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Nine Generations of Spiritual Leaders 1-2

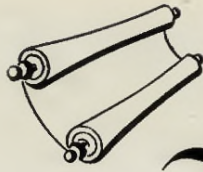
Author(s): Archibald F. Bennett

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Abstract: This series identifies a number of well-known Book of Mormon spiritual leaders, many of whom consisted of fathers and their sons (i.e., Alma/Alma the Younger, Mormon/Moroni). The first part covers Alma the Elder and Alma the Younger.



Genealogy

NINE GENERATIONS OF SPIRITUAL LEADERS

By Archibald F. Bennett
General Secretary, Genealogical Society

QUALITIES of great leadership are rarely transmitted from father to son in unbroken succession for generations. History does reveal such notable examples as that of the great English statesman, William Pitt the elder, and his equally famous son, William Pitt the younger; and of Lord Randolph Churchill and his son, Prime Minister Winston Churchill. In America we have the case of President John Adams, President John Quincy Adams, his son, the latter's son, Charles Francis Adams, author, statesman of repute and candidate for vice president, and Charles Francis Adams, author and publicist of the fourth generation.

The religious field provides instances of families contributing several generations of prominent ministers. In the brief history of our own Church already we can cite four and five generations of general Church authorities in lineal succession. For example, the posterity of Asael Smith, a grand old pioneer who died in 1830, has furnished to the Church: Joseph Smith, Sr., Presiding Patriarch; Hyrum Smith, counselor in the First Presidency and Presiding Patriarch; Joseph F. Smith, president of the Church; Hyrum M. Smith, an apostle; and Joseph F. Smith, the present Patriarch to the Church. A brother of Joseph Smith, Sr., was "Uncle" John Smith, who also served for years as Presiding Patriarch. His son, George A. Smith, was an apostle and a member of the First Presidency, as also his son, John Henry Smith, father of George Albert Smith, now president of the Council of the Twelve.

Yet, with the single exception of the ten generations of ancient patriarchs from Adam to Noah who were all "preachers of righteousness, and spake and prophesied," the Book of Mormon presents a record of spiritual leadership that is unique and without parallel in the annals of heredity.

For nine generations, over a period of almost 500 years—173 B.C. to 321 A.D.—Alma the elder, Alma the younger, Helaman son of Alma, Helaman son of Helaman, Nephi son of Helaman, Nephi the disciple son of Nephi, Nephi son of Nephi the disciple, Amos son of the last-named Nephi, and the two sons of Amos, viz., Amos the younger and Ammaron, each in his generation stood as a leader in the Church of Christ in America and keeper of the sacred records. The story of their glorious ministry should be forever treasured in the hearts of the faithful.

1. ALMA THE ELDER

THE first Alma, father of this long line, was born 173 B.C., probably about twelve or thirteen generations after his lineal ancestor, Nephi the son of Lehi, who came out of Jerusalem. He grew to young manhood among his people the Nephites, in the city of Lehi-Nephi, which was completely surrounded by their enemies the Lamanites. Noah, king of the Nephites, was a wicked and grasping oppressor, and gathered about him a circle of apostate priests who abandoned themselves to idolatry and riotous living. Alma became one of these priests.

Wickedness became so widespread that the Lord sent the dauntless prophet Abinadi to rebuke the king and his priests. In the power of the Lord he told them of their misdeeds and called upon them to repent. King Noah, in anger, commanded his priests to seize the prophet and put him to death.

But there was one among them whose name was Alma, he also being a descendant of Nephi. And he was a young man, and he believed the words which Abinadi had spoken, for he knew concerning the iniquity which Abinadi had testified against them; therefore he began to plead with the king that he would not be angry with Abinadi, but suffer that he might depart in peace.

But the king was more wroth, and caused that Alma should be cast out from among them, and sent his servants after him that they might slay him.

But he fled before them and hid himself that they found him not. And he being concealed for many days did write all the words which Abinadi had spoken. (Mosiah 17:2-4.)

