

# The Legrand Richards 1978 Interview

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[The entire contents of the following comes from the website \*Thoughts on Things and Stuff\*, 11 December 2015.](#)

In the June 9, 1978 issue of the Deseret News, the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints published a letter declaring that a revelation had been received by Prophet Spencer W Kimball lifting the ban on black men receiving the Priesthood.

In the weeks that followed, there was a great deal of speculation about the nature of the revelation. How was the revelation received? Did it come with a vision and divine visitation, as Joseph's did in the First Vision? Did the Lord speak directly to the prophet in a first-person voice, as He did to Joseph in the revelations recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants? Did a heavenly messenger of great renown convey the message, as when Joseph experienced the Priesthood originally restored? There were rumors that Joseph himself appeared to the Prophet. The revelation lifting the ban was the most tangible and concrete example of a revelation directly from God for the whole church and there was a great deal of curiosity about it.

5 weeks after the initial announcement, two men were granted an opportunity to speak with Legrand Richards, one of the senior Apostles. They asked several key questions of the Elder and one of the most straightforward descriptions of the process of modern revelation was given in reply. In addition, other interesting topics were discussed including the existence of Joseph's seer-stone, the legitimacy of the "Lectures on Faith" and changes to the Book of Mormon.

Transcripts of a portion of this interview have been published in various places online, however, this is the first time that the full audio recording and transcription of that interview has been made available online. The original audio quality was severely degraded and I have attempted to clean up the audio as much as possible.

[Audio link available from archive.org.](#)

## Photography session

**WALTERS:** yeah. can we get a picture?

**RICHARDS:** ... I walked up to the counter of the United Airlines in Chicago, a couple of years ago and a man in back of the counter, a young man, looks at me and he said 'Aren't you Legrand Richards?' and I said "yes, sir." and he said "I am one of those guys that's already got my boots on." <sup>2</sup>

**WALTERS:** Oh. ha ha!

**RICHARDS:** He said "I've since joined the church. And I'm going out to the Y next fall"

**WALTERS:** Could I get a picture of you two together?

**RICHARDS:** Well if he doesn't object.

**WALTERS:** Okay, fine. let's go. Just stand right beside him.

**RICHARDS:** Do you want us to stand up together?

**WALTERS:** No, no. You sit down and let him be, uh, let me get the filter on here because it's got fluorescent lights. Let me get my filter on once. But just, uh, Let him be shaking your hand

**RICHARDS:** Well let's come on over to this side, and I'll turn..

**WALTERS:** Okay fine. Now you step forward a little bit, Chris, and let me get both of you in there, wait a minute now.

**RICHARDS:** Am I alright?

**WALTERS:** You're just perfect.

**RICHARDS:** Should I straighten out?

**WALTERS:** You're just perfect. Wait a minute now. I got to get my lighting correct here. and, uh.. let's see what's here

**VLACHOS:** Let us know when you take it.

**WALTERS:** Alright, I will. Just a minute, I'll tell ya. I got to get my, uh

**VLACHOS:** Looks like candy over there.

**RICHARDS:** Hmm?

**VLACHOS:** You eat candy

**RICHARDS:** Huh?

**VLACHOS:** The candy.

**RICHARDS:** Oh yeah. I was just gonna read that.

**WALTERS:** Ok. It looks like

**RICHARDS:** [unintelligible] let me sit up a little

**WALTERS:** Okay, that's fine. That's great. Now hold on

**VLACHOS:** Should I look at you or look at each other?

**WALTERS:** No just look at each other that way. And let me take a couple here. Just in case let me get a little different angle here, a new one. And let me get one around like this. Okay.

