# An Open Letter to Mormon Thought Leaders

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Joe Murff
November 11, 2026

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**Beloved Brothers and Sisters:**

As members of the Church, we aren't supposed to be cheerleading the presiding officers when they are running the railroad like a snowcone shack manned by half-literate, half-naked, disobedient children. We are trying to prepare for the arrival of a literal God, and we need to establish a **HOUSE of ORDER** like we've been commanded by the Lord to do (D&C 88:119-121).

Imagine the Savior coming back to check on us, and he finds us in this absolute **MUD-BOG** of a situation. No wonder Joseph Smith's last vision was so dark. During the night before his death in Carthage Jail, Joseph recounted his last dream to Elder Cyrus H. Wheelock, and it's found in the History of the Church, Volume 6, Chapter 33. Here it is:

> "I was back in Kirtland, Ohio, and thought I would take a walk out by myself, and view my old farm, which I found grown up with weeds and brambles, and altogether bearing evidence of neglect and want of culture.
>
> I went into the barn which I found without floor or doors, with the weather boarding off, and was altogether in keeping with the farm. While I viewed the desolation around me, and was contemplating how it might be recovered from the curse upon it, there came rushing into the barn a company of furious men, who commenced to pick a quarrel with me. The leader of the

> party ordered me to leave the barn and farm, stating it was none of mine, and that I must give up all hope of ever possessing it.
>
> I told him the farm was given me by the Church, and although I had not had any use of it for some time back, still I had not sold it, and according to righteous principles it belonged to me or the Church. He then grew furious, and began to rail upon me and threaten me, and said it never did belong to me nor the Church.
>
> I then told him that I did not think it worth contending about; that I had no desire to live upon it in its present state, and if he thought he had a better right I would not quarrel with him about it, but leave; but my assurance that I would not trouble him at present did not seem to satisfy him, as he seemed determined to quarrel with me, and threatened me with the destruction of my body.
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> While he was thus engaged, pouring out his bitter words upon me, a rabble rushed in and nearly filled the barn, drew out their knives, and began to quarrel among themselves for the premises; and for a moment forgot me, at which time I took the opportunity to walk out of the barn about up to my ankles in mud.
>
> When I was a little distance from the barn I heard them screeching and screaming in a very distressed manner, as it appeared they had engaged in a general fight with their knives. While they were thus engaged the dream or vision ended."

We need a renaissance in the Church, and a return to lawful and righteous behavior. The Church is currently a mud-bogged and dilapidated mess. Many members of the Church understand on some

vague emotional level that **all is not well in Zion** (2 Nephi 28:21), but they are not willing to read the scriptures or Mormon History with open eyes, or to ask with real intent, in order to find out **why** things are such a mess.

It might strike you as radical and unorthodox that I'm essentially talking down to all of you, in a way that frames you as being my subordinates, but there is a good reason for that. My patriarchal blessing tags me as someone who will stand apart from the common membership, will mentor the great ones in the Church, and will be an important leader during a time of conflict. The blessing doesn't explicitly say that I will be a formal administrative officer, but it does indicate that I will lead the Church in various ways.

By comparison, in the 1950s, Juanita Brooks was the presiding prophetess in the Church with regard to the Mountain Meadows repentance effort. She outranked everyone else in the Church on that topic, and she had a very specific mission to accomplish. Meanwhile, the duly appointed administrative prophets were fighting against her and resisting her leadership, because they were arrogant, hard-hearted, hypocritical Pharisees who refused to see the writing on the wall.

Juanita's leadership was not in violation of D&C 28:6-7. She was not attempting to bring any **NEW** commandments to the Church. Instead, she was issuing a virtuous reminder to the Saints in terms of the commandments that **were already on the books** –and that is something that any common member has the right to do.

Juanita was a barefoot messenger like Samuel the Lamanite and Abinadi were: messengers called by the Spirit to preach repentance to those who administratively outranked them. At any given time and

on any given issue, there are two types of leadership in the Church: the administrative leadership and the spiritual leadership. Ideally those two types of power would overlap and be found within the same group of individuals, but there is often a mismatch. The reason for that mismatch is because of the law of restoration. The Lord can only appoint administrative officers who match the spiritual maturity of the core average of the group. If the group is immature in a specific area, the administrative leaders are going to be immature in that same area, per 1 Samuel 8:7-22, Ezekiel 14, and D&C 130:20-21. Having virtuous administrative officers is a blessing that must be earned. It is earned when a critical mass of members creates an improved level of spiritual maturity in the Church, and thereby expands the selection pool from which the Lord can select administrative officers.

The early Saints were a racist people on average, and they eventually became a vengeful, violent, and idolatrous group who ended up ignoring D&C 101:79, D&C 98, and 2 Nephi 28:31. Thus the Lord couldn't protect them in any of the proto-Zions they attempted to establish. It got so bad that God was eventually forced to give them an extremely racist and vengeful leader –Brigham Young, who would lead them into a long-term exile and carnal security.

Orson Pratt, who was anti-slavery and was far less revenge-minded than Brigham Young was, was not called to preside at the presidential level, because by 1847 the Saints didn't deserve him. They barely deserved to have him as an apostle, and he was eventually kicked out of the Quorum because Brigham convinced the other apostles to cast him out.

In any event, at present I happen to be the **default spiritual leader** in the Church in relation to various commandments that have long been

neglected, one of which is the law of common consent. The reason I'm the default leader in that area of the gospel is because I've taken the time to understand and obtain pure knowledge about it, in keeping with Matthew 7:7, Alma 32, Moroni 10:5, James 1:5-6, D&C 1:19-20, and Moroni 7:15. Most members care nothing about common consent and have zero interest in learning about it, much less are they actually obeying it.

A tragic example: in 2010, Elder Matt Eyring (President Eyring's son, who was the area seventy in Boston during the time I lived there) told me to my face that he wasn't willing to study or pray about common consent. He told me he had more important matters to attend to, and he contemptuously called my testimony about common consent "a gospel hobby." He had zero respect for opposing votes, and was dismissive and contemptuous towards D&C 42:91, D&C 124:144, D&C 107:82-84, D&C 26:2, D&C 42:59-60, and JST Mark 9:46.

Because most members have that same contempt or disinterest towards the law of common consent, the Lord is forced to call low-quality leaders like Matt and his father into the administrative offices of the Church, so that the blind will lead the blind, in keeping with the law of restoration.

The current officers are excellent and inspired leaders in some areas of the gospel –the areas of the gospel in which the average member is righteous– but in other areas they are dishonoring and neglecting their callings, just as Brigham Young and many other leaders dishonored various areas of the gospel during their tenures.

Please take seriously the fact that D&C 124:144 is not a suggestion, it is explicitly presented as a **commandment** by God. We must openly disapprove of the leaders when they openly violate the

commandments (D&C 42:91, JST Mark 9:46, Matthew 23, D&C 42:59-60). And, if the First Presidency doesn't improve after being **voted against and reproved in public** (D&C 42:91), then we have the obligation to press for them to be taken to the cutting room and permanently removed from office, so that the Church can heal and improve (D&C 107:82-84).

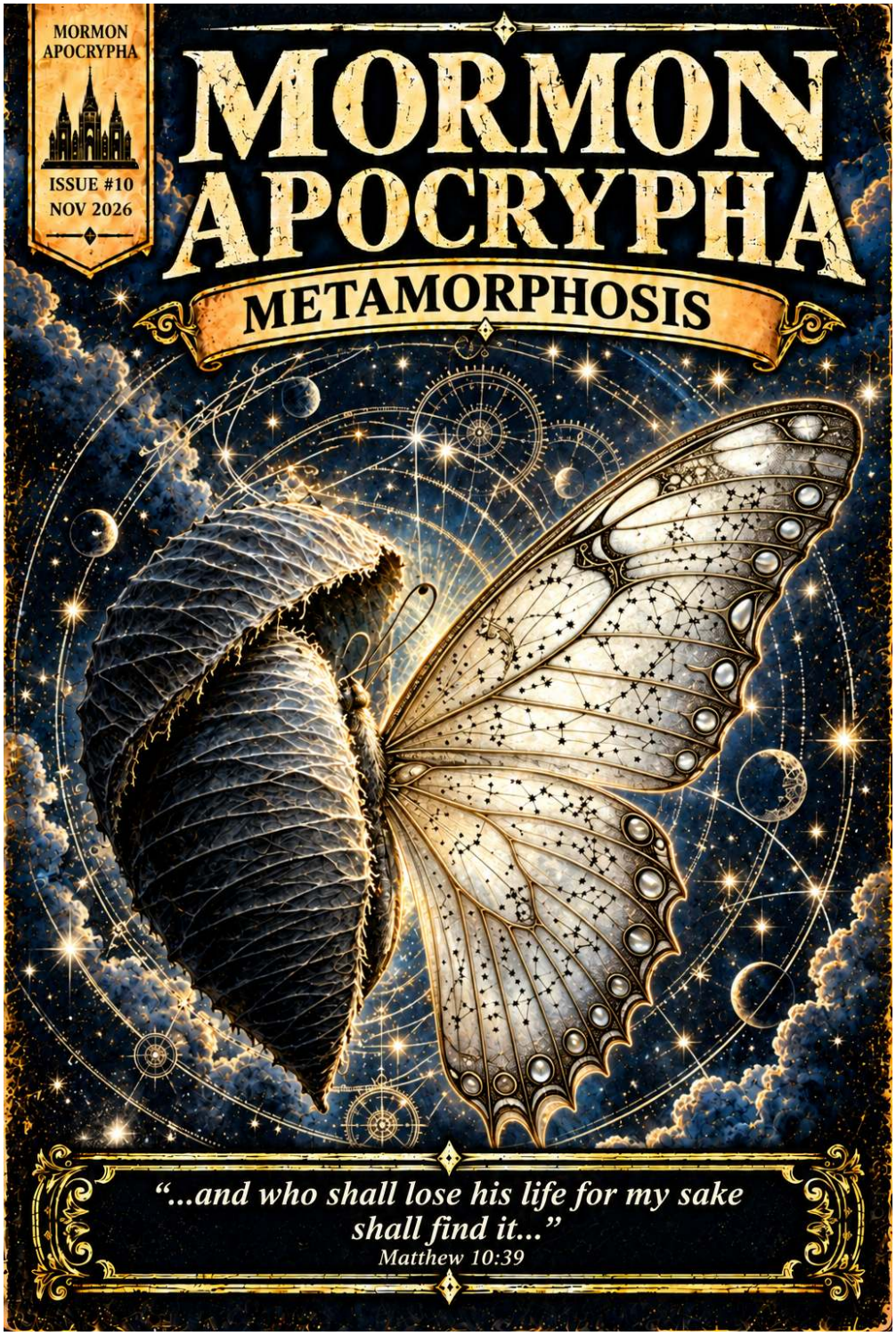
In order to escape the current complicity in sin that exists in the Church, you've got to stop giving your consent and approval to the idolatry and disobedience that is currently taking place. It's not enough to merely abstain from voting, you have to actually confess, in public, your disagreement with what is happening in the Church, with a formal vote of disapproval– because **that is what God has commanded us to do** (D&C 124:144, JST Mark 9:46, D&C 42:91).

## A Request for Help

I've been voting in opposition for 17 years, and I've been begging each Presiding Bishop as they cycle through their tenures to do their job and call a Common Council. THEY DON'T CARE. They are asleep at the wheel and they are part of the curse or darkness of mind that the Church is under (2 Nephi 28:31).

In order to break the multi-generational curse that we are tangled up in, we have to build a critical mass at the grassroots level for a renaissance. We need all of the semi-mature Wheat in the Church to become fully mature, and to start taking the law of common consent seriously. A significant minority of the membership needs to start voting in opposition at every conference, and to start pressing the leaders for the empanelment of a Common Council.

I realize that this is a hard ask in relation to most of you, and that it might actually be a martyr-level task for some of you, in the social sense, in that it will be sharply incompatible with your current “gigs”.



For example, Terryl Givens (and others at BYU), if you were to start obeying the law of common consent, you would no doubt be cast out of your **priestcraft-compromised** positions at BYU. But that would be a blessing to you in the long run (Matthew 10:39).

