

Dear Bro. Jason,

First of all, there is no need to apologize for the tone of your email. I very much appreciate your inquiry and the chance to actually have this discussion. It is so discouraging to have brethren spreading misinformation and making accusations without ever giving opportunity to discuss how and why things really are. When I was ordained to the office of Seventy, my branch presidency refused to let me perform any function as a priesthood member without even speaking to me about it. They did the same to Seventy George Thomas, who was also a member of our branch, because he was involved in my ordination. They did however inform Bro. George that my family and his family would no longer be served communion in the Warrensburg Branch, because of my ordination. The presiding elder and his counselors never met with me to try to recover me from my sin of being ordained. They simply cast us and our families out. We were treated better by the RLDS church when they silenced me (I was a priest at the time) and cast out my family back in 1989. At least the Stake President sent a letter (actually he sent out more than 300 letters) explaining what they were doing to us. Doug Patterson and I were also removed from the Conference of Restoration Elders, Africa Restoration Ministries board of directors because we were ordained as Seventy, but without any explanation or discussion. I share that, to help you understand how much I appreciate the discussion you and I are able to have.

I am inserting this paragraph to apologize for having written a book in response to your questions. My only excuse is that I fear not answering your questions adequately or thoroughly. I hope I have not discouraged you from further inquiry, as I would be happy to answer any additional questions you might have. And if I have that opportunity, I will try to be shorter and more prompt in my response.

- 1) There is definitely a wealth of testimony regarding the calls to Seventy, and they do seem spiritually directed. I remember when the calls came, Doctrine and Covenants Section 104 was sited as scriptural support - which I agreed with. However, would you be able to provide the CRB's formal rationale with regards to scriptural support for the calls to Seventy and subsequent calls for High Priests and Apostles?**

I guess the rationale of the Conference of Branches was that not only does Section 104 give the Seventy the authority to perpetuate the office of Seventy, but church law also gives Conferences of the church, above the level of Branch Conferences (Branch business meetings) the authority to approve/sustain calls to the office of Seventy when those calls are approved by a Council of Presidents of Seventy. It was also in recognition of the actions taken by a Conference of Branches in 1853 when they had one President of Seventy, but approved the ordination of 20 Elders to the office of Seventy. God indicated His approval of those actions when He told Joseph Smith III seven years later, that the "Reorganization" which was formed in 1853 was the only

body within the Restoration movement with which He was well pleased. So much so that He told Joseph Smith III to go and “join the Reorganization”.

When the Conference of 1853 was struggling terribly with what some believed was a revelation from God to “organize”, God kept telling them that they had the pattern and they should follow the pattern. They finally agreed at that Conference of Branches to ordain 7 Apostles, 20 Seventy, at least 12 High Priests and they organized the Zarahemla Stake. Joseph Smith III later said that God could have reorganized His church if He had but one Elder.

The calling and setting apart of Presidents of Seventy, Seventy, High Priests, Apostles and Patriarchs at General Conferences of the Conference of Restoration Branches have all been done by revelation. Jesus Christ built His church in ancient days, not from within the existing church of His day, but by establishing His church by calling men to His holy priesthood. He established all of the offices of priesthood as necessary to the building of His church and His kingdom. When God restored His church to the earth in 1830 He restored all of those offices of priesthood. He never expected His church to function without Deacons, Teachers, Priests, Elders, Seventy, High Priests, Apostles, Bishops, Patriarchs and a Prophet. The church at various times in history has been without a Prophet, but God has always sent a Prophet in His time. The reorganization was without a prophet from 1853 until 1860, but it had all of the other offices of priesthood, and it thrived. Today in the Restoration we have thousands and thousands of saints who have never had the opportunity of receiving their Patriarchal Blessing. Is that an ordinance and a ministry that is necessary in God’s church?

The Conference of Restoration Elders was not formed as the result of revelation from God. Neither were its appendages. (i.e., ARM, SEAAM, LAMB, GEM, etc.) The CRE and all of their missionary boards are not scriptural, not according to church law and not organized according to revelation. Good men came together and tried to address a need, but they are not functioning according to God’s plan for His church and the building up of His Kingdom.

The Conference of Restoration Branches or the Joint Conference of Restoration Branches is not a new church. We are a continuation of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, just as the Reorganization said they were not a new church but a continuation of the original church founded by the Prophet, Joseph Smith Jr.

God gave the saints the right to have voice and vote in His church. Be that at a branch conference, district conference, stake conference or General Conference. He gave branches the authority to come together in Conference just as three branches did in 1852. And the Reorganized church was eventually recognized legally as the original church.

