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Fellower Mormon-ellers:

The following was an upload to the Religion Forum on Compuserve. Uploaded with permission of the author (Paul Toscano) it is a transcript of the Stake Meeting revolving around the re-organization of ex-President Poelman's stake. Despite my temptation to edit it (at least to put in paragraph breaks) I am offering it as I received it.

Report

Special Stake Conference

Monument Park North Stake

Salt Lake City, Utah

August 14, 1994

by Paul and Margaret Toscano

Presiding: President Boyd K. Packer, acting president of the Council of the Twelve. Elder John E. Fowler, of the First Council of the Seventy, area president for the Utah North Area (as of August 15, 1994, this area has been reorganized to include the central part of the state previously included in the Utah Central Area, formerly under the presidency of Elder Malcolm Jeppsen).

Purpose: To sustain a new stake presidency occasioned by the release of stake president Bryan Lloyd Poelman, the named partner in the law firm of Kirton, McConkie, and Poelman, which serves as general counsel for the LDS Church.

Background: President Poelman was released following his arrest on July 16, 1994 and his subsequent plea of guilty to the class C misdemeanor of soliciting a prostitute and engaging in oral sex. South Salt Lake City Attorney Kevin Watkins, a member of Poelman's stake became aware of the charges. Watkins did not act for several days, expecting Poelman to come forward and report his arrest and charge to the Utah State Bar and to church leaders.

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When it became apparent to Watkins that Poelman would not be forthcoming, Watkins reported the matter to church and bar officials. President Poelman resigned from his law firm, and action was instituted to release him from the stake presidency. He was released on Sunday August 14, 1994 and excommunicated that evening by the new stake presidency and the high council of the Monument Park North Stake. Since then, he continues to work for his law firm, but whether he will continue there as an attorney or as a partner is unclear. On August 30, 1994 it was reported in the Salt Lake Tribune that Poelman had withdrawn his guilty plea so that he has the option to enter a plea in abeyance which could result in no criminal record.

MINUTES

Special Stake Conference
Monument Park North Stake
August 14, 1994

Opening hymn and prayer.

Stake business: Ordinary stake business was conducted, including the release of two high councillors and some auxiliary officers, and the announcement of men ordained to offices of the Melchizedek Priesthood. Release of old stake presidency: President Boyd K. Packer, by order of the First Presidency, released the stake presidency consisting of Bryan Lloyd Poelman, Robert Lewis Bauman, and Melvin Garfield Cook with a vote of thanks. Calling of new stake presidency: President Packer announced the new stake presidency to consist of Robert Lewis Bauman, stake president; M. Garfield Cook, first counselor; and Kevin E. Anderson, second counselor. Announcement of agenda: President Bauman then introduced the agenda for the meeting. President Poelman would speak first, followed by the members of the new stake presidency. There would be an intermediate hymn sung by the congregation ("I Know That My Redeemer Lives"), followed by Elder John E. Fowler, and President Boyd K. Packer. President Poelman: Beloved brothers and sisters. I appreciate Brother Packer's willingness to let me speak. I cannot say everything I am feeling. Many of you would be surprised at what those feelings are. I sincerely pray the Lord will give me utterance. I have felt the sweetness of the gospel. The goodness of God is great. It is a privilege to be born in this dispensation. I know the strength of the Church, the goodness of the people. In my youth I received a testimony of the truth of this work and that testimony has never slackened. I have a special love for Joseph Smith. I am grateful for the strength of the Church and its present leadership. There is nothing about the doctrine or the leadership that I do not support. I have seen the Church in operation. I have had many choice privileges. I have had stalwart mentors. Those present here are dear to my heart. I am thankful for the thoughtful comments and expression, the uplifted hands. In the last weeks we have been flooded with sentiments that have been so appropriate. So many have shown such kindness to Catherine and the children. Two and a half years ago this stake was created. I was called with Bruce S. Sorenson and H. Roger Boyer. President Boyer was later called as a mission president and President Sorenson concluded his services. I sustain the actions of this conference. President Bauman is the one. We served as each others' bishop. He is a man of God. The Lord prepared him for this call. I wish to express my love for President Cook. And the calling of President Anderson was no surprise. I see the gospel in a clearer dimension. I have learned more about myself, the Savior, the gospel, and the adversary. I have been concerned about people having faith in me, but my faith is anchored in Jesus Christ. I am thankful for the plan of redemption. My family has had struggles. These have been too public. The Lord has blessed us with healing powers. I am grateful for a choice companion, Catharine. I love her very much. I want to be worthy of her. I hope that anyone I have offended will forgive me. My prayers are for the reaffirmation of their religious conviction. I am aware of human frailties. I seek forgiveness. I ask

the Lord to bless each of us with healing in his wings. I have faith and confidence in the triumph of good over evil. Mercy will overflow justice. Our lives will be purged. Some sins are proclaimed from the housetops, others are more private. I am a witness to the goodness of God. The way to successful living is to keep the commandments. In this there is both safety and peace. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Bauman: When driving in a storm, the light breaks forth from the darkness. The Savior's resurrection dispelled the darkness of apostasy. "I am the light of the world," he said. This calling [to be stake president] is unexpected, but I want to serve the Lord. I am aware of my inadequacies, but I ask the help of the Lord. I express my love to my wife, my gratitude to Elder Packer and Elder Fowler for their kindness and sensitivity in the past few weeks.

