

The thinking has been done: unquestioning obedience to Mormon leaders...

by RandyJ Feb. 24, 2016 - Recovery from Mormonism

This is an article I wrote on alt.religion.mormon in 2001. Several TBMs had argued that the "thinking has been done" concept of unquestioning obedience to church leaders was not normative Mormon practice. I wrote this post to document the history of the doctrine:

Scarcely a month goes by that at least one Mormon here on ARM denies that a culture of unquestioning obedience to LDS leaders, sometimes called the "thinking has already been done" concept, exists in Mormonism. It's odd that some Mormons try to deny its existence, because they know very well that it does, in actual practice. To question the authority or inspiration of Mormon leaders is to question the validity of the LDS Church itself. Perhaps the most-oft-quoted example of the principle is from a 1945 Church-published magazine article; when that article is quoted, some Mormons will often reply that the article was not authoritative; that it was later retracted; or that it is outdated or no longer in vogue. To the contrary, the concept has been a fundamental principle of Mormon culture from the earliest years, and LDS leaders have made statements that repeat the same principle in recent years. The purpose of this article is to document the numerous statements from LDS leaders that show the principle to be normative in LDS theology and culture.

An early example of the concept is found in a revelation dated April 6, 1830, as found in D&C 21:4-5. Speaking of Mormonism's founder, Joseph Smith, it states "thou shalt give heed unto all his words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them...For his word ye shall receive, as if from my own mouth..." Smith claimed that this revelation was from Jesus Christ Himself. To a faithful Mormon, it doesn't get any more authoritative than that. The intent is clear that Mormons are to heed "all his (Joseph Smith's) words" as though they came from the mouth of Jesus Christ.

A few years later, in the spring of 1838, about half of Joseph Smith's followers had abandoned his young church in Kirtland, Ohio, primarily over the issues of Smith's failed speculative bank, and his United Order system, which mandated community ownership of property. Smith and his counselor, Sidney Rigdon, were forced to flee Ohio, escaping the wrath of angry investors and disillusioned church members. They made their way to the only other significant branch of Mormons, in western Missouri. Hoping to reinstitute their communal society there, and to try to prevent the same type of failure and apostasy that had occurred at Kirtland, Smith and Rigdon intensified their call for unquestioning obedience, regardless of whether their directives were spiritual or temporal. Some of their followers, including high-ranking Mormons such as David and John Whitmer, William W. Phelps, Lyman Johnson, and Oliver

Cowdery, declined to enter the new communal order, preferring instead to control their own lands and opportunities. David Whitmer, one of Smith's earliest associates since 1829, wrote of the period:

"In the spring of 1838, the heads of the church and many of the members had gone deep into error and blindness. I had been striving with them for a long time to show them the errors into which they were drifting, and for my labors I received only persecutions. In June, 1838, a secret organization was formed, Doctor [Sampson] Avard being put in as the leader of the band; a certain oath was to be administered to all the brethren to bind them to support the heads of the church in every thing they should teach. All who refused to take this oath were considered dissenters from the church, and certain things were to be done concerning these dissenters, by Dr. Avard's secret band."

John Whitmer, who was the official church historian, corroborated his brother David's account:

"Joseph Smith, Jr., S. Rigdon and Hyrum Smith moved their families to this place, Far West, in the spring of 1838. As soon as they came here, they began to enforce their new organized plan, which caused dissensions and difficulties, threatenings and even murders. Smith called a council of the leaders together, in which council he stated that any person who said a word against the heads of the Church, should be driven over these prairies as a chased deer by a pack of hounds, having an illusion to the Gidionites, as they were termed, to justify themselves in their wicked designs. Thus on the 19th of June, 1838, they preached a sermon called the salt sermon, in which these Gideonites understood that they should drive the dissenters, as they termed those who believed not in their secret bands, in fornication, adultery or midnight machinations."

