

Hearts Knit in Righteousness and Unity

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Righteousness and unity are profoundly significant. When people love God with all their hearts and righteously strive to become like Him, there is less strife and contention in society. There is more unity.

Elder Cook is saying that being righteous will breed unity. If that is true then the reciprocal property has to be true; if when water gets colder it turns to ice cubes, when ice cubes warm they should turn to water. If a group is righteous then there will be unity among the group (family, church congregation, nation etc) and the reciprocal is, that if a family, church congregation, nation etc are not united, that means that there is unrighteousness at play.

Doctrine and Covenants 38:27 (Footnote 1)

27 Behold, this I have given unto you as a parable, and it is even as I am. I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine.

Why are we not the Lord's if we are not one? If we are not in unity? Because the prerequisite for unity is righteousness. Can you live celestial law with an individual who is unrighteous? No. And if you are not living celestial law, can God make you his? Can He make that people, that city, a city of Holiness? No, he cannot. So there are two things that could happen. The unrighteous in the group become righteous or two, the unrighteous and righteous are separated.

In Doctrine and Covenants 38 we also read of the angels waiting to reap and separate the wheat and the tares (v12) and the Lord then proceeds to tell the Saints that He has a land of inheritance for them, New Jerusalem (v20), but in order to obtain it they have to be righteous enough to live in unity. The parable that the Lord gives in verse 26 is also crucial to understand for Saints with regard to New Jerusalem.

26 For what man among you having twelve sons, and is no respecter of them, and they serve him obediently, and he saith unto the one: Be thou clothed in robes and sit thou here; and to the other: Be thou clothed in rags and sit thou there—and looketh upon his sons and saith I am just?

If the Lord says that He would not give a righteous son robes and another righteous son rags because it would make Him unjust, what convinces Saints that the Lord will rain down robes from heaven upon His righteous sons and also rain down robes onto his unrighteous sons? What convinces members of such an unjust God? Notice when the Lord was giving this parable of divvying out inheritances in New Jerusalem the unrighteous weren't there. Ergo, separation must have already occurred. This is when the Parable of the 10 Virgins comes back into focus again, for, were all of the virgins brought in? No. And the virgins were the righteous. So one has to be both willing and able, ie. your character and heart has to be willing to live celestial law but you also have to have the means to live celestial law.

A modern story that might bring this in to focus is that of Brigham Young asking for help to be sent to the Willie and Martin handcart companies. The initial asking was a separation of the wheat and the tares. But then Brigham Young proceeds to ask the "wheat" when could they leave? Three months was one reply, 3 weeks was another reply, but it was Ephraim's reply of "right now" that brought Brigham to tears. That is an example of a wise virgin.

How many members would be willing to live celestial law? There is your righteous element. Ask the righteous element how long would it take you to be debt free, have a year supply of food and water and/or move across the country. And you will get 3 years, 1 year, right now. Those like Ephraim that live every day ready are the men that get to be fulfillments to prophecies, not simply bystanders to them.

I love a true account that exemplifies this.

As a young man not of our faith, General Thomas L. Kane assisted and defended the Saints as they were required to flee Nauvoo. He was an advocate for the Church for many years.

In 1872, General Kane, his talented wife, Elizabeth Wood Kane, and their two sons traveled from their home in Pennsylvania to Salt Lake City. They accompanied Brigham Young and his associates on a trek south to St. George, Utah. Elizabeth approached her first visit to Utah with reservations about the women. She was surprised by some of the things she learned. For instance, she found that any career by which a woman could earn a living was open to them in Utah. She also found Church members were kind and understanding with respect to Native Americans.

During the trip they stayed in Fillmore at the home of Thomas R. and Matilda Robison King.

Elizabeth wrote that as Matilda was preparing a meal for President Young and his company, five American Indians came into the room. Although uninvited, it was clear they expected to join the company. Sister King spoke to them "in their dialect." They sat down with their blankets with a pleasant look on their faces. Elizabeth asked one of the King children, "What did your mother say to those men?"

Matilda's son's reply was, "She said 'These strangers came first, and I have only cooked enough for them; but your meal is on the fire cooking now, and I will call you as soon as it is ready.'"

Elizabeth asked, "Will she really do that, or just give them scraps at the kitchen-door?"

Matilda's son answered, "Mother will serve them just as she does you, and give them a place at her table."

And so she did, and "they ate with perfect propriety." Elizabeth explained that this hostess rose 100 percent in her opinion.

I would ask a question at this time, can you have unity with the unrighteous and the ungodly? What does the word of God teach us about that? The answer is no, you cannot have unity, God's unity, God's understanding and definition of pure unity, with the unrighteous and the ungodly. However, are we to go to war with the unrighteous and the ungodly? Are we to hate them? Spur them on? Antagonize them? No.

D&C 82:22-24

22 And now, verily I say unto you, and this is wisdom, make unto yourselves friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, and they will not destroy you.