**RICHARDS:** [unintelligible]

**WALTERS:** Okay, that's great. Thanks so much. Appreciate that.

## Candy Giftcard

**RICHARDS:** Now go over there and pull that board out and read it.

**WALTERS:** Listen, while he's doing that I'd like to ask you a question about this Priesthood revelation.

**RICHARDS:** You listen to that first. That'll answer your question.

**WALTERS:** Alright, I'll listen to that first. Okay. Alright fine.

**VLACHOS:** Dear Elder Richards, We hope you know it's about time you received a Payday.

**WALTERS:** Ha Ha!

**VLACHOS:** With this little [unintelligible] Thank you very much for giving a big heart of your life to service to others by showing you care. We feel you have always been a "super smartie" inside the Gospel. and whoop, this fell down. But now [unintelligible] great Goliath missionary. A giant of the [unintelligible]. One look at your \$100,000 smile and we had a Crunch on you. When you speak you say a mouthful in a Marathon trial and it's always sprinkled with freckles and snickers. Like your letters too. Mounds of appreciation for being cool. Powerhouse of strength. A delight to all of us. Indeed [unintelligible] our lives with your creme flavored filling. Who was it from?

**RICHARDS:** The Patriarch of [unintelligible] Las Vegas Nevada and three of his daughters brought that up to me last October conference [unintelligible] together.

**WALTERS:** Isn't that great. That's really clever.

**RICHARDS:** When families come in with their kiddies.

**VLACHOS:** yeah right

**RICHARDS:** I can have a bunch of them stay. And I let them read it and the kiddies get a thrill out of it.

**VLACHOS:** yeah.

**RICHARDS:** Pretty cleverly done isn't it?

**VLACHOS:** Yeah. Sorry about that.

## Priesthood Revelation

**WALTERS:** On this revelation, of the priesthood to the Negro, I've heard all kinds of stories: I've heard that Christ appeared to the Apostles. I've heard that Joseph Smith appeared; and then I heard another story that Spencer Kimball had had a concern about this for some time and simply shared it with the apostles, and they decided that this was the right time to move in that direction. Now are any of those stories true, or are they all...

**RICHARDS:** Well, the last one is pretty true, and I might tell you what provoked it in a way. Down in Brazil, there is so much Negro blood in the population there that it's hard to get leaders that don't have Negro blood in them. We just built a temple down there. It's going to be dedicated in October. All those people with Negro blood in them have been raising the money to build that temple. And then, if we don't change, then they can't even use it. So Brother Kimball worried about it, and he prayed a lot about it.

He asked each one of us of the Twelve if we would pray—and we did—that the Lord would give him the inspiration to know what the will of the Lord was. And then he invited each one of us in his office—individually,

because you know when you are in a group, you can't always express everything that's in your heart. You're part of the group, you see—so he interviewed each one of us, personally, to see how we felt about it, and he asked us to pray about it. And then he asked each one of us to hand in all the references we had, for, or against that proposal. See, he was thinking favorably toward giving the colored people the priesthood.

Then we had a meeting where we meet every week in the temple, and we discussed it as a group together, and then we prayed about it in our prayer circle, and then we held another prayer circle after the close of that meeting, and he (President Kimball) lead in the prayer; praying that the Lord would give us the inspiration that we needed to do the thing that would be pleasing to Him and for the blessing of His children. And then the next Thursday—we meet every Thursday—the Presidency came with this little document written out to make the announcement—to see how we'd feel about it—and present it in written form. Well, some of the members of the Twelve suggested a few changes in the announcement, and then in our meeting there we all voted in favor of it—the Twelve and the Presidency. One member of the Twelve, Mark Petersen, was down in South America, but Brother Benson, our President, had arranged to know where he could be reached by phone, and right while we were in that meeting in the temple, Brother Kimball talked with Brother Petersen, and read him this article, and he (Petersen) approved of it.

**WALTERS:** What was the date? Would that have been the first of June, or something?

**RICHARDS:** That was the first Thursday, I think, in May. [June?] At least that's about when it was. And then after we all voted in favor of it, we called another meeting for the next morning, Friday morning, at seven o'clock, of all the other General Authorities—that includes the Seventies' Quorum and the Patriarch and the Presiding Bishopric, and it was presented to them, and they all had an opportunity to express themselves and then there were a few of the brethren that were out presiding in the missions, and so the Twelve were appointed to interview each one of them. I had to interview Brother Rex Reeve and read him the article and asked his feelings. He was thrilled because he labored down there in Brazil and he knew what it would mean for those people. And so every member of the General Authorities, to a man, approved it before the announcement went out.

Now we had a letter from a colored man up in Ogden, read like this; he was a member of the church, and he said “If the Lord is willing to let me have my wife and children in this life, why wouldn’t He be willing to let me have them in the next life?” That makes sense, doesn’t it?

