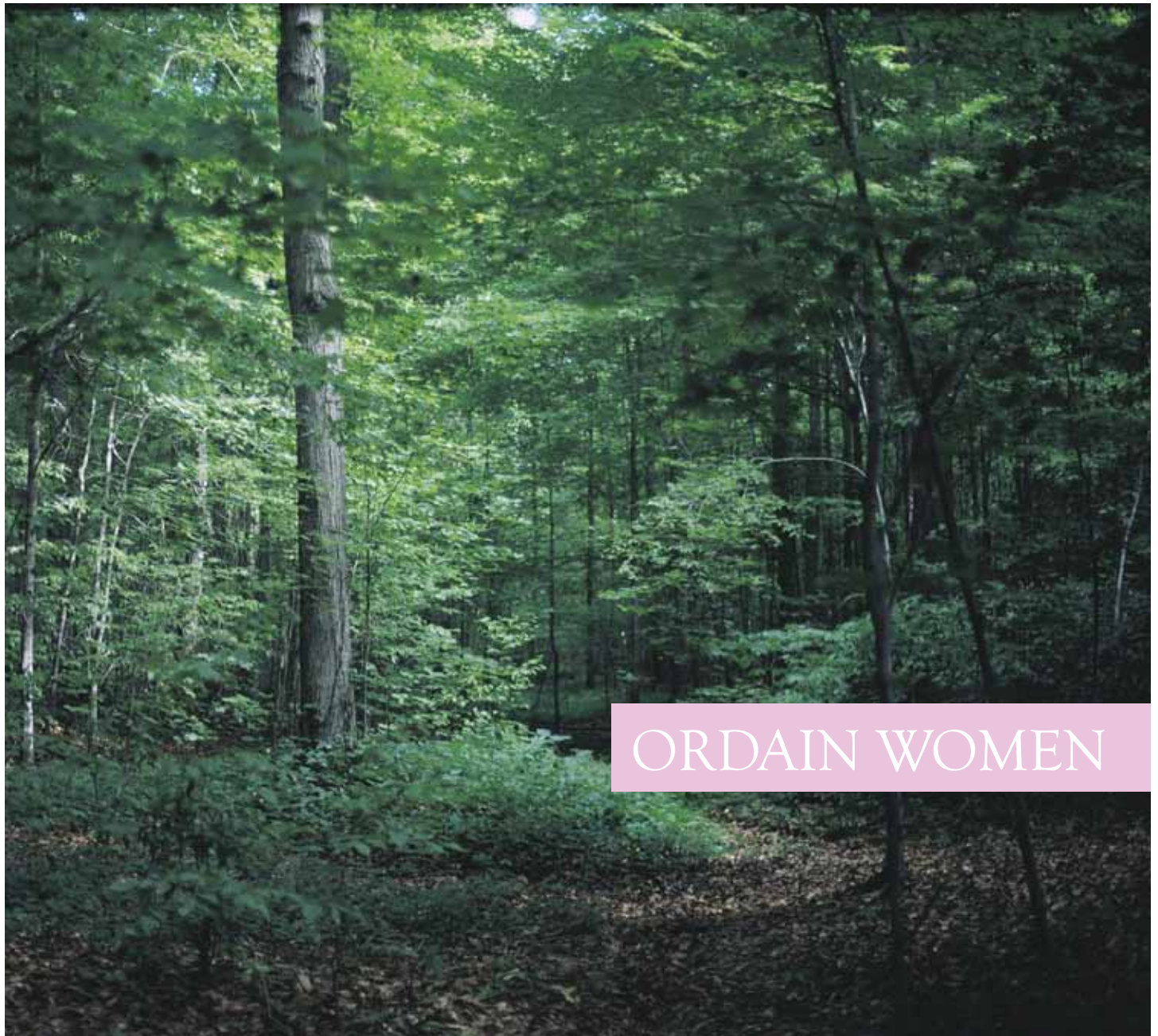


Revel in Revelation

Discussion Four



ORDAIN WOMEN



REVEL IN REVELATION

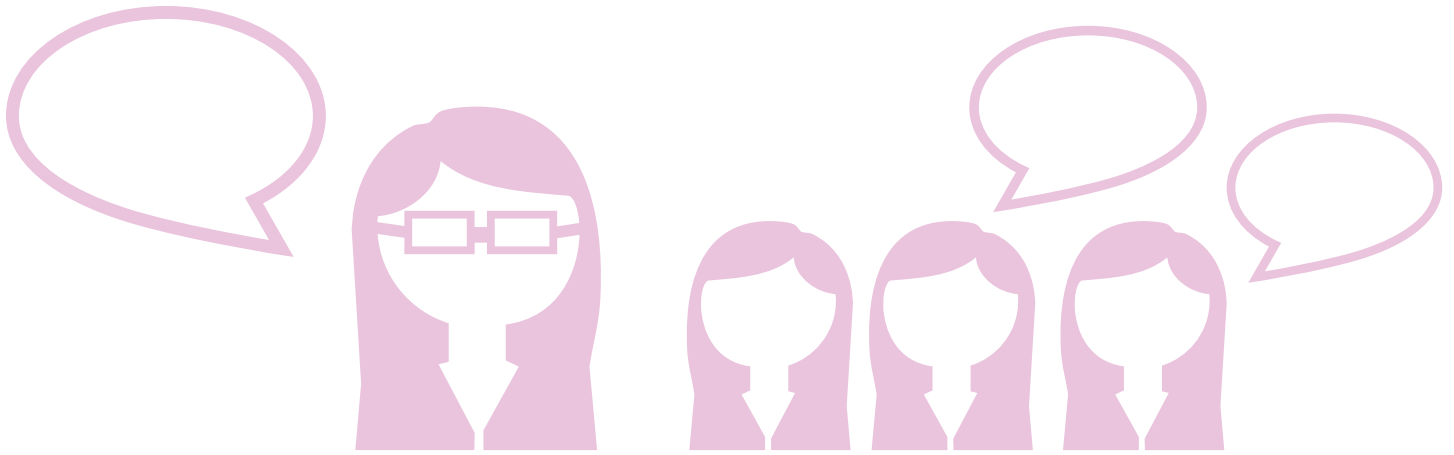
Discussion Four

“Revelations will probably never come unless they are desired. I think few people receive revelations while lounging on the couch or while playing cards or while relaxing. I believe most revelations would come when a man is on his tip toes, reaching as high as he can for something which he knows he needs, and then there bursts upon him the answer to his problems.”

-Spencer W. Kimball

“We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.”