23 Leave judgment alone with me, for it is mine and I will repay. Peace be with you; my blessings continue with you.

24 For even yet the kingdom is yours, and shall be forever, if you fall not from your steadfastness. Even so. Amen.

So what is the difference between God's unity and being a "friend with the mammon of unrighteousness"? Joseph Fielding Smith described it as thus,

"The commandment of the Lord that the saints should make themselves 'friends with the mammon of unrighteousness,' seems to be a hard saying when not properly understood. It is not intended that in making friends of the 'mammon of unrighteousness' that the brethren were to partake with them in their sins; to receive them to their bosoms, intermarry with them and otherwise come down to their level. They were to so live that peace with their enemies might be assured. They were to treat them kindly, be friendly with them as far as correct and virtuous principles would permit, but never to swear with them or drink and carouse with them. If they could allay prejudice and show a willingness to trade with and show a kindly spirit, it might help to turn them away from their bitterness. Judgment was to be left with the Lord." (Church History and Modern Revelation, 2 vols. [1953], 1:323; see also Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual, 2nd ed. [Church Educational System manual, 2001], 179.)

The example that Elder Cook gives is not an example of God's unity that we should strive for to make us a Zion people, it is an example of making friends with the mammon of unrighteousness. Period. This is important for you to understand for when you get to the next line in his talk.

Unity is enhanced when people are treated with dignity and respect, even though they are different in outward characteristics.

The use of unity in this sentence could be interpreted utterly incorrect. If he is saying the previous example was an example of how to create and strive for the unity that would make us Zion people, he is wrong. If he is making a broad statement (which he doesn't seem to be doing because he tacks this sentence in with the paragraph) and the broad statement is people in Zion, a part of being righteous that will directly impact the righteousness and thus unity is the treating of ALL people with respect, than that statement is correct. If he had said "the previous example is an example of how treating all people with dignity and respect regardless of who they are will enhance serenity/peace/goodwill/etc with our fellow inhabitants of the world (the mammon of unrighteousness)" that would also have been a correct statement. The choice of wordage here could leave people interpreting this incorrectly.

As leaders, we are not under the illusion that in the past all relationships were perfect, all conduct was Christlike, or all decisions were just.

This line was the most problematic line in the entire conference. Period. The significance and weight of a statement like this cannot be understated. Could this be a catastrophically worded sentence? It's possible. But as that sentence stands, one has to hear it as plain and literal as possible, despite its obvious ambiguity.

1. "I am speaking on behalf of all the leaders of the Church"
2. "*some* decisions, conduct, relationships etc from the Church and its leaders in the past were not just, Christlike, perfect"

If you can't understand how dangerous and reckless a statement like this is, then God help us! There are so many things wrong with this statement that it hurts my head just thinking about it. We have members, right now, who are so brainwashed that they think that to critique **current** leaders, simply say something that they have done is wrong or they are not perfect, is grounds to burn these members at the stake. But yet here we have an apostle throwing generations of Latter-day Saint leaders under the

bus. And for what? There is no edification in it. He is not even talking to the members at this point. It is purely a nod or a hat tip to BLM, the NAACP etc, “please don’t label us as racists! We aren’t racist like Joseph Smith, Brigham Young etc!” The same people who are saying that “you have the spirit of apostasy” because you simply suggest that we should wait out the winter and travel to Salt Lake in the spring so we all don’t die, are the same people who seem to be completely okay with throwing all the old prophets and apostles under the bus. Which is it? Are we not allowed to call out our leaders when they have done something wrong? Or are we allowed to call generations of Latter-day Saint leaders racists or unChristlike or unjust?

And then to cap off this ridiculous sentence, he doesn’t even list specifics. So what he has done is given members of the Church the “go-ahead” to comb through Church history and search for all of these examples of what they then will label “unjust, unChristlike etc”.

Some might be barking right now, “That’s not what he said!” To which I would reply, that is exactly what he said. It might not have been what he meant to say, it might not have been what he should have said, but that is exactly what he did say and this is how the grand majority of people who heard it would interpret it.

He also does not have the keys to speak *for* all the leaders of the Church. Only one person has the keys active to speak *to* all leaders of the Church. And even then, only to tell them what they should do, not the authority to speak *for* them. Sustaining and supporting your leaders is not the same as giving them the right to speak for you, the church is not a representative Republic.

This was an utterly horrific sentence that did no good for the Church, with no intent to edify, and was purely spoken to and for the benefit of mammon. And if you are a member saying it is okay to throw *past* leaders under the bus so long as you are a current leader yourself, and current members of the Church can’t point out and say *anything negative* about what any *current leader* has done, then you are the members that are making all the rest of us look like we are members of a cult. Congratulations. If you worry about the effects of members critiquing the leaders of the Church on other member’s faith, diligence etc and aren’t a steaming, hot pot of wrath over this sentence, you are a flaming hypocrite. The effects of some random member critiquing a leader is miniscule at best vs an apostle outright throwing previous generations of prophets and apostles under the bus over the pulpit at General Conference has untold, incalculable more impact.

