

First Transition of Power Discussion Following Ortell's Death

MEETING OF GOVERNING BOARD AT DIXON BUILDING

Meeting Date: Aug. 29, 1987

Location: 159 W Broadway, SLC, UT 84101



Governing Board Members Present

- No. 10 (Merlin Kingston)
- No. 19 (Ivan Nielson)
- No. 21 (Ray Brown)
- No. 34 (Wendell Owen)
- No. 2 (Clyde Gustafson)

Also present

Elden Kingston,
Ardous Gustafson,

Paul Kingston,
J. Daniel Kingston

Meeting Notes

No.19 (Ivan Nielson) in charge

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Prayer: No.10 (Merlin Kingston)

No.19 (Ivan Nielson):

I am here to learn about the expansion of the governing board to bring it up to seven. Brother Ernie is gone. I had in mind Brother Ortell had left a man for the successor. I feel it is good to turn the meeting over to Brother Paul so we will be enlightened as to what Brother Ortell wanted.

Paul Kingston:

The question is who we should have take charge of tomorrow's meeting. I think it would be good for each member on the governing board, and Sister Ardous, and Brother Elden, and Daniel [to speak].

No.2 (Clyde Gustafson):

I expected this meeting would be held. I figured there was going to be a meeting held in as much as brother Merlin doesn't get around very often. I am glad he is here and able to partake of some these things we are interested in. I don't know just exactly [what] is the most important to bring out. For myself I spend most of my time in Ogden. My desire is to continue to work in that area and continue to build those stewardships to the best of my ability. I have people that are working with me really good. Because of working up there I am not familiar with the problems you have down in this area. I believe that I will wait for the rest of my remarks to find out what the Lord wants us to bring out in a meeting of this type.

No.10 (Merlin Kingston):

This is quite a crucial time in the history of the order. It brings back memories of when Brother Elden left us. There was quite a bit of concern and there was wondering who was going to continue on in Brother Elden's footsteps. I am going to give a little history.

Back in 1948 a couple of months before Brother Elden died, he just barely had strength to get out of bed and walk into the next room and perform some ordinances. He took myself, brother Charles and Ortell. He said I am going to sit down in this chair.

He told Brother Charles you lay your hands upon my head and confer the priesthood upon me.

He did.

Then he said Brother Charles you sit down in this chair and I am going to confer the priesthood upon you. Brother Charles sat down in the chair and he conferred the priesthood upon him.

Then Brother Elden conferred the priesthood on Brother Ortell.

Then he said Brother Merlin you sit down in this chair and Brother Ortell will confer the priesthood upon you.

I wondered about that for a lot of years and it took me quite a while and wondered why that was. John the Baptist was sent here to get the people ready for the Savior. The first thing the Savior did was go find John the Baptist and get him to baptize him. The Lord had put his authority here and when the Savior came he bowed under that authority. That was the end of John the Baptist's work.

When the Lord gave the Prophet Joseph the priesthood he gave it to him to be used in his dispensation. In Isaiah it tells about the first man the Lord sent down and gave him the authority of the Priesthood. The Lord ordained the first man and gave him the priesthood to use. It went on down through the times of the church to 1935 to Broadbent's time. Brother Charles had the priesthood ordained on him he could trace back to the Prophet Joseph Smith, but Brother Elden did the same as the Savior, he placed himself under that priesthood.

Brother Elden is that second man it tells about in Isaiah. When he tells about that second man, that is Brother Elden, unto whom rightfully belongs the priesthood. He was sent on this earth to do the job that second servant came down to do.

He conferred it upon Brother Ortell and told Brother Ortell to confer it on me. That was done in the spring of 1948 and then Brother Elden passed on.

Going a little farther I have kept this to myself.

In the year of 1946, I had just got out of the army. I had the privilege of working with Brother Wendell getting out the potato and beet crop. Brother Elden said he was going to let the boys pick their own jobs. I thought that will be a good thing. Brother Hyrum Peterson was delivering coal for a coal company. I asked Brother Hyrum to ask them if they would give me a job. They said, let him come tomorrow. They gave me a bunch of hard orders. I delivered fifteen orders that day.

When I went home Brother Elden came to me and said "I am going to the mine and you better call the coal company you are working for and tell them you are going to go to the mine to work". I did and they wanted me to stay with them. That next morning Brother Elden came and picked me up and took me to the mine. If I had not got one other thing from Brother Elden besides that ride it would have been worth it.

Brother Elden talked to me all the way down there and the spirit was so strong I could have listened to him all day.

He said, "Brother Merlin you are supposed to marry some of my girls. This is the thing that is going to save the order. I can tell you are really confused. This is something that is new to you, but I promise you the day will come when you will understand it."

