

CHURCH  
SECTION

# The Deseret News

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THE DESERET NEWS, SATURDAY, JUNE 17, 1933.

## AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT

— FROM THE —

*First Presidency*

— of —

*The Church of Jesus Christ*

— of —

*Latter-day Saints*



HE First Presidency have recently received letters making inquiry concerning the position of the Church regarding the contracting of polygamous or plural marriages.

It is evident from these letters, as well as from certain published material—some of it distributed during our last General Conference—that a secret and, according to reputation, an oath-bound organization of misguided individuals is seeking to lead the people to adopt adulterous relations under the guise of a pretended and false polygamous or plural marriage ceremony.

While the position of the Church since 1893 has been repeatedly set forth, namely, that polygamous or plural marriages are not and cannot now be performed, yet in order that there may be no excuse for any Church member to be misled by the false representations or the corrupt, adulterous practices of the members of this secret, and (by reputation) oath-bound organization (of which the history of the Nephites and Lamanites show so many counterparts), it is deemed wise again to set out the position of the Church on this matter, at the same time tracing the outlines of the historical facts lying behind the Church's position, of which many young Church members may not be fully aware.

#### The Church and Marriage

Marriage may be defined as the act, ceremony, or process by which a man and woman are legally recognized as husband and wife.

While it constitutes a contract in which the consent of the parties involved is necessary, the law, both canonical and civil, provides that certain specific requirements be complied with before it can be recognized as legal and binding upon the persons who enter into the marriage relation.

Marriage presupposes parenthood, and parenthood involves the responsibility of husband to wife, wife to husband, parents to children, and children to parents.

Marriage is fraught with greater possibilities for good or evil, happiness or despair, prosperity or penury, exaltation or condemnation, than any other relationship upon which a man or woman may embark.

When questioned by the Pharisees regarding the proper relationship of husband and wife, Jesus answered: "From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. . . . What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

#### The Duty of Parents to Their Children

The duty of parents to chil-

dren who are born to them in wedlock is definitely defined. Parents are under obligation most solemn to instruct, train, and provide for their children. If they are indifferent or negligent and the children become evil or wicked, the parents are held responsible.

Children are to honor their parents, obey them in righteousness, and comply with their just demands.

From the beginning civil laws have existed which have made it obligatory upon those who enter into the bonds of matrimony, to observe these sacred obligations of husband to wife, wife to husband, parents to children, and children to parents. The violation of these sacred obligations are made punishable offenses and compliance with them is obligatory.

At an early period in the history of the Church, nine months after its organization, speaking upon the subject of marriage, the Lord said: "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her, and none else. And he that looketh upon a woman to lust after her shall deny the faith, and shall not have the spirit; and if he repents not he shall be cast out."

The following appears in a revelation which was given a month after the one just quoted:

"And again I say unto you, that whoso forbiddeth to marry is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God, unto man. Wherefore it is lawful that he should have one wife, and they twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation; and that it might be filled with the measure of man, according to his creation before the world was made."

The quotations cited above are from Sections 42 and 49, Doctrine and Covenants, the former given February 9th, 1831, and the latter a month later.

Referring to the family relationship involved in matrimony, the Lord says:

"And again, verily I say unto you, that every man who is obliged to provide for his own family, let him provide, and he shall in no wise lose his crown." (Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 75:28.)

At this period in the history of the Church the doctrine of the eternity of the marriage covenant and plural marriage had not been revealed. It is obvious that the Church, at that time recognized the monogamic system of marriage which prevailed among Christian people of the world.

Twelve years after the foregoing revelations—that is, on July 12th, 1843—the revelation on the eternity of the marriage covenant, including plurality of wives, was announced, one year before the martyrdom of the Prophet and of the Patriarch of the Church.

It was a new and unthought of doctrine that the marriage relation might be effective after death, and that to make it so, this relation must be sealed upon

the contracting parties for time and eternity, by one having authority from God, to act and speak in his name.

This authority was conferred upon Peter by our Lord when he said to him: "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. 16:19.)