After Rigdon delivered his "Salt Sermon"---which Smith heartily endorsed---Rigdon drafted a "Warning Against Dissenters", informing the Whitmers, Phelps, Johnson, Cowdery, etc., that because of their refusal to obey Smith's order to sign over their lands and join the commune, "out of the county you shall go, and no power shall save you....there is but one decree for you, which is depart, depart, or a more fatal calamity shall befall you..." Rigdon had 83 Mormon men sign their names to his "Warning"; those men formed the nucleus of the Danite band, which became Smith and Rigdon's secret enforcement squad of loyal Mormons. Their first act was to drive off the dissenting Mormons and plunder their homes and belongings. Danites took a secret oath of loyalty and obedience to their order and to church leaders:

"In the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, I now promise and swear, truly, faithfully, and without reserve, that I will serve the Lord with a perfect heart and a willing mind, dedicating myself, wholly, and unreservedly, in my person and effects, to the upbuilding of His kingdom on earth, according to His revealed will. I furthermore promise and swear that I will regard the first president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, as the supreme

head of the church on earth, and obey him the same as the supreme God, in all written revelations given under the solemnities of a 'Thus saith the Lord,' and that I will always uphold the presidency, 'right or wrong.' "

Readers will recognize that such a secret band, with vows of loyalty and unquestioning obedience, committing criminal acts, was disturbingly similar to today's organized crime groups. Ironically, the LDS Church's own Book of Mormon condemns such secret societies.

Most Mormons of today are unaware of the Danite band, and their purpose and activities; and most of those who are, attempt to deny that Smith or Rigdon instituted the band. When the "Mormon War" in Missouri ended in October 1838, and Smith, Rigdon, and other Mormons had been arrested for murder and treason, several of their followers testified in court of Smith's policy of unquestioning obedience to authority, and the potential punishment for refusing:

"We found that the events of a few days had placed Caldwell County under a despotic government where even liberty of speech was denied to those not willing to unite in support of the New Order...A friend of long standing said that if Joseph Smith should tell him to cut my throat he would do it without hesitation...A few individuals of us were ever after this opposed to the rule of presidency perceiving that all spiritual and temporal affairs were under their control and no monarch on earth ever had supreme power over his subjects more than they do over the inhabitants of Caldwell County...Their word was law in religious, civil, and military matters.....John Correll observed to a person in Far West that he did not 'think it was his duty to unite with the firm and that he had no confidence in the revelation that required it'. Joseph Smith and S. Rigdon learning that he had made this observation, chided him severely for his rebellion in the presence of several persons. Smith said to him 'if you tell on the streets again that you do not believe this or that revelation I will walk on your neck, sir', at the time smiting his fists to evince his great rage. He talked to dissenters and cited us to the case of Judas, saying that [the dead Christian apostle] Peter told him in a conversation a few days ago that he himself hung Judas for betraying Christ. He also said 'if you do not act differently and show yourself approved you shall never be admitted into the kingdom of heaven.'" (Reed Peck Manuscript, pp. 7-13.)

Thomas Marsh, the president of the Mormon Council of Twelve Apostles, concurred with Peck, in his sworn affidavit: "They have among them a company of all that are considered true Mormons, called the Danites, who have taken an oath to support the heads of the church in all things that they say or do, whether right or wrong..." (Sworn affidavit of Thomas B. Marsh, as published in "Senate Document 189", State of Missouri.)

"Some time in June, I attended two or three Danite meetings; and it was there, as a part of the duty of the band, that they should support the presidency in all their designs, right or wrong; that whatever they said was to be obeyed,

and whoever opposed the presidency in what they said, or desired done, should be expelled from the county, or have their lives taken." (Affidavit of John Cleminson, *ibid.*)

"Jos. Smith, jr., said there were certain men using their influence against the proceedings of the presidency, and if they were suffered to go on they would do great injury. And Smith told [George W.] Robinson, the first man he heard speaking against the presidency, and against their proceedings, he must tie him up and give him thirty-nine lashes; and if that would not do, give him thirty-nine more." (Affidavit of Burr Riggs, *ibid.*)

Mr. Smith said...any person who spoke or acted against the presidency of the church, should leave the county or die." (Affidavit of John Whitmer, *ibid.*)

After Smith and Rigdon were arrested, Smith cowardly attempted to shift responsibility for the Danite band and their actions onto a subordinate, Sampson Avard. The average Mormon of today assumes that Smith's denial of responsibility was truthful; however, Smith's claim of innocence is refuted not only by dozens of witnesses, such as those quoted above, but also by the fact that the Danite band, as well as the principle of unquestioning obedience to LDS leaders, were carried over into Nauvoo and Utah, long after Avard was cut off from the church.