The saints and branches who participate in the General Conference of the Conference of Restoration Branches are following the scriptures, church law and the guidance and

direction of God, to preserve the offices of priesthood that God placed in His church, and to advance the work of the Kingdom, bringing thousands of saints into a covenant relationship with Jesus Christ.

When I was called to the office of Elder I was ordained into the Melchizedek priesthood. When I was ordained to the office of Seventy, I was set apart to that office in the Melchizedek priesthood. When I was ordained as a High Priest and then Apostle, I continued in the Melchizedek priesthood.

Our brothers in the CRE are telling us that all we have to do to bring unity in the church is to lay down the office to which we were called and to be Elders again. As an Apostle I am still an Elder, but God called me to be an Apostle. I asked God if He wanted me to lay down my office to bring unity to His church. He told me if I laid down the office of Apostle, that I would have to deny my call to Apostle, Seventy, Elder and Priest, because He assured me that He called me to all of those offices of His priesthood. I cannot deny my testimony of my calls and I have seen confirmation of those calls as I have served in those different offices of priesthood. Each office has many of the same gifts, but many different gifts also. Why else did He establish the different offices?

I know this has been a VERY long answer to your question about rationale, but I never considered rationale, when I sought and received testimonies of my calling to different offices of priesthood.

I guess if I were to use rationale, as I understand it anyway, (maybe I am not understanding what you mean by rationale) I would say that common sense tells me that God placed these offices of priesthood in His church for a reason and He does not make mistakes and He expects His church not only to follow the pattern that he established, but to maintain that pattern.

I think we all believe that when God restored His church in 1830, He said He had set His hand for the last time. When the church fell apart after the death of Joseph the Martyr, God did not send Jesus back to set His church in order. He told His saints to follow the pattern and when they did He sent His prophet. So many saints are now waiting for Jesus to come back and set His church in order, but why would He? He has given us the pattern. He has given us authority. He expects us not to be the servant who buried the one talent in the ground so he could dig it up and present it to the master upon his return. The master rebuked that servant. But He praised the servants who had labored and increased the talents He had given them. Too many of our brothers and sisters have taken it upon themselves to protect the restoration gospel by burying it within organizations that were never intended by God. Are they growing the "talents" that were entrusted to them? The reality is that the efforts of the Conference of Restoration Branches, through its missionary functions has tripled the size of the Restoration Branch Movement. Yes, it would be nice if we could give ourselves a "church" name that we could identify ourselves by, but we simply are a continuation of the Reorganized Church, teaching the same doctrine and practicing the same ordinances as were taught and practiced by Joseph Smith Jr and Joseph Smith III.

God is speaking to us and directing us, and although we are human and we struggle sometimes, He has preserved us. There has been more than one occasion that we came together in Conference not knowing if we would survive the week as a Conference, but He has always brought us through and I can testify to you that fruit is being born and we are reaping a harvest for the Master. There is no doubt that if the Restoration Branch Movement could come together and pool our spiritual and temporal resources, that much more fruit would be born, but God is blessing our efforts, and we must continue to follow His lead.

2) Could you also explain how the CRB sustains these higher offices, but is still not considered a church?

I will certainly try to be shorter in my response to this question. God made provision for the higher offices of the priesthood to be sustained by Conferences of the church. In the early days of the Restoration Branch Movement, it was thought we could not even call men to the offices of Deacon, Teacher, Priest and Elder. Having come out of the Central Missouri Stake where ALL priesthood calls had to be approved by the Stake High Council and approved by a Stake Conference, it was assumed by most that a branch could not process calls to the priesthood. But, in the restoration branches, we eventually realized that God had given branch conferences, (not conferences of branches) the authority to approve/sustain calls to those four offices of priesthood. Offices above that of Elder must be approved/sustained by a Conference higher than a branch conference. The Doctrine & Covenants clearly authorizes “branches in close proximity” to organize Districts and Districts can hold District Conferences. We do not have any Stakes in the Restoration Branch Movement, but if God so directed, as He did to the Conference of Branches in 1853, a Stake could be organized and that Stake could then hold Stake Conferences. And branches are clearly authorized to come together in General Conferences. God gave authority of District, Stake and General Conferences to approve and sustain calls to the higher priesthood offices. If the Quorum of Apostles calls a man to the office of Apostle, or Patriarch, that call has to be approved by a Conference. If the Quorum of High Priests calls a man to the office of High Priest, that call has to be approved by a Conference. These calls do not have to be approved by the whole church. Men are called to these offices by revelation and they must be approved/sustained by a Conference above that of a branch conference. Many of the Restoration Branches who incorporated as Independent Branches have in their bylaws that they cannot call men to the higher offices of priesthood. And as true as that is, many branches are ruled by their bylaws more than by scripture or church law. More than a year after my family was persona non grata at the Warrensburg Restoration Branch, I had a discussion with a priesthood member of the branch and I asked if he could show me where my ordination had violated the scriptures, or church law and he simply replied that it did not violate the scriptures or church law, but it violated the bylaws of the Warrensburg Branch.

