



A LETTER OF INSTRUCTION

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In presenting the following letter of instruction, to the readers of the Herald, I have deemed it advisable to do so by a series of questions,

having in consideration the subject matter of the position, privilege, and duty of the Quorum of the First Presidency in its several parts contingent upon the death or deposition for cause of the President of the church, denominated in the law as the president of the high priesthood. In answering the several questions the following premises

should be remembered and observed.

First. Priesthood, delegated authority, is conferred for the expressed purpose of accomplishing, by human means, the work of the divine mind, for the benefit of mankind.

Second. Office in the priesthood is intended to designate the general and specific work that the individual called, chosen, and ordained to the office is to do.

Third. Office in the priesthood is not conferred to increase the importance of the individual or as a means to

self-aggrandizement or personal emolument.

Fourth. All offices in the priesthood are equal in honor before God, the honor of each as to the individual holder resulting from the manner in which the duties of the office are performed.

This is evident from a consideration of the statement made by the Apostle Paul, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called....That no flesh should glory in his presence."--1 Corinthians 1:26, 29.

Fifth. It is equally essential to remember, that in using the terms, "called," "appointed," "chosen," and "ordained," referring to any person, chosen and ordained by the body to any office in the priesthood, the worthiness, fitness, and qualifications to act in such office should be understood and conceded

without a constant repetition of these terms.

Sixth. It is the axiom of the church, that persons ordained to office in the church are so ordained because they are called of God by revelation.

This follows the injunction of Paul to the Hebrew brethren, "And no man

taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God."--Hebrews 5:4

1. In the case of the death of a president of the church, or his removal from office for cause, what would be the position of his counselors?

To reply to this question intelligently it is necessary to ascertain to what office they have been called and ordained. Section 104, paragraph 11, reads thus: "Of the Melchisedec priesthood, three presiding high priests, chosen by the body, appointed and ordained to that office, and upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the church, form

a quorum of the presidency of the church." In section 17, paragraph 1, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were called and ordained apostles. In section 87, paragraph 3, it is stated that Sidney Rigdon and Oliver Cowdery were equal to the president in "holding the keys of this last kingdom."

By provision in section 99, paragraph 6, the three high priests who were chosen as the Presidency of the Church are rated as equal in authority to preside over the high council. In section 68, paragraph 2, these three presiding high priests are distinctly authorized to officiate in the ordination of those who are called and appointed to act as

bishops in the church, either of the order of Aaron or by virtue of holding the office of high priest.

In the church articles of incorporation, Article 1, in the government of the church, there is provision made that the church should be presided over by a First Presidency, consisting of a president

and two counselors. We have already seen how these counselors are chosen.

From what is given from the authorities cited above, it is clear that in authorizing the organization of the church, the Lord provided an ample safeguard against imposition upon the people from the improper

aspiration of any of the leading authorities of the church, by establishing three quorums as checks and counter checks upon each other, the three being equal in authority in matters of importance, neither one of the three being paramount to overriding the authority of the other two. It is therefore reasonable to suppose, that in case

of a vacancy occurring in either of the quorums, unless such vacancy was of such a character as to reduce the membership of the quorum below the permissible majority provided for in section 104, where it would be impossible to secure an undivided quorum, such quorum in which the vacancy occurred would still hold its unity of power, a majority

existing, providing there was a unity in the remaining members of the quorum. Or in other words, that a quorum broken by death or by deposition, providing a majority still remained, would hold its quorum authority intact, and could not be deprived of its quorum authority and privileges unless it should be overruled by a unanimous decision

of the other two quorums. It would not therefore be reasonable to suppose that the Quorum of the First Presidency would be so completely broken by the death or removal from office for cause of the president of the high priesthood that such quorum would cease to exist, as a quorum, or its duties to the body as a quorum cease upon the death or

removal of the president. The provision is an ample and wise one, as anyone can see by examining the proposition devoid of prejudice, the result of wrongdoing in the past.

