

48

July 4, 1978

President Spencer W. Kimball
Church Office Building
47 East South Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84103

Dear President Kimball:

One of my children has recently returned from a Church mission and three more have been preparing to go on missions. However, the recent announcement that the Priesthood can now be given to the Negroes has raised several questions in my mind. Before I can sustain or support my children on missions for the Church, I must have the following ten questions satisfactorily answered.

1. This announcement contradicts the statements of all previous presidencies of the Church. The word of the Lord should be consistent and unchangeable, "for God doth not walk in crooked paths, neither doth he vary from that which he hath said...." (D. & C. 3:2)

President Brigham Young declared that:

"The Lord said I will not kill Cain, but I will put a mark upon him, and that mark will be seen upon the face of every Negro upon the face of the earth; and it is the decree of God that *that mark shall remain upon the seed of Cain until the seed of Abel shall be redeemed, and Cain shall not receive the priesthood until the time of that redemption.* (Wilford Woodruff, by Cowley, p. 351)

President Brigham Young had received the word of the Lord on this matter and once remarked:

Shall I tell you the *law of God* in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty, under the *law of God*, is death on the spot. THIS WILL ALWAYS BE SO. (J.D. 10:110)

And again:

How long is that race to endure the dreadful curse that is upon them? That curse will remain upon them and they never can hold the Priesthood or share in it *until all the other descendants of Adam have received the promises and enjoyed the blessings of the Priesthood and the keys thereof....* (J.D. 7:290)

When there is a contradiction between past and present prophets, then someone is wrong. Either the early presidencies of the Church were wrong and those today are right--or else the former presidents of the Church were inspired of God and those today are not. One or the other is right, or else they are all wrong together. Yet, we know the early men of the Church were led of God--so how can we justify this contradiction by saying the leaders of today are also right?

It appears that this "revelation", like the Manifesto is not a new revelation, but rather a statement, by the president of the Church, abandoning revelations that have previously been given. Why is there such a contradiction in the word of God?

2. Why was this revelation proclaimed as a doctrine of the Church before the members had an opportunity to vote on it? We are told by the Lord that "all things MUST be done *in order*, and by COMMON CONSENT in the Church, by the prayer of faith." (D. & C. 28:13; see also D. & C. 26:2) This is a privilege and a duty of the members. The right of common consent in God's Church prevents dictatorship so that unwanted decrees cannot be hoisted upon its members without their approval. Even the ancient church of God followed this procedure. Why has this new edict overturned the established order of procedure as outlined by the Lord?

3. Why was the announcement of this revelation given to the public news media before it was published or printed in any of the Church publications, or before it was announced to the members of the Church? The haste and manner by which it was proclaimed to the world, rather than to the members, has the essence of satisfying public clamor rather than the needs of the Church. The revelations of the Lord have always been for the benefit of Church members, not to meet the demands of society or for gentile approbation. Was this announcement generated to satisfy Civil Rights groups and appease the wrath of those bringing lawsuits to you and the Church, rather than for some spiritual merits achieved by the Negroes, of which we are all unaware?

4. Within two days after this announcement, Negroes were being ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood. Within two weeks of that announcement, Negroes were administering the sacrament, taking out their endowments, being sealed in mixed marriages in the Temple, and being called on missions! Why the extreme rush to put the Negro into these positions and appointments without proceeding through the same step by step gradations that have been required of the whites? Men should be advanced to the Priesthood according to their faithfulness and accomplishments in each of the offices of the Church to prove their worthiness for Priesthood advancement. Now the Negro is receiving preferential treatment, and Church procedure with the Negro is creating a discrimination against the white man.

5. Where is this revelation? If such a revelation is to be thrust upon four million members of the Church as official doctrine, they are entitled to read it. If it is a revelation, then it should be published, voted upon, and added to the standard works of the Church as scripture. If the Lord should reveal something to you, which is of a personal nature, then you have the right to keep it secret, and probably should. But when a revelation comes through the president of the Church for its members, then they are entitled to have it.

