

Service in The Church

7

Joe was extremely proud of his priesthood and honored it every chance he could. He baptized and confirmed all nine of his children and conferred the priesthood on every one of his eight Sons:

Carl—deacon, teacher, priest, elder
Larry —deacon, teacher, priest, elder, high priest
Duane—deacon, teacher, priest, elder
Michael—deacon, teacher, priest, elder
Mark—deacon, teacher, priest, elder
Dick—deacon, teacher, priest, elder
Jody—deacon, teacher, priest
John—deacon, teacher, priest

He performed the marriages of those boys who didn't marry in the temple: Carl and Sue, Michael and Diane, Jody and Janna, and John and Sheila. He emphasized the fact that he was only performing a ceremony for time—until death parted them. As he gave them his father's blessing, he admonished them to prepare themselves so that they could go into the temple

of the Lord and have their marriage made a permanent bond. After all, if a girl is worth marrying, she's worth marrying for an eternity.

When his sons left home to make their way into the world, Joe gave each a father's blessing, using his Holy Priesthood to ask for the Lord's guidance and protection. Thursday was his fast day, and for many years he held a twenty-four hour fast for himself and for his family.

If the daughters-in-law wanted his administration before their babies were born, he would bless them and administer to them in the name of the Lord.

Joe loved the Lord with all his heart, and always used his priesthood for the very holy purpose for which it was given. In 1954, he was called to serve as Bishop of the Poplar Grove Fourth Ward. He served in this position for ten years. Joe was always a perfect example to the membership of the ward and truly enjoyed leading and counseling those over whom he served.

Joe felt that nothing was too good for the Lord and His service. He always carried a briefcase with his books and lamented the fact that "his brains were in the case." Often he would talk about the time when he would be able to remember all that he read; he didn't outwardly worry about not having a high school education because he believed that he would be able to learn twice as fast on the other side. I'll never forget his "Now, listen to this" when he was speaking from the pulpit. He would point his right index finger, hold the book high with his left hand so he could read, look through his glasses (they were bifocal), and address the audience all at the same time.

Joe's favorite books were always church books and the church magazines. Once in a while, he would read the Readers Digest. He always read the newspaper, most of the time quite thoroughly, but reading for a pastime was just not his style. If he needed to look up a reference

pertaining to a secular matter, he would find what he wanted easily enough, but he did not read any books from cover to cover except his church books. He frequently marked or underlined them so that he could remember something special. He always claimed that the Millennium was for furthering one's education. He wanted his children to be well educated, but he often made the statement that in the Millennium he could learn through the instrument known as the Urim and Thummin that Joseph Smith used in translating the Book of Mormon. He knew that information and knowledge would be absorbed by the individual much faster during that 1,000 year period, so he was waiting for that time. Incidentally, he also hoped to finally get a full head of hair then too.

When the Sacrament was passed, Bishop Nemelka always closed his eyes so that he could think about the Sacrament and the sacrifice of the Savior uninterrupted. The little children once asked him why he always went to sleep during the Sacrament, and he explained that he could concentrate better with his eyes closed. I never remember him ever talking during the Sacrament. Most of the time, he closed his eyes.

Joe was always clean and neat when he went to church on Sunday morning. He looked just like a Bishop should look. He would come and say, "How do I look?" and he looked wonderful, ready to serve the Savior and do what he could to help the people build up the Kingdom.

One of Joe's favorite little anecdotes was one about tithing that he found while destroying some of the Church correspondence during his work with the Church Historian's Office:

An investigation was made of a Brother in the church who reported that he couldn't pay any tithing because he had no income. When asked by

the authorities just why this condition existed, he made the following reply:

“Well, brethren, my chickens are molting all the time, my horses are my tractors, the cows are dry most of the time, and my bees, well, that’s a story for you. The Queen Bee ran off with a horsefly and we can’t sell the honey because it tastes like horse manure. That’s why I can’t pay tithing—I have no income!”

I will now include some journal entries made by Joe while he served as Bishop:

Sunday, October 20, 1963

My son Joseph informed me that he knew that I had not graduated from High School nor attended college because when I spoke in public I seemed to search for words to express myself.