It would then seem clear that the members of the First Presidency who would survive the death of the president would still hold the office of

presiding high priests over the high priesthood and be authorized to act in such duties of the presidency in a similar manner that they may do during the life of the president, restricted only by the exceptions found in the law, the most important of these perhaps being the restriction as to the right of receiving revelations and presenting them to

the church for the government and guidance thereof. It would further seem reasonable that as these officers were high priests those whose priesthood warrants the belief that they might receive revelations from God, it would not be impossible that the Lord might speak through one of those who remained in the quorum after the death of the

principal, or his removal from office for cause, as it is the privilege of the Lord to speak through whom he will. There could be no danger of the church being misled by such revelations, these revelations being subjected to the same scrutiny by the quorums as those given by the president himself.

2. When would their term of authority cease and what would be the extent of their duty pending the appointment of a successor?

Their office as counselors merely would cease at the death of the president, for obvious reasons; but their office as members of the First Presidency to which they had been ordained after being called and

chosen would not pass until a successor to the deceased or deposed president was chosen, upon which choice properly made by the body a reorganization of the Quorum of the Presidency would be requisite, their office passing at their report and laying down their office, awaiting the action of the body.

3. Would their right to act as presidents cease at once upon the death of the president or would they be authorized to continue to act as presidents until a successor was chosen?

Being chosen and ordained as presidents of the high priesthood forming a quorum, and not as

counselors only, they would be authorized to continue to perform the perfunctory duties of presidents until a successor was chosen or other provision made for an acting presidency.

This is agreeable with section 107, paragraph 39: "I give unto him for counselors my servant Sidney

Rigdon and my servant William Law, that these may constitute a quorum and first presidency, to receive the oracles for the whole church." This shows clearly that the intention of the Great Organizer was to create a quorum, and not simply to institute two men as counselors with no responsibility attaching to them, in case of the absence by death or

deposition of the president. It would seem that divine wisdom would not so loosely form a three-fold cord, like that made by the three quorums, the Presidency, Twelve, and Seventy, that one of them would cease to exist, if one of its members was to be removed, leaving the other two intact to perform quorum duties. It is safe to assume that when these

three forming the Presidency were appointed by revelation, and chosen and ordained "as three presiding high priests," they would be qualified to perform the necessary duties attaching to their office as members of a quorum, with equal authority under the law.

4. Should they report the death of their principal officially to the Quorum of Twelve through the presiding officer of that quorum?

Yes. They should not only report to the Quorum of Twelve, but also report to the Quorum of Seventy, through its president, these quorums holding concurrent jurisdiction in

matters of decision. This they should do, not only as a matter of courtesy but as a matter of right.

5. Or should they report to the next ensuing session of the Annual Conference and continue to act as presidents until such conference convenes and their report be made?

They should report to the next ensuing conference and should continue to act in their office as presidents of the high priesthood, until the successor of the deceased president should be chosen, and the First Presidency as a quorum reorganized. They should consult with the presiding officers of the two quorums, Twelve and Seventy, and

if upon such consultation it would be deemed advisable to call a special session of conference, they should make report to such special conference, in conjunction with the officers of the quorums referred to.

6. Would either of them be eligible to be chosen as president to succeed their principal by virtue of their

holding the office of the high priesthood to which they had been ordained as counselors?

Yes. The same as they were eligible to be chosen as members of the First Presidency when such presidency was formed by their accession to it.

7. If the death of the president should be reported by these counselors to the Twelve, would it be the duty of that quorum to at once assume the care and direction of the affairs of the church?

The Quorum of Twelve would not be authorized to traverse outside of their duties as "a traveling, presiding

high council," and take absolute direction and control of church affairs, if the remaining members of the Presidency were in agreement and showed no disposition to assume arbitrary control, without proper recognition being given to the two other quorums holding concurrent jurisdiction in matters of decision. Should there be disunity

among the remaining members of the Quorum of the Presidency, and confusion and strife as to authority arise between the counselors, the Quorum of Twelve should then be recognized as authorized to secure a proper unity of action in the church in connection with the Quorum of Seventy, holding equal authority in matters of decision. It is not in

accordance with sound reason, that either quorum would have the right of absolute dictation over the authority and jurisdiction of the other two ruling quorums, these all three having been made equal by organic law. The assumption of arbitrary power and control by either one of these three bodies, declared in the organic law to be equal, would give

rise to opposition and active protest, and confusion would inevitably result.

