

"We Believe"

Show Notes & Transcripts

Podcast General Description:

followHIM: A *Come, Follow Me* Podcast with Hank Smith & John Bytheway

Do you ever feel that preparing for your weekly *Come, Follow Me* lesson falls short? Join hosts Hank Smith and John Bytheway as they interview experts to make your study for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' *Come, Follow Me* course not only enjoyable but original and educational. If you are looking for resources to make your study fresh, faithful, and fun--no matter your age--then join us every Wednesday.

Podcast Episode Descriptions

Part 1:

What if two of the most "revolutionary revelations" in Church History are two that we often overlook? Brother Thom Reed unpacks the Articles of Faith and Official Declaration 1 as bold, future-shaping revelations, from Joseph Smith's visionary inclusiveness (with a surprise rap) to Wilford Woodruff's courageous end to plural marriage to preserve temples and covenants.

Part 2:

Brother Thom Reed continues to explore how Official Declaration 2 transforms pain into possibility, healing into forward momentum, and the global church into a more unified body of Christ.

Timecodes:

Part 1 -

- 00:00 Part 1 - Brother Thom Reed
- 01:13 Episode teaser
- 04:51 Bio of Brother Thom Reed
- 12:50 The Genesis Group
- 17:03 *Come, Follow Me Manual*
- 20:22 Truth for the entire world
- 23:00 Power comes from understanding principles
- 24:35 DJ Brother T raps the Articles of Faith
- 28:45 Living in revelation
- 30:06 Revelation in the craft store
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- 34:17 The miraculous nature of the Articles of Faith
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- 39:18 A future, growing thing not a creed
- 42:22 Family History uniform change
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- 50:07 Faith to move forward
- 53:11 Full uniform
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- 59:44 Be inspired, not offended
- 1:01:42 A recent sealing
- 1:03:40 End of Part 1 - Brother Thom Reed

Part 2 -

- 00:00 Part 2 - Brother Thom Reed
- 00:15 Genesis Group hat
- 01:30 A tragedy and a conversion story
- 05:26 Pushback and perspective
- 09:00 Love for Joseph and President Kimball
- 10:04 Revelation on a plane
- 11:54 One man’s experience with revelation
- 16:27 Redemption and revelation
- 18:38 Family Search with Africans and African Americans
- 22:03 The evil of racism
- 23:56 Going forward
- 25:33 Juneteenth in the United States
- 27:44 Continuous Restoration and revelation
- 30:53 God is good, all the time
- 34:01 End of Part 2 - Brother Thom Reed

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Biographical Information:



Thom Reed is a program manager for African heritage in North America for FamilySearch International. His area of emphasis is African American records, research, and experiences. He also manages relationships with community and genealogical and historical organizations for people of African descent around the world. Prior to working for FamilySearch, Reed spent more than 10 years as a marketing, communications, and business development professional in the consumer-packaged goods, healthcare, and technology industries.

Reed is a member of the National Genealogical Society, Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, Afro American Genealogical and Historical Society of Chicago, and Black Family General and History Society of Phoenix. In 2019, he served on the national Board of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS) as the Vice President for Genealogy. Reed received his Bachelor of Arts degree in International Business with a minor in Japanese studies from Illinois State University and received his Master of Business Administration degree in Marketing from Brigham Young University. He and his wife, Lisa, are the parents of 5 children and reside in South Jordan, Utah.

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Hank Smith:	00:00:00	Coming up in this episode on followHIM.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:00:02	I remember revelation hit me in a Hobby Lobby. I'm standing in line trying to get some stuff for youth gifts to give out at graduation, and this one book is standing up there. I'd never read it before. God said, this brother needs that book. And so I bought it and I gave it to him.
Hank Smith:	00:00:23	Hello everyone. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with my co-host John Bytheway, who is honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and does good to all men. Indeed, we may say he follows the admonition of Paul. John, as I'm reading the 13th Article of Faith, this could be John Bytheway's bio.
John Bytheway:	00:00:47	Thanks Hank. My dad used to say honest, true, and chased by an elephant. I've never actually been chased by an elephant. You roared at a lion once. That's one of my favorite Hank stories.
Hank Smith:	00:01:01	One day I'll have to tell that story on the show.
John Bytheway:	00:01:03	But I've never been chased by an elephant.
Hank Smith:	00:01:06	Hey John. We are privileged to have with us Brother Thom Reed. Thom, welcome to followHIM.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:01:12	Thank you. I'm so excited to be here. This is gonna be fun. I'm excited.
Hank Smith:	00:01:17	Yeah. Just in our talk before we hit record, John, we can tell this is gonna be a good day. We're gonna have a lot of fun. John, today, interesting section, interesting content here, the Articles of Faith and some official declarations. So as you were thinking about recording today, what came to mind? What were you thinking about?

John Bytheway: 00:01:35 One of the first things I was thinking about was Elder Holland's talk about a boy who came to him and said, I'm not sure if I know the church is true, but I believe it is. In part of Elder Holland's response he said, our collective Articles of Faith begin, we believe. Never be embarrassed about believing. The other thing I thought about was Article of Faith nine, because these official declarations are evidence of Article of Faith nine, that God will yet reveal many great and important things. It's a continuous restoration.

Hank Smith: 00:02:05 That's great. I love that. It does call them official declarations, but I also like adding those great and important declarations as well. Thom, as you've been prepping for today, what are we looking forward to? Give us a preview.

Brother Thom Reed: 00:02:18 What's really come to me is what I'm terming revolutionary revelations. It's this whole block, the Articles of Faith, Official Declaration one, Official Declaration two, are these moments when God stepped in to change the story, to change the church, and to prepare us for the Savior in ways that would never leave things the same. We're gonna hit these first, the Articles of Faith. Joseph didn't just give these to the Saints. He gave this world a declaration of what the restored church stands for. That to me was revolutionary and it still anchors us today. And then you got Official Declaration one, President Woodruff, he shows us what happens when a prophet courageously follows revelation. He changed course. Joseph had a revelation. Wilford had a different revelation or needed to do something different at that time, and it protected the temple. It protected God's work and set the church on a new course even in the middle of a really messy past.

00:03:15 And then third, Official Declaration 2, this revelation not only changed the church, but also changed my life personally. In 1978, Spencer W. Kimball prays, the heavens open, and the revelation transforms continents, families and individuals. There's three things I love when I present, to always help people walk away with something they know, they feel and they do. You're gonna know after we have this conversation that God still speaks and revelation is real, but revelation for the world comes to his servants, the prophets and you're gonna know that. You're gonna feel the gratitude and confidence that that same God who opened the heavens for Joseph Smith, for Wilford Woodruff, for Spencer W. Kimball is still opening the heavens for you and me and for those we love. That's what you'll feel. What I want you to do with this knowledge is trust in God's living prophets and seek revelation for yourself. There is a God in heaven. He has a prophet on the earth right now. I want

		you to go and trust him. You read these three sections, you can't help but trust God and know that he's in charge. Trust his prophets. That's what I hope listeners get from it today. At the end we'll take a quiz and we'll see, everybody will have to say now I know, now I feel, now I do, that kind of stuff, right.
Hank Smith:	00:04:40	Oh, we talk often about who are we gonna bring on and as Thom started to give us his summary, you could feel it.
John Bytheway:	00:04:47	Yeah. This is gonna be a good day. This is the right man.
Hank Smith:	00:04:51	Now some of our listeners might not know who Brother Thom Reed is, so John, what do we know about him?
John Bytheway:	00:04:58	You know, I just have some little outline points that I'd really love for Thom to fill us in a little bit more. I think he has a fascinating background because Thom and his parents are African-American, when I read his Facebook post, he was like, but I'm kind of Japanese-African-American 'cause I grew up in Japan.
Hank Smith:	00:05:17	Wow.
John Bytheway:	00:05:17	And his dad and mom. Yeah. In the Air Force. So I have this picture of his dad in his Air Force uniform. Really cool.
Hank Smith:	00:05:24	Thom, just so you know, a picture of the Air Force, you are now endeared in John Bytheway's mind.
John Bytheway:	00:05:34	Thom attended some different evangelical church and Baptist church but joined the church in 1991. Well this is what's really cool 'cause I think the Lord just, he just loves to do things like this, called Thom back to Japan in the Nagoya Japan mission when he was 21 years old. He went to Illinois State University, bachelor's in International Business, an MBA from Brigham Young University. You actually taught marketing at LDS Business College, which is now Ensign college. And right now if I got this right, you're a program manager at Family Search for North American African Heritage. And I just love family history. I think it's fascinating. Our souls expand when we suddenly have names and faces of people that we're connected to. Thom one of my favorite things was you spell your name. T-H-O-M. You don't pronounce the H And I'm John and you don't pronounce the H. So you're Thom and I'm John. So yeah.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:06:32	Yes. Let's fist bump to that right there. Your name is just Ank. We're just gonna call you Ank.

John Bytheway:	00:06:39	The Silent H of Hank, Thom and John with our silent H's.
Hank Smith:	00:06:45	That's great.
John Bytheway:	00:06:46	Thom, tell us more. Were you in the United States? Were you still in Japan when you started investigating the church? How did that happen?
Brother Thom Reed:	00:06:53	So Japan at birth was just a short little while. So my dad was stationed there. My sister actually was born in Germany while he was stationed in Germany. My parents both African-American from the Midwest. My dad born in Chicago. My mother was born in Arkansas, but they met in Gary, Indiana and that's where they grew up. Dad was in the Air Force, retired, actually before he retired he got stationed in California. So when I was three years old, we moved to California. We lived on a place called Treasure Island Naval Station. So I should be rich. There was no money there. I was kind of mad.
John Bytheway:	00:07:27	No treasure.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:07:28	I was digging up on the beaches trying to find coins, and there was nothing at Treasure Island. So I was kind of mad. But then he retired and we moved to dun-dun-dun-dun! Normal Illinois.
John Bytheway:	00:07:39	Mmm.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:07:39	Okay. That is the name of the town. It is in central Illinois. It's about two and a half hours South Chicago, two hours north of St. Louis, right smack in the heart of Illinois. The most fertile soil in the world is in McLean County, which Normal is in right next to Bloomington State Farm headquarters. Illinois State University. So the city gets its name because it was a teacher's college that was founded there. Illinois State Normal University. They took off Normal eventually and became Illinois State University, which I graduated from. What I would like to tell people is I'm the only Black Latter-day Saint that joined the only Normal Ward in the entire church. I was a member of Normal Ward. So the other brother who's from my town, Jonathan, was born, was baptized in the Bloomington Ward. And so Bloomington Normal are sister cities, but I'm the only one from the Normal, maybe not.
	00:08:32	There'll be some friends from Normal that'll be like, no Thom. As you can tell, I've taken that Normal thing and been like, my life has not been normal at all. Oh here I am, joined the church at 18 years old going to the University of Illinois. That's a

