

Revelation extends blessings of gospel

The First Presidency of the The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints released the following statement:

"As we have witnessed the expansion of the work of the Lord over the earth, we have been grateful that people of many nations have responded to the message of the restored gospel, and have joined the Church in ever-increasing numbers. This, in turn, has inspired us with a desire to extend to every worthy member of the Church all of the privileges and blessings which the gospel affords.

"Aware of the promises made by the prophets and presidents of the Church who have preceded us that at some time, in God's eternal plan, all of our brethren who are worthy may receive the priesthood, and witnessing the faithfulness of those from whom the priesthood has been withheld, we have pleaded long and earnestly in behalf of these, our faithful brethren, spending many hours in the upper room of the temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance.

He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood, with power to exercise its divine authority, and enjoy with his loved ones

every blessing that flows therefrom, including the blessings of the temple. Accordingly, all worthy male members of the Church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard for race or color. Priesthood leaders are instructed to follow the policy of carefully interviewing all candidates for ordination to either the Aaronic or Melchizedek Priesthood to insure that they meet the established standards for worthiness.

We declare with soberness that the Lord has now made known His will for the blessing of all His children throughout the earth who will hearken to the voice of His authorized servants, and prepare themselves to receive every blessing of the gospel."

Sincerely yours,

Spencer W. Kimball
Weldon G. Tanner
Marion G. Romney

The First Presidency

Priesthood news evokes joy

The First Presidency's announcement on June 9 that all worthy male members may be ordained to the priesthood has received positive reactions from both members of the Church and non-members throughout the world.

Reaction to the statement, which was issued in the form of a letter to priesthood leaders, quickly spread from the Church's headquarters in Salt Lake City to major news outlets across the nation and in other countries.

The Church's Public Communications office, which released the statement to the news media, received hundreds of telephone calls from interested parties throughout the world. All major television networks featured the announcement Friday evening.

The story was the lead item on the NBC Nightly News that evening. Time and Newsweek magazines held up deadlines in order to get a report in their upcoming issues. The New York Times, Washington Post and Los Angeles Times carried the story on their front pages, as did many other major newspapers.

News media representatives from Canada, England and several other countries called with requests for more information.

U.S. President Jimmy Carter, in a telegram to President Spencer W. Kimball, said, "I welcomed today your announcement as president and prophet of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that henceforth all worthy men in your church without regard for race or color may have conferred upon them the priesthood in your church.

"I commend you for your compassionate prayerfulness and courage in receiving a new doctrine.

"This announcement brings a healing spirit to the world and reminds all men and women that they are truly brothers and sisters."

The most joyful reaction to the news, however, came from Church members.

Numerous bishops, stake presidents and other priesthood leaders expressed their pleasure and optimism about the opportunities that may come to all Church members now that the priesthood may be conferred upon all worthy male members.

The announcement brought tears of humility, elation and happiness to many members, especially black men and their families.

Robert L. Lang, a black member who has been serving as the first counselor in the Sunday School presidency of the Inglewood Ward, Los Angeles California Inglewood Stake, and his wife, Delores, were thrilled with the announcement. Sister Lang is the secretary to the Young Women in the ward.

"When I came in, my wife was crying," Brother



Joseph Freeman Jr. is now an elder. With him are son, Alexander and wife, Toe.

Lang said. "She had heard the news and was so happy. I know the Church is true, and I knew that the time would come when the Lord would make it right.

"It had not been hard for me to accept the Church. I knew I had found what I was looking for and I gladly accepted it.

"Delores and I will now get our endowments and will be sealed and do temple work for the dead. I know that they have been waiting for this moment, too."

Monroe Fleming, an active member in the Valley View 4th Ward, Salt Lake Valley View Stake, said, "I shouted for joy. We have had numerous calls from important people. This seems to be the thing the Lord has prepared."

Brother Fleming has been a member of the Church since 1966. "The gates are down," he said. "It is up to me to build my life up so that I will be worthy to enter."

Brother Fleming, who has been a popular speaker at firesides for several years, said that he will continue

to do the kind of missionary work that he has been doing.

Titus Ifedida, a Nigerian who serves in the presidency of the Sunday School in the Manhattan 2nd Ward, New York New York Stake, has been a member of the Church for three years.

A medical doctor specializing in tropical diseases, he said, "We were excited when we heard the news, but I am too busy to be excited now. There is too much work to do.

"This is the true Church, and a true prophet receives revelation from our Heavenly Father. These are facts.

"Every black member of the Church should very humbly pray and realize that we must begin right now to share with others the precious gift of faith, which Heavenly Father has entrusted to us.

"In the face of disappointments, ingratitude, lack of cooperation, apathy or indifference in our lives, we

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