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The Church is subject to the Lord, not to popular opinion. When it comes to doctrines, principles, or ordinances of the gospel, change is a matter of revelation from the Lord to his prophet.

# Revelation on the Priesthood, Thirty-Five Years Later

E. DALE LEBARON

E. Dale LeBaron (1934–2009) was a professor emeritus of Church history and doctrine at BYU when this article was published.

Editor's note: On September 30, 1978, President N. Eldon Tanner presented Official Declaration 2 for a sustaining vote at general conference. It was unanimously approved. This declaration is now introduced with a new heading in the 2013 edition of the scriptures: "The Book of Mormon teaches that 'all are alike unto God,' including 'black and white, bond and free, male and female' (2 Nephi 26:33). Throughout the history of the Church, people of every race and ethnicity in many countries have been baptized and have lived as faithful members of the Church. During Joseph Smith's lifetime, a few black male members of the Church were ordained to the priesthood. Early in its history, Church leaders stopped conferring the priesthood on black males of African descent. Church records offer no clear insights into the origins of this practice. Church leaders believed that a revelation from God was needed to alter this practice and prayerfully sought guidance. The revelation came to Church President Spencer W. Kimball and was affirmed to other Church leaders in the Salt Lake Temple on June 1, 1978. The revelation removed all restrictions with regard to race that once applied to the priesthood."

*To celebrate the anniversary of Official Declaration 2, we reprint this classic article, with minor changes, from Sperry Symposium Classics: The Doctrine and Covenants. Another classic article on the topic appeared in Religious Educator 4, no. 2, by Richard E. Bennett, "That Every Man Might Speak in the Name of God the Lord": A Study of Official Declaration 2" (online at rsc.byu.edu).*

As a young boy in Primary memorizing the ninth article of faith, I never imagined that I would live to see the Lord reveal anything as “great and important” as the revelation of June 1978, which extended priesthood and temple blessings to all worthy male members of the Church. Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was present when this revelation was received, stated: “It was a revelation . . . that would reverse the whole direction of the Church, procedurally and administratively; one that would affect the living and the dead; one that would affect the total relationship that we have with the world. . . . This affects what is going on in the spirit world. . . . This is a revelation of tremendous significance.”<sup>1</sup>

As far as we know, this was the first time since Cain and Abel that all the blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ were made available to all people of all races living upon this earth. And it was the first time that temple ordinances could be performed for all people back to the beginning of time.

On September 30, 1978, at the 148th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency, read Official Declaration 2, which included the following:

In early June of this year, the First Presidency announced that a revelation had been received by President Spencer W. Kimball extending priesthood and temple blessings to all worthy male members of the Church. . . . This revelation . . . came to him after extended meditation and prayer in the sacred rooms of the holy temple. . . .

We have pleaded long and earnestly in behalf of these, our faithful brethren [from whom the priesthood has been withheld], spending many hours in the Upper Room of the Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance.

He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood, with power to exercise its divine authority, and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows therefrom, including the blessings of the temple. . . .

Recognizing Spencer W. Kimball as the prophet, seer, and revelator, and president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it is proposed that we as a constituent assembly accept this revelation as the word and will of the Lord. . . .

The vote to sustain the foregoing motion was unanimous in the affirmative.

Of the revelations now in the Doctrine and Covenants, this is the only one received within the past ninety-five years. Because this important revelation is so relevant to us today, it should receive our careful and prayerful study. It should have a deep spiritual influence upon our souls and lives. The manner in which the revelation on the priesthood was revealed and accepted is powerful evidence of the Church's inspired leadership, the Lord's divine direction, and the members' discipleship.

### **Before the Revelation on the Priesthood**

Clearly, the gospel is intended for all people. In the preface to the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord declared, "For verily the voice of the Lord is unto all men. . . . And the voice of warning shall be unto all people. . . . Wherefore the voice of the Lord is unto the ends of the earth" (D&C 1:2, 4, 11). Then, in the appendix to this book of scripture, the Lord stated: "And this gospel shall be preached unto every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (D&C 133:37). There are seventy-eight references in the Doctrine of Covenants pertaining to the Lord's dealings with every nation or with the nations of the earth.

