

It is proposed that we sustain the Counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. All in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed.

Since April conference Elders Han In Sang, Stephen D. Nadauld, and Sam K. Shimabukuro have accepted calls to serve as members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy. Those who wish to join in sustaining these Brethren in these callings, please manifest it. Any who may feel otherwise.

With gratitude for their service as General Authorities for the past 5½ years, it is proposed that we release the following as members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy: H. Verlan Andersen, George I. Cannon, Francis M. Gibbons, and Gardner H. Russell. These Brethren have rendered tremendous faithful, devoted, and unselfish service. All who wish to join in a vote of appreciation may do so by the uplifted hand.

It is proposed that we release Elder LeGrand R. Curtis as First Counselor and Elder Robert K. Dellenbach as Second Counselor in the Young Men General Presidency and that we release Elder H. Verlan Andersen as First Counselor and Elder Rulon G.

Craven as Second Counselor in the Sunday School General Presidency. All who wish to express appreciation for these Brethren may do so.

It is also proposed that we sustain Elder Robert K. Dellenbach as First Counselor and Elder Stephen D. Nadauld as Second Counselor in the Young Men General Presidency and that we sustain Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., as First Counselor and Elder Clinton L. Cutler as Second Counselor in the Sunday School General Presidency. All in favor please manifest it. Any opposed.

It is proposed that we sustain the other General Authorities and general officers of the Church as presently constituted. Those in favor may manifest it. Any opposed.

It appears that the voting has been unanimous in the affirmative. Thank you, our beloved brothers and sisters, for your continued vote of love and confidence.

President Monson

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our first speaker at this session.

He will then be followed by Elder Julio E. Dávila of the Seventy.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

Spiritual communication comes as a feeling

A testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ, a witness that the Book of Mormon is true, comes in a delicate, refined spiritual communication. It is described in the scriptures as light (see D&C 88:11, 67), as burning in the bosom. It is best described as a *feeling* (see 1 Nephi 17:45).

Ordinarily a testimony comes when we seek for it with a sincere heart and real intent (see Moroni 10:4). "If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive reve-

lation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal" (D&C 42:61).

No message appears in scripture more times, in more ways than "Ask, and ye shall receive." (Matthew 21:22; James 4:3; 1 John 3:22; 1 Nephi 15:11; Enos 1:15; Mosiah 4:21; D&C 4:7; and Moses 6:52 are examples.) While we may invite this communication, it can *never* be forced! If we try to force it, we may be deceived.

Enos, who was “struggling in the spirit,” said, “Behold, the voice of the Lord came into my *mind*” (Enos 1:10; italics added). While this spiritual communication comes into the *mind*, it comes more as a feeling, an impression, than simply as a thought. Unless you have experienced it, it is very difficult to describe that delicate process.

The witness is not communicated through the intellect alone, however bright the intellect may be.

“The natural man,” Paul told us, “receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:13–14).

Both the intellect and the spirit

Recently the Council of the First Presidency and Quorum of Twelve Apostles issued a statement alerting members of the Church to the dangers of participating in circles which concentrate on doctrine and ordinances and measure them by the intellect alone.

If doctrines and behavior are measured by the intellect alone, the essential spiritual ingredient is missing, and we will be misled.

Personal testimony is confirmed to us initially and is reaffirmed and enlarged thereafter through a harmonious combining of both the intellect and the spirit.

A testimony is profoundly personal and occurs in response to very private prayers and pleadings. Nevertheless, the Lord has told us, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20; see also D&C 6:32).

There is safety in learning doctrine in gatherings which are sponsored by proper authority. Some members, even some who have made covenants in the temple, are associating with groups of one kind or another which

have an element of secrecy about them and which pretend to have some higher source of inspiration concerning the fulfillment of prophecies than do ward or stake leaders or the General Authorities of the Church. Know this: There are counterfeit revelations which, we are warned, “shall deceive the very elect, who are the elect according to the covenant” (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:22).

The Lord commanded: “Assemble yourselves together, and organize yourselves. . . . Continue in prayer and fasting. . . . Teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom. . . . And my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand” (D&C 88:74–80).

