

Unanimity in Presidencies Outline - Mike Baird Oct 2003

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The Doctrine

- D&C 107:22-30
 - "every decision made by either of these quorums must be by the unanimous voice of the same"
 - "The decisions...are to be made in all righteousness, in holiness, and lowliness of heart, meekness and long suffering, and in faith, and virtue, and knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity"
- D&C 38:27
 - "I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine"

Examples from First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve

- James E Faust:

"These are men of experience, accomplishment, ability, and intelligence, and matters are discussed openly and candidly. Often, I have held an opinion which, after a discussion in reason and inspiration, I have completely reversed. It is a marvelous thing, after a discussion is had and everybody has expressed his thoughts and feelings, to have the president say, `Brethren, I think this is what we should do,' and to then have the confirmation that the decision is the mind and will of the Lord."

"It is marvelous to see how the Lord chooses those who serve him. They are not all out of the same mold. They have different backgrounds, different training, different experience; yet it all comes together after an issue is discussed and prayed about, pondered and evaluated, to where there is a burning feeling in the bosom of all that it is the mind and will of the Lord." (In the Strength of the Lord: The Life and Teachings of James E. Faust], pg145)
- Gordon B Hinckley:

"No decision emanates from the deliberations of the First Presidency and the Twelve without total unanimity among all concerned. At the outset in considering matters, there may be differences of opinion. These are to be expected. These men come from different backgrounds. They are men who

think for themselves. But before a final decision is reached, there comes a unanimity of mind and voice. . . .

I add by way of personal testimony that during the twenty years I served as a member of the Council of the Twelve and during the . . . years that I have served in the First Presidency, there has never been a major action taken where this procedure was not observed. I have seen differences of opinion presented in these deliberations. Out of this very process of men speaking their minds has come a sifting and winnowing of ideas and concepts. But I have never observed serious discord or personal enmity among my Brethren. I have, rather, observed a beautiful and remarkable thing—the coming together, under the directing influence of the Holy Spirit and under the power of revelation, of divergent views until there is total harmony and full agreement. Only then is implementation made. That, I testify, represents the spirit of revelation manifested again and again in directing this the Lord's work."

(Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley, pg 84-85)

- Rulon G. Craven:

"It has been my privilege as Executive Secretary to the Quorum of the Twelve to sit in some of the leading councils of the Church and witness the communication processes that take place in conducting the business of the Church.

Let me share with you a typical experience in a meeting of the Quorum of the Twelve. They always work from an agenda. The agenda is distributed to each member of the Twelve the night before the meeting so that they have an opportunity to read, ponder, and consider each item in preparation for the meeting. When they meet together they usually express love and concern for one another. After an opening prayer, in which a request is made for the Spirit to be in the meeting, the President of the Twelve addresses each item on the agenda one by one. He may make some short preparatory comments that he feels necessary concerning the item, and then he presents the item or asks one of the Twelve to present the item for discussion.

The Brethren express their thoughts and feelings. They are men of strong character, men from different backgrounds—they are certainly not "yes" men. They speak as they are moved by the Spirit. They strive to feel the manifestations of the Spirit concerning the item being discussed, which may necessitate a change in their own feelings and thoughts in order to be in harmony with the entire Council. When the President of the Twelve senses a unity taking place concerning the item on the agenda, he may ask for a recommendation, or one of the Twelve may present a recommendation to the

Twelve. The recommendation remarkably summarizes the feelings of the total Council. The President will then state, "We have before us a recommendation. Is there any further discussion?" Each member of the Twelve will have an opportunity again to express himself. They don't repeat what has already been said; rather, there is an unusual economy of expression in order to ascertain the total views of the Council. After all who have a desire to speak have done so, the recommendation may be modified. The recommendation is then presented in the form of a motion by a member of the Twelve, and is seconded by another. The President of the Twelve then asks for the vote of the Quorum; thus, the Twelve make decisions in harmony, unity, and faith, with the combined judgment of each member and in harmony with the Spirit." (M. Russell Ballard, Counseling with Our Councils, pg 47-48)

Counselors Responsibility

- Steven D Dalton:
"Although they are individuals, they should act as one. Counselors must give input to the President. Must feel free to share thoughts, experiences, inspiration. But when the decision is made, the President's decisions must become the counselors decision as well." (Counselors)

God uplifts unified councils

George Q Cannon

"The First Presidency ought to have in the first place their hearts single to the glory of God; to have no personal feeling that will influence them in any policy, but have their motives pure, and then when they unite on anything and give any counsel, I tell you that God will sustain that and carry it through; He will supplement it by His wisdom and power, and make it effective. For the First Presidency are but mortal men. We can only see a certain distance. God sees to the utmost limit. There are no bounds to His sight. But there are bounds to ours. Does He require superhuman wisdom of us? No, only as He gives it to us. He points out the path, and if our motives are pure and we are united on any plan or policy, He will bless and sanctify that, and He will make it successful." (DISCOURSE Delivered by President George Q. Cannon, at the General Conference, held in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, April 7, 1895)