

# **Revelations of Joseph Smith III 1832-1914**



## **Joseph Smith III**

Born Nov. 6, 1832, Kirtland, Ohio

Died Dec. 10, 1914 Independence, Missouri (age 82)

Age 11 at father's death (June 27, 1844)

1852 he was asked to lead RLDS (age 19)

1860 he became prophet leader of RLDS (age 27)



Wives:

1856 (age 24) Emmeline (d. 1869) = 5 children (- 2)

1869 (age 37) Bertha (d. 1896) = 9 children (- 4)

1898 (age 65) Ada = 3 children

Three sons also became president of RLDS church

Frederick Madison (Bertha) (1874-1946) – President (1915-1946)

Israel A. Smith (Bertha) (1876-1958) – President (1946-1958)

Wallace Smith (Ada) (b 1900-d1989) – President (1958-1978)



## Joseph Smith III – Children

Emmaline Grisworld

Emma Josepha (1857-1940)

**Evelyn Rebecca** (1859-1859)

Carrie Lucinda Smith (1861-1944)

Zaide Viola (1863-1891)

**Joseph Arthur** (1865-1866)

Bertha Madison

**David Carlos** (1870-1886)

Mary Audentia (1872-1963)

**Frederick Madison** (1874-1946)

**Israel Alexander** (1876-1958)

**Kenneth** (1877-1877)

**Bertha Azuba** (1878-1884)

Hale Washington (1881-1956)

**Blossom** (1883-1883)

Lucy Yeteve (1884-1945)

Ada Rachel Clark

Richard Clark (1898-1969)

**William Wallace** (1900-1989)

Reginald Archer (1903-1974)

**Died young**

Frederick M. Smith



Israel A. Smith



W. Wallace Smith



Latter Day Saints repeatedly visited Joseph Smith III and asked him to take up his father's mantle, but his reply was that he would only assume the church presidency if he were inspired by God to do so. Finally, in 1860, Smith said that he had received this inspiration and at a conference in Amboy, Illinois on April 6, 1860, he was sustained as president of the RLDS Church.

“Smith received the final answer for which he had ‘hungered’ in the fall of 1859. In an 1880 Autobiography Joseph Smith reported that while praying for an explanation of his troubles he received a divine message—that **‘the Saints reorganized at Zarahemla and other places, is the only organized portion of the Church accepted by me.** I have given them my Spirit and will continue to do so while they remain humble and faithful.’” (Joseph Smith III, Pragmatic Prophet, p. 109)

Joseph Smith III stated at the 1860 conference:

I would say to you, brethren, as I hope you may be, and in faith I trust you are, as a people that God has promised his blessings upon, I came not here of myself, but by the influence of the Spirit. For some time past I have received manifestations pointing to the position which I am about to assume. I wish to say that I have come here not to be dictated by any men or set of men. I have come in obedience to a power not my own, and shall be dictated by the power that sent me. God works by means best known to himself, and I feel that for some time past he has been pointing out a work for me to do

## **Joseph Smith III has been called a “Pragmatic Prophet.”**

We need to be careful as we read from his biography by Roger D. Launius

“With problems of all types he carefully considered all ramifications and took actions that could be considered compromises in all too many instances. He was, in the best tradition of American philosophy, a pragmatist: he preferred to see changes come slowly, after due deliberation and with the consent of all affected groups. Almost instinctively, Smith inclined to a middle-of-the-road position on issues. Such a leader was critical to the continued success of what had begun as a loosely organized, extremely heterogeneous movement started by strikingly nonconformist dissenters of the early church.” (Joseph Smith III, Pragmatic Prophet, p. 119)

I believe we can acknowledge all the personal skills that Joseph Smith III had, but we must also realize that he was an actual prophet of God and that his success was through the process of listening to God. We have to acknowledge and recognize God’s influence in his life and that he was willing to “wait on the Lord” (Ps. 27:14) for guidance and direction.

In the 1850s the Reorganization had functioned under a very loose organizational structure, almost a confederacy of virtually independent congregations that could choose to accept the policies of the general church conference and the Quorum of Twelve Apostles or ignore them completely without fear of punishment. As a consequence, the church had been unable to sustain any extended missionary work or forceful policy because of the shifting nature of support from the members...