The keys of this authority were sealed upon Joseph Smith: "I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and there is never but one on the earth at a time upon whom this power, and the keys of this priesthood are conferred."

Any ceremony pretending to bind man and woman together beyond the period of mortal life, which is not solemnized by one who has been commissioned and authorized by the man who holds the keys of authority to bind upon earth with a covenant which will be binding in heaven, is of no efficacy or force when people are out of the world.

There is but one person on the earth at a time upon whom the keys of this sealing ordinance are conferred. That man is the presiding High Priest, the President of the Church. He is the bearer of this authority; which he may exercise personally or he may commission others to exercise it under his jurisdiction, for such time, long or short, up to the end of his life, as he may desire.

It was after the revelation of July, 1843, which provided that under certain conditions, which are clearly defined, a man may receive more than one woman to be his wife, that plural marriage became a recognized doctrine of the Church. Under this system family ties were established and relationships entered into which were held sacred and binding, not alone by those who accepted and entered into the order of plural marriage, but by all who had become members of the Church.

While the practice of plural marriage was severely criticized by the ministers of various religious denominations and others, it was not until 1874 that the Congress of the United States took definite steps looking to the suppression of the practice. A member of the Church who had entered into the order of plural marriage was arrested, tried before a jury, found guilty, and sentenced to pay a fine of five hundred dollars, and be incarcerated for two years at hard labor.

An appeal was taken to the Supreme court of the territory, which confirmed the decree of the lower court. The case was then carried to the Supreme Court of the United States, which ruled that the law prohibiting the practice of plural marriage was constitutional and enforceable.

From August, 1877, the date of the death of President Brigham Young, until October, 1880, the Council of the Twelve, with John

Taylor at their head, directed the affairs of the Church.

At the October Conference, 1880, the First Presidency was reorganized, John Taylor was sustained as President, with George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith as his first and second counselors.

During the entire period of the presidency of John Taylor, 1880 to 1887, relentless prosecution of men who had entered into the relationship of plural marriage was intensified.

Under the provisions of the Edmunds-Tucker law the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was disincorporated, the Perpetual Emigration Fund company was dissolved, and all property belonging to the Church with the exception of buildings used exclusively for religious worship, was escheated to the government.

Hundreds of men who had contracted plural marriages were heavily fined, and imprisoned. All persons who could not subscribe to a test oath which was provided especially for those who practiced or believed in the practice of plural marriage, were disfranchised.

It became obvious that no human power could prevent the disintegration of the Church, except upon a pledge by its members to obey the laws which had been enacted prohibiting the practice of polygamy.

It was under these circumstances that Wilford Woodruff was sustained as President of the Church, in April, 1880.

September 24th, 1890, President Woodruff promulgated his official declaration to the Church and people of the United States, commonly referred to as The Manifesto.

On the day that The Manifesto was issued President Woodruff wrote in his journal: "I have arrived at a point in the history of my life as the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, where I am under the necessity of acting for the temporal salvation of the Church, and after praying to the Lord, and feeling inspired, I have issued the following proclamation, which is sustained by my counselors and the Twelve Apostles."

After reviewing the enactment of the law prohibiting the practice of plural marriage, and the effect of its enforcement, President Woodruff, in his declaration, says:

"Inasmuch as laws have been enacted by Congress forbidding plural marriages, which laws have been pronounced constitutional by the court of last resort, I hereby declare my intention to submit to those laws, and to use my influence with the members of the Church over which I preside to have them do likewise. . . . And I now publicly declare that my advice to the Latter-day Saints is to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land."

The Manifesto was signed by President Woodruff as President of the Church.

After the vote approving the Manifesto had been recorded (October 6, 1890) President



Woodruff, addressing the Conference congregation, said:

"I want to say to all Israel that the step which I have taken in issuing this Manifesto has not been done without earnest prayer before the Lord. I am ignorant of the feelings that have been engendered through the course I have pursued, but I have done my duty."