-Article of Faith 9



WOMEN'S DISCUSSION FOUR READINGS

Participants should prepare beforehand by reading the following talks, articles and scriptures:

The Spirit of Revelation, Elder David Bednar April 2011

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2011/04/the-spirit-of-revelation?lang=eng&query=Revelation>

The Two Lines of Communication, Elder Dallin Oaks October 2010

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2010/10/two-lines-of-communication?lang=eng&query=Two+Lines+of+Communication>

Teachings of Joseph Smith: Chapter 16, “Revelation and the Living Prophet

<https://www.lds.org/manual/teachings-joseph-smith/chapter-16?lang=eng>

Church History: Revelations in Context, The Word of Wisdom Jed Woodworth June 2013

<http://history.lds.org/article/doctrine-and-covenants-word-of-wisdom?lang=eng>

What the Brother of Jared Can Teach Us about Women’s Ordination, Katie Marinda Hyde

<http://ordainwomen.org/what-the-brother-of-jared-can-teach-us-about-womens-ordination/>

Spencer W. Kimball and the Revelation on Priesthood, Edward Kimball. BYU Studies, 2008

<https://byustudies.byu.edu/showtitle.aspx?title=7885>

Shouldn’t It Be Obvious? How Mormon Women Hold and Exercise the Priesthood Today. April Young Bennett, May 18, 2014

<http://www.the-exponent.com/shouldnt-it-be-obvious-how-mormon-women-hold-and-exercise-the-priesthood-today/>

SCRIPTURES

Exodus 18:13-27, Amos 3:7, James 1:5, 1 Nephi 10:19, 2 Nephi 32, D&C 1:38, D&C 8:2-3, D&C 9:7-9,
Article of Faith 1:9

DISCUSSION FOUR INTRO ACTIVITY

WHO ASKED THE QUESTION: MATCH THESE REVELATIONS, VISIONS, AND MIRACLES

PERSON/GROUP

1. Emma Smith questioning use of tobacco
2. Spencer W. Kimball, the Genesis Group and members praying regarding the priesthood/temple ban
3. Brother of Jared requesting light for the ships
4. Hannah physically and vocally demonstrating to God at the temple gates
5. Five Sisters petitioning Moses for the right to inherit property (Zelophehad's Daughters)
6. Mary pleading with Jesus to come to her home and perform a miracle
7. Joseph Smith as young boy asking to know which church to join
8. Aurelia Spencer Rogers, a 44-year-old mother of 12, asking that children be taught the gospel in their own classes
9. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, petitioning Moses
10. LDS women from the Let Women Pray campaign writing letters to Brethren

OUTCOME

- A. Children's Primary Program
- B. Official Declaration 2 in 1978
- C. Change in Mosaic Law regarding women
- D. Word of Wisdom
- E. A woman for the first time offers a prayer in General Conference April 2013
- F. The First Vision
- G. Luminescent stones to light the journey
- H. Change in Policy on how Children of Israel were Judged
- I. The prophet Samuel is born
- J. Lazarus Raised from the Dead

ANSWER KEY:

1 (D), 2 (B), 3 (G), 4 (I), 5 (C), 6 (J), 7 (F), 8 (A), 9 (H), 10 (E)

DISCUSSION FOUR REVIEW

Discussion Three suggested that we can be part of the revelatory process by asking questions and articulating the need for revelation. Elder Uchtdorf said, "... if we stop asking questions, stop thinking, stop pondering, we can thwart the revelations of the spirit. Remember, it was the questions young Joseph asked that opened the door for the restoration of all things. ... How often has the Holy Spirit tried to tell us something we needed to know, but couldn't get past the massive, iron gate of what we thought we already knew."¹

DISCUSSION GUIDE

AN ESTABLISHED PATTERN OF REVELATION

“During His earthly ministry, Jesus Christ conferred the authority of the priesthood that bears His name and He established a church that also bears His name. In this last dispensation, His priesthood authority was restored and His Church was reestablished through heavenly ministrations to the Prophet Joseph Smith.”²

The “Teachings of Joseph Smith” manual states:

“We never can comprehend the things of God and of heaven, but by revelation. ... The doctrine of revelation far transcends the doctrine of no revelation; for one truth revealed from heaven is worth all the sectarian notions in existence.

“Salvation cannot come without revelation; it is in vain for anyone to minister without it. ... No man can be a minister of Jesus Christ except he has the testimony of Jesus; and this is the spirit of prophecy [see Revelation 19:10]. ... Jesus in His teachings says, ‘Upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’ [Matthew 16:18] What rock? Revelation.

“The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was founded upon direct revelation, as the true Church of God has ever been, according to the scriptures (Amos 3:7, and Acts 1:2); and through the will and blessings of God, I have been an instrument in His hands, thus far, to move forward the cause of Zion.”³

- What part did revelation play in the Restoration?
- The Prophet Joseph said “revelation” is the rock on which the church is built. How do you think this strengthens the Church?

REVELATION THROUGH THE LIVING PROPHET STILL GUIDES THE CHURCH TODAY

Elder Dallin H. Oaks explains:

“The priesthood line is the channel by which God has spoken to His children in times past. And it is this line through which He currently speaks through the teachings and counsel of living prophets and apostles and other inspired leaders. This is the way we receive the required ordinances. This is the way we receive calls to serve in His Church. His Church is the way and His priesthood is the power through which we are privileged to participate in those cooperative activities that are essential to accomplishing the Lord’s work. These include preaching the gospel, building temples and chapels, and helping the poor.”⁴

- What are the advantages of having a church lead by revelation and a living prophet?
- Elder Oaks indicates that revelation guides many things that are accomplished in the Church such as ordinances, preaching the gospel, and helping the poor. How do you think these things enhance the lives of LDS members?

KNOWING FOR OURSELVES

Elder D. Todd Christofferson advised the following:

“It should be remembered that not every statement made by a Church leader, past or present, necessarily constitutes doctrine. It is commonly understood in the Church that a statement made by one leader on a single occasion often represents a personal, though well-considered, opinion.”⁵

- How do we know when a Church leader’s statement “constitutes doctrine” or when it “represents a personal, though well-considered, opinion”?

Revelation does not just guide the prophet and the leaders of the church; we are encouraged to “know for ourselves” through personal revelation if the doctrines of the church are true. Elder Oaks says, “We need a personal testimony of the truth.”⁶

- Share a personal experience about a time when you knew through personal revelation that the words of the prophet were true.

PERSONAL REVELATION

Personal revelation is an important force in our lives that comes directly from God to us. Elder Oaks explains that this revelation, through the power of the Holy Ghost, can guide and direct our lives:

“In the personal line we pray directly to our Heavenly Father, and He answers us by the channels He has established, without any mortal intermediary. The mission of the Holy Ghost is to testify of the Father and the Son, to guide us to the truth, and to show us all things that we should do.”⁷

Nephi also tells us that we can find knowledge by seeking through personal revelation and that mysteries can be unfolded to us.

“For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost.” (1 Nephi 10:19)

- What things have you learned by seeking?
- How has revelation helped you understand the mysteries of God?

Revelation does not always come right away. Elder David Bednar compares it to the rising sun and how light gradually fills the morning turning night in to day. He gives the example of Nephi following the spirit of revelation a piece at a time as he tried to get the plates of Brass from Laban and as he learned to build a ship. In the Spencer W. Kimball BYU Studies article, we read that many prophets including President Kimball decades wrestling with the priesthood/ temple ban, studying it out in their minds, praying, receiving new information and letting that information influence their minds and hearts until the answer became clear.

- Share an experience where you had to struggle and seek for a period of time before an answer became clear.

