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Race and the Priesthood: Analysis of the New Mormon Statement

By: [Robert M. Bowman Jr.](#)

In December 2013, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) published a statement on its website entitled "[Race and the Priesthood](#)." This article provides an analysis and respectful response to that new Mormon statement. Quotations from that statement are presented all in italics. Numbers in brackets refer to endnotes at the conclusion of this article.

Joseph, Brigham, and the Mormon Scriptures on Blacks and the Priesthood

Latter-day Saint scripture and teachings affirm that God loves all of His children and makes salvation available to all. God created the many diverse races and ethnicities and esteems them all equally. As the Book of Mormon puts it, "all are alike unto God" [2 Ne. 26:23].

It is true that 2 Nephi 26:23 says this; in fact, it makes this point regarding "black and white, bond and free, male and female." For most of LDS history, however, this verse was not viewed as inconsistent with the policy of denying blacks the priesthood. Indeed, even now it is not regarded as inconsistent with the policy of denying *women* the priesthood. Yet the verse says that "male and female" are "alike unto God." So either this verse is irrelevant to the blessings of the priesthood in Mormon religion, or, if it is relevant, it implies that the LDS Church should also extend the priesthood to women.

This citation from the Book of Mormon gives the impression that LDS scripture does not support the racist doctrines that the LDS Church taught for most of its history. However, in fact those doctrines were squarely based on the teaching of the Book of Mormon, the Book of Moses (part of the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible), and the Book of Abraham. See the article "[Mormon Scriptures on Race](#)" for a complete compilation of the racist statements in those LDS scriptures.

The Church was established in 1830, during an era of great racial division in the United States. At the time, many people of African descent lived in slavery, and racial distinctions and prejudice were not just common but customary among white Americans. Those realities, though unfamiliar and disturbing today, influenced all aspects of people's lives, including their religion. Many Christian churches of that era, for instance, were segregated along racial lines.

The Mormon statement here is factually accurate but overlooks a significant difference between the LDS Church in the nineteenth century and other religions: the Mormons claimed to be led by a prophet of God, someone who had direct access to God and frequently received revelations from him. A religion that is led by a genuine prophet of God ought to be ahead of the culture, speaking against its social norms where they violate God's standards of love and justice. The point here is not that the LDS Church should have been perfect, but that it should have been markedly more enlightened on racial issues than other religions, if indeed it was the only true church on the earth and was led by a prophet of God.

Toward the end of his life, Church founder Joseph Smith openly opposed slavery. This statement is accurate: toward the end of his life, in 1843 and 1844, Joseph Smith publicly opposed slavery. The word "openly," however, might be taken to imply that he had opposed it privately all along but at the end of his life went public with his opposition. Such an implication, which the statement might or might not have been intended to convey, would not be accurate. For at least a period of time, Joseph Smith was an open *critic* of the abolitionist movement (see our article "[Joseph Smith on Race and Slavery](#)").

Joseph's statements at the end of his life supporting the freeing of slaves did not become the new position of the LDS Church. His successor Brigham Young consistently supported the practice of slavery and even justified it as the result of the curse of Cain (see our article "[Brigham Young on Race](#)").

During the first two decades of the Church's existence, a few black men were ordained to the priesthood. One of these men, Elijah Abel, also participated in temple ceremonies in Kirtland, Ohio, and was later baptized as proxy for deceased relatives in Nauvoo, Illinois. There is no evidence that any black men were denied the priesthood during Joseph Smith's lifetime. In 1852, President Brigham Young publicly announced that men of black African descent could no longer be ordained to the priesthood, though thereafter blacks continued to join the Church through baptism and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The statement that Brigham Young announced in 1852 "that men of black African descent could *no longer* be ordained to the priesthood" (emphasis added) gives the false impression that black men were freely ordained to the priesthood prior to Young's 1852 announcement. Nothing in Young's 1852 speeches even alludes to the idea that the priesthood had been open to black men up to that point. Moreover, the historical facts do not permit a simple, clean line to be drawn between a policy of granting the priesthood to blacks before Brigham Young's speeches in 1852 and a policy of denying the priesthood to blacks after that date. Although there were about 26,000 Mormons at the time of Joseph Smith's death in 1844, perhaps as few as two black men at that time held the LDS priesthood (besides