After this sentence spoken at conference I don’t want to hear another member complaining about constructive criticism towards current leaders of the church and decisions they’ve made by other current members, until Elder Cook offers an official apology and retraction of this statement. Until that time comes, however, it is fair game to point out any action of a leader that is “unjust, unChristlike, not perfect, bad decisions etc”. Period.

For contrast, I teach Saints that the leaders of the Church aren’t perfect, they are men, they make mistakes like we do. But we should forgive them as they forgive us, and ALWAYS follow the keys- I teach this and members light their hair on fire. Elder Cook teaches the leaders of the Church haven’t always been Christlike, just in their decision making, or perfect. And what does he pivot to after this to edify and teach?

However, our faith teaches that we are all children of our Father in Heaven, and we worship Him and His Son, Jesus Christ, who is our Savior.

“But that’s not what our religion teaches!” So now he is saying past leaders of the Church were unChristlike, not perfect, unjust in their decisions dealing specifically with race relations because they weren’t living their religion. This sentence is the bookend to that last statement, spoken entirely to non-members of the Church. Once again, for what benefit? For example, “We know our relationship with children in the past hasn’t always been squeaky clean, but that’s not what our faith teaches! We want to be nice and good to the children.” Who reading that with their mind already set in the negative towards the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints would have their minds changed? If cancel culture, the Assyrian, etc, teaches us anything, it will never be enough to change these people’s minds. And what about people who know nothing about the Church? Or recent converts? Now what are they thinking? They are immediately thinking “what in the bleep did they do to the children in the past?!” And are they going to go to the Church website for answers? Are they going to go to a Church member and ask them? 99.9% of the time they are too embarrassed to do that so they will get their information from a third party with a bias and an invested interest in getting people to leave the Church and they are gone.

I do not see a single scenario in which case this last paragraph strengthened people’s testimony of the Savior or deepened their understanding of the doctrine taught in his restored church; I see a lot of situations in which people’s faith is called into doubt and the desire to learn the doctrine from proper sources lessened.

Up to this point in the talk we have one giant story told entirely to virtue signal, followed by this roundhouse kick to the face of the past generations of Latter-day Saint leaders, and finally a plea directed out of the Church to the Assyrian in appeasement. Like I said, this truly was a dumpster fire of a talk.

Our desire is that our hearts and minds will be knit in righteousness and unity and that we will be one with Them.

Color me confused because now he has pivoted back to the correct definition of unity. This unity of hearts and minds cannot and should not be with non-members of the Church and it is made possible only through unity with Christ and the Father. Reading this and seeing the capitol “T” on “Them” it becomes clear who we are to have unity with, but listening over the pulpit, once again, a lot of false interpretations of who the “them” is could and will crop up. It is impossible to have such a unity with the Lord *and* the unrighteous mammon. He then references D&C 45:71, which further proves my point.

Doctrine and Covenants 45:71 (footnote 8)

71 And it shall come to pass that the righteous shall be gathered out from among all nations, and shall come to Zion, singing with songs of everlasting joy.

We are to call the ungodly and unrighteous to repentance. When they repent, we are to knit our hearts with theirs through Christ, but not until they repent. We are to treat them with dignity and respect, as far as righteous principles will permit. We cannot and should not be inviting sin into our home, or in the words of Joseph Fielding Smith, “carouse” with them. We are not to support them in their sinful behavior, we are not to “bake cakes” for them and otherwise come down to their level. You cannot lift somebody to a higher standard when you are standing on the same plain. You can pat each other on the

back and say “all is well in Zion” but you cannot lift. Jesus offered all the opportunity to repent and to “come follow him”, but if they refused, he didn’t bake a cake for their gay wedding; he went and found those who would listen and would change. He forgave adulterers if they repented, “and sinned no more”.

“Oh Babylon, oh Babylon, we bid thee farewell. We are going to the mountains of Ephraim to dwell.”

Righteousness is a broad, comprehensive term but most certainly includes living God’s commandments.

Elder Cook then references D&C 105:3-5 (footnote 9)

Doctrine and Covenants 105:3–5

3 But behold, they have not learned to be obedient to the things which I required at their hands, but are full of all manner of evil, and do not impart of their substance, as becometh saints, to the poor and afflicted among them;

4 And are not united according to the union required by the law of the celestial kingdom;

5 And Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom; otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself.

Which further, once again, adds to my confusion. Is he still talking to non-members of the Church? Every time celestial law was fully lived the city was made a city of Holiness and was first separated (ie. God would not allow outside influences in) and secondly, the city was removed. So once again, members might be confused in thinking he is calling for a unity of mind with the mammon of unrighteousness but that would be in direct opposition to celestial law.