Modern prophets have echoed that message. For example, Elder McConkie taught that before the Second Coming of the Savior, stakes will be organized in Communist China, Russia, and other nations where the gospel was not then established.<sup>2</sup> President Spencer W. Kimball said in a great visionary message:

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15.) . . .

. . . Surely there is significance in these words! There was a universal need and there must be universal coverage. . . .

. . . It seems to me that the Lord chose his words when he said "every nation," "every land," "uttermost bounds of the earth," "every tongue," "every people," "every soul," "all the world," "many lands."<sup>3</sup>

The gospel has not always been sent to all people, however. From the beginning, the Lord has sent the gospel to people according to his priorities, and the priesthood has been given selectively. During the fourteen centuries from Moses to Christ, only the house of Israel had the gospel. Only the tribe of Levi was permitted to hold the Aaronic Priesthood, and a few others were chosen to hold the Melchizedek Priesthood. Elder McConkie observed, "Not only is the gospel to go, on a priority basis and harmonious to a divine timetable, to one nation after another, but the whole history of God's dealings

with men on earth indicates that such has been the case in the past; it has been restricted and limited where many people are concerned.”<sup>4</sup>

In the early history of the Church, men of black African descent were restricted from receiving the priesthood and temple blessings. In 1949 the First Presidency reaffirmed the Church’s position: “The attitude of the Church with reference to the Negroes remains as it has always stood. It is not a matter of the declaration of a policy but of direct commandment from the Lord, on which is founded the doctrine of the Church from the days of its organization, to the effect that Negroes may become members of the Church but that they are not entitled to the priesthood at the present time.”<sup>5</sup>

That position has not always been understood or accepted, even by some in the Church. Because it did not receive specific scriptural status in the Doctrine and Covenants, some question its origin; however, not all revelations are made public. In 1977, President Kimball said, “We testify to the world that revelation continues and that the vaults and files of the Church contain these revelations which come month to month and day to day.”<sup>6</sup>

Statements by the prophets in this dispensation suggest that there were some unanswered questions relating to blacks and the priesthood. Fifteen years before receiving the revelation, Elder Spencer W. Kimball expressed his views about this delicate and difficult matter: “The things of God cannot be understood by the spirit of men. . . . I have wished the Lord had given us a little more clarity in the matter. But for me, it is enough. The prophets for 133 years of the existence of the Church have maintained the position of the prophet of the Restoration that the Negro could not hold the priesthood nor have the temple ordinances which are preparatory for exaltation. . . . The doctrine or policy has not varied in my memory. . . . I know the Lord could change his policy. . . . If the time comes, that he will do, I am sure.”<sup>7</sup>

Then Elder Kimball caustically rebuked members of the Church who were pressuring Church leaders to make a change regarding blacks and the priesthood: “These smart members who would force the issue, and there are many of them, cheapen the issue and certainly bring into contempt the sacred principle of revelation and divine authority.”<sup>8</sup>

In 1973, when President Kimball became President of the Church and was asked about the position of the Church regarding the blacks and the priesthood, he answered: “I am not sure that there will be a change, although there could be. We are under the dictates of our Heavenly Father, and this is not my policy or the Church’s policy. It is the policy of the Lord who has

established it, and I know of no change, although we are subject to revelations of the Lord in case he should ever wish to make a change.”<sup>9</sup>

A few months later, President Kimball gave a powerful and visionary address. He spoke of “armies of missionaries” taking the gospel to areas of the world, even to lands where the Church had never been. But no mention was made of one continent—Africa. The revelation on the priesthood had to precede the gospel message being spread throughout Africa. David M. Kennedy, who served as a special representative of the First Presidency to help move the gospel to foreign nations, told of a large atlas that President Kimball kept in his office. When they studied it together, Brother Kennedy would place his hand over Africa, saying, “We can’t go there unless they have the priesthood.” Returning from the temple after receiving the revelation of June 1978, President Kimball stopped at David Kennedy’s office and said, “You can take your hand off that map, David. We can now go to Africa!”<sup>10</sup>