		miraculous story in and of itself. How it started with some young men in my little neighborhood, but then eventually transitioned to a young man who was attending the University of Illinois with me. I'll tell you more about that probably later. Decided that I wanted to go on a mission, that was kind of weird. And my dad wasn't really cool with that at all. In fact, he really had some issues with the church right at the beginning because of things like priesthood restriction, the prior priesthood restriction, which he had become aware of. He thought a mission was a waste of time until I opened my call and when I opened my call I said, dad, I'm going back home. And he said right on Stretch. That's his nickname for me. His name is Thom also. That's why I put the H in mine so that we just be different. 'cause I'm different that way. I'm not normal.
John Bytheway:	00:09:34	The H is for heighth because I read somewhere that you're really tall. How tall are you Thom?
Brother Thom Reed:	00:09:40	Yes. Six foot four, in the Genesis Group presidency where I currently serve, my calling under the Utah Area is in the Genesis group presidency. I'm actually the middle guy. There's actually Will Kennedy who's six eight. So I love since he joined the presidency as second counselor 'cause I'm the middle guy. But yes, H can stand for height. Met my wife there in Normal, got married in Chicago Temple, which was great. We've got children, three of our children were born in Normal. Two others in other locations. We've got five of them.
John Bytheway:	00:10:11	What a great story.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:10:12	My career took a different path as well. I went to Illinois State for my undergrad, the day I graduated from undergrad, which again is not normal, my second child was born. That morning at 4:00 AM and I walked at 4:00 PM. That was a crazy day. My wife was in the hospital and back then they didn't have video so she got to hear on my sister's cell phone when they called my name as I walked across the stage to graduate from Illinois State. And she still had baby in her arms in the hospital in Urbana, Illinois. Chose to get into marketing, came to BYU, did my MBA and then got to go to Procter and Gamble and went to Cincinnati, Ohio where I had a great experience for three years and then chose to kind of follow a guy who was a bit of a mentor to me.
	00:10:56	Ken Snyder, if you're listening, you know how much you mean to me brother. He helped me prepare for my mission and then he was president of a company back in Bloomington Normal that I went to go work for. Now unfortunately, that's when the economy downturned. I was back and forth between various

jobs. Ended up in Utah in 2010. Still was struggling with some jobs and stuff until I came to work for the church in the family history department in Family Search in 2013. So I've been there 12 years in Family Search and it has been a wonderful blessing to be a part of what my patriarchal blessing identifies as will be my career. And the thing that I'll be contributing most in the gathering of Israel is family history. The Lord had something in store for me. That's why I'm here. We live in South Jordan, Utah and we live in a normal house. So it's not anything like crazy there.

John Bytheway: 00:11:51 It's a normal house that you brought from Normal, Illinois.

Brother Thom Reed: 00:11:54 There's a lot more to my story. I did serve as a ward temple and family history leader for three weeks after I got released as Bishop because then Elder Hutch Fale called me from the Utah, our Area Seventy to be called to serve as second counselor in the Genesis group at that time. And then since then the first counselor needed to be released. And so I got called to be ER first counselor as well. So I currently serve as first counselor in the Genesis group presidency, which is a group that supports Black Latter-day Saints in the Utah area.

Hank Smith: 00:12:24 With President Ronell Hugh who I have known since the 19 hundreds. That is a good man.

Brother Thom Reed: 00:12:28 The 19 hundreds. You make it sound like that was so long ago.

Hank Smith: 00:12:33 It was. It was.

Brother Thom Reed: 00:12:36 It was 25 years ago.

Hank Smith: 00:12:38 Such a good man. I'm guessing he's listening this time around. So Ronell, we love you.

Brother Thom Reed: 00:12:42 He better be. President, you need to listen. Because he helped me prepare a little bit too, so.

Hank Smith: 00:12:48 Oh good, good.

John Bytheway: 00:12:50 Hey Thom, why don't you tell us more about the the Genesis branch. I've got to speak out there once or twice.

Brother Thom Reed: 00:12:58 Yeah and it'll be a great connection back to when we talk about Official Declaration 2 as well. But the Genesis group was formed in 1971 under the direction of the First Presidency. Three junior apostles were given the assignment to meet with three Black

men in Salt Lake City, Utah, who were noticing the struggle that Black Latter-day Saints were having in the 1960s and the 1970s. In 1971 on October 19th, Elders Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson and Boyd K. Packer established the Genesis Group. At the time they called a man, Ruffin Bridgeforth to serve as president, Darius Gray to serve as first counselor and Eugene Orr to serve as second counselor. That organization has been in existence since 1971, 7 years before the revelation on the Priesthood. And if you can ever have the chance to listen to that recording of that day to hear President Hinckley turn the meeting over to a man who does not have the priesthood to present for sustaining vote other members, that day they sustained a Relief Society, Primary presidency, Young Men, Young Women presidency in that meeting. Ruffin Bridgeforth was the one who sustained all of them after President Hinckley sustained he and the presidency. Just an amazing thing.

00:14:16 So it's existed in various forms since 71 and then obviously the revelation came in 78 and really it's there to help strengthen Black Latter-day Saints in their walk with the Savior. Now we exist as a multistake activities group and we are called the Genesis Group. We are an official unit of the church but we are multistake within the Utah area. We are really here to help build and strengthen individuals, build and strengthen the Genesis Group and help strengthen stakes and leaders of the church as they reach out and try and minister to Black Latter-day Saints. I got introduced to it through Darius Gray which I'll, you'll hear a lot more about his name. This is probably the third time I already dropped his name. So Darius, you better be listening too. Ronell, Darius, I'm calling everybody Ken Snyder. Everybody needs to be listening to this.

00:15:07 Darius, when I met him in Illinois in 2001 and then came to BYU in 2002, that's when I became active in the Genesis Group and started to come and bring my family. My wife is white so our children are biracial and it has been a challenge for them living in Utah, being the anomaly and not having others in the ward that look like them. And they come to Genesis. My girls come to Genesis now because they see girls that look just like them that still got same struggles that they do but the same joy and understand the same things culturally that their family does that other families maybe don't do coming from African-American background. We're in Utah and so if you are listening to this and you are in Utah, we want you to let your stake president and bishops know about this. It is for Black Latter-day Saints families and friends.

	00:15:54	If you come to Genesis Group Devotional, John and Hank, we ain't kicking you out. Y'all brothers are welcome. All are welcome here, all are alike unto God as it says in second Nephi 26, right? We really exist to strengthen Black Latter-day Saints who have had challenges because of the past, prior to 1978 and things like that. That's who we truly serve. So if you know someone who could be blessed by fellowship with other Black Latter-day Saints, please, please connect them with us. They can go to ldsgenesisgroup.org is the website, lds genesis group.org to learn more. Find us on Facebook and Instagram as well to know what activities we got going on and to hear some of our messages and see some of the speeches that are some of the talks that are given at our devotionals and things like that. Thanks John. I wasn't even planning for that. Thank you for giving me that commercial.
John Bytheway:	00:16:45	I got to go and speak there once and I just had a blast.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:16:49	We gonna bring you back. We gonna bring, we're gonna bring Ank Smith back as well. I'm gonna forget the H when I put that on there. Ank Smith.
Hank Smith:	00:16:58	I will be there in a heartbeat, especially if I can see President Hugh again. Let's get started. I'm gonna read from the Come, Follow Me manual. The lesson is entitled We Believe. It starts this way. Since Joseph Smith's First Vision, God has continued to guide His Church by revelation. In some cases that revelation has included changes to the policies and practices of the Church. Official Declarations 1 and 2 announced this kind of revelation. One led to the end of plural marriage and the other made the blessings of the priesthood available to people of all races. Changes like these are part of what it means to have a true and living church with a true and living prophet led by a true and living God. But eternal truth doesn't change, though our understanding of it does. And sometimes revelation casts additional light on truth. The Articles of Faith serve this clarifying purpose. The Church is solidly founded on eternal truth, yet can grow and change according as the Lord will, suiting his mercies according to the conditions of men. That's Doctrine & Covenants 46. In other words, we believe all that God has revealed, all that he does now reveal, and we believe he will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the kingdom of God. We have a great guest. We have a great introduction. So Thom, where do we go from here?
Brother Thom Reed:	00:18:17	One of the first things that popped up in the Come, Follow Me lesson was actually taking you to teachings of the Presidents of the Church of Joseph Smith right? And it was chapter 38. That

kind of gives you the context. It really sets that solid context for what we're about to dive into. And I love the fact that Joseph Smith was writing a man who was in Chicago, my home state. I do call my, sorry John, I know Japan, you talked about Japan, but my home state's Illinois. He was talking to a man in Chicago close to my home. I have to stop and say I love Joseph Smith. I can't wait to meet him. He is and was and will always be a prophet of God. In the simple statement he published in the Times and Seasons, it was March 1st, 1842. You get a sense of him truly understanding his duty to God and to the Saints.

00:19:04 When he wrote this, he wrote, quote, at the request of Mr. John Wentworth, editor and proprietor of the Chicago Democrat, I have written the following sketch of the rise, progress, persecution and faith of Latter-day Saints, of which I have the honor under God of being the founder. Mr. Wentworth says that he wishes to furnish Mr. George Barstow, a friend of his who is writing the history of New Hampshire with this document, as Mr. Barstow has taken the proper steps to obtain correct information. All that I shall ask at his hand is that he publish the account entire, ungarnished and without misrepresentation. The crowning piece of the content are these 13 declarations of church doctrine at the end of those that today we call the Articles of Faith. Let me digress for just a second. I'm walking in big shoes 'cause y'all had Elder Ahmad Corbitt doing this lesson like three, four years ago right now. Now I'm trying to follow up. I love Elder Corbitt. We've had a great relationship. He actually sealed me as a child to my deceased parents recently.

John Bytheway: 00:20:04 No kidding.

Brother Thom Reed: 00:20:04 Which was great. My dad passed away in December and he as a General Authority Seventy, was able to seal us. I remember when I heard this lesson, when you guys did it, when it aired right after he did it. And I'm like now thinking, man, I can't add nothing to what that brother had to say. Right now he serves in the Caribbean Area Presidency and like you know, has done so much since the mission in Dominican. He loved me and been a mentor to me. But I think I have some different things now 'cause I was praying, how can I be different? One of the things that just stuck out to me this time and I have it highlighted in my scriptures, is the word "all" how many times it appears here. To me it's how inclusive and comprehensive, the 13 statements of doctrine are.

00:20:47 He wasn't just speaking to early Saints. Joseph was really talking and declaring this truth to the whole world. And even though

that the church was small, Joseph did have a vision of its future. But at the time the church was small, he received really what's this inclusive doctrine from the Lord. Let's take a look at these verses. Verse three. We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved. Verse nine, we believe all that God has revealed, and all that he does now reveal. Verse 11, we claim the privileges of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may. And then my favorite Mr. John Bytheway scripture, we believe in being honest, but it says we believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things and hope to be able to endure all things. This comprehensive, it's this inclusive, it's this visionary revelation that Joseph laid out for us in a way, like I said earlier, that just anchors our faith now.