When Joseph Smith III assumed the presidency of the Reorganized Church in 1860, he was an inexperienced young man, not yet twenty-eight years old, who did not understand the intricacies of either the centralized operation of the church under his father or the rather loosely organized confederation within the Reorganization. He quickly realized... that the Reorganized Church had to reinstitute some form of central direction, come to some understanding of basic doctrine, and work toward the enforcement of orthodoxy if it were ever to grow into anything more than a small faction filled with individualists and cranks...

Centralization of the church's administration took several years of numerous small steps before Smith could begin to claim real authority over the movement (Joseph Smith III, *Pragmatic Prophet*, p. 140-141)

One of Joseph's first revelations was in 1861 when he was trying to decide if he should enlist to fight in the Civil War.

Other religious leaders in the North felt no hesitation about supporting the war effort both morally and materially, and Smith could easily have taken this approach. Unable to decide what he should do, Smith decided to pray for direction from God. He specifically asked about the propriety of serving in the military and, after weeks of contemplation, received an answer that he said was clear, definite, and unmistakable: "Do not enlist. Enlisting makes your military service an individual and voluntary action, whereby you might shed blood while in the service. Wait; if drafted, the responsibility is lifted. In such case do not hesitate to take your places in the ranks and to do your full duty as good soldiers and citizens, supporting the government to the best of your powers." (Joseph Smith III, Pragmatic Prophet, p. 135)

## Joseph Smith III Revelations - RLDS sections

In October 1860 a committee was organized to nominate four men to fill out the Quorum of the Twelve, but they only nominated three. Then, in April 1861 they changed the minutes of 1860 to read, “The Quorum of the Twelve should be filled *as far as practicable*.” – This was a little disappointing.

“The question as to the rights, privileges, and duties resting upon the church by virtue of what is known as the law of tithing had been brought into prominence and seriously and earnestly discussed... While pondering over the matter after an earnest engagement in such prayer, I became aware of a power being exercised over me such as I had never before experienced, and, vividly impressed upon my consciousness, came that which is embodied in the revelation mentioned... It will be noticed that the communication also includes a warning against self-aggrandizement, closing with the words ‘be he whomsoever he may be.’ There had grown up in the minds of those with whom the Reorganization movement began a strong and active repugnance to the idea of what was called a ‘one-man’ rule or power” (Memoirs, p. 464)

- SECTION 114 - October 7, 1861 (3 verses)
  - The Twelve are to work with the bishop in executing the law of tithing

*1b and let them before God see to it that the temporal means so obtained is truly used for the purposes of the church-and not as a weapon of power in the hands of one man for the oppression of others or for the purposes of self-aggrandizement by anyone, be he whosoever he may be.*

*2 As I live, saith the Lord, in the manner ye execute this matter, so shall ye be judged in the day of judgment.*



“as no revelation had been received by the Reorganized Church up to 1863 directing the filling of the first quorum [First Presidency] many questions arose... After the expiration of three years from the time I was chosen to preside it seemed a favorable and opportune time for the Lord to direct in the matter. Thus, at the Conference of 1863 a revelation was received directing the church to call and ordain William Marks to be a Counselor to the President of the church.” (Memoirs, p. 464)

- SECTION 115 - March, 1863 (5 verses)
  - William Marks is called to the First Presidency-Elders are to travel two by two to preach the gospel

*115:1b It is my will that you ordain and set apart my servant William Marks to be a counselor to my servant Joseph, even the President of my church, that the First Presidency of my church may be more perfectly filled.*

In elevating the appointment to the level of a formal revelation written for the church, Smith accomplished two purposes. As God’s prophet, he nominated the person to hold the office, and he virtually assured that his recommendation would be accepted by the church body. (Joseph Smith III, Pragmatic Prophet, p. 144)

“At the Conference of 1865, considerable discussion was had upon the proposition of ordaining Negroes... After much discussion it was ‘Resolved that we refer the above matter to the Lord and then come together fasting and praying to God that He will reveal his Will on this point unto his servant, Joseph Smith.’” (Memoirs, p. 465)

- SECTION 116 - May 4, 1865 – After Civil War (9 verses)
  - Men of every race may be ordained to the priesthood-  
Admonitions to the priesthood

*116:1b Lo, it is my will that my gospel shall be preached to all nations in every land and that men of every tongue shall minister before me;*

*116:1c therefore, it is expedient in me that you ordain priests unto me of every race who receive the teachings of my law and become heirs according to the promise...*

...