In this dispensation, some Church leaders believed the blacks would not receive the priesthood before the Millennium. Similarly, the prophets and apostles at Jesus’ time did not fully comprehend some of the basic principles of the gospel or the Lord’s timetable. It wasn’t until after glorious revelations were received that they completely understood the doctrines of the Atonement, of the Resurrection, or of taking the gospel to all nations. Elder McConkie said that because the gospel had been only for the house of Israel, the earliest Apostles were not able to envision that after the Resurrection the gospel should then go to all the world.<sup>11</sup> Even Peter had to receive a vision before he fully understood that the gospel was to be taken to the Gentiles at that time.

In this dispensation, some Church leaders spoke from limited understanding regarding when the priesthood would be given to the blacks. Elder McConkie said: “There are statements in our literature by the early brethren that we have interpreted to mean that the Negroes would not receive the priesthood in mortality. I have said the same things. . . . We spoke with a limited understanding and without the light and knowledge that now has come into the world. We get our truth and our light line upon line and precept upon precept. We have now had added a new flood of intelligence and light on this particular subject, and it erases all the darkness and all the views and all the thoughts of the past. They don’t matter any more.”<sup>12</sup>

## Revelation by the Power of God

Typically, before a large worldly organization makes a significant change in direction, philosophy, or practice, the leaders carefully ensure that their constituency will continue to support them. That is true of political, business, and most religious organizations. They first participate in studies, surveys, conferences, pilot testing, debates, Vatican councils, or bishops' synods to determine whether change is advisable. When changes are made, they are usually implemented carefully and gradually.

For example, a Canadian newspaper reported on challenges facing the newly appointed moderator of the United Church of Canada (Canada's largest Protestant denomination):

The church was just concluding what could arguably be termed the most difficult four months in its 60-year history because of the outcry over a report which recommended the church sanction the ordination of homosexual clergy.

Smith's first duty as moderator was to chair the fractious debate on what to do about the issue.<sup>13</sup>

Similarly, under the heading "Episcopal Church report asks sanction of non-marital sex," an American newspaper reported:

The Episcopal Church should recognize and bless committed nonmarital sexual relationships between homosexuals, young adults, the divorced and widowed, a report from the church's Newark diocese urges. . . .

The report by the diocese's Task Force On Changing Patterns of Sexuality and Family Life aims to ignite a new debate on sexual ethics among leaders of the nation's 3 million Episcopalians in hopes they will amend church doctrine to embrace all believers.<sup>14</sup>

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is subject to the Lord, not to popular opinion. The Church has used some research methods before implementing such programs as family home evening and the consolidated meeting schedule; however, when it comes to doctrines, principles, or ordinances of the gospel, change is a matter of revelation from the Lord to his prophet.

At the time of the revelation on the priesthood, my wife and I were presiding over the South Africa Johannesburg Mission, then the only mission on the continent of Africa. About six months before the revelation came, I received a copy of a letter from the First Presidency that was sent to all priesthood leaders. The letter restated the Lord's position with regard to the blacks' being denied the priesthood and temple blessings. I heard no more about this matter until the announcement of the revelation. The brethren did not survey the feelings of the Church membership or do studies to determine the effects

that such a change might have. That the Church made such a sudden and major change of course so smoothly is a miracle of incredible proportions.