At present, you aren't honoring the Mission Statement of BYU, you are unrighteously coloring inside the lines of the misguided anti-free-speech policy, which is absurdly called an "Academic Freedom Policy." If you were to start honoring the Mission Statement of BYU –to pursue all truth and maintain intellectual integrity + teach the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ– you would immediately find it impossible to abide by the current censorship policy. BYU is asking you to serve two masters, and you can only serve one. At present you are serving the wrong master. So start serving the right master and let the chips fall where they may.

For those of you who are currently working as scholars or researchers in the Maxwell Institute, part of your official mission is that you are supposed to "**engage the world of religious ideas**". Okay, great, cool, fantastic, so how about you **engage** with the questions that are in my 2025 letter to Bishop Waddell, and answer those questions honestly? You can't or won't. You have to bite your tongues and "echo the Brethren or remain silent" in order to keep collecting your priestcraft paychecks.

The idea that criticism of the leaders is evil even when it is true is **NONSENSICAL MADNESS.** In April 2007, President Oaks doubled down on his anti-free-speech position ("**it's wrong to criticize leaders of the Church, even if the criticism is true**..."), which is based on an extraordinarily poor and immature reading of D&C 121, and

involves a complete rejection of Matthew 23, D&C 42:91, JST Mark 9:46, and D&C 107:82-84.

That poor reading of the scriptures didn't originate with President Oaks, it existed long before he was born, and it's obviously motivated by the infallibility doctrine from Wilford Woodruff –the idea that it's impossible for presidents of the Church to lead us astray.

I'm truly sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but those of you who are at BYU are engaging in **priestcraft,** by virtue of the fact that you are being paid to uphold a system that promises we can't be led astray in terms of net-outcome, which is idolatry.

You need to stop going along with that wickedness, immediately. Quoting President Uchtdorf and lionizing him isn't going to cut it. He doesn't believe what you seem to think he believes. Please refer to the open letter I wrote to him (it's a secondary entry within the letter to President Oaks) and **please get your doctrine straight**.

## Nominations for Renaissance Leadership

I nominate **Jeff Nielsen** to lead a committee for drafting a **Joint Vote of Opposition Letter**.

In October of this year, the presiding officers held yet another tyrannical coronation in which they unrighteously basked in a coerced vote of widespread approval, based on the implicit (and very real) threat that opposing voters will be cast out of the temple. We need to follow-up on that nonsense and have a REAL VOTE before the end of this year, in preparation for a **mass opposing vote** at every

future conference until repentance takes place. Every virtuous member of the Church needs to step up and start voting responsibly.

**Jeff**, in this regard, I'm asking you to be our symbolic **Thomas Jefferson** in this Mormon Renaissance initiative. Your eloquence and power of expression would be difficult to match, and you have a good number of years of experience in publicly smacking down on the well-meaning but arrogant and abusive tyrants in SLC.

One of the best and most passionate defenses of freedom of speech in Mormon History is found in the letter you wrote in June 2006, to the Philosophy Department chair at BYU:

> "...Unquestioning acquiescence and blind loyalty to leaders in positions of power over human beings have no place in any institution of higher learning.
>
> ...When it comes to the sustaining of church leaders, I will always argue for the privilege of church members to examine, question, and dialogue with each other and with their leaders in order to genuinely sustain and support church doctrines and teachings.
>
> ...I do not believe that sustaining leaders requires either silent acquiescence or unquestioning conformity, but it does require active engagement with one another and with our church leaders, regardless of our place or position within church leadership hierarchies.
>
> ...If sustaining our leaders is to be real and genuine—not a sham as are elections in totalitarian governments—then members must be free to examine, question, and benevolently criticize."

***Amen***, brother. That is some excellent, concise, and powerful "Declaration of Independence" language for a Joint Vote of Opposition. You've essentially already written a relatively solid introduction and/or closing snippet for such a document.

I also nominate the following individuals to assist Jeff in drafting a full Joint Vote of Opposition document, so that we can have something like a **Committee of Five**, comparable to the 1776 Drafting Committee, when the US was in the process of overthrowing secular king-worship.

## Mormon Renaissance Committee of 5 + 1 (Men)

Jeffery Nielsen (*Thomas Jefferson proxy*)

Darius Gray (*Benjamin Franklin proxy*)

Patrick Mason (*John Adams proxy*)

Matthew Bowman (*Roger Sherman proxy*)

Morris Thurston (*Robert R. Livingston proxy*)

Taylor Kerby (*Executive Secretary*)

I invite the six of you to pray about this matter, and if the Spirit confirms to you that this informal, non-administrative invite in relation to this Mormon Renaissance effort is something that you should accept, please get together and put together a

joint-opposing-vote document that the men in the Church can rally to and sign.

Nominations on the Prophetess / Priestess side:

## Mormon Renaissance Committee of 5 + 1 (Women)

Kristine Haglund (*Thomas Jefferson proxy*)

Maxine Hanks (*Ben Franklin proxy*)

Jana Riess (*John Adams proxy*)

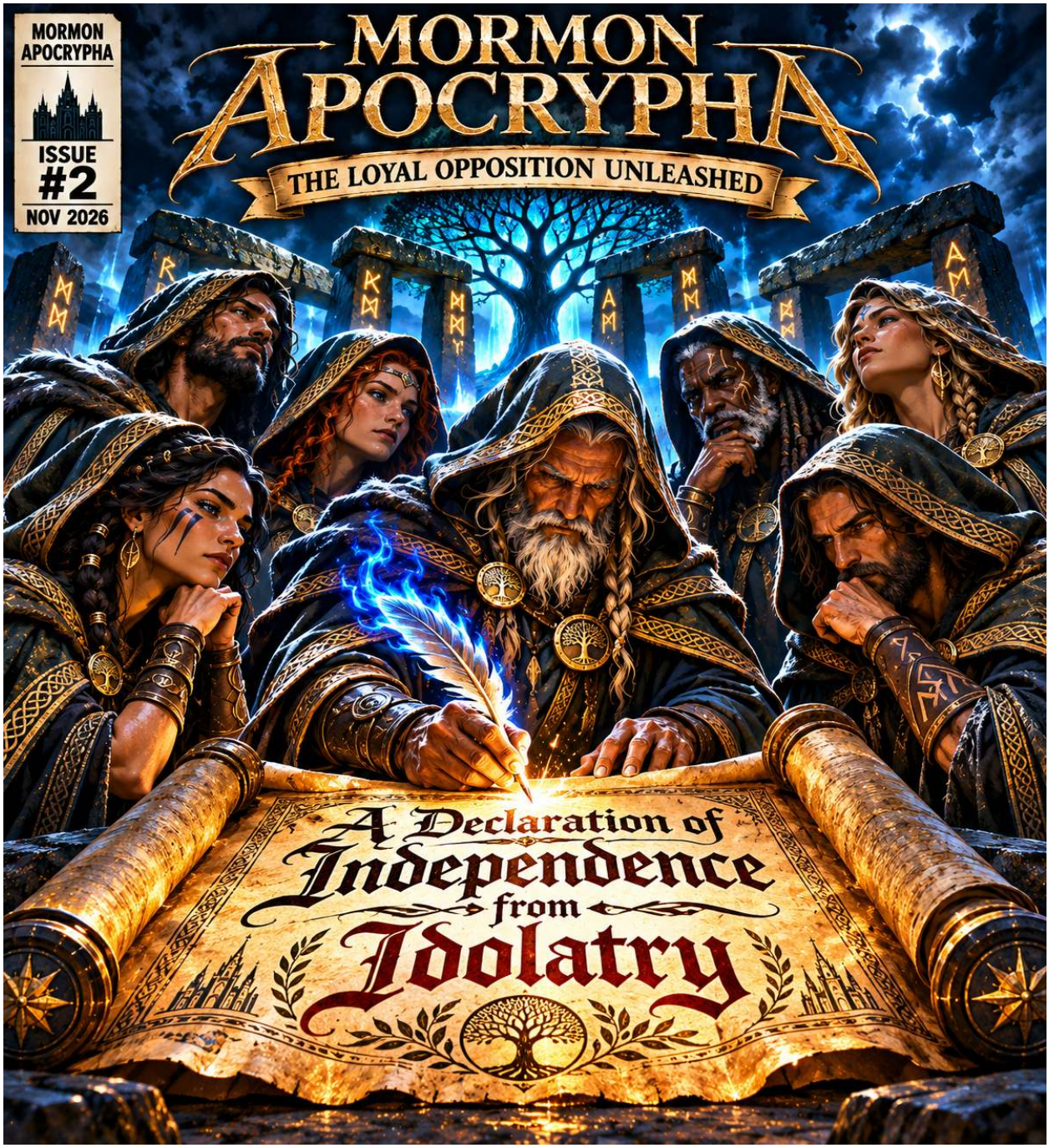
Marguerite Driessen (*Roger Sherman proxy*)

Joanna Brooks (*Robert R. Livingston proxy*)

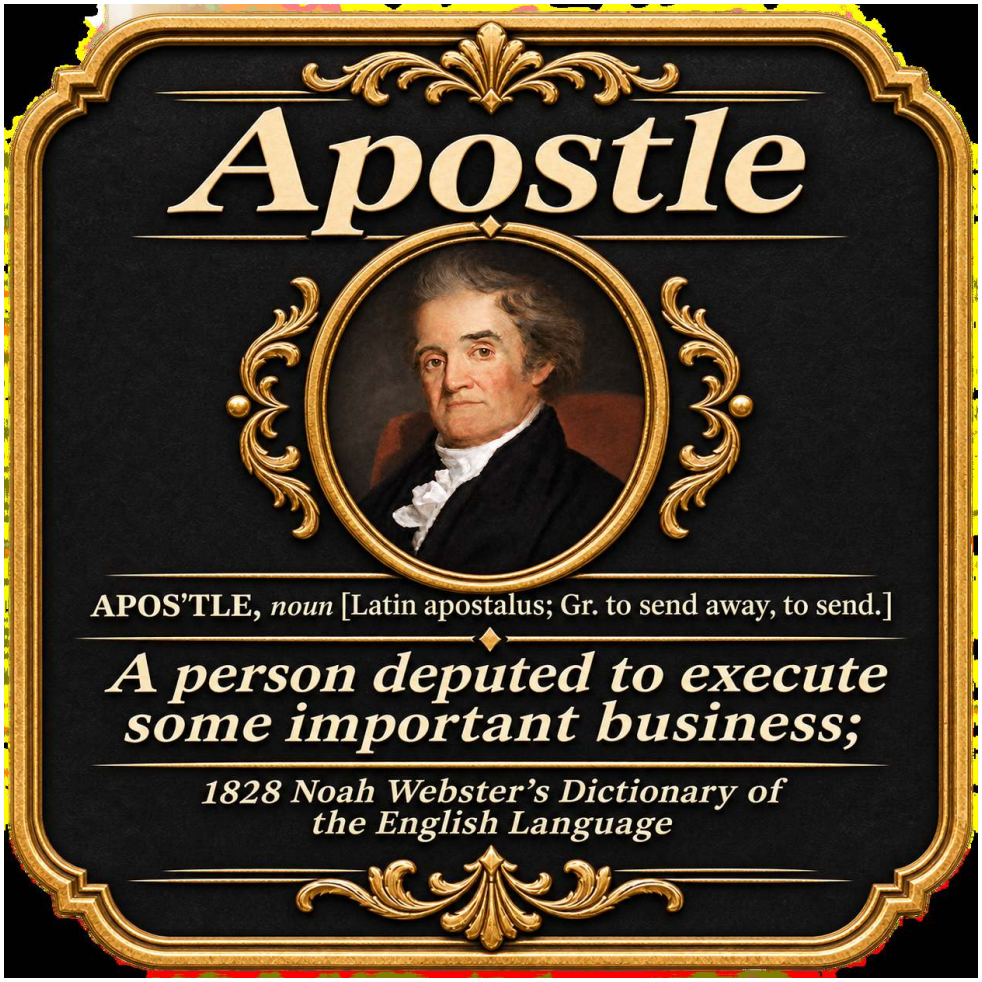
Heather Sundahl (*Executive Secretary*)

Sisters, please pray about this invite and participate if you receive confirmation that it's virtuous. Assuming you get a green light from the Spirit: after you've created a female-specific Joint Opposing Vote letter, please connect with the male committee, and merge the letters or bundle them into a single document that has a unified introduction and invitation to vote responsibly.