After Sacramento meeting, this date, Brother _____ came to me and said he would like to talk with me. “My wife would like another baby (6th) but I am afraid. I lost my job a year ago and was just informed that I might lose my job again in December. My wife says she had a dream and saw another spirit waiting to come down. What shall I do?”

My answer was, “You have a good wife. Listen to her and trust in the Lord.” (she had a boy in 1965)

Following April conference, 1962

For the third time, I received a strong impression to go and see an inactive Seventy who had moved into the ward and to deliver a message to him. I had refused to listen to the spirit previously. I called the brother on the phone and told him I would be over to visit him. He had four children

who were out playing when I arrived. The husband, wife and I sat in the front room. I asked them to let me finish before they said a word. I informed them that I felt somewhat as Jonah as he went to the city of Nineveh—I had not listened to the Spirit previously. I told them that the Lord was displeased with their inactivity in His Church and with their responsibility to their children (D&C 68:24-25). I don't recall all the things I said, but I informed them that they, as people, were important in the eyes of the Lord and encouraged them to not fail in their mission upon the earth. They have a son who should attend Church and receive the priesthood, and one child who should be baptized. They became active, not 100 percent, but at least they started. They stated that just that day they had talked about how their children were not attending Church.

Joe held banquets in his Ward that have never been equaled. He didn't like the members to sit down to skimpy meals, so we always had plenty of food to serve. After the dinner, he would send the remains of the feast home with the people with large families. He even bought large containers to hold the food for carrying purposes. No one ever left a banquet of his the least bit hungry.

After Joe was released as Bishop, he was made a counselor in the Stake Presidency. Joe was greatly loved and respected as Bishop and this respect and gratitude followed with him as he continued to serve in other callings in the church. The following story reflects the great influence Joe had in the lives of those whom he served.

On May 23, 1971, President Nemelka came to visit the Junior Sunday School of the Poplar Grove Fourth Ward. He was asked to speak to the children



October 7, 1964



High Council Social
October 7, 1964

gathered there. As he began to speak, for very selfish reasons, I started to take notes on what he was saying. Now, I feel I would like to share the testimony and the blessing he gave to the children that day.

“...When Jesus was crucified, he visited the Nephites here in America. He called the children together with their parents. He talked with them, and such wonderful things happened that even the Book of Mormon could not describe what took place. In the Book of Mormon, it tells that the children were encircled with fire and that angels came from heaven and blessed the children. The Book of Mormon was made to testify that this did happen.

“Jesus does love us boys and girls! Heavenly Father loves us! I hope you love God. I love Him! How do you show your love for Him? What do you do? Can you tell me? (At this time, one of the children answered — ‘by doing what he tells us to do.’) Fine! Keep the commandments He gives us:

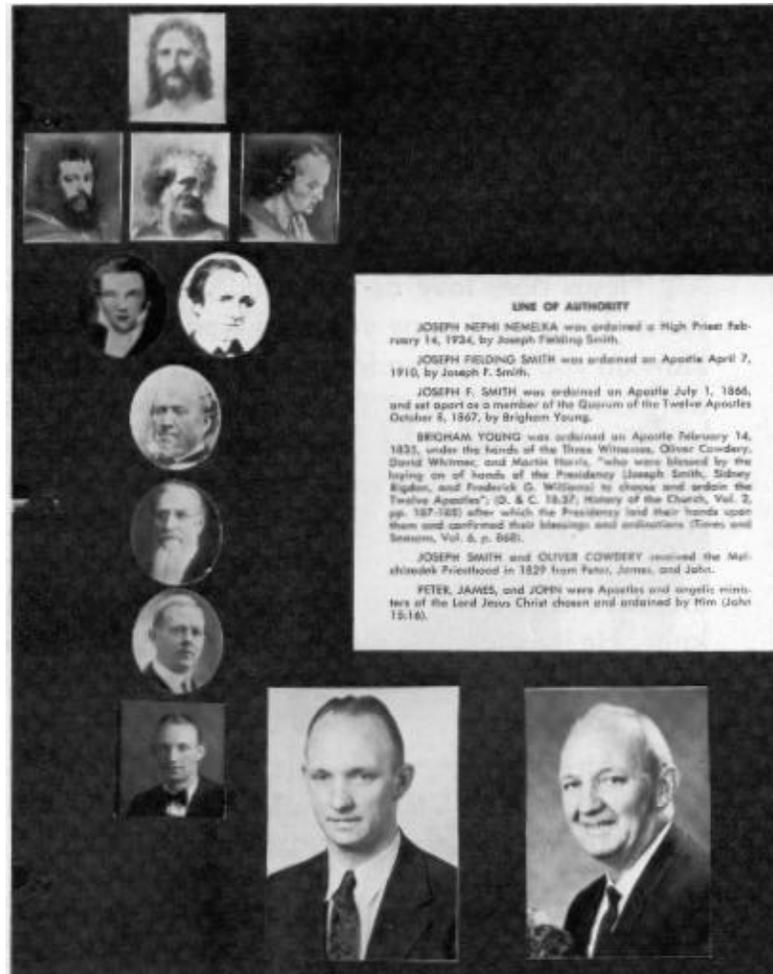
First, Love the Lord with all your heart, might, mind, and strength. Second, Love your neighbor and love each other. I bear you my testimony—I know He lived and He died and that He is going to come to Earth to live again. All the wicked people will be destroyed, and He will be our King.