He then says:

It qualifies us for the sacred ordinances that constitute the covenant path and blesses us to have the Spirit give direction to our lives.

Ergo, being obedient allows us the Spirit which will give us direction. But direction to do what and for what purpose?

Alma 36:30 (footnotes 10)

30 But behold, my son, this is not all; for ye ought to know as I do know, that inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land; and ye ought to know also, that inasmuch as ye will not keep the commandments of God ye shall be cut off from his presence. Now this is according to his word.

1 Nephi 2:20

20 And inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper, and shall be led to a land of promise; yea, even a land which I have prepared for you; yea, a land which is choice above all other lands.

Mosiah 1:7

7 And now, my sons, I would that ye should remember to search them diligently, that ye may profit thereby; and I would that ye should keep the commandments of God, that ye may prosper in the land according to the promises which the Lord made unto our fathers.

Ergo, being obedient qualifies us for the Spirit, once we have the Spirit we will prosper in the land and will eventually be led to the New Jerusalem, and if we don't, we will be cut off. He identified what to be obedient to in the previous sentence, celestial law.

This is a totally different talk if you read the references. Which means that it is either a. a catastrophically written talk or b. it was a talk written to the Assyrian with coded messages in the references to the Saints.

Once again, the references he pointed you to said "if you are obedient to celestial laws it will qualify you for the Spirit which will make you prosper in the land and eventually will lead you to an inheritance in New Jerusalem, but if you refuse celestial laws, or are not obedient to them, you will be cut off from the land." That is what the references he referenced said- he said in his talk "Righteousness is a broad, comprehensive term but most certainly includes living God's commandments. It qualifies us for the sacred ordinances that constitute the covenant path and blesses us to have the Spirit give direction to our lives." Does this sound like the same talk to you? Like I said, either a or b, take your pick.

Being righteous is not dependent on each of us having every blessing in our lives at this time. We may not be married or blessed with children or have other desired blessings now. But the Lord has promised that the righteous who are faithful "may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness."

Footnote 11 quotes Lorenzo Snow:

President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901) taught: "There is no Latter-day Saint who dies after having lived a faithful life who will lose anything because of having failed to do certain things when opportunities were not furnished him or her. In other words, if a young man or a young woman **has no opportunity** of getting married, and they live faithful lives up to the time of their death, they will have all the blessings, exaltation and glory that any man or woman will have who had this opportunity and improved it. That is sure and positive" (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow [2012], 130). See also Richard G. Scott, "The Joy of Living the Great Plan of Happiness," Ensign, Nov. 1996, 75.

He fails to mention this crucial key to understanding this doctrine but does provide it in a footnote. Once again, two different talks. For more information on that see my paper on Celestial Law.

Unity is also a broad, comprehensive term but most certainly exemplifies the first and second great commandments to love God and love our fellowmen. It denotes a Zion people whose hearts and minds are "knit together in unity."

Elder Cook tries here to let you know what I have already explained in great detail above. There is a difference between being friends of the mammon of unrighteousness (ie. love our fellowmen) and that of the unity of a Zion people. One of his references takes you to the city of Enoch, which I already mentioned above as well, which was separated from their fellowmen.

The context for my message is the contrast and lessons from sacred scriptures.

It has been 200 years since the Father and His Son first appeared and commenced the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ in 1820. The account in 4 Nephi in the Book of Mormon includes a similar 200-year period after the Savior appeared and established His Church in ancient America.

The historical record we read in 4 Nephi describes a people where there were no envyings, strifes, tumults, lyings, murders, or any manner of lasciviousness. Because of this righteousness, the record states, “surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God.”

With respect to unity, 4 Nephi reads, “There was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people.”

It is important to note here once again, that Elder Cook identifies that there is multiple types or definitions of unity but pretty much for the rest of the talk will not differentiate them for you. Having no contention in the land does not mean by itself that the people were in unity, ie. the love of God was in their hearts. There’s a multitude of reasons why there might not be contentions in a land at a specific time. It is why Mormon tacked on the “because”, he wanted people to know that the reason for this unity was because of the love of God in their hearts. A circle is an oval, but an oval is not a circle. You can have no contention without God, but you cannot have contentions in a city of unity, a city of God.

Unfortunately, 4 Nephi then describes a dramatic change that began in the “two hundred and first year,” when iniquity and division destroyed righteousness and unity. The depths of depravity that then occurred were subsequently so evil that ultimately the great prophet Mormon laments to his son Moroni:

“But O my son, how can a people like this, whose delight is in so much abomination—

“How can we expect that God will stay his hand in judgment against us?”

Elder Cook says that in the two hundred and first year things fell apart, and that we are currently living in the two hundredth year. Ie. “things might fall apart in 2021.” He then references 4 Nephi 1:24, which should raise red flags for anyone who knows Isaiah chapter 3.

4 Nephi 1:24 (footnote 16)

24 And now, in this two hundred and first year there began to be among them those who were lifted up in pride, such as the wearing of costly apparel, and all manner of fine pearls, and of the fine things of the world.