Race

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Elijah Abel, the only other known example seems to be a Massachusetts man named Q. Walker Lewis[1]). On the other hand, despite the official ban from at least 1852 to 1978 on ordaining blacks to the priesthood, Elijah Abel's son Enoch received the priesthood in 1900 and Elijah's grandson Elijah Abel Jr. received it in 1934. Their place in the LDS Church was recognized by a monument in Elijah Abel's honor in the Salt Lake City Cemetery and dedicated in 2002 by Elder M. Russell Ballard.[2] Therefore, isolated instances of the ordination of a couple of black men to the LDS priesthood do not demonstrate that the LDS Church was officially open to such ordinations, whether in the early 1900s or during Joseph Smith's day.

Brigham Young's 1852 speeches are not the first evidence of opposition within Mormonism to granting the priesthood to blacks. In April 1847 Parley Pratt, a leading Mormon, referred to a half-black, half-Indian named William McCary, who had just been excommunicated for being a false prophet, as a "Blackman who has got the blood of Ham in him which lineage was cursed as regards the priesthood." [3] This was less than three years after Joseph Smith had died. As Lester Bush remarked, Pratt's characterization of blacks "unmistakably derived in part from the book of Abraham." [4] In June 1847 LDS mission president William Appleby wrote a letter to Brigham Young questioning whether blacks were allowed to be ordained to the priesthood; they met later toward the end of the year, when evidently Young agreed that blacks should not be so ordained. In February 1849, Young stated that "the Lord had cursed Cain's seed with blackness and prohibited them from the Priesthood." [5]

It is true that Joseph Smith never explicitly denied the priesthood to blacks in the LDS Church, but the scriptures he claimed to translate, especially the Book of Moses and the Book of Abraham, laid the foundation for that policy, as Lester Bush concludes:

"In a very real sense, Joseph Smith had provided a context which, in his absence, inevitably led to a policy of priesthood denial to blacks.... It seems very unlikely that Brigham and his colleagues perceived themselves as moving away from Joseph's lead, but they may well have felt they were carrying it forward to its logical conclusion." [6]

In 1850, the U.S. Congress created Utah Territory, and the U.S. president appointed Brigham Young to the position of territorial governor. Southerners who had converted to the Church and migrated to Utah with their slaves raised the question of slavery's legal status in the territory. In two speeches delivered before the Utah territorial legislature in January and February 1852, Brigham Young announced a policy restricting men of black African descent from priesthood ordination. At the same time, President Young said that at some future day, black Church members would "have [all] the privilege and more" enjoyed by other members.

As explained and documented above, Brigham Young had already stated in 1849, before the creation of Utah Territory and more than two years prior to his 1852 speeches, that blacks could not receive the priesthood. The Mormon website statement quoted above gives the impression that Young instituted the policy denying blacks the priesthood as a temporary measure due to political exigencies in a society that included Mormons who legally owned blacks as slaves. That impression is underscored by the claim that Young said that blacks would at a future time have the same "privilege" as other members. What this claim ignores is that in those very speeches Young was very clear about why blacks were being denied the priesthood and what had to happen before blacks could be given the same blessings:

Now I tell you what I know: when the mark was put upon Cain, Abel's children were in all probability young; **the Lord told Cain that he should not receive the blessings of the Priesthood, nor his seed, until the last of the posterity of Abel had received the Priesthood, until the redemption of the earth.** If there never was a prophet or apostle of Jesus Christ [that] spoke it before, I tell you, this people that are commonly called Negroes are the children of old Cain. I know they are; I know that **they cannot bear rule in the Priesthood, for the curse on them was to remain upon them until the residue of the posterity of Michael and his wife receive the blessings** the seed of Cain would have received had they not been cursed, and hold the keys of the Priesthood until the times of the restitution shall come, and the curse be wiped off from the earth and from Michael's seed. Then Cain's seed will be had in remembrance and the time come when the curse should be wiped off.

