

Doctrine and Covenants Section 29



"As a Hen Gathereth Her Chickens", by Kimberly Hansen, 2020

Gathering begins – the Second Conference of the Church

Newel Knight and his brother-in-law, Freeborn DeMille, traveled to Fayette for the Second Conference of the Church held in late September 1830 at the Peter Whitmer home. It was not small thing for Colesville Township people to be there. Fayette was a three-day journey each way, meaning Newel and Freeborn were away from home, work, and farm chores for at least a week or more. But they wanted to hear for themselves the new doctrines that were taught at each meeting by Joseph Smith, the Prophet.

At the Conference Joseph Smith discussed the revelations now in Section 29, and spoke of "gathering," a significant doctrine that hearkened back to biblical roots, but was new for the young Church. Verses in the new revelation declared, "Ye are called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect," which became an important admonition to those present to go out and preach that the gospel of Jesus Christ had been restored, and gather in to the fold of the church all who were willing to join.

There was a second kind of gathering announced as well. All of those who had joined the church were asked to prepare to gather in one place and a New Jerusalem would be built, but the place of gathering for the saints and the location of the New Jerusalem was not announced.

This revelation about both parts of the gathering had significant impact on the lives of the Knight family.

The conference lasted three days and Joseph Smith wrote that there was “considerable” discussion and investigation into Hiram Page’s seer stone that was renounced. They also partook of the sacrament, “confirmed and ordained many, and attended to a great variety of church business on the first two days.”¹ Part of that business was the ordination of Newel Knight as a priest, by Oliver Cowdery and the baptism of Freeborn DeMille, the husband of Newel’s sister Anna, by Hyrum Smith with a confirmation by Joseph Smith, Jr.

Another significant part of the business was the calling of Hyrum Smith as the president of the Colesville Branch, the first formal unit of the church.

Newel returned home from the conference filled with great zeal to spread the teachings of salvation to all who would listen. And because Newel was ordained a priest, he had the priesthood authority to baptize those he taught. He and Freeborn also brought the news that all of the members of the new church that were scattered around New York and Pennsylvania, would be gathering together literally, in one yet-to-be named place.

As directed by Joseph Smith, just a few days after the Conference ended, Hyrum Smith, his wife Jerusha and two little girls moved to Colesville, where they were welcomed into the home of Newel and Sally Knight.

Hyrum and Newel spent much time preaching in the Colesville area and beyond. Despite the strong anti-Mormon feelings in the area, three prayer meetings were held in homes and several people were baptized. Newel wrote, “A few believed and were baptized in this region of the country, while many raged and continued to persecute us to stop the spread of the gospel as revealed to us through Joseph Smith the prophet.”²

Newel later wrote in his journal:

Soon after this conference, Bro Hyrum Smith, wife and family came to Colesville to live me, but most of his time, as was my own, was spent visiting the towns and villages around, preaching the Gospel wherever we could find anyone who would listen to us, either in public or in private. A few believed and were baptized, among whom was Emer Harris, brother to Martin Harris (he was the first man I had ever baptized) who proved to be a useful laborer in the vineyard.

Many raged and persecuted us, doing all in their power to stop the progress of the work. But we moved steadily ahead, putting our trust in the Lord God of Heaven who had revealed the gospel and given us a commandment, with power, to preach the same, and

¹ Joseph Smith, Church history p 115

² Newel Knight, *Newel Knight Journal*, Allen typescript, p 9

to administer in the ordinances of the church. We feared not man, though many rose up against us in their fury with the full purpose of hindering our labors. But these were labors of love, for **we sought only the salvation of the human family** and God protected us, and blessed our labors, and our enemies were put to confusion.

On the fourth of October, Bro Hyrum Smith held a prayer meeting at brother Aaron Culver's and the promise of the Lord, that where two or three are met together in his name, there he would be in their midst and that to bless them was truly verified to us, insomuch that we rejoiced greatly. . .

On the fourteenth of October Bro. Hyrum Smith held meeting at my uncle Hezekiah Peck's. Bro. Hyrum had great liberty of speech, and the spirit of the Lord was poured out upon us in a miraculous manner. There was much good instructions and exhortation given, such as was calculated to encourage and strengthen the Saints in this their infantile state. At this meeting, four persons came forwards and manifested their desire to forsake all, serve their God in humility and obey the requirements of the gospel.

After the close of the meeting, Bro. Hyrum and myself intended going to spend the night with one of the brethren who lived a short distance from my uncle's, but as we were ready to start, the spirit whispered to me that I should tarry there at my uncle's all night. I did so and retired to bed, where I rested til midnight when my uncle came to my room and desired me to get up, saying he feared his wife was about to die. This surprised me, as she was quite well when I went to bed.

I dressed myself and having asked my Heavenly Father to give me wisdom and power to rebuke the destroyed from the habitation, I went to the room where my aunt³ lay. She was in a most fearful condition, her eyes were closed, and she appeared to be in the last agonies of death. Presently she opened her eyes and bade her husband and children farewell, telling them she must die for the redemption of this generation, as Jesus Christ had died for the generation.

Her whole frame shook, and she appeared to be racked with the most exquisite pain and torment, her hand and feet were cold, and the blood settled in her fingers, while her husband and children stood weeping around her bed. This was the scene new to me, and I felt she was suffering under the power of Satan, that it was the same spirit that had bound and overpowered me at the time Joseph cast him out. I now cried to the Lord for strength and wisdom that we might prevail over this wicked and delusive power, just at this time my uncle cried aloud to me saying, O brother Newel cannot something be done?

I felt the Holy Spirit of the Lord rest upon me as he said this, and I immediately stepped forward, took her by the hand, and commanded Satan, in the name of Jesus Christ to

³ Newel's uncle Hezekiah Peck was married to Martha Long Peck, known as Patty.

depart. I told my aunt she would not die, but that she would live to see her children grow, that Satan had deceived her and put a lying spirit in her mouth, that Christ had made the only and last atonement for all who would believe on his name, and that there should be no more shedding of blood for sin. She believed and stretched forth her hand and cried unto me and Satan departed from her.

After laboring sometimes in this vicinity we returned to my home, found our wives well and in the enjoyment of the spirit of the Lord. We spent a few days preaching to and comforting the Saints at Colesville, and then we went to see another of my uncles, Ezekial Peck, brother to Hezekiah. These were baptized. There were but few others who embraced the faith in that neighborhood, and after spending a few days and laboring until we felt we had done all the good we could, or all the people who would receive, we bade farewell to the few who had believed and left our blessing with them, again returning home where we found all well. We also found Bro. Orson Pratt, awaiting us, who had been called by the Prophet to labor with us in the ministry and we received a letter from Bro Josphe Smith, Jr. and John Whitmer.⁴

Diane Mangum – January 2025

⁴ Newel Knight, Journal of Newel Knight, Allen typescript, p 9-10. Waiting for them in Colesville was dated Dec. 2nd 1830, which would indicate that Newel and Hyrum had been out preaching for most of October and November of 1830.