

Priesthood

Deacons	156,000
Teachers	122,000
Priests	236,000
Elders	382,000
Seventies	30,000
High priests	157,000
(An estimated increase of 42,000 priesthood members during 1980)	
Full-time missionaries	29,953

Church School System

Total enrollment during 1979-80 school year:	
Seminaries and Institutes including special programs	309,000
Church schools, colleges, and continuing education	75,000

Welfare Services

Persons assisted with cash or commodities	160,600
Persons assisted by LDS Social Services	51,600
Persons placed in gainful employment	26,400
Man-days of labor donated to welfare services	527,900
Commodities distributed from storehouses in pounds	35,441,200

**Prominent Members Who Passed
Away during the Year**

Elder William H. Bennett,
emeritus member of the First Quorum

of the Seventy; William Pakimana Taurima, president of the Gisborne New Zealand Stake; Thomas Lee Chappell, president of the Loa Utah Stake; Donald Leon Hansen, president of the San Bernardino California East Stake; Clara Alberta Wright Moyle, widow of Henry D. Moyle, former First Counselor in the First Presidency; Betsy Hollings Richards, widow of George F. Richards, former President of the Quorum of the Twelve; Edgar B. Brossard, former member of the United States Tariff Commission for 36 years; Leona Holbrook, president of the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, former member of the U.S. Olympic Committee, and participant in the International Olympic Academy; Junius M. Jackson, former president of the Church Genealogical Society; Pearl B. Johnson, secretary to members of the First Presidency or Quorum of the Twelve for over forty years and former member of the YWMA General Board.

President Kimball

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be the first speaker. Elder Marvin J. Ashton, also a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will follow.

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley

In behalf of all, I should like to welcome Brother Angel Abrea, a great and faithful and devoted leader of the Church for many years in Argentina, whose influence has been felt not only there but throughout South America.

**Purported blessing given to Joseph
Smith III**

I think I should like to say a

few words this afternoon about the recently discovered transcript of a blessing, reported to have been given January 17, 1844, by Joseph Smith to his eleven-year-old son. This has received much attention in the media of late. The document is evidently in the handwriting of Thomas Bullock, who served as clerk to the Prophet.

Our Historical Department secured it in pursuit of their practice of obtaining artifacts of many kinds re-

lated to our early history. We determined that we would give full publicity to the discovery, even though we were confident that critics, knowing little of the factual history of the Church, would seize upon it as suggesting a flaw in our line of authority.

Furthermore, and this is of significant importance, we recognized the wording of the document as a father's blessing, having great sentimental value for the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, whose presidents have been lineal descendants of Joseph Smith. The First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve determined to offer it to the Reorganized Church.

Officers of that church responded with appreciation, and indicated that they would accept the document only by giving us in return another valuable artifact. An exchange was made on March 19th last.

I do not wish to open old discussions, but for those who may feel that the document casts a cloud on the principle of transfer of authority through the Council of the Twelve Apostles, I desire to review briefly a few facts concerning the document and the history of the period to which it is related, and then conclude with some observations that arise out of the circumstances.

First, it should be said that the document is a transcript of a blessing. It is not a record of ordination to an office. As a matter of fact, the recipient of the blessing, Joseph Smith III, himself testified in 1893, in the U.S. Circuit Court in Kansas City: "I did not state that I was ordained by my father: I did not make that statement. I was not ordained by my father as his successor: according to my understanding of the word *ordain*, I was not. I was blessed by him and designated, well in a sense chosen. . . ."

Possible successors

It should be noted further that at various times Joseph Smith had indicated a number of men or groups of men who might possibly succeed him. These included his brother Hyrum, Sidney Rigdon, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, his son Joseph III, even his yet unborn son David; and, most importantly, on a number of occasions, the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Nor was it unusual for fathers to give their sons blessings of this kind. Orson Pratt, an Apostle, similarly blessed his son in a spirit of hopefulness that he would rise to leadership. Brigham Young and others similarly blessed their sons.

We in the Church recognize that the fulfillment of all blessings given under authority of the priesthood is conditioned upon two things: one, the worthiness and faithfulness of the recipient, and, two, the overriding will and wisdom of God.