“I bless you, boys and girls, that you will keep the commandments of God so that you will be with our Heavenly Father. ...”

I feel that there is no greater tribute to pay to a truly great and spiritual leader than to record his thoughts for the generations to come. Therefore, I honor this beautiful person by writing down only a

few of the thoughts he left us. He was truly one of God's chosen spirits.

Carla C. Vincent
Junior Sunday School
Secretary 1971



*PRIESTHOOD LINE OF AUTHORITY OF
JOSEPH NEPHI NEMELKA*

JOSEPH NEPHI NEMELKA was ordained a High Priest February 14, 1934 by Joseph Fielding Smith. Ordained a Bishop on June 30, 1954 by Harold B. Lee.

JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH was ordained an Apostle April 7, 1910, by Joseph F. Smith.

JOSEPH F. SMITH was ordained an Apostle July 1, 1866 and set apart as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles October 8, 1867, by Brigham Young.

BRIGHAM YOUNG was ordained an Apostle February 14, 1835, under the hands of the Three Witnesses, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris, “who were blessed by the laying on of hands of the Presidency (Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams) to choose and ordain the Twelve Apostles”; (D. & C. 18:37; History of the Church, Vol. 2, pp. 187-188) after which the Presidency laid their hands upon them and confirmed their blessings and ordinations (Times and Seasons, Vol. 6, p. 868).

JOSEPH SMITH and OLIVER COWDERY received the Melchizedek Priesthood in 1829 from Peter, James, and John.

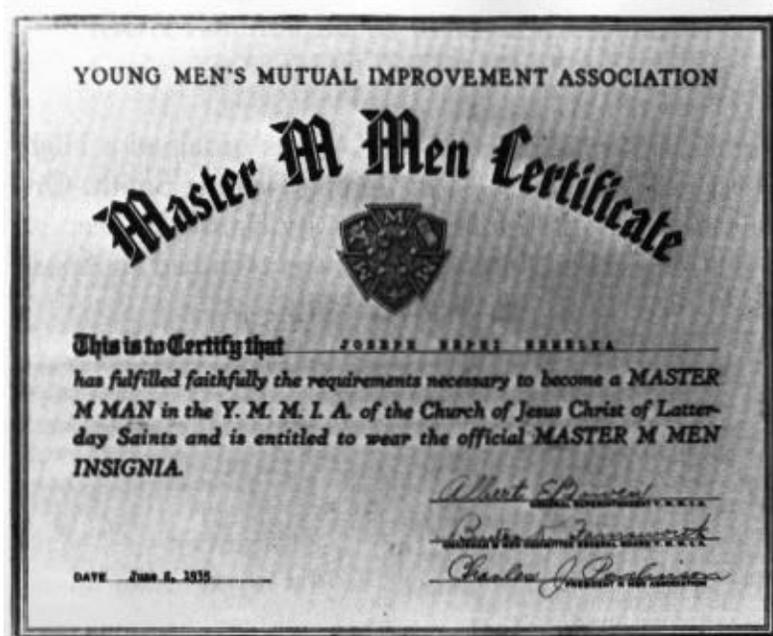
PETER, JAMES, and JOHN were Apostles and angelic ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ chosen and ordained by Him (John 15:16).