He said, “it is a wonderful things that three brothers can work together in building up the Kingdom of God. If anything ever happens to me in the future I want Brother Ortell to take my place in the order, in my family and everything I am going. That will be his responsibility.”

He said, “if the time ever comes if anything happens to Brother Ortell it will be your responsibility to take over his place.”

I feel it is my responsibility how to repeat what Brother Elden told me that day. I feel if the order wants my services I feel I have that responsibility. I was hoping the day would never come when I would have to tell the rest of you that story. I did my best and everyone did their best to keep our leader Brother Ortell here. I will truly say Brother Ortell did not truly tell me anything he had in mind when he left. I haven't seen him much in the last while. About the only communications I have had with him is on the farm.

If I was only thinking about myself I would say, “I would say I don't want that kind of responsibility.” When thinking of the order I feel like with the problems you have down in this area I realize it is a large responsibility. When thinking of the order, I feel like whatever the Lord wants I want.

No.19 (Ivan Nielson):

The spirit of the Lord has been here. I was very glad to hear what Brother Merlin had to say. I for one want to support anyone the Lord has given his guidance for the man to take the leadership of this work. I would be very glad to stand behind Brother Merlin on this. I would be glad to stand behind any of the rest of you here if that would be the Lord's will. I had never heard this instruction that Brother Elden had given to himself and Brother Charles. I don't imagine the LORD WOULD GIVE any conflicting instructions like this. I feel like it is opening up tonight to where we will be able to understand the will of the Lord, Brother Elden's thoughts and the way we should go.

No.21 (Ray Brown):

I am glad to be here tonight at this meeting. I realize the seriousness of the things here that have happened and have to be put in order. I talked with Brother Ortell when I was here that we should take the responsibility of seeing these children were brought up right. I am going to stand behind what Brother Merlin has talked about because I know it is true. I know we are in a serious condition at a time like this and it is very important we get off on the right foot and give it every support we have. That is what I intend to do in this work.

I know when I talked to Brother Elden before he died when he was really sick I promised him as long as I was alive this work would never die. I hope all of us realize the seriousness of these things and do our best to support the knowledge we have so these things can be fulfilled.

I ask the blessings of the Lord that we can accomplish these things and stand behind the Lord and his servants here in the earth. I ask these things in the name of Jesus, Amen.

No. 34 (Wendell Owen):

I am very glad to hear these things. I am saddened by Brother Ortell's departure, for ourselves, but not for him. Brother Ortell in his talks has been talking very plainly about some of the things we need to do better on and prove ourselves on as far as our oneness and he mentioned quite recently that we had need of the covenant. I feel like Brother Ortell brought out, nothing is sure and our success as a people and our success of the Order is not sure. It is dependent on the people. It is up to us and I feel like if we were not doing it with him, how can we do it without him. I feel like he is going to be very close to us. The way you stop paying interest is by paying the debt. I feel his pain-racked body was physically unable to pay any more without paying with his life. That means we have been relieved of some of that debt that was spiritual and I feel we should realize that payment has been made and we should pay that part we have to pay.

Brother Merlin, Ortell and Sister Ardous were my cousins. Though possibly we visited a time or two I do not have much recollection of them until we came to this order. Brother Merlin was sent out to Wyoming to put up the hay. I was fourteen and Brother Merlin was fifteen. I had the privilege of getting acquainted with Brother Merlin at that time. Since that time I have really had a lot of good experiences with Brother Merlin. I feel a closeness with Brother Merlin. I have always look[ed] to him as being above me in the eyes of the Lord and I always had that respect for Brother Merlin.

I never heard the story of the Priesthood. The first thing I had of the priesthood when Brother Charles took us down and baptized us and Brother Charles conferred the priesthood on Brother Ivan and Brother Ivan conferred it on me. Brother Ortell said the priesthood should be reconferred under the church, as a record, and from the church itself. Even though I have been baptized into the present church, but I do not hold the priesthood in that church.

One thing I have had one big concern about Brother Merlin, I feel if he filled that position we would drive him into an early grave. He has always had trouble with his health all his life and I say this out of love for Brother Merlin, that would be my main concern if that was the decision of the Lord at this time. I know on these things most of the people in the order do not begin to realize the strain and responsibility that was carried by Brother Elden and Brother Ortell on these things. I managed to get close enough to Brother Ortell to see an insight into these things. Talking about a lot of those experiences in the days of the church and things like that the idea of being the leader and not realizing what it takes, I told Brother Ortell when you get close enough to the leadership to see what is there and what it takes I am real thankful that I do not have to do it. What I want is the will of the Lord.

