

Approved Minutes from the U. S. National Conference

United States National Conference
East 39th Street Community of Christ
Independence, MO
October 7, 2017

President Fred Greene called the conference to order with the singing of “The Scriptures Are the Word of God” and offering an invocation.

First item of business was the approval of the minutes from the October 5, 2017 business meeting. Chad Nestman noted that the address in the unapproved minutes needed to be changed to 39th Street. This was the only correction offered. Brother Nestman moved and Dale Wilson seconded the motion to approve the minutes as amended. The motion carried.

Jan Jordison presented the credentials report for the conference. A total of 152 people registered for the conference this year representing members of 26 branches. This was almost twice as many as registered for the conference in 2016.

Branches with members registering included Byrneville Restoration Branch, Central Branch, Cross Timbers/Preston Restoration Branch, Dallas Restoration Branch, Devon Park Restoration Branch, East Gate Restoration Branch, First Branch (Remnant), Forefront Restoration Branch, Gospel Park Restoration Branch, Green Bay Study Group, Independence Branch, Keosauqua Restoration Branch, Mount Ayr Restoration Branch, New Berlin Group, Osceola Restoration Branch, Saints Haven Restoration Branch, South Branch, St. Joseph Restoration Branch, Waldo Restoration Branch, Zarahemla Restoration Branch, Zion’s Hope Restoration Branch, Zion’s Outpost Restoration Branch, Belize Restoration Branch and at large members. There were a total of 25 delegates with 550 votes, four alternates with four votes, 114 members, and nine guests for a total of 677 possible votes.

Jerry Vickery moved and Jim McKay seconded that the credentials report be approved. The motion was approved.

Reports were offered from the various quorum sessions where groups were asked to discuss the message shared by Neil Simmons and answer questions about how they might promote more unity among the body of Christ.

Report of the High Priests *Presented by David Whiting*

To the US National Conference:

The Quorum of High Priests met in regular session on October 6, 2017, combined with the Quorum of Apostles and the Order of Patriarch/Evangelists. After prayer and review of the agenda items to be covered, the Quorum elected US National Conference quorum officers for the coming year. Brother Rob Rolfe was elected the Quorum President, Brother Alan Smith was

elected the Quorum Vice President and Brother David Whiting was elected the Quorum Secretary.

Discussion regarding the revelation to the US National Conference took place with the Quorum unanimously acknowledging and affirming the revelation as the Word of the Lord to the US National Conference.

In specific response to requests of the conference leadership to consider the 2017 revelation to the US National Conference regarding Unity of the Body of Christ, the quorum provides the following worthy engagements to promote unity.

1. Consider the Solemn Assembly proposal being developed by the Quorum of Apostles
2. Support the “Prayers for the Kingdom” program for the youth
3. Support the 2000 Strong program
4. Develop personal relationships with other Restoration group members
5. Exercise faith and go where opportunities lead
6. Be sensitive to the Holy Ghost to lead us
7. Support the Book of Mormon Symposium

Respectfully Submitted,
David Whiting
Quorum Secretary

Report of the Seventy
Presented by Dan Norman

There are three points regarding unity in the church as required by the message from the Lord given to this U.S. National Conference through Patriarch Neil Simmons.

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3 A. Try to Identify and list the opportunities that currently exist in building unity with other Restoration groups. How can the atmosphere towards unity be created?

Seventies Response: *There are many ongoing cooperative efforts to heal this breach. Most of the seventy are engaged in finding common ground with the many different factions of the Latter Day Saint movement. Some are working with disgruntled branches, others are stepping out in faith assisting in ordinances with other duly ordained ministers from some of these factions – this is in accordance with the message given to the fall 2017 U.S. National Conference. One of the more recent and exciting endeavors that shows unity as possible was the Swahili translation of the Book of Mormon. This ministry was a cooperative effort between the, ARM board which is part of the Conference of Elders, and men associated with the JCRB.*

3 B. List our strengths (membership and priesthood) that will assist in facilitating unity.

Seventies Response: *Our strength is that we are inclusive. We don't look for ways to exclude an individual or body of people. We believe that the purpose of the Restoration is to restore not to exclude. As a conference, it's been our standard from the beginning to follow*

scriptural protocol when it comes to accepting someone into our midst; this is true with priesthood members who have been authoritatively ordained as well.

3 C. List the obstacles that need to be addressed that could interfere with unifying with other Restoration groups. Identify these in such a manner, that committees can be formed that will study these and report their recommendations to the next conference for action.