In that way, we can invite the common membership of the Church to start treating the vote with the respect it deserves, and encourage them to stop the idolatrous, rubber-stamping, fear-motivated, cult of personality traditions that currently have primacy.




For the combined male and female groups, I'm informally designating you as **The Twelve Apostles of the Mormon Renaissance**, in keeping with the first definition entry for "Apostle" in the 1828 Webster's Dictionary:




## All nominees–

To accept your nominations, simply get the work done as soon as possible and put up websites with signature submission widgets for the general membership, so that we can begin to log **ACCURATE VOTING DATA** in the Church. A reasonably good template that you can refer to for how to structure a signature collection portal is available here: [Signatures | By Common Consent].

Here is a suggested list of individuals to alert after completing your joint-opposing-vote declarations and establishing your voting website:

- David Noyce, *Salt Lake Tribune*
- Peggy Fletcher Stack, *Salt Lake Tribune*
- Lauren Jackson, *New York Times*
- Michelle Boorstien, *Washington Post*
- Matt Canham, *The Seattle Times*
- Elizabeth Dias, *New York Times*
- Ruth Graham, *New York Times*
- Jodi Kantor, *New York Times*
- Jack Jenkins, *Religion News Service*
- Bob Smietana, *Religion News Service*
- Dylan Eubank, *Salt Lake Tribune*
- Tamarra Kemsley, *Salt Lake Tribune*
- Sarah Jane Weaver, *Deseret News*
- The Presiding Officers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, care of Doug Andersen, Director of Media Relations (newsmedia@churchofjesuschrist.org)

## Keystones New and Old

Another way of understanding the problem that exists in the Church is to recognize that the changes that took place in the Church between 1844-1934 created a "New Keystone of Mormonism," i.e., **Follow the Prophet**, which is idolatrous.

That new charter took us into a dangerous and impure path —a path that we had already been flirting with for a long time prior to 1919-1934, and even before the 1890 pitfall. And we had zero excuse for behaving in that way and getting seduced into literally *canonizing idolatry* in 1890-1934, given that we had been roundly and firmly

warned **to avoid the worship of mortal officers**, from day one in our history.

The reason why mortal-officer worship (aka idolatry) is so popular, and so seductive, and why its prohibition is found in the First Commandment, is because one of the most intractable and devastating aspects of human nature to want a **nearby idol, proxy god, mortal king**, **or other physical object** of adulation to worship and trust in. Essentially the entire story of the Old Testament is the people of God falling into idolatry again and again, and eventually operationalizing idolatry into their formal system of governance (1 Samuel 8:7-22).

In 1051 BC, the Israelites forced the Lord's hand into allowing them to trade in their birthright of having of an Eternal King (himself, Jehovah), in exchange for a mortal dynasty of warrior-prophet-kings who would babysit them in person as living idols or proxy gods: King Saul, followed by the Davidic line.

The Lord warned the Israelites very clearly, through Samuel, that the trade was a horrible idea, but the people felt they knew better, and they didn't believe Samuel's warnings, and they wanted to be like worldly tribes. All of the non-Israelites tribes around them had charismatic cult-of-personality kings, which gave those tribes great power on the battlefield, and the Israelites wanted that, and pressed for it aggressively. So the Lord was forced by the law of restoration to allow the Israelites to act as a tragic **Prodigal Son**, and to throw away their divine inheritance on worldly ideas and immediate gratification.

God is bound by eternal law (D&C 82:10), and he would cease to be God if he were to disregard the law (Alma 42:22-25). The Lord must give people the leaders they deserve, he has no choice in the matter.

Having good leaders is a blessing that must be earned, and in 1051 BC the Israelites didn't earn that blessing (D&C 130:20-21). They earned something much different, and God was bound by law to give it to them.

Idolatry is a supremely attractive sin because as mortals trying to make our way in a tremendously chaotic, violent, and bewildering world in which any given personal decision can wreak absolute havoc on our lives and the lives of our loved ones, we intensely crave certainty and easy answers, and we want a local and tangible **mortal king or proxy god** to babysit us. We naturally want to offload as much of our personal accountability as we possibly can, as often as we can.

Terryl Givens once explained it this way:

> "We want a standard that is infallible because it relieves us of the burden of continually exerting ourselves to use discernment. The way that Dostoyevsky put it so beautifully is that "We want some person to be a keeper of our conscience". The hard lesson is that there is never a moment when you can delegate your volition to another individual." (*Mormon Matters Podcast* #225, Wrestling with Prophets and Scripture, April 2014)

Based on the progression of our doctrine from the 1830s to 1890, a strong argument can be made that Joseph Smith was actually our proverbial Old Testament **Samuel**, and that Brigham Young was our first king (**King Saul**), and that John Taylor + Wilford Woodruff was essentially our **King David**. In other words, the post-1844 leaders have been a **divinely appointed** punishment **to us**, or a recompense for rejecting the warnings that our proverbial **Samuel** clearly outlined from 1830-1840s.

At present, we are far along into our divinely appointed "dynasty of kings." We treat our current prophets **much more as kings to be worshipped, than as prophets to be tested against the Spirit,** and the fact that our leaders have allowed, perpetuated, and demanded this behavior does not speak highly of them, or of us. We have fallen into the exact same trap that the ancient Israelites got tangled up, which is outlined in tragic and vivid detail in 1 Samuel 8:7-22.

During the doctrinal transitions that have taken place during our history, we have rejected the Lord to some areas of the gospel (D&C 84:54-84 and 2 Nephi 28:31), we have failed to accept the Savior as our King, and we have demanded to have a flesh-and-blood mortal king, or idol, to lead us.

Even while Joseph was still alive, we had started demanding a mortal leader who would unpack the gospel for us, and who would minutely explain to us what all of the commandments mean and how to live those commandments (D&C 58:26), rather than us showing a willingness to engage with the Holy Ghost and unpack, test, experiment with, and obey the gospel for ourselves (Moroni 10:5, Alma 32, Moroni 7:15, John 7:17, Matthew 7:7, James 1:5-6, etc.).

Hence the reason the Lord could not protect us or uphold us in any of the proto-Zions that we attempted to establish in the early years, because we were already in violation of the First Commandment, and we had started to treat the mortal leaders as gods or idols.

For the last 180+ years, the Lord has been waiting for us to have our **Mosiah II repentance moment** (Mosiah 29:38), in which we will finally awaken from our spiritual slumber, cease our idolatry, and return to a proper and holy worship of the One True and Eternal King.

Mosiah 29:38, which took place at about 150 BC, is one of the most important moments in the Book of Mormon. It's a record of when Mosiah II abdicates the throne, which was an act of repentance in relation to the 450+ years of idolatrous worship of mortal kings that had taken place during the rule of the Nephite priesthood hierarchy, connecting back to almost 1,000 total years of idolatry that started with King Saul and King David in 1051 BC. Here is the text in Mosiah:

> "Therefore they relinquished their desires for a king, and became exceedingly anxious that every man should have an equal chance throughout all the land; yea, and every man expressed a willingness to answer for his own sins." (Mosiah 29:38)

## The True Keystone of Mormonism

Prior to the 1890-1934 period, the Keystone of Mormonism was without doubt, at least on paper, **Follow the Spirit**. That keystone is found abundantly within the plain language in the Book of Mormon.

For example, see 2 Nephi 28:31, 2 Nephi 4:34, Moroni 10:5, Moroni 7:15, Helaman 5:12, 2 Nephi 9:42, Alma 32, Mosiah 29:38, 1 Nephi 4:6, and many other passages in which the absolute and non-negotiable importance of following the Spirit is identified as being the key to salvation. The emphasis on following the Spirit (over following the prophet) is also found abundantly in the speeches of the early leaders.

If the Book of Mormon were to be boiled down to one simple statement, it might go something like this:

> "Jesus Christ is the Savior of all mankind. Follow Him."

> In effect: “Follow the Holy Ghost” (**Christ = Holy Ghost**, per 3 Nephi 11:36).

And that is almost the exact statement that Moroni presents to us as being the core purpose and meaning of the entire Book of Mormon, when he is describing the abridgement of all the records that he and his father had carefully edited and brought into one anthology:

> “...Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations—And now, if there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment-seat of Christ.”

It’s absolutely of **atomic-bomb level importance**, that Moroni, who is the “prophet among prophets” presenting the Keystone Anthology to us in his Title Page Warning, is not pointing to himself as being infallible or incapable of leading us astray, he is actually **deprecating himself**, along with **deprecating all of the other associated prophets**, in the very same breath in which he is presenting the Keystone Anthology to us.

In light of that intentional and pointed deprecation, it is more than fair to place **2 Nephi 28:31** as being one of the most centrally important verses in the Book of Mormon because that verse echos Moroni’s **Title Page Warning** in very direct and powerful language, and it encapsulates what the original Keystone of Mormonism actually is, with a high degree of simplicity and purity:

> “Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, or maketh flesh his arm, or shall hearken unto the precepts of men, save their

> precepts shall be given by the power of the Holy Ghost." (2 Nephi 28:31)
>
> **Cross reference–**
>
> "...man should not counsel his fellow man, neither trust in the arm of flesh— But that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world... (D&C 1:19-20)

And that highly important and ultra-concentrated verse of scripture (**2 Nephi 28:31**), which is a clear match for Moroni's Title Page Testimony, is also referenced and pointed to by a good number of other passages in the Book of Mormon, and in the Doctrine and Covenants, and in the "individualist / personal responsibility / Follow the Spirit" version of Mormonism that was taught by Joseph Smith and various other early leaders.

One of the most potent examples of the original version of Mormonism is from Joseph Smith's Ezekiel 14 speech, from 1842, in which he issues a very strong warning to ***not*** follow the prophet, but to follow the Spirit. In that speech he compares himself and the other presiding officers to the Sanhedrin:

> "President Joseph Smith read the 14th chapter of Ezekiel—said the Lord had declared by the Prophet, that the people should each one stand for himself, and depend on no man or men in that state of corruption of the Jewish church—that righteous persons could only deliver their own souls —applied it to the present state of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—said if the people departed from the Lord, they must fall—that they were depending on the Prophet, hence were darkened in their minds, in consequence of neglecting the

> duties devolving upon themselves." (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 237)

Meanwhile, in the present times, under the aegis of the **New and Impure Keystone of Mormonism**, we get shallow and tragic ignorance like this:

> "I do not know if the LDS general authorities ever gave passionate sermons on "holding sacred the freedom of conscience,"... but they do not give such talks today. As Latter-day Saints know, contemporary general authority sermons emphasize obedience to ecclesiastical authority and loyalty to the institutional church above virtually every other value. ...
> [There is] an insistence that individual religious conscience be subordinated to the church's institutional interests." (Professor Frederick Mark Gedicks, BYU Law Review, 2003, Issue 3, page 969)

The reason why such an eminent scholar (who held the Guy Anderson Chair at the BYU Law School for almost 20 years) "doesn't know" of such earlier speeches –plenty of which do exist– is because:

> (1) he is politely pretending to not know about those speeches, because they are sharply antagonistic to the version of the gospel that our present leaders teach, or,
>
> (2) because he had been drinking the *Woodruff infallibility kool-aid* so heavily, having been actually nursed on it from birth as most post-1890 members have been, that he didn't even bother to look for such speeches, and didn't care if such speeches even existed, much less did he have any interest in

> understanding if such speeches might hold a purer or more accurate version of Mormonism than the version that is currently being taught.

We need a redemption arc from Professor Emeritus Gedicks, and from many other priestcrafters. It's not too late to repent.

**Professor Gedicks,** please get on the righteous side of this issue and participate in this renaissance effort. We need you and many others to step up and realize that the office of the president of the Church is not supposed to be treated as a Santa-daddy proxy god that requires constant fawning and preening over, or automatic obedience from subordinates.

Instead, it is a tremendously high-risk and nearly impossible calling in which to operate in a righteous and responsible manner (D&C 121:39), and it needs constant oversight, checking and balancing from opposing voters (D&C 124:144), countervailing council authorities (D&C 107:82-84), and public expressions of disapproval (D&C 42:91).