Mormon Bishop John D. Lee, an original Danite, stated that such secret policies and practices continued after Smith's death:

"Brigham Young knew very well that I was not a man who would willingly take life, and therefore I was not ordered to do his bloody work. I never took part in any killing that was desired or ordered by the Church, except the part I took in the Mountain Meadows Massacre. I was well known by all the members of the Church as one that stood high in the confidence of Brigham Young, and that I was close-mouthed and reliable. By this means I was usually informed of the facts in every case where violence was used in the section of country where I resided. I knew of many men being killed in Nauvoo by the Danites. It was then the rule that all the enemies of Joseph Smith should be killed, and I know of many a man who was quietly put out of the way by the orders of Joseph and his Apostles while the Church was there. It has always been a well understood doctrine of the Church that it was right and praiseworthy to kill every person who spoke evil of the Prophet. This doctrine had been strictly lived up to in Utah, until the Gentiles arrived in such great numbers that it became unsafe to follow the practice, but the doctrine is still believed, and no year passes without one or more of those who have spoken evil of Brigham Young being killed, in a secret manner." ("Confessions of John D. Lee")

The attempt on former Missouri governor Lilburn Boggs' life, allegedly by the infamous Danite Orrin Porter Rockwell, is an example of Lee's claim of retribution against the enemies of Joseph Smith. In fact, the Mormon temple

endowment rite, as dispensed by Brigham Young, included an "oath of vengeance," wherein initiates swore to "avenge the deaths of the prophets unto the third and fourth generation." Historians point to this oath of vengeance as a root cause of the 1857 massacre of some 120 non-Mormon emigrants from Arkansas, by Mormon men, in Southern Utah.

After Smith's death in 1844, Brigham Young assumed control of the LDS Church. Using the Danite oath as a pattern, he introduced an "oath of obedience" into the early Mormon temple endowment ceremony. Because temple initiates were sworn to secrecy, the oath of obedience was exposed to the public by dissenters. The earliest account, written under the pseudonym "Emeline", was published in the "Warsaw Signal" on April 15, 1848: "We were to hold up the heads of the Church, and obey them in all things, and at all times. Then we held up both hands above the head, and placed our right hand under our left ear, drew it across the throat, the left hand was placed to the right shoulder, then drawn across the breast, and the right hand suddenly thrust down the right side."

After the Mormons were forced to leave Illinois in 1846, they settled in the uninhabited Utah territory. Brigham Young established a theocratic dictatorship, which further intensified the principle of unquestioning obedience. Many sermons of Mormon leaders over the years repeated the idea. Note that some of the following statements also imply a status of infallibility for Mormon leaders:

"When Brother Joseph Smith lived, he was our Prophet, our Seer, and our Revelator; he was our dictator in the things of God, and it was for us to listen to him, and do just as he told us." (Heber C. Kimball, JoD, vol. 2, p. 106.)

"Learn to do as you are told.....if you are told by your leader to do such a thing, do it, none of your business whether it is right or wrong." (Heber C. Kimball, JoD, vol. 6, p. 32.)

"If you do things according to counsel and they are wrong, the consequences will fall on the heads of those who counseled you; so don't be troubled." (Journal of William Clayton, p. 334.)

"God placed Joseph Smith at the head of this church; God has likewise placed Brigham Young at the head of this church;...we are commanded to give heed to their words in all things, and receive their words as from the mouth of God.." (Orson Pratt, JoD, vol. 7, pp. 374-5.)

"Whatever principles I may have imbibed during my scientific researches, yet, if the Prophet of God should tell me that a certain principle or theory I might have learned was not true, I do not care what my ideas might have been, I should consider it my duty, at the suggestion of my file leader, to abandon that principle or theory." (Wilford Woodruff, JoD, vol. 5, p. 83.)

"The Lord Almighty leads this church, and he will never suffer you to be led astray if you are found doing your duty. You may go home and sleep as sweetly as a babe in its mother's arms, as to any danger of your leaders leading you astray." (Brigham Young, JoD, vol. 9, p. 289.)