Seventies Response: *We feel that the biggest obstacle to achieving the goal of unity within the Restoration factions is the **'sole authority' dogma** that each faction promotes. We tend to believe that we are the only inheritors of God's holy priesthood and rights that come with making "us" the only true representatives of Jesus Christ's church. It's this pride that is the biggest obstacle to our peoples coming together as one. This is the sin of pride.*

God has seen fit to utilize the seventy in many capacities to bring about unity within His church. We have been blessed to be involved in new efforts toward unity. One of the most fundamental strengths of this conference as a body is that we are inclusive. We believe it is our calling as missionaries to assist in the gathering of the House of Israel; in so doing, healing the breach is a primary focus.

We feel that it is the responsibility of those who have received messages from God, as we have, to follow closely the instruction He has given; recognizing that it is "vain and foolishness" to quarrel against those who are properly ordained as well as the ordinances they have performed. We believe that we can serve alongside priesthood members from some of these factions, recognizing their priesthood as given by the Creator.

As members and followers of the word of the Lord, we can be vigilant in prayer and fasting for unity, be responsive to efforts toward unity, develop friendships and closer bonds with those we meet within other factions of the church; all this in an attempt to lead our fellow brothers and sisters toward the Lord in unity.

Report of the Elders Quorum

Presented by Richard Hoff

There were 17 in attendance when the Elders' Quorum met for its luncheon.

Sherrie Wages presented some thoughts about the book "The Insanity of God," which he recommended to the group. He had a display about the book and related material at the conference.

Chadwick Nestman called the meeting to order and officers for the coming year for the Elder's Quorum at the US National Conference were Richard Hoff, president; Eric Woolery, vice president and David Cromwell, secretary.

A discussion was held on the 2017 revelation brought by Neil Simmons with various comments verifying the validity of the spiritual counsel.

Unity with other restoration groups was discussed, talking about the importance of unity while recognizing differences among the groups. It was noted that walls have been built. How to handle differences and causes for disunity were discussed.

Focusing on things we have in common was a suggestion. A list of our strengths in unity were discussed. Some ideas included joint prayer services, the Book of Mormon festival, focusing on the hope of Zion, emphasizing love for one another, praying for all Restoration elders and connecting with an elder you do not know to serve with them in such things as administration.

The meeting closed with reading of the scripture of Alma meeting with the sons of Mosiah in Alma 12:1-4.

Report of the Aaronic Priesthood Quorum

Presented by Russel Sewell

During the JCRB General Conference in the spring of 2017 the Aaronic Priesthood met as a quorum to discuss the topics presented during the conference. Along with the topics presented, we discussed the need to come together as a priesthood body so that we grow and unite in our ministry. At the quorum meeting, Levi Vickery, David Frye and Rex Marchant volunteered to organize a weekend retreat for the Aaronic priesthood. Planning began in early summer and prayerful consideration was given for the location, timing and content of the retreat.

Communication of the retreat was done to the best of our ability and our faith was in the Lord that he would bless those that attended. The location that was selected was Spring Valley Ranch in Eucha, Oklahoma. A commitment of 25 people was given to the retreat center. While we were hopeful that we would achieve that number, we only had 14 attendees total. We had prepaid for the facility and would like to request funding to help us with the cost of the retreat. The total cost of the retreat was \$3,076.40 and we collected \$1,305.00. (It was reported at the conference that an individual had picked up the difference to take care of the shortfall.)

Saturday of the retreat started with a prayer service followed by a day of classes. Neil and Ken Simmons led the first class regarding the organization of the Church and the Aaronic Priesthood. Levi Vickery led a class on the scriptural stated roles found in Section 17 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Fred Greene provided instruction specific to the organization of the Church as perceived and as intended. Fred focused his instruction on the ministry of the Priest. Neil Simmons led a discussion on the Aaronic Priesthood and expanded on the office of Teacher and Deacon. Jerry Vickery closed out the day with instruction on Stewardship, focusing on all that is encompassed with stewardship and not specifically financial. The Spirit of the Lord was with us as we worshiped, learned, and fellowshiped together.

We closed the weekend with a sacrament service and sharing the one thing that each person would take away from the weekend. There was a unanimous agreement from the Aaronic priesthood members in attendance that we should have another retreat. One every six months was the consensus. We also discussed ideas about what we would like to see at our next retreat.

Some of the takeaways from those in attendance were:

- There is urgency for the work of our office.
- Excitement to perform.
- Knowledge of the importance of the Bishop.
- Tools to be enabled in our ministry.
- Better understanding of quorums and that quorums should be directing the ministry.