The Reorganization called themselves the Reorganized Church, but they were not a new church and very clearly claimed and testified in the famous court case in Ohio that

they were only a continuation of the original church. The Conference of Restoration Branches is not a new church and does not function as a church, but functions as a Conference of the original church. Every year, every branch and every saint with an authoritative baptism has to choose whether or not they want to have voice and vote in the Conference. Branches come and go and members come and go from Conference to Conference. You cannot join the Conference of Restoration Branches, but you can choose to have voice and vote when the General Conference is convened.

Additionally, any representative who came to our region from the JCRB always presented the JCRB as a new church and had every interest in "reorganizing" the former RLDS church, which caused even more confusion.

As for those who went across the US and even into the international mission field claiming that the Conference of Restoration Branches was a new church, most of those men were members of the CRE or South Crysler Restoration Branch, or a handful of Restoration Branches in the Centerplace. I cannot say there was never a man who participated in the Conference that did that, but the missionaries in the Conference of Restoration Branches had an agreement, that we would not promote the JCRB or denigrate the CRE or any of the other factions and groups. If there were men from the JCRB who were claiming the JCRB was a new church, they were very few in number and they were mistaken and definitely speaking out of turn. There were a handful of men who tried to take the Conference of Restoration Branches into the Remnant Church and when that failed, they left the Conference and went over to the Remnant and were immediately ordained to higher offices. Those same men recently tried to assume the top positions in the Remnant Church, and when they were unsuccessful in that, they left and started a new church.

There is no doubt that in the very earliest days of the Joint Conference of Restoration Branches, there were men with an agenda to organize the Conference into a church. But they were very few and they failed and have been gone for a long time, and we continue to be a Conference of Restoration Branches, not a church. We have even said we are a portion of the original church, where all of the offices of His holy priesthood are to be found, with the exception of a prophet president. I pray that in His time, God will send His prophet to those who are still preaching and teaching His doctrine and His gospel and baptizing and confirming thousands of saints in a covenant relationship with Jesus Christ, looking forward to the establishment of Zion and to His return.

I have copied a few JCRs (Joint Conference Resolutions that have been passed at General Conferences of the Conference of Restoration Branches) that may or may not be appropo to our discussion.

Resolution #6, Fellowship with all faithful members and branches

Whereas: We recognize the rights of both branches and individuals to decide whether to participate in the conference, therefore be it

Resolved: That this conference pledges to extend the hand of fellowship to all those faithful members and branches not represented with delegates at this conference; and be it further

Resolved: That the members of this conference will pray for all members of the body of Christ, and ask for their support in prayer.

Resolution #12, RLDS is lawful successor

We believe that the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints as reorganized by Joseph Smith III is the lawful successor to the Church founded by Joseph Smith, Jr.

JCR #31, Resolution on Sustaining Higher Priesthood Officers

Whereas, it has been the practice of the church conferences to vote whether to sustain or not sustain the men of the priesthood whose calling had been approved by conferences greater than that of a single branch; and

Whereas, it is proper and scriptural for the priesthood who are ordained to the offices of High Priest, Seventy, Bishop and Patriarch to be presented to the conference of the Saints so that they may or may not be sustained in their office and calling; and

Whereas, The Book of Mormon declares the reason for submitting to the vote of the people.

35 Now it is not common that the voice of the people desireth anything contrary to that which is right; but it is common for the lesser part of the people to desire that which is not right;

36 Therefore this shall ye observe, and make it your law to do your business by the voice of the people.

37 And if the time comes that the voice of the people doth choose iniquity, then is the time that the judgments of God will come upon you; (Mosiah 13:35-37)

See also this small sample of precedents:

D&C 121:1a, and 126:12 Requiring sustaining vote.

RLDS C.H. Vol. 1 Chapter 24:642, A refusal to sustain.

RLDS C.H. Vol. 3 Chapter 4:116 Presidents of Seventy sustained.

RLDS C.H. Vol. 3 Chapter 4:118 Bishops sustained; and

Whereas, for more than twenty years there has been no representative conference of the church members that could vote to sustain or not sustain these men of the priesthood; therefore,

Be It Resolved that the priesthood: Seventy, High Priests, Bishops, and Patriarchs are invited to submit their names individually to the Secretary/Recorder of the Conference, to be sustained and supported in their office and calling by the vote of the Joint Conference of Restoration Branches.