And then, you know, the Lord gave revelation to Prophet Joseph where He said that “There is a law irrevocably decreed in the heavens before the foundation of the Earth was laid upon which all blessings are predicated and no blessing can be obtained except by obedience to the law upon which it is predicated.” Well all that means is that if you want to raise wheat you’ve got to plant wheat, doesn’t it? If you want corn then you’ve got to plant corn. Well if I plant wheat and get a harvest and the colored man plants wheat and takes a good care of it—why isn’t he as much entitled to the harvest as I, you see?

And then, um, [untelligible] and so.

**WALTERS:** Well I was going to ask you about

**RICHARDS:** So we figured the same with spiritual blessings. If the colored man lives as good as I do, he can serve the Lord and so forth, why isn’t he as much entitled to the blessings as I am? It’s been a united decision, there’s been no adverse comment by anyone of the General Authorities.

**VLACHOS:** What about intermarriage? Is it okay?

**RICHARDS:** what?

**VLACHOS:** Is it okay to marry?

**WALTERS:** Intermarriage, is that in view too?

**RICHARDS:** Well, no. Never before this decision was reached we’ve always recommended that people live within their own race—the Japanese ought to marry Japanese, the Chinese ought to marry Chinese, Hawaiians ought to marry Hawaiians and the colored people ought to marry colored.

**WALTERS:** And that would still be your position?

**RICHARDS:** That is still our position. But they are entitled to the temple blessings and the sealing of their wives to them. It’s all conditioned on their living. Now

if they live right and they're devoted and they're good clean living—why shouldn't they get the blessings?

**WALTERS:** Now when President Kimball read this little announcement or paper, was that the same thing that was released to the press?

**RICHARDS:** Yeah.

**WALTERS:** There wasn't a special document as a "revelation", that he had and wrote down?

**RICHARDS:** We discussed it in our meeting. What else should we say besides that announcement? And we decided that was sufficient; that no more needed to be said.

**WALTERS:** Was that the letter you sent out to the various wards?

**RICHARDS:** And to the Church; and to the newspapers, yes.

**VLACHOS:** Will that become a part of "scripture"?

**RICHARDS:** Yes, I've already thought in my own mind of suggesting we add it to the Pearl of Great Price, just like those last two revelations that we've just added.

**WALTERS:** At that point, is there a special reason why you add it to the Pearl of Great Price rather than to the Doctrine and Covenants? Is it just more convenient to put it in there instead of adding another number or something?

**RICHARDS:** I don't know, we didn't discuss the reason, which book it should go in, but the Pearl of Great Price was written and assembled later than the Doctrine and Covenants was and my Grandfather was one that organized the Pearl of Great Price. So when we discussed it in our meeting, we didn't discuss whether it should go in the Doctrine and Covenants or the Pearl of Great Price. We just discussed how to add those two revelations to the Pearl of Great Price.

**WALTERS:** Will this affect your theological thinking about the Negro as being less valiant in the previous existence? How does this relate? Have you thought that through?

**RICHARDS:** Some time ago, the Brethren decided that we should never say that. We don't know just what the reason was. Paul said, "The Lord hath before appointed the bounds of the habitations of all men for to dwell upon the face of the earth," and so He determined that before we were born. He who knows why they were born with black skin or white and so on and so forth. We'll just have to wait and find out.

**WALTERS:** Is there still a tendency to feel that people are born with black skin because of some previous situation, or do we consider that black skin is no sign anymore of anything inferior in any sense of the word?

**RICHARDS:** Well, we don't want to get that as a doctrine. Think of it as you will. You know, Paul said "Now we see in part and we know in part; we see through a glass darkly. When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away, then we will see as we are seen, and know as we are known." Now the Church's attitude today is to prefer to leave it until we know. The Lord has never indicated that black skin came because of being less faithful. Now, the Indian; we know why he was changed, don't we? The Book of Mormon tells us that; and he has a dark skin, but he has a promise there that through faithfulness, that shall again become a white and delightsome people. So we haven't anything like that on the colored thing.

