

# **Our Response to Woman Who has a Dispute's Response to Our Response to Woman Who has a Dispute's 54 Page Document**

As we have waded through this process of disputes concerning the man in question's 2nd council, Woman Who has a Dispute, you have made demands, accusations, and threats, have set deadlines, and have continually sought to escalate your dispute. These are not the hallmarks of seeking common ground or reconciliation, nor of attempting to learn to come together in unity. You have made it clear this is a zero-sum game where one side loses and one side wins. There is no middle ground, and you have described this as the only acceptable outcome.

It is evident you will not stop until you feel fully vindicated by utterly conquering this council. We find this approach disturbing and in no way keeping with the letter or the spirit of what the Lord has commanded or required of his daughters in these important proceedings.

We have not made any demands, threats or accusations. We have not set deadlines. We do not seek to compel you in any way, though we feel you absolutely seek to exercise control, dominion, and compulsion over us.

Having laid out this reminder, we need to talk about general principles established by the Lord.

## **1. What is at stake:**

Exercising priesthood publicly is a sacred trust offered to men, but because of past abuses, it now requires the ratification and consent of women. The sustaining vote of women constitutes an expression of trust and confidence in the man to stand in the place of the Lord. Denver has taught, regarding baptism:

"Performing this ordinance puts the officiator in the role of the Lord, who holds the keys of death and resurrection."  
(See blog post "3 Nephi 11:26," 9/25/10 and Glossary entry *Baptism*)

For a man to stand in the role of the Lord and be trusted by women to stand faithfully in that role, this requires a certain standard of behavior on the part of the man. A man who violates the basic behavioral standard expected by the women of the movement is subject to having that trust withdrawn. This is the very reason the Lord has given women this responsibility. In the past, men abused this sacred trust, so the Lord gave the women the means and responsibility of preventing such abuse in our time.

The withdrawal of the women's trust is the sum total of the remedies provided to the women when a priesthood holder violates their trust. They cannot "punish" the man, they cannot reprimand him, they cannot excommunicate or expel him. They cannot even find him "guilty." They cannot deprive him of life, liberty or property. All they can do is withdraw their trust.

Further, no amount of argument, criticism, or accusation by a third party against the women can do anything whatsoever to restore that trust. Telling them they're wrong will not change the man's behavior that caused them to withdraw their trust from the man. Trust is earned, not demanded or forced. Further, that trust is earned by the man in question by his godly walk and behavior, and when necessary by repentance—not by a third party making demands and accusations.

## **2. Litigating This as if it Were a Criminal Trial or Court Case:**

This is not a murder trial, nor a criminal proceeding. The approach of attempting to litigate and argue every shred of every point of contention and every nuance of meaning, procedure, evidence, and testimony may be appropriate for a murder trial, but is certainly not appropriate for a women's council.

Woman Who has a Dispute, you have shown that you are willing to nitpick this to death, argue any and every point you can find or manufacture, and exercise all your faculties attempting to invalidate this council based on whatever

technicality you can point out. In many cases you assert your interpretation is the only correct one, your definitions and rules are the only valid ones to consider, and your opinions are the law.

Such an approach, applied to ANY women's council ever held, will bear the same fruit and have the same result. There will always be something to complain about, to nitpick, or upon which to object. The councils you have headed are certainly not above reproach, and would fall prey to the same scrutiny you are directing against this one.

We have no interest in litigating this, point for point, tit for tat, argument for argument over every detail that can be questioned for any reason, real or imagined. Such an effort could literally take years, and do nothing but cause division, strife, anger, heartbreak and sorrow. It would produce thousands of pages of argument, but no good fruit. It would not do anything to address the reasons for the withdrawal of trust from the man. And it would ultimately divide and destroy this movement.

### **3. Home Fellowship:**

The Lord did not give a definition for "home fellowship." You have manufactured rules and tests to determine what exactly constitutes a man's "home fellowship" in an attempt to prove the Lord's instructions were not followed.

A "fellowship" is at its root a relationship. Denver spoke in talk 5 of fellowship between men and angels, and men and the Lord. He spoke of fellowship between women. A fellowship, by very definition, is NOT an organized or identifiable group. Two people can constitute a fellowship.

Dictionary definitions of fellowship include: *The companionship of individuals in a congenial atmosphere and on equal terms; friendship; comradeship; a close association of friends or equals sharing similar interests.*

Therefore, a marriage is certainly a fellowship. Staying at someone's house is a fellowship. Traveling together is a fellowship. Studying together, worshipping together, or drinking beer together all constitute forms of fellowship.