The Declaration by President Woodruff and its approval by the members of the Church in General Conference assembled, was accepted by the government as evidence that the practice of plural marriage would be discontinued. Prosecutions under the Edmunds-Tucker bill ceased and a spirit of neighborly good will was established between members and non-members of the Church.

In December, 1891, one year after the announcement of the Official Declaration of President Woodruff, a petition signed by the Presidency of the Church and Council of the Twelve was prepared and forwarded to the President of the United States, asking that amnesty be granted to all violators of the Federal law which prohibited the practice of plural marriage.

This petition was also signed by Governor Arthur L. Thomas, Judge Charles S. Zane, and many other non-members of the Church. The petition was approved and the prayer of the signers granted by President Benjamin Harrison, on January 4th, 1893. The prayer of the petitioners was granted with the definite understanding that the practice of plural marriage was to be discontinued.

September 6th, 1893, the Enabling Act, granting to the people of Utah permission to meet in convention and frame a constitution under which Statehood might be granted, was presented by Joseph L. Rawlins, Representative in Congress, was passed by the Congress, and approved by the President.

The Enabling Act provided (Section 3—First): "That perfect toleration of religious sentiment shall be secured, and that no inhabitant of said State shall ever be molested in person or property on account of his or her mode of religious worship: Provided, that polygamous or plural marriages are forever prohibited."

The convention met March 4th, 1895, an acceptable constitution was framed, and by proclamation of President Grover Cleveland, Utah was admitted to the Union as a sovereign State.

Article III. of the State Constitution provides as follows:

"The following ordinance shall be irrevocable without the consent of the United States, and the people of this State."

#### Religious Toleration — Polygamy Forbidden

"FIRST: Perfect toleration of religious sentiment is guaranteed. No inhabitant of this State shall ever be molested in person or property on account of his or her mode of religious worship, but polygamous or plural marriages are forever prohibited."

March 28th, 1896, President Grover Cleveland, in response to

a memorial which had been presented to and approved by Congress, restored to the Church the property which had been escheated to the Government in 1887. This petition was signed by Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith, who then constituted the Presidency of the Church, and by the Council of the Twelve. It was also endorsed by Arthur L. Thomas, Governor, and Charles S. Zane, Chief Justice of the Territory.

From the foregoing it will be seen by any person of normal intelligence that it was the practice of polygamous or plural marriage which led up to the enactment of the Edmunds-Tucker law and later the enforcement of the law by representatives of the government.

It is also obvious that every available means in defense of the contention that polygamous or plural marriage was a religious rite, and therefore could not be attacked under the Constitution of the United States, had been exhausted; that thereafter the Church pledged itself, by its Presidency, by its members in General Conference assembled, and by its support of the State Constitution, to discontinue the practice of polygamous or plural marriage. Thus our people secretly covenanted with the Government of the United States that they would obey the civil law.

That the Lord requires from his people no more than that they shall exhaust all human means to obey the law is shown in the following quotations, which are from revelations given to the Church, the first on April 30th, 1832, and the latter June 9th, 1841, nine years later.

#### Revelation Given April 30th, 1832

"A revelation of Jesus Christ unto his servant Joseph Smith, Jr. and six Elders, as they united their hearts and lifted their voices on high. Yea, the word of the Lord concerning His Church, established in the last days for the restoration of his people, as he has spoken by the mouth of his prophets, and for the gathering of his saints to stand upon Mount Zion, which shall be the city of New Jerusalem.

"Which city shall be built, beginning at the temple lot, which is appointed by the finger of the Lord, in the western boundaries of the State of Missouri, and dedicated by the hand of Joseph Smith, Jr. and others with whom the Lord is well pleased.

"Verily this is the word of the Lord, that the city New Jerusalem shall be built by the gathering of the Saints, beginning at this place, even the place of the temple, which temple shall be reared in this generation.

"For surely this generation shall not all pass away until an house shall be built unto the Lord, and a cloud shall rest upon it which cloud shall be even the glory of the Lord, which shall fill the house."

