

Institutes of religion were established at public colleges beginning in 1926 at the University of Idaho. I have known personally most of those who pioneered religious education in the Church.

There is another chapter. In fairly recent times, elementary and secondary schools were established many places in the world where schools were not available to our members. When public education became available, more than a hundred schools—including a university, junior colleges, academies, secondary and elementary schools—were transferred to state governments or were closed.

In order to coordinate the programs and growth of Church schools, a General Church Board of Education was organized in 1888, consisting of selected local Church leaders—stake presidents, for instance. Karl G. Maeser was named the first superintendent of Church schools, a position that later became the commissioner of Church education.

Working As One

In recent years, the board of education of the Church and the board of trustees for Church colleges and universities has been the First Presidency, six members of the Quorum of the Twelve, a member of the Presiding Bishopric, and the presidents of the Relief Society and the Young Women of the Church.

I can best tell you how you are governed today, how the board of trustees functions, by explaining the principles and procedures we follow in the meetings of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. These procedures protect the work from the individual weaknesses apparent in all of us.

When a matter comes before the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in a temple meeting, one thing that is determined very quickly is whether it is of serious consequence or not. One or another of us will see in an apparently innocent proposal issues of great and lasting consequence.

It is clear from the revelations that the decisions of the presiding quorums “must be by the unanimous voice of the same. . . . Unless this is the case, their decisions are not entitled to the same blessings” (D&C 107:27, 29). In order to ensure that to be the case, matters of consequence are seldom decided in the meeting where they are proposed. And, if the proposal is a part of a larger issue, sufficient time is taken to “bring us all along” so that it is clear that each of us has either a clear *understanding* of the issue or, as is often the case, has a very clear *feeling* about it.

The Doctrine and Covenants instructs us:

Let not all be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege. [D&C 88:122]

It would be unthinkable to deliberately present an issue in such a way that approval depended upon how it was maneuvered through channels, who was presenting it, or who was present or absent when it was presented.

Often one or more of us is away during regular meetings. We all know that the work must proceed and will accept the judgment of our brethren. However, if a matter has been studied by one of the Quorum in more detail than by the others

or he is more familiar with it either by assignment, experience, or personal interest, the matter is very often delayed until he can be in on the discussion.

And, always, if one of us cannot understand an issue or feels unsettled about it, it is held over for future discussion.

I remember occasions when a delegation was sent to the hospital to discuss with a member of the Council who was ill some urgent matter that could not be delayed but which needed that “unanimous consent.” There are occasions, as well, when one of us will leave the meeting temporarily to call one of our number who is abroad to get his feelings on a matter under discussion.

There is a rule we follow: A matter is not settled until there is a *minute entry* to evidence that all of the Brethren in council assembled (not just one of us, not just a committee) have come to a unity of feeling. Approval of a matter in principle is not considered authority to act until a minute entry records the action taken—usually when the minutes are approved in the next meeting.

Sometimes an afterthought keeps one of us restless over a decision. That is never dismissed lightly. It cannot be assumed that that restless spirit is not in fact the Spirit of Revelation.

That is how we function—in council assembled. That provides safety for the Church and a high comfort level for each of us who is personally accountable. Under the plan, men of very ordinary capacity may be guided through counsel and inspiration to accomplish extraordinary things.

Even with the best of intentions, it does not always work the way it should. Human nature may express itself on occasion, but not to the permanent injury of the work. I

have a deep, even a sacred, regard for councils; inspiration is evident in them. If ever another course has been followed, trouble has followed as surely as night follows day.

When I was first called as a General Authority, I was serving as an assistant administrator of seminaries and institutes and as a member of the administrative council of BYU. They were kind enough to have a dinner to see me off with Elder Marion G. Romney, representing the board of education, as the speaker.

President William E. Berrett made a very brief response in which he said that Brother Tuttle (who by then was one of the Seventy) and I had something of a motto. It was “Follow the Brethren.” Brother Romney responded with some humor that he was glad for that motto since I already had been given an assignment to assist him. “Now I know that Brother Packer will do everything I tell him to do.”

I was asked to respond. I did not know Brother Romney very well at that time or I should not have said what I did. Nevertheless, I lived to learn that the very intimate relationship I had with him in years to come began that night when I said, “Brother Romney misunderstood! Our motto was ‘Follow the *Brethren*,’ not ‘Follow the *Brother*.’” He drew close to me thereafter because I had shown respect for a principle that was precious to him. There is only one “Brother” to follow, and that is our Prophet President. But even he does not act alone, for he has counselors.

These same principles that govern the function of the presiding councils of the Church work equally well in auxiliary organizations. And they apply to a combination of the two, such as in the board of trustees, where great women endowed