Report of the Youth Quorum

Presented by Chris Taylor

In lieu of a conventional youth quorum, a youth activity was held on Friday evening in the form of a campfire. It was conducted by Chris Pedersen and featured several campfire songs led by Ron Smith and Brother Pedersen. A wonderful campfire atmosphere was created by David Cromwell inside the sanctuary of the church. Chris Taylor gave a testimony and offered a prayer for all the youth of the church, and Brother Pedersen closed the service with a benedictory prayer.

Report of the Restoration Women's Ministries/Member's Quorum

Presented by Barb Giertz

Report from the Restoration Women's Ministries/Members Quorum

Our time together began with a presentation by Sister Penny Curtis while we shared a fine lunch. Sr. Curtis spoke of the wives and families left at home when the Priesthood leave on missions. She touched on the responsibilities that are assumed during this time and the need for others to respond to that temporary "oneness;" that sometimes the wife needs just to talk with another women. She then spoke about Give Back Hope International, which supports an orphanage in Malawi. Close to that project has been born the "Women 2 Women" initiative to help make women in other countries self-sufficient and able to support their children and even to help other women gain independence. There was a very good response and discussion.

We moved on to the formal quorum session with a devotional from Sister Rita Woolery, who focused on Book of Mormon 4:93-95, which begins: *"Doubt not, but be believing, and begin as in time of old, and come unto the Lord with all your heart, and work out your salvation with fear and trembling before him."*

In respect to the question of officers for this quorum, which is a committee of the General Conference tasked to also serve the women of the National Conference, no discussion took place.

Sister Karen Bates led a discussion on the Revelation of May 2017 given through Patriarch Neil Simmons. Sr. Bates had many scriptural references that supported the document. This list may be found on the JCRB website under additional resources or by emailing Sr. Bates at karenb@comcast.net.

A discussion regarding "unity" was led by Sister Betty Vickery. Understandings that were shared were:

- We must understand WE cannot reconcile everything. Our efforts may be met with silence.
- It is God's prerogative to reconcile those who will not respond to overtures of reconciliation.
- It is imperative that we find common ground and concentrate our efforts in those areas.
- It is also important that we depend on God to give direction rather than someone else, i.e. we should not depend on someone else's study to get us to the next level of understanding.
- We must pray for all to respect the differences; concentrate on the commonalities and refrain from gossip or "put downs."
- Respect one another in submitting to God's call to Unity.
- Infiltrate: i.e. attend other group's activities; support them with respect and love. This might even include other denominations. One's attendance may have an unforeseen effect.
- In the same way, invite others to attend our activities. They may respond.
- Forgive and forget the past; we must move forward.
- Refuse to take offense; it is a choice!
- All the Restoration groups are doing *something* right; speak well of that and refuse to speak ill of them.
- Act to bring blessings without expectation of a specific response.
- Do pray intercessory prayer for Unity.
- Rebuild relationships damaged by actions over the years; repair that breach.
- Love better.
- Testify – and sometimes with words. Share Christ.
- Encourage.
- Entice.
- Edify.
- Strengthen others in their testimony. As we are strengthened in testifying, so are others!

The final discussion, led by Sister Chari Pedersen, focused on specifics that the quorum members are willing to commit to:

- Understanding and applying the financial law.
- Invite the priesthood into the homes.
- Increase, or begin, an effort to communicate with those who are lost to us because of past events. We once worshipped with them; got out with them for dinner; pray together on ANY issue.
- Reach out.
- Women of the church have a desire to be together and will attend other group's women's activities when possible.
- Recognize that strife comes from pride; know and understand the cost of pride.
- Participate in visiting or calling other women to offer encouragement.
- Fast: for the youth, for specific reasons, for direction, for their souls.
- Feast on the Word.
- Honor the Gospel; obey it to show your love for God.
- Be valiant in testimony; share the love of God.

- Sometimes visit elsewhere to learn something positive and uplifting about others.
- Be patient and understanding.
- Try to see others as God sees them.
- Heal the Breach.

Respectfully submitted,
Restoration Women's Ministries/Members Quorum
Barbara Giertz, Acting Secretary
Debbie Newman, Chair
Karen Bates
Chari Pedersen
Lorrie Turner
Betty Vickery
Rita Woolery

When all the reports had been made, Chad Nestman moved and Dale Wilson seconded the motion to accept the reports. The motion carried.

In a matter of personal privilege, it was asked that the minutes reflect the appreciation of the conference for the efforts to provide lunch for everyone during the quorum sessions so people could meet over the lunch hour. BJ Jordison, conference manager, and her team were thanked for this special effort.

Next item of business was Resolution NCR17-01 Qualifications for US National President. The resolution, presented by secretary Alan Smith, was read to the body.

