Following Living Prophets

The title lends itself to an apparent and obvious conclusion, but the use of such only negates the following of past prophets who received commands of the Lord. The concept was emphasized in conference within the last twenty-five years to combat the fundamentalist demand for polygamy because of the teachings of Brigham Young and in some case words supposedly spoken by Joseph Smith. These traditional concepts may or may not be true, nonetheless it was imperative to follow living prophets sustained by the body of the church.

In order to look at this concept in light of other relational insights about revelation we need to cover those former revelations in order to prevent the common excuse of not reading the standard works because all one has to do is follow the living prophet. If one emphasizes the living prophet but does not refer to previous prophets that spoke of the same, tradition may very well arise in the church that has no origin. To be blunt, following living prophets does not have any origin in the standard works. When the Lord said to take heed to the words of Joseph Smith, he did not mean that we should no longer pay attention because he is dead. Truth is eternal and does not end.

What are the other relational concepts the saints should always consider?

**Thus Says the Lord**

Living prophets do not use this statement as far as the average reading of conference talks can determine. This is open revelation, and certain prophets of the Book of Mormon actually admitted they did not receive any revelation even thou they had the authority, instructions to care for the records. This was specifically Abinadom the son of Chemish who said, “I know of no revelation save that which has been written, neither prophecy; wherefore, that which is sufficient is written.

When a living prophet or apostle says, “I know that Jesus is the Christ,” this is revelation, but not anything more than what all have a right to receive. Because ancient as well as Book of Mormon prophets also kept records of historical accounts and often referred to or testified of previous prophets, we often think their words are specifically of the Lord.