After Young's 1877 death, Apostle (and later church president) Joseph F. Smith reiterated the policy of unquestioning obedience to church leaders: "The moment a man says he will not submit to the legally constituted authority of the church,.....that moment, he cuts himself off from the privileges and blessings of the Priesthood and Church, and severs himself from the people of God, for he ignores the authority that the Lord has instituted in his Church....when a decision is rendered against us.....in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, we are in error, and the decision is right; and although we may, at the time, not be fully able to see and feel its justness, yet we will be constrained to say that 'inasmuch as there are sixteen chances against one for me to be wrong, I will gracefully and humbly submit...the Lord has established his Church, organized his priesthood, and conferred authority upon certain individuals, councils and quorums, and it is the duty of the people of God to live so that they shall know that these are acceptable unto him. If we begin to cut off this one and that one, and set their authority aside, we may just as well at once set God aside, and say that he has no right to dictate.'" ("Gospel Doctrine," p. 45.)

Note that Smith also reiterated his predecessors' teaching, that even if church leaders were clearly wrong in a decision, that the subordinate church member so affected should "gracefully and humbly submit" to the authority of his superior officer---which reinforces the idea of infallibility of Mormon leaders, and of letting them do the thinking for rank-and-file members.

When the federal government forced the LDS Church to abandon its polygamy practice in 1890, some Mormons were disturbed that their supposedly "infallible" prophet had seemingly bowed to the authority of the government on what they had been taught was a principle never to be abandoned. Woodruff placated them by declaring: "The Lord will never permit me or any other man who stands at the head of this Church to lead you astray. It is not in the programme. It is not in the mind of God. If I were to attempt that, the Lord would remove me out of my place, and so He will any other man who attempts to lead the children of men astray from the oracles of God and from their duty." Woodruff's statement has been entered into Mormon scripture, thus canonizing the concept of infallibility of Mormon leaders, and the inadvisability of rank-and-file members questioning or second-guessing their counsel or decisions.

Another incident that brought wide attention to the principle was the 1904 Reed Smoot Hearings, wherein LDS Apostle Reed Smoot, who had been elected as U. S. Senator from Utah, was made to undergo a Congressional investigation to determine whether his oath of loyalty to LDS leaders would interfere with his

oath as a Senator. Smoot made certification that his temple oath would not supercede his constitutional oath, and he was allowed to serve in the Senate.

Half a century after Woodruff's declaration, the June, 1945 edition of the LDS Church's official monthly magazine, "The Improvement Era," contained the

oft-quoted "ward teachers' message" which again repeated the policy of

unquestioning obedience: "Any Latter-Day Saint who denounces or opposes, whether actively or otherwise, any plan or doctrine advocated by the 'prophets, seers, and revelators' of the Church is cultivating the spirit of

apostasy.....Lucifer.....wins a great victory when he can get members of the

church to speak against their leaders and to 'do their own thinking.'.....When

our leaders speak, THE THINKING HAS BEEN DONE. When they propose a plan---it is God's plan.

When they point the way, there is no other which is safe. When

they give direction, it should mark the end of controversy."

This statement, of course, is the one that causes today's Mormons the most

embarrassment. That's hardly surprising, but in light of the many prior

statements on the subject, the above quote from the "Improvement Era" should seemingly not cause any controversy among today's Mormons. Still, remarkably, many modern Mormons claim that this quote from the Church's official magazine

is not normative Mormon thinking, and some even claim that the concept has been declared a "false doctrine" by later Mormon leaders (a claim for which I have

yet to see authoritative documentation.)

This supposed repudiation of the concept is hardly credible, because the policy

has been reiterated by later Mormon leaders in recent times. For example, the

LDS Church's current official monthly "Ensign" magazine's August, 1979 issue's "First Presidency Message", which is the monthly counsel from church leaders

that Mormons are expected to heed, once again reiterates the "thinking has been done" policy:

"Recently, at the Churchwide fireside meeting held for the women of the Church, Young Women President Elaine Cannon made the following statement: "When the Prophet speaks,...the debate is over" (Ensign, Nov. 1978, p. 108). I was

impressed by that simple statement, which carries such deep spiritual meaning

for all of us. Wherever I go, my message to the people is: Follow the prophet.