HOW DO PERSONAL REVELATION AND CHURCH REVELATION WORK TOGETHER? THREE STORIES

1. MOSES AND JETHRO (EXODUS 18:13-27)

- 13 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening.
- 14 And when Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even?
- 15 And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to enquire of God:
- 16 When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws.
- 17 And Moses' father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good.
- 18 Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone.
- 19 Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God:
- 20 And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do.
- 21 Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens:
- 22 And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee.
- 23 If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace.
- 24 So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said.
- 25 And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.
- 26 And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.
- 27 And Moses let his father in law depart; and he went his way into his own land.
 - What can we learn from this story about talking to Priesthood leaders about our observations and ideas?
 - What can we learn from Moses' response to Jethro's advice?

2. EMMA SMITH AND THE WORD OF WISDOM

Emma Smith [the first president of the female Relief Society] told Joseph Smith the environment concerned her. He and Emma lived in the Whitney store, and the task of scrubbing the spittle from the hardwood fell upon her weary shoulders. The stains were impossible to get out. The whole situation seemed less than ideal for those who were called of God as these elders were, especially when we remember that the room with the filthy floor was Joseph's "translation room," the same place where he received revelations in the name of God. Joseph began inquiring of the Lord about what could be done, and on February 27, scarcely a month after the school started, he received the revelation later canonized as D&C 89 The answer was unequivocal. "Tobacco is not for the body neither for the belly and is not good for man."⁸

- What can we learn about revelation from this story about Joseph and Emma?
- How can we be a part of the revelatory process?

3. SERMON FROM BRIGHAM YOUNG

"I am more afraid that this people have so much confidence in their leaders that they will not inquire for themselves of God whether they are led by Him. I am fearful they settle down in a state of blind self-security, trusting their eternal destiny in the hands of their leaders with a reckless confidence that in itself would thwart the purposes of God in their salvation, and weaken that influence they could give to their leaders, did they know for themselves, by the revelations of Jesus, that they are led in the right way. Let every man and woman know, by the whispering of the Spirit of God to themselves, whether their leaders are walking in the path the Lord dictates, or not. This has been my exhortation continually."⁹

- Does President Young's sermon relate to our present day? Why or why not?
- What do you think President Young means when he says that not inquiring for ourselves "could weaken that influence [we] could give to [our] leaders? How might this relate to the process and interaction of personal revelation with prophetic revelation?



READINGS

WHAT THE BROTHER OF JARED CAN TEACH US ABOUT WOMEN'S ORDINATION,

by *Katie Marinda Hyde*

As we approach the second Ordain Women priesthood session action, the pattern set by the Brother of Jared resonates with me. His example of asking the Lord for light, after being initially rebuffed, buoys me up as I prepare to faithfully approach the door of the Tabernacle, knock a second time and ask to be accepted as an equal in the household of God.

I am regularly asked, "If you have faith in God and in the Restoration, why is agitation for greater inclusion of women in the Church necessary? Why hasn't God already taken care of it?" I've thought a lot about this. I truly believe in the Restoration and that Christ is at the head of this true and living church. Part of what makes the Church a living church is that it grows and adapts to the needs of its members. Just as "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath," the Church organization was made to serve God's children and not the children to serve the organization (Mark 2:27).

Since we live in a fallen world, there are societal and cultural influences that have been part of shaping the Church over time. We do not live in Zion yet, and every disciple of Christ must strive to build the kingdom of God. I believe female ordination will hasten the work of establishing Zion. Proposing female ordination will change this iteration of church organization, however I do not believe it is asking for God to change His mind. I believe He already sees my sisters and me as having equal ability to exercise the divine power and authority that our brothers currently exercise.

In this circumstance, I think about the Brother of Jared and his interaction with the Lord. The book of Ether tells us the Brother of Jared goes to the Lord and says, "O Lord, in [our boats] there is no light... And also we shall perish, for in them we cannot breathe" (Ether 2:19). God answers the Brother of Jared, instructing him how to modify their boats so that they can breathe and thus survive the journey, but God doesn't answer the Brother of Jared's question regarding the darkness. God simply provides the bare necessities for the people to cross the waters safely. However, the Brother of Jared returns to the Lord, reiterating the importance of the light to the people, and asks again, "O Lord, wilt thou suffer that we shall cross this great water in darkness?" (Ether 2:22). The Brother of Jared understood that his community would be able to safely cross the water this way, but he wanted the journey to be a better experience for everyone. The Lord asks the Brother of Jared how he would dispel the darkness. This is when the Brother of Jared suggests the shining stones.

Through the Restoration we are blessed to have the Holy Priesthood, and it provides the way for us to safely cross the waters of mortality. If, like the Brother of Jared, we approach our Father in Heaven and say we too hope to make this journey a better experience for everyone, I believe that that's acceptable to Him. My sisters and I have earnestly studied out in our minds the matter of gender inequality within the structure of the Church, and we suggest female ordination. We recognize that the power and authority to make this decision lies with Him who guides our church, Christ Jesus. We simply ask that our leaders and prophets prayerfully consider and ask God if this be right.

EXERPTS FROM "SPENCER W. KIMBALL AND THE REVELATION ON PRIESTHOOD,"

by *Edward Kimball (his son)*. *BYU Studies*, 2008.

<https://byustudies.byu.edu/showtitle.aspx?title=7885>

(please see all author's footnotes in original link provided)

In 1947, the First Presidency assigned Heber Meeks, president of the Southern States Mission, to explore the possibility of proselyting in Cuba. Meeks asked his knowledgeable LDS friend, sociologist Lowry Nelson of the University of Minnesota, about the mixed racial picture in Cuba and whether missionaries would be able to avoid conferring priesthood on men with some Negroid ancestry. Nelson sent his reply to both Meeks and to the First Presidency, expressing sharp dismay at the policy. The Presidency responded, "From the days of the Prophet Joseph even until now, it has been the doctrine of the Church, never questioned by any of the Church leaders, that the Negroes are not entitled to the full blessings of the Gospel." Its explanation, they said, was to be found in the premortal existence.

In 1949, George Albert Smith's administration began sending out a consistent statement in response to inquiries. It followed

the pattern set in earlier private correspondence by the First Presidency and by David O. McKay, who had been a counselor in the First Presidency since 1934: "It is not a matter of the declaration of a policy but of direct commandment from the Lord, on which is founded the doctrine of the Church from the days of its organization, to the effect that Negroes . . . are not entitled to the priesthood at the present time,"²⁰ based on "some eternal law with which man is yet unfamiliar" and by which men's place and condition of birth and rights to priesthood must be explained; accordingly, "the conduct of spirits in the premortal existence has some determining effect upon the conditions and circumstances under which these spirits take on mortality."²¹ The statement went beyond the evidence both in claiming a "direct commandment" from the Lord and in saying that the doctrine came "from the days of [the Church's] organization."

When McKay became Church President in April 1951, he continued to respond to queries with this same statement.²² But behind the scenes, application of the policy was changing to some degree. In 1948, during the George Albert Smith administration, priesthood leaders in the Philippines were

authorized by the First Presidency to ordain Negro men to the priesthood. These were native men with black skin who had no known African ancestry.²³ Descent from black Africans only—not skin color or other racial characteristics—became the disqualifying factor.²⁴

In 1954, President McKay is said to have appointed a special committee of the Twelve to study the issue. They concluded that the priesthood ban had no clear basis in scripture but that Church members were not prepared for change...