Notice that Brigham Young clearly claimed that the doctrine he was presenting came from divine revelation: "the Lord told Cain," Young said, and Young's own comments are presented in his capacity as the Prophet of the LDS Church: "If there never was a prophet or apostle of Jesus Christ [that] spoke it before, I tell you...." Since Young taught the curse of Cain doctrine as divine revelation in his capacity as the Prophet, if that doctrine is false then Young would be a false prophet, wouldn't he?

The above comments by Brigham Young are immediately followed by the words quoted by the LDS statement "Race and the Priesthood":

Now, then, in the Kingdom of God on the earth, a man who has the African blood in him cannot hold one jot nor tittle of Priesthood. Why? Because they are the true eternal principles the Lord Almighty has ordained, and who can help it? Men cannot, the angels cannot, and all the powers of earth and hell cannot take it off; but thus saith the Eternal I am, what I am, I take it off at my pleasure, and not one particle of power can that posterity of Cain have until the time comes that says he will have it taken away. **That time will come when they will have the privilege of all we have the privilege of and more.** [7]

Again, see our article on [Brigham Young and race](#) for the complete text of this and other relevant speeches Young

made on the subject.

It is ironic that during Brigham Young's tenure as president of the LDS Church, his main rival as the true prophetic successor to Joseph Smith went in a completely different direction on the issue of blacks and the priesthood. In 1865 Joseph Smith III (the son of Joseph Smith Jr.), the first president of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, issued a revelation calling for the ordination of men "of every race" to the priesthood.[8] Yet according to the Utah-based LDS Church, Joseph Smith III was not a prophet at all. How is it that an uninspired or false prophet could see the wisdom in 1865 of inviting people of all races to share fully in the ministries of the restored Church, but Brigham Young, supposedly the true prophet, could not? Indeed, how is it that it took the Mormon Church **113 years** after Joseph Smith III to come around to the same conclusion?

The justifications for this restriction echoed the widespread ideas about racial inferiority that had been used to argue for the legalization of black "servitude" in the Territory of Utah. According to one view, which had been promulgated in the United States from at least the 1730s, blacks descended from the same lineage as the biblical Cain, who slew his brother Abel. Those who accepted this view believed that God's "curse" on Cain was the mark of a dark skin. Black servitude was sometimes viewed as a second curse placed upon Noah's grandson Canaan as a result of Ham's indiscretion toward his father.

The above sentences are perhaps the most misleading in the new LDS statement. The point that they are seeking to convey is that Brigham Young and other LDS Church leaders after him were merely reflecting their racist societal ideas when they taught that blacks could not hold the priesthood because they bore the curse of Cain. It is, granted, true that the idea that black skin was the mark of the curse of Cain derived ultimately from the broader non-Mormon culture. However, the statement is deceptive by omission because Young's understanding of that idea came **directly from the Mormon scriptures produced by Joseph Smith**. Joseph got the idea from his white Anglo-American culture, and he incorporated that idea into the scriptures he claimed were translated from ancient texts (Moses 7:6-8, 20-22; Abraham 1:21-28; see our article on **Mormon Scriptures and Race**). Ironically, the LDS Church is here admitting that a key idea in these Mormon scriptural texts that were supposedly translated from ancient sources were really modern ideas stemming from modern cultural prejudice. By tracing the origin of the "curse of Cain" doctrine to early Colonial America, this new statement by the LDS Church is tacitly admitting that the doctrine of the Book of Moses is modern, not ancient, in origin.