Resolution NCR17-01
Qualifications for US National President

Whereas there seems to be a conflict between Resolution NCR-02 and NCR-04 as to what the qualifications are for president of the U.S. Conference with NCR-02 stating that the president must be a "credentialed member of the U.S. National Conference" while NCR-04 says the president must be chosen from "participating branches,"

Be it resolved the first sentence of section **2. Presiding Protocols** in NCR-04 be amended to read:

"2. Presiding Protocols. The US National Conference President shall be chosen from among the Melchisedec priesthood of credentialed members of the U. S. National Conference."

David Drummond moved and Dale Wilson seconded the motion to approve the resolution. The motion carried.

It will be recorded as Resolution NCR-08.

Resolution NCR-08
Qualifications for US National President

Whereas there seems to be a conflict between Resolution NCR-02 and NCR-04 as to what the qualifications are for president of the U.S. Conference with NCR-02 stating that the president must be a “credentialed member of the U.S. National Conference” while NCR-04 says the president must be chosen from “participating branches,”

Be it resolved the first sentence of section **2. Presiding Protocols** in NCR-04 be amended to read:

“2. Presiding Protocols. The US National Conference President shall be chosen from among the Melchizedek priesthood of credentialed members of the U. S. National Conference.”

President Greene noted that he felt \$2,000 should be allocated by the US National Conference toward future Aaronic Priesthood retreats in the United States.

Neil Simmons moved and Rose Wiseman seconded the motion that the amount would be budgeted for the coming year as seed money for another Aaronic priesthood retreat. It was noted that the conference had the funds for this endeavor. The motion was approved.

Next item of action was the election of officers for the 2018 US National Conference.

The minutes from the mass meeting of Melchizedek priesthood were read by conference secretary H. Alan Smith.

Minutes of the Mass Meeting of Melchizedek Priesthood

The Melchizedek priesthood meet in a mass meeting to nominate a president for the US National Conference Saturday, Oct. 7, at 12:30 p.m.

David Bates offered a prayer for the meeting.

President Fred Greene asked for a point of personal privilege to ask that his name not be put into nomination for president of the conference. He said he felt the president of the national conference should be different than that of the General Conference and that the national conference leadership position was a good training ground for leadership.

Vice President Dan Sherer was then asked to take the chair for the nomination of a candidate for president.

He opened the nominations for the position of president of the US National conference. Three men were nominated – Joel Loving from the Mount Ayr Restoration Branch, George Baldwin from the Green Bay Restoration Group, and David Whiting from the Byrneville, IN Branch.

A question was raised about who was eligible to be nominated for president. It was noted that any credentialed Melchizedek priesthood at the conference could be nominated.

Before the vote was taken, prayers were offered by Avilio Herrera and Glenn Vreeland.

A vote was held with Joel Loving being the person receiving the most votes. His name will be submitted to the conference as the nominee from the mass meeting.

Brother Fred Greene was then asked to dismiss the meeting with prayer. Chris Taylor gave a statement of appreciation to brother Greene for his leadership of the group the past several years.

Respectfully submitted,
H. Alan Smith, Secretary

President Greene asked if there were other nominations for president. There were none and Joel Loving was elected president of the conference.

Brother Greene noted that he had been president for 11 national or general conferences and appreciated the support he had been given over the years.

A rising vote of appreciation for Brother Greene's leadership was made by those assembled.

Three men were nominated for vice president of the conference – Fred Greene, David Whiting and George Baldwin. David Whiting was chosen as the vice president.

Two names were nominated for the position of secretary – H. Alan Smith and Chad Nestman. H. Alan Smith was elected.

Marilyn James was nominated for the position of treasurer. She was chosen by the conference.

Chad Nestman and Jan Jordison were nominated for the position of recorder with Jan Jordison being elected.

The members of the Logistics Committee were then nominated. All the officers of the conference are automatically members of the committee. A motion was made by Patrick McKay to include all the other members of the committee currently serving along with Fred Greene to serve for the next year. Those on the committee included Sally Simmons, Lisa Newman, Duane Newman, Barbara Giertz, Chris Taylor, Alissa Hughes and BJ Jordison. The eight members were approved to serve on the Logistics Committee.

Nominated to serve on the Credentials Committee were Phil O'Camb, Glen Vreeland and Chad Nestman. Phil O'Camb and Glen Vreeland were elected to serve on the committee.

A motion was made by Don Kauble and seconded by Nancy Clardy to hold another conference in October 2018. The conference determines from year to year if it is to be held.

The motion was approved.

President Fred Greene offered a prayer to close the conference.

Respectfully submitted,
H. Alan Smith, Conference Secretary