8. Or should they await the sitting of the next ensuing Annual Conference to which report should be made by the counselors and then assume the direction of affairs and proceed to secure nomination and election of a

president to fill the vacancy created by death or removal from office for cause?

They should await the action of the ensuing Annual Conference unless by agreement referred to above an earlier conference is called, at which report of the death of the president should be officially made, when their

right to assume temporary control should be accorded them through their presiding officer, subject to voice and vote in the usual form of opening conference.

9. What should be the course of procedure in securing such choosing and sustaining of one to fill such vacancy?

Conference should be opened in the usual manner by choosing a president pro tempore and the necessary secretary, by nomination and vote, whereupon the report of the remaining members of the Quorum of the Presidency should be presented by them, and the conference proceed to act upon said

report, or to set an hour on that or a succeeding day, at which the report would be taken up and acted upon. The setting of an hour, as suggested, would give time for the appointment of credentials committee and the hearing of their report, that the conference might be fully prepared to vote viva voce or by a yea and nay call of delegates.

There would be no need for friction, if there was a disposition upon the part of all to grant the courtesy and rights to others that they would make demand for themselves, in the spiritual understanding that it is not for the purpose of self-aggrandizement or self-laudation that they are met, but to do business

which will conserve the safe interests of the entire body.

10. Should the Quorum of Twelve by one or more of their number by virtue of their office preside at the conference next ensuing after vacancy in the Quorum of the First Presidency occurred?

No person has the right, either in custom or law, to demand the prerogative and rule of authority to preside over the conference of the church when met for business, at a stated period, and arbitrarily assume control without the choice of the assembly obtained by nomination and vote.

11. Or would it be legal or expedient for the conference to choose some one to act pro tempore by usual nomination and vote?

It would be lawful for the conference to choose by nomination and vote any qualified person, holding the Melchisedec priesthood to preside pro tempore, but Paul's adage, that

"all things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient," would be in force in such instance, and the wiser and safer course would be that the president of the Quorum of Twelve or some one of the quorum, or other, whom he might suggest should be chosen to preside until the First Presidency as a quorum was reconstructed.

12. Could one of the counselors be so chosen by nomination and vote and preside until the vacancy referred to was filled?

Yes. The rule of expediency suggested in the answer to the preceding question would be of force and value in this issue. The

remaining members of the Quorum of the First Presidency would be persons directly in interest in the pending business of choosing a successor to the removed president, and the same propriety that causes a presiding officer to vacate the chair when matters in which he is in interest are being considered would suggest that neither of these

counselors would desire to preside, under the circumstances governing in the case. If adverse criticism or opposition be made touching the work of these counselors during the interim between the death of the president and the convening of the conference, they should be left free from presiding responsibility, to meet such conditions free from other

responsibility. It would seem safe to infer under such conditions that the counselors would decline to accept the duty of presiding, while the matter of succession was being considered. Not until the Quorum of the Presidency is reconstructed would the position of these remaining members be definitely ascertained, as they may or may not

be chosen to succeed themselves, and the will of the body may otherwise dispose of them, as to their office.

13. Would it be considered imperative that such vacancy in the Presidency should be filled at the next ensuing conference after such vacancy has occurred?

It would not be imperative, but the rule of expediency would require that if such vacancy could be filled, in the spirit of peace and good-will, it should be done. It would be advisable that the church should know as soon as practicable who should assume definite control of the affairs of the church, for if there

should be friction, by reason of contention between individuals as to rights and prerogatives an interim without the choice being made would only serve to sow distrust and disaffection in a wider field. In this as in many other things, precaution is the parent of safety. It is safe to presume, that under the ordinary circumstances of church work the

conference assembly would be as prepared to act at such ensuing session as they would be at any succeeding period of time, and the risk of unavoidable difficulties occurring would not be incurred.

14. If not, would the Quorum of Twelve in their organized capacity direct and administer in the care of

the church until such time as a successor was chosen?