*116:4a Be not hasty in ordaining men of the Negro race to offices in my church; for verily, I say unto you,*

*D&C 116:4b All are not acceptable unto me as servants; nevertheless, I will that all may be saved, but every man in his own order; and there are some who are chosen instruments to be ministers to their own race. Be ye content; I, the Lord, have spoken it.*

Just think of how much grief and heartache could have been avoided if this revelation from the Lord had been known to, or perhaps even been received by, the LDS Church! The Church could have been a leader in giving equality rather than having been one of the last holdouts. In fact, many observers both within the Church and outside believed that the LDS Church had finally simply caved into the pressure from demonstrations and the media. It was not good press for the Church!

Note also the difference between this revelation and that received by LDS leaders in 1978. LDS President Kimball held a meeting with the apostles where each presented his view on the subject. All agreed that the time had come for all worthy men to receive the priesthood. Then they all prayed for the confirmation of heaven of their decision. All testified that they felt a powerful witness from the Holy Ghost. A Declaration was later added to the LDS D&C stating that President Kimball had received a revelation, but the witness of the apostles only testified of a strong confirmation of their decision. In other words, no revelation was added to the D&C, but only a declaration that one had been received (John Pratt: [Revelations to Joseph Smith III](#))

By 1873, prompted by the decimation of general officers through death, infirmity, resignation, or defection, Smith had decided that the time had come to reorganize the leading quorums of the church. Smith was operating alone in the Presidency, Rogers was operating alone in the Presiding Bishopric, and less than half of the apostles were functioning. In addition, the Quorum of the Seventy had been virtually destroyed as an effective missionary tool. (Joseph Smith III, Pragmatic Prophet, p. 144)

“The spring of 1873 proved to be an eventful one. Through many periods of prayer—which characterized the entire year before the sitting of the Conference—the necessities of the church were presented to God, and in response He granted a revelation through which a more perfect organization was secured... I felt I could not continue to give revelations to the church unless there should be established a better organization of the Quorums under whose administration such revelations as should be presented should reach the body... In the days following its [the 1873 revelation] reception I was permitted to enjoy the presence of the Spirit in a remarkable degree...”

“There had developed among the brethren, as I have said, something in the nature of a strife over the question as to just who was authorized to formulate the doctrine and the theories of the church, and upon the part of a few there seemed to be a desire to be the ones to direct in this regard. The provisions of this revelation seemed to throw about us all a definite and much-desired safeguard.

“The specific mention in this revelation of Elders J. W. Briggs, Josiah Ells, and E. C. Briggs to remain as special witnesses indicated that, having been members of the old church, they were still to be recognized as standing in their proper callings, and by the Spirit of the Master regarded as strong, valiant, and useful men. The men newly chosen were wise young men who had approved themselves in the field as able and worthy expounders of the faith, well qualified to be called to succeed such men as those were who had been taken from the Quorum by death. Their choice seemed to prove conclusively that the Spirit of supervision which had been over the body from the first still continued...” (Memoirs, p. 465-466)

SECTION 117 - March 3, 1873 (24 verses)

- the First Presidency was filled for the first time since the church was reorganized in 1860. W. W. Blair and David H. Smith are called to the Presidency-Several are called to the Quorum of Twelve-The Bishop is to choose counselors and bishop's agents-Let contentions cease

*9a Until such time as the Quorum of the Twelve shall be filled, the decision of that quorum, a unanimous decision, shall be accounted final, as if such quorum were filled, according to my law as given in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants.*

*9b And until such time as the Quorum of the Seventy shall be filled, their decision, if unanimous and agreeing with that of the Quorum of the Twelve, shall be considered the same as if the quorum were filled.*

...