SETTING THE STAGE

The days leading up to June 1978 offer a classic illustration of the pattern leading to much of revelation—an urgent question, an intense consideration, a prayerfully formulated tentative answer, and a spiritual confirmation.¹⁰⁸

Many factors set the stage for change, although it is impossible to determine how much each contributed:

- Requests for missionaries continued to come from individuals and groups in Africa, particularly Nigeria and Ghana. How could the Church deny gospel teaching to sincere seekers? And how would they function without priesthood?
- The American conscience was awakening to the centuries of injustice against blacks; the balance had tipped decisively against racism and toward egalitarianism, preparing whites to accept blacks as both legal and social equals. This consciousness did not happen at once, nor did it reach everyone, but it prepared white Mormons to welcome blacks as full participants.
- This new ethos also created social pressure. Many Americans scorned Mormons as bigots, and the perception may have affected missionary efforts.
- The Church's commitment to missionary work—always high—had achieved unprecedented heights under President Kimball's vision of missionary work sweeping the earth. Both leaders and members continually confronted the logical consequence: missionary efforts had to include black Africa.
- Study by General Authorities and independent scholars had weakened the traditional idea that Joseph Smith taught priesthood exclusion and cast a shadow on the policy's purported scriptural justifications.¹⁰⁹
- The Church's surging growth in Brazil and the temple there, rapidly moving toward completion, created an insoluble dilemma. In such a racially mixed society, many people had remote Negro ancestry but did not know it. Application

of the policy would be accompanied by the near certainty of error.

- And finally, the person responsible for directing the Church had changed. President Hinckley said, "Here was a little man, filled with love, able to reach out to people. . . . He was not the first to worry about the priesthood question, but he had the compassion to pursue it and a boldness that allowed him to act, to get the revelation."¹¹⁰

SEEKING REVELATION

As a follower, Spencer had proved loyal and conservative. He did not come to leadership intending to be a reformer, but he was not afraid of change. His only desire was to push the work of the Church forward. If doing so required changes, he stood prepared to make them.

President Kimball felt that his predecessors had sought the Lord's will concerning the priesthood policy, and for whatever reason "the time had not come." But Spencer had to ask anew. He wanted urgently "to find out firsthand what the Lord thought about it."¹¹¹ It was not enough just to wait until the Lord saw fit to take the initiative: the scripture admonished him to ask and to knock if he wanted to know for himself. He prayed, trying not to prejudge the answer: Should we maintain the long-standing policy, or has the time come for the change? He received no immediate answer to his prayers.¹¹²

In May 1975, President Kimball referred to his counselors various statements by early Church leaders about blacks and the priesthood and asked for their reactions.¹¹³ Wary of ways in which the question had been divisive during the McKay administration, he asked the Apostles to join him as colleagues in extended study and supplication.¹¹⁴ Francis M. Gibbons, secretary to the First Presidency, observed special focus on the issue in the year before the revelation.¹¹⁵ Ten years after the revelation, Dallin H. Oaks, president of BYU in 1978, recalled this time of inquiry: "[President Kimball] asked me what I thought were the reasons. He talked to dozens of people, maybe hundreds of people . . . about why, why do we have this."¹¹⁶

Years earlier, talking about revelation in general, Spencer had written in a letter to his son:

"Revelations will probably never come unless they are desired. I think few people receive revelations while lounging on the couch or while playing cards or while relaxing. I believe most revelations would come when a man is on his tip toes, reaching as high as he can for something which he knows he needs, and then there bursts upon him the answer to his problems."¹¹⁷

In June 1977, Spencer invited at least three General Authorities to give him memos on the implications of the subject.¹¹⁸ Elder McConkie wrote a long memorandum concluding that there was no scriptural barrier to a change in policy that would give priesthood to black men.¹¹⁹ Considering Elder McConkie's traditional approach to the topic during the Lee administration, this conclusion explains why, according to Elder Packer, "President Kimball spoke in public of his gratitude to Elder McConkie for some special support he received in the days leading up to the revelation on the priesthood."¹²⁰ Although

minutes of quorum meetings are not available and participants have not commented in detail, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve discussed the issue repeatedly, at length, and over a period of months.¹²¹

Elder James E. Faust, head of the International Mission, which included nearly all of Africa, conferred with President Kimball a number of times in early 1978 about the priesthood issue.¹²² At one meeting, Elder Faust displayed a stack of letters received from Africa during just the previous month. Asked to read a sample, Elder Faust chose a letter from a boy whose “greatest hope was to one day sit in the Salt Lake Tabernacle and there hear the Lord’s prophets speak.”¹²³

During the months leading up to June 1978, President Kimball spoke with the Twelve repeatedly about the question, asking them to speak freely.¹²⁴ He invited associates who had not expressed themselves in the group setting to talk with him in private.¹²⁵ He seemed so intent on solving the problem that others worried about him. A neighbor of the Kimballs, Richard Vernon, had noticed that Spencer seemed somewhat withdrawn. Normally relaxed and comfortable with friends in his ward, Spencer responded to one inquiry that he was not feeling well and changed the topic. Many in the ward had noticed the difference and felt concerned. Many also noticed that Camilla was anxious and worried about Spencer. Elder Packer, concerned at President Kimball’s inability to let the matter rest, said, “Why don’t you forget this?” Then Elder Packer answered his own question, “Because you can’t. The Lord won’t let you.”¹²⁶

Spencer later described:

“Day after day, and especially on Saturdays and Sundays when there were no organizations [sessions] in the temple, I went there when I could be alone.

“I was very humble...I was searching for this...I wanted to be sure...

“I had a great deal to fight...myself, largely, because I had grown up with this thought that Negroes should not have the priesthood [emphasis added] and I was prepared to go all the rest of my life until my death and fight for it and defend it as it was.”

REVELATION

Spencer continued to receive many letters from Church members concerning the issue. Some writers criticized and demanded; others expressed faith and hope. A letter dated May 19 from Chase Peterson, then a Harvard University administrator and soon to be president of the University of Utah, urged a “present opportunity,” while external pressures had slackened, to open the priesthood to black men. After thoughtful expression of this view, he concluded:

Could it be that the Lord has been both preparing us to accept the black man into full Priesthood fellowship and preparing the black man for Priesthood responsibility? . . . [Perhaps the Lord] is waiting for us to be ready, and if we fail to demonstrate our readiness, there may not be a [right] time again [soon].¹⁴⁶