The office of the counselors as members of the Quorum of the Presidency not expiring until the quorum is reconstructed, they would continue to act as stated in answer to question two, and the Quorum of Twelve justly could not take arbitrary

control of the affairs of the church outside of their office work as a traveling high council, except upon agreement between the three quorums involved, accepted, and acquiesced in by the voice of the conference. If such agreement was reached and the Quorum of Twelve so installed the counselors would at once cease to act, leaving the

quorum vacated, as if their office as counselors expired at the death of the president, they could not hold office as counselors to either a president pro tempore or to the Quorum of Twelve. If they did not exist as a majority of the Quorum of the Presidency, their identity as active officers would be lost to the church, except they should act by

sufferance or by courtesy. Strenuous contention as to the rights and prerogatives would be out of place and incongruous under such conditions, and the church has a right to expect that such will not occur.

15. Do the words, "Your priesthood hath remained with Christ in God,"

as given in section 84, paragraph 3, given to the elders of the church by revelation, taken with other passages of scripture and the revelations found in the Book of Covenants, justify the belief in the right of the sons of those acting in the offices in the priesthood to succeed their fathers who have been

or are acting in offices of the
priesthood?

The clear understanding of this passage is that the priesthood had remained latent, "hid with God in Christ," but the office in such priesthood depends upon the manner of call by revelation, choice, and ordination. Call, choice, and

ordination presume worthiness, fitness, and qualification.

16. Does the law of primogeniture inure to the first born?

Yes. The church, however, is dealing with living entities and the eldest living son is, so far as church work is

concerned, to be considered eligible as the first born.

17. Are such first-born sons eligible to be chosen to succeed their fathers, other qualifications of fitness to act in the office being equal and satisfactory to the church?

Yes, without question.

18. Do the terms occurring in section 104, paragraph 18, wherein the office of patriarch is mentioned, refer to the priesthood as other officers including in the priesthood called Melchisedec, the words being, "This priesthood descends from father to son"?

The words, "this priesthood," occurring in the section referred to, apply to the Melchisedec priesthood and not to any office in the priesthood. The patriarch is an office or an order in the priesthood. There is a division of labor under different offices in the priesthood, but no division in the priesthood is created when a person is ordained to an

office. One of the earliest teachings of the church, and most substantial, is that there are but two priesthoods. The multiplication of the offices could not create an additional priesthood.

19. Is this priesthood referred to in this paragraph the same as that which appears in the third paragraph of section 104 wherein the provision

for the choosing of a president of the high priesthood is given?

Yes. The quotation referred to makes it clear and decisive that the priesthood from which the presiding officers are to be chosen in the Melchisedec priesthood, and not from any specific quorum or office in the priesthood.

20. Is there just reason for believing that the words designating the class and number of such class of officers, refer to and include only the members of the apostolic quorum?

The value of this question will be seen when it occurs to the reader that there is an organized boy

professing belief in the priesthood as given by revelation to the church, who construe the language occurring in paragraph 11, of section 104, designating the class of officers from among whom the three presiding high priests, constituting the Quorum of the First Presidency are to be chosen as applying to the apostolic quorum only, assuming that the

words "three presiding high priests" mean only those who have already been chosen and ordained as such presiding high priests. Acting upon this interpretation of the language, they have assumed the right to confine the choice and ordination to the Presidency to those who have previously been ordained apostles of the Quorum of Twelve.

The term "three presiding high priests" who were to constitute the Quorum of the First Presidency applies to the three chosen and ordained after such ordination has taken place to the office of three presiding high priests over the Melchisedec priesthood, and by no means indicates that the

appointment by revelation from God, and the choice and ordination by the church are to be confined to the apostolic quorum only.

21. Or is the number there referred to inclusive of all the members holding and occupying in offices of the high priesthood?

The choice by revelation is at the disposition of the Lord. He has the right to designate whom he may choose; but when the matter is left to the action of the body, those holding the high priesthood, known as Melchisedec, whether members of any quorum or not, would be eligible.

22. Do the revelations given in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants justify the belief that a son of a president of the church, duly called by revelation and ordained and sustained by the church, is eligible to succeed his father as president, other qualifications of fitness being equal, with other members of the high priesthood. Do such revelations

justify a belief that such a son should be chosen to succeed his father as president?

Following the legendary teaching of the eldership and the precedent established in the reorganizing of the church, based upon the revelations which were accepted and on record at the death of Joseph and Hyrum

Smith, the eldest living son of a president of the high priesthood acting as president of the church would be eligible under the considerations named in the question.