The rest of the priests lifted up their voice against Abinadi, and they burned him at the stake.

Alma sincerely repented, and taught the words of the martyr among the people secretly, baptizing many who received the truth and forming them into the Church of Christ, "having their hearts knit together in unity and love." They escaped the king's army sent to destroy them by taking their tents and families and fleeing into the wilderness. After eight days they pitched their tents in a beautiful and pleasant land of pure water, where they built a city and established a new home. Alma refused to be made the king of his people, but he served faithfully as high priest and founder of their Church, watching over and nourishing them in righteousness.

Later, the Lamanites subjected Alma and his people to bondage and bitter persecution, but Alma, under divine

guidance, led his followers out of the clutches of their captors, until they arrived at the City of Zarahemla. There King Mosiah and the other Nephites received them with great joy, and Alma was given authority over the Church, as high priest: In this authority he conducted a vigorous reformation throughout the entire country and great numbers were baptized. "And the Lord did pour out his Spirit upon them, and they were blessed and prospered in the land."

2. ALMA THE YOUNGER

AS the years went by, the number of unbelievers increased, and they began to persecute the members of the Church.

Now the sons of Mosiah were numbered among the unbelievers; and also one of the sons of Alma was numbered among them, he being called Alma, after his father; nevertheless, he became a very wicked and an idolatrous man. And he was a man of many words, and did speak much flattery to the people; therefore he led many of the people to do after the manner of his iniquities.

And he became a great hinderment to the prosperity of the church of God; stealing away the hearts of the people; causing much dissension among the people; giving a chance for the enemy of God to exercise his power over them. (Mosiah 27:8-9.)

As he and the sons of Mosiah went about secretly to destroy the Church, rebelling against God, the angel of the Lord descended upon them, speaking with a voice of thunder, and Alma and his associates fell in terror to the earth.

Demanded the angel:

... why persecutest thou the church of God? . . . Behold, the Lord hath heard the prayers of his people, and also the prayers of his servant Alma, who is thy father; for he has prayed with much faith concerning thee that thou mightest be brought to the knowledge of the truth. (Mosiah 27:13, 14.)

He reminded Alma of the captivity and deliverance of his fathers, and commanded him to seek no more to destroy the Church. Alma, stricken dumb and helpless, was carried before his father, Alma, who rejoiced, knowing this was the power of God. The priests and the multitude fasted and prayed for two days and two nights, when Alma received his strength, and, arising, bade them be of good comfort,

For, said he, I have repented of my sins, and have been redeemed of the Lord; behold I am born of the Spirit. . . . I was in the darkest abyss; but now I behold the marvelous light of God. (Mosiah 27:24, 29.)

HENCEFORTH Alma the younger was a changed man, a most zealous champion of truth and righteousness. By his father he was appointed high priest and placed in charge of the
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Just Taste

WHAT TEMPTING
FLAVOR THE SUN
HAS STORED FOR
YOU IN . . .



Desert Grapefruit

FLAVOR AND FRESHNESS is packed into each juicy segment. Sunshine has made each mouthful good-tasting and healthful.

For our Desert Grapefruit is laden with vitamin C. In each half you get an adult's primary supply of this all-important vitamin . . . enough for a wonderful start toward your full-day's requirement.

Enjoy this bracing, full-flavored golden fruit at every breakfast. Use its juicy-rich segments in luncheon salads or in frozen deserts. Or sip cool, thirst-quenching Desert Grapefruit Juice. Every way, Desert Grapefruit brings you marvelous refreshment and "health from the desert."



MY SPRING PHOBIA

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are cold colors and tend to make such a room dreary and forbidding. Poorly lighted rooms, we found come to life when pinks and yellows and shades of peach and orange decorate them. On the other hand where windows and sunshine are plentiful nothing is more spacious than rooms done in the subdued colors, soft blues, deep greens and browns. We learned to spot vivid colors as accents in rooms done in pale colors. We learned that walls in solid color make the best background for paintings and hangings and that pictures are displayed to the best advantage when hung at eye-level where they may be most easily seen. We learned that to place furniture across the corner of a room makes it appear smaller. Furniture lined up parallel with the wall is simplest and most effective. We found that too much furniture arranged in a small room also made it seem smaller.