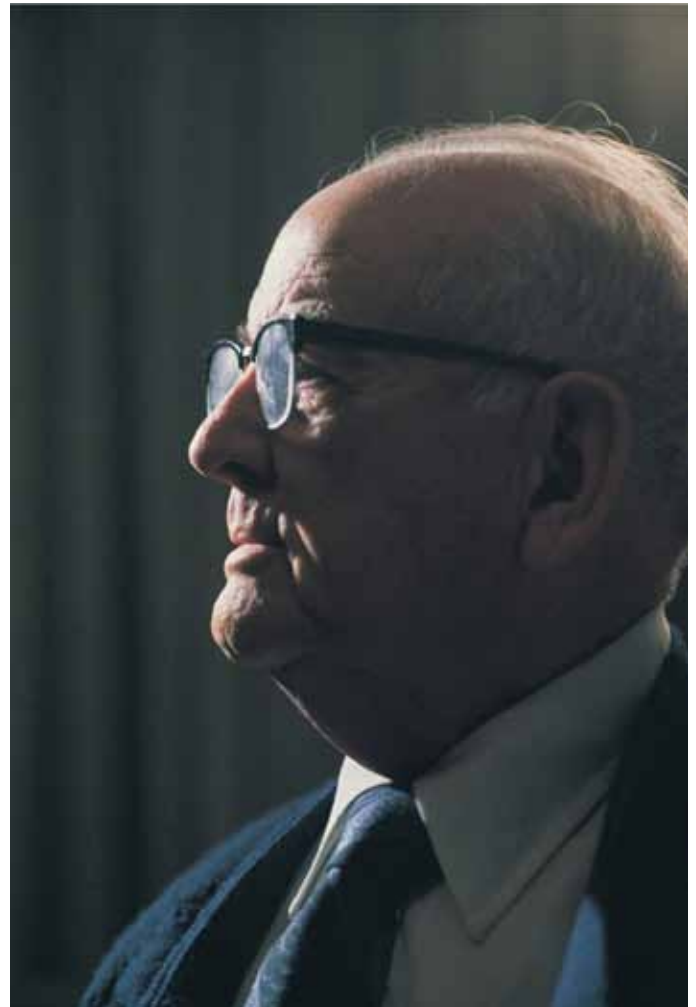
A few days later Spencer replied, “I thank you very much for your delightful letter and for the suggestions you have offered. Please accept my sincere thanks and best wishes.”¹⁴⁷

On May 25, Mark E. Petersen called President Kimball’s attention to an article that proposed the priesthood policy had begun with Brigham Young, not Joseph Smith, and he suggested that the President might wish to consider this factor.¹⁴⁸

On May 30, Spencer read his counselors a tentative statement in longhand removing racial restrictions on priesthood and said he had a “good, warm feeling” about it.¹⁴⁹ They reviewed past statements and decided to ask G. Homer Durham, a Seventy supervising the Historical Department, to research the matter further.¹⁵⁰ They also concluded to alter the pattern of their next Thursday morning meeting with the Twelve by canceling the traditional luncheon in the temple and asking the council members to continue their fasting.

On June 1, 1978 During the temple prayer meeting the vote was unanimous among the Twelve. One June 8, 1978 Official Declaration 2 was read to Church membership worldwide.

We encourage discussants to read the entire BYU Studies article.



REVELATIONS IN CONTEXT: THE WORD OF WISDOM (FROM LDS.ORG)

Like many other revelations in the early Church, Section 89, known today as the Word of Wisdom, came in answer to a problem. In Kirtland, many men in the Church were charged with preaching in various parts of the United States. They were to cry repentance unto the people and gather in the Lord's elect. To prepare these recent converts for their important labors, Joseph Smith started a training school called the School of the Prophets, which opened in Kirtland on the second floor of the Newel K. Whitney mercantile store in January 1833.

Every morning after breakfast, the men met in the school to hear instruction from Joseph Smith. The room was very small, and upwards of twenty-five elders packed the space. The first thing they did, after sitting down, was to "light a pipe and begin to talk about the great things of the kingdom and puff away," Brigham Young recounted. The clouds of smoke were so thick the men could hardly even see Joseph through the haze. Once the pipes were smoked out, they would then "put in a chew on one side and perhaps on both sides and then it was all over the floor." In this dingy setting, Joseph Smith attempted to teach the men how they and their converts could become holy, "without spot," and worthy of the presence of God.

TOBACCO

This episode in the Whitney store occurred in the middle of a massive transformation within western culture. In 1750, personal cleanliness and hygiene were infrequent, haphazard practices, mostly the concern of the wealthy and aristocratic. By 1900, regular bathing had become routine for a large portion of the population, especially the middle classes, who had adopted gentility as an ideal. Tobacco spitting shifted from being a publicly acceptable practice among most segments of the population to becoming seen as a filthy habit beneath the dignity of polite society. In the midst of this cultural shift, at the very moment when everyday people started to concern themselves with their own cleanliness and bodily health, the Word of Wisdom arrived to light the way. (D&C 89 on JosephSmithPapers.org)

The scene in the School of the Prophets would have been enough to give any non-tobacco user like Joseph Smith cause for concern. Joseph's wife Emma told him the environment concerned her. He and Emma lived in the Whitney store, and the task of scrubbing the spittle from the hardwood fell upon her weary shoulders. She may have complained of being asked to perform this thankless task, but there was also a more practical consideration: "She could not make the floor look decent," Brigham Young recalled. The stains were impossible to get out. The whole situation seemed less than ideal for those who were called of God as these elders were, especially when we remember that the room with the filthy floor was Joseph's "translation room," the same place where he received revelations in the name of God. Joseph began inquiring of the Lord about what could be done, and on February 27, scarcely a month after the school started, he received the revelation later canonized as Doctrine and Covenants 89. The answer was unequivocal. "Tobacco is not for the body neither for the belly and is not good for man" (see D&C 89:8).

STRONG DRINKS

Tobacco was just one of a host of substances pertaining to bodily health and cleanliness whose merits were hotly debated on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean at the time the Word of Wisdom was received. The discussions were so frequent because the abuses were so widespread. Frances Trollope, the British novelist, reported disdainfully in 1832 that in all her recent travels in the United States, she never met a man who was not either a "tobacco chewer or a whisky drinker."

Drinking, like tobacco chewing, had clearly gotten out of hand. For centuries nearly all Americans had consumed large quantities of alcoholic beverages, much like their European counterparts. The Puritans called alcohol the "Good Creature of God," a blessing from heaven to be imbibed in moderation. Alcohol was consumed at virtually every meal in part because the unpurified water of the time was so unhealthy. Homebrewed beer was a favorite, and after 1700, British-American colonists drank fermented peach juice, hard apple cider, and rum either imported from the West Indies or distilled from molasses made there. By 1770, per capita consumption of distilled spirits alone—to say nothing of beer or cider—stood at 3.7 gallons per year.

The American Revolution only exaggerated this reliance on alcohol. After molasses imports were cut off, Americans sought a substitute for rum in whiskey. Grain farmers in western Pennsylvania and Tennessee found it cheaper to manufacture whiskey than to ship and sell perishable grains. As a consequence, the number of distilleries grew rapidly after 1780, boosted by settlement of the corn belt in Kentucky and Ohio and the vast distances to eastern markets. To the astonishment of observers like Trollope, Americans everywhere—men, women, and children—drank whiskey all day long. American consumption of distilled spirits climbed precipitously, from two and a half gallons a person in 1790 to seven gallons in 1830, the highest amount of any time in American history and a figure three times today's consumption rate.

This elevated alcohol consumption offended religious sensibilities. As early as 1784, both Quakers and Methodists were advising their members to abstain from all hard liquor and to avoid participation in its sale and manufacture. A more aggressive temperance movement took hold among the churches in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Alcohol became viewed more a dangerous tempter and less a gift from God. In 1812, the Congregational and Presbyterian churches in Connecticut recommended strict licensing laws limiting the distribution of alcohol. Lyman Beecher, a leader in this reform movement, advocated even more extreme measures, endorsing full abstinence from alcoholic beverages. The idea soon became a central plank of the American Temperance Society (ATS), organized in Boston in 1826. People were encouraged to sign a temperance pledge not just to moderate their alcohol intake but to abstain altogether. A capital "T" was written next to the names of those who did so, and from this the word "teetotaler" was derived. By the mid-1830s, the ATS had grown to well over a million members, many of them teetotalers.