Hardcore legal experts such as yourself should have pure knowledge in relation to D&C 124, 107, and 42, 98, 101, 119, 120, and 134, but you clearly **lack that knowledge at present**. Please start on a redemption arc in your life and start showing up for work in these highly important areas of the gospel.

## Back to the full group:

Supposing for the sake of argument that even a small number of you smarty-pants Intelligentsia-grade members were to go **full rage against the machine** (Matthew 23), there might well turn out to be

enough momentum on your side –enough support from the common membership base– that the Wizard of Oz curtain that is currently protecting the well-meaning but tyrannical prophet-kings might get torn away, and it might result in us as a people being ready for better leaders, which the Lord is **ready and willing to give us** just as soon as a critical mass of the Saints manifest a readiness for that blessing (D&C 130:20-21).

And the current leaders could themselves become those **better leaders** by rising to the occasion by massively and immediately improving their behavior, policies, and doctrine. And if they aren't willing to do that, then the Lord will replace them in relatively short order with the quality of leaders that we do deserve, in keeping with the law of restoration, if some critical mass within the Church were to merit it.

If you were to start holding the presiding officers firmly accountable for their mistakes, they would have a serious problem if they and/or your local officers decided to go to war with you. Rather than going to war with you and trying to purge all of you from the Church, a much better path for them would be to acknowledge that you have legitimate grievances, and to commit to you and to the Church that major improvements are on the way.

Before coming out in open warfare against the presiding officers, it would be charitable to give them a fair warning that you are planning to openly vote against them, in order to give them an opportunity to proactively make changes and win back your votes, so that a public war can be avoided if possible.

Meanwhile, if the leaders are **too far gone** or **too prideful** to see the writing on the wall (which they might well be, based on their

behavior thus far) then the ensuing war might split the Church between Wheat and Tares. There might be immense upheaval among the common membership, and maybe that is what needs to happen. Maybe **it really is time** to get that separation process underway in earnest.

At present, there are a massive amount of lukewarm **Tares** and **Unwise Virgins** in the Church –goose-stepping, sieg-heiling members who think all the doctrines are perfect, and who believe that worshiping the leaders is a golden ticket to salvation. Those blind and dishonorable behaviors are **not** what Mormonism is supposed to be about, and those sub-standard members are dragging the holy Church through the mud, and are taking the Lord's name in vain on a **daily basis** by teaching idolatrous filth and attributing it to the Savior.

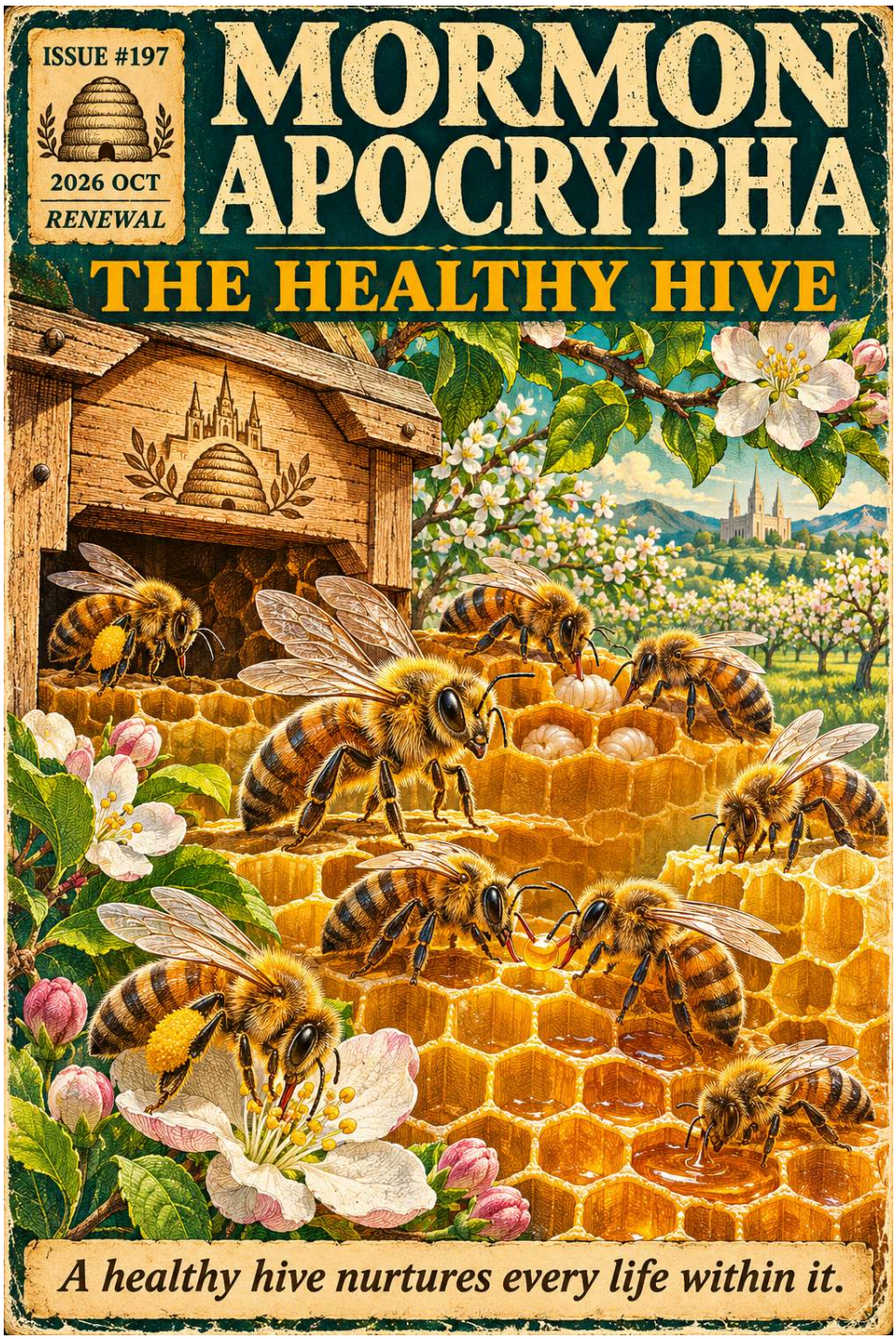
True and original Mormonism is about becoming individually hot or cold in relation to each and every purported commandment of God, and then defying the rest of the world in pursuit of truth and righteousness (2 Nephi 28:31, Moroni 10:5, Alma 32, D&C 1:19-20).

Regardless of whether the presiding officers do deserve advance notice or not, and regardless of whether or not they would commit to making changes in response to such a warning, the following reality remains: The status quo in **totally unacceptable**, and anyone who is voting in approval of what is taking place in the Church at present is complicit in unrighteous dominion, is dishonoring their calling to be a responsible voter in the Church, and is neglecting the commandments and warnings of God that are found in D&C 124:144, JST Mark 9:46, 2 Nephi 28:31, D&C 42:91, Mosiah 13:12-13, and many other scriptures.




It's up to us to unpack, honor, and obey the commandments, and it has to be a grassroots initiative. The sin of idolatry is not the sort of problem that can be solved from the top, vertically downward. It has

to be solved by pure knowledge, sacrifice, and improved behavior at the local level.




We have to start doing what the Book of Mormon and Doctrine & Covenants teach us to do: to take personal responsibility for our own spiritual health, to connect with the Lord for ourselves, to follow the

Spirit no matter what (2 Nephi 28:31, D&C 45:57) and to hold abusive officers to account, in keeping with the holy laws of the Church.

## A Brief History of Common Consent Voting

It's perfectly clear from the scriptures and from Church history that formal votes of opposition are virtuous, and that such votes are an important aspect of the Saints' right to symbolically oppose the status quo (D&C 124:144, JST Mark 9:46, D&C 42:91). By punishing or effectively outlawing opposing votes, we have doomed ourselves to an incestuous or artificial unity.

At present, we are tragically pretending to be unified as a people by forcing everyone to formally vote in approval of the status quo —under threat of expulsion from the temple. By doing that, we are revealing that we are not yet the Lord's true people (D&C 38:27) because we aren't confessing our true differences to each other, much less are we exercising the patience, long-suffering, pure knowledge, or love unfeigned, that will be necessary over time to heal our fractures and become a people who is truly of one heart and one mind.

Put more simply: honest communication is a requirement for the emergence of true unity. And honest and open communication in the Church is profoundly lacking at present. There is an aggressive culture of self-censorship, dishonestly, and chilling of free speech.

Meanwhile, up until 1934, voting in approval of the top presiding officers was optional. Prior to that year, the vote of common consent was something roughly comparable to a report card for the leaders.

Negative votes were essentially low grades, and positive votes were good grades.

In 1902-1904, Joseph F. Smith put forward an intelligent and very reasonable "free will" interpretation of common consent voting in his General Conference addresses, reinforcing a statement that John Taylor had made in 1872 about the purpose of the vote:

> "If we have presidents or apostles or anybody that we do not like, let us vote them out, and be free men, and cultivate and cherish in our bosoms the principles of liberty." (John Taylor, 7 October 1872; "Discourse," The Deseret News Weekly, Volume 21, Number 48)

Importantly, the common "vote" does not hold administrative power, meaning, the Church is not a mob democracy. In relation to voting in approval or disapproval of the top level officers during general conferences, it is clear from D&C 107:82-84 that the First Presidency cannot be "voted out" by the common membership.

In that regard, the votes of common members are symbolic only, and not binding. But nonetheless John Taylor was 100 percent correct that we should vote the way we want to, and that we should **symbolically** reject bad leaders, in keeping with JST Mark 9:46, D&C 124:144, and D&C 42:91.

And this fact is highly important: while it is true that common members can't vote out the First Presidency, those top level officers can indeed be **voted out** by a different process. At the administrative level, when push comes to shove, John Taylor's quote actually turns out to be **technically accurate** for the following reason: the Presiding Bishopric has the administrative power to vote out abusive or

neglectful Presidents of the Church, by means of a Common Council per D&C 107:82-84.

In that regard, we, the Saints as a body **in total**, which includes the Presiding Bishopric, literally can and should **vote out** abusive or neglectful presidents of the Church.

In any event, copied below are the Joseph F. Smith general conference quotes from 1902 and 1904, which outline the "free will" or "vote your conscience" version of common consent voting –ideas which have been aggressively censored or "correlated out" of our curriculum for well over 100 years:

> "We desire that the brethren and sisters will all feel the responsibility of expressing their feelings in relation to the propositions that may be put before you. We do not want any man or woman who is a member of the Church to violate their conscience. We would like all to vote as they feel, whether for or against." (President Joseph F. Smith, 1902 October General Conference)
>
> "We desire that the Latter-day Saints will exercise the liberty wherewith they have been made free by the gospel of Jesus Christ; for they are entitled to know the right from the wrong, to see the truth and draw the line between it and error; and it is their privilege to judge for themselves and to act upon their own free agency with regard to their choice as to sustaining or otherwise those who should exercise the presiding functions among them. We desire the Latter-day Saints to exercise their prerogative, which is, to vote as the Spirit of the Lord prompts them on the measures and the men that may be presented to them." (President Joseph F. Smith, 1904 October General

Conference)

Along with the above quotes being a match for the plain language in D&C 124:144 (received in 1841), the above ideas about free-will voting appear to have been initially mentioned or roughly sketched out for the first time during the first meeting of the Council of Fifty, in Joseph Smith's Red Brick Store in Nauvoo, Illinois, on March 10, 1844:

> "Joseph urged participants to "speak their minds" and "to say what was in their hearts whether good or bad." He said he "did not want to be forever surrounded by a set of '**dough heads**' and if they did not rise up and shake themselves and exercise themselves in discussing these important matters he should consider them nothing better than **dough heads**.'" (source)




***Full stop.*** It's important to point out that several years before he became president of the Church in 1901, Joseph F. Smith made statements about common consent voting that were aggressively **anti-free-will**. He taught the following doctrine when he was the Second Counselor in the First Presidency, in 1898:

> "The moment a spirit enters into the heart of a member to refrain from sustaining the constituted authorities of the Church, that moment he becomes possessed of a spirit which inclines to rebellion or dissension; and if he permit that spirit to take a firm root in his mind, it will eventually lead him into darkness and apostasy." (source)

The above idea shows itself to be impure and irrational doctrine, and clearly traces to the "dead-duck" Woodruff infallibility doctrine from 1890. In light of the fact that the Lord has **commanded us** to openly disapprove of the leaders as we might feel inclined to do (D&C 124:144, JST Mark 9:46, 42:91), the above warning against oppositional voting is misguided fear-mongering that amounts to mindlessly **sucking up** to the idolatrous Woodruff worldview.