00:21:55 If those who are listening and watching have not clicked on the link to listen, 'cause sometimes I'm gonna be honest, when I study Come, Follow Me I don't click on all the links of all the resources that are in the lesson every week. This one, y'all gonna miss something big if you miss Elder L. Tom Perry's talk, The Doctrines and Principles Contained in the Articles of Faith from the October 2013 General Conference. It meant something to me when I first heard it. I remembered it as I was studying this week. I was like, oh yeah, I remember that he shared this funny story of this kid having to stand in front of sacrament meeting and recite the Articles of Faith because he had graduated from there. That's what we used to do in the church. John and Hank, good job. You have to do that back in the day to graduate from primary? Had to stand up and recite an article of faith?

John Bytheway: 00:22:44 Yeah, they'd say choose your favorite one and most of us chose the shortest one 'cause we could memorize it, right?

Brother Thom Reed: 00:22:50 Absolutely. Nobody was quoting 13. Nobody was quoting 11. Nobody could, nobody could say 10 because you can't say paradisiacal.

John Bytheway: 00:22:57 Nobody can say that.

Brother Thom Reed: 00:23:00 So all the kids were like, okay, I can do number two, maybe, or number four, the principles and the ordinances, but nobody was doing those other ones. Elder Perry says it's great that the memorizing is there, but that's not good enough. Like the real power comes from understanding the principles and doctrines behind each article and the Articles of Faith form this concise, comprehensive way to equip us how to teach and explain and

defend our beliefs in a simple and clear way. As I was preparing to go on my mission and not having my mission call, I remember trying to memorize these scriptures of 1993, 94, something like that, young in the church there wasn't much that I could really sunk in deep at 18, I was still learning so much, but I was like, I can memorize these 'cause these are 13 things.

00:23:48 I got able to say paradisiacal glory and stuff like that, and then I got called to Japan. Now all that memory just went out the window. I hate the fact that I can't memorize them as I prepared for this. I wanted to memorize them now and I was, let me figure out a way that I can memorize. I'm not gonna actually recite them to you all because I'm not here to impress. I'm here to just bless those who would listen to us. Right? Today, one of the little games mnemonic devices that I used to do is with Alma 37:37. You ask my family, everybody knows it because during COVID I created a song that helped us understand the council with the Lord and all thy doings, and he shall direct thee for good. Yea when thou liest down at night, I have a hard time saying it because I'm so used to singing it.

00:24:35 I'm not gonna sing it for y'all today. I'm sorry, I'm just, I'm a choir singer in the back. I'm one of the baritones. You'll never see me up front as doing the solo, at least from a singing standpoint. But I decided to put pen to paper. I came up with a little flow. I like to rap. I like rap music. I've always wanted to be a secret rapper. My DJ name is DJ Brother T. People know who know me, right? Know I'm DJ Brother T. I put some lyrics together. I found a beat. The beat is actually a beat called Chicago. John Wentworth, Chicago Democrat.

John Bytheway: 00:25:11 Chicago Democrat. There you go.

Brother Thom Reed: 00:25:13 And it goes through and gives the context of the Articles of Faith and then goes through each of the 13 Articles of Faith and talks about why we believe Brother T. on the mike, Jambrosia Studios. Y'all ready for this? Yo, it started with the letter in Chi-town scene. To John Wentworth Joseph Smith came clean. He laid down history of the visions he saw, yes, he did. First vision fire restoring God's law from Palmyra's light to Zion's rise. He testified straight with prophetic eyes, a prophets pen with purpose oh so clear gave us the creed we still hold dear. We believe! We believe! This is our creed. Yes. Faith, repentance, baptism, our seeds. 13 articles form a covenant chart. 13. Guiding the saints with the power of heart. We believe. We believe, yes. This is our creed. Faith, repentance, baptism our seeds. 13 articles form a covenant chart guiding the Saints with the power of heart.

	00:26:12	One, God Eternal, His Son's our King. Two, Adam's fall, redemption we sing. Three, through Christ, whose salvation's host. Four, faith, repent, baptize, the Holy Ghost. Five, authority by prophets we're led. Yes. Six, apostles and pastors, the ancient thread. Seven, gifts of the Spirit are alive today. Eight, the Bible and Book of Mormon are true, we say. Nine, more to come, revelations unfold. Ten, Zion will rise, prophecies will be told. Eleven, worship how or where we choose. Twelve, obey the law, give Caesar his due. Thirteen, pure, virtuous, seeking the light. Walking with God 'til faith turns to sight. That's right. These lines define us, they show His grace, built on Christ. These are the Articles of Faith. We believe, we believe, this is our creed. Faith, repentance, baptism, our seeds. Thirteen articles form a covenant chart. Guiding the saints with the power of heart. We believe, we believe, this is our creed. Faith, repentance, baptism, our seeds. Thirteen articles form a covenant chart, guiding the saints with the power of heart. These are the Articles of Faith, truth revealed from heaven. The foundation of who we are. These 13 things teach what we believe, why we believe and who we follow, Jesus Christ, the living Son of God.
Hank Smith:	00:27:28	Fantastic, fantastic. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I, I'm certain I'm not wrong. We've done this for five years and that is a first for followHIM.
John Bytheway:	00:27:38	That is a first. This is a unique episode. This is, we could say this is not normal from Normal, Illinois. Right.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:27:47	This is not normal.
Hank Smith:	00:27:48	Not a normal episode.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:27:50	You know, to have this Black Latter-day Saint from Daybreak, Utah spitten rhymes on followHIM is probably something I'm assuming you might not have had anyone else do before. Even though I know there's some various artists out there in the Latter-day Saint community that are black that do stuff like this, but never in this way.
Hank Smith:	00:28:09	Not on followHIM.
John Bytheway:	00:28:11	I think we're pretty safe to say that.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:28:13	Yeah. Oh, I love it. I'm still working to have it memorized. Right. It's just funny when you're older how much you can't memorize like you used to when you were younger. Right. This song is

gonna help me remember these important statements. For me, the biggest thing I take away is how these Articles of Faith illustrate that Joseph qualified for and was living in revelation. You guys have talked about it, I'm sure in the past about this whole idea like Elder Bednar teaches about living in revelation. The whole Doctrine and Covenants and everything that we've been studying all this year is all about Joseph living in revelation. Then you have obviously some other prophets towards the end that are living in revelation as well and I love that. I just wanted to talk a little bit about and get your thoughts on what it means to live in revelation and how that prepares you when big things come, how you can easily recognize that it comes from God and have the courage to deliver God's message to his people.

John Bytheway: 00:29:13 President Oaks has commented on the fact that he said, I've met adult members of the church who don't feel they have a testimony 'cause they never felt a burning in the bosom. Well, that's one way it can come. There's so many other ways that it can come. Sometimes it's just, what is the phrase Joseph Smith used, a pure intelligence flowing into your mind. For me, sometimes I have actually thought, I've heard nothing, I'm gonna take my best shot on this decision and then I look back and I think, wow, I was being guided back then and I didn't even know it. Maybe that's living in revelation, you don't even know it, but you're doing your best. You're going to, getting the sacrament so you can always have his Spirit to be with you. Sometimes not even aware that you're being guided. Then you look back and you say, I was being guided. I didn't really know it, but whew. I was being guided.

Brother Thom Reed: 00:30:06 I had this not so normal experience as a bishop. I remember a brother came to me with a problem that he had been dealing with for a while. He expressed his frustration with the previous bishops he had talked to about this because it kept coming up in his life and great man, it was awesome. I looked at him and I almost cried every time I heard him teach, the Spirit oozed from him in so many ways, but he was still burdened and struggled. Here I am, okay, what can I do as bishop to help him? I remember this whole practice of living in revelation. I remember revelation hit me in a Hobby Lobby. I'm standing in line in a Hobby Lobby trying to get some stuff for youth gifts to give out at graduation and find a nice little book and this one book is standing up there and it's orange.

00:30:53 I'd never read it before. God said, this brother needs that book. And so I bought it and I gave it to him and I said, I ain't never read this book before so it could be filled with all kind of anti-

LDS rhetoric and all kind of stuff. I don't know. I mean it was supposed to be a self-help book and all this kinda stuff, but I had not cracked it open and I handed it to him and he's like, Bishop, if you hand it to me, I will read it. And I'm like, come back to me in two weeks and tell me what you learned so I'll actually know what's in the book that I gave you.

Hank Smith: 00:31:20 Yeah.

Brother Thom Reed: 00:31:20 And he came back in two weeks and told me, Bishop, this is so helpful because it really focuses me on my relationship with my Savior more than anything else had ever done before. And I was like, that came from me? Like what?

John Bytheway: 00:31:36 Yeah.

Brother Thom Reed: 00:31:37 Those impressions come, they may be subtle. Elder Bednar says, we gotta be humble, they can be subtle. We've gotta be avoiding sin in order to have these revelations that come and be living in that revelation. The Articles of Faith are written in 1842 as part of that Wentworth letter, but they weren't the result of a committee or debates or reasoning. It flowed naturally because of Joseph's revelatory experiences all up till then, and each article reflects things that Joseph learned line upon line from the First Vision through his angelic visitations, priesthood restoration. The revelations contained in the Doctrine & Covenants all, example, Article of Faith one was the revelation that he received with his firsthand vision of the Father and the Son. The fourth Article of Faith reflects what's in Doctrine & Covenants Section 20 on the first principles and ordinances of the gospel. Article of Faith nine. We've talked about it all.

00:32:35 We believe all that God has revealed, all that he does now reveal and we believe that he will yet reveal. Therefore making revelation itself a defining characteristic of our faith. That's how Joseph was living in revelation. It was dynamic. It was part of his unending faith. Really a faith in a living church. It wasn't like those fixed creeds that had existed in other denominations. They didn't really disclose canon. Instead they testify that revelation is ongoing and expected. Joseph was modeling confidence that God would continue to reveal truth to guide the Saints. He was living in revelation, anticipating God's future direction as he was trusting what had already come. Now this revelation was starting to shape doctrine and practice in real time. So by the time Joseph penned the Articles of Faith, the Saints had already seen entire systems of belief and practice emerged through revelation.

