

Sisters,

My name is Carolyn Barlow. I am writing to all involved on all sides of this issue concerning the women's council. I would like to present some ideas to you all but first I would like to give a brief description of my background so that you might understand my perspective.

I was born and raised in the Davis County Cooperative Society, aka 'the order' or the Kingston polygamist group. I began to "wake up" from all of that as a teenager and have since been removed from the group. In my waking up process, over the last 13 years I have attended many courses and seminars/ trainings and retreats, seeking to understand the process of healing my wounds and how that is the groundwork for healing my relationships. Through all of this, I have completely transformed into a different person, finding much healing in myself and my relationships, many of which were considered 'impossible' to find any resolution to. I achieved this by undergoing many processes of coming to face my own demons and wounds, discovering and being accountable for the false belief systems I have formed from those wounds, and changing the lens through which I view the world. In other words, I have had to discover my filters/ blind spots and false beliefs/ traditions, repent of them and learn something different. I don't claim to have this all figured out as I am still doing this work. To this day, I am still discovering more.

I recently have become aware of the issue among the women over the women's council. Over the last couple of weeks I have been reading things from all sides of this dispute. I have felt not to choose sides or get mixed up in the emotions but to simply observe and seek to understand all sides. As a result of the trainings and experiences I have had, I am seeing this completely differently than most. What I am seeing is a big opportunity and potential breakthrough for the movement at large if we will take it. I'm going to do my best to lay it out for you.

This last summer when reading the Covenant of Christ, all of the healing work I have done suddenly came into a new perspective in understanding the gospel and coming to Christ. It was also made more clear to me how these tools can be used to resolve disputes and find unity. From the Covenant of Christ, I was able to see two paths an individual or a group of people take. They either in progression come to Christ or in digression separate from Christ.

This process begins the same way for all people. They were blind unable to see, and deaf unable to hear. In other words they are in the accusers' chains of darkness. A messenger is sent to give a message from God to bring them out of their blindness. Because they begin on a false foundation, they are shaken to their core when the truth is seen and heard. Here is where they make the choice on which path to continue. The prideful respond in anger because the very foundation they are standing upon is about to fall from under them. In their fear, they harden their hearts seeking to hang onto that which they have. The humble are willing to sacrifice all they have, letting the old foundation crumble so that they can build a correct foundation on the truth. As a result, the humble are given more light until they live in peace with no contention among them. The prideful fight among themselves until they destroy one another.

In every case, contention is the result of clinging to a false foundation, and peace is the result of being willing to build on a correct foundation.

This is written in plainness for us to see that we too are choosing to walk in one of these two paths. When we are triggered or we feel shaken up, it should be a clue to us that we are believing a lie and not standing on solid ground. This is a signal that we need to repent. I want to dive into the first few steps and explain what the Lord has said to us about our condition as a movement. Maybe it will shed some light on why we are in this predicament together.

Path to Unity/ Peace in Christ	Path to Separation/ Destruction
Sitting in blindness/ darkness	
Hear the word of God usually through a messenger which causes them to feel triggered/ shaken to their core. (Wake up call)	
Humble- Willing to hear and see their awful condition, Faith-willing to ask for the truth	Prideful-unwilling/ refusing to hear and see their awful condition. Will not ask or receive the truth
Repent- wake up to awful situation	Remain in blindness and deafness, respond in anger, will not repent
Receive New Eyes/ New Heart, Receive Baptism of Fire/ Holy Ghost which gives further instruction, light and knowledge. Surrender to truth	Become more hardhearted, cast out the prophets and persecute the righteous. Aspire for control over others
Firm in their Testimony- firm foundation/ can no longer be shaken	They are stubborn on their sandy foundation, shaken (which causes anger)
They are gathered, live in peace, no contention	Righteous are taken from among them, those who are left divide and contend
They become a people of one heart and one mind with no poor among them.	War and bloodshed, in some cases to the complete destruction of that civilization.

In the prayer for the covenant, we read (T&C 156:14), *“It is written that those who will not harden their hearts will receive a greater portion of your word, until they know the mysteries of God in full. It is also written that those who will harden their hearts will receive a lesser portion of your word, until they know nothing concerning the mysteries of God....”* In the chart above we see this. The prideful lost all knowledge, their blindness increased, and it resulted in division and destruction. **“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”** (Hosea 2:1) The humble gained further light and knowledge of God's mysteries and were able to live in peace with one another.

Continuing with vs 14, **“We seek to leave behind a hard heart, and to be open to receiving a greater portion of your word, and to know your mysteries, and obtain your grace for us as a**

people, that we may become yours.” If we don’t know the mysteries of God, how can we become one so that we may become His? If we are not one we are not His. **Can it be that the mysteries of God have something to do with how to live in peace and harmony with one another?** I believe so.