**WALTERS:** Now, with this new revelation—has it brought any new insights or new ways of looking at the Book of Abraham? Because I think traditionally it is thought of the curse of Cain, coming through Canaanites and on the black-skinned people, and therefore denying the priesthood?

**RICHARDS:** We considered that with all the "for's" and the "against's" and decided that with all of that, if they lived their lives, and did the work, that they were entitled to their blessings.

**WALTERS:** But you haven't come up with any new understanding of the Book of Abraham? I just wondered whether there would be a shift in that direction.

**VLACHOS:** Is the recent revelation in harmony with what the past prophets have taught, of when the Negro would receive the priesthood?

**RICHARDS:** Well, they have held out the thought that they would ultimately get the priesthood, but they never determined the time for it. And so when this

situation that we face down there in Brazil—Brother Kimball worried a lot about it—how the people are so faithful and devoted. The president of the Relief Society of the stake is a colored woman down there in one of the stakes. If they do the work, why it seems like that the justice of the Lord would approve of giving them the blessing. Now it's all conditional upon the life that they live, isn't it?

**WALTERS:** Well, I thank you for clarifying that for me, because you know, out in the streets out there, there must be at least five, ten different stories about the way this happened.

**RICHARDS:** Well, I've told you exactly what happened.

**WALTERS:** Right. Well, thank you so much. I appreciate it.

**RICHARDS:** If you quote me why you will be telling the truth.

**WALTERS:** Ok, well fine. You don't mind if we quote you then?

**RICHARDS:** No.

**WALTERS:** Ok, that's great!

## A Marvelous Work and a Wonder

**RICHARDS:** Do you have any other questions? You were only supposed to be here fifteen minutes.

**WALTERS:** Well they told Chris that we could have from about 3 to 3:15 of your time. And so we didn't want to

**RICHARDS:** Well we don't mean to do that, but if there is anything special that you want to talk to me about. I have already preached [unintelligible]

**WALTERS:** Okay—Haha

**RICHARDS:** If you read "A Marvelous Work and a Wonder" and you mark anything that you can find that you think's wrong and bring it back to me—I'll prove to you that you're wrong and that the book isn't. I did that with a man who was smart in the scriptures, he would just roll 'em off like that, a

young fellow in his thirties. He came to me one day and I had a little gospel conversation with him and then I had to get him to excuse me to go to an important meeting. And I said “What I’d like to do..” Excuse me, I get dry in my mouth.

**WALTERS:** That’s all right. Go right ahead. Good.

**RICHARDS:** I said “What I’d like to do is to give you a copy of this book that I’ve written. And you read it and you mark everything in it you can find that you think’s wrong and then bring it back to me and I’ll show you that what you thought was wrong was right and that you’re wrong. I like a challenge. A challenge to give something to look forward to.

**VLACHOS:** I accepted

**RICHARDS:** In three days the book came back and I wasn’t here. He left it on the desk. He scribbled on the border all through the book. On the final he turned it over and he wrote this “Up to the time I had a knowledge of this book, my life felt pointless. I did not understand my relationship with God, or with Christ, my fellow man, or those who walk the way of darkness. By reading I am enlightened beyond expectation. I began to become aware of spiritual things which were not apparent before.” Then after scribbling all through the book, in the back he wrote this, “In this book I find no fault. It is an education in itself.”

Well then a man learned in the scriptures could read 450 pages of Mormonism and be asked to find something wrong with it, and he couldn’t. He must find something right. Now you find something wrong.

**WALTERS:** Alright.

**RICHARDS:** If you can, and bring it in to me and I’ll show you where the book’s right and you’re wrong. I might find a comma, or something like that out of place but the idea or the teaching you won’t find out of truth.

## Changes to Scriptures

**VLACHOS:** Okay. When I wrote you the letters, I asked you a question and I wasn’t quite satisfied with the answer I received as to why the Doctrine and

Covenants, the revelations, have been changed from what they originally were. If you compare the original edition of the revelations to what we have today, there has been many changes. Why have there been?