Why It Took So Long: The Prophet Who Got No Answer

Nevertheless, given the long history of withholding the priesthood from men of black African descent, Church leaders believed that a revelation from God was needed to alter the policy, and they made ongoing efforts to understand what should be done. After praying for guidance, President McKay did not feel impressed to lift the ban.

The implication of this statement is that President David O. McKay and other leaders at the time regarded the "policy" of excluding blacks from the priesthood as a practice for which there was no divine mandate but one that they did not feel they could overturn without divine authorization. This claim is made explicitly in the *BYU Studies* article by Edward L. Kimball cited in the LDS Church statement's footnote. Kimball cites secondhand reports by various individuals who claim that President McKay told them that the exclusion of blacks from the priesthood "was not a doctrine but was a policy and subject to change" though not one McKay felt he could make without the Lord telling him to do so. The story that McKay prayed about the matter but received no revelation to authorize lifting the ban also comes secondhand.[9]

In contrast to these secondhand reports, the First Presidency made public, official statements on the matter of the exclusion of blacks from the priesthood during the mid-twentieth century. In 1949 the First Presidency, which included McKay, issued a statement reasserting that the exclusion was not "a policy" but a "direct commandment from the Lord":

The attitude of the Church with reference to the Negroes remains as it has always stood. It is not a matter of the declaration of a policy but of direct commandment from the Lord, on which is founded the doctrine of the Church from the days of its organization, to the effect that Negroes may become members of the Church but that they are not entitled to the Priesthood at the present time.[10]

The words "at the present time" are explained with a quotation from Brigham Young asserting that the priesthood blessings would be granted to blacks "when all the rest of the children have received their blessings in the holy priesthood," that is, only after people of the other races had finished coming into the church and receiving the priesthood. This official statement endorsed the doctrine that blacks were under "the curse of Cain" as well as the doctrine that those who were born into the black race had merited that cursed status because of their "conduct" as spirits "in the premortal existence."

A statement twenty years later, toward the end of 1969, reaffirmed this position, and even quoted McKay, who had served as the President of the Church since 1951, in support:

From the beginning of this dispensation, Joseph Smith and all succeeding presidents of the Church have taught that Negroes, while spirit children of a common Father, and the progeny of our earthly parents Adam and Eve, were not yet to receive the priesthood, for reasons which we believe are known to God, but which He has not made fully known to man. Our living prophet, President David O. McKay, has said, "The seeming discrimination by the Church toward the Negro is not something which originated with man; but goes back into the beginning

with God.... Revelation assures us that this plan antedates man's mortal existence, extending back to man's pre-existent state." [11]

Thus, whatever McKay might or might not have said privately, publicly he taught that the exclusion was mandated by divine revelation and determined as part of God's plan even before human beings came to the earth as mortals. See our article on **Official Mormon Statements on Blacks and the Priesthood** for the full text of these statements.

There is something quite problematic for the Mormon religious system about the claims made about this part of LDS history by this new web article. It claims that the exclusion was a racist policy and not a revealed doctrine, that the Church's living prophet President McKay wanted to end the exclusion, and that he prayed for a revelation authorizing him to end it, yet "did not feel impressed to lift the ban." These claims are logically incompatible with one another; they cannot all be true. Supposedly the "policy" was racist, man-made, and contrary to divine revelation, and McKay was the living prophet for God's people on the earth during a time when the exclusion was increasingly being challenged from both inside and outside the church, yet he could not receive a revelation from God to authorize him to end the exclusion. Just what kind of prophet was he?

Revelation but No Information: The 1978 Declaration

In 1975, the Church announced that a temple would be built in São Paulo, Brazil. As the temple construction proceeded, Church authorities encountered faithful black and mixed-ancestry Mormons who had contributed financially and in other ways to the building of the São Paulo temple, a sanctuary they realized they would not be allowed to enter once it was completed. Their sacrifices, as well as the conversions of thousands of Nigerians and Ghanaians in the 1960s and early 1970s, moved Church leaders.