In T&C 156:16 We read “O Lord, **remove our blindness, forgive our sins and weaknesses, give to us a new heart that we may become children of the Most High God....**” We have acknowledged that we are blind and need a new heart. In response to our plea to be given a new heart and new eyes so we can see clearly, the Lord told us to go and obtain a new heart. **He then told us the sources of our blindness** and how it has been the source of our divisions even telling us we have been unable to see one another clearly because of our blindness.

Reasons for our blindness.

1. False brethren/ false traditions: The Lord explained to us that many parts of the gospel were altered and discarded by false brethren who intended to blind the eyes and harden the hearts of others in order to obtain power and authority over them. (T&C157:14)
2. We were likened to a man who seeks good fruit from a neglected vineyard and told that **we neglect to do His word:** (vs 17) and **forsake His words to do them.** (Vs 18)
3. Refusing to receive the truth. T&C 157:16 “I desire to heal you from your awful state of blindness so that you may see clearly my will to do it..... **yet you refuse to receive the truth, even when it is given to you in plainness.** How can you who pursue the truth yet remain unable to behold your own weakness before me?”
4. Our past wounds and walls: The Lord also told us twice that **we have all been wounded.** He told us to obtain a new heart for our hearts have been pierced through with sorrows because of how the world has treated us, and we have then turned around and scarred one another, yet we are **unable to see** that we have done this to each other. (Because of our blindness) Our visages have been so marred that our **hardness, mistrust, suspicions, resentments, fear and jealousies and anger toward each other** bear outward witness of our inner selves. (Vs. 49 and 51)

Many workshops I attended were designed to bring us face to face with our wounds. If we were willing and humble we were able to go through the process of discovering our false belief systems that were formed at the time of the trauma/ event that caused the wound. After discovering the false belief, we would then discover a ‘self protective covenant’ that was formed to make sure that that never happened again! We were able to see our personal biases that clouded our entire perspective and how we viewed the world.

Here is an example of what this looks like. As a child I had an experience that was deeply wounding. On a subconscious level, I began to believe “I’m not enough”. I told myself, I will never trust anyone again so that I never have to be hurt again (self protective covenant). The wall I put up and projected onto others was “you are going to hurt me, so I’m not letting you in”. I

kept all of my relationships casual and never let anyone into my heart. I wondered my whole life why people continued to walk away from me and not like me. I concluded it was because "I'm not enough". I struggled with relationships my whole life until I discovered this. And I have since learned that most if not all of my conflicts and disputes were a result of my wounds, false beliefs, and self protective covenants and biases. All of these conflicts were opportunities to find peace with myself, others, and God.

All of our false beliefs, (I'm not enough, I'm not loved, I'm not worthy etc) are chains that the accuser puts on us to get us to put up walls that keep one another and God out. These lies and attacks on our identities are the root cause of all of our disputations. They cloud our judgments and view of one another and influence our personal biases.

All of the things the Lord listed, (**hardness, mistrust, suspicions** etc..) are results of a self protective covenant formed after being wounded. They bare "*outward witness of our inner selves*". We are projecting them onto one another. "**You do not notice your misconduct toward each other because you think you are justified in this.**" Vs 49. We just think the other person is the one at fault. We blame and play the victim.

One of the things I have studied and learned for many years is archetypal patterns and behaviors. The 3 main patterns we all play out are.

1. Playing the victim or victimizing others included, blaming, accusing, and seeking validation or expecting rescuing, It is refusing to see where you can take accountability.
2. Another one would be doing something that goes against our honor and integrity for perceived security. This includes trying to fit in or change who we are or what we stand for because of fear of rejection or the need to survive. When we do that then our pride and ego steps in as a false identity, needing to appear as important or good, someone we are not, etc.
3. We sabotage ourselves and relationships out of fear of rejection or failure, and by projecting all of our wounds onto each other. Then when the relationship fails we continue to play the victim - blame others, refusing to be accountable.

All of these patterns bring contention and disputation. Another thing we do, that we have been warned against, is to pull God into our disputes. All of these things are going on right now among us.

In 2017 we were told in the answer to the prayer for Covenant, "*Even strong disagreements should not provoke anger, **nor to invoke my name in vain as if I had part in your every dispute.***"

We were told again in the recent June 20th revelation "**Let everyone take care in how they use my name, as if I had part in their every dispute, for many things provoking arguments**

among the people are born of **pride, stubbornness, aspiring for control, and reckless indifference toward me and one another.**

How do we overcome this awful state of blindness? What can we as a movement do right now in this situation we are in?

