



*President Kimball
and Elder Hunter
in 1978*

back. It was nearly dark when we returned, and we couldn't get in because the key was locked inside. Spencer drove to a telephone and learned where we could get another key." Later, back in the cabin, "We spent a pleasant evening around the table singing songs, accompanied by Spencer on the harpsichord, and hearing about the Kimballs' recent tour of the missions in South America."

"Therefore, Brethren, . . . Be of One Mind"

IN HIS SECOND epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul concludes, "Therefore, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." (2 Corinthians 13:11.) These words, written nearly two millennia ago, aptly describe the leaders of the Church in this dispensation.

Perhaps no greater examples of the unanimity and unity of the Brethren in the latter days can be found than at the time when the Brethren unitedly confirmed the 1978 revelation that "all worthy male members of the Church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard for race or color," and the times when one prophet is called home and another one is set apart to carry on as the Lord's mouthpiece on earth.

Prior to the day the revelation was received, President Kimball talked at length, over a period of several months, with the members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve as a group and individually. Elder Hunter noted in his journal one such occasion when the prophet invited him to his office and they discussed the subject for about an hour. "I could feel his deep concern and his desire to follow strictly the will of the Lord," he said.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote concerning the meeting at which the brethren all "heard the same voice and received the same message from on high":

"It was on a glorious June day in 1978. All of us were together in an upper room in the Salt Lake Temple. We were engaged in fervent prayer, pleading with the Lord to manifest his mind and will concerning those who are entitled to receive his holy priesthood. President Kimball himself was mouth, offering the desires of his heart and of our hearts to that God whose servants we are.

"In his prayer President Kimball asked that all of us might be cleansed and made free from sin so that we might receive the Lord's word. He counseled freely and fully with the Lord, was given utterance by the power of the Spirit, and what he said was inspired from on high. It was one of those rare and seldom-experienced times when the disciples of the Lord are perfectly united, when every heart beats as one, and when the same Spirit burns in every bosom."³

"Following the prayer," Elder Hunter wrote, "there were many expressions of love and appreciation among the brethren. Comments were made about the feeling shared by



Members of the Twelve help their quorum president, Ezra Taft Benson, celebrate his eightieth birthday on August 4, 1979. From left, David B. Haight, L. Tom Perry, Bruce R. McConkie, Marvin J. Ashton, Ezra Taft Benson, LeGrand Richards, Mark E. Petersen, Thomas S. Monson, Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, James E. Faust

all, that seldom, if ever, had there been greater unanimity in the council."

After the written copy of the revelation was read to the brethren the following week, Elder Hunter wrote that "there were expressions from several of the brethren about the powerful witness of the Spirit last Thursday, and how this confirmed the divine origin of the revelation." The next day—Friday, June 9, 1978—the document was read to all of the General Authorities at an early-morning fast meeting, "a highly spiritual meeting with much emotion and some tears, and the brethren expressed love for all of God's children and bore testimony that President Kimball is a Prophet of God. This is a meeting we will never forget."

Within hours the word had spread through the media to the world, and Saints everywhere felt many of the same emotions and joy as those who had participated in this glorious manifestation.

Some of the most spiritually affirming experiences Elder Hunter and his brethren in the Twelve have shared have come

at times of sorrow when a beloved prophet has passed away and one of their number is set apart and sustained as the new president, prophet, seer, and revelator.

The passing of President David O. McKay in January 1970 had not been totally unexpected, since he had been in failing health for several years and his decline had been gradual. (See chapter 10.) However, news of the deaths of the next two prophets came suddenly, without warning.

On Sunday, July 2, 1972, Elder Hunter wrote that since he had no stake conference assignments, he spent his free time working on his genealogy. Shortly before ten o'clock that evening, a Church spokesman called to tell him that President Joseph Fielding Smith had passed away at nine-thirty. "This was shocking news because he has not been ill," Elder Hunter wrote. Then, after describing what he had been told about President Smith's final few hours, he concluded, "I have often wondered about the condition of persons who are translated, and tonight I have had the feeling that this was the course the President has followed from mortality to immortality without tasting of death."

President Smith had been Elder Hunter's file leader in the Twelve for ten years and then president of the Church for two and a half years. "My life has been enriched by this close association," Elder Hunter wrote. "I am grateful."

The apostles met in the temple the day after the funeral, and Harold B. Lee, as senior apostle, was sustained by his brethren as president of the Church, with Nathan Eldon Tanner and Marion G. Romney as counselors in the First Presidency. After these brethren were ordained and set apart, Elder Hunter wrote, "the Spirit . . . bore witness to each of us that what was done was the will of the Lord."

Only eighteen months later he again witnessed the transfer of the presidency, after the unexpected death of President Lee. When they received the news on Wednesday evening, December 26, 1973, the Hunters were spending the Christmas holidays with their family at John's home in Ojai, California.

HOWARD W. HUNTER

ELEANOR KNOWLES

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