JCR #32, Limitations on conference and officers

No Joint Conference nor any of its officers has the right or authority to regulate the internal affairs of participating branches by virtue of office or position in the Joint Conference.

JCR #40, RLDS in organizational disorder

Resolved, that the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is in organizational disorder.

JCR #41, COC is a new church

Resolved, that the Community of Christ is a new church, culminating over 40 years of doctrinal changes to the church's formulated creed and well understood faith.

JCR #43, Adoption of RLDS Rules through January 1, 1958

Resolved, that the Joint Conference of Restoration Branches and its participating branches adopt the scriptures, resolutions, rules of order, and quorum decisions of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints as they existed on January 1, 1958; and

Resolved, that the JCRB and its participating branches reserve the right to rescind or modify any doctrinally incorrect resolutions, rules of order and quorum decisions; and Resolved, that the JCRB and its participating branches reserve the right to adopt any scriptures, resolutions, rules of order, and quorum decisions that are in harmony with the established law of the scriptures; and

Be it further Resolved; that all of this be done by the prayerful deliberation, voice and vote of the conference.

JCR #46, The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

Whereas, participating branches of the Joint Conference of Restoration Branches believe and uphold the original precepts of the gospel; and

Whereas, the Conference of June 12, 1852 affirmed, "That we recognize the validity of all legal ordinations in the Church, and will fellowship all such as have thus been ordained, while acting within the purview of such authority;

Resolved, That we believe that the Church of Christ, organized on the 6th day of April, A.D. 1830, exists as on that day, wherever six or more Saints are organized, according to the pattern in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants." (The Messenger, Vol. 2, p. 9); and

Whereas, the Conference of June 12, 1852 also affirmed, "Where evidence of a legal baptism once having been received, and in the absence of expulsion or apostasy, it was not admissible to require a re-baptism, to be identified with the Reorganization; but that in such cases it was optional with the persons themselves – a matter of conscience with them alone." (The Messenger, Vol. 2, p. 37); and

Whereas, that the participating branches of the JCRB agree with the position of the 1852 conference that re-baptism and re-ordination were not required for membership in the Reorganization; and

Whereas, re-baptism and re-ordination are still not required for membership in the Restoration Branches: therefore be it

Resolved, that the participating branches of the Joint Conference of Restoration Branches, an unincorporated ecclesiastical organization, claim that we are a continuation of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and not the organization of a new church, in the same way that the Reorganization is the continuation of the original church known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. And be it further;

Resolved, that we believe that any branch formed according to the pattern specified in Article 1 of the Articles of Incorporation of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which states, "A 'branch' may be organized at any time, or place, by the concurrence of six or more resident members in good standing, of said Reorganized Church, one of whom must be an elder, priest, teacher, or deacon," is a lawful branch of the Church of Christ as organized on April 6, 1830 and reorganized in April 1853, with all the rights and privileges of such branches, including, if it so chooses, the use of the name Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

JCR #55, W. B. Smith right to name successor

As long as Wallace B. Smith is alive, no one else can name a successor to the Presidency of the High Priesthood.

JCR #100 Resolution for Quorum of High Priests

Whereas, the High Priests in a meeting on April 18, 2011, with the potential increase in their number, have determined that it is timely to function as "The Quorum of High Priests" according to accepted General Church procedure;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the general conference of Branches, as a continuation of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, authorizes the High Priests to form a quorum of High Priests.

JCR#123 – Resolution on Purpose Statement for Joint Conference of Restoration Branches

Resolved: That the following be adopted as the purpose statement for the Joint Conference of Restoration Branches:

Who we are

The Joint Conference of Restoration Branches is a body of people, individual branches and other authoritatively baptized members who share a belief in the distinctive message of the Restoration found in the Inspired Version of the Bible, Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants, the authority of priesthood and the sanctity of the ordinances and the sacrament.

Our purpose

The purpose of the JCRB is to bring people into a covenant with the Father through Jesus Christ. We exist to spread the Restored Gospel of Christ, to assist in the gathering of the House of Israel, and to establish Zion, a city of righteousness, the New

Jerusalem. We exist to provide a venue for the members of the Restoration to confer together to make decisions on how to carry out these purposes.

In 2007, the JCRB was incorporated to facilitate the ownership of property, should the Conference ever choose to own property.

**Bylaws
of
Joint Conference of Restoration Branches**

2.1 The Corporation. **The Corporation shall have no members.**

2.2 The Unincorporated Association of Branches and Members. **The General Conference of the JCRB is an unincorporated association of Restoration Branches and members of the church**, according to JCR#1 operating under the Rules of Order, Resolutions, Council Decisions and Policies of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in effect on January 1, 1958 and as amended by General Conferences after January 1, 2007.