President N. Eldon Tanner observed that President Kimball had defended the position of the Church for some thirty years as a member of the Twelve, yet when the revelation came, he immediately reversed himself.<sup>15</sup> As an apostle and then as the prophet, President Kimball traveled throughout the Church. His sensitive spirit reached out in love to all people, especially to those deprived of priesthood and temple blessings because of lineage. He noted: “This matter had been on my mind all these years. We have always considered it.”<sup>16</sup> President Kimball described his sacred struggle: “Day after day I went alone and with great solemnity and seriousness in the upper rooms of the temple, and there I offered my soul and offered my efforts to go forward with the program. I wanted to do what he wanted. I talked about it to him and said, ‘Lord, I want only what is right. We are not making any plans to be spectacularly moving. We want only the thing that thou dost want, and we want it when you want it and not until.’”<sup>17</sup>

Unknown to anyone except the First Presidency and the Twelve, President Kimball had asked each of them to carefully research the scriptures and statements of the earlier Brethren, to make an exhaustive study of all that had been recorded concerning this issue. For months before the revelation, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve discussed these sacred matters at length in their temple meetings. President Kimball also met privately with each of the Brethren to learn their feelings on the matter.<sup>18</sup>

On Thursday, June 1, 1978, the General Authorities held their regular monthly fast and testimony meeting. The members of the Seventy and the Presiding Bishopric were then excused, and President Kimball, his two counselors, and ten of the Apostles remained (Elder Mark E. Petersen was in South America, and Elder Delbert L. Stapley was in the hospital).

Before offering the prayer that brought the revelation, President Kimball asked each of the Brethren to express his feelings and views on this important issue. For more than two hours, they talked freely and openly. Elder David B. Haight, the newest member of the Twelve, observed:

As each responded, we witnessed an outpouring of the Spirit which bonded our souls together in perfect unity—a glorious experience. In that bond of unity we felt our total dependence upon heavenly direction if we were to more effectively accomplish the Lord’s charge to carry the message of hope and salvation to *all* the world.

President Kimball then suggested that we have our prayer at the altar. Usually he asked one of us to lead in prayer; however, on this day he asked, “Would you

mind if I be voice at the altar today?" This was the Lord's prophet asking us. Such humility! Such meekness! So typical of this special servant of all. . . .

The prophet of God pour[ed] out his heart, pleading eloquently for the Lord to make his mind and will known to his servant, Spencer W. Kimball. The prophet pleaded that he would be given the necessary direction which could expand the Church throughout the world by offering the fullness of the everlasting gospel to all men, based solely upon their personal worthiness without reference to race or color.<sup>19</sup>

In response to a prophet's humble prayer of faith, united with those of twelve other prophets, seers, and revelators, the Lord poured out his Spirit—and his answer—in a most powerful way. Elder McConkie testified:

It was during this prayer that the revelation came. The Spirit of the Lord rested mightily upon us all; we felt something akin to what happened on the day of Pentecost and at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. From the midst of eternity, the voice of God, conveyed by the power of the Spirit, spoke to his prophet. . . . And we all heard the same voice, received the same message, and became personal witnesses that the word received was the mind and will and voice of the Lord. . . .

On this occasion, because of the importuning and the faith, and because the hour and the time had arrived, the Lord in his providences poured out the Holy Ghost upon the First Presidency and the Twelve in a miraculous and marvelous manner, beyond anything that any then present had ever experienced.<sup>20</sup>

In an attempt to stifle speculation, Elder McConkie also explained what did not happen: "The Lord could have sent messengers from the other side to deliver it, but he did not. He gave the revelation by the power of the Holy Ghost. . . . And maybe some . . . would like to believe that the Lord himself was there, or that the Prophet Joseph Smith came to deliver the revelation. . . . Well, these things did not happen. The stories that go around to the contrary are not factual or realistic or true."<sup>21</sup>

President Gordon B. Hinckley described his impressions as follows:

There was a hallowed and sanctified atmosphere in the room. For me, it felt as if a conduit opened between the heavenly throne and the kneeling, pleading prophet of God who was joined by his Brethren. . . .