How can we expect that God will stay His hand indeed.

In this dispensation, although we live in a special time, the world has not been blessed with the righteousness and unity described in 4 Nephi. Indeed, we live in a moment of particularly strong divisions. However, the millions who have accepted the gospel of Jesus Christ have committed themselves to achieving both righteousness and unity. We are all aware that we can do better, and that is our challenge in this day. We can be a force to lift and bless society as a whole. At this 200-year hinge point in our Church history, let us commit ourselves as members of the Lord’s Church to live righteously and be united as never before. President Russell M. Nelson has asked us “to demonstrate greater

civility, racial and ethnic harmony and mutual respect.” This means loving each other and God and accepting everyone as brothers and sisters and truly being a Zion people.

The talk by President Nelson that was referenced here was remarks made to the NAACP. Once again, here we are. Elder Cook correctly identifies here for the first time in the talk that this unity is to be achieved however, between only those who have joined the Church and have committed themselves to the goal of righteousness and unity. He then, after saying that this specific unity only applies to members of the Church, turns around and says “we are all aware that we can do better” which once again, seems to be a sentence directed out not in. He then segues to saying “we” again “can lift and bless society as a whole” meaning the Church members. And I pray to God he is not saying we should have unity with society as a whole, for as Brigham Young clearly taught, “and when the spirit of persecution, the spirit of hatred, of wrath, and malice ceases in the world against this people, it will be the time that this people have apostatized and joined hands with the wicked, and never until then” (Discourses of Brigham Young, 4:326, p.112) Which isn’t clarified in the next sentence because he only commits the members to be united, so we are now back to only us.

This last line is open ended as well, it does not specify what “each other” refers to or explain what “accepting everyone” entails. In “accepting everyone” are we to carouse with them? Are we to intermarry with them? Are we to come down to their level? There are many people who believe this is the definition of acceptance. You will bake a cake for them, you will have homosexual couples as scout leaders, etc etc. To many people, this is their definition of acceptance. To fail to clarify and leave the statement ambiguous and arbitrary leaves Satan and the progressive element in the Church open and invited. People will now, in the Church, point to this quote and say, “We just need to be more accepting, so let’s go to this gay marriage” or “We just need to be more accepting, so let’s go to this pipe smoking pow wow” or “We just need to be more accepting, let’s intermarry with them, carouse with them and otherwise go down to their level with them!” Nobody in the Church would fall for “let’s just go to her pole dancing ‘class’, we need to be more accepting” or “Mom, I’m bringing an escort over to dinner tonight, I want a sense of normality and acceptance before I go home with her.” Members would not accept that at all, yet are completely onboard with far grosser sins of rebellion. Going to a gay couple’s wedding is an affront to God, it is a sin of rebellion. Period. Going to a strip club is a sin of coveting and would most likely be classified as a sin of weakness.

Saints of God, we better tread very carefully with what we allow into our homes, into our hearts etc and the judgement (ie. punishment) we affix (ie. you judge [punish] an individual harshly for going to a strip club in weakness but you celebrate and pat on the back members attending a gay wedding). If we as Saints accept this, then we resign ourselves to a lower degree of glory. Period.

With our all-inclusive doctrine, we can be an oasis of unity and celebrate diversity.

This might be the second worst line in all of conference. Elder Cook here sounds an awful lot like a modern leftist, “we celebrate diversity, so long as everyone’s dark-skinned and everyone thinks exactly the same.” He just went on to talk about how if we are diverse we are not God’s people, we need to be one in “minds, hearts, etc”. So what diversity is he talking about? If I said, “I think having sex with all my neighbors is a good thing, it creates unity for the neighborhood,” would he accept that diversity? So what form of diversity is he referring to? If I said, “I believe the Japanese race was superior” and I taught that, would he accept that diversity of thought? What if I said, “I believe hardworking, intelligent, industrious people should be wealthy and rich and the lame, the dumb etc should remain poor and die

in the streets (ie. classes)", would he accept that diversity? The answer to these is no, a resounding no. So we are to have no diversity of thought (ie. one mind), no diversity of doctrine (one Lord, one faith, one baptism), we are to have no diversity of gods (thou shalt have no other gods before me), we are to have no diversity of classes (ie. rich and poor), we are to have no diversity with the gifts of God (ie. priestcraft, the teacher esteemeth himself not above the student), I could go on and on. So what diversity does the Church accept? What diversity is the Church perfectly equipped to apparently handle?

Unity and diversity are not opposites.

Definition of unity

1a: the quality or state of not being multiple : ONENESS

Definition of diversity

1: the condition of having or being composed of differing elements : VARIETY

(both taken from Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

In other news, up is not the opposite of down, right is not the opposite of left and cold is not the opposite of hot. And don't wait for me to explain it, because I don't!