After Joseph F. Smith became president in 1901, he manifested a doctrinal evolution or reversal in thinking in relation to common consent voting that was clearly in response to the controversy that was unfolding with Elder Reed Smoot's national-level political career.

Elder Smoot made an initial failed Senate run in 1901, followed by a successful run in 1903. During and after those political campaigns, various political enemies and newspapers pointed out that Elder Smoot was potentially over-leveraged or fatally compromised in a religious sense, due to the "follow the prophet at all costs" aspect of Mormonism. In the 1904 *Puck* Magazine cartoon (image next page), Senator Smoot is depicted as a puppet in the hands of the Mormon Hierarchy, with the patches of fabric on the hierarchy's coat being labelled as follows:

- Mountain Meadows Massacre

- Polygamy
- Murder of Apostates
- Blood Atonement
- Resistance to Federal Authority
- Mormon Rebellion






*Puck* Magazine, 1904 political cartoon / Reed Smoot 1909

And since the Saints had been known to be “law-breakers” in the past –defying the Morrill Act (1862), the Poland Act (1874), the Edmunds Act (1882), the Edmunds-Tucker Act (1887), mass murdering immigrant travelers and trying to cover it up to some extent, making

violent threats towards various groups, etc– there was a certain level of legitimacy in those "anti-Mormon" concerns.

In light of that context, it's clear that the 1902 and 1904 "vote as your conscience dictates" version of common consent was intentionally written up as an answer to the attacks on Elder Smoot, and were "**trotted out**" to show the world that the Saints were ***not*** being forced to make any mandatory oaths of unreserved obedience to the President of the Church. But even though the Elder Smoot political controversy was the reason ***why*** Joseph F. Smith put forward an improved interpretation of the vote of common consent in 1902 and 1904, that reason in no way cancels out the intelligence and wisdom that those doctrinal statements actually contain.

In addition, those doctrinal improvements implicitly ratify and harken back to the excellent free-will-focused interpretation of the vote from John Taylor's 1872 quote, as well as confirming or highlighting the early "dissent is righteous and mandatory" way of thinking from Joseph Smith's 1844 Council of Fifty meeting, along with being in accordance with the plain language of D&C 124:144, JST Mark 9:46, D&C 42:91, D&C 107:82-84, etc.

## A Tragic Misstep by President Heber J. Grant and Many Others

After Joseph F. Smith passed away in late 1918, President Grant and George Albert Smith **immediately** took us back to an **anti-free-will interpretation of the vote**, starting in 1919 conference speeches, and culminating with a devastating policy decision in 1934, most likely with the aim of harmonizing the purpose and meaning of the vote with the 1890 Woodruff presidential infallibility doctrine, which had

become part of the Standard Works by 1908, eighteen years after its first appearance.



*President Heber J. Grant with Senator / Apostle Reed Smoot, circa 1919*

George Albert Smith was strongly in favor of the idea that sustainment was supposed to be an unreserved oath of obedience to the presiding officers (which he started teaching during General Conference in 1919), and President Grant was essentially on the same page as him. A summary of their teachings related to sustainment is found in our official curriculum: Heber J. Grant | George Albert Smith.

By 1934, rather than the vote holding a “soft power” to symbolically approve or disapprove of the status quo, the vote was converted

officially into a **mandatory oath of obedience** to the incumbent officers, and tied to temple worthiness.

And then in 1976, added on top of that mandatory oath of obedience, was a forced "you-must-confess" recognition of the alleged "all-encompassing" keys of the president during the temple recommend process, **which turns out to be mistaken**, because the President of the Church can't direct or exercise all of the keys. One example among several is the key noted in D&C 107:82-84.

The Presiding Bishop is the only officer that can exercise the highly important priesthood power that is found in D&C 107:82-84. Within the "Supreme Court" aspect of the Church's blueprint, the Presiding Bishop **clearly outranks the President of the Church**, and our failure to honor that aspect of the gospel has led to disastrous outcomes.

The 1934 update to the temple recommend interview –which tied the vote to temple worthiness– was a watershed moment in Church history, and not in a good way. It took place after George Albert Smith had been pushing the "unreserved oath of obedience to mortal officers" interpretation of the vote for 15+ years, during his conference addresses as a member of the Twelve.

George Albert Smith became the president of the Church immediately after President Grant, and every president since his administration has kept the temple-worthiness-entanglement aspect of the vote in place, and have been quoting and reinforcing the George Albert Smith interpretation of what the vote allegedly means, and that interpretation is what appears in our current official curriculum today:

> "When you vote affirmatively you make a solemn covenant with the Lord that you will sustain, that is, give your full loyalty and support, without equivocation or reservation, to the officer for whom you vote" (Harold B. Lee, in Conference Report, Apr. 1970, p. 103). (source)

That is the currently accepted paraphrasing of George Albert Smith's doctrine. And the original unabridged version of his doctrine was quoted and reinforced by President Nelson in an October 2014 general conference address ("Sustaining the Prophets").

**Cold hard reality:** the doctrinal and policy changes that took place in relation to the vote from 1919 to 1934 are highly inimical to basic gospel principles. If we would have kept the 1902-1904 version of common consent in place (and taken it seriously), the last 100+ years of our history would have taken us to a much better place than we currently are– and maybe even to the redemption of Zion.

One of the reasons that local priesthood officers take such radical offense to votes of opposition towards the First Presidency is because the current official definition of apostasy is an anti-free-speech pitfall, or misguided "precept of man", and tragically many officers and members firmly believe that this unholy **King Darius-like decree** is actually from the Lord:

> "[Apostasty is] repeatedly acting in clear and deliberate public opposition to the Church, its doctrine, its policies, or its leaders." (General Handbook, 32.6.3.2)


MORMON APOCRYPHA
SPECIAL EDITION
MORMON APOCRYPHA
An impure oath of unreserved obedience to mortal officers
WHEN CONSCIENCE BOWS TO POWER

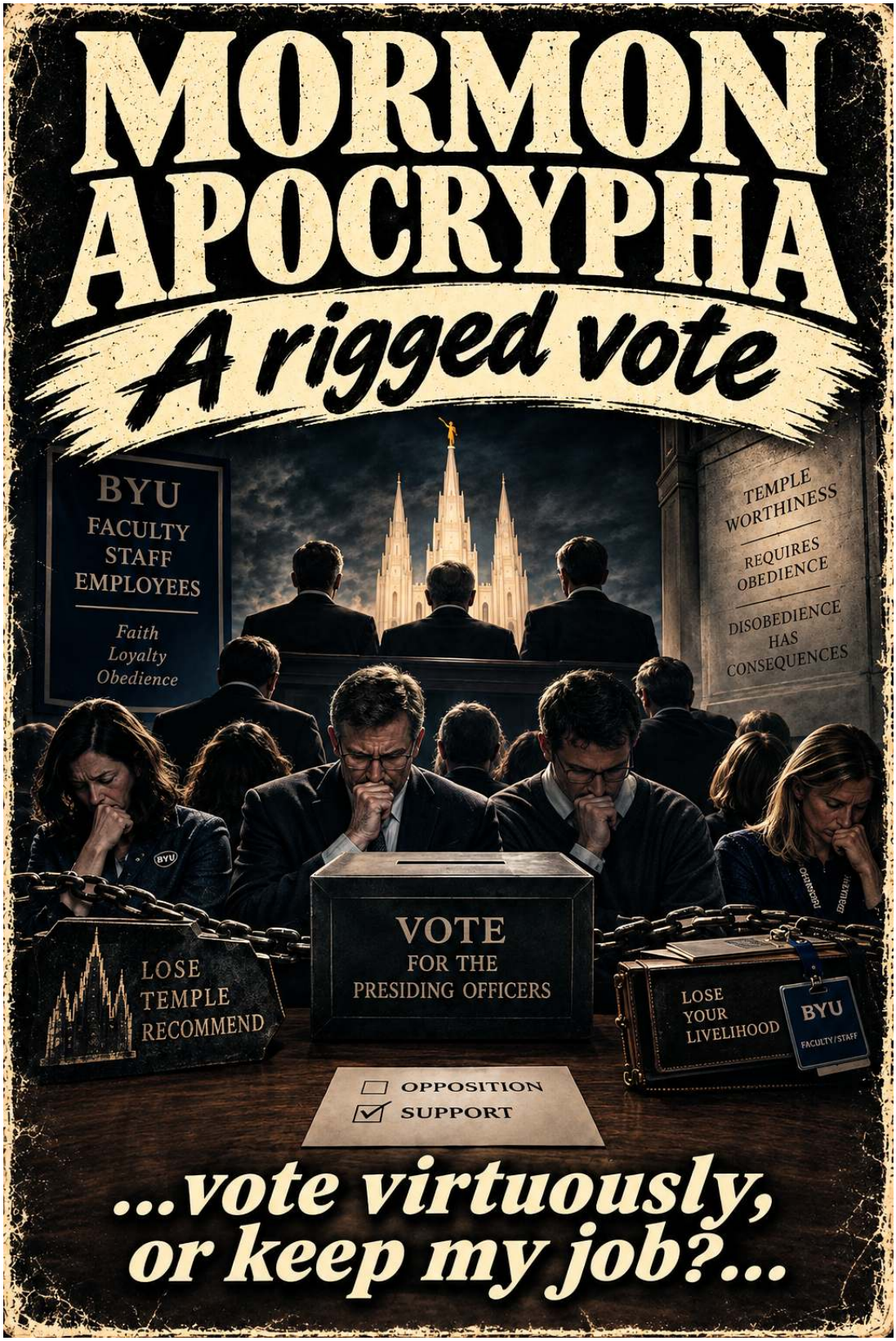
In the real world, the Lord has actually **commanded us** to repeatedly act in clear and deliberate public opposition to the leaders when they offend us. For example: D&C 124:144, JST Mark 9:46, D&C 42:91, and Matthew 23.

Meanwhile, the policies and doctrines in the Church at present, in relation to common consent voting and public criticism of the leadership, are so misguided and so stunting, that obeying the divine commandments in relation to manifesting formal public disapproval of the leaders has been **strictly outlawed** via the temple recommend process, like **Daniel being forbidden to pray** by a decree of King Darius, upon threat of being cast into to the Lion's Den.

Take for example BYU professors and other Church employees who literally cannot vote in formal opposition against the presiding officers, because they would be cast out of the temple, and would **lose their livelihoods** if they were to do that.

In that regard, the current "Academic Freedom Policy" at BYU is actually a **King Darius-like enslavement policy**, in that it invokes the stifling and unrighteous prohibition in General Handbook 32.6.3.2, which requires extremely aggressive self-censorship, and demands "silence by fiat" in order to avoid so called "apostasy."

I have a very expensive bridge to sell to anyone who thinks that aspect of our current definition of "apostasy" has any actual connection to the true gospel of Christ.


MORMON APOCRYPHA
A rigged vote
BYU
FACULTY
STAFF
EMPLOYEES
Faith
Loyalty
Obedience
TEMPLE WORTHINESS
REQUIRES OBEDIENCE
DISOBEDIENCE HAS CONSEQUENCES
VOTE
FOR THE
PRESIDING OFFICERS
LOSE TEMPLE RECOMMEND
LOSE YOUR LIVELIHOOD
BYU
FACULTY/STAFF
OPPOSITION
SUPPORT
...vote virtuously, or keep my job?...