This passage in the new Mormon statement, rather astonishingly, admits that a major impetus for the ending of the exclusion was that black people were increasingly contributing financially to the construction of temples they would not be authorized to use. In effect, the statement implies that the LDS Church was concerned that if they did not end the exclusion their black members would become resentful and perhaps not continue funding the Church's temple-building program. Humanly speaking, this explanation makes a great deal of sense. However, one would think that a religion uniquely led by a prophet of God would not have needed such financial motivation to abandon its racist policy.

In June 1978, after "spending many hours in the Upper Room of the [Salt Lake] Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance," Church President Spencer W. Kimball, his counselors in the First Presidency, and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles received a revelation. The revelation rescinded the restriction on priesthood ordination. It also extended the blessings of the temple to all worthy Latter-day Saints, men and women. The First Presidency statement regarding the revelation was canonized in the Doctrine and Covenants as Official Declaration 2.

There are several reasons to question whether the decision to open the Mormon priesthood to black men was a genuine revelation from God.

1. This was a decision that the LDS Church leaders had already concluded needed to be made, and they were simply looking for confirmation of their desired action. According to President Kimball's son Edward L. Kimball (in an article cited twice by the new LDS statement), President Kimball "had reached a decision after great struggle, and he wanted the Lord's confirmation, if it would come." [12]

Generally speaking, in the Bible God takes the initiative in revelation; the prophet or apostle who receives the revelation does not expect it and is often surprised by it. It is of course *possible* for God to grant a revelation to someone who asks for it, particularly a prophet. But there are grounds for doubt here because the previous prophet, David O. McKay, had supposedly sought a revelation from God and received none, and because Kimball by his own testimony had already concluded the exclusion needed to be rescinded.

2. A revelation ending a racist policy would have been more credible in 1928 than in 1978. Even Joseph Smith III, whom Mormons regard as a false prophet, managed to issue such a revelation in 1865. Instead, the LDS Church leaders were able to obtain this "revelation" only after the 1960s Civil Rights movement in America, only after it had begun building temples in parts of the world heavily populated by people of African descent, and only after it had become culturally expedient to change the Church's practice. If Mormonism's claims to unique prophetic leadership were true, why would Spencer W. Kimball come after Martin Luther King Jr. instead of before him?

3. The accounts of the receiving of this revelation indicate that it amounted to little more than an emotional experience of Kimball and his associates as they gathered to seek the revelation. Judging from the accounts of those present, they knew what they wanted to do, they strongly and even desperately wanted to feel authorized by God to make the change, and the revelation consisted of a strong feeling coming over them that God was saying yes. Edward Kimball's summary of their accounts repeatedly uses such words as "felt" (ten times), "feeling" (seven times), "feel" (twice), and "emotion" (twice). [13]

4. The supposed revelation conflicted with the earlier supposed revelation delivered by Brigham Young and reaffirmed by more than a century of Mormon prophets. The professed basis for the new revelation was the fact that earlier prophets had stated that the exclusion was temporary, thus establishing the possibility of rescinding the exclusion. But this argument actually ignores what those earlier prophets had said. The new statement explains the basis for the decision as follows:

"He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come," the First Presidency announced on June 8. The First Presidency stated that they were "aware of the promises made by the prophets and presidents of the Church who have preceded us" that "all of our brethren who are worthy may receive the priesthood."

As explained above, however, those "promises" explicitly stated that the ban on ordaining blacks to the priesthood would be lifted only after all of the people of other races had finished coming to the faith and receiving the blessings of the priesthood. For example, Brigham Young had stated that "the Lord told Cain that he should not receive the blessings of the Priesthood, nor his seed, until the last of the posterity of Abel had received the Priesthood, until the redemption of the earth."^[14] One must ask, then, whether it was Young or Spencer W. Kimball who was wrong— not to mention whether the Mormon scriptures on which the exclusion was based were wrong.