We can achieve greater unity as we foster an atmosphere of inclusion and respect for diversity.

In other news, we can gain a greater purity of salt as we are more inclusive to pepper, onion powder and parsley and respect that mix. We are all spices and we should be inclusive to them all and as we dump all these random spices together, miraculously out pops 100% pure salt!

Also, the war of the ages, the bloody war, that was fought against the pedophiles has finally reached its end, as the non-pedos have realized that the reason why there was war was because they just weren't accepting enough of the pedophiles. Once they became accepting and handed over their little children, peace and unity followed...

Without context, which Elder Cook does not provide, and which WILL be filled in by Satan's progressive and evil element in the Church, this statement is madness and with the help of Satan and his progressive element, will turn into pure evil.

During the period I served in the San Francisco California Stake presidency, we had Spanish-, Tongan-, Samoan-, Tagalog-, and Mandarin-language-speaking congregations. Our English-speaking wards were composed of people from many racial and cultural backgrounds. There was love, righteousness, and unity.

This is the first time in the paper that he has identified what diversity he is referring to. And this diversity is of language spoken, diversity of culture and diversity of race. And he says despite diversity of race, culture and language, there is unity with members of the Church. Okay, seems legit, culture + race + language are the only forms of "diversity" we really put "value on" and "desire" ... but wait... the next sentence reads:

Wards and branches in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are determined by geography or language, not by race or culture. Race is not identified on membership records.

What the bleep is he talking about then? He identifies that we should not be diverse on any of those other things because we should be in unity, and then he proceeds to tell us that the forms of diversity he *is* referring to are language, culture and race. But in this sentence he says that race and culture aren't recognized in the Church, ergo, can't be the diversity he is referring to as positives for if they were positives, the Church would identify them! He then says that congregations are assigned based off of language- meaning there isn't even diversity of language in our congregations! It's like listening to the left teach you how a man can be a woman and a woman can be a man. Okay, got it. But then they say we don't believe there is any such thing or will recognize male or female. Uhh, what? Which is it?

He then goes on to "prove" that the Church doesn't recognize race or culture by saying they instead use geographical boundaries and language instead; hint boomer, the two biggest identifiers of race and culture are geographical boundaries and language. It's like saying, we don't ask if you are male or female, we just ask if you have given birth or can give birth, have the priesthood or don't hold it. Isn't that the same thing?

And to top off the confusion levels, in the previous paragraph, he listed Tongan, Samoan, etc members living in California. So we are to believe that these individuals don't have a unique culture or race, they are just from an island of the same name and speak a similar language but there is no unique culture to the Samoans and there is no race Samoan but they can still be visibly identified living in California.

The Church website still says the gathering place for "Brazilian Saints is Brazil, the place for the Japanese Saints is Japan" etc.

I don't understand what you are referring to then. If I moved to Korea and learned to speak Korean, would that make me Korean? And since I was now "Korean" does that mean that I could never move back to Idaho? Or were they saying the race Korean that comes from that geographical area that share their Korean culture and Korean language should, if possible, remain in Korea.

It doesn't matter, either case however, because Elder Cook apparently doesn't recognize race or culture as an identifier for anything of value. Ergo, race and culture cannot be strengths in diversity. As soon as they turn around and say that there are strengths in diversity, it would be like saying that there are strengths to being a woman and strengths to being a man- you are not only now acknowledging that they exist, but you are also acknowledging that there are strengths to the genders, and if there are strengths there are weaknesses. Likewise, there is weakness in diversity, massive weaknesses, however there are no weaknesses in unity.

Early in the Book of Mormon, approximately 550 years before the birth of Christ, we are taught the fundamental commandment regarding the relationship between Father in Heaven's children. All are to keep the Lord's commandments, and all are invited to partake of the Lord's goodness; "and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile."

The Savior's ministry and message have consistently declared all races and colors are children of God. We are all brothers and sisters.

He continues his attack on "race and culture" by saying that we as saints should all live "color blind" with regards to race and culture. Okay... If we are color blind and don't see race or culture, all we see is

“children of God”, wouldn’t that mean we in fact have NO diversity again? We are all homogenous? Which is it? Are we to see race and culture and celebrate the “diversity”, or are we to NOT see race and culture as being dividers at all, but are to only see each other as one race and one culture and thus NO diversity? This literally cannot be both ways. Men and women exist, they are “things”, but men can be women and women can be men OOORRrrrrr... the concept of “men and women” are “social constructs” that don’t actually exist? Which is it left? Make up your mind! Am I to look out at a congregation of West Africans, East Indians, Mexicans, etc. and see all those races and glory in the differences between them and love them for their differences (thus strengths AND weaknesses of the races) and love “diversity” OOORRrrrrr... Am I to look out at a congregation of West Africans, East Indians, Mexicans, etc. and see ONLY “God children, NO race and thus no differences between them” and thus see no “diversity” at all! Which is it? Make up your mind! Both cannot be true.