*CHURCH SERVICE RECORD OF
JOSEPH NEPHI NEMELKA*

Appointed Released

*Deacon—dusted the chairs and benches in
the chapel of the Poplar Grove Ward on 9th*

Sept. 1921



*South and Concord Street, also cleaned the
 ward outhouse and carried out the regular
 Deacon assignments.* May 1924

Teacher— Counselor in the Teacher's 1924
Quorum Presidency 1925

Secretary of the Y.M.M.I.A. 1926

Second Counselor in Poplar Grove Ward 1927
Sunday School Superintendency
Block teacher
Ward Basketball team 1929

Set apart as a Missionary for the Swiss Ger- Jan. 1929
man Mission. While on mission, served as
Branch President, Primary President, Relief
Society President, Beehive teacher, and
Conference President



Poplar Grove Ward Bishopric

<i>Stake Sunday School Board—Old Testament Department with Sister Logena Tadge</i>	<i>1931</i>	<i>1932</i>
<i>Ward M-Men Leader</i>	<i>1931</i>	
<i>M-Men Supervisor—Stake Committee</i>		
<i>Sunday School Teacher</i>		<i>1934</i>
<i>Stake Sunday School Board</i>	<i>1932</i>	
<i>Ward M-Men Leader</i>		<i>1934</i>
<i>Ward Sunday School Superintendent</i>	<i>1932</i>	
<i>Ward Teacher Trainer</i>	<i>1933</i>	<i>1934</i>
<i>Poplar Grove Ward Bishopric—Bishop William Leary. Set apart by Joseph Fielding Smith as 1st Counselor</i>	<i>Feb. 1934</i>	<i>June 1936</i>
<i>Poplar Grove Ward Bishopric—Bishop Paul Otto Hunger. Set apart by Richard R. Lyman</i>	<i>June 1936</i>	<i>Dec. 1937</i>
<i>Member of Ward Genealogical Society</i>	<i>1938</i>	
<i>Advisory Committee of High Priest's Quorum</i>		

<i>Instructor of High Priest Group Baptism, Confirmation, and Endowment work once a week in the Salt Lake Temple Block Teacher</i>	1939	
<i>Teacher of Genealogical Class and Research Teacher.</i>		
<i>Stake Seminary Superintendent of 7th, 8th, and 9th grades</i>	1940	1943
<i>Assistant to Stake Chairman and then Stake Chairman of the Genealogical Committee</i>	1943	1946
<i>Poplar Grove Ward Bishopric—Bishop Ernest Snider</i>	Feb. 1946	Oct. 1947
<i>Pioneer Stake Sunday School Superinten- dent</i>	1947	1948
<i>Deacon's Advisor</i>	1949	
<i>Instructor, Adult Aaronic Priesthood Class Adult Aaronic Priesthood Committee</i>		1950
<i>Pioneer Stake High Council</i>	1950	June 1954
<i>Bishop of Poplar Grove 4th Ward. Ordained as Bishop by Harold B. Lee</i>	June 1954	Sept. 1964
<i>Second Counselor of Pioneer Stake Presidency</i>	Sept. 1964	Sept. 1969
<i>First Counselor of Pioneer Stake Presidency</i>	Sept. 1969	
<i>Released from his earthly duties on 15 July 1971</i>		

The following positions were filled also but the dates are unknown:
Chorister M.I.A. Served on all Priesthood Committees
Ward Teaching Supervisor
Pioneer Stake Coordinator Adult Aaronic Priesthood

TEACHING POSITIONS

M-Men Leader

Teacher Training Class—Ward

High Priest Class Instructor

Teacher in Deacon's Quorum

Teacher of Adult Aaronic group

Gospel Doctrine Class in Sunday School

Genealogical class in Sunday School

Teacher in Genealogical Committee Class—Ward

Missionary Class—SS

Teacher in Stake Genealogical Committee