Keys and authority of the priesthood

As all students of our history know, we have maintained and followed the position that the keys and the authority of the priesthood, that authority without which there can be no true Church of Jesus Christ, were given to the Council of the Twelve Apostles in the very early days of the Church so that in the event of the death of the president the authority would remain and be passed on legally and properly for so long as the Church should continue.

For instance, in the great revelation on priesthood which we know as section 107 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which was received and recorded on March 28, 1835, the Lord spoke of the governance of his Church and said of the Twelve after

speaking of the Presidency: "They form a quorum, equal in authority and power to" the presidency. (D&C 107:24.)

Two years later, on July 23, 1837, this principle was again affirmed through revelation: "For unto you, the Twelve, and those, the First Presidency, who are appointed with you to be your counselors and your leaders, is the power of this priesthood given, for the last days and for the last time." (D&C 112:30.)

Again on January 19, 1841, the Lord said through the Prophet Joseph: "I give unto you my servant Brigham Young to be a president over the Twelve traveling council;

"Which Twelve hold the keys to open up the authority of my kingdom upon the four corners of the earth, and after that to send my word to every creature." (D&C 124:127-28.)

The record of a special conference held in Nauvoo on August 16, 1841, states: "The time had come when the Twelve should be called upon to stand in their place next to the First Presidency, . . . and assist to bear off the kingdom victorious to the nations. . . .

"Motion seconded and carried that the conference approve of the instructions of President Smith, in relation to the Twelve, and that they proceed accordingly, to attend to the duties of their office." ("Conference Minutes," *Times and Seasons*, 2 [1 Sept. 1841]: 521-22.)

It is abundantly clear that the Lord placed the Council of the Twelve, with Brigham Young as its president, next to the Prophet Joseph Smith and gave unto them the keys and the authority to advance the Church under the direction of the Prophet while he was alive, and to govern after his death. The revelations I have just read and the minutes of the Nauvoo meeting were recorded from three to nine years before the blessing of which we are speaking.

"The kingdom of God will roll on"

The winter of 1843-1844 was a season of great tension in Nauvoo. Enemies were plotting the destruction of the Church. During that winter, on a number of occasions, Joseph assembled the Twelve in the upper room of his brick store on Water Street in Nauvoo. Our archives contain a number of documents attesting to these meetings and what was done in them. I have time to quote from the record of only one who was present. There were many. Wrote he of Joseph Smith:

"This great and good man was led, before his death, to call the Twelve together, from time to time, and to instruct them in all things pertaining to the kingdom, ordinances, and government of God. He often observed that he was laying the foundation, but it would remain for the Twelve to complete the building. Said he, 'I know not why; but for some reason I am constrained to hasten my preparations, and to confer upon the Twelve all the ordinances, keys, covenants, endowments, and sealing ordinances of the priesthood . . . for, said he, the Lord is about to lay the burden on your shoulders and let me rest awhile; and if they kill me . . . the kingdom of God will roll on, as I have now finished the work which was laid upon me, by committing to you all things for the building up of the kingdom according to the heavenly vision, and the pattern shown me from heaven.'" (Parley P. Pratt, "Proclamation," *Millennial Star*, 5 [March 1845]: 151.)

As you know, Joseph Smith was killed by the Carthage mob on June 27, 1844. On the following 8th of August a congregation of thousands assembled in Nauvoo. Sidney Rigdon, who had served as a counselor to Joseph Smith, spoke for an hour and a half, proposing that he be appointed guardian of the Church.

There was no affirmative response. That afternoon Brigham Young spoke on behalf of the Apostles. Many present testified that he looked and sounded like the martyred Prophet. When, following his talk, a proposal was put that the Twelve lead the Church, having been given the keys by Joseph, the vote was overwhelmingly in favor.

Surely no one who is acquainted with the subsequent history can doubt the strength of that leadership. Work went forward on the temple and other projects. Then in February of 1846 the unparalleled movement began from Nauvoo on the Mississippi to Winter Quarters on the Missouri, and subsequently to this valley of the Great Salt Lake. So great was the faith of the tens of thousands involved, so strong their testimony, that many gave their lives rather than falter. Where could one find a more powerful witness for the validity of their leadership than in the actions of those who left their homes in Nauvoo to gather here in the valleys of the mountains in response to the call of the Twelve with Brigham Young at their head and subsequently as president of the Church?

