

Elder Rulon G. Craven

Testimony of living prophets

My brothers and sisters, while I served 13½ years as secretary to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, my testimony was strengthened concerning living prophets. The Lord said through the Prophet Joseph Smith, "The Twelve Apostles [are called to be] special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world" (D&C 107:23).

Prophets have a special gift of the Spirit, a prophetic gift. During the time I served as secretary to the Twelve, I observed these men whom our Father in Heaven has called as special witnesses of his Son, Jesus Christ.

The Thursday morning meetings in the upper room of the temple were always a special experience for me. My heart was often filled with emotion as I listened to the members of the Twelve pray to their Father in Heaven, remembering these are the Twelve Apostles, chosen by our Father in Heaven and sustained by the Saints as prophets, seers, and revelators.

Decisions made in love and unity

As President Hunter would lead the Twelve through the agenda, I was continually reminded of section 107, verse 27, of the Doctrine and Covenants, which reads, "And every decision made by either of these quorums must be by the unanimous voice of the same; that is, every member in each quorum must be agreed to its decisions, in order to make their decisions of the same power or validity one with the other."

The members of the Twelve strive to live according to the promptings of the Spirit. They speak their mind. However, they are also good listeners and speak when moved upon by the Holy Spirit. Their posture in quorum meetings is to listen and sense the di-

recting power of the Spirit, which always leads to a unity of decision. I marveled as I watched the directing power of the Spirit touch the minds and hearts of the members of the Twelve, influencing the decision-making process.

Decisions made by the Council of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve are directed by the Spirit because they strive continually to abide by the counsel of the Lord found in section 107, verse 30, of the Doctrine and Covenants, which reads:

"The decisions of these quorums, or either of them, are to be made in all righteousness, in holiness, and lowliness of heart, meekness and long suffering, and in faith, and virtue, and knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity;

"Because the promise is, if these things abound in them they shall not be unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord" (107:31).

The members of the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve, the Seventy, and the Presiding Bishopric are truly men who are striving to be pure in heart. A spirit of righteousness, love, and unity abounds in their quorum meetings.

President Hunter walks again

The Twelve love President Hunter, and President Howard W. Hunter loves the Twelve. President Hunter's gentle, persuasive leadership invites the Spirit of the Lord into all of their meetings. I hope President Hunter will forgive me for relating an experience which portrayed to me the great love the Twelve have for each other, which love brings the Holy Spirit into their quorum meetings.

Many will remember a number of years ago President Hunter was informed that he would not walk again. However, his faith and determination

were greater than that message. Daily, without fanfare and the knowledge of others, he went through some very strenuous physical therapy exercises with determination, faith, and the vision that he would walk again. During those difficult months, his Brethren of the Twelve were praying for him daily in their quorum meetings and in their private prayers.

Months later, on a Thursday morning, I went to President Hunter's office to discuss an agenda item for the temple meeting that morning. I found he left early and was informed that he was walking to the temple. I questioned that information and then hurried to catch up with him. When I caught up with him, he was walking with the help of a walker. We walked together to the elevator and then up to the fourth floor. We went down the hall to the upper room of the temple. When their president walked into that room, the Twelve stood and began to clap their hands. They tenderly watched him walk over to his chair and let his body down into the chair. Then with magnificent love, honor, and tenderness, each of the Twelve went up to him and extended to him an affectionate touch, kiss on the forehead, and a hug, showing their great love and admiration for him. They all sat down, and President Hunter thanked them and said, "I was not supposed to walk again, but with the Lord's help and my determination and, most important, the faith of my Brethren of the Twelve, I am walking again." President Howard W. Hunter is an example of maintaining faith and determination in the face of adversity. The Twelve are examples of maintaining faith and prayer in behalf of those who are experiencing adversity.

Look to the prophets

My brothers and sisters, I share these personal experiences with you because I was there. I have a humble desire to strengthen your faith in the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, whom we sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators.

These men, from my close observation, live close to the Lord. I have witnessed the power of the Holy Spirit touch their hearts and minds and give expression to their words. I have marveled at the unity of purpose of the First Presidency and the Twelve in serving the Lord. Christ and his prophets are one. I continually observed the love and sustaining power extended by his two counselors and the Twelve to our prophet leader, President Ezra Taft Benson. My witness from personal observation is that you can have unwavering faith in the united counsel of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve. They will lead you in the path of righteousness, happiness, and inner peace.

My wife, Donna, and our children have made it a practice to read, listen to, and follow the counsel of the prophets. We have always been abundantly blessed in our homes, in our occupations, and in our personal lives.

My brothers and sisters, there will yet be perilous and challenging times ahead. I admonish the Saints to look to the prophets, study their words. Teach their words in your family home evenings. Sustain them in private and in public; pray for them in your private and family prayers. And in turn, enjoy in your lives that inner peace that surpasseth understanding.

I leave you my special witness of the reality of our Father in Heaven, that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of all who will come unto him, and that his chosen prophets do walk the earth today. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.