On June 17, 1933, the First Presidency, under President Heber J. Grant, issued the following statement:

It is alleged that on September 26, 1886, President John Taylor received a revelation from the purported text of which is given in publications....

As to this pretended revelation, it should be said that the archives of the Church contain no such revelation; *the archives contain no record of any such revelation, nor any evidence justifying a belief that any such revelation was ever given.*

From the personal knowledge of some of us, from the uniform and common recollection of the presiding quorums of the Church, from the absence in the Church archives of any evidence whatsoever justifying any belief that such a revelation was given, *we are justified in affirming that no such revelation exists.* (*Way of the Master*, by Mark E. Petersen, p. 58)

I called up to the Church Archives to inquire about obtaining a copy of this latest revelation, but they informed me that they do not have any copy of it, nor do they know the whereabouts of that revelation. Am I justified then in saying that since "the archives of the Church contain no such revelation nor any evidence justifying belief that any such revelation was given, that I am also "justified in affirming that no such revelation exists?"

On December 6, 1974, you sent a letter to "All Stake and Mission Presidents, Bishops and Branch Presidents in the Western United States and Western Canada" recommending that they use the book *The Way of the Master* by Elder Petersen, to help counsel "members of the Church who may be influenced by false doctrine being disseminated by apostate cultist groups." Also you stated that you wanted them to be informed by that book so "no member of the Church be led astray by those who covertly try to teach falsehoods." You recommended reading Chapters 8 through 15 for this purpose. May I remind you of a paragraph in Chapter 11 which states:

Furthermore, so far as the authorities of the Church are concerned and so far as the members of the Church are concerned, since this pretended revelation, if ever given, *was never presented to and adopted by the Church* or by any council of the Church, and *since to the contrary, an inspired rule of action, the Manifesto, was (subsequently to the pretended revelation) presented to and adopted by the Church, which inspired rule in its terms, purport, and effect was directly opposite to the interpretation given to the pretended revelation, the said pretended revelation could have no validity and no binding effect and force upon Church members, and action under it would be unauthorized, illegal, and void.*" (*The Way of the Master*, p. 58)

Now then, since your "revelation" was "never presented to and adopted by the members of the Church" and your revelation is "opposite to the inspired rule in its terms, purport, and was directly opposite to" those revelations and teachings of the scriptures and prophets before you, then should I consider that your "revelation could have no validity and no binding effect and force upon Church members, and action under it would be unauthorized, illegal, and void?"

At least the Revelation of 1886 began by saying, "Thus saith the Lord." It also said, "All commandments that I give must be obeyed by those calling

themselves by my name, unless they are revoked by me or by my authority, and how can I revoke an everlasting covenant; For I the Lord am everlasting and my everlasting covenants cannot be abrogated, nor done away with but they stand forever."

The hallmark of distinction between a prophet of Mormonism and all the rest of the world is a "Thus saith the Lord" revelation which marks the stamp of Divine approval on it. This is the distinction between false prophets and true prophets. Also, a true prophet will never call a "Thus saith the Lord" revelation from God a "concocted," "purported" or "spurious" revelation. Neither will he oppose it or its doctrines. As a matter of fact, the Prophet Joseph Smith warned members that the devil could be detected "by his contradicting a former revelation" from the Lord. (T.P.J.S., p. 215)

In summary, then, your "revelation" (a) contradicts a former revelation, (b) it has not been voted upon by the members of the Church, and (c) it is not to be found in the Archives of the Church or in any of the Church publications. How then can we have any assurance that it came from God?

6. Calling the house of Cain to receive the rights of the Priesthood makes a distinct change in our Articles of Faith. Since we no longer apparently believe in "...the literal gathering of Israel" and the "...restoration of the ten tribes," but now have included the "tribe" of Cain, I presume these articles will have to be re-written. The Lord declared that we "...are called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect..." (D. & C. 29:7). What has brought about this change that the call is being made to the *unelected*? Is there a justification and reason for this reversal in the articles of our faith?