One thing we need here in the order and we need badly what Brother Ortell talked to me about taking care of my health and watching on the highway. We are going to have to stay around to help put these things in front of the younger people. I know there is lots to be done and a lot we need Merlin very

badly for. There isn't any way the type of people that are on the earth are going to be the Lord's people he says are going to be here through out the Millennium.

There are two different operations going on. One is the olive tree and the branches he was going to graft back into the tree. Brother Elden told the story about the queen bee. That queen bee was Sister Vesta. A rod shall come forth out of the stem of Jesse and a branch shall grow out of his roots. That rod was the prophet Joseph. The branch that came out of the roots was a descendant of Jesse. That branch came out of the roots. That branch was the result of this queen bee that was to be the mother of the hive. That was by the uniting of her family and the grafting in of these other branches and it will all be one tree and it will all be equal and it will all be his.

That is what was started and need to be continued in the future and it is important that all that are involved in that process; it is very important they all work together and continue in this work and in these things that Brother Elden established here upon the earth, and brother Ortell poured all his life into, and it is very important that we harvest the results of all that sacrifice, and that means it has to have the complete picture, every part of it and those branches of that root, and it means it has to have the other branches to be grafted into it; and if we do not continue to all work together to bring those things to pass.

The posterity of Brother Elden, Brother Ortell, Brother Merlin Sister Orlean and Sister Ardous that is where that branch is; where that posterity and root is. Brother Elden's posterity is evident mostly in Brother Elden's family and that was one of the most important keys the Lord had in this plan. There are a few places that is evident and the Lord is very mindful of and very concerned about. We are aware that we have Brother Merlin's posterity is one of the most important branches that we have.

It is also important that it is one branch. The Lord did not want five branches. He wanted one branch and the success of this work, if it is to be in its fullness, it is important of those three branches to be fused into one. The next for the next be fused into that. Any part of that if it is left out, we are going to be very short of that. I think we should all continue to work together.

I would be really thrilled to work under Merlin to be the head of this order, but I would fear for his life at this time. I don't know whether Brother Ortell gave any instructions to any of you here. I know if we will be successful in knowing the will of the Lord I know he is going to give that help and that knowledge to whomsoever he chooses to take that position. I would like to ask the blessings of the Lord upon us in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Elden Kingston (Gustafson):

I guess some of you are wondering why I am here tonight. I am here more or less being a spokesman for Brother Clyde and maybe say some of the things he would say. I appreciate the opportunity to be here and being a part of this meeting. I realize this is a turning point in the order and a stepping stone and it is really important how things come out here. Everyone of us have worked hard for the order and

everyone has put in hour after hour. Everyone here is willing to follow the one the Lord wants to lead the order. I really appreciate the things brother Merlin brought out and the things he told us tonight. I have been quite close to Brother Ortell. Probably I have taken part of the load off of him.

I have known I am not the one to lead this work. I know for a fact you can get that right out of your mind. It goes right back to some of the things Brother Ortell told us. Right now the thing all of us want in this meeting is the thing the Lord wants. There have been wonderings by the people.

There is one thing that Brother Ortell told me before he died and this was in the last year.

He said, "I have progressed far enough that when I do leave I will be able to choose my successor."

The thing I have been thankful for all my life. I love Brother Ortell and Brother Merlin. They taught me the things inside of me that have kept me in the order. When Brother Ortell told me, "I have been blessed where I can choose my successor," I knew if anything happened to him it would be lined up the way the Lord wants it to be lined up.

About ten years ago Brother Ortell was quite sick. He had fasted about six months before. He called Brother Merlin and he called me and my mother was there. My mother said I don't think he is going to make it. I thought I don't think he is going to make it either. Sister LaDonna asked us to administer to him. As I laid my hand on his head the spirit of the Lord came over me and I knew he was going to get well, I told he was going to have to go through much suffering but I told him he would live. After we administered to him, my mother said it looked like he was getting worse. All the while he was sick I knew for a fact he was going to get well.

The Lord has shown him he will choose his successor. I do believe at that time Brother Merlin got that direction I think, if something had happened to brother Ortell, that would probably the way it would have been.

My place is to help take some of the load off of his shoulders. I hope the spirit here will show us all what the Lord wants and what Brother Ortell wants.

These last weeks before Brother Ortell died when he got over the fever he started taking a few liquids in his body and he started eating a little bit I figured he would start getting better. I came over the next day and he looked worse. I would think he would start coming out of it.

I think his time was up.

While he was sick he told Sister Ilona, "my time is up."

She said, "we are not going to let you go."