Reverence and revelation

When we meet to learn the doctrines of the gospel, it should be in a spirit of reverence. It is about *reverence* and how it relates to *revelation* that I wish to speak.

Inspiration comes more easily in peaceful settings. Such words as *quiet*, *still*, *peaceable*, *Comforter* abound in the scriptures: “Be *still*, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10; italics added). And the promise, “You shall receive my Spirit, the Holy Ghost, even the *Comforter*, which shall teach you the *peaceable* things of the kingdom” (D&C 36:2; italics added).

Elijah felt a great wind, an earthquake, a fire. The Lord was not in any of them; then came “a still small voice” (1 Kings 19:12).

Helaman said of that voice of revelation: “It was not a voice of thunder, neither was it a voice of a great tumultuous noise, but behold, it was a still voice of perfect mildness, as if it had been a whisper, and it did pierce even to the very soul” (Helaman 5:30).

It was Nephi who reminded his brothers that an angel “hath spoken

unto you in a still small voice, but ye were past *feeling*, that ye could not *feel* his words" (1 Nephi 17:45; italics added).

For the past several years we have watched patterns of reverence and irreverence in the Church. While many are to be highly commended, we are drifting. We have reason to be deeply concerned.

The world grows increasingly noisy. Clothing and grooming and conduct are looser and sloppier and more disheveled. Raucous music, with obscene lyrics blasted through amplifiers while lights flash psychedelic colors, characterizes the drug culture. Variations of these things are gaining wide acceptance and influence over our youth.

Doctors even say that our physical sense of hearing can be permanently damaged by all of this noise.

This trend to more noise, more excitement, more contention, less restraint, less dignity, less formality is not coincidental nor innocent nor harmless.

The first order issued by a commander mounting a military invasion is the jamming of the channels of communication of those he intends to conquer.

Irreverence suits the purposes of the adversary by obstructing the delicate channels of revelation in both mind and spirit.

Reverence in Sunday meetings

Our sacrament and other meetings need renewed attention to assure that they are truly worship services in which members may be spiritually nourished and have their testimonies replenished and in which investigators may feel the inspiration essential to spiritual conversion.

Our meetinghouses are designed so that we may enjoy socials, dancing,

drama, even sports. All of these are important. But these auxiliary activities should be subdued when compared with what the world is doing. Music, dress, and conduct associated with them are quite different from what is appropriate in the chapel or classroom on the Sabbath day.

When we return for Sunday meetings, the music, dress, and conduct should be appropriate for worship. Foyers are built into our chapels to allow for the greeting and chatter that are typical of people who love one another. However, when we step into the chapel, we *must!*—each of us *must!*—watch ourselves lest we be guilty of intruding when someone is struggling to feel delicate spiritual communications.

Leaders sometimes wonder why so many active members get themselves into such predicaments in life. Could it be that they do not feel what they need to feel because our meetings are less than they might be spiritually?

Irreverent conduct in our chapels is worthy of a reminder, if not reproof. Leaders should teach that reverence invites revelation.

The reverence we speak of does not equate with absolute silence. We must be tolerant of little babies, even an occasional outburst from a toddler being ushered out to keep him from disturbing the peace. Unless the father is on the stand, he should do the ushering.

Music in worship services

Music is of enormous importance in our worship services. I believe that those who choose, conduct, present, and accompany the music may influence the spirit of reverence in our meetings more than a speaker does. God bless them.

Music can set an atmosphere of worship which invites that spirit of revelation, of testimony. We are told in

the handbook that "music and musical texts are to be sacred, dignified, and otherwise suitable for a Latter-day Saint meeting" (*General Handbook of Instructions*, 1989, p. 2-5) and that "organs and pianos are the standard instruments used in sacrament meetings. Other instruments, such as orchestral strings, may be used when appropriate, but the music must be in keeping with the reverence and spirituality of the meeting. Brass and percussion instruments generally are not appropriate" (*Handbook for Church Music*, p. 17).

An organist who has the sensitivity to quietly play prelude music from the hymnbook tempers our feelings and causes us to go over in our minds the lyrics which teach the peaceable things of the kingdom. If we will listen, they are teaching the gospel, for the hymns of the Restoration are, in fact, a course in doctrine!