Take for instance this man, Thomas Bullock, whose hand evidently recorded the document we are discussing. If he wrote that blessing, he knew about it. It was reportedly found among papers left at his death.

Thomas Bullock had joined the Church in England in November 1841, and had emigrated to Nauvoo in 1843. He served as a clerk to Joseph Smith. He and his family were among the last group of Saints to leave Nauvoo in the fall of 1846. While desperately ill he was faced by the mob with rifles and bayonets at point-blank range and ordered to leave the city within twenty minutes or be shot. He challenged the men to shoot, suggesting that he would probably die soon anyway. The captain responded, "If you will re-

nounce Mormonism you may stay here, and we will protect you." Brother Bullock replied that he had legal ownership of his home, that he had committed no crime. "But," said he, "I am a Mormon, and if I live, I shall follow the Twelve." He was one of the sick and dying carried from that place, whose life, along with those of others of his company, was preserved by the miraculous coming of flocks of quail into their Iowa camp.

When the Saints left Winter Quarters in the early spring of 1847, he was chosen as clerk of the first company. He kept a valuable record of that long trek. He made a second trip East and again back to the valley in 1848. He served a mission to England from 1856 to 1858.

Unbroken chain of authority

The question naturally follows: Would he have been willing to pay so heavy a price for his membership in the Church and to have suffered so much to advance its cause as a missionary at the call of Brigham Young if he had any doubt that President Young was the proper leader of the Church and that this right belonged to another according to a blessing which he had in his possession and which he had written with his own pen?

Brethren and sisters, from the tragedy of that 27th of June, 1844, when Joseph Smith sealed his testimony with his blood, from the confirmation that came into the hearts of the thousands assembled in Nauvoo on that subsequent August 8th, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has gone steadily forward and has never taken a backward step. That same authority which Joseph held, those same keys and powers which were the very essence of his divinely given right to preside, were by him conferred upon the Twelve

Apostles with Brigham Young at their head. Every president of the Church since then has come to that most high and sacred office out of the Council of the Twelve. Each of these men has been blessed with the spirit and power of revelation from on high. There has been an unbroken chain from Joseph Smith, Jr., to Spencer W. Kimball. Of that I bear solemn witness and testimony before you this day. This Church is built upon the sure word of prophecy and revelation—built, as Paul wrote to the Ephesians, “upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.” (Eph. 2:20.)

We were glad to see our brethren of the Reorganized Church get the document which contains a

father’s blessing given upon the head of a son he loved. It is a precious artifact, with great sentimental value for the family of Joseph Smith. It does not seriously raise any question concerning the validity of succession in the presidency through the Council of the Twelve Apostles as that body was established by the Prophet and as it has functioned under the revelations of God. Of this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Kimball

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us. We shall now hear from Elder Marvin J. Ashton, also a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

Love is important

A few weeks ago, just before 6:00 A.M., my wife and I boarded a taxi to begin the last lap of our trip to Salt Lake City from Australia. Our driver, who had been on duty since 3:00 A.M., was anxious to talk with us, his first passengers of the day. We learned his parents were born just outside of Mexico City. They moved to Chicago, where he was born, and then moved to New Mexico. Twenty years earlier our friend had come for a short visit to San Francisco and had never left. During our trip to the airport, this man related a few incidents from which some great truths were reemphasized.

His parents, he told us, had remained in New Mexico, but liked to visit him and his brother whenever they could afford it because they loved being with their children and grandchildren. In New Mexico his mother’s health was rather poor, but

whenever she was in San Francisco, she seemed to feel much better. This discerning son had said to his brother, “I know just exactly what mother needs.”

He said, “I found a large truck. My brother and I drove to New Mexico, loaded our parents and all their possessions into the truck, and brought them to live near those who loved them most. Mother’s health improved noticeably.” Then he added, “You know, love is very important if it is done right.”

Teach children to work

The second incident related by this humble but wise man was also significant. He said, “I teach all my children to work. I want them to have schooling, but they must learn to work to get it. I just finished helping my sixteen-year-old son get a part-time job at a bank. While he is