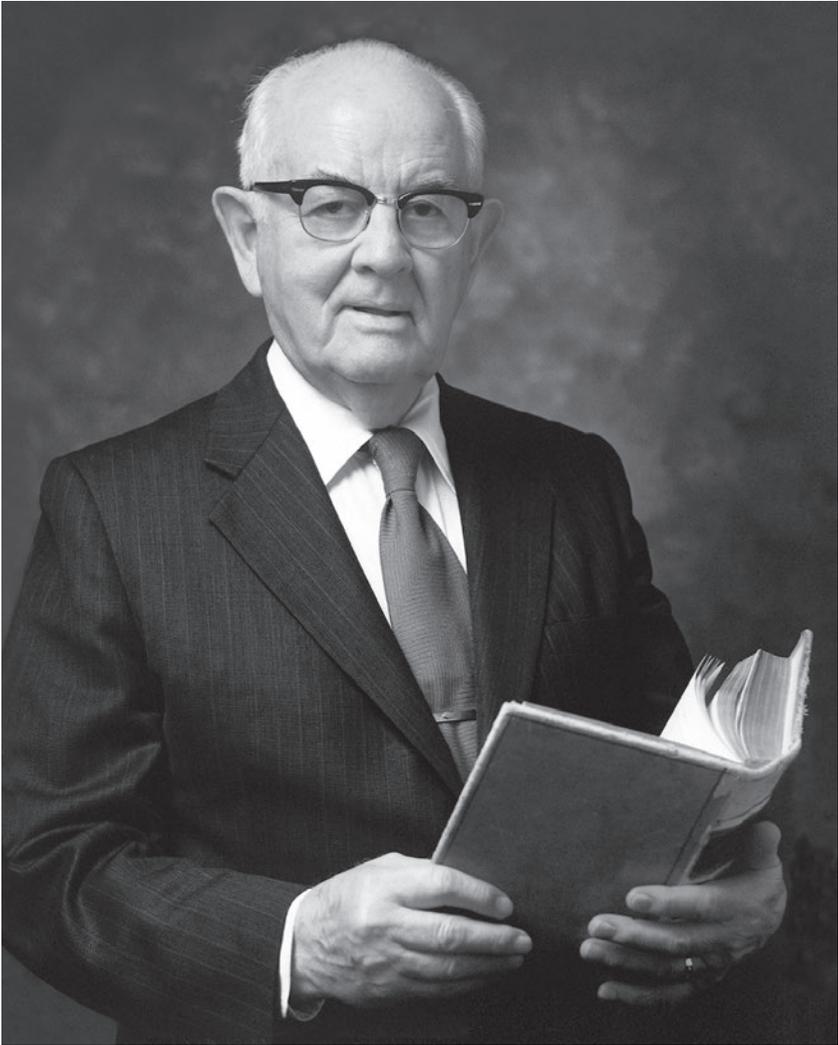
It was a quiet and sublime occasion. . . .

There was a Pentecostal spirit, for the Holy Ghost was there. . . .

Not one of us who was present on that occasion was ever quite the same after that. Nor has the Church been quite the same. . . .

There was perfect unity among us in our experience and in our understanding.<sup>22</sup>

Elder Haight related the events immediately following the historic revelation: "President Kimball arose from the altar. (We surrounded it according to seniority, I being number twelve.) . . . He turned to his right, and I was the



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first member of the circle he encountered. He put his arms around me, and as I embraced him I felt the beating of his heart and the intense emotion that filled him. He then continued around the circle, embracing each of the Brethren. No one spoke. Overcome with emotion, we simply shook hands and quietly went to our dressing rooms.”<sup>23</sup>

The manner in which this revelation came is unique in our Church history because of the power with which it came, the numbers who received it, and the powerful effects it would have upon so many. Both President Kimball

and President Benson said that they had never “experienced anything of such spiritual magnitude and power” as this revelation.<sup>24</sup> The reason the Lord chose to reveal this to the First Presidency and the Twelve, rather than only to his prophet, is due to the tremendous import and eternal significance of what was revealed, according to Elder McConkie. Hence, “the Lord wanted independent witnesses who could bear record that the thing had happened.”<sup>25</sup>