*13 Let contentions and quarrelings among you cease. Sustain each other in peace; and ye shall be blessed with my Spirit, in comforting and strengthening you for my work.*

“Some nine years elapsed [1882] before the next revelation was received, during which time some uneasiness concerning the still uncompleted Quorums had again developed. There arose also the question as to whether or not the Reorganized Church was authorized or expected to occupy the grounds of foreign missionary work which had been opened during the days of Joseph and Hyrum Smith... The Fall Conference in 1882 was held in Lamoni, and it was at that time I had, in the exercise of my presiding authority, to pass through the most severe trial I had yet encountered. Indeed, it was the most serious situation in which I had been called to act, for I stood face to face against two of the most prominent and leading members of the ministry, as they openly defied me and my decisions... I commend the reading of the revelation of 1882 for the spirit it breathes as well as for the law it expounds. It established more securely the grounds of our contention against evil.” (Memoirs, p. 467)

- SECTION 118 - September 28, 1882 (8 verses)
  - Need for further organization and unity-Heed the counsel of the traveling ministry

*3 It is my will that ye more fully honor and pay heed to the voice and counsel of the traveling ministry in spiritual things-which if ye do not, the office which they hold is not honored in my service, and the good they should do is made void.*

*4a If they approve themselves as righteous ministers, they shall be blessed; if they be found transgressors or idle servants, ye shall not uphold them.*

*4b But be not hasty in withdrawing your support from them, peradventure ye shall injure my work.*

*4c Even now I am not well pleased with some, but space is granted for repentance and a renewal of diligence. Let no one deceive himself that he shall not account for his stewardship unto me.*

“Some more or less agitated questions were decided by the revelation— which particular officers of the church were qualified by their calling to administer the bread and the wine; the time for the observance of the Sacrament; the fixing of the first day of the week, commonly called the Lord’s Day, as the Sabbath; the admonition to the official members of the church calling for a greater degree of sobriety and diligence on their part; and the endorsement of the song service with a general change to the whole membership to cultivate music... The Voice of the Spirit came to me in such plain and unmistakable terms that it was no wonder the revelation was promptly and unanimously accepted for the government and guidance of the church. (Memoirs, p. 468)

- SECTION 119 - April 11, 1887 (33 verses)
  - Elders are to be of sober mind, studious, humble, sincere, and set a good example—Instructions concerning the sacrament, service of song, keeping the Sabbath, prosecuting the missionary work, and care of the mind and body

*3c Men of God, who bear the vessels of the Lord, be ye **clean in your bodies and in your clothing**; let your garments be of a sober character and **free from excess of ornamentation**.*

*3d **Avoid the use of tobacco, and be not addicted to strong drink** in any form, that your counsel to be temperate may be made effectual by your example.*

*5a And the Spirit saith further: **Contention is unseemly**; therefore, cease to contend respecting the sacrament and the time of administering it;*

*5b for whether it be upon the first Lord's day of every month or upon the Lord's day of every week, if it be administered by the officers of the church with sincerity of heart and in purity of purpose, and be partaken of in remembrance of Jesus Christ and in willingness to take upon them his name by them who partake, it is acceptable to God.*

Here are some of the salient items covered in Section 119 (John Pratt):

- As late as 1887, 27 years after the founding of the Church, the Quorum of Twelve Apostles was not complete, but each member had been named in a revelation (v. 1).
- Elders should have godly speech, sober clothing, and be a good example to win souls (v. 2-3).
- Don't be eager to court apostates to return; they might well bring heresies. Some who have left the Church will return if not hindered by elders (v. 4).
- The sacrament on the Lord's Day can be weekly or monthly (v. 5).
- The emblems of the sacrament are referred to as bread and wine (v. 5).
- The breaking of bread and pouring of wine can be before or after the prayers, early in the meeting (v. 5).
- Church hymns should not sound like funeral dirges (v. 6).
- Reed, string, and brass instruments are allowed with wisdom in sacrament meetings, but not during prayers or testimonies. Hymn books should be provided (v. 6).
- The Church should meet on the Lord's Day, considered to be the first day of the week, as the day of worship and rest until further revelation be given (v. 7).[9]
- The Lord's Day should be kept with wisdom, not wasting anything or judging those doing necessary work (v. 7).
- All are called to missionary work using their particular gifts (v. 8).
- Sleep at night as designed by God which can prevent suffering in mind and body (v. 9).
- Be cheerful, even with bodily suffering which is not relieved by blessings or wisdom.

