

The Proclamation on the Family: Scripture or Revelation?

Sometimes a member will claim that “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” is an example of modern day scripture and/or revelation. There are some indications that Church leadership wants the general membership to view it in that way, but close inspection suggests it is wrong to refer to the proclamation as scripture or revelation.

None of the 15 have ever called it “scripture”

The Proclamation has been called “scriptural” and “scripturelike” but it has never been given the appellation “scripture” by the 15.

- “A prophetic document”, “inspired” —Ballard
- “An inspired document” —Packer
- “Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” —Eyring
- “significant”, “major”, “revelatory”, “scripturelike” —Packer (note the revelation section below)
- “marvelous”, “scriptural direction” —Haight
- “those who attack it are ‘false prophets and false teachers’ ” —Ballard
- “the doctrine of the family and the home was recently reiterated” —Perry
- “we were all blessed recently to receive an important message” —Hales

Never been voted on

Within the D&C and within the words of the brethren one can find disagreement on what makes something scripture, “binding”, or “accepted”. ([source](#))

Still, a very strong case can be made for the need for a vote.

D&C 28:13 “For all things must be done in order, and by common consent in the church by the prayer of faith.”

Two prophets, under oath, have stated that nothing becomes “binding” or “accepted” until it has been presented to the church for a vote.

... the church has a right to say whether they will accept it or reject it as a revelation, and before a revelation can be accepted by the church, as a law, it must in some form or other be presented to the church and accepted by the church ... (Wilford Woodruff in Testimony before the Western District Circuit Court in 1892, [source](#))

no revelation given through the head of the church ever becomes binding and authoritative upon the members of the church until it has been pre-

sented to the church and accepted by them. (Joseph F. Smith in the Reed Smoot Trial in 1904, [source](#))

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World” has never been voted on.

When called “revelation” by an Apostle the statement was redacted

Only one of the 15 (Packer) has ever labeled the Proclamation “a revelation”, and this was redacted from the official version of his talk. (Oct 2010 GC, Boyd K. Packer, [Cleansing the Inner Vessel](#))

The original (about the 1 minute mark):

It qualifies according to the definition as a revelation and we’d do well as members of the church to read and follow it.

The written, official version:

It is a guide that members of the Church would do well to read and to follow.

A President of the Seventy *has* referred to it as “modern-day revelation”

Again the proclamation on the family, modern-day revelation:....As we ponder these inspired words of modern revelation....I leave you my witness that the proclamation on the family, which I referred to earlier, is modern-day revelation provided to us by the Lord through His latter-day prophets. ([source](#))

However, “a single statement made by a single leader...is not meant to be officially binding for the whole Church.” ([Approaching Mormon Doctrine](#)). Arguably, the redaction from Elder Packer’s talk is a much better indication of the Proclamation’s revelatory status than a statement by a President of the Seventy.

Considered to have come “from God”, but never called scripture or revelation in correlated material

The Proclamation has been suggested to have “[come] from God”, but it has never been called scripture or revelation in correlated material (of which I am aware).

For instance, the [October 2014 sharing time](#) is entitled “‘The Family: A Proclamation to the World’ Came from God to Help My Family”. The Proclamation is shown together with Moses holding the ten commandments and a bible. However, the Proclamation is never referred to as “scripture” or “revelation” in the lesson itself.

Written for World Conferences on the Family

According to Boyd K. Packer in a [2003 CES Fireside](#), the document was written to be used at a world conference on the family being held in SLC:

I can tell you how that came about. They had a world conference on the family sponsored by the United Nations in Beijing, China. We sent representatives. It was not pleasant what they heard. They called another one in Cairo. Some of our people were there. I read the proceedings of that. The word marriage was not mentioned. It was at a conference on the family, but marriage was not even mentioned. It was then they announced that they were going to have such a conference here in Salt Lake City. Some of us made the recommendation: “They are coming here. We had better proclaim our position.”

Likely drafted to be used as a legal document

The circumstantial evidence strongly suggests that the Proclamation was written as a legal document in response to court battles over same-sex marriage in which the church was engaged at the time. As early as 1988 the church was working to influence legislation regarding same-sex marriage. In March of 1995, the church was rejected as a party to the Baehr case in Hawaii because it failed to demonstrate having any “property” in the issue. In 1997, the Proclamation was used as a legal exhibit in an amicus brief filed by the church.

Major sources

- [FAIR Mormon - Mormonism and the Proclamation on the Family, Official Doctrine?](#)
- [Is the Family Proclamation Scripture?](#)
- [From Amici to 'Ohana: The Hawaiian Roots of the Family Proclamation](#)
- [Proclamation Written by Lawyers?](#)
- [Richley Crapo: Chronology Of Mormon / LDS Involvement In Same-Sex Marriage Politics](#)

Posted to:

- [exmormon](#)
- [mormon](#)