# A Violation of the Holy Sacrament Covenant

Because of how the current doctrine and policy about common consent voting is explicitly structured, something extraordinarily **unrighteous and unacceptable** is taking place when we vote in approval of the incumbent officers. In voting to sustain the current officers, we are not merely giving our temporary or limited consent or approval to the status quo, we are actually making an unreserved oath of obedience to mortal men, and that is profoundly wicked, and it involves **crass and naked idolatry**, and is a very real violation of the First Commandment that God gave to Moses.

Our current and improperly structured "oath of allegiance" to the temporary mortal officers of the Church **clearly violates** the holy Sacrament Covenant "to always remember [the Savior], and "to keep his commandments which he has given us."

Here are some of the commandments that the Savior has given to us: D&C 124:144, D&C 42:91, D&C 107:82-84, Matthew 6:24, Mosiah 12:35, Exodus 20:3, and JST Mark 9:46 . Can we obey those important commandments if we are swearing total allegiance to the temporary mortal officers? **Of course not**. Making an oath of total allegiance to mortals violates Matthew 6:24, it violates the First Commandment, it violates common sense, and it violates several explicit commandments in the Doctrine and Covenants.

In short: obeying all of the commandments of God is **literally impossible** to do when we are swearing total allegiance to the temporary officers and to the mortal corruption that comes with that (2 Nephi 28:31).

In light of the unacceptable and deep-seated violations of the commandments of God that occur within the current approach to voting, absolutely **zero** members of the Church should be offering positive votes of sustainment or approval towards **any priesthood officers at any conference**, until the definition of the vote is officially restructured and repaired in a formal way, with updated curriculum and doctrine that falls within the bounds of sanity, and proper discipleship in Christ. **And those fixes need to happen immediately.**

## Keys, Councils, and a House of (Dis)order

On January 8th, 1844, Joseph attempted to **unilaterally drop** William from the First Presidency. As a result, William immediately complained that it was supposed to require a Common Council before he as a member of the First Presidency could be removed from office (D&C 107:82-84). The cause of the fracture between Joseph and William was as follows:

> "In his last encounter with Joseph Smith on 8 January 1844, William boldly declared that polygamy "was of the Devil and that Joseph should put it down," and that it was in contradiction to the Doctrine and Covenants [D&C 42:22-24]. But when the prophet insisted that his practice of the ancient order of marriage was by revelation, any remaining hope for a reconciliation was destroyed. Richard S. Law, William's son, said his father, "with his arms around the neck of the prophet was pleading with him to withdraw the doctrine of plural marriage...William pleaded for this with Joseph with tears streaming from his eyes. The Prophet was also in tears but he informed [William] that he could not withdraw the doctrine for God had commanded him to teach it and condemnation would

> come upon him if he was not obedient to the commandment." (source)

William asked that a Common Council be held during the **April General Conference in 1844**, but he was denied. Joseph acknowledged William's request during the conference itself, but swept the matter under the rug as follows:

> "It had been expected by some that the little petty difficulties which have existed would be brought up and investigated before this conference but it will not be the case; these things are of too trivial a nature to occupy the attention of so large a body." (source)

**NEWS FLASH:** that absurd and tyrannical drop-kick from Joseph was a massive and obvious **RED FLAG**. Plural marriage is anything but a "**trivial**" or "**little petty**" matter. Polygamy and polyandry **are earth-shattering and radical doctrines**, and it doesn't require a degree in astrophysics or quantum mechanics to understand that Joseph's antagonism towards the idea of holding a proper Common Council in relation to William Law's concerns was **unrighteous and tyrannical**. That unwillingness to follow the laws of the Church highlights the fact that the Saints were on a crash course with some very serious and soon-to-be-manifested chaos and disaster.

Two weeks later, on April 18, a kangaroo court tried William *in absentia* without a summons or notice, and declared a verdict of excommunication, with William being informed of the result after the fact, along with his wife Jane Silverthorn Law and several others also being informed of their summarily-decided-upon excommunications. The presiding officer at the unlawful trial was Brigham Young, who was President of the Twelve at the time, and

there were approximately thirty other high-ranking officers in attendance.

In relation to William Law, that trial was **unlawful and meaningless**, because members of the First Presidency are not accountable to the President of the Twelve, or to any *ad hoc* councils that might be called by that officer. Per the holy laws of God, only the Presiding Bishopric with a specially chosen panel of twelve high priests as jurors can discipline a member of the First Presidency (D&C 107:82-84).

William Law wrote in his journal that the trial was "**illegal**" and that "**B. Young had no right to preside**" (Diary of William Law, 21 April, 1844). And William was 100 percent correct in making those judgements.

In our current Historical Resources, and Church History, and Gospel Courses sections of the Church's website, the official position of the Church is that William was in fact "**excommunicated**" in the month of April of 1844. That assertion is simply not true – it is **FACTUALLY INCORRECT**, and it's a mistake that needs to be remediated in each of those locations, along with correcting it anywhere else where it might appear in the official literature or curriculum of the Church.

William was not excommunicated from the Church, he was **exiled**. A kangaroo court made a feckless attempt to excommunicate him, and then published an obscene writ of judgement that had zero legitimacy.

If you were to take a slip of Monopoly money and write "ONE TRILLION DOLLARS" on it with a #2 pencil, it would have more meaning than the notice of excommunication that was issued to William Law in 1844.

One of the truly “insane” things about the situation is that when that 1844 kangaroo excommunication trial was held, Brigham Young was already **multiple wives deep** into the secret underground polygamy circle that he and Joseph and several others had been participating in since at least April of 1841-1842, whereas William, having been a counselor already in the First Presidency for **almost three years** (since January 1841, when the Lord explicitly named him to that office, per D&C 124:126), he had only just been informed about plural marriage for the first time in late 1843.

Accounts differ as to whether or not Joseph propositioned William’s wife Jane during the chaotic events in 1843-44:

> **Mid-1843:** William and Jane Law are privately introduced to the doctrine of plural marriage by Joseph and Hyrum Smith. The Laws are deeply troubled and immediately reject the doctrine.
>
> **Late 1843:** According to accounts from William Law and later a testimony from Ann Eliza Young (ex-plural-wife of Brigham Young), Joseph Smith visited Jane at night (when she was 29 years old, with him being 38) while William was away, and proposed that she enter into a polyandrous plural marriage with him, telling her it was God′s will, and that William could have half her love and Joseph would have the other half. Jane adamantly refused.
>
> **January 8, 1844:** Following William Law′s threats to expose polygamy if Joseph wouldn’t cease, desist, and denounce all plural marriage activity, Joseph informed William that he had been dropped from the First Presidency.

> **Hyrum Smith's version of what transpired with Jane Law:** After the June 7, 1844 *Nauvoo Expositor* newspaper was published, and it was publicly known that William and Jane had rejected polgamy, Hyrum Smith gave testimony to the Nauvoo City Council on June 8 1844 that Jane Law had approached Joseph, had thrown her arms around his neck, and begged him to take her as a wife. According to Hyrum's account, Jane wanted Joseph to marry her to secure her salvation because William was being denied temple ordinances due to alleged adultery. Hyrum claimed Joseph strictly refused her advances.

More than forty years later, in 1887, William said the following about the doctrine of plural marriage:

> "Jane and I were just turned upside down by it, we did not know what to do." (William Law Interview, 30 March 1887, page 6)

In January of 1844, after his tearful pleading with Joseph to stop polygamy, and then subsequently being unlawfully "dumped" from the First Presidency, William wrote:

> "What my feelings have been I cannot relate; various and painful at times almost beyond endurance a thousand recollections burst upon my burning brain the past the present and the future disappointed hopes injured feelings where they should have been held sacred these things are as poisoned arrows in my bleeding heart." (Diary of William Law, 13 January, 1844)



President William Law - 2nd Counselor in the First Presidency, appointed 21 January 1841, **exiled** in April 1844.

Not only was the new plural marriage doctrine a devastating monkey wrench to deal with on its own terms (regardless of whether Joseph propositioned Jane or not), but it also coincided with a profound and bewildering **violation of interpersonal trust**, given that for the last several years, William, as a member of the First Presidency, had been testifying to the Church and to the world that there was zero approval within the Church for any sort of plural marriage activity whatsoever.

William had believed Joseph's assertions to that effect, and had been openly and stridently defending Joseph against complaints and accusations to the contrary. In other words, Joseph had clearly been using William as a cloak or an unwitting double-agent, up until it was decided to make an attempt to bring him into the inner circle.

And while it's not impossible that a years-long build up to an invitation to participate in a highly controlled and sacred commandment could have been in keeping with the Lord's will (however unlikely that might appear to be), it is nonetheless impossible for any reasonable person to avoid admitting that a Common Council investigation would have been an **OBVIOUS AND NECESSARY ACTION**, in order to check and balance the situation, and to obtain clarity from the Lord per the laws of the Church, that all was well, and to find out if there might be transgressions or abuses in the mix, whatever the case might turn out to be, which is the entire reason why the "Supreme Court" mechanism exists within the Church's blueprint in the first place (D&C 107:82-84).

Given that a member of the First Presidency had been used for several years as an unwitting double-agent to hide doctrinal contradictions or a highly "specialized" doctrinal nuance involving plural marriage and/or secret sexual relationships, such a condition is about as **hardcore of a reason that could possibly exist** for the legitimate and necessary empanelment of a Common Council, short of an accusation of **actual murder**.

And given that both the First Counselor and the Second Counselor in the First Presidency had expressed the most strident alarm and disagreement with the situation, it was a MASSIVE AND SPECTACULAR FAILURE OF DUTY on Bishop Whitney's part when he

chose not to empanel a Common Council investigation in relation to the matter.

The *raison d'être* of the Presiding Bishop's "common council" is that it has the divinely appointed responsibility and power **to bring an end to controversy** in relation to Presidents of the High Priesthood (D&C 107:84), and there very much **was a controversy** taking place in 1843-1844, and it was taking place with **all three of the presidents** simultaneously (Sidney Rigdon was also at odds with Joseph).

After being "excommunicated" (**exiled**) *in absentia* by an unlawful kangaroo court presided over by none other than hardcore polygamist Brigham Young –the existence of which polygamy had just barely become known to William, he understandably felt it was necessary to warn the Saints of the secret and ongoing mass-adultery (as he saw it) that was taking place with the top officers, hence his participation in the *Nauvoo Expositor* issue of June 7, 1844.

## So What Does it All Mean?

The polyandry + polygamy fight that William and Joseph were tangled up in was of high intensity, and it involved highly important doctrinal implications for the future of the Church. The fact that Joseph attempted to unilaterally drop William from the First Presidency is an undeniable **RED FLAG** that must be taken seriously and acknowledged as being **A PROBLEM OF THE HIGHEST ORDER**, because only the Presiding Bishopric can formally discipline a member of First Presidency, and any attempt to corrupt or sideline that process represents a clear and obvious violation of the laws of the Church, which the scriptures warn us is a **MATTER OF SPIRITUAL LIFE AND DEATH** (D&C 42:59-60).

In April 1844, we have the following realities:

- Joseph was clearly acting in a **tyrannical and unrighteous way**, and was dishonoring his keys in some areas of the gospel, and needed to be reigned in.
- William Law rightfully attempted to hold Joseph accountable according to the plainly written laws of the Church.
- Joseph attempted to silence William by attempting to summarily release him from the highest executive council of the Church, which was **unlawful, unrighteous, and abusive behavior** on Joseph's part (cross ref D&C 121:39).
- William's legitimate request for redress was ignored by the Presiding Bishop, and the unlawful strong-arm excommunication attempted by Brigham Young created more sin, and more bad blood, all around.
- After the attempt at lawful redress took place, followed by an unlawful kangaroo court exile action, things devolved into the classic 19th century honor-culture of provocation and retaliation, in which public insults "had to be met" with equal and opposite force. Publicly accusing Joseph Smith of degrading women and running a military-enforced underground harem or bordello that was tricking women into fornication or adultery with promises of salvation "had to be met" with smashing the Nauvoo Expositor press, which provoked additional violence, mobbing, bloodlust, etc.
- By 1844, a significant number of the Saints had started **worshiping Joseph Smith as being a god or an infallible king.** And that same mood or atmosphere in the Church would continue on for the next 50+ years in relation to the subsequent leaders, with minimal pushback (by Orson Pratt and a few others), until the idolatry poison took full hold, and we formally

canonized **NAKED IDOLATRY** into our system of government, and went full Prodigal Son, by trading in our divine inheritance of Heavenly King for worldly king-worship, precisely along the lines of what happened in Samuel 8:7-22.