“... while some may deem it irregular or even illegal for me, in response to a request coming from a separate or joint quorum or council without the concurrence of the body of the church as a whole... A careful reading of this document will show that without a goodly share of the Spirit of revelation the matters presented were beyond our human sagacity or priestly wisdom to outline or determine...” (Memoirs, p. 468)

- SECTION 120 - April 8, 1890 (27 verses)
  - The organization of branches and districts-Roles of traveling and standing ministry-Ordination of high priests-Vacancies to be filled in the high council and the First Quorum of Seventy

1c When branches and districts are organized, they should be so organized by direction of the conferences, or by the personal presence and direction of the Twelve, or some member of that quorum who may be in charge, if practicable;

1d or, if a branch, by the president of the district with the consent, knowledge, and direction of the missionary in charge, when circumstances prevent the missionary in charge being present.

2a A branch may be presided over by a high priest, an elder, priest, teacher, or deacon chosen and sustained by the vote of the branch.

2b Districts may be presided over by a high priest or an elder, who shall be received and sustained in his office by the vote of the district.

2c If a branch or district be large, he who is chosen to preside should be a high priest, if there be one possessed of the spirit of wisdom to administer in the office of president;

...

3d The Seventy, when traveling by the voice of the church or sent by the Twelve to minister the word where the Twelve cannot go, are in the powers of their ministration apostles-those sent-and in meetings where no organization exists should preside if no member of the Twelve or Presidency be present.



“In reference to Section 121, ... it was effective in settling vexations questions and establishing positions in church procedure and government sufficiently ample to govern, under similar circumstances thereafter, the entire history of the church and its work. (Memoirs, p. 468)

- SECTION 121 - April, 1885 (12 verses)
  - Instructions concerning members of the leading quorums and the work in Chicago

*4a It is my will that my servants shall contend no longer one with another in regard to the Chicago Branch. Let the branch be instructed to report to the conference of my Saints of the district where the branch is located, the Northern Illinois District.*

...

*5a The following, also received in 1885, is added by direction of the conference of 1894:*

*5b My servants of the Seventy may select from their number, seven- of which number those now being of the seven presidents of Seventy shall be a part-who shall form the presidency of seven presidents of Seventy as provided in my law.*

“The revelation, ... was asked for and given at a time when there was considerable controversy in regard to church procedure and the inactivity of certain persons holding leading office in the body... An important feature of this revelation is that the ministry of all grades was chided for the very evident and unnecessary divergence of opinion existing between them in regard to the application of the revelations which had been received.” (Memoirs, p. 468-469)

- SECTION 122 - April 15, 1894 (52 verses)

- Duties of the Presidency, Twelve, Seventy, Bishopric, and the standing ministry-Quorums in order of their authority- Priesthood are to labor together in harmony

I was, on the fifteenth day of the fourth month, of the year 1894, in fasting and prayer before the Lord; and, being commanded of the Spirit, I arose from my praying and wrote,  
Thus saith the Spirit unto the Elders and the Church:

*1a My servants have been harsh one with another; and some have not been sufficiently willing to hear those whose duty it is to teach the revelations which my church has already received.*

*1b Until my people shall hear and heed those who are set in the church to teach the revelations, there will be misunderstanding and confusion among the members.*

*2a The burden of the care of the church is laid on him who is called to preside over the high priesthood of the church and on those who are called to be his counselors; ...*

*4b My servant David H. Smith is yet in my hand, and I will do my will in the time for its accomplishment. Be not troubled or fearful in this matter, for it shall be well for my work in the end. ...*

*13a The Spirit saith further: The Twelve should remain at Lamoni and continue in council with the Presidency and the Bishop and his counselors, if practicable, a sufficient time after the adjournment of conference to counsel together and agree on the things of the law and the general affairs of the church,*

“... the Twelve were directed to stay on at Lamoni for a season and continue in Joint Council with the Presidency until the matters in agitation could be disposed of. This was accomplished, and the result of their council actions was published and later embodied in what is known as Section 123 in the Doctrine and Covenants.” (Memoirs, p. 469)

- SECTION 123 - April 20, 1894 (46 verses)
  - A joint council of the First Presidency, Quorum of Twelve, and Presiding Bishopric met as a result of the instruction given in Section 122:13. This section is not a revelation but contains the minutes of the council.