A "home" fellowship implies the one that is most basic, closest, most fundamental. Certainly a marriage is the first and foremost of "home" fellowships. Indeed, this is why we have the following instructions in PTR:

*Within the community of fellowship, until his wife is prepared to support him acting outside the family, his effort should be within his family. Husbands and wives are one flesh. The struggle to live that kind of oneness is godly, noble and elevating.*

A "home" fellowship may also imply the relationships in a man's home—where he lives and sleeps. In such a case, those of the household are certainly part of his "home" fellowship.

Having said the above, we remind all that the Lord gave the option for a council to be called among the man's "home fellowship" **OR** at a conference called for the purpose of addressing the question.

Preserving the Restoration, p. 510-511: *If a man's worthiness to function is called into question, then a conference can be convened to deal with the question.*

A conference was called, as directed. We believe the answer to the "home fellowship" question is satisfied per our obedience to the Lord's counsel laid out in Preserving the Restoration.

### **4. Daily Walk:**

The idea of a man's daily walk is addressed abundantly in scripture. It does not mean the man's daily activities, but rather his conduct and behavior.

For example:

*O house of Jacob! Come all of you and let's **walk** by the light of the Lord, because you've abandoned the right way. (2 Ne. 8:5 CoC)*

*Now Alma **walked** in the Lord's ways, kept His commandments, and passed righteous judgments. (Mosiah 13:10 CoC)*

*And so the Nephites began to fall away in unbelief and grow increasingly in wickedness and abominations, while the Lamanites grew increasingly in their knowledge of God; they obeyed His ordinances and commandments and **walked** uprightly in truth before Him. (Helaman 2:34 CoC)<sup>14</sup>*

*And they became a righteous people, and they **walked** in the ways of the Lord and paid attention to keeping His commandments and statutes. (Alma 14:15 CoC)*

*However, you should teach your children to always **walk** in the path of truth, to be considerate and kind, and to love and serve one another. (2 Nephi 15:1 CoC)*

*Now, my people, I judge these things of you because of your peaceable **walk** with mankind. (Moroni 7:2 CoC)*

*For this cause, we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that you might **walk** worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing: being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might according to his glorious power unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness, giving thanks unto the Father, who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who has delivered us from the power of darkness and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son — in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins — who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. (Colossians 1:3 RE)*

*You shall observe to do therefore as the Lord your God has commanded you. You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall **walk** in all the ways which the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess. (Deut. 2:12 RE)*

There are many more references, but the point is well made. The daily walk required by the Lord is a godly walk, exhibiting the qualities mentioned in the above quotes.

The opposite sort of behavior is also mentioned abundantly in scripture, perhaps most pointedly in 2 Timothy 1:8:

*This know also: that in the last days, perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, without self-control, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof.*

Such behavior also qualifies as a daily walk, though not to the credit of the man walking in this way.

For our purposes, those who know a man's daily walk are those who have observed his behavior in various situations over an adequate period to form an opinion of his character and attributes. Such an opinion may be informed by:

- How he treats his wife
- How he speaks of his wife when she's not present
- How he discharges his responsibilities as provider, protector, companion, and support
- How he treats his children
- How he treats others' children
- How he treats those outside his family (particularly those in a lower perceived station than his own)

- How he serves and benefits others
- His generosity toward those in need
- His influence and example to his peers
- His humility before God and his lack of pride
- His repentance and willingness to accept correction when required
- His acceptance and support of community standards for behavior
- His ability to control his passions and even anger
- His knowledge obtained by study and faith
- His teaching of his family and others
- His priestly service to the community
- His behavior toward those he believes are in error

The list could go on and get quite lengthy. The point is that at least some of the women on the council should know enough about the man through long enough experience and association to have a correct view of his character and behavior. This does NOT require years of closeness, nor does it require recent close interaction. This does NOT require any particular relationship with the man in question (ie. friend or advocate), or even direct interaction with him; only the opportunity to observe him in enough various situations to know of his character. A large number of women on our council are well acquainted with the Man in Question's daily walk, and well aware of his character and behavior in various situations.

## 5. Injustice

The Lord requires women present who are acquainted with the man's daily walk "so that no injustice results." "Justice" requires that the outcome be what the man deserves. Nothing more, nothing less. Therefore, there are two ways injustice could result:

1. The women withdraw their trust when they should not.
2. The man retains the women's trust when he should not.

Let's examine the role of the "daily walk" women in both situations.