5. Finally, there is another difficulty related to the previous one with the idea that Kimball and his fellow leaders had received a revelation from God in 1978 lifting the ban on ordaining blacks to the priesthood. Although the First Presidency announced that the exclusion was being rescinded, it gave no explanation for how this action squared with the LDS Church's uniform teaching from the time of Joseph Smith that blacks were under a divine curse. Mormons continued to believe that blacks were under the curse of Cain with the mark of black skin because of their inferior conduct as spirits in the preexistence prior to earthly mortality. It took 35 years for the LDS Church to disavow those doctrines. This troubling fact leads us to our conclusion.

Conclusion: Too Little, Too Late

Today, the Church disavows the theories advanced in the past that black skin is a sign of divine disfavor or curse, or that it reflects actions in a premortal life; that mixed-race marriages are a sin; or that blacks or people of any other race or ethnicity are inferior in any way to anyone else.

The LDS Church is to be commended for disavowing these ideas. Unfortunately, the Mormon leadership is not being forthright about the origins of these ideas. For about 125 years the Mormon prophets and apostles taught these ideas not as "theories" but as doctrines originating in divine revelation, given in Scripture and reaffirmed by the living prophets from Brigham Young to David O. McKay. By disavowing these doctrines, the new Mormon statement is undermining the LDS Church's most basic claims to be the church of the Restoration mediated through its restoration of ancient scriptures and its doctrinal revelations through modern prophets. Moreover, by disavowing them in an unsigned article on its website—an article that appears to have been written by a Mormon scholar, not by one of the Mormon prophets or apostles—the disavowal appears to be an attempt at damage control, not new light issuing from the living prophet of the only true church on the earth. One wonders why President Thomas Monson, the current "living prophet" of the LDS Church, did not appear on *60 Minutes* or *20/20*, or at least in a video posted on the Church's website, to announce personally the new doctrinal stance.

As many Mormons themselves are coming to realize, the LDS Church's handling of the issue of blacks and the priesthood raises a number of critical issues regarding the most basic truth claims of Mormonism:

- Evidently the "living prophet" can lead the Church astray, contrary to the claim made by President Wilford Woodruff in Official Declaration 1. The ten presidents of the LDS Church from Brigham Young to Harold B. Lee (1847-1973) all led the Church to view blacks as inferior persons who had proven themselves in the preexistence to be unworthy of receiving the priesthood. The Church's "policy" of excluding blacks from the priesthood was a failure of leadership, leading the Church in the wrong direction for more than a century.
- Evidently the Mormon prophet cannot reliably receive revelations from God, since supposedly President David O. McKay sought a revelation from God to rescind the exclusion of blacks from the priesthood but heard nothing. This is difficult to explain away since, as detailed above, the LDS Church now admits that the exclusion was based on false beliefs about black people. Presumably, then, God would not have wanted the LDS Church to continue denying the priesthood to black men. If God wanted the exclusion ended, and if his prophet wanted to end it, where did the communication between them break down? It is hard not to conclude that McKay, however sincere a man he may have been, simply was not a genuine prophet of God.
- Evidently the Mormon scriptures teach false doctrines, since the doctrines of the Book of Mormon, the Book of Moses, and the Book of Abraham pertaining to race have now been repudiated as "theories," man-made beliefs to be rejected. Moreover, the authenticity of these books has now been called into question by the new Mormon statement on race and the priesthood, since it acknowledges that those doctrines, especially the "curse of Cain" doctrine, originated as a modern justification for white racism. Since the Mormon scriptures supposedly translated from ancient texts contain these doctrines, one must regard this fact as strong evidence against their authenticity.
- Evidently Joseph Smith was not the seer and revelator he claimed to be, since the texts he claimed to translate from ancient scriptures were in fact laced with modern, white racist myths.