Why else has the Lord placed prophets on the earth through the dispensations

of time? In his infinite wisdom, and as part of the plan of life and salvation

for his children, God has given us the blueprint to follow, the leadership to

direct us and keep us on course, and the Church organization to help us lay the foundation and develop the skills, or make the preparation necessary, to lead

us back to our eternal home. It is foolish to suppose that men can be left to

their own devices and accomplish what God intended for them.....It is difficult

to understand why there are many people who fight against the counsel of the prophet and FOR the preservation of the very things that will bring them misery and death...Latter-Day Saints should be able to accept the words of the

prophets without having to wait for science to prove the validity of their

words. We are most fortunate to have a living prophet at the head of the

Church to guide us, and all who heed his counsel will be partakers of the

promised blessings which will not be enjoyed by those who fail to accept his

messages....We cannot serve God and mammon. Whose side are we on? When the prophet speaks the debate is over." ("The Debate Is Over," President N. Eldon Tanner, "Ensign", August 1979, p. 3.)

Although the wording changed slightly from "the thinking has been done" to "the debate is over," the message is the same---do what the Mormon prophet tells you to do, and do not question his counsel.

Another recent Mormon leader, President Ezra Taft Benson, reiterated the teaching, using several oft-repeated stories from Mormon history, in a 1980 speech entitled "Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophet." (I understand that Benson's speech has been used as curriculum material for religion classes at the LDS Church's Brigham Young University, which indicates its position in LDS orthodoxy.) Below are some excerpts from Benson's 1980 speech. Note how he reiterates the teachings of his predecessors:

SECOND: The Living Prophet is More Vital to Us Than The Standard Works. President Wilford Woodruff tells of an interesting incident that occurred in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith: "I will refer to a certain meeting I attended in the town of Kirtland in my early days. At that meeting some remarks were made that have been made here today, with regard to the living oracles and with regard to the written word of God. The same principle was presented, although not as extensively as it has been here, when a leading man in the Church got up and talked upon the subject, and said: 'You have got the word of God before you here in the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants; you have the written word of God, and you who give revelations should give revelations according to those books, as what is written in those books is the word of God. We should confine ourselves to them.' When he concluded, Brother Joseph turned to Brother Brigham Young and said, 'Brother Brigham, I want you to take the stand and tell us your views with regard to the living oracles and the written word of God.' Brother Brigham took the stand, and he took the Bible, and laid it down; he took the Book of Mormon, and laid it down; and he took the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and laid it down before him, and he said: 'There is the written word of God to us, concerning the work of God from the beginning of the world, almost, to our day. And now,' said he, 'when compared with the living oracles those books are nothing to me; those books do not convey the word of God direct to us now, as do the words of a Prophet or a man bearing the Holy Priesthood in our day and generation. I would rather have the living oracles than all the writing in the books.' That was the course he pursued. When he was through, Brother Joseph said to the congregation: 'Brother Brigham has told you the word of the Lord, and he has told you the truth.'" (Conference Report, October 1897, pp. 18-19)

(NOTE: Some modern Mormons assert that the only official LDS Doctrine is in the canonized Standard Works. But above, prophet Benson tells us that the words of living prophets are of more value than those Standard Works.)

THIRD: The Living Prophet is More Important to Us Than a Dead Prophet. The

living prophet has the power of TNT. By that I mean "Today's News Today." God's revelations to Adam did not instruct Noah how to build the ark. Noah needed his own revelation. Therefore, the most important prophet, so far as you and I are concerned, is the one living in our day and age to whom the Lord is currently revealing His will for us. Therefore, the most important reading we can do is any of the words of the prophet contained each week in the Church Section of the Deseret News, and any words of the prophet contained each month in our Church magazines. Our marching orders for each six months are found in the general conference addresses, which are printed in the Ensign magazine. I am so grateful that the current conference report is studied as part of one of your religion classes--the course entitled "Teachings of the Living Prophets," number 333. May I commend that class to you, and suggest that you get a copy of the class manual at your bookstore, whether you're able to take the class or not. The manual is entitled "Living Prophets for a Living Church" for Religion Course number 333.

Beware of those who would pit the dead prophets against the living prophets, for the living prophets always take precedence.