Unless such action was contravened by revelation directing otherwise, such son should be chosen. This

would be in harmony and consistent with the precedents of history and the legendary teaching referred to.

23. Do the revelations point out with sufficient clearness that such a son is appointed by revelation as the proper one to be chosen and sustained as successor to his father, his father having died in office while

being sustained by the faith,
confidence, and prayers of the
church?

Yes, unless such action upon the
part of the church is prevented by
revelation directing otherwise.

24. Or do such revelations require
that such a person to succeed

should be appointed or named by the incumbent prior to his death in order to justify the church in making such person their choice of successor?

In the absence of direct revelation otherwise the church would be justified in choosing and ordaining such a person to succeed a

president removed by death under conditions named in the question.

25. Would the church be justified in choosing and electing such a person under the direction of present and existing revelations or does the spirit of revelation and wisdom in the various quorums and members of the priesthood sufficiently point out

or designate such person as should be chosen to fill the vacancy in the Presidency caused by death, without such previous designation being so made by the existing incumbent in the office of president?

In the view of the subject thus presented, as shown by the precedent, established in the

choosing of a president of the church in 1860, it would appear clear that the church would be so justified; for the reason that the spirit of revelation and wisdom as manifested to the one chosen in 1860 and to the members and officers of the church then in partial organization, there was sufficient coherence as to justify the action of

the church upon that occasion. There is now, as there was then, evidence of a supervising Spirit working upon the different members of quorums and workers in the church, pointing to such a consummation, should the occasion arise demanding action upon the part of the church.

26 and 27. By whom should the nomination for the choosing (and electing) of a successor to fill the vacancy in the Presidency by death at the conference meeting to choose such successor be made? Would such nomination be confined to the Quorum of Twelve in their capacity as a quorum under the provision of the law which says, "they shall

regulate and set in order," etc., as found in section 104, on priesthood?

When the conference has assembled and has been duly called to order, and the business properly stated, the common rule would permit any member of the assembly entitled to voice and vote to make such nomination; but a custom of

courtesy having been established in the church, a priority of privilege should be cheerfully accorded to the one holding highest office by ordination; and if there should be two or more holding office alike in this regard, seniority in point of age should be considered, and by common consent he be privileged to make such nomination. If, however,

the question should have been considered in quorum capacity by the leading quorums of the church and an agreement reached by such quorums as to the person to be nominated, it would be proper for such nomination to be presented by the Quorum of Twelve by the president of that quorum, by consent of the quorum or by some person to

be named by them, either from among their own number or one from either of the quorums holding the Melchisedec priesthood.

This course of procedure in nominating would prevent any disturbing question of right or priority from occurring, the end to be reached being the good of all and

not the gratification of any personal self-interest.

28. Is there just reason to believe that a successor to the present incumbent of the office of president of the high priesthood is sufficiently clearly designated to warrant the church in making a choice in case of the death of such incumbent?

The right to give revelation belongs to God. Necessarily the giving or withholding of revelation is determined by his wisdom, and is not governed by the desires of those who believe in revelation, nor by the necessities and exigencies of the church judged only by the wisdom of men. Hence, in the light of what has

been stated, in answering the questions going before there is just reason to believe, that if no further revelation should be accorded the church, more specifically directing who should be chosen to succeed, in case of the removal of the present incumbent by death, the church would be justified in proceeding to make such choice upon what has

already been vouchsafed, bearing upon the subject.

It must be taken for granted that He who has watched over the church since its establishment in the days of Adam and of Enoch up to the present must be accredited with the all-pervading wisdom that provides for every exigency through which the

church may be called to pass. It is upon this fact that the confidence of the church must rest, to the effect that apparent direction for the accomplishment of certain designs has been given, and further and more definite direction does not follow the church is justified in pursuing that course which is to it justified by the spirit of wisdom and

revelation resting with it in its various quorums and organizations, for the various works of the church. As we are distinctly told, that "our ways are not like his ways, our thoughts are not like his thoughts," the church is justified in doing that which is necessary to be done, by the wisdom that may be given it at the time such work is to be done, if no

specific direction is given how such work shall be performed, and there is abundant evidence to justify the belief, that if the church will pursue such principle the Lord will not permit the work intrusted to their care to suffer from failure upon his part to give such specific direction, much as his people may have desired it should have been given.