	00:33:31	Baptism for the dead, Doctrine and Covenants 124. Word of wisdom, Doctrine & Covenants 89. You've got the organization of the priesthood quorums, section 107, and the Gathering of Israel. They summarize these revealed truths in a simple and powerful way. To me, it shows how Joseph lived in revelation by distilling divine instruction into guiding principles for the whole church. If Joseph can be living in revelation and have such powerful doctrine distilled upon him, can we do the same? The answer is Hank, of course we can. Yes we can. Can we do it? Yes we can. Yes we can. What is that? I can't remember what cartoon.
John Bytheway:	00:34:10	Bob the Builder.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:34:12	Bob the Builder. That's it. Bob the builder. My kids used to watch Bob the Builder. Yes, we can.
Hank Smith:	00:34:17	I'm really blown away here at a couple of things. One, when someone walks us through something we've read many times and shows us something new, it's both inspiring and frustrating. The word all, there's eight alls in the Articles of Faith. All of a sudden I'm seeing them in a new light. When I first read the Articles of Faith, both of you, I was like, oh yeah, yeah. This is what we believe. The older I get, the more I realize if someone asked me without having ever read the Articles of Faith, if someone said, Hey, can you write everything your church believes, your doctrine and do it in less than 700 words?
John Bytheway:	00:34:52	Yeah, that'd be tough.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:34:55	Chat GPT now would help you, but...
Hank Smith:	00:34:57	Chat could help me.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:34:59	But I could not do that on my own. It would require additional intelligence.
Hank Smith:	00:35:04	As you started saying, oh, Joseph lived this. He really did. John, maybe you've shown to me this before, but if you look at Articles of Faith one through four that seems like Joseph Smith 1820 through 1829, 5 is 1829 with authority 6, 1830, the church is organized. Seven and eight, there's his Book of Mormon, Bible project. Nine sits on its own, meaning we believe in the past, the present, the future. 10, 11 and 12. That seems like the Missouri period. They establish Zion, they want to worship God the way they want to and they want other people, they can worship the way they want. We are subject to the law and 13

		stands on its own. So Thom, he really walked, he experienced this. Every one of these.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:35:54	All these things that he experienced in previous sections, like you said, these various periods come out in the culmination of the Articles of Faith and it shows that he was living in revelation the whole time.
Hank Smith:	00:36:07	That's great. One thing I'll mention, one other thing as you said Thom, what's it like to live in revelation and what have we been studying this year? John, Dr. Dirkmaat in our Voices of the Restoration, we did 12 of those this year. If a listener hasn't heard those, they can come find them on our YouTube channel or wherever you get the podcast. One thing he's shown us is look at the unanswered questions Joseph had about a lot of things, primarily about Alvin. So in 1823 Alvin dies and Joseph doesn't know what's happened to him and then section 76 comes nine years later. He still doesn't know what's happened to Alvin. You have to be baptized to go to the Celestial Kingdom. Alvin wasn't baptized he's obviously not going. It's not until 1836 he sees a vision of the Celestial Kingdom and there's Alvin, so it's been 13 years and he marveled. I thought Alvin wasn't gonna, and then it wasn't until 1842 that the Lord says, oh yeah, there's baptisms for the dead. So there's 19 years of line upon line of an unanswered question. So many of us want answers now. Give me the answer now or I don't know if I can stay in and here's Joseph who has a, I think a very important question about heaven and his own family and it's 19 years.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:37:26	But he was humble enough.
Hank Smith:	00:37:27	Yeah, he just stayed.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:37:28	That's part of the living in revelation is being humble enough to wait for the answer to come.
Hank Smith:	00:37:33	There you go.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:37:33	And when it comes, wait.
Hank Smith:	00:37:37	Thanks Thom. This has been spectacular.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:37:40	We talked about know, do and feel earlier. If Joseph is an example of living in revelation and it's manifest and evident in the Articles of Faith then what for me. It's simple things that Elder Bednar taught about keeping covenants faithfully, repenting as I go, being consistent in the small things, being

open to subtle influence. I want you and John to think about how this was manifest in the life of Joseph, like act in faith, patience, trusting in God's timing. You just said that. Avoid clutter and distractions that dull spiritual sensitivity. Joseph was chastised a couple of times because he wasn't on point. And then reflect and look back on the experiences to see how God has already been guiding you and I think this is a look back as he sends this letter supposed to be going to George Barstow and through John Wentworth.

00:38:28 This is a look back and it's the culmination of all these things that came from living in revelation. Just so powerful. This is all new to me by the way. This isn't something, I used your last name, sorry John. You should copyright it but.

Hank Smith: 00:38:41 This is all new to me Bytheway.

Brother Thom Reed: 00:38:43 This is all new to me. This isn't the thing I've taught for years. Like I said, I wanted to prepare well more in advance. This is the things that the Lord distilled upon me in the last few days and again, it's just a testament to me that God speaks to his children because he loves us and he will give us the revelation that we need for our purposes when we need it. Might not be when we want it, but he'll be there right on time 'cause he is an on time God. A gospel song says. But I'm not gonna sing that one, sorry.

John Bytheway: 00:39:18 Thom, you articulated that a way I've never heard before. Instead of a creed that says, let me summarize all these old documents, which is great. This had a future in mine, especially Article of Faith nine, all the alls. This is articulating a future growing thing. I gotta chew on that one. Thank you for that one Thom. That was beautiful. Hank, do you remember when we had Richard Bennett on, he wrote an article in the Ensign magazine years ago, I think it was called Carefully Schooled in First Principles. The way it opened me up was, whoa. Joseph Smith didn't just think, let's see what are the first principles and ordinances, this, this, this, this. He was schooled to have the faith and expectation to take James 1:5 and literally go and ask, second to have the 116 pages lost or stolen. Repentance. The depths of repentance and then to be translating and hey, we haven't been baptized.

00:40:24 What do we do? And to have the John the Baptist appear. This is what Richard Bennett's article was about was he didn't just come up with these. He was living in revelation. He experienced the first principles and ordinances of the gospel before he ever put it down, which I thought was a great article that Richard Bennett wrote. I think I was at education week one time. This is

		when Stephen Covey's Seven Habits were really taking off. He was giving a gospel class. He said, have you ever noticed that the Articles of Faith kind of came in reverse order of the way things were taken away? Just like you said, Thom, the first thing that Satan would want to mess up is our understanding of the nature of God. In the First Vision, boom, Article of Faith one. God, the Eternal Father, His Son Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost. What else happened over time? The idea of original sin, the idea of Adam's transgression and 2. Men would be punished for their own sins, not for Adam's transgression. He went through this thing and I went, oh, I've never seen that before. There was a sequence and you just kind of said that too, Hank, look at the Palmyra period, the Kirtland period and how you can kind of match those with how those unfold. You've got my mind racing. This is good stuff already.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:41:45	It is. I like the fifth article of faith about we believe that a man must be called of God by prophecy, by laying on of hands by those who are in authority to preach the gospel and administer the ordinances thereof. I like it because it's gonna set us up for these next two, these Official Declaration 1 and Official Declaration 2, God had called these men by prophecy, by laying on of hands by those who are in authority. Then members of the church had to sustain as was designated by when it was read in General Conference, the Official Declaration 1 or Official Declaration 2. Then we sustained by virtue of their calling. Love how that ties these two together.
Hank Smith:	00:42:22	Alright, in a blink of an eye we are back. Those who are viewing can see it. Those who are listening, what are we doing next?
Brother Thom Reed:	00:42:30	Yeah, I took off my shirt and tie and put on my uniform. I work for Family Search, the family history department of the church and have been for 12 years and as we're talking about plural marriage and what happened to save temples. I wanted to put on this shirt for a reason because there's a connection to family history with temple work and what this declaration really did. That's why, and I'm not normal, so how many of your guests like do clothing wardrobe changes in the middle of a podcast right?
Hank Smith:	00:42:59	Another first.
John Bytheway:	00:43:00	You're the only one.
Hank Smith:	00:43:01	Another first on followHIM.

Brother Thom Reed: 00:43:02 This is an interesting one and and I'll just be candid with everybody. Official Declaration was one, I came to the party late. 34 years in the church I never really felt a personal need to study polygamy. Recently as I've kind of had to sit with Official Declaration 1 and read it and read it and reread it and read other things about it. I heard something that felt more familiar. I heard God preserving people so covenants could keep going. For me, Official Declaration 1 isn't about stopping something hard. It's about saving something holy. In this case it was temples and ordinances. It came line upon line. There's a period of progress that came with this. It came line upon line. Some people look at it as a big retreat from what the established principle was but more, again, I look at it from the sense of it was a revelation to protect the covenants that carry the Restoration.

00:44:00 That's what we do is unite families for eternity. If Wilford wouldn't have reversed course at this time, what would've happened there? That legal pressure was real. It was escalating like the Supreme Court upheld that anti-polygamy statutes and with the Reynolds case, 1879 Congress disincorporated the church. They took over assets and disenfranchised many of the Saints back then you have the Edmunds Tucker Act like 1887 and then now you've got Utah statehood at stake. These weren't hypothetical threats that were happening to the Saints. They were enforceable realities that were gonna shape the moment of Official Declaration 1. Now what it says, President Woodruff publicly denied authorization of new plural marriages. He advised the Saints to quote, refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land. Remember, Joseph said what in the Articles of Faith?

John Bytheway: 00:44:57 We believe in being subject.

Brother Thom Reed: 00:44:59 Right. Now he's following this core doctrine that Joseph taught in General Conference October 6th, 1890 Lorenzo Snow motions recognizing Woodruff's keys and then the canonized text then preserves the follow-up addresses where he also explains like the vision behind the move. That's one cool thing about this official declaration. One is that you got a heading and then you got the to whom it may concern, the manifesto, which I do want to talk about a manifesto because this is the first time I actually really studied what a manifesto is and why this revelation was called a manifesto. I wanna make sure we hit on that a little bit later. You have the manifesto, then you have the reading that happens at General Conference. Then you have all this background on it. I mean it's really fascinating. The Church

has been, with the Church History Department publishing more on the church and polygamy and plural marriage.

00:45:54 You can go in the gospel library and read all those and you get pointed to those from the Come, Follow Me as well. It's great to have all this context and understanding it now, one of the things I realized is that as you read the context, you understand everything that was going on. You're gonna see that it's not an event but a process. There were plural marriages continued in limited circumstances after 1890. It was mostly outside the US which prompted then Joseph F. Smith's 1904 statement threatening excommunication for new plural marriages, which is referred to as the second manifesto. That enforcement line finally shut everything down institutionally. Wasn't just this one, you can think of Official Declaration 1 is when it stopped, it actually crept a little bit later than that. Again, I want to go back to President Woodruff's recorded rationale was really about preserving the temples and keeping prophets and families free to lead and worship 'cause that was all at stake. He said, quote, the Lord will never permit me to lead you astray and testified that's kind of the inner logic behind Official Declaration 1. Your thoughts. I wanna hear from you guys. What did you get from it? Reading it this time or in your years and years of studying this?

John Bytheway: 00:47:09 I love the way you put it. Instead of looking at stopping something, it was protecting something sacred. It was protecting the temples that we had and that's what Wilford Woodruff saw would happen.

Brother Thom Reed: 00:47:21 He saw our day, he saw 382 temples in 2025. That's what he saw at stake.

John Bytheway: 00:47:29 I can't keep up with that number. Is it 382 now? Yeah. What time is it?