7. According to the word of the Lord, the descendants of Cain received a dark skin, which was a distinguishing feature of those who would be "...cursed as pertaining to the Priesthood," and should not have the right of possessing the Priesthood. (Abraham 1:27) If those of that lineage are worthy to receive the Priesthood, why are they still cursed with a black skin? If God placed this mark upon that certain lineage for a particular reason, wouldn't He remove that mark when it was time for them to obtain the rights of the Priesthood? He has removed that stigma before (2 Nephi 30:6), and He can do this again if He chooses to bestow Priesthood upon them.

The skin of blackness was a curse given to the Negro race because of their disappointing weakness in the pre-existence; therefore, they forfeited the right to obtain the Priesthood in mortality. If they are still being born black, they must still be of that class to whom the curse was given in the pre-existence. How can there be any justification for giving the Priesthood to anyone who still has the mark of a curse from their pre-mortal life?

8. Do members of the Church now have any justifiable grounds for segregation of the races? Before this announcement came, members had the right of religious convictions for not intermarrying and inter-mixing races, but now there are no apparent grounds to prevent intermarriage. Any mention of discrimination by natural selection, or right of preference, can now bring trouble and lawsuits by any blacks who wish to use the law for their own personal wishes. What right are members left to claim segregation of their own race?

9. How long, and how many times, has the presidency of the Church appealed to the Lord for a change on this issue? The very fact that the Lord has warned us not to "ask for that which you ought not" (D. & C. 8:10) because "if ye ask anything that is not expedient for you, it shall turn unto your condemnation" (D. & C. 88:65), should be remembered. When Joseph Smith continually pleaded to the Lord for permission to give the 116 pages of the *Book of Mormon* manuscript to Martin Harris, the Lord finally consented. The Lord finally gave him permission, not because it was right but because of Joseph's persistence. I am wondering if such a situation has again occurred.

Also, the prophet Balaam, because of his persistence, chose a different path to follow from that which the Lord revealed to him. (See Numbers 22)

Fifteen years ago, Hugh B. Brown told the news media that the First Presidency was seeking for possible ways to change this ban to the Negroes and that *they were considering abandoning this doctrine in the Church*. The *New York Times* published the account in the following report:

Salt Lake City, June 3--The top leadership of the Mormon Church is seriously *considering the abandonment* of its historic policy of discrimination against Negroes. ***

One of the highest officers of the Church said today that the possibility of removing this religious disability against Negroes *has been under serious consideration*.

"We are in *the midst of a survey looking toward the possibility of admitting Negroes*," said Hugh B. Brown, one of the two counselors serving President David O. McKay in the First Presidency of the Mormon Church. ***

Mr. Brown, a 79-year-old former attorney, said he believed that if the change were made, it would be a doctrinal revision for Mormonism of a magnitude matching the abandonment of polygamy in 1890. (*New York Times*, June 7, 1963)

For the fifteen years since then, the Church has been the victim of lawsuits, Civil Rights protestors, unwarranted attacks by the news media, and a constant clamor from public opinion for this change. Has a constant and repetitious appeal to the Lord brought about this reversal, just as it was granted to Joseph Smith?

10. Why have written revelations and spiritual gifts declined so much over the past 80 or 90 years? The last written revelation that carried a "Thus saith the Lord" was recorded in 1889 which stated in part:

Thus saith the Lord...Let not my servants who are called to the Presidency of my Church deny my word or my law, which concerns the salvation of the children of men.... Place not yourselves in jeopardy to your enemies by promise.

Fear not the wicked and ungodly.

Search the scriptures, for they are they which testify of me; also those revelations which I have given to my servant Joseph, and to all my servants since the world began, which are recorded in the record of divine truth.

The eyes of the Lord and the Heavenly Hosts are watching over you and your acts. Therefore, be faithful until I come.

The Manifesto, which was issued a few months later, was of course a denial of His word, and it placed members of the Church into jeopardy by promise with their enemies. This was the last time the Church as a body has heard a "Thus saith the Lord" revelation.

Your "revelation" is another promise to the demands of our enemies and a denial of God's word on the subject of Priesthood. Can these be the reasons that spiritual gifts, and the written revelations of God, have discontinued in the Church?