One of the reasons why it is difficult to answer the foregoing questions, with apparent satisfaction to all, is that the only precedents established by the church are those incident to the choice and installation of Joseph Smith, jr., the first president, and the choosing and ordination of his successor in 1860, so far as the

choice of the president direct is concerned.

The choosing and appointing of a presiding officer by those engaged in the Reorganization can scarcely be regarded as a precedent, except so far as a recognition of the rightful successor, by the choosing of one to represent him, and the many

spiritual manifestations connected with the choosing of such a representative and his associate officers of the church.

It will be remembered by those conversant with the action taken by the Reorganization, and those who have read the history of those events, that the spirit of prophecy

accompanied the various efforts of those who had held the priesthood through ordination and administration of the martyred president and patriarch, and foreshadowed each successive movement. In answer to prayer those men were, by revelation, directed to the Book of Doctrine and Covenants as containing the rules of

law in the observance of which the foundation and superstructure of complete reorganization could be safely accomplished. The effect of this recognition of the revelations given during the formative period of the church and that which was done under the observance of the instructions therein given, practically reduced the interregnum which it is

charged interrupted the onward sweep of the church in its office work, from the sixteen years elapsing between 1844 and 1860, to the eight years elapsing between 1844 and 1852; eight years instead of sixteen.

It is a fortunate circumstance that the conference of 1852 was held fully

two months before the promulgation of the so-called revelation on plural marriage, and the action taken at that time shows beyond successful dispute, that the supervising spirit of the work had wisely forestalled the spirit of the adversary which sought to destroy surely the spiritual building of the church organized in 1830. Each successive step

following that conference up to the April conference of 1860 strongly confirms the line of instructions given in answers to the questions above stated.

The church is not at liberty to accept or to follow the precedent supposedly established by the action of the Quorum of Twelve in the fall of

1844, in the Twelve taking absolute charge of the administration of the affairs of the church which culminated in 1847 in the installing of a Presidency by taking three from the then nine adhering members of the Twelve existing at the death of the Prophet, and installing them in the Presidency of the church with Brigham Young as their chief, which

action was followed by public proclamation of the plural marriage dogma with its concomitant corruptions of the doctrines of the church, through the revelation and the restoration of the gospel.

This precedent and those established by James J. Strang, Lyman Wight, William Smith, and others, are of no value in directing

the action of the church, other than they serve as warnings against deviating from the letter and the spirit of what had been given to the church prior to the death of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. They are but precedents showing what the church may do in safety.

In the organic law given in section 104 it is clearly pointed out that the Lord intended to provide a sufficient safeguard against a possible contingency in which there might be an effort made by one or more ambitious men, more mindful of self-exaltation and aggrandizement than for the good of a spiritual people, to so far obtain control in authority that

mischievous and pernicious theories and doctrines, in either faith or organization, by which the symmetry of the whole might be virtually destroyed. This was done by authorizing the establishing of three quorums holding equal authority in matters of extreme decision, forming a three-fold cord in spiritual affairs and in fact that could not easily be

broken. The same organic law provides rules by which when these quorums are once established, they may be kept intact in so far that no one of them may under ordinary circumstances become so disorganized as to prevent its working in connection with each of the others in harmony for the good of all. This provision is found in the

direction that a majority may perform service if it is impossible that the entire body of either quorum be present; or in other words, that if it should be impossible that the whole of each be available for the important service.

This view is held to be applicable to the Twelve and Seventy by some,

who in the absence of specific instructions in the law assume what may be called a logical or constructive interpretation of various provisions of the law. There is no reason in law or logic nor the common renditions of prudence and wisdom why the same principle of completeness in majority should not apply to the leading quorum known

as the Presidency as well as to those of the Twelve and Seventy. The ordination of those chosen as presidents of the high priesthood, constitute the three thus ordained as a quorum. Citations from the law are given in two or three answers to questions in the foregoing list which clearly and definitely determine this point.