He said, “you can take it or leave it, my time is up. If I did not tell you the things I feel and the things I feel inside of me, I feel like I would be doing you an injustice.”

I think one of the reasons he lived the last week was because we were going to work together and get over our difficulties and the feelings we had.

I think after this meeting I would suggest that Brother Merlin should take charge of this meeting and if it is decided Brother Paul was to fill that position he should present him. I am going to do everything in my power for myself and my family they will fit in with what the Lord wants.

Clyde Gustafson (2):

I realize I am getting full of years. I take comfort in reading about some of the things that happened to other individuals in ancient history. I am in better health than I have ever been. I am doing the same work I did for the past fifty years.

J. Daniel Kingston:

I appreciate the privilege of attending this meeting tonight. I appreciate very much the understanding Brother Wendell expressed in the lining up of the families. I appreciate this last two weeks we had Brother Ortell with us and it has brought us closer together. It made us all realize we all wanted the same thing.

There was a man in the order I was talking with that we were looking forward to the day when Brother Ortell got well. What type of dedication and support our leader would have if he would stand before us; it made me think of all the times a lot of people did not think it is worth going to meetings.

If Brother Ortell had wanted us to know he would have told us. Now each one of us have the opportunity to find out from the Lord what that choice is. All we need to do is find out what that choice is.

I feel like the Lord is holding back a piece of information to see how we pass the test.

I realize Brother Paul has worked with Brother Ortell like I myself have done. There has been a terrific amount of requirement to keep things up for my father.

I would feel like if Brother Merlin is the choice, Brother Merlin would not have a better servant than myself. If Brother Paul is the choice he would not have a better servant than myself. Whoever the Lord has chosen, I feel like it is up to us to find out, and when we find out I know all of us will follow it.

I have never seen anyone as intelligent as my father. I do not say, “you have to go to school.” I feel like it was more that the Lord was working through my father and as the order moves on it is going to move on without a break. It is going to be one continuous path. I never expected my father to leave this soon,

but I know all of us are going to have to take a certain amount of the weight he was holding and I want to take my part.

Paul Kingston:

I really appreciate the things that have been brought out tonight. I appreciate the things Brother Merlin talked to us about. As I was growing up there was two people in my mind that were as close to the Lord as they could get and one of those was my father and the other one was brother Merlin.

Brother Ortell could have come to each one of us and said, “this is the way it is going to be.” If Brother Ortell were to come to a couple and say, “this is the best way for you to get married,” or, “this is the way you are supposed to go,” there would come a time in their life when things would not be easy and they would look at things and they would think that was something that someone told me and that isn't the way these things are going to work out.

The true plan and the true way is for these things to take place for that young man to go to the Lord and turn their future over to the Lord.

The choice of our leader has already been decided by the Lord.

It is a matter of going to the Lord and asking him, “what would you have me do.” Among all of us we have that same responsibility to choose and get that testimony from our Lord. If we are successful in fitting into the plan the Lord has for us. I can truthfully say right now that each person in this room I would be very happy of supporting and giving my all to each person here. I think like Brother Wendell about the difficulty and the things Brother Ortell faced in his life. It gets back to the condition of a young couple facing their choice in marriage. If we are not willing to face our place the Lord has for us, we are not going to be able to face the challenges in our life.

I know Brother Ortell would not have left if he had any question in his mind we were not willing to face the challenges in head of us. I think it is the responsibility of each one of us to go to the Lord and see what is ahead of us. If people understood what the Order was and who the leader of the order was, they would be able to do things better. I have a testimony that whatever happens when I breathe my last breath it is going to be here in the order.

Ivan Nielsen (19):

My suggestion is to see what course we should take.

Wendell Owen (34):

I think we have a lot of people that are wondering, but I don't think we should leave them wondering too long. I think there are a lot of them have been wondering what we should do.

Elden Kingston (Gustafson):

There is a certain amount of things we don't need direction on. In looking things over I have had the opportunity of working with Brother Ortell and a lot of you have been on these different stewardships. I have worked with him on a day to day basis and I have had that opportunity. I have been shown in my mind beyond any doubt how things are to be lined up.

The Lord has picked someone. Brother Ortell has done that.

The Lord is going to make that decision. I think the things that Brother Elden told Brother Merlin about his family and Brother Elden's family if he lines his life up like Brother Elden had that plan I think that is going to fulfill that prophesy. I think the things the Lord has prophesied is going to happen.

Wendell Owen (34):

I feel to put the extra burden on Brother Merlin to run the entire order would actually hinder him to live his life long enough to see those things take place.