* * * * *

All of this brings me to the sobering thought that this "revelation" which you claim may not be from the Lord! In fact, all of the evidence so far leads to this conclusion. If your "revelation" is not from God, or even if your "revelation" is premature, the consequences could be catastrophic!

President Brigham Young said:

Let this Church which is called the Kingdom of God on the earth; we will summons the First Presidency, the Twelve, the High Council, the Bishopric, and all the Elders of Israel, suppose we summons them and appear here, and here declare that it is right to mingle our seed with the black race of Cain, that they shall come in with us and be partakers with us of all the blessings God has given to us. *On that very day and hour we should do so, the Priesthood is taken from this Church and Kingdom and God leaves us to our fate. The moment we consent to mingle with the seed of Cain, the Church must go to destruction--we should receive the curse which has been placed upon the seed of Cain, and never more be numbered with the children of Adam who are heirs to the Priesthood until that curse be removed.* (Speech by Governor Brigham Young in Joint Session of the Legislature, giving his views on slavery, February 5, 1852.)

According to this, then, every man in the Church who tries to give the Priesthood to the Negro, or sanctions giving it to them, must, of course, lose his own Priesthood. In such a condition, "it signifies then, that the ordinances must be kept in the very way God has appointed; otherwise, their Priesthood will prove a cursing instead of a blessing." (T.P.J.S., p. 169)

All of the descendants of those who mix their seed with the Canaanites will be deprived of the Priesthood, for "any man having one drop of the seed of Cain in him cannot receive the Priesthood.... (Wilford Woodruff, p. 351)

All those of the black race who think they possess the Priesthood will learn that they have been deceived by the present leaders of the Church.

All of the black people, and those who have ordained them, who give ordinations and perform ordinances will learn that they were of no avail. All their administrations will be vain. "The gifts of God are all useful in their place, but when they are applied to that which God does not intend, they prove an injury, a snare and a curse instead of a blessing." (T.P.J.S., p. 248)

All those who have put their trust in your arm will learn that they have been deceived and cursed. (D. & C. 1:19; 2 Nephi 4:34; Jer. 17:5)

All those who seek to exalt the Negro will only bring themselves down to their station and lose the "rights of the Priesthood" until the Negro does receive it.

All those who believe that you received a true revelation and later learn that it was not true, would say that you were guilty of "blasphemy" and that you were a false prophet because you produced a revelation that was not of God. The law of God declares such to be guilty of death. (See Deut. 13:1-5)

All of the temples would become corrupted by those who enter without the Priesthood. Their ordinances and offerings would no longer be acceptable to the Lord, as in the case of Cain.

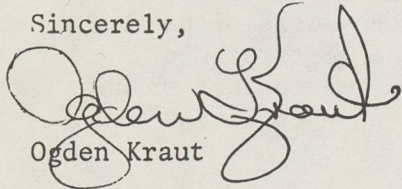
In such a condition the Lord would someday be forced to return and "set His house in order" and remove the Canaanite from His temples, as foretold in the scriptures: "...and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts." (Zach. 14:21)

If your "revelation" is not from the Lord, then you must someday answer to your forefathers who were before you. Your grandfather, Heber C. Kimball, like other great men, "...are not far from us, and know and understand our thoughts, feelings, and motions, and are often pained therewith. (T.P.J.S., p. 326) From Heber C. Kimball to Father Abraham you will have to answer for letting the Canaanites into the House of the Lord and defiling His temples. You will have to explain why you allowed the Negro into the temples, but have excommunicated men and women who have believed and lived the principles that your forefathers had taught as being the fulness of the gospel. To more than four million members you will have to answer for a curse upon the House of Israel.

The consequences and results of your "revelation" could prove to be the forfeiture of celestial blessings from which sorrow and regret may never be overcome through all the eternities.

Because these Priesthood matters are of such vital importance, I have been prompted to write this letter. I would very much appreciate your interest and concern to such an extent that you would respond to these questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ogden Kraut". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Ogden Kraut

cc: Members of the First Presidency
and Quorum of the Twelve