Encouraged by the ATS, local temperance societies popped up by the thousands across the U.S. countryside. Kirtland had

its own temperance society as did many small towns. Precisely because alcohol reform was so often discussed and debated, with everyone under the sun having an opinion, the Saints had to have a way of adjudicating which were right. Besides rejecting the use of tobacco, the Word of Wisdom also came down against alcoholic beverages: “inasmuch as any man drinketh wine or strong drink among you behold it is not good neither meet in the sight of your father” (see D&C 89:5).

Nevertheless, it required time to wind down practices that were so deeply ingrained in family tradition and culture, especially when fermented beverages of all kinds were frequently used for medicinal purposes. The term “strong drink” certainly included distilled spirits like whiskey, which hereafter the Latter-day Saints generally shunned. They took a more moderate approach to milder alcoholic beverages like beer and “pure wine of the grape of the vine of your own make” (see D&C 89:6). For the next two generations, Latter-day Saint leaders taught the Word of Wisdom as a command from God, but they tolerated a variety of viewpoints on how strictly the commandment should be observed. This incubation period gave the Saints time to develop their own tradition of abstinence from habit-forming substances. By the early twentieth century, when scientific medicines were more widely available and temple attendance had become a more regular feature of Latter-day Saint worship, the Church was ready to accept a more exacting standard of observance that would eliminate problems like alcoholism from among the obedient. In 1921, the Lord inspired Church president Heber J. Grant to call on all Saints to live the Word of Wisdom to the letter by completely abstaining from all alcohol, coffee, tea, and tobacco. Today Church members are expected to live this higher standard.

HOT DRINKS

American temperance reformers succeeded in the 1830s in no small part by identifying a substitute for alcohol: coffee. In the eighteenth century, coffee was considered a luxury item, and British-manufactured tea was much preferred. After the Revolution, tea drinking came to be seen as unpatriotic and largely fell out of favor. The way was open for a rival stimulant to emerge. In 1830, reformers persuaded the U.S. Congress to remove the import duty on coffee. The strategy worked. Coffee fell to 10 cents a pound, making a cup of coffee the same price as a cup of whiskey, marking whiskey’s decline. By 1833, coffee had entered “largely into the daily consumption of almost every family, rich and poor.” The Baltimore American called it “among the necessaries of life.” Although coffee enjoyed wide approval by the mid-1830s, including within the medical community, a few radical reformers such as Sylvester Graham and William A. Alcott preached against the use of any stimulants whatsoever, including coffee and tea.

The Word of Wisdom rejected the idea of a substitute for alcohol. “Hot drinks”—which Latter-day Saints understood to mean coffee and tea—are not for the body, or belly,” the revelation explained (see D&C 89:9). Instead, the revelation encouraged the consumption of basic staples of the kind that had sustained life for millennia. The revelation praised “all wholesome herbs.” “All grain is ordained for the use of man and beasts, to be the staff of life ... as also the fruit of the vine,

that which yieldeth fruit, whether in the ground, or above the ground.” In keeping with an earlier revelation endorsing the eating of meat, the Word of Wisdom reminded the Saints that the flesh of beasts and fowls were given “for the use of man, with thanksgiving,” but added the caution that meat was “to be used sparingly” and not to excess (see D&C 89:10-12).

“I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT UPON ALL FLESH”

Latter-day Saints who learn of the American health reform movements of the 1820s and 1830s are sometimes perplexed at first hearing. How do these movements relate to the Word of Wisdom? Did Joseph Smith simply draw upon ideas already existing in his environment and put them forward as revelation?

Such concerns are unwarranted. We would do well to remember that many early Latter-day Saints who took part in temperance societies viewed the Word of Wisdom as inspired counsel, “adapted to the capacity of the weak, and the weakest of the saints, who are, or can be called saints.” Moreover, the revelation has no exact analog in the literature of its day. Temperance reformers often tried to frighten their hearers by linking alcohol consumption with a host of horrific diseases or social ills. The Word of Wisdom offered no such rationale. Strong drink, the revelation says simply, is “not good.” Similarly spare explanations are given for the injunctions against tobacco and hot drinks. The revelation can be understood more as an arbiter and less as a participant in the cultural debate.

In the end, some overlap between the Word of Wisdom and the health reform movement of the nineteenth century is to be expected. This was a time of “refreshing” (Acts 3:19), a moment in history where light and knowledge were pouring down from heaven. On the night Joseph Smith entertained the angel Moroni for the first time, in the fall of 1823, the angel quoted a line from the Book of Joel and said it was about to be fulfilled: “I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh,” the passage read (Joel 2:28; emphasis added). Insofar as temperance reform made people less dependent on addictive substances, prompting humility and righteous action, the movement surely was inspired by God. “That which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do good continually,” the Book of Mormon stated (Moroni 7:13) Rather than concerning themselves with cultural overlap, Latter-day Saints can joyously contemplate how God’s spirit touched so many, so widely, and with such force.

Soon after receiving the Word of Wisdom, Joseph Smith appeared before the elders of the School of the Prophets and read the revelation to them. The brethren did not have to be told what the words meant. They “immediately threw their tobacco pipes into the fire,” one of the participants in the school recalled. Since that time, the inspiration in the Word of Wisdom has been proven many times over in the lives of the Saints, its power and divinity cascading down through the years. In some ways, the American health reform movement has faded from view. The Word of Wisdom remains to light our way.

SHOULDN'T IT BE OBVIOUS?

HOW MORMON WOMEN HOLD AND EXERCISE THE PRIESTHOOD TODAY

By April Young Bennett, Exponent Blog, May 18, 2014

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS, Mormons) bans women from ordination to the priesthood, while virtually all male members over 12 years of age are ordained. Although this ban clearly restricts women from performing most church ordinances and disqualifies women from most high-level callings (ministry positions), some suggest that Mormon women actually do hold and exercise the priesthood without ordination.

TEMPLE ENDOWMENT

Some of the wording of the temple endowment ceremony seems to bestow priesthood upon all who receive the endowment, including women, but very little has been said by church leaders clarifying whether or not this is the case, possibly due to taboos against discussing temple ceremonies. Elder M. Russell Ballard recently said,

"When men and women go to the temple, they are both endowed with the same power, which by definition is priesthood power." (Ballard, 2013)

But Ballard's statement seems to contradict a statement made by fellow apostle Boyd K. Packer 20 years earlier:

"Some members of the Church are now teaching that priesthood is some kind of a free-floating authority which can be assumed by anyone who has had the endowment...The priesthood is conferred through ordination, not simply through making a covenant or receiving a blessing." (Packer, 1993)

TEMPLE MARRIAGE

If priesthood is only conferred through ordination, women clearly do not have the priesthood. Ordination of women is banned by the LDS church. However, even Packer has suggested another way that women obtain the priesthood without ordination:

"No man receives the fulness of the priesthood without a woman at his side. For no man, the Prophet said, can obtain the fulness of the priesthood outside the temple of the Lord. And she is there beside him in that sacred place. She shares in all that he receives." (Packer, 1998)

A recent statement by Ballard may support this suggestion:

"Just as a woman cannot conceive a child without a man, so a man cannot fully exercise the power of the priesthood to establish an eternal family without a woman...In the eternal perspective, both the procreative power and the priesthood power are shared by husband and wife." (Ballard, 2013)

By linking priesthood power to procreative power, Ballard's statement raises more questions. Is he actually talking about

husbands and wives sharing the priesthood itself? How do they share it? Or is he just reminding us that men hold the priesthood and women bear children and between the two of them, the couple enjoys both? How does this apply to couples that do not bear children? What about single women and women married to non-priesthood holders? They are clearly excluded from receiving the priesthood through spouses—barriers not experienced by men, who may be ordained to the priesthood regardless of marital status.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks has pointed out that while women are partners with their husbands within their own families, they do not share their husbands' priesthood callings. (Oaks, 2005) Exactly what bit of the priesthood are wives sharing?

