

Many of us remember the excitement of coming to the 10 talks and the process of getting to know one another. We all had something in common: We all heard and recognized the Lord's voice and message through His servant and recognized that He was setting His hand again. All of us had, in some way, awakened from our awful state, beginning the process of repentance, sacrificing much and, in many cases, losing family and friends in the process of choosing more light. Yet we were filled with the excitement to have each other because we all desired to labor for the cause of Zion. A real love and friendship developed among us. Each time we parted, we couldn't wait to come together again and share in stories and laughter and friendship. We believed we could become the family of God.

The assignment to produce and adopt a unified statement of principles was given, and ultimately resulted in disagreements and disputes that have since divided us. The effort itself was long and, for many, mentally and emotionally exhausting. As a committee, we believe that, as a result, we have been unable to accomplish other work the Lord has given us as a complete and unified people. There have been several efforts over the last nine years since we voted to adopt a statement of principles to try to explore what went wrong and how we may have done better, but such efforts have had little effect in unifying us as a people.

A group of us have been deliberating for almost a year to figure out how we might bring all who are interested in answering the questions, *"What have we learned, and what ought we to have learned?"* and how we might engage in a process of reasoning to heal old wounds, as well as discover how we might move forward together.

This committee would like to honor that not everyone has disputes about the statement of principles; however, there are disputes, and we want to own our specific disputes as ours. We also want to take responsibility for our part in how we failed in our treatment of each other due to our strong convictions, and, individually, we are committed to doing our part to address and resolve those issues. We want to acknowledge that there is division among us and to do our part in healing that by following the Lord's counsel together by precept, reason, and persuasion.

We are asking for your help. The Lord has blessed us with a process describing how we might labor together to learn how to respectfully disagree:

*"Study to learn how to respect your brothers and sisters and to come together by precept, reason, and persuasion, rather than sharply disputing and wrongly condemning each other, causing anger."*

To us, this means that we take the time to come together to define the issues dividing us by:

- Precept – providing some scripture, moral, or ethical foundation for the idea
- Reason – *expounding why we believe the precept requires the conclusion*
- Persuasion – presenting an explanation using practical, common sense and supporting thought to appeal to the other party

We would like to go through this process to define and understand our disputes with those who feel impressed to participate. We understand that the labor we are pursuing will require significant work and effort. We need as many as feel called who do not share in our dispute to join with us so that we (those of us who still hold a dispute) can resolve it. Barring our ability to find resolution, we would like to further rely on the promise from the Lord which states that if we:

*“Pray together in humility and together meekly present [our] dispute to [the Lord], and if [we] are contrite before [the Lord], [He] will tell [us] [His] part.”*

We are not asking you to take our dispute on, but to be willing to walk alongside us in this process starting this November.

We ask that all who are interested come together to help us understand each other's perspectives as they relate to the statement of principles, attempt to resolve the impasses that may still exist, and present the disputes that still exist to the Lord for His part. We know the difficulty of what we are asking, and understand the intense emotions that have and do exist regarding this subject. We invite any who feel impressed to work through these issues to join this effort. We hope for this to be the beginning of a series of workshops to move through disputes that still exist, so we can labor together as a unified body in future endeavors. We hope to show the Lord our desire to aim together, strive together, and move forward together in a labor of love as one covenant body so that we may be His.

-Committee members