If we look at the terminology used to describe us, and compare it to the terminology used to describe the 2 paths it becomes clear what type of condition we are in. We still suffer from **hard hearts, blindness, and contentions and divisions**. We still have **pride and stubbornness, and aspire for control etc**. This does not mean that it is too late to repent. The Lord said "I bear with the people still and patiently await the return of natural fruit in my vineyard. Do not be misled by my patience, for the time is quickly approaching for the harvest of my vineyard." We need to rise up. Remember the paths start out the same. The thing that divides the wicked from the righteous is pride vs. humility. **It's the unwillingness or willingness to ask and receive**. The path to Christ is the willingness to wake up and **humble ourselves** in order to find healing from our awful state of blindness. Let's look at some ways to do this.

Archetypes- In the archetypal language, we are also pointed to the willingness to wake up, **look and see**:

1. Where we have played the victim so we can 'step into **100% accountability**. This means no blaming or accusing.
2. Where we have been out of our honor and integrity so we can **renew our integrity**. If we can recognize our fear of survival, rejection or issues of security we will see where we need to confess in order to step back into our honor. This requires **humility**.
3. Where we have caused sabotage based on assumptions, or fears or gossip, and personal bias, and instead setting a **clear intention to be a source of peace and stand on truth**. This can only be done if we will see the need for repentance and renew our accountability, honor and integrity.

All of these are actions to be taken to wake up to our awful situation so that we can walk the path to unity. I want to invite us all in the movement to go through these processes of renewing our integrity, stepping into accountability and holding a space of peace as we maneuver through all of these things the next couple of weeks. If we can hold this peace in ourselves, we can create it outside of ourselves.

Covenant of Christ- The Lord has been so good to us, and so patient, in spite of our unwillingness to receive what he has been trying to give us. I think He sees that we really are wanting to get this right but our works are falling short. As an effort to help us to see this path so much more plainly (even though it was already "*given to us in plainness..*" vs 16) He gave to us the Covenant of Christ. Not only has He given us this valuable book in our language but He has seen where we specifically are stumbling. He has clarified the text **for us** so we can get what He

is trying to tell **us**! He is trying to reach us any way He can, to give us a chance to come to Him. I would like to encourage everyone to study the Covenant of Christ with all these topics in mind.

Parables- The words in the answer to the prayer for covenant points us to 3 different parables from the Sermon on the Mount: The beam/ mote, the firm/sandy foundation, and the good/ bitter fruit. We can find them in 3 Nephi chapter 14. These parables give insight on 3 different ways to do the work of binding the spirit of the accuser within us. For the sake of making this as short as possible, I'm not going to go into it much here. However I will say that not only do we need to refrain from being the accuser, we need to be set free from the chains of the accuser, and his accusations against us. We can observe our fruits to know what our inner vessels are. We can discover our beams (wounds and self protective covenants) by the motes we see in others, and we can allow our sandy foundation to fall when we are triggered/shaken and build a firm one by **doing** the work. Vs 10. *"You think Satan will be bound a thousand years, and it will be so, but do not understand your own duty to bind that spirit within you so that you give no head to accuse others....."*

Coming to Him- The Lord has invited us to come unto Him and be saved. *"How do men come unto me? It is by faith, repentance, and baptism, which bring **the holy ghost, to then show you all things you must know.**"* Vs 21 (The mysteries and knowledge that is needed to then live peace with one another.)

The Lord has also told us T&C 157:3 ***"For you to unite, I must admonish and instruct you, for my will is to have you love one another."***

We all remember the story of Moses trying to bring the people up the mountain to approach the Lord for themselves. They became fearful, rejected it and made Moses into a strong man asking him to talk to God for them. Everyday all day long Moses listened to and resolved their disputes until his father in law Jethro advised him to set up a new structure for resolving disputes that looks a bit like a pyramid. In this system they were able to bring the toughest disputes to Moses and the smaller ones to those placed under Him. This became their form of government.

The issue every society faces is How are we to be governed? How do we keep things in order and get along with one another? How do we resolve conflicts and disputations? Every society has sought to solve this dilemma using kings and queens, judges and democracy or communism etc. We have an understanding that the government of God will be different and all other governments will come to an end. What does that look like though? That is the mystery we seek. That is the very question and dispute we are facing as a movement right now.

What would the government have looked like for the children of Israel had they ascended that mountain and approached God? Did He invite them to come to Him and offer to resolve their disputes for them? Did He offer to be their King? The Lord has offered to do that for us. We need to ascend the mountain and approach God. He has invited us to come unto him many times. *"How oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chicks under her wings but ye would not."* It's our disputations resulting from our false foundation that causes us to not be able

to gather. Yet he has offered to give us His part if we will approach Him together. He wants to give us more understanding and has offered to give us more, But He laments that **we have refused to come to Him**. He cannot give us what we will not ask for.

“This principle of asking and receiving on the one hand, and the spirit of prophecy and revelation on the other are directly related. Without an inquiry, you are not able to receive.”
(Second comforter pg 92.)