Some have questioned why this revelation came when it did. Some critics of the Church suggest that it came in response to pressures upon the Church. External pressures on Church leaders regarding the blacks and the priesthood immediately before the revelation were minor compared to those in the 1960s, when civil rights were a major issue. As to why the revelation came when it did, Elder McConkie stated that it “was a matter of faith and righteousness and seeking on one hand, and it was a matter of the divine timetable on the other hand.”<sup>26</sup> President Kimball further stated: “There are members of the Church who had brought to President David O. McKay their reasons why it should be changed. Others had gone to Joseph Fielding Smith and Harold B. Lee and to all the former presidents and it had not been accepted because the time had not come for it.”<sup>27</sup>

### **After the Revelation on the Priesthood**

Could there be any news revealed since the Restoration that has caused so many of God’s children to immediately respond with such exquisite gladness and gratitude as did this marvelous revelation? I will never forget the overwhelming feelings I experienced after hearing of the revelation. Although we did not have any black male members of the Church in southern Africa at that time—until 1978 the Church had little involvement with blacks—it was powerfully evident that the revelation had a great and immediate effect upon that continent and its people. After June 1978, blacks began contacting us about the Church, although they knew nothing about the revelation. I will cite two examples.

First, I received a letter, dated June 8, 1979, from a non-LDS black man in Zimbabwe. He asked if he could translate the Book of Mormon into the Shona and Ndebele languages, the two African dialects of Zimbabwe. He said he had been called of God to take the gospel message to his people. He ended his letter with: “I wish you [to] confirm this with the prophets.”<sup>28</sup>

Second, about the same time, I received a packet of materials from the Church missionary department. It contained a letter from a group of Africans

in an isolated part of South Africa who had founded their own church and called it “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” Missionary work soon commenced among them.

I will also share three experiences that brought tears of gratitude to some faithful brethren in Africa. Soon after I arrived in South Africa as a mission president in 1976, I met a black African by the name of Moses Mahlangu. As he shook my hand he said, “So you are the new mission president.” I told him I was and asked if he had known any others. He named each mission president who had served during the previous twelve years. When I asked him how he knew them, he told me his conversion story.

While serving as a lay minister in a Protestant church, Moses found a copy of the Book of Mormon in his church’s library. He began to read it. He soon knew it was true. He searched until he found the Church and met with the mission president. The mission president was so impressed with Moses’ knowledge and testimony of the gospel and his sincerity and honesty that he wrote to the First Presidency asking permission to baptize Moses. Because of the strict apartheid laws at that time, it was illegal for Moses to attend any religious meeting with a white congregation. That would prevent him from receiving the sacrament. The mission president advised Moses that he would have to wait for baptism. And so Moses waited—for fourteen years. During that time he came by the mission office every few months and got a supply of pamphlets and copies of the Book of Mormon, which he distributed as he preached among his people. He held meetings in his home regularly and taught his people about the Book of Mormon and the Restoration of the gospel. He was fluent in nine languages and was a most articulate gospel teacher.

Soon after the revelation of 1978, I was privileged to conduct a baptismal interview for Moses. It was one of my most sacred and humbling experiences. To every question I asked, I received the same answer: “I have been keeping that commandment for fourteen years.” For fourteen long years, this great soul had been faithfully living the gospel and sharing it with his family and friends.

Another experience involved Joseph W. B. Johnson of Cape Coast, Ghana. In 1964 he was given a copy of the Book of Mormon, which he prayerfully read. He received a witness of its truth and a vision directing him to preach the message of the Restoration to his people. Brother Johnson wrote often to Church headquarters requesting literature and missionaries to teach and baptize them. Church literature was sent, but he was told, “The time is not yet;

you must wait.” For fourteen years he devoted his time and energies to teaching the gospel, gathering believers, and organizing and strengthening twelve Church congregations in Ghana. Brother Johnson was sustained by frequent spiritual experiences, but he and his people became discouraged when their pleadings and prayers to be sent missionaries were not answered. Then, on the night of June 9, 1978, because of despair and discouragement, he could not sleep. He felt impressed to listen to the BBC short-wave news broadcast, which he had not done for several years. After struggling with the old radio for more than an hour, he finally tuned in to the BBC at midnight. He related: “I heard the message of President Kimball’s prophecy concerning the priesthood, that all worthy males in all of the world could receive the priesthood. I burst into tears of joy, because I knew the priesthood would come to Africa, and if we did the right things, we would all receive the priesthood.”<sup>29</sup>