I THINK I have solved my phobia. The way to cure spring phobia is to give yourself over to it as completely as is possible. The key to the situation is similar to the principle involved in vac-

ination. A little hard work tied in with a degree of fulfillment of daydreams will immunize you against further recurrences on a larger scale of the disease. . . . I think.

However, honesty compels me to add that we haven't done a thing to our basement. That chamber of horrors has clasped to its grimy bosom all the "don't-know-what-to-do-with-this, but-we-must-keep-it-because-Uncle-Edgar-gave-it-to-us and it-really-is-nice-we-just-don't-have-a-place-to-keep-it-now" things. Now, there's a picture we saw the other day of how a basement room might be arranged with just a few yards of material, second-hand pieces of furniture and paint.

* * *

I think my phobia is like the head-cold. There seems to be no real cure. In my mind's eye I can see us now, . . . he in his old paint be-spattered "cords," I, in my old seersucker housedress, fixing up the basement. Perhaps the best thing to do is to make up my mind to a lengthy illness and merely say to you weakly in closing, "Happy painting to you . . . and may the best plan win."

GENEALOGY

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Church in all the land; and by Mosiah the king, he was named to be the secular ruler, the first chief judge under the revised form of government. As such, "he did judge righteous judgments; and there was continual peace through the land." Soon after his father, Alma the elder, died at the age of 82, "having lived to fulfil the commandments of God. . . and thus ended the days of Alma, who was the founder of their church." (Mosiah 29:45 and 47.)

Events crowding Alma's public ministry called for the highest type of courage and wisdom. The apostate Nehor slew the aged and faithful servant of God named Gideon. Alma, as chief judge, condemned him to die for this crime. Amlici, cunning and ambitious, sought to have himself proclaimed king; and when defeated led a rebellion. Alma, chief judge and governor, led his people and chief captains in the bloody battles which ensued, and slew Amlici in personal combat. As a man of God he continued to labor for the preservation of his people; and resigned the chief judgeship to devote his entire time to his responsibility as earthly head of the Church. This entailed extensive missionary tours, frequently among whole communities of most bitter opponents. His imprisonment with Amulek at Ammonihah and their miraculous deliverance, the punishment of the blasphemous Korihor who demanded a sign, the mission to the Zoramites which ended in partial failure owing to the waywardness of his son, Corianton, and Alma's

inspired teachings to this son, now repentant, are classic and well-known examples of the highest type of leadership.

Cried Alma in one self-revealing passage:

O that I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart, that I might go forth and speak with the trump of God, with a voice to shake the earth, and cry repentance unto every people!

Yea, I would declare unto every soul, as with the voice of thunder, repentance and the plan of redemption, that they should repent and come unto our God, that there might not be more sorrow upon all the face of the earth. (Alma 29:1-2.)

Toward the end of his life's mission Alma carefully questioned his eldest son, Helaman, as to the steadfastness of the latter's belief in Christ and in the sacredness of the records he was about to entrust to his care. Then he blessed Helaman, foretelling that in four hundred years from the time that Jesus Christ should manifest himself unto the Nephites they should dwindle in unbelief, and be almost entirely destroyed. Alma blessed this land for the sake of the righteous, but cursed it unto those who do wickedly.

And when Alma had done this he departed out of the land of Zarahemla, as if to go into the land of Melek. And it came to pass that he was never heard of more; as to his death or burial we know not of.

Behold, this we know, that he was a righteous man; and the saying went abroad in the church that he was taken up by the Spirit, or buried by the hand of the Lord, even as Moses. (Alma 45:18-19.)

(To be continued)