**RICHARDS:** But there aren't [unintelligible] and I have never known any difference. As it is now is the way it's been since I have known what to read. Was it any different before? Now [unintelligible] try to tell us that we've changed the Book of Mormon. There hasn't been anything changed in that Book of Mormon in the way of doctrine or history, but Joseph Smith had hardly even been in school and Oliver Cowdery was unlearned and so I think Brother Talmage, who was an educator, went through and capitalized and put commas and so forth and I don't know what else, I've never made any comparison, but if there were any grammatical errors he may have fixed them there. That's all the changes that have been made in the Book of Mormon.

**VLACHOS:** But as far as you know there have been no changes in the revelations?

**RICHARDS:** what's that?

**VLACHOS:** As far you know

**RICHARDS:** As far as I know there have been no changes at all in any of the revelations. If there have been any changes it would all have been fixing grammar or something like that.

## Lectures on Faith

**VLACHOS:** What about the "Lectures on Faith"?

**RICHARDS:** Oh I read them once when I was a boy and I've never read them since and I couldn't tell you what's in them.

**VLACHOS:** Do you know why they are no longer in the Doctrine and Covenants?

**RICHARDS:** No. Think about it, I mean, we got enough as it is. We don't need to worry about what we don't have. Joseph Smith has given us more revealed truth than any prophet who has ever lived on the face of the earth, as far as the records go.

## Apostle's Safes

**WALTERS:** Now I had understood that before the death of Joseph Fielding Smith, the Apostles had their own safes where they would have some of the church materials, manuscript materials, deposited. They were not in the Historical department. And I had understood that the safes have now been cleaned out and all the historical material is over in the one depository. Is that correct?

**RICHARDS:** I don't know. I never heard anything like that.

**WALTERS:** Well, like, for example, I understood that

**RICHARDS:** You know when a man dies, one of the general authorities, he may turn over certain accumulation.

**WALTERS:** Of his own.

**RICHARDS:** Of his own from the historians [unintelligible]. For instance, my father was the President of the Quorum of the Twelve when he died and he had a stack of journals that he had written and a big book that he had written some of the decisions of The Twelve, and that all came to me until they died and I turned it all over to the Historian's Department.

## Joseph's Seer Stone

**WALTERS:** Well I thought somebody said that Joseph Fielding had had Joseph Smith's seer stone.

**RICHARDS:** No. We don't have that.

**WALTERS:** You don't have that?

**RICHARDS:** No.

**WALTERS:** Oh.

**RICHARDS:** We have got some of the early writings of the Prophet Joseph and things of that kind, and testimony of when Joseph Smith performed a plural

marriage for them, but—things of that kind in the Historian’s office. But we have [unintelligible] church.

**VLACHOS:** Is the seer stone in the historical department?

**RICHARDS:** We don’t have a seer stone. That went back with the plates when [unintelligible]

**WALTERS:** Oh! Okay, I hadn’t heard that. I see. I thought that somebody said that it was still out there somewhere.

**VLACHOS:** Do you know what it looked like?

**RICHARDS:** What?

**VLACHOS:** Do you know what the stone looked like?

**RICHARDS:** No. I’ve never seen it. And I don’t think there is any living man who has seen it.

## Richards Family Tree

**RICHARDS:** My grandmother was the wife of Dr. Willard Richards who was in jail with the Prophet when he was martyred. And the Prophet said in one of his writings that he’d “found a man who could be trusted in all things.” (Some of his friends turned against him) and that man, he said, was Willard Richards. Now he was older than Grandma, he was a counselor of Brigham Young when they came out west here, and he died rather young. Not more older than 29. In the day when they were practicing polygamy Brigham Young advised Brother Richards to raise up posterity to, well advised Franklin D. Richards, to marry Willards wife and raise up posterity to Willard. So my grandmother had 3 children by Willard, one of them is the father of Stephen L Richards who was a counselor to Brother McKay. And those he had three children by Franklin D and my father was one of them. Steve’s father and my father were sons of the same woman by different fathers, but we are all sealed to Willard, so I claim them both!

**WALTERS:** Ha ha—you had two grandfathers!

**RICHARDS:** Yeah. Father said Franklin D never did claim him. He was always father Willard's boy. He said all he ever gave him was a [unintelligible]. I have a letter that Franklin D wrote for my father when he was called to be a patriarch in his own handwriting and his signature. Reminding father that he had two fathers to account to.

