to turn on his shortwave radio and find the BBC news broadcast. He was finally able to tune in the BBC at midnight. He recalls:

“I heard the message of President Kimball’s prophecy concerning the priesthood, that all worthy males in all of the world could receive the priesthood. I burst into tears of joy, because I knew the priesthood would come to Africa, and if we did the right things, we would all receive the priesthood.” 16

What joy spread through his heart as he heard the BBC news commentator announce the long-awaited revelation! (Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, “The Incomparable Blessings of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1997, p. 50)

3. PUBLICATION OF NEW LATTER-DAY SAINT EDITIONS OF THE SCRIPTURES

It is significant that the Lord’s appointed custodian of the scriptures—the leaders of his Church—have produced and published the Church’s own edition of the Bible. Because of the influence of continuing revelation, we are able to present to the world the most useful Bible on the planet—a Bible that incorporates references to all of the standard works.

The prophet Ezekiel prophesied:

“The word of the Lord came ... unto me, saying, “Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all of the house of Israel his companions:

“And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.” (Ezek. 37:15–17.)

The stick or record of Judah—the Bible—and the stick or record of Ephraim—the Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ—are now woven together in such a way that as you read one, you are drawn to the other; as you learn from one, you are enlightened by the other. They are indeed one in our hands. Ezekiel’s prophecy stands fulfilled. (Boyd K. Packer, “Using the New Scriptures,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1985, 52)

The impact of these new editions will be felt in the Church for generations to come. In an earlier sermon on this matter Elder Packer said:

The stick or record of Judah—the Old Testament and the New Testament—and the stick or record of Ephraim—the Book of Mormon, which is another testament of Jesus Christ—are now woven together in such a way that as you pore over one you are drawn to the other; as you learn from one you are enlightened by the other. They are indeed one in our hands. Ezekiel’s prophecy now stands fulfilled.

With the passing of years, these scriptures will produce successive generations of faithful Christians who know the Lord Jesus Christ and are disposed to obey His will.

The older generation has been raised without them, but there is another generation growing up. The revelations will be opened to them as to no other in the history of the world. Into their hands now are placed the sticks of Joseph and of Judah. They will develop a gospel scholarship beyond that which their forebears could achieve. They will have the testimony that Jesus is the Christ and be competent to proclaim Him and to defend Him. (Boyd K. Packer, “Scriptures,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 53)

4. ADDITIONAL QUORUMS OF THE SEVENTY

What are the duties of the Seventy?

The Seventy are also called to preach the gospel, and to be especial

witnesses unto the Gentiles and in all the world—thus differing from other officers in the Church in the duties of their calling. (D&C 107:25)

The Seventy are to act in the name of the Lord, under the direction of the Twelve or the traveling high council, in building up the Church and regulating all the affairs of the same in all nations, first unto the Gentiles and then to the Jews . . . (D&C 107:34)

The divine direction that came as the Seventy assumed their divinely directed role in the leadership of the Church is further evidence of the revelatory nature of our religion. I have in my wallet a card, signed by S. Dilworth Young, indicating that I was ordained a Seventy by Gordon B. Hinckley on June 10 of 1972. In those days all stakes had stake quorums of Seventies. I remained in that office until 1992 when I was ordained a High Priest in my own ward. But I never had a clear understanding of my duties. I tried to do missionary work, but not in any ways different from those I employed when I was an elder or a priest. I was associated for years with a small group of other Seventies, studying the lessons in priesthood and home teaching each other, but I often wondered what my duties were. When the Lord spoke through President Kimball in 1975 and the First Quorum of Seventy was organized, I began to see more clearly. In 1989 a Second Quorum was added. Then in 1997, three more quorums were added, these to serve as Area Authority Seventies.

Read the following verses and see the fulfillment of prophecy and revelation.

93 And it is according to the vision showing the order of the Seventy, that they should have seven presidents to preside over them, chosen out of the number of the seventy;

94 And the seventh president of these presidents is to preside over the six;

95 And these seven presidents are to choose other seventy besides the first seventy to whom they belong, and are to preside over them;

96 And also other seventy, until seven times seventy, if the labor in the vineyard of necessity requires it.

97 And these seventy are to be traveling ministers, unto the Gentiles

first and also unto the Jews.

CONCLUSION:

President Spencer W. Kimball from this very pulpit bore his testimony when he said: “I say, in the deepest of humility, but also by the power and force of a burning testimony in my soul, that from the prophet of the Restoration to the prophet of our own year, the communication line is unbroken, the authority is continuous, and light, brilliant and penetrating, continues to shine. The sound of the voice of the Lord is a continuous melody and a thunderous appeal.” (*Ensign*, May 1977, p. 78; cited in L. Aldin Porter, “The Spirit of Prophecy,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, p. 10)

I pray we will all be devoted listeners to that continuous melody, and that the thunderous appeal of revelation from the Heavens will shape us into Christlike beings worthy of exaltation.

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