

Interfaith Voices GT Column: Is Revelation Relevant Today?

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“Revelation is communication from God to His children on the earth.” This statement was given in 2015 by David Bednar, an apostle of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It’s a simple statement with profound implications. The words imply that each person can receive answers, inspiration, impressions, and direction from God. In a time when it is difficult to distinguish truth and falsehood, this is a wonderful gift.

Julie Beck, an LDS leader, taught: “The ability to qualify for, receive, and act on personal revelation is the single most important skill that can be acquired in this life. It requires a conscious effort.”

It’s been my experience that an attitude of humility sets the foundation for personal revelation. When coupled with a desire for knowledge and understanding, inspiration can be forthcoming. Faith is also an integral part of that “conscious effort” — faith in a God, faith that you are one of His children, and faith that His love includes a two-way communication process.

Beyond personal revelation, LDS Church members believe that God reveals His word to prophets on earth, in ancient and modern day. On April 1, 2018, Russell Nelson was sustained as the new President and Prophet of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He is the 17th president following the death of Thomas Monson in January 2018. Nelson was not elected by a vote of the sixteen million members, but through a simple revelatory process. In the administration of the LDS Church, there is a Presidency which includes a prophet and two counselors, as well as twelve apostles who assist in leading the church. When a prophet dies, the Presidency is dissolved, but the twelve apostles remain. The longest serving member of the apostles is named the new president, after confirmation by the apostles who seek revelation regarding the decision. Nelson was the longest serving apostle, having been called to that position in 1984, when he relinquished his professional career as a world-renown heart surgeon. In his first address as the President, he initiated several broad changes in the LDS church organization. These are actions that I believe came as revelation from God for this day and age.

Only the Prophet can receive revelation for the LDS Church as a whole. This brings me full circle to personal revelation and the opportunity we have to seek direction for our own circle of influence. Each of us can benefit from revelation in our lives which can impact our goals, professions, community service, activities, families, and relationships.

Speaking about revelation in April, Nelson shared, “Find a quiet place where you can regularly go. Humble yourself before God. Pour out your heart to your Heavenly Father. Turn to Him for answers and for comfort. Pray in the name of Jesus Christ about your concerns, your fears, your weaknesses—yes, the very longings of your heart. And then listen! Write the thoughts that come to your mind. Record your feelings and follow through with actions that you are prompted to take... As you continue to be obedient, expressing gratitude for every blessing the Lord gives you, and as you patiently honor the Lord’s timetable, you will be given the knowledge and understanding you seek. Every blessing the Lord has for you—even miracles—will follow. That is what personal revelation will do for you.”

Praying, reading scriptures and other inspired messages, meditating, serving others, journaling, and tapping into the power of the Holy Ghost are conduits through which all can commune with God. Personal revelation is a blessing available to each of us.