**WALTERS:** Well we better be on our way.

Letter from Chris Vlachos  
to Legrand Richards  
11 Sept, 1978

358 West 170 North  
Orem, Utah 84057  
11 September 1978

Elder LeGrand Richards  
LDS Church Office Bldg.  
47 E. South Temple St.  
Salt Lake City, UT 84111

Dear Elder Richards,

I wanted to write and thank you for our visits of August 16th and a week or so ago. Wesley Walters and I appreciated your kindness in spending so much time with us, and for explaining your experiences with regard to the recent revelation authorizing you to give the LDS Priesthood to Negroes. Since I did not take any notes at our first meeting, I wanted to write and verify a few important points which you made before I forget them.

One of the most interesting items which you mentioned was that the whole situation was basically provoked by the Brazilian temple--that is, the Mormon church has had great difficulty obtaining Priesthood leadership among its South American membership; and now with this new temple, a large proportion of those who have contributed money and work to build it would not be able to use it unless the Church changed its stand with regard to giving the Priesthood to Blacks.

I believe that you also mentioned President Kimball as having called each of the Twelve Apostles individually into his office to hear their personal feelings with regard to this issue. While President Kimball was basically in favor of giving the Priesthood to Blacks, didn't he ask each of you to prepare some references for and against the proposal as found in the scriptures?

Another thing which stands out in my mind was the prayer that President Kimball offered in the special prayer circle with the Apostles and First Presidency on June 1st: Didn't you say he prayed essentially that God would give you all the inspiration necessary to do what was pleasing to the Lord and what was best for the blessing of His children?

Elder LeGrand Richards  
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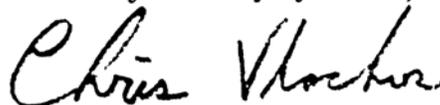
In addition to these details, I have tried to sequentialize what you told us about the revelation. The Twelve and First Presidency had a special prayer circle in the Salt Lake Temple on June 1st, where President Kimball prayed for guidance and inspiration in regard to Negroes. Then, one week later on June 8th, you all met again and the First Presidency presented the letter released on June 9th to all Church leaders to the Twelve in order to hear their reactions. A few members of the Twelve offered suggestions for a few changes in the document. Afterwards, all twelve Apostles voted in favor of the announcement. When we asked you if there was a written revelation, you said that the only written document was the June 9th letter--that it was considered to be sufficient. The next morning, all other general authorities met and voted in favor of the announcement. Then it was released to the press. I feel fairly certain as to the accuracy of these events, but just wanted to double-verify it with you.

I recall Wesley asking if the Mormons still believe that Negroes were less valient in the pre-mortal existence--this being a reason for their black skin. Didn't you say that the Brethren decided that the real reasons are still unknown? I do remember you saying that the Book of Abraham curse doctrine was considered with the pros and cons, and that you all decided that if Negroes live good lives, they are entitled to their blessings. I assume that this means no new interpretation of the Book of Abraham account?

When we talked about intermarriage, I got the feeling that the Mormon Church will not encourage them, but if they occur, the Church will support them. Is my perception accurate?

I guess that's about it. We did talk about other things, but these stick out more in my mind as the important parts. When you reply, please let me know if this accurately represents what you told Wesley and I. I really appreciate your personal concern in answering all our questions.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris Vlachos". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Chris Vlachos

Letter from Legrand  
Richards to Chris Vlachos  
12 Sept, 1978

# THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The Council of the Twelve  
47 East South Temple Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150

September 12, 1978

Chris Vlachos  
358 West 170 North  
Orem, Utah 84057

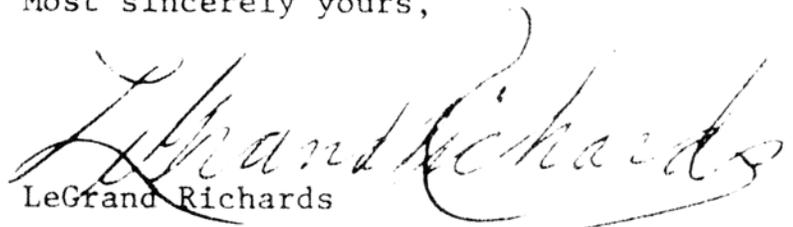
Dear Friend:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of September 11th and I don't quite understand the purpose of your letter. The explanations I gave to you when you were here in my office I did not intend for public use. I thought it would be for your own information. I don't think there is anything more I need to add to what I told you at that time.