Ivan Nielsen (19):

I understood Brother Ortell told Sister LaDonna who should succeed him. I dreamed it would be a complete harmonious transition to what would happen. The Lord has already decided and we can be harmonious if his will is brought out through his word.

Paul Kingston:

I think the decision is critical. All of the men in this room are men who have spent their entire life and every part of their being has been dedicated to serving the Lord. If you were to put on a play and you would say we were to choose the person that was to take a part in the play, you would narrow it down maybe to a handful of people that meet those requirements. If you were to say this is the way it should be you might get the very best person for that job. It might be there was five or six you the Lord has brought up to meet all the requirements for that job, but there is one individual that will be able to meet those requirements better than anyone else.

It is going to be more confusing the longer things go on. It is essential there be complete harmony among the governing board. The leadership of his kingdom is going to be a combined effort of all these men in everything they accomplish. Whoever takes that position, as much as I think of every man here, I realize that none of us are perfect; there are going to be times whoever is in that position it is going to be a challenge to support him. If things move ahead like they should be, there has to be a oneness in the governing board.

Raymond Brown (21):

The Lord said, "wherever there is two or more united in my name, there I will be also." If we take a day or two and strive for that knowledge I am sure we will get the answer. I also believe when Sister Ardous was talking in this next dispensation there will be jobs turned over to different ones so the

responsibility will be on other responsible men. I think Brother Paul is very wise in his thinking and also Sister Ardous in all these things.

Merlin Kingston (10):

Each man on the governing board should get that direction when they make that decision.

The people of the order have to get that direction and it has to be at least the majority of the people.

Brother Elden said the governing board are to run the affairs of the order.

When the order makes this decision and that decision the governing board should help make that decision. That will give the leader a surety he has the backing of seven people.

I hope we all spend the next few days to find out what the Lord wants on this thing. I want to know it is the Lord's will.

Wendell Owen (34):

The reason this responsibility wasn't spread out on others shoulders [was] because there wasn't that complete oneness among us. If we meet on those things it would have to be in complete oneness. Up to now that is exactly why he had to carry so much on himself.

Raymond Brown (21):

Brother Elden explained after the 1940 meeting that was the master plan and the man on those stewardships should take the responsibility of those things. As long as they were doing a good job that lessened the leader's work.

Elden Kingston (Gustafson):

I feel like spreading out the load is really important in the future. In the future it is going to take every one of us to do our part. Maybe we can liken to a bunch of sheep out on the range, we will have to get a sheep herder or those sheep will scatter all over the range.

Paul Kingston:

When I said the Lord had made his decision what I meant to say meaning it goes back to the time when Joseph Smith died. Brigham Young said you can choose whoever you want to lead you, but the Lord has made a choice, if we want to continue the Lord's choice.

When a young person gets married there is the best way for that person to go. Maybe there is two choices for that young person to go but the Lord can see that one choice is going to bring the results he needs in the next generation. It doesn't mean one person is better or more important but it does mean where those two people fit the very best.

Brother Ortell mentioned the reason the responsibility was kept as it was because those people were not able to work as one. If they did not work as one it would have destroyed the order.

As the responsibility spreads out it is going to spread out under the law of the one above the other.

That is why it is so important the way these things are put out to the people. When it is presented to the order it needs to be presented on a united front.

Merlin Kingston (10):

Brother Elden said if anything happened to Brother Ortell the responsibility would fall on me. The only way I feel I can be relieved of that responsibility--I want everyone to know I am not campaigning for a job. If I thought only of myself I would never ask for that job. It makes me feel bad if Brother Elden has chosen something different than Brother Ortell has chosen.

Elden Kingston (Gustafson):

Have you received anything from Brother Ortell how it should be lined up after his death?

J. Daniel Kingston:

If a person is chosen by the Lord and that person is brought before the people I don't think everyone will accept that person. I think the direction from Brother Elden and Brother Ortell would be in harmony.

Elden Kingston (Gustafson):

Brother Ortell told us when he was sick that man was in favor with the Lord. I think he was in harmony with Brother Elden all the way through. Everything he did all his whole life was in harmony with Brother Elden. I think at this point we have to look on the teachings and truths brother Ortell brought out and that has been in line with Brother Elden.

Wendell Owen (34):

I gained a testimony of Brother Elden to the extent I worshipped the man and anything he wanted me to do I would do that I was capable of doing. I had those same feelings about Brother Ortell.

Ivan Nielsen (19):

How about going home and praying about it and see when we come to church in the morning and we come to one person and say we have come to a decision. Let us adjourn the meeting and we will go to the Lord to get an answer of His will, and then we will give our answer of yes or no.

Meeting adjourned.