That one of these three high priests thus chosen to constitute a quorum should hold the office of president of the high priesthood with the prerogatives of receiving revelations for the government and guidance of the church when conditions require that such direction and guidance are necessary, and are asked for, as

well as to be in place for the discharge of such duty if the wisdom and will of the supreme Lawgiver has such wisdom and guidance to give to the church, does not so far impair the apparent intention of making three quorums equal as to destroy the completeness of such quorum, if that individual be taken from the quorum, by either death or

transgression, providing that the remaining members are a unit in belief and decision. To assume that the two other than the principal are but counselors to the one, and that upon his death or deposition the Quorum of the Presidency is hopelessly and helplessly broken as one unit of the three equal quorums, and that the functions of their office

were only advisory as counselors, and so ceased at the death of the principal, thus ending their responsibility and authority, is to strike at the symmetry of the whole structure and leave an unfortunate weak spot which evidently was not intended to exist by the great Masterbuilder.

But there is another provision of the law to which attention is called, that should the emergency arise by the death or defection of the incumbent of the Presidency and the death or deposition of one of the remaining members of the Quorum of the Presidency, leaving but one in minority, that it would be well for the church to remember and bring into

operation, if serious necessity should occur. It is distinctly stated in the law that the high council, presumably the standing high council of the church in Zion, is in equality in its decision with that of the Quorum of the Presidency or that of the Twelve, supplying the third member of the three-fold principle in spiritual control, if either of the quorums of

the established order might be lost to the economy of the church by death or defection of either one of the important component parts of the three-fold cord, constituted by the unity of the Presidency, Twelve, and Seventy. (See section 104.)

By accepting the fact that those composing the Quorum of the

Presidency are ordained unto the equal functions of authority as a quorum, with the exception of specific duty imposed upon the president, the quorum is not in danger of dissolution by the death of either of its component parts; but will continue its work as a quorum so long as a majority of the quorum remains intact, and may carry on the

work unto which they were ordained as presidents of the high priesthood until the quorum shall again be reconstructed and full membership established. By accepting this view there is authority for the continuation of the quorums acting together in unity, or if divergence of opinion occurs an equilibrium in the principles of action between either

two of the quorums is preserved,
and the work go on smoothly.

By assuming that two of those
ordained to the office of president of
the high priesthood are but
counselors to the one, and that at
the death of the one the office and
authority of the counselors cease,
the equilibrium is destroyed. If they

were counselors only, and not entitled to act in any other role or capacity, they being counselors only to the president removed by death or deposition, they cannot as such counselors act in association with either the Twelve or the Seventy or the High Council in Zion, they not having been ordained as counselors to such offices.

There is no rule of law or logic that warrants such a construction of church procedure, and it would performe be a singular stretch of courtesy that would continue them as counselors to living authorities when their office as counselors had passed by reason of the death of their principal. As such counselors

they could not demand that the president of the Twelve or the seven presidents of the Seventy should accept their offices as counselors, nor could these authorities demand their presence and assistance upon the supposition that their ordination to their dead principal had given them warrant for such demand.

As members of the Quorum of the Presidency continuing in the discharge of the duties as presidents of the high priesthood, according to the terms of their ordination to such office until such time as the office made vacant by the death or defection of the president of the church is again filled by revelation, choice, and ordination, and

themselves or others chosen as associate presidents of the high priesthood, there need be neither difficulty nor danger of a lapse of unity or a fear of conflict of authority. There is danger if other course of action is taken. Observing the premises laid down at the beginning of this letter of instruction, there need be no hesitancy in accepting

the views expressed in these answers and adopting the course therein set forth.

Assuming the right seemingly conferred in the revelations contained in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants and conforming to the safer principles enunciated in the legendary teaching of the eldership,

I, Joseph Smith, the present incumbent of the office of president of the Reorganized Church, definitely designate my eldest living son, Frederick Madison Smith, as the proper person to be chosen by the church as my successor in office, believing as I do that the Spirit of revelation and wisdom has manifested to me that such choice

should be made as directed by the Spirit of the great Master builder. The present incumbent of the office of president of the Reorganized Church states further that he has trust and confidence in that Spirit which called him to the position which he has held for the last half century of time, and more, that such manifestation will be given to the

several eldership of the church as will confirm the advice and direction herein given.

He, therefore, submits this letter of instruction to the careful consideration of his associate officers and members of the church in the work intrusted to the care of

the Reorganized Church of Jesus
Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Joseph Smith III

Independence, Missouri, March 4,
1912