Brother Thom Reed: 00:47:35 Yeah, I was. I was like, that's the last I checked, but it could have changed. That's what he saw. He saw what was at stake. There's a lot of those who are not sympathetic to our faith. Let's just call them that. Critics who talk about why this was done. I really think it was done out of love. I believe it was done out of preparing us for the Second Coming of the Savior and what needed to be done. Now it was established to achieve God's purpose is the same. Come, Follow Me, takes us right to section 132. Let's jump into the scriptures here. I wanna go to section 132. I want to focus and hone in on those last verses. It's here where we get the laws governing plural marriage. This is the

revelation given the Prophet Joseph. This is the line upon line that he receives now, now touching the law of the priesthood.

00:48:26 There are many things pertaining thereunto. Wherefore if a man be called of God as was Aaron by my own voice and by the voice of him that sent me, and I have endowed him with the keys and the power of this priesthood, if he do anything in my name and according to my law and by my word, he will not commit sin, and I will justify him. Here's the new word. The Articles of Faith's word was all, this section's word is justify, glorify and destroy. He sets it up here saying, Hey, I'm letting you know if you got the priesthood, if you're endowed and you're doing things in according with my name, you don't commit sin. He said, let no one therefore set my servant Joseph, for I will justify him for he shall do the sacrifice which I require at his hands for his transgressions saith the Lord your God.

00:49:12 Whether or not this feels good to you, what's happening here? This is what the Lord is revealing to Prophet Joseph and this is why it happened. People ask why it happened all the time and and there's speculation and conjecture and all kinds of theories and we hear people bad mouthing Joseph, but it's a revelation from God. It's God himself speaking to Joseph, saying this is how you're supposed to do it, so Joseph's trying to do it and if ye have 10 virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery for they belong to him and they're given unto him. Therefore is he justified. Keep the commandments of God and you're justified. If you do it for His purposes to achieve what he has set out for you to achieve, you will be glorified. If not, you'll be destroyed and this whole thing came from an Old Testament practice. As I read this, what's coming up for you Hank? What's going on for you John?

Hank Smith: 00:50:07 I'm fascinated. We went kind of backwards here, right? We went to Official Declaration 1 and then let's go backwards to when this practice started. Latter-day Saints are still the same today. We resist change, we resist foreign things, we resist commandments that make us uncomfortable because here the Lord is yes, I want this to happen. Everyone's dragging their feet, which is understandable and then Official Declaration 1 the Lord's saying, I want this to happen and everybody's dragging their feet, but it's the opposite direction. It's just the Lord working with people in fear saying, have faith, move forward. I was impressed from the statement that President Woodruff made. It said excerpts, this is by Official Declaration 1, excerpts from three addresses by President Woodruff. He says, let me ask you a question, and he asks this really long question about what if we lost everything?

	00:51:07	What if we lose the temples? What if we lose our leadership? What if we lose all of our personal property? Is that worth keeping this practice? Then he said, I've been shown what will happen if we don't stop this practice. He talks about what he's seen after both of those things. He says, I wanna tell you this. I would let all the temples go. I would go to prison myself. I would let every Latter-day Saint man go there had heaven not commanded me to do this thing. He's being practical. He's saying, look, this is what would happen if we don't stop, but really this is about what the Lord has said. It's the same thing in 132. The Lord is saying, I know you're struggling. This is what I have said according to my commandment. It must be frustrating to the Lord that we resist all of that. He deals with it, right John?
Brother Thom Reed:	00:52:08	He's gotta go teach us one way. We resist. He's gotta go teach us to do something else.
Hank Smith:	00:52:11	Just the other way.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:52:12	We resist, right?
Hank Smith:	00:52:14	As Latter-day Saints or as a teacher myself, I find myself to be more apologizing for the doctrine sometimes. I know you really struggle with this. I know, I know, and the Lord doesn't seem to have that attitude. He's saying, look, I commanded this. I commanded this. We're gonna move forward. Why are we struggling so much? He's gentle as he explains, but he doesn't give excuse. I excuse not myself. He says in section one.
John Bytheway:	00:52:39	Thank you Hank. I think of Father Adam, why are you offering sacrifices? I know not save the Lord commanded me. We talk about that in our family all the time because sometimes we want a reason for everything and we want it right now. Sometimes the Lord doesn't explain things. I don't think he ever explained to Job exactly why he did what he did. He said, Hey, were you there when I created everything? That's inspiring. Thank you Wilford Woodruff for that example too.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:53:11	Courage. Courage, courage. I put on my shirt and I'm putting on my Family Search hat.
John Bytheway:	00:53:18	Alright. Okay.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:53:19	For a reason.
John Bytheway:	00:53:20	Full uniform.

Brother Thom Reed:	00:53:21	Full uniform now. Right? This whole declaration teaches us that faithfulness sometimes means ending a once commanded practice to keep the covenant center intact. If we can stay rooted in ordinances while letting the Lord retire things that no longer serve his purposes, then we're much better off. In this case, the Lord's honoring the people, especially the women and children, like ending plural marriage, required this courage and produced some real losses and logistics for families. Think about it. Who could not be in this? When the church put the essay out about it, like they talked about how complicated and painful and and intensely personal these decisions were. Like you said, people were struggling. We know looking forward means telling those stories with tenderness and refusing to weaponize the past. We can't use that as ammunition about how the practice was wrong just because it ended. To me it's finally this third thing I got from it was Joseph's pattern for modern discipleship. When legal culture and global realities press upon the church, we can expect these revelations that will safeguard temples, prophets that will safeguard families. When the things are threatened, God's gonna protect these things. It's not about retreating, it's about girding up our loins and having a strategy that's gonna help us for salvation. To me, Woodruff's witness about preserving ordinances as a template about how heaven prioritizes things. It prioritizes celestial law over terrestrial law.
Hank Smith:	00:54:57	Covenants matter more than policy and practice.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:55:01	Absolutely. I was really interested in understanding how this manifesto protects and enables temple and family history work today. What's the connection between these two? This was the question that was going on in my head. So I got three things that come from this manifesto. We know that the manifesto was about preserving the authority of church leadership. When President Woodruff and those who sustain it acted they kept these temple ordinances under the direction of properly authorized priesthood. That meant later prophets, apostles would still have control over temple work ordinances and baptisms for the dead, and if they didn't do that, that whole authority of the church leadership would've been gone. This means when temple work accelerates, when sealing work expands, when ordinances for the dead are done in more places and under consistent unified authority and regulation because of that protection, there is consistency, integrity, and trust in how family names are treated. Because he did this, this is how it's impacting us today. There's integrity, there's trust, there's consistency. Otherwise, without temples, without church leaders having that authority to administer the ordinances

		thereof, what would be happening today? Things would be running amok. What's your thoughts on that?
John Bytheway:	00:56:17	I really like the focus on the families, the covenants that they've made, protecting those families and the covenants. I love the focus on the temple and what we already have is more important than a practice of the past is covenants and ordinances and their efficacy going forward.
Hank Smith:	00:56:39	Exactly. I thought of the explanatory introduction to the Doctrine & Covenants. I know that's something that comes to mind often for most people.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:56:48	We go way back then. You gotta take us way back.
Hank Smith:	00:56:50	Yeah. It says, this is the second page. These revelations were received in answer to prayer in times of need and came out of real life situations involving real people. The prophet in this case, Wilford Woodruff and his associates sought for divine guidance, and these revelations certify that they received it. These are real people in real situations. I liked what you said there, Thom. Sometimes we weaponize the past and we make these people basically objects that we can use to assert what we want on other people or the church. These are real people who are suffering in real ways on both sides of this.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:57:31	And just trying to do the will of God. Struggling with what that will is because all these forces are raging against them. They're trying to stand up for, and at the end of the day, the Lord reveals and speaks to his prophet and says, okay, let's go a different direction now. This is what we're going to do because this is gonna prepare the world for the Savior's return. Now I think about the Standard of Truth. Recite the Standard of Truth for me.
Hank Smith:	00:57:58	I'll tell you this, Thom, if our executive producer, Shannon Sorensen were here, or any of her children, or Steve, her husband, they have this memorized through and through. I mean, they could do it backwards and forwards.
John Bytheway:	00:58:10	I love what you've told us. This is this article to the Chicago Democrat and here's Joseph Smith saying, okay, I'll do this, but you have to include every word. Don't edit it for your purposes. Right. Include every word. Towards the end here, and usually we don't hear this part, but he says, our missionaries are going forth to different nations and in Germany, Palestine, New Holland, the East Indies and other places. Here's where we

usually start. The standard of truth has been erected. No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished and the great Jehovah shall say the work is done. Then what comes next? Number one, we believe in God, the eternal Father and in his son Jesus Christ and in the Holy Ghost. Number two, I love the way that flows. You wanna know about us. Okay, here it comes.

Hank Smith: 00:59:21 Thom. I just love this. In the 1840s, these are real people who are struggling, like you said, to do the will of God and in the 1890s, even though it's a completely opposite direction, these are real people who are struggling to do the will of God.

Brother Thom Reed: 00:59:37 And we are what? We are real people in our day who are struggling to do the word of God.

John Bytheway: 00:59:44 Right? I can't remember who said this. It was one of my favorite phrases that I've learned from followHIM, and that is rather than thinking about these real people, rather than being offended for them, let's be inspired by them.

Hank Smith: 01:00:00 That is Dr. Maclane Heward. So good. Four years ago on section 51 through 57. We'll link it in our show notes. John, I had that exact same thought.

John Bytheway: 01:00:11 Think these are real people. Rather than being offended for them and saying that's not fair 200 years later or whatever. Sometimes they're not even saying that. We wanna say it for them. So thank you Maclane.

Brother Thom Reed: 01:00:24 Earlier I talked about how much I loved the prophet Joseph Smith. I love President Woodruff. The courage that it took for him to do this as a prophet of God, I can't wait to meet him. This is a testimony to me, and the Church acknowledged that by saying, Hey, we're gonna accept this manifesto because of the rights by his authority. He said it, and this is what the will of the Lord, thus saith the Lord. We need to accept this and I am raising my hand to the square.

John Bytheway: 01:00:55 Yeah, yeah.

