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Dear Vance,

Shortly after mailing you a draft of our Sunstone Symposium Paper I received your letter. I imagine our correspondence passed each other in the mail. I wish to thank you for the obvious concern and effort you put forth to provide me with an uplifting and enlightening response to some questions that I have raised. Having written a number of similar letters to my sister (I think you may have seen one or two of them), I realize the sacrifice in time, study and prayer that such an epistle requires. I really do appreciate it.

The tone of your letter was one of useful dialogue and for that I am grateful. It is true we disagree, but it is nice we are doing it agreeably. The most valuable portion of your letter dealt with the "mentality of the 'fundamentalist mind,'" which I am understanding better. However, one observation I will offer to you is that I might have understood it more than you originally gave me credit. You anticipate that I would not find some of your answers totally satisfying and that I was, in some ways, "missing the point or the real question." Your letter did instruct me better, but my point has been *authority* right from the beginning. Remember that I chose the topic of the fireside. It was not a treatise on the topic of "Does the Lord require us to be polygamists today for a full exaltation in the next life?" Rather, I chose to address the issue of: Are the sealing keys available to us today? I remind that I started by presentation by observing that the response by you and your congregation would fall into one of two categories with respect to the line of authority I was examining:

## I Understand and Believe

or

## It isn't Important

I had both of these statements made into slides. My impression is (and please correct me if I understand wrong) that with respect to your authority, you *understand and believe* it until the hard questions arise and when the weaknesses of the Lorin C. Woolley 1886 ordinations are brought to light, your response *isn't important* and I am missing the real question. I'm probably over simplifying, but that is how I see it. As I contemplated your repeated appeals that I focus more correctly, I wonder: *If the Lorin C. Woolley 1886 ordinations never occurred, are you still justified before the Lord?* I make this question at the risk of missing the point again. You did write that "it is not the Lorin Woolley statement, but the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith that are the basis of our convictions." However, the Lorin Woolley statement *is*, I believe, the basis of your authority.

Of course if you state no, Fundamentalists are not justified without authority, to the question above, I will feel that my analysis of the 1886 ordinations requires more emphasis than you desire to give it. Additionally I assure you that those ordinations never did occur. I spent last Friday at the Church Historical Department going over the rest of Samuel Bateman's journal. He never alluded to any council or quorum of Friends. He never sealed any marriage at all. He never acted like an apostle, let alone a "High Priest Apostle." You read it for yourself. The evidence against the ordinations is rather significant. Do you care to defend Lorin C. Woolley's recollections? You're probably thinking, "Brian is missing the point again."

If you answer that yes to that question, that you are justified without Lorin C. Woolley's claim to sealing keys, I would ask: Where did you get your authority? Also, I would like to add that line of claimed authority to my chart. If you have none, what about D&C 132:18?

In light of your revealing statement: "I offer that authority has to exist outside the church, as otherwise, it would not be possible to receive of the same fullness as Joseph instituted." I still think we must be sure of our authority source. The assumption that we must be polygamists does not authorize (neither do Lorin C. Woolley's claims). The Lord was plain in D&C 132:18. Possibly you feel that the ground rules have changed somewhat and the Lord is more lenient today... or do you ascribe to the 1886 ordinations? These are some of my thoughts.

Three points you brought up require a mild rebuttal. The first deals with the idea that A. Milton Musser uncovered solid evidence of the 1886 revelations while serving as Assistant Church Historian. Where did you get this idea? You suggest that there are many journals and diaries that have pages missing and paragraphs blotted out etc. and that these deletions somehow support Lorin Woolley's claims; where did you get this important information? It is true that we cannot see John Taylor's diary. It is likely that that decision was made by Wilford Woodruff or Joseph F. Smith and no subsequent President of the Church has desired to reverse the decision. I truly wish they would release it so we would know what it contains. I have observed that besides the burning testimonies, the greatest supports for some fundamentalist doctrines are contained in the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon, the unavailable John Taylor diary and the lost L. John Nuttall diary for September, 1886. Do you agree? The reason I am certain that A. Milton Musser knew nothing of the 1886 ordinations comes from reading the journal of his son, Joseph W. Musser. I made a copy of the entire volume and have been systematically reading it. If A. Milton Musser knew anything of Lorin C. Woolley's ordination, he never told Joseph his son. Joseph in the early 1920's, before teaming up with Woolley which occurred towards the end of the decade, spent a great deal of time with John T. Clark. He is the one who claimed to be the "One Mighty and Strong" from D&C 85:7 and also the "most literal descendant of Jesus Christ on the earth" (See Musser's journal for 16 May 1922). Woolley discounted these ideas, but that did not deter Musser from spending many hours with Clark helping him publish his claims (see entries for May 20, 22, 23, June 8, 10, July 21, 29, 31, and August 4, 1922), even allowing Clark to borrow his typewriter and later to bless him (December 18, 1922). It does not appear that Musser, in 1922, identified Lorin C. Woolley as the conduit through which the sealing keys would be made available to modern polygamists. If A. Milton Musser had told Joseph that John and Lorin C. Woolley held the keys and were prophets and priesthood leaders, wouldn't Joseph have aligned himself with them earlier and not wasted much energy with the likes of John T. Clark? Joseph Musser mentioned Woolley in his diary as early as 1922, but then several years go by without any other interaction with him. I suggest this would have been an unlikely relationship if Joseph Musser had been taught the Lorin Woolley story by his father A. Milton Musser.

Incidentally, did you know that Joseph Musser supported the change in the garment (shortening the sleeves and pant legs etc.) when it first occurred? His entry for May 24, 1923 reads:

"Quite a furor is being caused in church circles by action of authorities in changing the design of the garment - short arms and legs and low necks. Since as I understand it, the garment is only a symbol, it matters little about these details which are less important than the inconvenience of having long sleeves etc. to bother in the warm summer weather..."

I don't wish to get into a discussion of the changes in the garment directly (though we can