Topics covered in this section:

- Joint Council
- Lamoni College
- Church History
- Discussion in Herald
- Utah Church
- Locating in Regions Round About
- Presiding Councils
- Doctrinal Tracts
- Directing Labor of High Priests
- Gospel Boat
- Detroit Branch
- Bishop's Council
- Presidents of High Council
- Counsel to be Honored
- Presidency of the Twelve and Meaning of the word “Abroad”
- Revelation of 1861
- Request for Articles for Publication

“It will be noticed that in the reception and embodiment of the revelation found in Doctrine and Covenants as Section 124, there was a marked change in the method employed. That I was directed to write gives the communication the characteristic of apparent dictation. I seemed to feel and recognize the presence of an Administrator by whom the counsel was delivered to me, and I was more sensibly impressed by the personification of the Spirit in form than I had ever been before—if that were possible.

Upon two or three occasions in my life, when occupying in the pulpit I had been permitted to preach as if consciously aware of the nearness of some Divine Personage. This Personage at one of these times placed his hand upon my shoulder with a sufficient degree of pressure as to make my sensibly aware of his presence. So I was in the ministration of the dictation received in this revelation of 1897” (Memoirs, p. 469)

- SECTION 124 - April 8, 1897 (20 verses)
  - The Presidency was temporarily filled; and, for the first time since 1860, the Quorum of Twelve and the office of Presiding Patriarch were filled.

*8b It has pleased the Father to accept many of the sacrifices of his people; and, notwithstanding some have fallen while engaged in their work, some have been tried and are still tried; some have been and are afflicted, yet the Lord has seen the affliction and trial and will accept and bless; and no man shall lose his reward.*

*Brethren of the ministry and members of the church: My soul has been cheered, my spirit and body have been strengthened, and my heart made exceeding glad by the blessed and holy influence of the Spirit which was with me and still is with me as I write-causing me to give praise, honor, and glory to God and the Lamb, to whom honor and glory belong and with whom are might, power, and dominion evermore. Amen.*

“Certain rules for representation by delegates to Conference were also given me in open vision, but the church seemed to be not then ready for it. (See Section 125) At the following Conference their adoption was still opposed, and the scope as to those who were *ex-officio* members was made wider, and subsequently still wider. I have not felt it advisable for me to press the validity nor the sacredness of the revelation I received about them, preferring to allow the church to reach the matter in its own due time.” (Memoirs, p. 471)

- SECTION 125 - April 15, 1901 (41 verses)
  - Vacancy filled in the Quorum of Twelve-Duties of the patriarchs, who are evangelical ministers-Rules of representation at General Conference-Independence and Lamoni Stakes are to be organized-Tracts are to be written-Instruction on foreign missions-Exercise discernment regarding spiritual manifestations

Before entering further upon the business, I have something to present. I spent a sleepless night. After retiring to my rest, weary, as you must know, I engaged in a season of prayer quietly, as I had been doing all day; and I suddenly found myself very wide awake; and from that on, I was in the Spirit, the Spirit of inspiration burning in my breast; and by it I was bidden to come to the house of assembly and tell what was given to me of light and instruction. I trust that it shall be so to you.

- Vacancy in the Presidency
- Vacancy in the Twelve
- Evangelical Ministers
- Rules of Representation
- Stakes
- Tracts
- Foreign Missions
  - England, Australia, Society Islands

The duties of the Presiding Patriarch were carefully defined in a revelation, which clearly answers the question about to what extent the Presiding Patriarch is to preside:

*The patriarch is an evangelical minister. The duties of this office are to be an evangelical minister; to preach, teach, expound, exhort, to be a revivalist; and to visit branches and districts as wisdom may direct, invitation, request, or the Spirit of God determine and require; to comfort the Saints; to be a father to the church; to give counsel and advice to individuals who may seek for such; to lay on hands for the conferment of spiritual blessing, and if so led, to point out the lineage of the one who is blessed.*

