

Please know of our love and gratitude for each of you. We thank you for your faith, your service, and your sustaining strength. May you, your loved ones, and your posterity be blessed by your righteous pursuit of power in the priesthood.

God lives. Jesus is the Christ. He directs His Church through His prophets and apostles. I so testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### NOTES

1. Ephesians 4:5.
2. See George Albert Smith, *Sharing the Gospel with Others*, comp. Preston Nibley (1948), 144–45.
3. See Matthew 20:16; 22:14; 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 17:14; Alma 13:3, 6, 9; 3 Nephi 12:1; Doctrine and Covenants 3:10; 52:1; 95:5; 121:34, 40–46.
4. Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:38.
5. See Hebrews 13:17; Alma 5:18; 11:43; Doctrine and Covenants 72:13–16.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 135:4.
7. See 3 Nephi 9:20.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 100:5–6.
9. See Doctrine and Covenants 128:18.
10. See Joseph Smith—History 1:72; Doctrine and Covenants 27:8, 12.
11. See Doctrine and Covenants 27:5.
12. See Doctrine and Covenants 110:11.
13. See Doctrine and Covenants 27:6.
14. See Doctrine and Covenants 110:12.
15. See Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 337–38; see also Doctrine and Covenants 27:9; 110:13–16; 128:21.
16. See Matthew 16:19; 18:18; Doctrine and Covenants 124:93; 127:7; 128:8, 10; 132:46.
17. See Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (1954–56), 3:154–56.
18. Doctrine and Covenants 112:31; see also 128:18.
19. Hebrews 5:4.
20. Doctrine and Covenants 107:3; see also Joseph Smith Translation, Hebrews 7:3; Alma 13:1.
21. See Doctrine and Covenants 1:20, 38; 84:19–22, 26–27; 107:18–20; 124:39–46; 133:6.
22. Doctrine and Covenants 132:47.
23. Doctrine and Covenants 11:13–14.
24. See Doctrine and Covenants 130:18–19.
25. Doctrine and Covenants 131:2–3; second brackets are in the original.
26. Doctrine and Covenants 121:36.
27. See Doctrine and Covenants 121:37.
28. See 2 Thessalonians 1:3; Doctrine and Covenants 121:41–42.
29. Doctrine and Covenants 121:45.

## Elder Monte J. Brough

I hold in my hand a copy of a Sunday School manual titled *Leaders of the Scriptures*, which was printed in 1947. The authors were Marion G. Merkley and Gordon B. Hinckley. Fifty-six years ago! This manual has been in my home for many years and is part of the motivation for this talk.

### Restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood

One of the most significant events of the Restoration is that of the Aaronic Priesthood in May 1829. John the Baptist

appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. Joseph recounts:

“While we were thus employed, praying and calling upon the Lord, a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light, and having laid his hands upon us, he ordained us, saying:

“Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins.”<sup>1</sup>

We have in this priesthood session of general conference tens of thousands of young men who hold the Aaronic Priesthood and who belong to deacons, teachers, and priests quorums all over the world. Each quorum is headed by a quorum presidency, including a president who holds keys to lead the individual priesthood quorum.

### Youth can hold responsible positions

Many of us may consider these youthful leaders to be too young to hold those important, responsible positions. Let us consider a few examples of what youth really can do.

#### *Jeremiah*

First, the prophet Jeremiah:

“Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

“Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

“Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.

“But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. . . .

“Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.”<sup>2</sup>

If the Lord desired, couldn't He also put words in the mouth of a 13-year-old deacons quorum president, who “holds the keys of the ministering of angels”?

#### *Timothy*

Another young man, Timothy, was a missionary companion to the Apostle Paul. The epistles from Paul to Timothy are tributes to the faith and testimony of this very young man. Let me read a few extracts from those epistles:

“Wherefore . . . stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. . . .

“[Christ] hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling.”<sup>3</sup>

“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise.”<sup>4</sup>

As with Timothy, wouldn't a 14-year-old teachers quorum president be entitled to a “gift of God” when he is set apart by the bishop? Isn't the calling of teachers quorum president also “an holy calling”? Can a 16-year-old priest be “wise”? The scriptures give us a resounding *yes!*

#### *Mormon*

One of the greatest examples of a very young man making a contribution of monumental significance is that of Mormon. Let's read just part of his account:

“And now I, Mormon, make a record of the things which I have both seen and heard, and call it the Book of Mormon.

“And about the time that Ammaron hid up the records unto the Lord, he came unto me, (I being about ten years of age, and I began to be learned somewhat after the manner of the learning of my people) and Ammaron said unto me: I perceive that thou art a sober child, and art quick to observe. . . .

“And behold, [one day] ye shall take the plates of Nephi unto yourself, and the remainder shall ye leave in the place where they are; and ye shall engrave on the plates of Nephi all the things that ye have observed concerning this people.”<sup>5</sup>

“And notwithstanding I being young, was large in stature; therefore the people of Nephi appointed me that I should be their leader, or the leader of their armies.

“[And so] it came to pass that in my sixteenth year I did go forth at the head of an army of the Nephites.”<sup>6</sup>

What a chronology of events in such a young life! He began preparing for his prophetic calling at age 10, when he re-

ceived knowledge of the ancient sacred records. By appointment of the people of Nephi, he became the head of the Nephite armies at age 16.