In our doctrine we believe that in the host country for the Restoration, the United States, the U.S. Constitution and related documents, written by imperfect men, were inspired by God to bless all people.

Here he is, once again, now taking pot shots at the founders of America. Imagine if every time I mentioned Elder Cook I said, “obviously an imperfect man”. Members would lose their freaking minds. Beam, meet splinter!

As we read in the Doctrine and Covenants, these documents were “established, and should be maintained for the rights and protection of all flesh, according to just and holy principles.” Two of these principles were agency and accountability for one’s own sins. The Lord declared:

“Therefore, it is not right that any man should be in bondage one to another.

“And for this purpose have I established the Constitution of this land, by the hands of wise men whom I raised up unto this very purpose, and redeemed the land by the shedding of blood.”

Jesus forgot to take pot shot at them, apparently Jesus didn’t think it was as relevant as Elder Cook to point out how flawed these men were, instead calling them “wise men”. Hrmmm... Jesus finds it important for us to know these men were HIS men and were WISE men while for some reason, Elder Cook talking mostly to non-member, once again, wants to make it clear that the founding fathers were FLAWED and USED by God. Fascinating really.

This revelation was received in 1833 when the Saints in Missouri were suffering great persecution. The heading to Doctrine and Covenants section 101 reads in part: “Mobs had driven them from their homes in Jackson County. ... Threats of death against [members] of the Church were many.”

This was a time of tension on several fronts. Many Missourians considered Native Americans a relentless enemy and wanted them removed from the land. In addition, many of the Missouri settlers were slave owners and felt threatened by those who were opposed to slavery.

In contrast, our doctrine respected the Native Americans, and our desire was to teach them the gospel of Jesus Christ. With respect to slavery, our scriptures had made it clear that no man should be in bondage to another.

Much like with Celestial Law, this is a topic no one in the church wants to learn much about, and because of that apathy there is a gross ignorance in the church surrounding it. The law of consecration isn't communism/socialism/redistribution of wealth etc. but that doesn't mean they are not similar in a lot of ways, if not most ways. The same goes for "slavery" vs "administering servants". Agency and choice is a huge part of the difference, but if you just look at the cover letters you might mistake them for the same thing. Instead of learning the differences, we as saints have opted to just omit and not talk about it. Much like Celestial Law, I'd recommend looking into it so as to prepare yourself for what might be in our near future. "No one would be happy as a servant when he/she could have been a king/queen"- President Kimball (Reference found in paper Celestial Law)

Ultimately, the Saints were violently driven out of Missouri and then forced to move to the West. The Saints prospered and found the peace that accompanies righteousness, unity, and living the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Once again, only because the wicked and righteous were separated for a time.

I rejoice in the Savior's Intercessory Prayer recorded in the Gospel of John. The Savior acknowledged that the Father had sent Him and that He, the Savior, had finished the work He was sent to do. He prayed for His disciples and for those who would believe in Christ: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Oneness is what Christ prayed for prior to His betrayal and Crucifixion.

Once again, oneness with Christ and the Saints, not with unrighteous mammon.

In the first year after the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, recorded in section 38 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord speaks of wars and wickedness and declares, "I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine."

He's already referenced this above... same scripture... he omits the entire parable here.

Our Church culture comes from the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I'd really like someone to explain this one as well. We sure have a lot of "Christmas trees" and "Easter eggs" and "Christmas dinners at the church with Santa Claus" etc. etc. that have nothing to do with the gospel of Jesus Christ and a whole lot to do with the culture of gentile countries. It says in Isaiah 28 that Ephraim will be "drunk" on that culture. So to continually say that the church has a culture that is entirely from the gospel of Jesus Christ doesn't seem to be a given, it's a goal not a forgone conclusion or reality. "Church culture" shouldn't actually be a thing (depending on the definition you use), the church should be simply God's will.

The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Romans is profound. The early Church in Rome was composed of Jews and Gentiles. These early Jews had a Judaic culture and had "won their emancipation, and began to multiply and flourish."

The Gentiles in Rome had a culture with a significant Hellenistic influence, which the Apostle Paul understood well because of his experiences at Athens and Corinth.

Paul sets forth the gospel of Jesus Christ in a comprehensive fashion. He chronicles pertinent aspects of both Judaic and Gentile culture that conflict with the true gospel of Jesus Christ. He essentially asks each

of them to leave behind cultural impediments from their beliefs and culture that are not consistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul admonishes the Jews and the Gentiles to keep the commandments and love one another and affirms that righteousness leads to salvation.

Like I said above, there shouldn't be a "church culture" (depending on the definition you use), the church simply is the mind and will of the Lord, the church teaches you what are and are not acceptable practices, traditions, celebrations, activities, etc. The church is the guidebook to weed out of cultures things that offend, it should not be a "culture unto itself" (once again, depending on the definition you use).

The culture of the gospel of Jesus Christ is not a Gentile culture or a Judaic culture.