Brother Thom Reed:	01:00:56	Saying, I sustain you, President Woodruff. I can't imagine how difficult it was. I wasn't there. I don't know, but I can't imagine how difficult it would've been to course correct in this significant way, but I'm glad you did because Thom Reed works for Family Search today, and I'm helping members in the United States Southeast Area submit names for temple ordinances at a higher rate than they've ever been able to do before.
John Bytheway:	01:01:20	Oh, so good.
Brother Thom Reed:	01:01:21	Without that revelation, we would not have temples and temple work today. We'd not have Elder Corbitt being able to seal me to my parents on April 11th, 2025. All these things would be done away with. Thank you President Woodruff for valuing the covenants and the ordinances.
John Bytheway:	01:01:42	Thom, I saw when I was looking up your bio, I saw the photograph you have of your parents gravestones there and thought, look at this we're still connected. This is my family, and now you're sealed in April.
Brother Thom Reed:	01:01:56	Now you're gonna make me cry talking about my mom and dad.
John Bytheway:	01:02:00	I just saw that and I thought, see my mom and dad, they're gone too, but boy, we're connected. That's what these temples do. We're still working together.
Hank Smith:	01:02:11	Just to throw in a Bible connection. There's a commandment the Lord gives in Matthew chapter 10 when he is speaking to his apostles, and it's the first commandment at least listed in the chapter, is you are not to teach Gentiles. You absolutely do not go into any village of the Samaritans. That's a pretty direct commandment. I don't want you teaching people based on their ethnicity. You're not gonna teach gentiles. You're not even gonna go into villages of the Samaritans. It's an easy one to remember because it's then Acts chapter 10, that was Matthew chapter 10, but in Acts chapter 10, Peter the Savior has died, resurrected and ascended to heaven, and the Lord says to Peter, it is now time to teach Gentiles and Samaritans. There's a completely 180 on our old policy. We see how many people push back against, what'd you call a course change? We're gonna change courses now. I know it's the exact opposite of what he said earlier, but he's saying it.
John Bytheway:	01:03:21	He is saying it. He capital H.
Hank Smith:	01:03:25	He capital H.

John Bytheway:	01:03:26	He. So we're good.
Hank Smith:	01:03:29	We're gonna do it. Real people trying to do the will of God.



John Bytheway:	00:00	Welcome back to part two with Brother Thom Reed as we discuss Declaration number 2.
Hank Smith:	00:06	We are back and Thom has changed again. Once again, there's some people listening who don't know what's happened.
Brother Thom Reed:	00:15	I started off in a suit and tie, then I switched to a polo that had my Family Search logo on it and I put on my Family Search hat, literally, as we talked about Official Declaration 1 and really what it meant to save the temples and how my job now is really involved in heavily in helping nourish temples with names and the gathering of Israel. So now wearing a t-shirt, but this t-shirt is from the Genesis Group summer cookout. We talked earlier about what the Genesis Group is and one of the ways that we help strengthen Black Latter-day Saint individuals and the Genesis Group is by having a summer cookout. So in June we got together, our president, Ronell Hugh, good friend of yours Hank, decided that we all as a leadership council should wear t-shirts. One of the phrases that is said and spoken in Black Church, it's a call and response. So my T-shirt says God is good all the time. And so the call and response is, I'll say, God is good, and then you'll say, all the time, then I'll say, all the time, and then you'll say, God is good. So can we practice this right now with just the three of us? So God is good.
Hank Smith & Jo...:	01:25	All the time.
Brother Thom Reed:	01:27	And all the time,
Hank Smith & Jo...:	01:29	God is good.
Brother Thom Reed:	01:31	So if you come to a Genesis Group meeting, you are going to hear that from the pulpit at some point. We are Latter-day Saints. Yes, at our devotionals on the first Sunday of the month. There will be things like that that will come out. I wanted to represent Black heritage in The Church. As we talk about Official Declaration 2, my experience is kind of unique. I was introduced

to the church through a white best friend, Andy Goodwin. I got another name, I'm calling out, he's gotta be listening to this. I'll let certain make sure he tunes in and his family and I felt a real kinship with the Saints that I met and got to know the youth back in the day when I was like 14, 15 years old. And unfortunately our senior year of high school, Andy was in a car accident and one of the other young men from the ward was in that car accident, was killed. Peter Andrew.

02:19 It was catastrophic to a ward. And this is a ward in Normal, Illinois. Of course these kids, you know, are the only ones in their high school. So we're super close knit, connected. And I remember going, instead of having like the Wednesday night activity that was planned after this whole tragedy happened, Andy's in the hospital, the bishopric and young men's presidency and young women's presidency just got the youth together to mourn together and to just talk about things. And I remember the young men's president, Lee Poor talking about eternal families and talking about how Peter had been sealed to his parents. And because of that, life continued beyond the grave and that answered so many questions for me in that moment about my own family, about my grandmother. Would I see my grandmother again? I went to the hospital and I was like, Andy, why didn't you tell me your church believed this?

03:08 He's like, I did. You were too busy in priest quorum jumping out the window to go to Jewel-Osco to bring us donuts and not listening to what we were teaching. So you could play in the stake basketball tournament than you were listening to our actual teachings. So if you wanna listen to our teachings, Thom, you gotta talk to the missionaries. So Andy gets outta the hospital, talks to the missionaries, and I feel an instant joy when I'm listening to the gospel. My dad finds out and my dad ain't happy. My dad had some past experiences with the church in California in 1975. A guy went to the temple and he didn't know what the temple was about and my dad tried to go in the Oakland temple and they wouldn't let him in and wouldn't tell him why. And he's like, I gotta find the guy, I gotta get back to base.

03:54 Like they're like, no, you can't come in here. And no one would tell him why he couldn't come in there. He didn't know what was happening in the temple and he knew that they restricted the Blacks from the priesthood then. But my dad was like, you ain't joining this Mormon church. Like that ain't happening brother. Like I'm like, okay. So I kind of chill for the year. I have this heightened spiritual awareness now and a need to connect with God and get answers. So my senior year of high school, I'm

going to church with friends that are Presbyterian, Catholic, Baptist, I'm going to my parents' church, all that kind of stuff. Like more and really trying to, and I had a barber who was Muslim, he was a member of the Nation of Islam. When I told him I was having this spiritual awakening and studying all these things and I mentioned The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he's like, boy, you better stay away from them.

04:42 And I was like, why? He's like, they don't want you in there. And I was like, what do you mean? Everybody loves Thom Reed. I ain't never felt like nothing. He is like, don't you know about them? What's to know? He's like, they didn't let us in there before 78. They didn't want us. Again he's telling this. That wasn't true. It's 1990 by the way, so it's not 70, it is not around the time of the revelation. This is my experience in 1990. So I'm like, no, my lived experience as a friend of the church was totally different. So that hostility and anger towards the church, I actually went to another church to a friend and she invited me to her Sunday School. She told the people I was coming to their Sunday School. So what was the lesson about in her church? How the Book of Mormon is a false witness of Christ.

05:36 I was getting hit with all this anti stuff before I joined the church. So I put everything on pause. I went to college. I met up with a young man by the name of Jaime Villagomez, who's gonna be listening to this podcast too now 'cause I called his name Jaime chose to go to the University of Illinois. I chose to go to the University of Illinois. Andy, my best friend, went to Rick's. We weren't going to the same college at the same time, but Jaime met me, found out that I had been taking missionary discussions in Normal when I was there and got me connected with Institute and and going to church. And so I joined the church in December of 1991. My only exposure to that, you know, was my dad's pushback, which my dad really didn't tell me all that stuff back then.

06:16 He told me that later after I joined the church, exactly why he had issues with the church and that whole thing with my barber back then, that never sat with me. It wasn't really until I had gotten back from my mission and I met Darius Gray that I started learning more about the priesthood restriction, right? And what had happened prior to 1978. It was interesting because even though I heard that, it didn't really stop me. This is a hot topic. The people are gonna listen to this episode and be like, you got a Black man on here talking about this? No, my experience was totally different for me. Not that I forgave it, but I was like, the church moved past this. Why is this a problem in

1990, 90, 91 or 2000 and 2001? Why is this a problem? Everybody was racist back in the day.

07:03 My daddy could have literally been Emmett Till because my dad used to go back to Mississippi to pick cotton in the summer on his family farm when he was 15 and Emmett Till was in Mississippi when he was like, I knew racism existed throughout the United States and people treated people differently, and that happened in church in the 1950s, sixties. Even in the seventies, I had a lot more respect for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints because I knew that they made an established intentional policy and statement to change the direction to course correct. For me it was never a problem because that course correction blessed my life. Went on a mission. I wasn't denied the opportunity to have, and that's different from other people. I talked about Darius Gray. His experience was different. When people ask you, did you have a problem with that?

07:56 No, I didn't have a problem with it because it never really impacted me. It made me wanna study more and think more about the Official Declaration. When I look at Official Declaration 2, it's different than the others. The pattern we've been seeing through the Doctrine & Covenants is the whole question, answer the thing that's unknown, the question that's posed by the prophet, and then an answer comes in the form of a revelation. It's a pretty consistent pattern. This one doesn't follow that. Then the answer becomes canonized. For example, Joseph asked about resurrection, the United Order, moving the Saints. You had an Official Declaration 1, it was in response to section 132 where it had been revealed about plural marriage. Official Declaration 2 changes that whole thing because there's no recorded previous revelation to respond to the policy that existed from 1852 to 1978. Wasn't a revelation, it wasn't a canonized question.

09:00 It just stood as a independent correction. To me, it was a divine course change that required revelation on something that was never grounded in scripture. We know it was never grounded in scripture because we've heard in the essay Race and the Priesthood, which came out in December of 2013 and Race and the Church of Jesus Christ, that current leaders of the church disavowed all theories that said that Blacks were inferior, marked with the curse of Cain, less valiant. Spencer Kimball was courageous. Again, I love Wilford Woodruff. I love the prophet Joseph and I love Spencer Kimball because he was wrestling with this for years. He prayed in the temple. He studied, he petitioned heaven over and over and over again on this topic.

That hadn't been an established revelation. It had been a practice in how things happened, but it wasn't directly stated from God before. Then in June of 1978, the heavens open.

10:04 God's will was unmistakably clear to all those men. The priesthood and temple blessings would be available to all God's children everywhere. Even in response to Brigham Young who had stated before that Blacks weren't worthy to have the priesthood at that time, but he said it would happen even in 1852, Brigham said that, here's what makes this even more powerful to me. It's not just a church revelation to me, it goes beyond that. It is a world revelation, just like the Articles of Faith. It is for the world, and we know this because the day that it was received, who heard about it? We know that those Black Latter-day Saint congregations in Africa heard about it. Cathy Stokes, our sister from Chicago, Black sister from Chicago, who I love, first Black woman I ever saw really in the church that was doing something was Cathy Stokes I love her to death.

10:57 She heard it on a flight to Hawaii. There was a Scotsman. I'll tell you this story. There was a Scotsman who was flying from Pacific Northwest coming to Salt Lake and he heard the pilot say it before he got here. It was newspapers across the globe were carrying the story. This was a revelation because God was signaling something much bigger than what the revelation said. The priesthood had never been about truly exclusion. We know that the Lord wanted the entire world to know in June of 1978. He wanted them to know that the blessings of the temple are for every nation, kindred, tongue and people. I wanna share with you a unique perspective in preparation for this. I talked to Darius Gray had been called in 1971 as the first counselor in the Genesis Group. The position I hold today. I asked Darius about his experience on June 8th, 1978.