OBVIOUSNESS AS A LITMUS TEST

Both the theory that women receive the priesthood through the endowment and the theory that women receive the priesthood through their husbands fail a litmus test suggested by Packer:

"Do not miss that one simple, obvious absolute: The priesthood ever and always is conferred by ordination by one who holds proper authority, and it is known to the Church that he has it." (Packer, 1993)

This "one...obvious absolute" is actually two. First, the priesthood is conferred by ordination. Women are not ordained in the LDS church today. Second, when someone has priesthood authority, the Church knows that he has it. Teachings about women holding the priesthood through the endowment or through partnership with their husbands are sparse, controversial and absent from church curricula. If women do hold the priesthood in these ways, why isn't it known to the Church?

PRIESTHOOD AUTHORITY

This is obvious: Mormon women are not allowed to be ordained to priesthood offices nor permitted to hold priesthood keys. (Packer, 1993) (Burton, 2013) (Ballard, 2013) These are the two primary ways by which priesthood authority is distributed. (Packer, 1993) (D&C sections 20 and 124)

But keys and ordination are not the only ways to obtain priesthood authority. Priesthood authority may be delegated.

"Those who have priesthood keys—whether that be a deacon who has keys for his quorum or a bishop who has keys for his ward or a stake president who has keys for his stake or the president of the Church who holds all priesthood keys—literally make it possible for all who serve or labor faithfully under their direction to exercise priesthood authority and have access to priesthood power." (Ballard, 2013)

These statements suggest that women exercise the priesthood; the authority to do so is delegated to them by male priesthood holders with keys. But what priesthood power are they wielding? Can priesthood itself be borrowed?

We are not accustomed to speaking of women having the authority of the priesthood in their Church callings, but
what other authority can it be?



When a woman—young or old—is set apart to preach the gospel as a full-time missionary, she is given priesthood authority to perform a priesthood function. The same is true when a woman is set apart to function as an officer or teacher in a Church organization under the direction of one who holds the keys of the priesthood.

Whoever functions in an office or calling received from one who holds priesthood keys exercises priesthood authority in performing her or his assigned duties.

Dallin H. Oaks

A female temple ordinance worker may be using the priesthood power conferred upon her through the endowment. Although church members sometimes use folk doctrines to explain away female temple work as something other than priesthood, Elders Oaks and Ballard have both confirmed that women exercise the priesthood in the temple. (Oaks, 2014) (Ballard, 2013)

However, the endowment cannot explain how other women, many of whom have not been through the endowment ceremony, exercise the priesthood in the context of their church callings. How is priesthood conferred to these women?

PRIESTHOOD POWER

In spite of Oaks' assurance that a woman "exercises priesthood authority in performing her...assigned duties," female church auxiliary leaders do not seem to see themselves in this way. General Relief Society president Linda K. Burton and former general Young Women president Elaine S. Dalton emphasized that women have priesthood power, not priesthood authority. (Burton, Dalton, & Wixom, 2013) Sheri Dew, former second counselor in the general Relief Society presidency, was blunt about putting women in their unauthoritative place:

"Young men, you will preside at home and in the Church...For the Church cannot achieve the full measure of its creation unless both faithful men who bear the priesthood and righteous women who rejoice in serving under the direction of the priesthood work together. (Dew, 2001)

Priesthood power is the power to be "sealed up unto eternal life." (D&C 131:5) Such power cannot be brushed aside as insignificant. Yet, speaking of women having priesthood power without authority could be another way of saying that although women may receive the blessings of salvation, they may not exercise the priesthood in any tangible way during this life.

Carole M. Stephens, first counselor in the general Relief Society presidency, taught that both men and women may "receive the power and blessings of the priesthood" but saw only men as eligible to "exercise the priesthood." (Stephens, 2013)

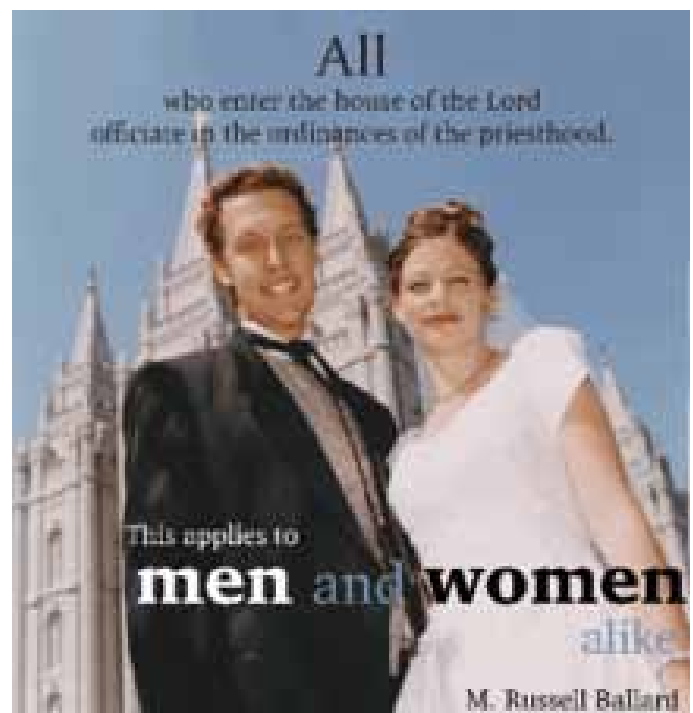
Elder Neil L. Andersen suggested that women without male priesthood holders in the home could still have priesthood power in their homes, but illustrated his point with a metaphor that evokes images of women waiting powerlessly in the dark because only "a man may open the drapes." (Andersen, 2013) More literally, Stephens described visiting three families without male priesthood holders, accompanied by a male priesthood holder who was able to bless them that day, but we are left to wonder how their priesthood needs will be met when visitors are not present. (Stephens, 2013)

If a man exercises the authority of the priesthood, "it is known to the Church that he has it." (Packer, 1993) If women also exercise priesthood authority, shouldn't it be more obvious?