### **Visits to an injured quorum member**

In June of the year I was 12 years old, I was injured in a horse accident while delivering newspapers in my old hometown of Randolph, Utah. I was placed in a wheelchair for six months, until I first walked on Christmas Day. I remember the members of my deacons quorum presidency coming to my home to visit me—Dale Rex, Doug McKinnon, and others who were 13-year-old leaders in the deacons quorum presidency. They seemed to understand their responsibility to me as a member of their quorum.

### **Failure to invite a young woman to church**

I recently was standing at the luggage retrieval at the Salt Lake City International Airport when a woman came to me and asked my name. I recognized her as a former South Rich High School classmate from years ago. She had changed since I had last seen her. You all know how you feel at the dreaded high school reunion. She had added some gray hair and a few wrinkles. (Of course, I hadn't changed.) It was obvious that she was meeting her missionary child, who was returning from a mission. It surprised me. While she was yet in school, her family, who were not members of the Church, had moved into our small community. Her name was Alice Gomez. She was about the same age as me and my friends. I remembered that she was friendly and always polite but that she never did attend any of our Church meetings.

I said to her, "Alice, tell me your story. You are obviously now an active member of the Church, but you never joined while we were going to school."

Her answer was condemning: "No one ever asked me!" Wow! Our quorum really dropped the ball on that one.

### **Jamaican quorum helps missionaries**

Recently reported to me was the story of a priests quorum in Jamaica that decided to help the missionaries with their work. So this quorum of young men went knocking on doors, trying to find appointments for the missionaries. They soon found more referrals than the missionaries could handle.

### **Kaysville quorum visits less-active boys**

Members of a priests quorum in Kaysville, Utah, decided they would not lose one member of their quorum. The whole quorum would go to a less-active member's home and have their Sunday lesson sitting around the less-active boy's bed. Soon that young man joined his quorum in taking the Sunday lesson to another home.

### **Rise up to quorum responsibilities**

As of the year 2003, there are more than 26,000 wards and branches in the Church, with approximately 78,000 deacons, teachers, and priests quorums. Talk about an army!

The contribution the quorums of the Aaronic Priesthood could make to the work of converting, retaining, and activating other members of their quorums is enormous.

If 16-year-old Mormon could be the commanding officer of a large military army, and if Jeremiah as a child could have words put in his mouth by the Almighty God, and if Timothy could be wise as he was, then each young man within the sound of my voice can rise to the challenge of his quorum responsibilities.

The responsibilities of the Aaronic Priesthood quorums are no less important than the responsibilities of elders quorums or high priests groups. Remember, they hold “the keys of the ministering of angels.” We need young men to stand up in their calling, knowing of their ordained right to act in the office to which they are appointed.

I testify that these Aaronic Priesthood quorums hold the holy priesthood of God. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### NOTES

1. Joseph Smith—History 1:68–69.
2. Jeremiah 1:4–7, 9.
3. 2 Timothy 1:6, 9.
4. 2 Timothy 3:15.
5. Mormon 1:1–2, 4.
6. Mormon 2:1–2.

## Elder Merrill J. Bateman

### **Priesthood restored by divine messengers**

One of the remarkable evidences of the Restoration is the testimony of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery regarding the manner in which the priesthood and its directing powers were returned to earth. In each case, priesthood and priesthood keys were restored by divine messengers who had held them in earlier times. John the Baptist brought back the Aaronic Priesthood with the keys of repentance and baptism.<sup>1</sup> Peter, James, and John restored not only the Melchizedek Priesthood but also “the keys of [the] kingdom.”<sup>2</sup> Moses and Elijah returned with the “gathering” and “sealing” keys.<sup>3</sup>

The events describing the return of the priesthood are remarkable in that they conform precisely with the biblical pattern of priesthood restoration in earlier dispensations. For example, consider the restoration and transfer of priesthood powers during the Savior’s time.

### **Jesus gives keys to His Apostles**

Near the end of His ministry, Jesus promised Peter “the keys of the kingdom,”<sup>4</sup> knowing that Jesus would soon leave and that priesthood keys were needed by the Apostles if they were to direct the work

after His ascension. In order for them to receive the keys, Matthew records that Jesus took “Peter, James, and John . . . up into an high mountain” where He “was transfigured before them” and Moses and Elias “appeared unto them.”<sup>5</sup> Shortly after this event, the Savior declared that the Apostles now had the keys to direct the ministry.<sup>6</sup> The Prophet Joseph Smith states that “the Savior, Moses, and Elias, gave the keys to Peter, James and John, on the mount, when they were transfigured before him.”<sup>7</sup>

The pattern of priesthood restoration described by Matthew is the same pattern followed in our dispensation. Apostles and prophets designated by the Lord to hold keys in earlier dispensations returned them to earth as this dispensation began.

In contrast, 19th-century ministers in the Palmyra environs, not understanding the great apostasy that had taken place, believed in an entirely different process for priesthood reception. They believed that the power to preach came through an inner calling to a priesthood of believers. They did not understand the necessity of receiving the priesthood from a person in authority by the laying on of hands.<sup>8</sup> Also, they did not understand the purpose or necessity of priesthood keys.