

President George Albert Smith:

This is a very remarkable sight, to see this house packed with men, and many standing.

That brings to my mind the question as to how many of these men who are here tonight do not know where they are going to sleep and have no place to stay. If there are any such, I think it would be advisable for you to raise your hands so that your neighbors who are near you who have a place to stay and probably an extra bed, will be able to take you home with them so that you will not have to sit around the lobby of some hotel. All of you who are in this house tonight who have not a place to stay after you go from this meeting, raise your hands, and keep them up. If there are any such, we do not want anybody to be left out tonight. If any of you see anybody's hand raised, please watch that person and see that when the meeting is out, somebody takes him home.

We are met here as brethren, servants of the Lord. We are met here to worship. I trust that as the meeting progresses we shall continue to feel the power of the Lord upon all those who shall address us and all of us who may be listening.

Our first speaker tonight will be Elder Joseph Fielding Smith of the Council of the Twelve.

ELDER JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

Of the Council of Twelve Apostles

It is my purpose tonight to plead with our brethren who hold the responsibility of conducting the priesthood for a better supervision of priesthood quorums. In a revelation given to the Prophet for the benefit of the first elders of this Church he said: ". . . thou shalt not idle away thy time, neither shalt thou bury thy talent that it may not be known." (D. & C. 60:13.) Too many of those who hold the priesthood have idled away their time and have buried their talent. We would like to have a revival among all the quorums of the priesthood.

ORGANIZATION ESSENTIAL TO PRIESTHOOD

In that great revelation known as section one hundred seven, the priesthood revelation, there are three expressions I would like to read, first from the twenty-first verse:

Of necessity, there are presidents, or presiding officers growing out of, or appointed of or from among those who are ordained to the several offices in these two priesthoods.

Then in the sixtieth verse the Lord says:

Verily, I say unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts, there must needs be presiding elders to preside over those who are of the office of an elder.

And then again in the eighty-ninth verse:

Again, the duty of the president over the office of elders is to preside over ninety-six elders, and to sit in council with them, and to teach them according to the covenants.

Organization is an essential requirement in the government of the Church. The entire universe is organized on a divine plan. Without organization there would be confusion, chaos, and that would lead to disorganization and destruction. The quorums of the priesthood are organized for a definite purpose. I've jotted down several of these: first, to keep the members holding the priesthood active and alert in the performance of every duty which the priesthood requires at their hands; second, to teach the members how to assume responsibility and magnify their callings; third, to train them in methods by which they may effectually teach others and officiate in their behalf; fourth, to encourage them in their responsibilities pertaining to the salvation of the dead as well as for the living.

A quorum, properly appointed, must seek out the needs of every individual member and attempt to supply these needs that may be discovered, both temporally and spiritually. No quorum of the priesthood is assuming the full obligation placed upon it by the Lord which does not sufficiently extend temporal need. Each member should dedicate himself and use his talent to advance the cause of Zion. He must be loyal and faithful to the Church, to the quorum, to the priesthood in general, to his family and to every divine principle of eternal truth.

RESPONSIBILITY OF PRESIDENT OF QUORUM

The responsibility of the quorum president is, as stated in this revelation, to sit in counsel, to advise and instruct and teach those who are under his direction. The Lord has placed the responsibility for the training and the conduct of the members of the quorum upon the shoulders of the president of the quorum. He has given him two counselors to assist him in that work. This direction and care of the quorum may not be transferred to the shoulders of some other. Men who are the most capable for these positions of presidency should be sought. Too frequently it is thought that the supervision of a quorum, especially of elders, is not of great importance, but the Lord thinks otherwise. There should be, however, a division of responsibility among the presidency. The presidency should see that the quorum is fully organized, and that every man is performing his duty. If there are delinquent or wayward members, these should be labored with until brought to repentance and full fellowship.

The stake presidency and the high council have supervision over the quorums of the Melchizedek Priesthood. It is their duty to see that the quorums are fully organized and properly functioning. The stake Melchizedek Priesthood committee is to act as an aid to the stake presidency. It is recommended that such a committee be maintained. It must be understood, however, that the stake Melchizedek Priesthood committee does not preside, but is to supervise and counsel quo-

rum members, under the direction of the stake presidency. It is proposed that a member of the stake presidency be the chairman of this committee. He may have as many members of the high council on that committee as it is deemed wise, but not less than three. It is further understood that this committee has authority in the supervision of the elders, seventies and high priests within the stake, under the direction of the stake president.

The presidency of a quorum of priesthood should hold weekly council meetings. They must not wait for something to arise which they deem important to be considered. If they will meet, many things will arise for their consideration which were previously not thought of.

There are three great needs of a quorum. We believe that the work falls naturally into three divisions: first, the need to help every bearer of the Melchizedek Priesthood to attain to the degree of economic independence and material well-being that will assure adequate food, clothing, fuel, housing, and other needs, physical and educational, for himself and family as well as spiritual; second, the need to establish a feeling of true brotherhood should characterize the work of priesthood quorums. There should be the endeavor to provide through the quorum activities, including socials and outings, the feeling of fellowship, faith, and love that shall meet all the needs of the membership; third, a need to search out the facts and make available all the information and statistics concerning the quorum and its members.

DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY

We suggest that the responsibility having to do with personal welfare be assigned to the quorum president. It would naturally follow that the other divisions would be assumed by the counselors, one taking the quorum activity and Church service, the other fact-finding and statistical responsibility. These responsibilities must not be shifted to the shoulders of others, but it is very proper that help be obtained from standing committees as the presidency of the quorum may determine. It is suggested that these responsibilities may be designated as follows: one, personal welfare; two, quorum activity and Church service; three, fact finding and statistics.