11:54 The revelation came on June 1st. It became public on June 8th, then was supported, sustained ratified by the Church in General Conference in September 30th, 1978. I wanna read you this story. This came after I talked to him last night. I spent some time writing this down. On the morning of June 8th, 1978 Darius Gray was at his desk at the Salt Lake office of the Zellerbach Paper Company. He had lived for years with the reality of priesthood restriction. He joined the church in 1968 and then 71 is in the Genesis Group. It's now 78, so he'd lived for years with the reality of priesthood restriction, searching for answers, but never receiving a definitive explanation. His conviction had always rested on the personal revelation that he received prior to baptism. This is the restored gospel and you are to join. That's the only reason he joined. After he heard that, this is the

restored gospel and you are to join, that was the voice from heaven to him, that assurance anchored him through the years of uncertainty.

12:51 That day, the ordinary rhythm of work was broken when Dixie, his credit assistant, stuck her head in the office. Direct and often blunt, she announced, Hey, Dari, I hear they're gonna give Negroes the priesthood. Darius dismissed her sharply. It was too sensitive a subject to be joked about. Twice he told her to leave even swearing at her the second time. But Dixie persisted. She explained that she had just been on the phone with Zellerbach's biggest customer, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and rumors were circulating at headquarters that the priesthood was to be extended to Blacks. That changed things. Darius switched on his office television and radio expecting to hear something so monumental, broadcast immediately, but nothing came through at that moment. Driven by the need to know the truth directly he picked up the phone and he called the office of President Spencer W. Kimball himself. You could do that back in the day, right.

13:46 He had had a relationship with Spencer W. Kimball prior to this, he explained to me that Spencer W. Kimball was an Elder when the Genesis Group was founded, but as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, he brought him a Christmas gift that first Christmas after the Genesis Group was founded in 1971. And at their summer parties, Spencer Kimball was bouncing Black children off his knee like they were his own grandkids. He had this deep relationship with Spencer W. Kimball. He calls him, Spencer Kimball wasn't available. He was in the temple, but a secretary knew Darius personally. She confirmed what Dixie had said. Yes, a revelation had been received and priesthood would now be available to all worthy male members. The words hit him with awe. Holy heck. He thought. That wasn't what he said. But holy heck, he thought, that wasn't a rumor it was real.

14:34 Later that day, Darius and his supervisor, Jim Kirschbaum, went to pick up a colleague, Jack Taylor, arriving from the Pacific Northwest. Jack a Scotsman and not a Latter-day Saint stepped off the plane already aware of the news. The pilot had announced it mid-flight, the LDS Church President had received an apparent revelation. Prior restrictions were no more. It struck Darius how momentous this was. A religious revelation being broadcast in the skies as casually as weather reports. Catherine Stokes and another Latter-day Saint would later recount hearing the same announcement on our way to Hawaii. To Darius, this underscored the global scope of what had happened. This was not just a revelation for The Church. It was

a revelation for the world. Returning to the airport, Jim suggested they stop at Temple Square. It was a joyful idea, but complicated for Darius, who as a Black man immediately drew attention from the reporters eager to capture his reaction.

15:26 He hadn't come to be interviewed. He'd come for something more personal, to see his friend, Heber Woolsey, Head of Church Public Affairs at the Church Office Building. Darius asked to see Heber. The secretary phoned him at home, not mentioning that it was Darius who had come. Believing President Kimball needed him, Heber rushed back. When the two men saw each other, they embraced and wept with joy. From Heber's office window they looked across at the Salt Lake Temple, having once been sent together to explain and defend the church's difficult position to protesting Black athletes and minister. They now stood on the other side of history. Heber's words captured the magnitude. The world will never be the same. The future will be changed. For Darius the thought deepened further, this was not only a revelation that stretched forward into the future, but backward into history. Generations of Black Saints whose names had been excluded from temple ordinances could now receive these blessings.

16:27 It was a sweeping redemption, binding past, present, and future. In one divine moment that day, June 8th, 1978, Darius Gray knew by witness from a prophet's secretary, by announcements echoing in the skies, by tears with a trusted friend, that the heavens had opened. He felt awe, joy, and vindication after years of searching, and he acted not by proclaiming it to the press, but by seeking out someone who would understand the weight of it. Together, looking at the temple, they knew nothing in the church or the world would ever be the same again.

John Bytheway: 17:06 So good.

Brother Thom Reed: 17:07 That was the uniqueness of this revelation. I think you said it earlier. All these were real people who were affected by Official Declaration 1 and now Official Declaration 2. Earlier I said, when we were gonna get started on this, we are gonna talk about revolutionary revelations. Can I get an amen to that?

John Bytheway: 17:26 Amen.

Hank Smith: 17:29 Wow. Changes everything.

Brother Thom Reed:	17:31	It changed everything. It wasn't just about a policy. It wasn't even about one generation. It was heaven correcting the record, reaching both backward and forward and declaring to the world that God truly is no respecter of persons. The Lord told Samuel man looketh on the outward appearance in 1 Samuel 16:7, but the Lord looketh on the heart. And as Nephi testified, the Lord denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female. For me, the revolutionary revelation calls us to move forward, not backwards. That's why I love the Race and the Priesthood essay that was released in December of 2013. It's just amazing, the definitive statements that come from that Race. and the Priesthood essay. I'm going to commit your listeners to make sure they read the Race and the Priesthood essay and read Race and the Church of Jesus Christ in the gospel topics, you need to know and understand the impact and the things that were, been perpetuated in the past have all been disavowed.
	18:38	We're in a new day. It's time to move forward, and we're seeing what's happening with the growth in the Church in Africa. In Family Search I had an assignment for a short time supporting Africa. I went to Ghana. I had a life changing experience in Elmina Slave Castle in Ghana, but I got to see the Ghanaian Saints and you want to talk about tears of joy. As I walk into a chapel, I'm the only Black one in my party coming from the United States, and I go into a chapel and ain't another white face in that chapel, and I felt at home again with my Black brothers and sisters who were children of the covenant as I was and we're seeing the growth of the church. We have now in the Utah area, a general authority, his name is Elder Clement Matwagothata. He is from Botswana. First General Authority Seventy from Botswana in Africa, now serving as an Area Assistant in the Utah area.
	19:38	We're gonna have a Genesis Group Sisters Conference, Sister Busi Matwagothata, his wife, is going to be there with us, get the chance to meet her. I haven't met Elder Matwagothata yet, and I'm looking forward to it as we meet with the Utah Area Presidency, as we do as a Genesis Group. Think about all the change, how that's impacted the world. Black Africa, you hear the stories of Helvécio Martins and Marcus Martins, the first African-American missionary after the revelation on the priesthood. So much to look forward to because God speaks to his prophets that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ.
Hank Smith:	20:21	Thom, this has been fantastic and inspiring. I think our listeners would love your perspective on what do I do when I think, why'd this even happen in the first place? What do I do with

		that uncomfortable feeling of, I can see how inspiring this is. What do I do with everything before then?
Brother Thom Reed:	20:45	Elder Holland said that God has only had imperfect people to deal with. They've always been members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint since the Restoration, right? They've always been imperfect. Every single one of 'em. Some things that have happened that have come at the agency and at the decision of imperfect people, period, full stop. But I think there's a higher principle that the Lord wants us to live by, and that's the principle of forgiveness. I wasn't there in 1852. I wasn't there in 1948. I was not there to know why this thing perpetuated and why God would allow that to happen. There's not a definitive clear answer, and I don't know if there ever will be. All I know is that God calls upon all his children to forgive others, and he wants us to move forward. We are at a position where we can move forward.
	21:39	That is the pattern of Jesus Christ. When the woman was taken in adultery, brought before him, did Christ go back and try and just say, well, why were you doing this? What's wrong with you? You should have never been there in the first place. He didn't go back to her mistakes. He who is without sin let him cast the first stone. Everybody walked away and He said, go and sin no more, period. Well, Spencer Kimball said, God said priesthood now, there were imperfect people who were leaders in the Church of Jesus Christ who still struggled with that. That's not to say that there weren't racial problems within the church, but again, that was a context of the time that we lived in as well. It took people time to repent and change who had racist attitudes. The prophet is still calling on people who have racist attitudes and bear prejudice to repent.
	22:35	We're hearing that from a living prophet today. That's why those things still existed is because they're imperfect people who need to repent, but it's calls upon us to forgive and to look to Christ and to move forward. That's how the kingdom is going to grow. The kingdom's not gonna grow looking back and telling everybody everything they had done wrong. How many of us in our marriage, when our wife brings up some old mistake we made, that just kind of like, no. Come on baby. I didn't. I tried not to do that, like, because you know it's true. It happened.
Hank Smith:	23:12	And we do it. We do it to each other.
Brother Thom Reed:	23:14	When we go back and dwell on those things, that's not the Christlike way. He didn't look back at all our state. He cleared our sins. Every time we make a mistake, every time we repent,

		those sins get put behind us and we can look forward to heaven. We can look forward to the strength and power of our covenants to keep us on the covenant path, to make it back to Him because He always forgives us. That's the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. For me, that's how I need to look at this issue is through the lens of Jesus Christ, not through the lens of a failed and imperfect human.
Hank Smith:	23:56	You sound like Joseph Smith. This is Doctrine & Covenants 128:22. Brethren, shall we not go on in such great a cause? Go forward, not backward. Courage. On, on to the victory! Let your hearts rejoice and be exceedingly glad. Let the earth break forth into anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel who hath ordained, before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison, for the prisoners shall go free. Forward.
Brother Thom Reed:	24:27	Hallelujah. Amen.
Hank Smith:	24:28	It's beautiful.
John Bytheway:	24:30	Hank, I was thinking of the same thing. Forward and on to the victory.
Hank Smith:	24:35	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	24:35	Thom, that little insight helped me so much to say, look, Official Declaration 1 was the Lord saying, yeah, I gave this revelation. Now I'm telling you to do this. This was not a revelation. Oh, so good. This was the Lord reaching down and saying, we gotta correct this and doing it and inspiring a prophet to wrestle with it. Now, people might have a problem with the timing. It was God that did it, so I'm not gonna have a problem with God's timing. He can do whatever he wants whenever he wants.
Brother Thom Reed:	25:04	Right? Right?
John Bytheway:	25:04	But He did. He corrected it. What a gift, Thom, to hear you talk about, and for all of our listeners to say, wow, and what happened to temple work after that with all of those families. All of the sudden.
Brother Thom Reed:	25:19	Guess what I'm doing?
John Bytheway:	25:20	Yeah.
Brother Thom Reed:	25:21	I'm putting on my Family Search hat.