***He is to be free from** responsibility — ministerial — as a traveling minister and from the care of the **local branch or church and district affairs**. When traveling and preaching, holding revival meetings, he is to labor in connection with the branch and district officers, not subject to the ministerial control of the missionary in charge, except he should transcend his bounds and teach false doctrine or be found in transgression. **He is not to meddle with branch affairs or district affairs**. He is not to listen to complaints made by individuals to him; but if persons insist upon presenting their troubles, he is to request them and require them to make them in writing, signing the name, giving time, place, and character of the trouble, with the witnesses, which it will be his duty to present to the branch or district officers, as the case may require. He is not to be put in charge of either branch or district. These are the privileges which attach to the office of patriarch and evangelical minister.*

*The Presiding Patriarch is to be considered the first, and when patriarchs meet in council, is to preside. Besides these duties, **the patriarch may meet with quorums** in their quorum meetings, where he may be asked for counsel, **but will not have either voice or vote**, except by courtesy, **having no direct control of quorums**. — RLDS D&C 125:3-5 (emphasis added).*

These inspired verses make it clear that the Presiding Patriarch is the highest office because it is totally spiritual, not in any way one of presiding over the Church, but only over the other patriarchs. (John Pratt: [Revelations to Joseph Smith III](#))

“The communication of 1902, Section 126, as far as the method of receiving direction for the action of the church was concerned, was most remarkable, for again there was an entire change of procedure. Direction as to the calling of persons to office and position came as a result of a vision clearly reflecting in their arrangement and relations the gradations in authority as referred to in the revelation, Section 104.

The individuals mentioned were clearly seen by me in vision in their different positions, and I so stated to the body. The Instructions I received by word came as if from One who stood by me, answering my questions and giving direction. Thus, by combined sight and hearing a wide range of the method of receiving and transmitting Divine direction was covered. I have felt that the most satisfactory method was that in which, being in the Spirit, I received verbal direction and precise statement as to what was to be given to the church” (Memoirs, p. 471)

- SECTION 126 - April 16, 1902 (21 verses)
  - Counsel concerning the leading quorums of the church- Application of the law of tithing and consecration-Quorums of Presidency, Twelve, and Seventy in joint council are to safeguard the rights of the people

*1 On the night of April 16, I made the condition of the church a subject of prayer, intensely desirous of receiving light and information in relation thereto and my duty. I awoke at the hour of three and had in presentation the following vision:*

*2a I saw the assembly of the Saints and the general authorities, the latter being arranged upon a platform with the seats arranged in lines, each line from the front of the platform slightly raised to the rear.*

*2b On that platform I saw the Quorum of the Presidency, the Bishopric, the Twelve, and a line above the Twelve on the seat behind them, a number of the brethren, including four of the present members of the Twelve and the patriarchs now ordained and recognized in the church.*

“The directions given in 1906 concerning the establishment of the Sanitarium were clearly presented to me, and came as the result of several years of prayer and consideration of the question as to how we were to place ourselves before the world as advocating the healing art. Since these directions have been acted upon by the church I am content to leave them as they are, for I have been vouch-safed no further information concerning them.” (Memoirs, p. 471)

- SECTION 127 - April 14, 1906 (23 verses)
  - Establish a sanitarium to care for the sick, with Apostle Joseph Luff to be medical director-Establish a home for children-Joseph Burton to minister in the South Sea Islands-Counsel on the gathering-Designation of Frederick M. Smith as successor to Joseph Smith III

So far as the burden of the conference and its peculiar conditions have enabled me to do, I have steadfastly presented the matter stated by the Bishop for our consideration to the Lord for instruction. Whether that which has come to me will bring relief to the situation, I know not; but such as it is, I hereby present it. (Preface to Section 128)

- SECTION 128 - April 18, 1909 (22 verses)
  - Authority of the Bishop and his counselors in the work of gathering-Organizations to operate according to laws of the land-Be in the world but not of it



To the Church: After constant meditation and prayer, both before and after coming to conference and during the sessions, so far as the peculiar conditions obtaining in our sittings had permitted, I was in the Spirit during the nights of the 15th and 16th of the month and the day passing between at such times during the calm that occasionally ensued and the quiet of the night when the burden of my care forbade sleep. My dreams also have been enlightening and encouraging. (Preface to Section 129)