- The entire Mormon canon was **implicitly destroyed** (on paper) by Official Declaration 1, because that declaration gives absolute fiat to the president, makes him an infallible emperor, makes him above the law, and makes whatever he says or does, by definition, the mind and will of the Lord. It is utter madness, devastating tragedy, and was the unwitting near-total destruction of **Original Mormonism**.

In sum: In the conflict that took place between William and Joseph, our natural bias towards defending Joseph is understandable, due to his position as the Prophet of the Restoration, but he was **not an innocent party** in the conflict that took place in 1844. He was clearly OUT OF CONTROL to some extent, and was demonstrating little to no respect for the disciplinary laws of the Church —in particular D&C 107:82-84.

As a people, we have been unwilling to deal with our own history in an honest and virtuous way. Instead of being dispassionate about what happened in 1844, and **calling a spade a spade**, we have a very stubborn blind spot, and we have been firmly unwilling to face reality.

All of our mainstream curriculum is infected with the **net-outcome infallibility poison**. Thus, telling the full truth about what happened in our history has been classified as "evil speaking" or "apostasy," which has been damning the Church for years. Intelligent discussion in relation to various topics is impossible by anyone who is a paid employee of the Church, such as at BYU.

And that is because the truth about what happened in 1844 "**opposes**" rather than merely "**discusses**" the Church's current teachings, policies, positions, etc., thus violating the snow-flake level delicacy and irrationality of the unChristlike censorship policy at BYU. The question we should be asking is this:

> "**Do the Church and the presiding officers sometimes deserve to be openly opposed?**"

And the obvious answer to that is **YES**, and the Lord has already provided us with the mechanisms and laws within the Church's blueprint for how to righteously and openly oppose abusive leaders, which has been outlawed by the well-intentioned but nonetheless **willfully ignorant** modern-day Pharisees who currently control the Church.

# A House of Order

Here is what should have taken place on January 8, 1844: The Presiding Bishop should have treated William Law's complaint with proper respect, and should have immediately convened a Common Council to investigate the immensely serious conflict that existed between Joseph Smith and William Law, who were both Presidents of the High Priesthood, and therefore fell under the jurisdiction of a Common Council.

A Common Council would have had the duty to get to the bottom of the polyandry + polygamy chaos, and that council would have had the authority and the divine inspiration to **judge righteous judgement,** and to **bring an end to the controversy,** per D&C 107:82-84.

# Radical Neglect of Duty by Bishop Newel K. Whitney

There is a very obvious reason **why** a Common Council disciplinary trial never took place in relation to William Law's complaint against Joseph Smith. And that is because Newel K. Whitney, the Presiding Bishop in 1844, was a **hardcore polygamist.** Newel and his wife Elizabeth consented to have their 17-year-old daughter, Sarah Ann Whitney, sealed to Joseph Smith in 1842. And then Whitney himself took several additional wives by 1844. So of course he wasn't going to honor his duty in terms of following due process for William Law's complaints in relation to D&C 107:82-84.

It was such an obvious conflict of interest, and such a profound neglect of duty that Bishop Whitney was engaging in, when he refused to hold a Common Council investigation in response to William Law's complaint against Joseph. And the fact that none of the Twelve said a peep about that radical and unacceptable neglect of duty, and instead participated in an "extra-judicial" and illegal excommunication kangaroo court in an attempt to silence or get rid of William, is **strong evidence that a very real rot had taken hold**, in various areas of the gospel, and that the doctrine of plural marriage might have accelerated into something ungodly and destructive, if in fact it was ever divinely authorized in the first place.

It's not as if the Twelve were clueless about the meaning and purpose of Common Councils. Joseph Smith had already been brought up on charges in 1834 in relation to various bad behaviors, and due process had been properly engaged.

And Whitney himself had been the Presiding Bishop who had initiated and presided at that trial in 1834, and he was fully aware of why the Common Council protocol existed and what its purpose was. Further, while blatantly ignoring William Law's legitimate request for a Common Council in January of 1844, Whitney had zero problem **whipping out the Supreme Court robes** the moment Brigham Young brought charges against Sidney Rigdon in September of 1844, who at the time was thought to be a potential "heir to the throne" due to his "residual status" as a First Presidency member.

Ironically, by empaneling a Common Council in that case, Bishop Whitney was tacitly confirming that Sidney was in fact still a member of the First Presidency, which does not appear to be accurate. Without a living president in place, it would seem that a First Presidency no longer exists. And that is because the authority to **administer ordinances** comes explicitly from the "**one**" Presiding High Priest over the Church, per D&C 107:65-67, and without that "**one**" officer being in place, it would seem that the keys of the First Presidency are not longer operational and get automatically dissolved back to the Twelve.

In that regard, the loss of a president due to death is like pulling a firing pin out of a gun, and thus the next equal-in-authority body would then hold primacy by default, which would be the Twelve, per D&C 107:24, which is a body that, with agreement from the Seventy and stake high councils, can choose a new First Presidency, per D&C 107:22.

The "**ordinances**" provision in D&C 107:65-67 is likely where the presiding officers derived the inaccurate idea about "all keys" being under the control of the president. The right to administer

**ordinances** is under the control of the president, but not all priesthood actions are **ordinances.**

For example, a Common Council is not an ordinance, it is what the Lord calls a "**council**," and the president has zero authority to interfere with that council, and he can be removed from office by that council, and have his keys stripped from him by that council. There are a good number of other areas within the blueprint of the Church in which the president lacks the authority to interfere or enforce his will on others, and that is because **the laws of the Church outrank him** (D&C 42:59-60).

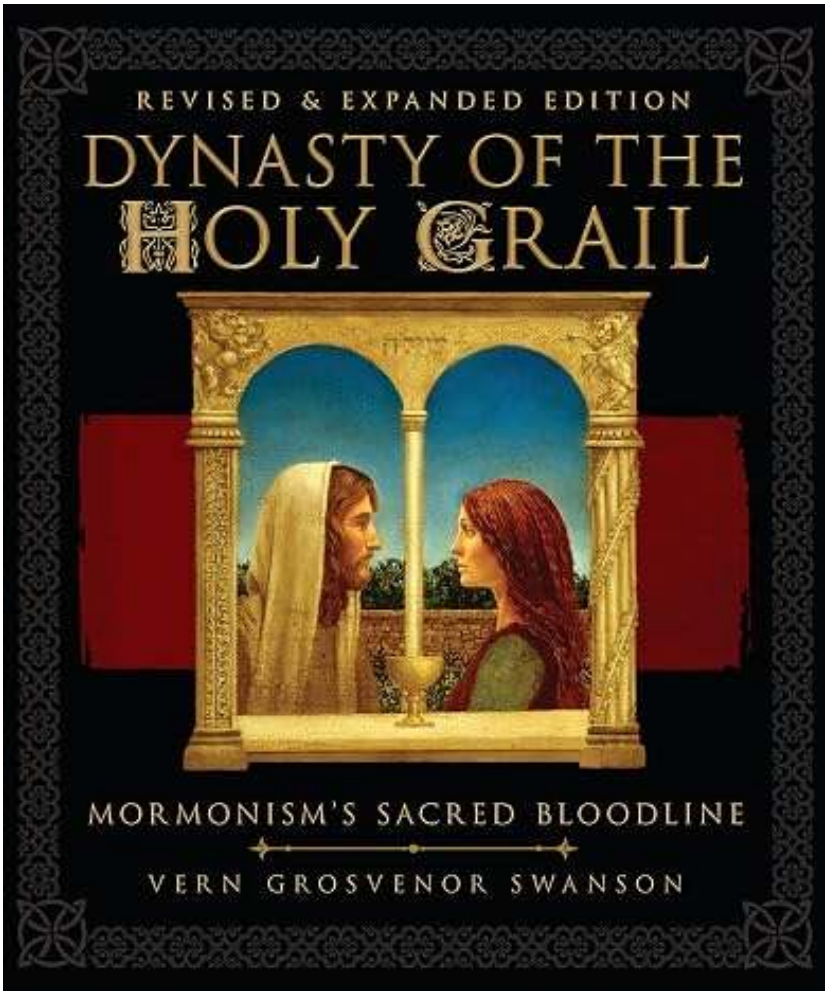
In any case, it appears that Bishop Whitney **failed twice in 1844**. First, he failed to hold a critically necessary Common Council in relation to William Law and Joseph Smith, and second, he held a meaningless and unlawful Common Council for a member of the Church who no longer held First Presidency standing.

In sum, William Law and Sidney Rigdon should still be found as members of the Church in the official records. They were **exiled**, not properly excommunicated. The fact that they have been scrubbed from the membership records of the Church is a tragic testament to the fact that we have been acting in a lawless and disobedient way in relation to various aspects of D&C 107 for almost our entire history.

## What is Polygamy even About?

Evidence that plural marriage might have been a trojan horse from the word "go" is here, here, and here.

On the other hand, per Swanson's demigod thesis, which Brigham Young appears to have spoken about in the early years of the Church and confirmed as being legitimate, plural marriage was necessary and approved by God to rebuild the literal bloodline of Christ on earth, per Daniel 2:44, D&C 86:9, and D&C 107:40, with a relatively small group of male descendants being the seed-sires of that critical rebuild.




The basic gist of the theory is that Christ's children were taken to Priddy England as a protective measure by Joseph of Arimathea, after the crucifixion. Those children were then lost to history until 1830, when their descendants gathered at the inception of the Church.

Thus, when the Savior calls Joseph Smith "**my son**" in D&C 121, 122, and 130, it is more than the common connection of God being everyone's Father, it is the Savior speaking to one of his own blood descendants. Within that context, polygamy was supposed to be limited to the men within the Church who actually had the special bloodline, and was not supposed to be a free-for-all.

Meanwhile, it was essentially "bad luck" on the female side of the equation, since the female descendants of Christ allegedly outnumbered the male descendants by a factor of about 3-to-1. Thus to multiply the bloodline in a rapid no-nonsense way, a significant percentage of the early women in the Church had to share a husband, during the initial "building up of the Kingdom of God" (Daniel 2:44) so that the demigod seed-sires could propagate an army or kingdom of demigods in relatively short order, during approximately a 50 year period, thereby creating a potent-enough group (missionary types and language-gifted, etc.) to pose a legitimate real-world threat to the temporary "god of this world," who is the devil.

If plural marriage was actually authorized by God to any extent in relation to a bloodline restoration process, it seems that one of the problems with the initial application of it is that the sexual novelty that came with it was too much for the males to handle properly (including Joseph Smith), and things spiralled out-of-control in various ways right at the beginning.

That being as it might be, one of the points of evidence that appears to support the demigod thesis is that Joseph Smith was, as established by multiple first-hand accounts, a profoundly Christ-like, magnetic, and radiant human being at the interpersonal level. There was something very unique and rare about him.

Josiah Quincy, a prominent Harvard graduate and future mayor of Boston who met Joseph in 1844, was baffled by his encounter with Joseph and had trouble reconciling it, in light of how much contempt he had for Mormonism in general. He described Joseph as having a "rugged power" "kingly faculty", and being "extraordinary", "remarkable," and "emphatically possessed of intrinsic leadership, capacity, and resource."

Such high compliments, especially coming from a begrudging source, might be evidence that a **demigod** was being described, with so many Christ-like characteristics being manifest in one person. And from Parley P. Pratt, we have a similar testimony, but with considerably more detail:

> "Joseph's countenance was ever mild, affable, beaming with intelligence and benevolence; mingled with a look of interest and an unconscious smile, or cheerfulness, and entirely free from all restraint or affectation of gravity; and there was something connected with the serene and steady penetrating glance of his eye, as if he would penetrate the deepest abyss of the human heart, gaze into eternity, penetrate the heavens, and comprehend all worlds. He possessed a noble boldness and independence of character; his manner was easy and familiar; his rebuke terrible as the lion; his benevolence unbounded as the ocean; his intelligence universal, and his language abounding in original eloquence peculiar to himself –not polished—not studied—not smoothed and softened by education or refined by art; but flowing forth in its own native simplicity, and profusely abounding in variety of subject and manner. He interested and edified, while, at the same time, he amused and entertained his audience; and none listened to him that were ever weary with his discourse. I have even known him

> to retain a congregation of willing and anxious listeners for many hours together, in the midst of cold or sunshine, rain or wind, while they were laughing at one moment and weeping the next. Even his most bitter enemies were generally overcome, if he could once get their ears." (source)

It appears from what is known that almost everyone who met Joseph in person immediately liked him and felt comfortable around him, and in most situations he had zero pretense, zero arrogance, children loved being around him, he was playful, kind, generous, and loving. That certainly sounds like a person who might be a literal blood descendant of the Savior, and was manifesting Christ-like characteristics from inherited DNA.