BEING AUXILIARY

The kind of priesthood authority that women may receive, that comes without priesthood office or keys, seems suspiciously similar to lack of authority. Women do not make decisions; they make "recommendations" and "suggestions." (Ballard, 2013) (Beck, 2010) (Scott, 2005) General auxiliary officers do not preside over their local counterparts. Instead, they have "occasional contact" with them and "assist" them. (Scott, 2005)

Female leaders in the LDS Church are very similar to expert consultants at secular organizations. They work long hours. Their "input is significant and welcomed." (Ballard, 2013) They offer "insight" and "unique wisdom" that is valued by the organization. (Dew, 2001) Organizational leaders should "listen" to their consultants; their input can be vital to organizational success. (Dew, 2001) (Ballard, 2013) Yet, consultants cannot make final decisions for the organization and do not have potential for promotion within its ranks. They are not part of the organization; they are outsiders. One might say that a consultant is auxiliary to the organization she works for.



DELEGATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

Considering that an oft-spoken complaint of female detractors of women's ordination is, "I don't want the responsibility," it is ironic that limited authority does not prevent LDS women from having significant responsibility. For example, consider a baptism. Women may proselytize, teach the potential convert the principles of the gospel, plan the baptismal program, prepare and give the talks and musical numbers, and take care of logistical concerns such as food and baptismal clothing: a long list of important and time-consuming responsibilities. Women are excluded from actually performing or technically witnessing the baptism (a three-minute procedure), interviewing the baptismal candidate (one hour), or presiding over the baptism (which takes no extra time because she is already present at the baptism anyway).

Many of the responsibilities assigned to priesthood holders in the scriptures are regularly delegated to Mormon women, such as teaching, proselytizing, caring for the poor, and presiding over groups of women and children. (D&C 20:57-59; 84:112; 107:10; 133:8) (Oaks, 2014) (Andersen, 2013) (Beck, 2012) (Beck, 2010) Women are currently banned from other scriptural priesthood responsibilities, such as performing ordinances in public, judging member worthiness and presiding over mixed gender adult or adolescent groups. (D&C 20:38-45; 107:71-72; 133:8)

Some responsibilities are assigned to priesthood holders by scripture but not actually fulfilled by the assigned priesthood holders because in today's church, these priesthood holders are adolescent boys. Teachers in the Aaronic priesthood, most of whom are 14 and 15 years-old, have the following scriptural assignment:

The teacher's duty is to watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them; And see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking; And see that the church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty. And he is to take the lead of meetings in the absence of the elder or priest. (D&C 20:53-56)

Since teenagers cannot reasonably be expected to "see that there is no iniquity in the church" or "see that all the members do their duty," these boys have been assigned the distantly related activity of visiting two or three families once a month and reading a paragraph aloud to them from a church magazine. They are also assigned to prepare and pass the sacrament, although these activities are not listed as priesthood responsibilities in the scriptures.

Women and girls are banned from preparing and passing the sacrament, among several other duties that have no scriptural basis for being limited to priesthood holders, such as serving as clerks, auditors and Sunday School presidents.

TRADITION AND REVELATION

Apparently, the scriptures only loosely govern delegation of priesthood responsibilities between men, women and male children. Packer offered this explanation:

"There are some things about the priesthood that every elder should know...Some of these principles are found in the scriptures, others in the handbooks. Some of them are not found in either. They are found in the Church. You might call them traditions, but they are more than that. They are revelations which came when the Brethren of the past assembled themselves, agreed upon His word, and offered their prayers of faith. (Packer, 1993)

The women's priesthood ordination ban itself is not scriptural. Andersen answered the question, "Why are the ordinances of the priesthood administered by men?" with the response, "I do not know the meaning of all things." (Andersen, 2013) Other apostles have implied that the ban came from God, without describing or referencing any revelation to that effect. Oaks called the ban "divinely appointed." (Oaks, 2014) Ballard said, "The Lord has not revealed why He has organized His Church as He has." (Ballard, 2013)

Until women's roles in the priesthood are more obvious, perhaps there is need for more revelation. If women may be delegated priesthood authority, why are they not entrusted to make decisions or preside over mixed gender groups? If women may exercise the priesthood to perform ordinances in the temple, why may they not do so in public? If women may hold the priesthood without ordination, shouldn't they be taught how to receive and use it? And most importantly, could women be ordained to the priesthood, instead of remaining auxiliary to it?

The oath and covenant of the priesthood states:

"And also all they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord;... And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father; And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him. (D&C 84:35-38)

And women are left to wonder, does this apply to me?

It should be more obvious.



GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

How does the Brother of Jared's experience relate to our day and the revelatory process?

Has likening the scriptures to your own daily questions and concerns, like Katie did with Ether 2, helped you receive personal revelation or answers to prayer?

What are the implications of the fact that not only Brigham Young, but also the First Presidency in 1947 and 1949, made repeated official statements declaring that the priesthood/temple ban for Black men and women was "doctrine" (rather than policy)?

What do we learn from the excerpts from church history about how revelation works in the Church?

How did President Kimball describe how his own upbringing (and possibly culture) influenced the revelatory process leading up to Official Declaration 2?

From these readings on the Word of Wisdom and the pre-1978 priesthood/temple ban, we saw how revelation can come in response to a problem or cultural shift. What are ways that we can rely on our faith that God will "yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God"?

Is there a role for advocacy in the revelatory process?

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES:

The following are recommended for participants who would like to follow up the discussion with continued personal study.

The Ram in the Thicket: Why the 9th Article of Faith Supports Faithful Dissent. Kristen Kinjo Bayles.

<http://www.feministmormonhousewives.org/2014/03/the-ram-in-the-thicket-why-the-9th-article-of-faith-supports-faithful-dissent/>

And Upon the Handmaids in Those Days will I Pour Out my Spirit Julie Beck April 2010

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2010/04/and-upon-the-handmaids-in-those-days-will-i-pour-out-my-spirit?lang=eng>

Revelation. Lisa Thomas Clayton. From *Mormon Women Have Their Say: Essays from the Claremont Oral History Collection*, edited by Claudia Bushman and Caroline Kline. Greg Kofford Books (2013) p. 145.

His Heart Is Set Upon Us. From *The God Who Weeps* by Terryl and Fiona Givens. Deseret Book (2012) pgs. 19-25.

NOTES

- ¹ February 2012 Leadership Training Broadcast, available at <https://www.lds.org/broadcasts/article/worldwide-leadership-training/2012/01/acting-on-the-truths-of-the-gospel-of-jesus-christ>
- ² Dallin H. Oaks, "The Two Lines of Communication" October 2010, available at <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2010/10/two-lines-of-communication?lang=eng&query=Two+Lines+of+Communication>
- ³ Teachings of Joseph Smith: Chapter 16 "Revelation and the Living Prophet," available at <https://www.lds.org/manual/teachings-joseph-smith/chapter-16?lang=eng>
- ⁴ Dallin H. Oaks, October 2010. Ibid.
- ⁵ D. Todd Christofferson, The Doctrine of Christ, April 2012, available at <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2012/04/the-doctrine-of-christ?lang=eng>
- ⁶ Oaks, 2010. Ibid.
- ⁷ Oaks, 2010. Ibid.
- ⁸ Church History: Revelations in Context "The Word of Wisdom" by Jed Woodworth. June 2013. available at <http://history.lds.org/article/doctrine-and-covenants-word-of-wisdom?lang=eng>
- ⁹ Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 9, p. 150, 12 January 1862.