As Mormons think through these challenging issues, we would encourage them to put their faith in the God who never changes and whose word is always trustworthy. If you conclude that the Mormon scriptures and prophets cannot be trusted, do not abandon belief in God. He exists, he loves you, and he wants you to know him and to "worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). [The Bible is trustworthy even if the Mormon scriptures are not.](#) Jesus Christ died for your sins on the cross, rose from the grave, ascended into heaven, and is the head of the true church, which is not a man-made organization but the body of Christ (Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 1:18-20). He has been with

the members of his body, with all genuine followers of Christ, from the time of the apostles, making disciples of people of all races without distinction, and will continue to be with us until the end of the age (Matt. 28:18-20; Gal. 3:28). Our hope is that this issue will not discourage Mormons from having faith in God, but will move them to rest their faith on the solid foundation of the biblical gospel (Rom. 1:16-17).

NOTES

[1] Newell G. Bringhurst, "Elijah Abel and the Changing Status of Blacks within Mormonism," in *Neither White nor Black: Mormon Scholars Confront the Race Issue in a Universal Church*, ed. Lester E. Bush Jr. and Armand L. Mauss (Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1984), 133-34, 143-44 n. 30; Connell O'Donovan, "The Mormon Priesthood Ban and Elder Q. Walker Lewis: 'An Example for His More Whiter Brethren to Follow,'" *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 26 (2006): 48-100, online updated edition.

[2] "News of the Church: **Monument Honors African-American Pioneer**," *Ensign*, Jan. 2003; Newell G. Bringhurst, "The 'Missouri Thesis' Revisited: Early Mormonism, Slavery, and the Status of Black People," in *Black and Mormon*, ed. Newell G. Bringhurst and Darron T. Smith (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 30.

[3] General Church Minutes, April 25, 1847, LDS Church History Library Archives, cited in Lester E. Bush Jr., "Whence the Negro Doctrine? A Review of Ten Years of Answers," in *Neither White nor Black*, ed. Bush and Mauss, 198.

[4] Bush, "Whence the Negro Doctrine," 207.

[5] *Journal History*, 13 Feb. 1849, cited in Bush, "Whence the Negro Doctrine," 198.

[6] Bush, "Whence the Negro Doctrine," 208.

[7] Brigham Young, 5 Jan. 1852, in *The Complete Discourses of Brigham Young*, ed. Richard S. Van Wagoner (Salt Lake City: Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2009), 1:468.

[8] Bringhurst, "'Missouri Thesis' Revisited," 24.

[9] Edward L. Kimball, "Spencer W. Kimball and the Revelation on Priesthood," *BYU Studies* 47, 2 (Spring 2008): 22. On McKay's supposedly viewing the exclusion as a policy and not a doctrine, Kimball cites statements made by Sterling McMurrin, Llewellyn McKay (President McKay's son), and Paul Dunn (n. 35)—none of whom was authorized to speak for President McKay, let alone for the LDS Church. The story about McKay praying for God to authorize him to lift the ban and not receiving an answer is supported from a personal communication from a general authority named Marion D. Hanks and by a statement that Mormon historian Leonard Arrington claimed was made to him by LDS apostle Adam S. Bennion (who died in 1958). See also the online pro-LDS article by Allen Wyatt entitled "**President David O. McKay Statement**" (BlackLDS.org, 2005), which labors to defend these secondhand reports as accurately reporting McKay's position—while ignoring the obvious problem that neither McKay nor any other leader in the 1950s ever publicly said any such thing.

[10] First Presidency Statement, 17 August 1949. Bowman/Race and the Priesthood: Analysis of the New Mormon Statement—page 11

[11] Statement of the First Presidency, 15 Dec. 1969. McKay passed away just over a month later on 18 Jan. 1970.

[12] Kimball, "Spencer W. Kimball and the Revelation on Priesthood," 56.

[13] *Ibid.*, 56-59. [14] Brigham Young, 5 Jan. 1852, in *Complete Discourses of Brigham Young*, ed. Wagoner, 1:468 (see above, n. 7).

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