In this revelation the Lord definitely declares that a city and temple are to be built at Independence, Missouri, and that this

was to be accomplished during the existing generation. Because of wicked persecutions the Church was obliged to leave the State of Missouri, which had been designated as the gathering place of the saints. Under orders signed by Lilburn W. Boggs, Governor of Missouri, twelve thousand members of the Church were compelled to abandon their homes and flee to the State of Illinois, where they established the city of Nauvoo.

As stated above, January 9th, 1841, a revelation was given to the Church at Nauvoo, from which the following is copied:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, that when I give a commandment to any of the sons of men to do a work unto my name, and these sons of men go with all their might and with all they have to perform that work, and cease not their diligence, and their enemies come upon them and hinder them from performing that work, behold, it behooveth me to require that work no more at the hands of those sons of men, but to accept of their offerings.

"And the iniquity and transgression of my holy laws and commandments I will visit upon the heads of those who hindered my work, unto the third and fourth generation, so long as they repent not, and hate me, saith the Lord God.

"Therefore, for this cause have I accepted the offerings of those whom I commanded to build up a city and a house unto my name, in Jackson County, Missouri, and were hindered by their enemies, saith the Lord your God.

"And this I make an example unto you, for your consolation concerning all those who have been commanded to do a work, and have been hindered by the hands of their enemies, and by oppression, saith the Lord your God." (Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 124: 49-53)

At the October Conference of the Church (1890) following the publication of the Manifesto issued by President Woodruff, the document was read before the assembled congregation, after which Lorenzo Snow, at the time President of the Council of the Twelve, arose and made the following motion:

"I move that, recognizing Wilford Woodruff as the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the only man on earth at the present time who holds the keys of the sealing ordinances, we consider him fully authorized, by virtue of his position, to issue the Manifesto which has been read in our hearing, and which is dated September 24th, 1890, and that as a Church in General Conference assembled, we accept his declaration concerning plural marriages as authoritative and binding."

This motion was unanimously sustained.

Notwithstanding this covenant, a few misguided members of the Church, some of whom had been signers of the petition praying for amnesty, and beneficiaries of its provisions, secretly associated themselves together for the

avowed purpose of perpetuating the practices of polygamous or plural marriage in defiance of the pledge made to the government, of the terms of the Enabling Act, and of the provisions of the State Constitution to which they had sworn allegiance.

Sworn to secrecy, these people promulgated their lawless propaganda, the result being that reports reached the Presidency indicating that certain professed members of the Church were teaching and in some instances entering into polygamous or plural marriage.

At the General Conference of the Church, April, 1904, President Joseph F. Smith, who had succeeded President Lorenzo Snow as President of the Church, made the following statement to the assembled congregation:

"Inasmuch as there are numerous reports in circulation that plural marriages have been entered into contrary to the official declaration of President Wilford Woodruff of September 24th, 1890, commonly called the Manifesto, which was issued by President Woodruff and adopted by the Church at its General Conference, October 6, 1890, which forbade any marriage violative of the law of the land, I, Joseph F. Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, do hereby affirm and declare that no such marriages have been solemnized with the sanction, consent, or knowledge of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints;

"And I hereby announce that all such marriages are prohibited, and if any officer or member of the Church shall assume to solemnize or enter into any such marriage he will be deemed in transgression against the Church, and will be liable to be dealt with according to the rules and regulations thereof, and excommunicated therefrom."

The following resolution was presented to the congregation, and unanimously adopted:

"Resolved, that we, the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in General Conference assembled, hereby approve and endorse the statement and declaration of President Joseph F. Smith, just made to this conference, concerning plural marriages, and will support the courts of the Church in the enforcement thereof."

October 5th, 1910, Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund, and John Henry Smith, the First Presidency of the Church at the time, addressed a letter to the President of each of the Stakes of the Church, which contained the full text of the statement made by President Joseph F. Smith, at the General Conference, April, 1904.

In this letter the Presidents of Stakes were definitely instructed to notify the members of the Church in the Stakes over which they presided, to report any case in which a person had entered into a pretended marriage violative of the civil law, or taught others to do so, and to take action against such persons and



excommunicate them from the Church.