- SECTION 129 - April 18, 1909 (25 verses)
  - Vacancies filled in the Presidency and Quorum of Twelve-Appointments to various offices-Offices and orders within the Melchizedek priesthood-Counsel of the Bishopric regarding the temporal law is to be followed-Unity is commended

*9a The Spirit saith further unto the church: The Lord is well pleased with the advancement which has been made in approaching unity during the conference year;*

*9b and though there may have been differences of opinion, these differences have been held in unity of purpose and desire for the good of my people and will result in helping to bring to pass a unity of understanding.*

*9c So be ye encouraged, and press on to the consummation designed of God for his people-unity, honor, sanctification, and glory. Amen.*

- SECTION 130 - April 14, 1913 (27 verses)
  - Appointments to various offices-Exercise the principles of sacrifice and repression of unnecessary wants-Warning against the spirit of accusation

*I In obedience to the spirit and design of the day of fasting and prayer, I observed the day with the church. I have hitherto made supplication to the God whom we serve and renewed my supplication in the spirit of the desire of the church for instruction and light. And I am now prepared to lay before the church what has come to me as the presiding officer, through whom the Master may speak to his people.*

John Pratt: [Revelations to Joseph Smith III](#)

The question arises, where does it say in the scriptures that "apostle" is a lifetime calling? Once a man is called to preach throughout the world, always traveling, is he never allowed to retire? What should have happened to Elder Dyer when he was released from the First Presidency?

That question was answered by the Lord when members of the RLDS Quorum of Twelve grew old and/or unhealthy, being unable to function fully as an apostle. Here is what the Lord said:

*Thus saith the voice of the Spirit: In order that the Quorum of Twelve may be placed in better condition to carry on the work of the ministry in various fields of occupation, it is expedient that Elders W. H. Kelley, I. N. White, and J. W. Wight **be released from the active duties of the apostolic quorum** on account of increasing infirmities of age and incapacity caused by illness of body, **and stand with their associates among the high priests and patriarchs of the church for such special service as may be open to them, according to wisdom and the call of the Spirit.** — RLDS D&C 130:2 (emphasis added).*

*This may seem like merely an administrative detail, but for the LDS Church, the calling of an apostle is the highest calling in the Church and considered to be a lifetime calling. The fact that there was an adopted rule, found nowhere in scripture, that the senior member of the Twelve should lead the Church has caused considerable problems when the President became incapacitated.*

- SECTION 131 - April 14, 1914 (12 verses)
  - The last revelation given to the church through Joseph Smith III before his death on December 10, 1914.

Counsel to the Bishopric-Counsel against spreading suspicion and distrust

*1a In agreement with the notice for the general fast of the church to be observed on the first Sunday, being the fifth day of April, 1914, I, Joseph Smith, President of the church, in common with the custom of the brotherhood, observed the rule requiring the fast and spent that day in meditation and prayer upon the work of God and our present duty in the affairs intrusted to our care.*

*1b Before the hour of breaking the fast came, I was blessed by the presence of the Holy Spirit resting upon me in quiet assurance and in power.*

*1c In the still, small voice which giveth light and understanding to the intelligence of man, exalting the soul and sanctifying the spirit, there came unto me the directing voice of him whose work we are engaged in.*

## Other Topics we might discuss

### 1. Who was the correct successor to Joseph Smith Jr.

#### a. Brigham Young

- i. There was no transfiguration of Brigham in Nauvoo
- ii. Brigham never received any revelations (not D&C 136)
- iii. Brigham didn't consider himself to be a prophet

#### b. Joseph Smith III

- i. Set Apart by Joseph Smith Jr. as his successor
- ii. Divine direction and member's witnesses
- iii. Prophetic insight in his revelations

### 2. Were the sons of Joseph Smith III also prophets?

a. "Supreme Directional Control" by Frederick M. Smith was a major dividing point for the church. He stated, "there must be recognized grades of official prerogative and responsibility, with supreme directional control resting in the Presidency as the chief and first quorum of the church."

- i. Supreme Directional Control is no longer advanced by the members of Community of Christ's First Presidency, although within the Restoration Branches movement many believe it is the reason that the First Presidency was able to change church doctrine so drastically. (Wikipedia)