FOURTH: The Prophet Will Never Lead The Church Astray. President Wilford Woodruff stated: "I say to Israel, The Lord will never permit me or any other man who stands as president of the Church to lead you astray. It is not in the program. It is not in the mind of God." (The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, pp. 212-213.) President Marion G. Romney tells of this incident, which happened to him: I remember years ago when I was a Bishop I had President (Heber J.) Grant talk to our ward. After the meeting I drove him home....Standing by me, he put his arm over my shoulder and said: 'My boy, you always keep your eye on the President of the Church, and if he ever tells you to do anything, and it is wrong, and you do it, the Lord will bless you for it.' Then with a twinkle in his eye, he said, 'But you don't need to worry. The Lord will never let his mouthpiece lead the people astray.' CR, October 1960, p. 78)

(Note that Benson reiterates the earlier teaching that even if LDS leaders are wrong on an issue, it is the duty of rank-and-file members to unquestioningly follow that counsel, rather than doing their own thinking.)

FIFTH: The Prophet is Not Required to Have Any Particular Earthly Training or Credentials to Speak on Any Subject or Act on Any Matter at Any Time. Sometimes there are those who feel their earthly knowledge on a certain subject is superior to the heavenly knowledge which God gives to His Prophet on the same subject. They feel the prophet must have the same earthly credentials or training which they have had before they will accept anything the prophet has to say that might contradict their earthly schooling. How much earthly schooling did Joseph Smith have? Yet he gave revelations on all kinds of subjects. We haven't yet had a prophet who earned a doctorate in any subject,

but as someone said, "A prophet may not have his Ph.D. but he certainly has his LDS." We encourage earthly

knowledge in many areas, but remember, if there is ever a conflict between earthly knowledge and the words of the prophet, you stand with the prophet, and you'll be blessed and time will vindicate you.

SIXTH: The Prophet Does Not Have to Say "Thus Saith the Lord" to Give Us Scripture. Sometimes there are those who haggle over words. They might say the prophet gave us counsel, but that we are not obligated to follow it unless he says it is a commandment. But the Lord says of the Prophet Joseph, "Thou shalt give heed unto all his words and commandments which he shall give unto you." (D&C 21:4). And speaking of taking counsel from the prophet, in D&C 108:1, the Lord states: "Verily thus saith the Lord unto you, my servant Lyman: Your sins are forgiven you, because you have obeyed my voice in coming up hither this morning to receive counsel of him whom I have appointed". Said Brigham Young, "I have never yet preached a sermon and sent it out to the children of men, that they may not call scripture" (Journal of Discourses, 13:95).

SEVENTH: The Prophet Tells Us What We Need to Know, Not Always What We Want to Know. "Thou hast declared unto us hard things, more than we are able to

bear,"complained Nephi's brethren. But Nephi answered by saying, ". . . the guilty taketh the truth to be hard, for it cutteth them to the very center"

(1Nephi 16:1, 3). Or, to put it in another prophet's words, "Hit pigeons flutter." Said President Harold B. Lee: "You may not like what comes from the authority of the Church. It may contradict your political views. It may contradict your social views. It may interfere with some of your social life. . . Your safety and ours depends upon whether or not we follow. . . Let's keep our eye on the President of the Church. (CR, October 1970, p. 152-153)

But it is the living prophet who really upsets the world. "Even in the Church,"

said President Kimball, "many are prone to garnish the sepulchres of yesterday's prophets and mentally stone the living ones" (Instructor, 95:257).

(NOTE: Interestingly, by denying the "thinking has been done" teaching, modern Mormons are doing exactly what Kimball warned against---failing to follow the 'living prophet.')

"Why? Because the living prophet gets at what we need to know now, and the world prefers that prophets either be dead or mind their own business. Some so-called experts of political science want the prophet to keep still on politics. Some would-be authorities on evolution want the prophet to keep still on evolution. And so the list goes on and on."

(NOTE: Even though many Mormon leaders have preached against the theory of evolution, as Benson does here, some modern Mormons are apparently so embarrassed at those teachings that they now claim that the LDS Church "has no

official policy on the theory of evolution." It's fascinating that Benson used anti-evolution as an example of a prophet's teaching that should be followed, while today's Mormons claim to ride the fence on the issue. I'm sure that Benson had no idea that only twenty years after his speech, Mormons would be repudiating his teaching.)

The numerous statements quoted above should indicate to rational thinkers that the concept of unquestioning obedience to LDS leaders was not limited to an allegedly-repudiated 1945 magazine article. To the contrary, the concept has been advocated throughout the entire history of Mormonism.

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