Notwithstanding all that had been said and done upon this question it became necessary again to call attention of the Presidents of Stakes to it in 1914, as follows:

"January 31st, 1914.

To Presidents of Stakes and Counselors,

Dear Brethren:

Having reason to believe that some members of the Church are secretly engaged advising and encouraging others to enter into unauthorized and unlawful marriages, we have deemed it advisable to call your attention to the communication we addressed to you on this subject on the 5th of October, 1910, a copy of which is herewith appended.

And believing, as we do, that these people are at the bottom of all the violations referred to in our communication, we direct your special attention to them, with a request that any information received by you from time to time relating to cases of this character, be followed up and investigated with a view to having this class of offenders placed on trial for their fellowship in the Church, as we regard them equally culpable with actual offenders. Please make the same request of your bishops.

Your brethren,

JOSEPH F. SMITH,

ANTHON H. LUND,

CHARLES W. PENROSE,

First Presidency."

From the attitude of the Church, the statements of its authorized Priesthood, and the revealed will of the Lord, as shown in the revelations quoted, it is made plain that the discontinuance of polygamous or plural marriage was obligatory and justifiable.

In the revelation given April 30th, 1832, Jackson County, Missouri, was designated as the gathering place of the members of the Church, the spot where a city was to be established, and a temple built. This work was to be accomplished by the people of the present generation.

Because of an order issued by its Governor, in which the removal of the people from the State or their extermination was ordered, the Church was obliged to leave the State of Missouri.

In the revelation given June 19th, 1841, eight years later, the Lord absolved the Church from responsibility, and told them that he required that work no more at their hands, and makes this an example in all things where the people are commanded to do a work, and are prevented by their enemies.

This principle applies to plural marriage as it does to all other of his commandments.

The members of the Church are reminded that the practice of polygamous or plural marriage is not the only law whose suspension has been authorized by the Lord and adopted by the people. The law of animal sacrifice, in force in ancient Israel, has been suspended, but the Prophet Joseph asserted it would be again restored, and such is the effect of the statement made by John the Baptist when restoring the Aaronic Priesthood. The law of the United Order has likewise been suspended, to be reestablished in the due time of the Lord. Other laws might be mentioned.

The members of the secret and (by reputation) oath-bound organization referred to in the first paragraph of this statement, make many false allegations, two of which—as being those without which all the others they make must necessarily fall—may be noted here by way of cau-

tioning the membership of the Church against the teachings and practices of this organization.

It is alleged that on September 26-27, 1886, President John Taylor received a revelation from the Lord, the purported text of which is given in publications circulated apparently by or at the instance of this same organization.

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.

Furthermore, insofar as the authorities of the Church are concerned and insofar 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 second allegation made by the organization and its members (as reported) is to the effect that President John Taylor ordained and set apart several men to perform marriage ceremonies (inferentially polygamous or plural marriage ceremonies), and gave to those so allegedly authorized the further power to set others apart to do the same thing.

There is nothing in the records of the Church to show that any such ordination or setting apart was ever performed. There is no recollection or report among the officers of the Church to whom such an incident would of necessity be known, that any such action was ever taken.

Furthermore, any such action would have been illegal and void because the Lord has laid down without qualification the principle that "there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred." The Lord has never changed this rule.

Moreover, four years after the date when it is alleged this pretended revelation was given to President John Taylor, and four years after the date of the alleged ordaining and setting apart of these men by President Taylor to perform marriage ceremonies (presumably polygamous or plural) the Church in General Conference formally approved the solemn declaration offered to the Conference by Lorenzo Snow, then President of the Council of the Twelve, that President Wilford Woodruff was "the only man on the earth at the present time (1890) who holds the keys of the sealing ordinances." This statement would have been an unmitigated falsehood if the allegation of the organization were true, President Lorenzo Snow did not falsify.