In the first situation, if a man who is known by some to be humble, righteous, obedient to God, a kind and loving husband and father, and an upstanding member of the community is accused of gross and harmful misconduct, the women who know the man's character would be inclined to say, "Wait a minute. That's not the man we know. Let's examine this evidence very carefully, because this doesn't track." They would serve as a voice of caution in uncritically accepting accusations against the man.

Further examination may or may not show the man to have committed the behavior he is accused of. But outright, unquestioning acceptance of the evidence will be eliminated, thus helping ensure a just outcome.

In the second situation, a man who is known by some to be violent, prone to anger, proud, haughty, and disobedient may produce witnesses who testify he is righteous and would never misbehave. In such a case, the women who know his daily walk would be obligated to question the witnesses very carefully, as their own experience with the man informs them that the witnesses may be lying. They would serve as a reality check when the charges seem to fit but false witnesses do not. Such a man retaining his certificate when he should not would not be just. Not for him and not for the community.

Thus, in both cases, women who know the character of the man help ensure that justice is done.

**Note that it does NOT mean they speak exclusively in the man's favor, or exclusively to protect him. They could well speak against him. It only requires that the outcome is JUST, meaning the man gets the outcome he deserves.**

If the outcome is NOT what the man deserves, then injustice has been done.

Therefore, any accusation that the council reached an unjust conclusion must NECESSARILY assert that the Man in Question did not deserve to lose the trust of the women. Such has not been asserted by the Man in Question or by the Woman Who has a Dispute. In fact, the question of the Man in Question's behavior has not been addressed at all. Therefore any assertion that this outcome is unjust is specious on its face.

## **6. Procedure: Invalidate**

The Lord has given a minimum set of instructions to be used as procedures in women's councils. To the best of our knowledge and understanding, we followed each and every one of these procedures to the letter.

Certainly it's possible to add requirements, multiply rules and invent objections, but none of those change the fact that every procedure required by the Lord was followed. Any assertion otherwise must, at a minimum, deal with the Lord's words, and not invent rules or requirements.

The Lord has NOT provided a procedure anywhere to "invalidate" a women's council. The Woman Who has a Dispute's attempts to "get this thrown out" on procedural grounds represent a broad invention of a new procedure the Lord has not commissioned or sanctioned.

His words are, "Reason together and draw upon the experiences from those past women's councils." Clearly experiences from past conferences can inform how things are conducted in the future. We are expected to "learn to come to agreement" in part by considering what was learned in the past. Nowhere does it say, imply, or even contemplate repeating a council, re-arguing an outcome, or voting to overthrow the unanimous conclusion of the 14 women who actually heard the evidence against the Man in Question.

If such an activity is contemplated as the next step after this mediation, we cannot in good conscience take part or give our assent. Nor do we think it's appropriate to present the evidence against the Man in Question before the general body of women, which such an attempt would require.

The outcome against the Man in Question was Just. Any accusation otherwise without taking into account the extensive evidence of the Man in Question's misbehavior is misplaced at best and fundamentally dishonest. You cannot make claims of injustice without examining the central matter.

## **7. Procedure: Reinstate**

The Lord has given a specific procedure to be followed when a man desires to have his certificate reinstated. He is to petition for reinstatement from the same 12 (in our case 14) women, and they are to vote on the matter. This procedure implies that the man would likely present evidence of his repentance, change, and trustworthiness to the women, thus convincing at least seven (or more than half) to trust him again.

Any other procedure for reinstating a man's certificate, including attempts to call the opinion of the 14 women who saw the evidence "invalid" is NOT a procedure that comes from God, but is the opposite. It is an attempt to overthrow the procedure the Lord ordained.

Should this become the new standard, then any angry, unrepentant man could simply begin arguing, accusing and nitpicking in a contest of opinions, attempting to get enough sympathy or stir up enough anger to get a 51% vote at a conference, based on procedural objections rather than the man's actual behavior. We shudder to think where such a precedent leads.

Our merciful Lord has shown the way for a man to regain the women's trust. It may require humility. It may require repentance. It may require willingness to admit fault and change. And these are all good things and greatly helpful to a man who desires to walk a godly walk.

Thus far, the Man in Question has made no attempt whatsoever to comply with the Lord's procedure and has not petitioned for reinstatement. Quite the opposite. His behavior since the council, as well as that of his surrogate the Woman Who has a Dispute, have further convinced us that the Man in Question is not interested in repenting or changing.