And those Christ-like qualities of Joseph's were richly attested to by many people, including Peter H. Burnett, Elam Cheney, Rachel R. Grant, Jane James, Jacob Jones, Lydia B. Knight, John D. Lee, Lyman O. Littlefield, James Palmer, Jane S. Richards, Jane S. Richards, Herbert S. Salisbury, John Smith, Eunice B. Snow, George W. Taggart, Wandle Mace, and others.

But none of that changes the fact that in 1844 there was massive conflict taking place in the Church, and Joseph was exhibiting some undeniably **tyrannical and abusive behavior**, and was on a crash-course with disaster.

In sum: we have a horrible reputation in general, for all the lying, chaos, and abuses that took place during the early years. We have a lot of unresolved sins that need to be dealt with on that front, **regardless** of whether plural marriage was authorized by God or not. The plural marriage issue needs to be firmly investigated and adjudicated, once

and for all, by **a righteous and uncompromising Common Council event**, and it needs to happen immediately.

Whether plural marriage (in any of its forms) was approved by God or not, or whether it had been initially approved and then got out of control, the fact remains that a **disciplinary council** in accordance with D&C 107:82-84 was necessary by January 8, 1844, in order to restore order, and was probably needed much sooner than that, due to the tremendous amount of chaos and conflict that was taking place between the Three Presidents of the High Priesthood.

In the summer of 1842, Sidney Rigdon's 19-year-old daughter Nancy "flatly refused" a plural marriage proposal from Joseph Smith (attested to by John Wickliffe Rigdon, Nancy's brother), and this caused a fracture between Joseph and Sidney which resulted in Sidney essentially being exiled to preside over a congregation in Pennsylvania, and having little or nothing more to do with managing the Church at large until 1844, when he was called back to speak at the ground breaking for the Nauvoo temple, and to participate in the US Presidential run as Joseph's VP candidate.

In August of 1843, Joseph unsuccessfully attempted to have a special conference vote to remove Sidney as a counselor in the First Presidency, but the attendees chose not to vote Sidney out. It would have been an **unlawful and meaningless vote** even if they had voted for removal, since D&C 107:82-84 is the relevant law, and random votes at random conferences do not have mob-democracy authority to remove members of the First Presidency.

Bishop Whitney was clearly already in serious neglect of duty at that point, and should have intervened to discipline Joseph for that attempted **tyranny and lawless behavior** towards Sidney.

# Radical Neglect of Duty by Bishop W. Christopher Waddell

Almost eleven months ago, in December of 2025, I sent a request to Doug Andersen (Global Director of Media Relations for the Church newsmedia@churchofjesuschrist.org) to deliver my request for a Common Council to the Presiding Bishopric.

The reason for asking Doug to deliver my request is because local officers have for the last 16+ years proven to be **utterly worthless, contemptuous, hostile, and unwilling to fulfill their priesthood duty of care** in terms of forwarding my numerous requests for a Common Council through the internal priesthood chain of command. Hence the reason for knocking on the public-facing "front door" of the Church, rather than continuing to play ring-around-the-rosies with the local dough heads.

But Doug Andersen has proven to be **equally worthless**. He is a captive in a perverse Wizard of Oz-like system, spiritually compromised and corporately compromised, like all employees of the Church currently are. Who knows if he has actually forwarded my requests, or if he is gatekeeping so hard that he feels the need to protect the delicate little egos of his corporate task masters by sheltering them from reality and from constructive criticism —criticism that however accurate they would no doubt consider to be "evil speaking."

My guess is that Doug has actually forwarded my requests, and has subsequently been instructed to give me the silent treatment by the

presiding officers, so that they can maintain plausible deniability, but who knows.

## Polygamy + Polyandry Remains an Open Wound in the Church

With regard to plural marriage, given that the current presiding officers have tacitly taken sides with Bishop Whitney's obscene failure of duty in 1844, and have given implicit *carte blanche* to everything that Joseph Smith did in relation to polygamy and polyandry, **the current officers are themselves guilty** of perpetuating and approving of the 1844 disorder and chaos that remains unresolved to this day.

And for that reason, the current First Presidency needs to be investigated and held accountable by the incumbent Presiding Bishop —or by a righteous future Presiding Bishop, if the current Bishop continues to be a **lame duck**.

The reason I omitted the polygamy-polyandry issue from my 12 grievances in my 2025 letter to Bishop Waddell, is because the presiding officers are such **immature babies**, that until we resolve the more basic issues of idolatry, misguided definitions of evil speaking and apostasy, blatant corruption of common consent, mass practice of priestcraft, and pervasive and institutional-level dishonesty, bringing up polygamy with the current leaders would be comparable to trying to teach differential calculus to a three-year-old. But they better learn calculus now, because I'm formally adding this grievance to my existing list of grievances, as of right now, with this letter.

The chaos of polygamy + polyandry can only be resolved by a righteous Presiding Bishop, and all of the millions of wasted hours on apologetics and hand-wringing that have taken place over the years have all been an obscene travesty, and a tragically unnecessary engine of attrition and angst.

The Lord has given us an orderly process for resolving our conflicts and mistakes, and **we need to put on our big boy pants, and our big girl pants**, and start to follow the laws of the Church that apply, so that we can obtain inspired resolutions and proper closure to our wounds and mistakes, rather than continuing this obscene ring-around-the-rosies with tyrannical mortal prophet-kings, which is a dishonorable and drunken dance (similar to the ancient Israelites dancing around a golden calf) that has been going on for almost our entire history as a people.

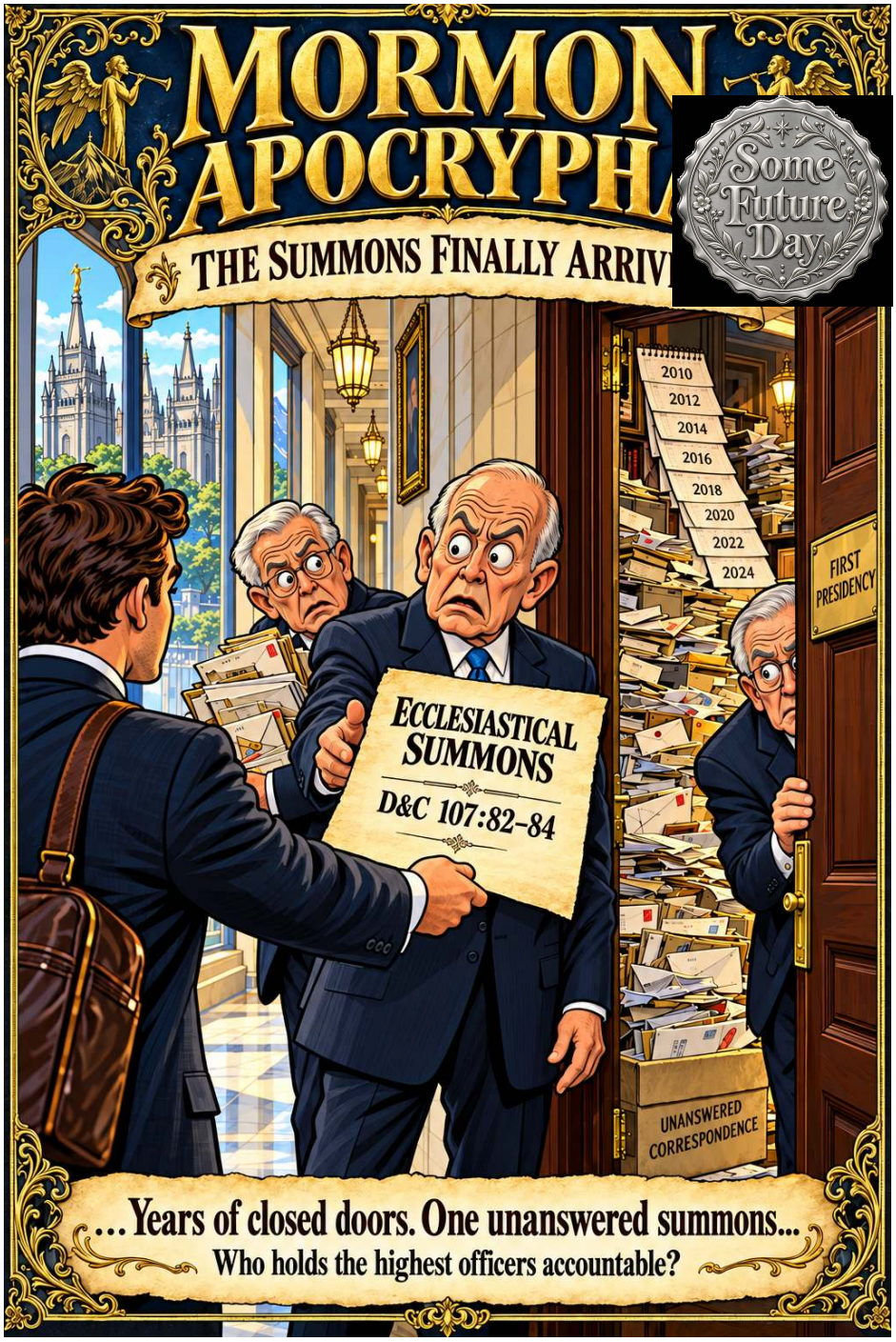
One of the most striking passages in the Standard Works is found in D&C 85:7, which is apparently talking about **a Presiding Bishop** either past or future:

> "And it shall come to pass that I, the Lord God, will send one mighty and strong, holding the scepter of power in his hand, clothed with light for a covering, whose mouth shall utter words, eternal words; while his bowels shall be a fountain of truth, to set in order the house of God, and to arrange by lot the inheritances of the saints whose names are found, and the names of their fathers, and of their children, enrolled in the book of the law of God..." (D&C 85:7)

In relation to that passage, the Joseph F. Smith First Presidency released an official statement in November of 1905, as follows:

> "...If, however, there are those who will still insist that the prophecy concerning the coming of "one mighty and strong" is still to be regarded as relating to the future, let the Latter-day Saints know that he will be a future bishop of the Church who will be with the Saints in Zion, Jackson county, Missouri, when the Lord shall establish them in that land; and he will be so blessed with the spirit and power of his calling that he will be able to set in order the house of God, pertaining to the department of the work under his jurisdiction; and in righteousness and justice will "arrange by lot the inheritances of the Saints." He will hold the same high and exalted station that Edward Partridge held; for the latter was called to do just this kind of work—that is, to set in order the house of God pertaining to settling the Saints upon their inheritances." ("First Presidency Statement", Deseret News, 1905-11-11, "One Mighty and Strong", Improvement Era, vol. 10, no. 12, pp. 929–43 (October 1907). . Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft) vol. 4., (1965–1971)

In sum: the office of the Presiding Bishop is of high importance, and we are desperately in need of someone at the Presiding Bishopric level who will show up for work, and will perform in the way that is outlined in D&C 85 – who will hold a scepter of power, who will be clothed in light, who will speak eternal words, who will be a fountain of truth, and who will be worthy to **set in order the house of God** and be with us in a true Zion – a New Jerusalem. At present, the house of God is desperately **out of order** in our currently cursed or fallen Zion (2 Nephi 28:31), and it needs some attention from those who have the power to set things right. Hence the reason we need to put pressure on Bishop Waddell and his counselors. They holds the keys to call a Common Council, and they need to use those keys.




Some day there will be repentance. Whether or not you choose to be part of the effort to help get us there, is up to you.

Joe Murff
Orem Utah