Once again, the church has no "culture", we have "doctrine" which never changes and "procedure" which does change- and that procedure DOES change based entirely off of "gentile culture". I.e, Certain missionaries in certain mission can wear grass skirts vs pants, and why? Because the culture of that area is directly impacting the "procedure" or "culture" of the church in that area, etc. etc. I understand the grasping desire for older leaders to use buzz words like "diversity/unity/culture/etc." with alarming frequency, but when not used precisely it leads to confusion, and the Holy Ghost cannot bear testimony of half-truths, near truths, or even mostly truths, it only edifies with pure precise truth. It would simply have been easier and leave far less room for erroneous interpretations to say that the church's will is not that will or desire of Gentile culture or Judaic culture, it is the Lord's will.

It is not determined by the color of one's skin or where one lives.

This is utterly incorrect. Where one lives DOES currently effect the "procedures" or "cultures" of the church in that area, I already have provided examples. In USA if you wear a "hat" into the building you will be asked to take it off or leave the building, in Africa they let it happen. Missionaries in Tonga can wear skirt dresses, most other places they are required to wear pants. Some areas will have Christmas trees in the building and Santa show up at a "Christmas dinner" where other areas will not. The Canadian hymn book has "God Save the King" in it. Where you live currently will DRASTICALLY change the church's "culture" or "procedures" for that area. Should it?

While we rejoice in distinctive cultures, we should leave behind aspects of those cultures that conflict with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The answer? No! We should NOT have diversity, we should have unity and oneness across the globe with procedures, culture, etc. Because of that diversity in a local area that we allow to happen, those in the same area with vastly different cultural behavior will not feel welcome and will wonder why their culture is deemed "bad" while others is "okay"- ie. "I can't play my acoustic guitar and sing a church hymn but they can sing a Baptist style gospel choir rendition of a song NOT in our hymn book, complete with hand clapping, at conference?" or "Brass instruments drive the spirit out, so no playing brass instruments... BBBUUUttt listening to this flute/violin combo done by these 12 year olds that is breaking the glass- that is totally okay!"

Our members and new converts often come from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds.

What? Now we are back to seeing these people as diverse racially?! I thought we were only to see them as children of our Heavenly Father and race doesn't actually exist or mean anything?!

If we are to follow President Nelson's admonition to gather scattered Israel, we will find we are as different as the Jews and Gentiles were in Paul's time. Yet we can be united in our love of and faith in Jesus Christ. Paul's Epistle to the Romans establishes the principle that we follow the culture and doctrine of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the model for us even today.³⁵

So... Culture and race exist and races are vastly different... But when we join the church we give up all those things that do not or cannot coexist with the church. We are all also, at that time, to see each other as equals, with no differences, all children of our father in Heaven, thus eliminating all diversity among us and creating unity. In this process of taking vastly different things and making them one, we celebrate diversity! Confused yet? Good! You've just had a lesson on "unity in diversity!"

America had it right and still does, a "melting pot", "out of many, one". Canada and other lesser countries have it wrong with their "mosaic", "out of many, many" will only bring death, blood, and destruction. If we don't start valuing unity above diversity a lot of people are going to die. That is a fact played out in history as true as the sun rising and the sun setting. If we don't stop talking about what makes us different and celebrating it and start talking about what makes us the same and one, brother will rise against brother, son against father, mother against daughter, and this world will enter a period of bloodshot the likes of which it has never known.

The ordinances of the temple unite us in special ways and allow us to be one in every eternally significant way.

We honor our pioneer members across the world not because they were perfect...

Once again, taking pot shots and I'm not sure the reason for it..

...but because they overcame hardships, made sacrifices, aspired to be Christlike, and were striving to build faith and be one with the Savior. Their oneness with the Savior made them one with each other. This principle is true for you and me today.

Once again, saint's oneness with the Savior and each other is not the same thing as saints making friends with mammon...

The clarion call to members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is to strive to be a Zion people who are of one heart and one mind and dwell in righteousness.

By NOT celebrating diversity! By making us ONE, REGARDLESS of race, culture, creed, etc.

It is my prayer that we will be righteous and united and completely focused on serving and worshipping our Savior, Jesus Christ, of whom I testify. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

It is my prayer that we stop worshipping at the altar of the false god of diversity and find our faith again

in the true and living God of oneness and unity. My prayer is that we stop worshiping this false god and start loving our brothers and sisters because they are our brothers and sisters, not because their "dark skin" makes us look better and allows us to virtue signal about it. Wake up saints of God and put away the childish things of your youth, put away this diversity non-sense and cleave to Christ and let us be one. Let us help our Father and our Christ in their work, to bring to pass the eternal life of man, all men. Let us stop viewing everything and everyone as different and start talking about and viewing what we have in common- and don't lower your standards and determination to stand on true and correct principles as you do so! In the name of Jesus Christ, amen!