Even an unjustly accused man, if godly, is capable of humility, acknowledgement, reconciliation and reinstatement. A man who has lost the trust of the women can choose to accuse, attack, blame and bully, thus further justifying the women's decision, or can humbly acknowledge that no matter how wronged he may feel, he bears some responsibility for the women's decision and therefore needs to address his own behavior rather than that of the council.

## **8. Procedure: Wife Withdrawing Her Name**

We note that both the Woman Who has a Dispute and the Man in Question have asserted that a wife can, anytime after signing her husband's certificate, simply refuse to further sustain her husband, and thus render his certificate invalid. This is another example of rejecting the Lord's procedure and inventing a new one instead.

The wife's sustaining vote (as well as that of all the seven women who sustain a man) is **only** to **create** a valid certificate. Once sustained, a man's public authority cannot be removed in any way except the way the Lord has described: through a women's council. We find it alarming and remarkable that in the midst of so many accusations that we didn't follow procedure, we find blatant attempts by the Woman Who has a Dispute to reject those same procedures and invent new ones instead. There is absolutely no justification in the Lord's word for a wife to be able to unilaterally remove a man's certificate, once sustained.

Were this in fact a valid principle, this entire discussion would be moot because the Man in Question's wife is one who brought forth concerns and voted to remove his certificate. Therefore, if we accept the Woman Who has a Dispute's reasoning, any further discussion about procedure is over because his wife took care of it.

## **9. Principle of Marriage**

The Woman Who has a Dispute makes the point that the Man in Question and his wife have a "unique marriage arrangement." She states that their marriage was never made legal and that they never intended to live in the same home together and never did.

God requires that a man leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife.

Preserving the Restoration states: *Husbands and wives are one flesh. The struggle to live that kind of oneness is godly, noble and elevating.*

The fact that the Man in Question chose to have a marriage where they didn't live together, didn't share in the responsibilities of married life, where the Man in Question didn't choose to support his wife financially, but they still shared physical intimacy, is so far removed from what God considers a marriage to be. In fact, the Man in Question didn't legally marry the woman he presents as his wife but still engaged in an ongoing sexual relationship, which is directly contrary to God's laws.

A man who enters into a "marriage" like this is not a man that we trust to stand as the Lord in performing ordinances of salvation.

## **10. Conclusion**

This council was called due to the existence of extensive and compelling evidence against the Man in Question regarding ungodly and unseemly behavior that caused this loss of trust. We followed every procedure found in

scripture and in PTR. We heard the evidence, considered carefully, and concluded that the Man in Question is not currently a man we trust to stand in the place of the Lord administering the ordinances of salvation.

We hope he will consider his behavior, and stop this harmful and dangerous campaign against the women who have labored so carefully and sacrificed and suffered to consider these charges. We are aware that the Man in Question has met with others to plead his case, complain against us, attack our characters, and otherwise portray himself as the victim. Such behavior will not result in a reinstatement. We invite him to stop.

We did not ask for this responsibility. We have been bullied, harassed, accused, denigrated, threatened, and emotionally drained by this process. The Woman Who has a Dispute has responded by attempting to divide us, requesting personal responses and personal conversations rather than dealing with the council of women who UNANIMOUSLY reached the same conclusion. As a result of this ongoing campaign against us, rather than against sin, many of our number have concluded they are unwilling to ever serve on a council again.

All this because this man behaved very badly and refuses to repent. Woman Who has a Dispute, it appears to us that you are promoting and justifying this wickedness by attacking us in an attempt to prevent the Man in Question from taking responsibility for his actions. This is harmful to him and harmful to us. We believe that you are on the wrong side of this thing. If you are the Man in Question's friend we suggest you spend your energy convincing him to repent, rather than attacking us.

We cannot imagine the Lord is pleased with these ongoing arguments. We suggest the attacks, accusations, threats, harassment and bullying need to stop. There is NOTHING godly about what this has become, and we want nothing of it.

When the Man in Question wants to have a productive conversation about his misdeeds, repentance and reinstatement, we stand ready to do so as his sisters with his best interests at heart.

Signed,

Ashley Noe Naegle  
Darnell Smedley  
Eva Gore  
Heidi Larsen  
Corina Hughes  
Amberli Peterson  
Alexandria Wilkes  
Tausha Larsen  
Jessica Bowler  
Joanna Briscoe  
Darcie Bishop  
Melody Fausett  
Whitney Horning  
Cherry Ann Redd