In the past we have had four standing committees but our observation and the information coming from stake priesthood committees lead us to conclude that these three committees may be all that are required. However, the presidency, if they desire, may call task committees whenever the occasion seems to warrant it.

MONTHLY LEADERSHIP MEETING

There should be in each stake a monthly Melchizedek leadership meeting at which the stake presidency and the stake Melchizedek priesthood committee shall meet with the officers and leaders of quorums and groups, including quorum presidencies, quorum secretaries,

group leaders, committee members, and class instructors. It is suggested that the secretaries meet with the fact finding and statistical group of counselors. It is also recommended that a special department to take care of instructors be conducted under the leadership, or at least the direction of a member of the stake Melchizedek Priesthood committee. In this department teacher-training helps and assistance should be given, lesson material enlarged and developed. It should be borne in mind that class instruction and related problems are the responsibility of the member of the quorum presidency assigned.

On the day of the monthly priesthood leadership meeting, the stake committee should hold a preliminary meeting with the presidencies of the Melchizedek quorums. We recommend that separation be had on a department, not quorum, basis. At the time of separation, brief opening exercises should be held. In the matter of reports, it is to be hoped that attention will be given to the instructions which are sent to the quorums. More detailed information and an outline of procedure and instruction will, within a short time, be furnished each stake president and quorum president.

THE COURSE OF STUDY

The course of study that will be considered by the priesthood quorums for the year 1946 was prepared by Elder Milton R. Hunter of the First Council of the Seventy. The title is, *The Gospel Through the Ages*. I have read this manuscript and some of the other brethren have read it, and I can assure you brethren that we are going to have a very profitable time in considering a subject of this nature.

Now, if I may spend a little time, after giving these details and stating that more information will soon be furnished, I would like to say a few things about our responsibilities as men holding the priesthood. On the one hundred and twenty-first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the quotation that we have heard so many times from the lips of President Heber J. Grant, I would like to make a comment.

THE WORD OF THE LORD

Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson—That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness. (D. & C. 121:34-36.)

Now who are those who are called? I take it that every man who is ordained to an office in the priesthood has been called. The Lord is willing that any man should serve him.

In the early revelations given to some of the brethren who came asking of the Lord what he would have them do, he told them to bring

forth the cause of Zion, to thrust in their sickles with their might that they might lay up in store.

I think a great deal of this short section, section four, for two good reasons: first, it was given to my great-grandfather, but it wasn't given to him alone, and I have said many times it was also given to me; and second, it was given to you, each one of you, and in this revelation the Lord says:

Therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day. (D. & C. 4:2.)

Then it follows that if we don't serve him with all our heart, might, mind, and strength, if we're not loyal to this calling which we have received, we are not going to be blameless when we stand before that judgment seat. It is a very serious thing to hold the priesthood. I wish when our young men were called and ordained, that is, recommended to be ordained to the office of elder in the Church, they could be impressed before they were ordained with the importance of the calling which they are about to receive.

In section eighty-four of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord has this to say:

For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies; They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God; And also all they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord. (D. & C. 84:33-35.)

And if we receive the Lord, then, surely the Lord receives us, and we are in fellowship with him.

For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth my Father. (D. & C. 84:36.)

Now, here is the great blessing, which I think many of us have overlooked, and especially these young men when they are called and sustained to be ordained to the office of elder:

"And he that receiveth my Father—" and of course we receive the Father through our faithfulness and our obedience, "receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him." (D. & C. 84:38.)

Can you think of a greater blessing the Lord could offer to any man holding the priesthood? But this is based upon faithfulness and the magnifying of the calling.

In other revelations, you know, the Lord says:

And [they] who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, . . . They are they into whose hands the Father has given all things . . . they are gods, even the sons of God. (D. & C. 76: 53, 55, 58.)

And this according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the

priesthood. Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father, which he cannot break, neither can it be moved. (D. & C. 84:39-40.)

Here is a definite, positive statement that every man who receives the priesthood, receives it with an oath and covenant that he will magnify his calling, that he will be faithful and true, and his reward will be to become a son of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ in having the fulness of the Father's kingdom. No greater blessing could be offered. And then the Lord has said:

Therefore all those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father, which he cannot break, neither can it be moved. (*idem.*)

Now, these promises were not made to high priests alone, but to all who receive the priesthood. And then the Lord is promising us everything that he has if we will be faithful. Isn't it only fair, that the punishment for violation of that covenant and the trampling of that priesthood under our feet should bring a punishment, on one hand, as severe, as glorious will be the reward on the other? And so the Lord says:

But whoso breaketh this covenant after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come. (D. & C. 84:41.)

Oh, if we could only impress that upon the mind of every man when he is called to receive the priesthood! Now, only those who magnify their callings will be chosen.

The Lord bless you, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER JOSEPH L. WIRTHLIN

Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

I sincerely trust, my brethren, that I might enjoy the spirit of the Lord the few minutes that I stand before this magnificent body of the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. As I listened to the opening prayer of this session of our conference tonight, there was one thought expressed that made a deep impression upon me, and that was the thought that we should put our arms around those who have become inactive and indifferent in the Church. Our responsibility to those who become indifferent brings to mind the scripture presented by Elder Mark E. Petersen in his most inspirational address. It is found in Ephesians 4:11-13.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE PRIESTHOOD

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man.