A third experience involved a faithful member of the Church in South Africa. He was a convert of twelve years and a counselor in a branch presidency. About six months before the revelation, this good brother shared a deep concern with me. His wife was not a member of the Church and was not supportive of his involvement in the Church. That put a strain on their marriage, but he tried his best to work things out. They had two sons, whom he had raised in the Church. One boy was nine years of age and the other almost twelve. Although it was not apparent, his wife came from a black lineage. His sons were not aware that they could not hold the priesthood. Deacons were needed in their branch, and the boys were wondering why the oldest one had not already been ordained. Both were talking about serving missions. He did not know what to do or how to approach this matter. He was afraid his sons might either resent their mother or resent the Church.

I told him that he would need to speak to them, and I urged him to fast, pray, and study the scriptures in preparation. He said he would. Four months later he had not yet talked with his sons about the matter, but he assured me that he would soon.

As soon as I heard about the revelation on the priesthood, I thought of this good man and his sons. Not having his phone number, I called his branch president and asked him to go immediately to his counselor’s home and inform him of the revelation. Upon hearing the news, this great soul collapsed into a chair, put his head in his hands, and began to sob uncontrollably. Over and over he said, “Thank God! Thank God!” He had been fasting for two days in preparation for the difficult task. He was planning to speak to his

sons within minutes. An enormous burden had been removed. I was grateful for the infinite wisdom and goodness of a loving Heavenly Father who considers not only the welfare of the Church but also the heavy burden of one faithful father.

I was inspired by the way members of the Church generally responded to this revelation. The key to accepting revelation faithfully is found in the following statement by President George Q. Cannon: “The Latter-day Saint who lives near to God, and has the Spirit of God constantly resting upon him or her, never has any doubts about any principle that God has revealed. When the gathering was taught they were prepared for it; when the payment of tithing was taught they were prepared for it; . . . when celestial marriage was taught they were prepared for it. . . . There was no doubt in their minds, because the same Spirit that taught them that this was the truth in the beginning, and that God had spoken from the heavens, taught them also that all these things were true. But when you have doubts respecting counsel given by the servants of God, then be assured, my brethren and sisters, there is room for repentance.”<sup>30</sup>

After the announcement of the revelation of 1978, I inquired of priesthood leaders in Africa as to how the Saints were responding to the revelation, which would affect Africa more than any other part of the world. There was generally great surprise and joy throughout southern Africa. I heard of only one negative response, and it came from a brother who often complained about home teaching or other things he was asked to do.

One of our most important challenges may be to see things as our Heavenly Father does. That is especially true when it comes to his revelations and his children. When a revelation of such magnitude comes, surely the Lord requires us to respond so that his purposes can be fulfilled, especially by showing pure love for his children.

Elder McConkie warned us, “We talk about the scriptures being unfolded—read again the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Matthew 20) and remind yourselves that those who labor through the heat of the day for twelve hours are going to be rewarded the same as those who came in at the third and sixth and the eleventh hours. Well, it’s the eleventh hour; it’s the Saturday night of time. In this eleventh hour the Lord has given the blessings of the gospel to the last group of laborers in the vineyard. . . . All are alike unto God, black and white, bond and free, male and female.”<sup>31</sup>

For many of us, first hearing the news of this revelation is a memory frozen in time, because of the deep feelings of joy and gratitude which it brought. President Gordon B. Hinckley observed: “I need not tell you of the electric effect that was felt both within the Church and without. There was much weeping, with tears of gratitude not only on the part of those who previously had been denied the priesthood and who became the immediate beneficiaries of this announcement, but also by men and women of the Church across the world who had felt as we had felt concerning this matter.”<sup>32</sup>

Because of the tremendous significance of this revelation, it would be well for us to record our feelings and experiences for our posterity. Future generations may search our journals for our impressions of this marvelous revelation that occurred in our lifetime. It is important that we leave for our posterity a legacy of faith through our testimony of the Lord’s prophets in our day.

