

## Priesthood Keys Outline - Mike Baird

What are Priesthood Keys? .....	1
Who holds all Priesthood Keys .....	1
What does it mean to delegate keys .....	2
Who holds keys?.....	3
How long does one hold keys? .....	3
Do counselors receive keys? .....	3
Delegation of Keys - Example.....	3
Keys in the Ward.....	5

### What are Priesthood Keys?

- Joseph F Smith:  
” The Priesthood in general is the authority given to man to act for God. Every man ordained to any degree of the Priesthood, has this authority delegated to him.  
But it is necessary that every act performed under this authority shall be done at the proper time and place, in the proper way, and after the proper order. The power of directing these labors constitutes the keys of the Priesthood.” (Gospel Doctrine, pg 136)
- J Rueben Clark:  
” So in carrying on the discipline and government of the Church, and in administering the rituals and ordinances thereof, the Lord has established a control that there may be order in the Church—the Lord has said his house is a house of order. Those controls make it necessary to have special authority for the exercise of the Priesthood functions and powers which are involved in these matters of discipline, government, and administration. Not every bearer of the Priesthood, no matter what grade he holds, can perform these special services, rituals, and ordinances; he must be authorized to perform them by one holding the right to authorize, and this right of performance under authorization is called a key.” (On the Way to Immortality and Eternal Life, pg 172)
- ” The exercise of Priesthood authority is governed by those who hold its keys. These keys are the right to preside over and direct the Church within a jurisdiction” (Church Handbook of Instructions, pg 161)

### Who holds all Priesthood Keys

- Lord Jesus Christ holds all keys
  - "He has given His Apostles the keys that are necessary for governing His Church" (Church Handbook of Instructions, pg 161)
- Not all priesthood keys are given to the Apostles on the earth

- Bruce R McConkie:  
 ” As a matter of fact, there are purposes for which the priesthood is designed to be used but for which we cannot use it because the keys of that particular thing have not been given. For instance, "by the power of the priesthood we will be resurrected." But none of us yet in mortality have the keys of the resurrection and so we cannot use the authority which the priesthood has in that field because no one can authorize us to use it. That key is not had.” (“The Keys of the Kingdom, Bruce R McConkie, Highlights from his life & teachings, pg 291-2)
- Belong to the Presidency of the High Priesthood
  - D&C 81:1-2  
 "...my servant Joseph Smith, Jun.; Unto whom I have given the keys of the kingdom, which belong always unto the Presidency of the High Priesthood"
- Only one man on earth at a time, the Senior Apostle, the President of the Church, can exercise them in their fullness
  - D&C 132:7  
 " and I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred"
  - Joseph F Smith:  
 ” In their fullness, the keys are held by only one person at a time, the prophet and president of the Church.” (Gospel Doctrine, pg 136)
  - Bruce R McConkie:  
 ” The keys of the kingdom of God—the right and power of eternal presidency by which the earthly kingdom is governed—these keys, having first been revealed from heaven, are given by the spirit of revelation to each man who is both ordained an Apostle and set apart as a member of the Council of the Twelve. But since keys are the right of presidency, they can only be exercised in their fulness by one man on earth at a time. He is always the senior Apostle, the presiding Apostle, the presiding high priest, the presiding elder. He alone can give direction to all others, direction from which none is exempt. Thus, the keys, though vested in all of the Twelve, are used by any one of them to a limited degree only, unless and until one of them attains that seniority which makes him the Lord’s anointed on earth.” (“The Keys of the Kingdom, Ensign, May 1983, 21)

## **What does it mean to delegate keys**

- Joseph F Smith:  
 "He may delegate any portion of this power to another, in which case that person **holds** the keys of that particular labor. Thus, the president of a temple, the president of a stake, the bishop of a ward, the president of a mission, the president of a quorum, each holds the keys of the labors performed in that particular body or locality. His Priesthood is not increased by this special appointment, ... the president of an elders' quorum, for example, has no more Priesthood than any member of that quorum. But he holds the power of directing the official labors performed in the mission or the quorum, or in other words, the keys of that division of that work." (Gospel Doctrine, pg 136)

### **Who holds keys?**

- How many people hold keys in the Cooper Mt Ward
  - Answer – 5 (Trick question)
    - Bishop, EQ President, Teachers Q President, Deacons Q President
    - President Dalton
- What about the HP group?
  - 1 Quorum with Stake President as President
- How many people hold keys in the Stake Organization?
  - Answer – 1 - Stake President
- Who holds keys then? (Church Handbook of Instructions, pg 161)
  - Presidents of: Temples, Missions, Stakes, Districts, Quorums, branches and Bishops

### **How long does one hold keys?**

- Until released

### **Do counselors receive keys?**

- "Counselors do not receive keys, but they do receive delegated authority by calling and assignment" (Church Handbook of Instructions, pg 161)

