

1838, I received from Brother Joseph substantially the same instructions. It was on my application to him, what should be done with the Negro in the South, as I was preaching to them. He said I could baptize them by consent of their masters, but not to confer the Priesthood upon them.<sup>39</sup>

With the addition of A. O. Smoot's report, three separate occasions are now recorded—Greene and Coltrin (1834); Patten, Parrish and Marsh (between 1833 and 1836); and Smoot (approximately 1838)—on which members concerned in one way or another with the Church in the South approached Joseph Smith for advice on what to do regarding Negroes. That none of them knew what to do without first consulting the president of the Church indicates that there was no general consensus or

<sup>39</sup> Berrett, *The Church and the Negroid People*, p. 11. Again this document was recorded long after the fact; however, in the absence of any period sources this account assumes its report to be generally correct.

Church-wide policy covering the subject at least as late as 1838.

This evidence in combination with the ordination of at least one Negro and the omission of any mention of the question of priesthood in the Church's official policy statement concerning Negroes is suggestive of the following conclusion: Joseph Smith, concerned for the safety of the Southern membership, appears to have begun informally advising individuals in about 1834 not to ordain Negroes to the priesthood. He appears from all recorded instances to have advised only members who approached him on the subject and who were concerned with the Southern Church. As no supporting theology was initially invoked or developed, and in light of events subsequent to 1834, it appears that Joseph Smith probably began to advise Negro priest-

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