It is my witness that the revelation on the priesthood came directly from God to his prophets and that this is one of the most significant revelations of this dispensation. I also testify that with this marvelous revelation came the responsibility to see and feel as the Lord does. It is required of each of us to have pure love towards all of our Father’s children regardless of their country, culture, or color—for “all are alike unto God” (2 Nephi 26:33).

*Editor’s note: On December 3, 2009, E. Dale LeBaron died from injuries sustained in an auto-pedestrian accident. As one demonstration of Dale’s contributions to the Church in Africa, we have included this expression of condolence by Joseph W. B. Johnson, who was mentioned in the article above:*

Beloved Brother Dale LeBaron,

I, Joseph Billy Johnson, my family, and the entire stakes in Ghana have learnt of your sudden departure to the eternity with great shock and dismay. Even though we are saddened of your departure, we believe that our Heavenly Father needs you for a special work beyond the veil. With tears of gratitude trickling from our eyes this very moment, we want your family and the Church to know that we love you dearly and highly esteem and appreciate the great services rendered to the African Saints, especially West Africa, and we will forever remember you in the family and the history of the Church in Africa. We wholeheartedly express our sincere thanks for the love you showed during your call to serve in Africa by our dear prophet, and in our language we say to your dear wife and family “DUE, DUE, NA AMANZDI HU, NYAME NKA HOM HO” (Be courageous, LeBaron’s family, for God is with you all). God be with you till we meet again. **RE**

## Notes

1. Bruce R. McConkie, "The New Revelation on Priesthood," in *Priesthood* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981), 134–35.
2. McConkie, "New Revelation on Priesthood," 131.
3. Spencer W. Kimball, "When the World Will Be Converted," *Ensign*, October 1974, 4–5.
4. McConkie, "New Revelation on Priesthood," 130.
5. See statement of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, August 17, 1949, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.
6. Spencer W. Kimball, "Revelation: The Word of the Lord to His Prophets," *Ensign*, May 1977, 78.
7. *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), 448–49.
8. *Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 449.
9. *Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 449.
10. See Martin Berkeley Hickman, *David Matthew Kennedy: Banker, Statesman, Churchman* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies, 1987), 343–44. See also address by David M. Kennedy to Religious Education faculty, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, October 2, 1992.
11. McConkie, "New Revelation on Priesthood," 130.
12. McConkie, "New Revelation on Priesthood," 131–32.
13. In *Calgary Herald*, January 12, 1985.
14. In *Daily Herald* (Provo, UT), January 30, 1987.
15. Loren C. Dunn, monthly letter to mission presidents and regional representatives in the Northern Plains Area.
16. In *Church News*, January 6, 1979, 15.
17. *Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 451.
18. McConkie, "New Revelation on Priesthood," 127; Lucile C. Tate, *David B. Haight: The Life Story of a Disciple* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987), 279.
19. Tate, *David B. Haight*, 279–80.
20. McConkie, "New Revelation on Priesthood," 128, 133–34.
21. McConkie, "New Revelation on Priesthood," 135.
22. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Priesthood Restoration," *Ensign*, October 1988, 70.
23. Tate, *David B. Haight*, 280.
24. McConkie, "New Revelation on Priesthood," 128.
25. McConkie, "New Revelation on Priesthood," 134.
26. McConkie, "New Revelation on Priesthood," 132–33.
27. In *Church News*, January 6, 1979, 15.
28. Pete Solomon letter, June 8, 1979, sent to the Church.
29. E. Dale LeBaron, ed., *All Are Alike unto God* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990), 21.
30. George Q. Cannon, in *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–86), 13:375.
31. McConkie, "New Revelation on Priesthood," 137; see also 2 Nephi 26:33.
32. Hinckley, "Priesthood Restoration," 70.