I have noticed that an increasing number of our leaders and members do not sing the congregational songs. Perhaps they do not know them or there are not enough hymnbooks. We should sing the songs of Zion—they are an essential part of our worship. We must not neglect the hymns nor the exalted anthems of the Restoration. Read the First Presidency's introduction in the hymnbook. The Lord said, "My soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads" (D&C 25:12). Do not let our sacred music slip away from us, nor allow secular music to replace it.

When music is presented which, however appropriate for other occasions, does not fit the Sabbath, much is lost. From the *Bulletin*: "Some religiously oriented music in a popular style can be uplifting and motivating for some of our members but may lack the dignity and propriety suitable for a worship service. Also, music which

might be suitable in a concert setting may not be appropriate for a worship service" (*Bulletin*, Sept. 1986, p. 1).

A choir which favors secular music above sacred music on the Sabbath becomes a chorus. In that respect, they teach the ways of men and, in doing so, miss the opportunity to inspire and deny the power that they might otherwise have. The Spirit does not ratify speech nor confirm music which lacks spiritual substance.

Now, someone will surely write to remind me that I have not been trained as a musician and will tell me of the stimulation that comes to them from listening to the great music of the world. I understand that. But not all great music nor all popular religious music meets the special criteria of the sacred music of worship, of the Sabbath, of revelation.

There is something else: We are drifting from the use of reverential words in our prayers. Familiar terms such as *you* and *yours* are replacing *thee* and *thine* in prayer. Teach the children and gently inform new members that we use reverential terms when addressing our Heavenly Father in prayer.

Increase in spiritual power

No one of us can survive in the world of today, much less in what it soon will become, without personal inspiration. The spirit of reverence can and should be evident in every organization in the Church and in the lives of every member.

Parents, stake presidencies, bishops, auxiliary leaders, teachers: Maintain a spirit of reverence in meetings; encourage participation in congregational singing and the use of reverential terms in prayers.

While we may not see an immediate, miraculous transformation, as surely as the Lord lives, a quiet one will take place. The spiritual power in the

life of each member and in the Church will increase. The Lord will pour out his Spirit upon us more abundantly. We will be less troubled, less confused. We will find revealed answers to personal and family problems without all the counseling which we seem now to need.

It was Nephi who taught: "Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. Wherefore, I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.

"Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye cannot understand them it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock; wherefore, ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark.

"For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do" (2 Nephi 32:3-5).

And in the spirit of reverence, I bear testimony that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that the Holy Ghost—our comforter, our teacher—will come to us if we will maintain a spirit of reverence, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Thank you, Elder Packer, for that much-needed counsel.

Elders Julio E. Dávila and Graham W. Doxey, who were sustained at April conference as members of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder Julio E. Dávila

Elder Dávila's conversion

My beloved brothers and sisters, it is very significant for me to follow Elder Boyd K. Packer this afternoon because just twenty-three years ago, his son Alan, then a missionary in Colombia, arrived with his companion to our home in Bogotá. That was our first contact with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Today I want to pay tribute to the missionaries, their parents and supporters, and to the leaders and members of the Church who, with their love and patience, made it possible for my wife, Mary, and me to join the Church and who continue supporting us in the process of conversion.

At the time the missionaries came to teach us, I was going through some trials and had many sorrows and concerns, and I needed to make some important decisions in my life. However, at the beginning I was not aware that their message of the restoration of

the gospel of Jesus Christ and of his Church was the answer and solution to my needs. I didn't realize that those young messengers were sent to me by my Heavenly Father.

Now I understand his mercy because he sent to us his Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who through the miracle of his atonement sacrificed his life for our salvation, broke the bands of death, defied the grave, and invited us to follow him.

Somehow it was not easy for them to start teaching us, but after many visits and discussions I was touched by the Spirit, and I agreed to be baptized, as well as my beloved wife. But I established some "don'ts" or conditions: don't call me "brother"; I will not attend all the meetings; I don't want to be assigned to pray nor to give talks in the meetings; I will not accept any callings; and never ask me to talk to my relatives or friends about the Church; and so forth.