

## **Researching the Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood**

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**Michael Hubbard MacKay, Church History and Doctrine**

### **Project Purpose**

This research project will support and develop the work of Dr. Michael MacKay on his book manuscript about the restoration of the priesthood. Specifically, I will be conducting primary historical research at New York and Pennsylvania state and county archives to support contextual and geographic research about where and when Peter, James, and John appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

### **Project Importance**

Many historians, both Mormon and non-Mormon, have developed ideas about the restoration of the priesthood, and there is a rich literature that describes the details of those events. However, the Joseph Smith Papers Project, for which Dr. MacKay is an author, has uncovered new information and produced new analysis from their detailed work that will help reinterpret and specify some of the important events of the restoration. This will be valuable to both the Church as a whole and to my individual knowledge and testimony of the Church.

### **Project Profile Body**

My primary position in this project will be to help support the research done by Dr. MacKay. I will work alongside him as we search journals, land records, maps, and Joseph Smith documents to specify what we can know about when and where Peter, James, and John appeared. Our approach will be different than that of others who have gone before us in that we will be focusing on strict document analysis and historical methodology, similar to that used in the Joseph Smith Papers Project. We also plan to follow Larry Porter's research trail at several archives in Pennsylvania, hoping to uncover new documents about the location of the priesthood restoration. We will be specifically looking for documents that Porter believed Reverend Wesley Walter possibly stole from a New York archive in the late 1970s. This will require hours of research at the University of Utah's Marquardt collection to find clues about what happened to those documents associated with the 1826 trial. The results of this research, when conducted, will possibly shed light upon the restoration of the priesthood.

I am specifically qualified to assist Dr. MacKay in this research because I have recently taken a course from him in the Church History and Doctrine Department in which he explained in great detail, his research about the restoration of the priesthood.

### **Anticipated Academic Outcome**

Dr. MacKay plans to publish his book with Religious Studies Center at Brigham Young University. I will be able to participate in and become familiar with the publication process involved, and begin to understand what it takes to publish an academic work. I hope to be able to present some of the work I do for Dr. MacKay with him at the Mormon

History Association forum in 2015. He also informs that he will allow me to present my findings in one of his lectures during the semester following our research.

### **Qualifications**

Dr. Michael Hubbard MacKay received an engineering degree from the US Air Force before double majoring in History and Political Science at Weber State University. He received a Masters of Arts degree from the University of York in England, focusing on world history, culture, and the history of science and medicine. His Doctorate of Philosophy degree was also awarded by the University of York, in which he studied cultural theory, history of science and medicine, and print culture. He taught in the Department of History at Brigham Young University for two years as a visiting professor, where his interests in science and medicine began to overlap with his research about nineteenth-century Mormon midwifery. This led to interest in and a position at the LDS Church History Department in Salt Lake City as a historian for the Joseph Smith Papers Project. He is now an assistant professor in the Department of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University.

I, Nathan Richardson, satisfy all the listed requirements in the Eligibility & Conditions section on the ORCA webpage (I am a student in good standing, understand project requirements, am able to comply with time constraints, etc.). I recently transferred from BYU-Hawaii with GPA of 3.97 (59 credit hours), where I also published a short work in the *Kula Manu*, a Department of English student publication, in 2011. In addition, I am aware of the responsibilities that will be associated with any grant money received, and am fully committed to completing the outlined project as previously explained.

### **Project Timetable**

We would like to begin our research in the winter semester of 2014 to help us develop and organize a trip to the New York and Pennsylvania archives in the summer of 2014.

### **Scholarly Sources**

Michael MacKay, et. al. *Joseph Smith Papers, Documents Vol. 1*.

John W. Welch (ed.), *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820-1844* (SLC, BYU Press and Deseret Book).

Gregory Prince, *Having Authority: The Origins and Development of the Priesthood during the Ministry of Joseph Smith* (Independence Missouri, Independence Press).

Larry C. Porter, "The Restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods," *Ensign*, Dec. 1996.

Richard Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (University of Illinois Press, 1985).