It wouldn't please me if you were using the information I gave you when you were here in my office for public purposes. I gave it to you for your own information, and that is where I would like to see it remain.

With all good wishes, I remain,

Most sincerely yours,

  
LeGrand Richards

LR:mb

Letter from Chris Vlachos  
to Legrand Richards  
15 Sept, 1978

358 West 170 North  
Orem, Utah 84057  
15 September 1978

Elder LeGrand Richards  
LDS Church Office Bldg.  
47 E. South Temple St.  
Salt Lake City, UT 84111

Dear Elder Richards,

Thank you for your reply of 12 September. I am writing you again because your response left me very puzzled. After you told Wesley Walters and I the incidents surrounding the recent Negro revelation, we asked you if we could quote what you had said, and you said something to the effect that "Yes, you can quote me, for I have told you exactly what happened." Having been given that permission, I have told many people since our conversation of your personal story. Now you say that it was not intended for public transmission. Of course, I have no intention of publishing any of those events, but having received permission to share the story, I am writing you again to verify the main points. I will continue to share what you told us, and only wish to be sure that what I say is correctly representing what you said.

The basic points of the story as I remember them are:

1. That the whole situation was provoked by the Brazilian temple affair. Apparently, most of the South American members would not have been able to use the temple due to their Negro ancestry.
2. President Kimball personally interviewed each of the Twelve Apostles on the Negro question, and asked you all to prepare references for and against giving Blacks the Priesthood.
3. President Kimball's prayer offered at the June 1st prayer circle was that God would inspire you all to do what was pleasing to Him and what would be best for His children.
4. The letter sent to all Church officials was first presented to the Twelve Apostles by the First Presidency, and voted upon (affirmatively). This occurred one week after President Kimball's prayer for guidance.

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5. The official letter mentioned in point #4 was the only written document involved in the policy change. No written revelation or account of inspiration was otherwise produced.
6. No new interpretation of the Book of Abraham "curse" upon the descendants of Cain will be offered by the Mormon Church. You said that we still do not know why Blacks were cursed, and that the lack of valency in the pre-mortal existence is not a doctrine. The general feeling of the Brethren is that if Negroes live righteous lives, they are entitled to the same blessings as other members of the Church.
7. With reference to intermarriage, the Church does not encourage them, but if they occur, the Church will support them and allow temple sealings to take place.

As I mentioned in the first paragraph, you originally told us that we could quote you as having related these facts. This we will continue to do, but I truly wish to have your verification of the above seven points so that we do not mis-quote you.

Thank you once again for your personal concern with this matter.

Sincerely yours,



Chris Vlachos

Letter from Legrand  
Richards to Chris Vlachos  
19 Sept, 1978

# THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The Council of the Twelve  
47 East South Temple Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150

September 19, 1978

Chris Vlachos  
358 West 170 North  
Orem, Utah 84057

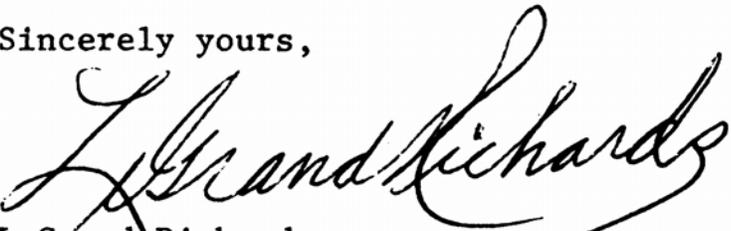
Dear Mr. Vlachos:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of September 15th.

The reason I replied to your last letter as I did was because some time ago I received a letter from someone down in your area, complaining about what you were saying. I don't remember just who the letter was from but I didn't feel that my interview with you was something that you would want to be publicizing all over. I don't have any objections to your telling it to a friend, as you have stated in your letter now of the 15th. I see nothing wrong in your statements reviewing our interview.

I send my best regards.

Sincerely yours,



LeGrand Richards

LR:mb