John Bytheway:	25:22	That's right.
Brother Thom Reed:	25:23	With my Genesis Group T-shirt now.
John Bytheway:	25:25	Now we've got two.
Brother Thom Reed:	25:26	Think about Darius's experience and what he saw. He saw it not just reaching forward. He saw it reaching back because it was going to liberate the captives, the Black captives that were in Spirit Prison now.
John Bytheway:	25:40	Across the world, across the street, across the veil. Yeah.
Brother Thom Reed:	25:44	This is funny. I didn't tell you all this earlier. We had this song earlier that I did about Articles of Faith. I did a song this summer at the Genesis Group cookout, where we had these t-shirts. I put together the two concepts of Juneteenth, which was the final emancipation of African-Americans. We celebrate that as a holiday here in the United States and June 8th, so I'm not gonna rap it for you, but I wrote this song called Freedom was Always Coming and here's some of the lyrics from it. I said, hot sun rising. It's June 19, Galveston streets where hope was seen. So Galveston, Texas where June, where Juneteenth really originated. Two years late, but the word was true. Y'all are free. God came through. Because actually they were supposed to be freed in 1863, but it wasn't until 1865 that they heard in Galveston that they were free.
	26:38	So two years late, but the word came through. Fast forward to 78 when Spencer Kimball prayed, the heavens awake. No more walls, no more divide. Priesthood power is now worldwide. And then I say from cotton fields to temple halls, the Savior breaks down every wall. Isaiah said he'd set us free. Luke four eighteen's legacy. Christ is the center, light in the storm, in Him all families are reborn. No delay can stop His grace. We've all got a seat and we all got a place because freedom was always coming, can't hold back the light. Chains fell slow, but the Lord made it right. From Galveston heat to priesthood fire, Jesus broke the silence and lifted us higher. Freedom was always coming. Freedom was always coming. It was always coming. It was just in the Lord's time and all these things are in the Lord's time. It's these revolutionary revelations that prove to me that God is still working.
	27:44	We are still in the process of restoration. President Nelson said, even when he read that bicentennial proclamation, we are still in the process of restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We

		have the fullness as it is now. It's like Joseph told us in the Articles of Faith, we believe all that he has revealed, all that he will reveal and he will yet reveal many great and important things. There is a God in heaven who speaks to His prophet on the earth and speaks to His children and makes course corrections when He needs to make course corrections because He wants his kingdom to flourish. He wants to prepare all His children for His Son's second return, and I testify that Christ lives and that Christ has the power to forgive and heal all wounds. If any of your listeners have been wounded by past policies of the church and the way things have been, either polygamy or the priesthood, turn to Christ, seek His healing Atonement in your life and look forward.
	28:50	Look to God and live. I'm gonna take my hat off here, right 'cause I want you to see me. Anybody who's watching. Jesus Christ lives and He's the Master Healer, and I know some of these things that we've been talking about today have actually been hard and maybe things that you've struggled with and you maybe have pain, maybe that lingering trauma from those things exist in your life, but I can tell you that you can overcome those things because of Jesus Christ, the Master Healer. He corrected things in the Church to allow His kingdom to continue to flourish. God is a God of second chances and He's given us our Savior Jesus Christ. Perfect example of how to forgive and how to live and be healed. And I testify to you that these things are true. That what we've learned today about these revolutionary revelations are things that will help us if we apply them in our lives.
	29:47	If we take on the perspective of, when the Lord needs to correct us, when the Lord needs to change, are we living in revelation to hear it? Are we willing to stay on the covenant path and keep the commandments even when we're challenged by the law, even when things look miserable and difficult or even when we don't know the reason why we're going through the trial we're going through, we can turn to Jesus Christ and He will deliver us. He is our Master Deliverer. He is our Redeemer. He is our Savior, and I bear you that witness in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.
Hank Smith:	30:26	Amen. Thank you Brother Reed. Thom, this has been a great day, a great day. As we were wrapping up there, I thought of Article of Faith 13. Today has been virtuous, lovely, good report, and praiseworthy.
Brother Thom Reed:	30:43	Yes, it has been praiseworthy.

Hank Smith:	30:44	Praiseworthy. We seek after this type of experience, don't we?
John Bytheway:	30:50	This is so great.
Brother Thom Reed:	30:52	Today we learn that God is good.
Hank Smith & Jo...:	30:55	All the time.
Brother Thom Reed:	30:57	And all the time,
Hank Smith & Jo...:	30:59	God is good.
Brother Thom Reed:	31:01	Amen. Amen.
Hank Smith:	31:02	Thank you for taking the time to be with us, Thom. It's been a joy. It really has it's been so fun.
John Bytheway:	31:10	Yeah so fun and inspiring.
Hank Smith:	31:13	With that, we want to thank Brother Thom Reed for joining us today. We want to thank our executive producer Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors David and Verla Sorensen, and every episode we remember our founder, we recited the Standard of Truth today, his face came into my mind, Steve Sorensen.
Steve Sorensen:	31:32	The standard of truth has been erected. No unhollowed hand can stop the work from progressing. Persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished and the great Jehovah shall say, the work is done! Baby.
Hank Smith:	32:06	We hope you'll join us next week on followHIM. Thank you for joining us on today's episode. Do you or someone you know speak Spanish, Portuguese, or French? You can now watch and listen to our podcast in those languages. Links are in the description below. Today's show notes and transcript are on our website. Follow him.co. That's follow him dot CO. Of course, none of this could happen without our incredible production crew. David Perry, Lisa Spice, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra, Heather Barlow, Amelia Kabwika, Sydney Smith and Annabelle Sorensen.



Hank Smith:	00:03	Welcome to followHIM Favorites. John and I share a single story to go with each week's lesson. John, we are in the Articles of Faith, Official Declarations one and two this week for Come, Follow Me. You told me you have a good story.
John Bytheway:	00:16	Yes. In fact, President Spencer W. Kimball was the signature on my mission call. Who was on your mission call Hank?
Hank Smith:	00:23	That would be Gordon B. Hinckley.
John Bytheway:	00:25	Wow. There is a generation gap here, isn't there?
Hank Smith:	00:30	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	00:31	I remember President Kimball telling the story and I just thought, wow, maybe this is why in Primary we're memorizing the Articles of Faith. Here's an article that was printed in an October '78 New Era, and I don't know where, but I remember hearing President Kimball tell this story. Some years ago, a primary boy was sitting on a train going to California. He was all alone. He sat near a window watching the telephone poles go by across the aisle. A gentleman was also going to California. The attention of the gentleman was called to this very young boy traveling without friends or relatives. He was neatly dressed and well behaved, and this gentleman was quite impressed with him. Finally, he said, hello, young man. Where are you going? I'm going to Los Angeles. Do you have relatives there? Yeah, I have relatives there. I'm going to visit my grandparents. They're gonna meet me at the station and I'll stay with them a few days. Where did you come from? Where do you live? Boy said, Salt Lake City, Utah, and the gentleman said, oh, you must be a Mormon. Do you remember when we used to call ourselves that?
Hank Smith:	01:28	Yeah, I remember those. Yeah.

John Bytheway:	01:29	Yeah. The boy said, yes I am. The gentleman said, that's interesting. I've wondered about Mormons of what they believe. I've been through the city. I've noticed the buildings, the tree lined homes, lovely streets, beautiful rows and flower gardens. He must not have seen my house, but I've never stopped to find out what makes them what they are. I wish I knew what Mormons believe and the boy said, well, I'll tell you what we believe. We believe in God, the Eternal Father and in his Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost. This businessman was surprised. The boy continued. We believe that men will be punished for their own sins and not for Adam's transgression. The traveling companion thought, this is rather unusual for a mere boy to know these important things. The boy went on. We believe through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.
	02:18	The gentleman was amazed at the knowledge and understanding of a mere boy. He was yet to be a scout, but he continued. We believe the first principles and ordinances of the gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins.
Hank Smith:	02:34	Can you imagine?
John Bytheway:	02:34	Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. This is wonderful, said the gentlemen. I'm amazed you know so well the doctrines of your church. I commend you. With a good start and encouragement Johnny continued. We believe a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands, by those who are in authority, to preach the gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof. That's very solid doctrine my boy, he said. I'm curious now how they get to be called of God. I understand how they could receive the call to be established by the laying on of hands, but who has the authority to preach the gospel?
	03:10	They discussed the matter of calling and sustaining and then the lad said, would you like to know more? The gentleman thought it was very unusual and said, we believe in the same organization that existed in the primitive church, namely apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth. This brought some more discussion and so forth. You mean your church has apostles like James, John, Peter, Paul, and prophets like Moses, Abraham, Isaac, Daniel? The boy responded. Yeah. Even evangelists, we call 'em patriarchs. They're appointed in all parts of the church where there are stakes and by inspiration they give all the members of the church as required what's

called a patriarchal blessing. I've already had my patriarchal blessing. I read it frequently. Now we have 12 Apostles who have the same calling and the same authorities the 12 Apostles in days of old. The gentleman came back, do you speak in tongues?

04:01 Do you believe in revelations and prophecies? The boy said, we believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healings, interpretation of tongues and so forth. The gentleman said, well, this sounds like you believe in the Bible. We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly. We also believe the Book of Mormon to be the Word of God. The gentleman discussed that we believe in both the scriptures and in revelation. The boy quoted, we believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, we believe that he will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And then he continued, we believe, I know this is one of your favorites, Hank, also in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the 10 tribes, that Zion will be built upon the American continent, that Christ will reign personally upon the earth and that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.

Hank Smith: 04:53 Can you imagine he says paradisiacal.

John Bytheway: 04:54 I know he is just like, what? Who is this kid? The gentleman was listening. He showed no interest in crossing the aisle back to his own seat. Johnny continued. We claim the privilege of worshiping the Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience and allow all men the same privilege. Let them worship how, where, or what they may.

Hank Smith: 05:16 Uh. I find this really funny.

John Bytheway: 05:18 I know. It just keeps going because the thing that was cool is how logically it came out. We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, magistrates in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law, and then as a final contribution, the boy repeated the 13th Article of Faith. We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say we follow the admonition of Paul. We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things, including this followHIM Favorite. If there is anything virtuous, lovely or of good report, or praiseworthy, we seek after these things. The youngster relaxed. Now, as he had finished the Articles of Faith, the gentleman was clearly excited not only at the ability of this

young boy to outline the whole program of the church, but at the very completeness of its doctrine.

06:11 He said, you know, after I've been to Los Angeles a couple of days, I expect to go back to New York where my office is. I'm going to wire my company that I will be a day or two late. I'm going to stop in Salt Lake City en route and go to the information bureau and hear all these things in more detail about what you've told me. I'm wondering, President Kimball said, how many of you know the Articles of Faith? Have you repeated them? You are always prepared with a sermon when you know the Articles of Faith.

Hank Smith: 06:39 Oh, that's awesome! I would've loved to just watch that. I think I would have to sing them like, what do you guys believe? We believe in God.

John Bytheway: 06:48 Yeah, we believe. Right.

Hank Smith: 06:52 That's so funny. I would just love to watch a little boy just, oh, I know what we believe.

John Bytheway: 06:58 Well, I mean, yeah, you would be very impressed with the kid.

Hank Smith: 07:02 Yeah. Especially when he said and so forth. You may say we follow the admonition of Paul.

John Bytheway: 07:08 Of Paul. Of course.

Hank Smith: 07:10 Well, hey, we hope you join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcast. We're with Brother Thom Reed this week and we have just as much fun with Brother Reed as we just did here. He is wonderful in every way, and then come back here next week. We'll do another followHIM Favorites.