Nephi and his brothers are my favorite examples for the two paths. Laman and Lemual taking the path that eventually led them away from God's spirit, and Nephi taking the path that led to peace. In part of their journey, Nephi found Laman and Lemual arguing. He asked them, *“Have you asked the Lord? They replied: “We haven’t—the Lord doesn’t reveal any such thing to us.” Nephi then asked them, “Why don’t you keep the Lord’s commandments? Why are you determined to damn yourselves **because of the hardness of your hearts**? Don’t you remember what the Lord has said? - **if you choose not to harden your hearts and ask me in faith, believing you will receive, consistently keeping my commandments, these things will certainly be revealed to you.**”* (CoC 1 Nephi 15:6-11)

In the second comforter, Denver expounded on the story of the Lord’s visit with Nephites. ‘The Lord explained to the Nephites that he told His disciples in Jerusalem that He had other sheep He was going to go visit. He then told the Nephites that they were the sheep He was referring to. He explained that He could not tell his disciples at Jerusalem anything more about the Nephites unless they asked. He said, **“If you want to learn from Christ, you must have belief, make an inquiry and have a soft heart.”** But His disciples lacked some or all of these and He was not going to force the information on them. Because they did not ask, they did not receive any further information. After He explained this to the Nephites, He proceeded to tell them that He had even more sheep that He is going to visit. After He gets through explaining this, Christ spends time looking at the group of Nephites and **“they just stare back without question or inquiry, He laments they are just not getting it.”** They missed the very point that He just taught. In response to His clearest of declarations, there is no inquiry! They did not ask, **They only listened to what the Lord was willing to tell them but they were unwilling to ask to learn more.** This is a clear example of how the Lord is disappointed when we fail to ask Him. It is learning that is the most difficult thing. **“It is learning, being taught, and receiving further light and knowledge which always challenges the human mind the most.** Here we are talking about **learning through revelation** not merely by study.”(second comforter pg 96-97)

The Lord asked us as a people, “What have you learned? What ought you to have learned?” Then gave His instruction to us to **“Love one another, labor willing alongside each other, learn what you ought and when I ask you to labor, do so wisely, even if you know not beforehand what you will find.”** T&C 176:12 Have we made the same mistake as the Nephites? **Have we failed to ask so we could learn the right thing?**

Back to the Second Comforter. “You are unwilling to be taught if you are unwilling to ask. How awful it is to think our failure to be instructed by the perfect teacher causes Him to groan

*within Himself and be troubled by the wickedness of those of us whose **lack of faith prevents asking**. The answers will not be forced upon you. If you are unwilling to ask then the heavens cannot give what you are unwilling to receive.... For those who are willing to receive always ask. **Asking is the way those who are ready identify themselves for Heaven.*** Right now, we have an opportunity to reason together, labor wisely alongside each other and to ask.

Going back to vs 21 "How do men come unto me? It is by **faith, repentance, and baptism**, which bring the holy ghost, to then show you all things you must know."

Having faith includes asking. When we ask, we are then able to be shown where we are in need for repentance so we can then wake up from our awful blindness and repent. From there we enter the waters of baptism where we commit to following Him, receive the Holy Ghost which then reveals to us all things we must know until we know the mysteries in full. From there we are able to live in peace.

Again the Lord has told us T&C 157:3 "**For you to unite, I must admonish and instruct you, for my will is to have you love one another.**" And he has invited us to come to Him to receive more. "**Pray together in humility and together meekly present your dispute to me, and if you are contrite before me, I will tell you my part.**"

In the very next paragraph after giving us this invitation, we are told "Remember there are **others** who know nothing, as yet of my work now underway...." We are the people who are seeking to assist in gathering the **other lost sheep**. The Lord just told us about these **others** right after He invited us to come to Him to resolve our disputes for us and receive His part. Does His part include the mysteries of how we live in peace with one another so we can actually reach out to and gather with His other sheep? Have we been missing out on more because we have been unwilling to ask?

I want to suggest that this dispute was given to us as a gift. That the Lord has been trying to reach us and seeking to set us free from our blind minds and hard hearts. It is an opportunity for us to come together and meekly present this to the Lord for His part so that we can obtain the knowledge of the mysteries of God and learn of His ways. He has been so patient with us and so loving and so inviting. Like He did with the Nephites, He stands here, waiting for us to ask Him so that we can receive what He so longs to give us.

I am inviting all of us women on all sides of this issue to come join together in prayer at this women's conference and to bring our dispute to the Lord. He asked us to pray together in **humility** which was the deciding factor that places us on the Lord's path to peace and unity. He asked us to meekly present our dispute to Him and if we are contrite before him, He promises to tell us His part. He is offering to condescend to speak to us. I would like to invite the Lord to be there with us and to give us His part.

I love you all. I'm grateful to be on this journey with you all. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

With love - Carolyn Barlow