Finally, without direct revelation from the Lord changing the

principle that there is never but one man on the earth at one time who holds the keys of the sealing power—and we solemnly affirm that there is not now and there has not been given any revelation making any change in that principle—any such act of ordination by President Taylor as that seemingly alleged by the members of this organization would be completely null and void. No one better knew this principle regarding authority for this sealing power, than President John Taylor and he would not have attempted to violate it. It is a sacrilege to his memory—the memory of a great and true Latter-day Saint, a prophet of the Lord—that these falsehoods should be broadcast by those who professed to be his friends while he lived.

The Master said that in the last days, many should come in his name saying, "I am Christ," and that these would deceive many; that many false prophets would come who would deceive many; that false Christs and false prophets would arise, would show forth great signs and wonders, and would, if possible, deceive the very elect. The Lord warned us that in these days "if any man shall say unto you, Lo here is Christ, or there, believe it not."

We do not wish to pass judgment upon or evaluate the motives of our fellow men—that is for the Lord to do—but we unqualifiedly say, as it is our right and duty to say, that the doctrines these persons preach and the practices they follow, are born of the Evil One and are contrary to the revealed will and word of the Lord. We call upon them to repent and to forsake their false doctrines and evil practices. Unless they do so the Lord will not hold them guiltless.

It is a significant fact that these claims are put forward in their detail after all persons who were in presiding authority at the time of these alleged occurrences and who might check the stories told, are dead.

Celestial marriage—that is, marriage for time and eternity—and polygamous or plural marriage are not synonymous terms. Monogamous marriages for time and eternity, solemnized in our temples in accordance with the word of the Lord and the laws of the Church, are Celestial marriages.

At President John Taylor's death, the keys of the sealing ordinances, with their powers and limitations, passed by regular devolution, in the way and manner prescribed by the Lord and in accordance with the custom of the Church, to President Wilford Woodruff. At the latter's death they similarly passed to President Lorenzo Snow; and upon his death, they similarly passed to President Joseph F. Smith; and at his death the same keys passed in the same way to President Heber J. Grant. There has been no change in the law of succession of the priesthood and of the keys appertaining thereto, nor in the regular order of its descent.

The keys of the sealing ordin-

ances rest today solely in President Heber J. Grant, having so passed to him by the ordination prescribed by the Lord, at the hands of those having the authority to pass them, and whose authority has never been taken away by the Lord, nor suspended, nor interfered with by the Church. President Grant is the only man on the earth at this time who possesses these keys. He has never authorized any one to perform polygamous or plural marriages; he is not performing such marriages himself; he has not on his part violated nor is he violating the pledge he made to the Church, to the world, and to our government at the time of the Manifesto.

Any one making statements contrary to the foregoing is innocently or maliciously telling that which is not true. Any one representing himself as authorized to perform such marriages is making a false representation. Any such ceremony performed by any person so making such representations is a false and mock ceremony. Those living a husband and wife under and pursuant to the ceremonies proscribed by President Smith or the ceremonies performed by any person whatsoever since that proscription, are living in adultery and are subject to the attaching penalties.

We reaffirm as true today and as being true ever since it was made in 1904, the statement of President Smith which was endorsed by a General Conference of the Church "that no such marriages have been solemnized with the sanction, consent, or knowledge of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

Finally, we are in honor bound to the government and people of the United States, upon a consideration we have fully received—Statehood—to discontinue the practice of polygamous or plural marriage, and Latter-day Saints will not violate their pledged faith.

The Church reaffirms its adherence to the declarations of Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, and Joseph F. Smith.

It adheres to the pledges made to the government of the United States, and to the Constitutional law of the State of Utah.

We confirm and renew the instructions given to Church officers by President Joseph F. Smith in 1904, in 1910, and in 1914, and direct the officers who administer the affairs of the Church diligently to investigate reported violations of the adopted rule, and if persons are found who have violated President Smith's ruling (adopted by the Church) or who are entering into, or teaching, encouraging, or conspiring with others to enter into so-called polygamous or plural marriages, we instruct such officers to take action against such persons, and, finding them guilty, to excommunicate them from the Church in accord with the directions given by President Smith. We shall hold Church officers responsible for the proper performance of this duty.

*Heber J. Grant*  
*Antoine L. Lund*  
*Charles W. Penrose*  
 First Presidency.