### **Delegation of Keys - Example**

- Story Elder Bradford – President Dalton – Bishop Baird
  - Elder Bradford (1<sup>st</sup> Quorum of 70) holds no keys
  - Elder Bradford authorized (delegated by assignment to him) to call & set apart new Stake Presidency
  - Elder Bradford authorized (delegated by assignment to him) to call a Bishop if new Stake President is a Bishop

- President Dalton authorized (before he was sustained & set apart) by Elder Bradford to call a Bishop
- Bishop Baird called before Stake Conference when President Dalton & counselors were sustained
- Authorization ended when Elder Bradford got on the plane for home

## Keys in the Ward

- Bishop
  - "Holds the priesthood keys to preside over a ward and direct the work of the Church in the ward." (Church Handbook of Instructions, pg 11)
  - 5 principle responsibilities
    - President of the Aaronic Priesthood
    - Presiding High Priest
    - Common Judge
    - Administer Church Welfare Program
    - Oversee finances, records, use & security of the meetinghouse
  - "The Bishop should delegate many assignments to his counselors, clerks....." (Church Handbook of instructions pg 11)
- Examples
  - Authorize ordinances
    - Baptism of an 8 year old
    - Sacrament
  - Teachers Q President called
    - Calling may be delegated to a counselor
    - Setting apart may not be delegated to a counselor
    - Counselor calling and setting apart may be delegated to a counselor
  - Civil Marriage (cannot delegate)

**"Succession in The Presidency" Bruce R McConkie: Highlights from his life and teachings. pg 298,299**

When President Lee passed he was attended by President Marion G. Romney, his second counselor, and President Spencer W. Kimball, the President of the Council of the Twelve.

President N. Eldon Tanner was in Arizona at the time. Brother Romney, as the representative of and counselor to President Lee, was in complete and total charge at the hospital. He gave President Lee a blessing. He felt the spirit of peace and satisfaction, the calm assurance that whatever eventuated would be right. He did not promise President Lee that he would be healed. The President had become ill very rapidly, just in a matter of hours or moments. Shortly after this blessing, he passed away. At the moment he passed. Brother Romney, in harmony with the system and the established tradition and custom of the Church, stepped aside, and President Spencer W. Kimball was then in complete charge and had total direction. President Kimball was at that moment the senior apostle of God on earth. And as the last heartbeat of President Lee ceased, the mantle of leadership passed to President Kimball, whose next heartbeat was that of the living oracle and presiding authority of God on earth. From that moment the Church continued under the direction of President Kimball.

When the President of the Church passes on, the First Presidency is disorganized, and the mantle of leadership-the reins of presidency-go to the senior man left and to the Council of the Twelve as a body; in effect the Council of the Twelve then becomes the First Presidency of the Church and so continues unless and until a formal reorganization takes place....

The Council of the Twelve met in the upper room of the Salt Lake Temple on Sunday, December 30 [1973 ], at 3:00 P.M. for the purpose of reorganizing the First Presidency of the Church. Normally in that upper room there are three chairs occupied by the First Presidency and twelve chairs in a semicircle in front of them occupied by the members of the Council of the Twelve. On this occasion, however, there were fourteen chairs in the semicircle, because there were fourteen Brethren present who had been sustained and ordained and set apart as members of the Council of the Twelve.

We took our places in those chairs, and President Kimball presided in the meeting, which lasted for about 3½ hours. In the course of this meeting President Kimball explained the business to be transacted, the things that might be done if the Brethren felt so guided and led....

He expressed himself as to what should be done, and he said that the proposition to be first considered was whether the First Presidency should then be reorganized or whether the Church should continue to function with the Council of the Twelve as its presiding officers He then invited each member of the Twelve, commencing with Elder Ezra Taft Benson and continuing around the circle to me, to arise in turn and express himself frankly and fully and freely as to what ought to be done

I'll tell you what in thought-content and substance was said by all of the Brethren on that occasion....

Each member of the Council in turn, specifically and pointedly expressed himself to the effect that now was the time to reorganize the First Presidency of the church- that there should not be farther delay that the effective and proper operation of this great organization that we have from the Lord needed this administrative arrangement. Each one in turn expressed himself that President Spencer W. Kimball was the man whom the Lord wanted to preside over the Church; there was no question whatever about that. There was total and complete unity and harmony...

And so after there had been full expression and consideration, Elder Ezra Taft Benson the next one in seniority to President Kimball, made he formal motion that the First Presidency of the Church be reorganized that President Spencer W. Kimball be sustained, ordained, and set apart as the President of the Church; as the prophet, seer, and revelator to the Church and as the Trustee-in-Trust. This motion was adopted unanimously....

At this point he chose his first counselor. President N. Eldon Tanner who responded appropriately and sweetly; he then chose President Marion G. Romney to be the second, who similarly responded. Following these appointments, Brother Benson was sustained as the President of the Council of the Twelve. And then all those present placed heir hands upon the head of President Kimball, and he was ordained and set apart with President Benson being mouth, to serve as President of the Church and as the prophet, seer, and revelator for this time and this season.