President Cook: This is the work of the Lord. I am filled with mixed emotions as, perhaps, many of you are. I think of Nephi when he had to rely on the Lord to build the ship to a new world. I think of Ammon, who had to act alone, it seemed, but was filled with the strength of the Lord. I appreciate the opportunity to work with President Bauman. I appreciate his sweet spirit.

President Anderson: I am astonished by this calling. I feel others are more qualified, wise and accomplished. I am grateful for the last stake presidency. I am grateful for the many kindnesses that have been showered upon us by the members of the stake. When I think of what it means to be lifted up into the stake presidency, I think of how the lame man must have felt when he was lifted up by Peter and given the strength to walk again.

Intermediate hymn: The congregation sang "I Know That My Redeemer Lives"

President John E. Fowler (First Council of the Seventy and Area President): No one but President Boyd K. Packer can testify of what I wish to say. When Moses was told he could not enter the promised land, he petitioned simply that the Lord would put in his stead a man that could lead the people of Israel. The First Presidency made the assignment to this stake to President Boyd K. Packer. He invited me to assist him. I had only one prayer and that was that my mind would be one with Boyd K. Packer's, in whom I have explicit trust. We interviewed the leading men of the stake. The spirit touched our hearts. The Lord has made every preparation needful. It was clear to me that that which has occurred in this reorganization is precisely what the Lord would have done if he were here. Men are called of God by prophecy and the laying on of hands. I am a certain witness of the divinity of this call. When I contemplate my weaknesses and inappropriate or untoward acts, I think of a scripture: "I the Lord forgive sins unto those who confess and ask for forgiveness and have not sinned unto death." I seek forgiveness every night. I plead for mercy. I testify that we are led by prophets, seers, and revelators. This is not the work of men, but of Jesus Christ as he gives direction to those in positions of responsibility. I am grateful for the sustaining vote you have given to those called of God today. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Boyd K. Packer (acting president of the Council of the Twelve Apostles): I neglected to sustain to new high councilors. There is no excuse for making this mistake, but made it anyway. I hope you will forgive me. This is the first mistake I have made, at least in this congregation [laughter]. Perhaps there is an excuse. I am a little tired. I just returned from Europe where I was travelling in Switzerland with President Howard W. Hunter and Sister Hunter. We had meetings on Monday and Tuesday. But Wednesday was a recreation day. We went to the top of Mount St. Gothard (?). It required four separate cable car changes to get to the top, which was well over 10,000 feet above sea level. It overlooks the Jungfrau. President Hunter took the cable car to the top of the Matternhorn. I had to return early. They will return later this week. This meeting is

conducted under the influence of the spirit. It is given to the brethren to conduct meetings by the spirit of the Lord. Brother Poelman knows the doctrines of the gospel well. He stepped forward in a way that took courage. He and his wife and family will be blessed. Alma in his teachings to his son Corianton outlined the plan of happiness. Mercy and justice are the same. I want to teach you something.

It is like a rod. One end is mercy and the other justice. Justice can't exist without mercy and mercy can't exist without justice. Repentance can't come without punishment. I felt relieved about President and sister Poelman. Whatever else will take place, there will be no eternal consequences. There was a church leader who had some stones on his mantel piece to remind him of the story in the New Testament, the story of the woman who was brought before Jesus. The law by Christ's birth was fulfilled. When they brought the woman in adultery, Jesus said, let him who is without sin cast a stone. The stones remain on the mantelpiece, never having been thrown. President and sister Poelman's lives need to be private now. Things put right will have no eternal consequences. These are important learning experiences. The Lord directed us to be brothers and sisters. We are a family. A family keeps things private. A family draws close together. These things are to be kept private. I would like to say a word about President Hunter. We are often asked: Does the president of the twelve always become president of the Church, or can someone else be chosen. Yes to both questions. Yes, because the Lord could choose someone else to be president of the council of the twelve. President Howard W. Hunter was the senior apostle and president of the twelve. The senior apostle always becomes the president of the Church. The next senior apostle always stands next to the president. On the death of the president, this next senior apostle automatically and immediately is the president of the Church. When Joseph Smith was killed, the leaders did not know what to do. Proposal about what to do were presented. Sidney Rigdon proposed that Joseph Smith III should be president with Rigdon as caretaker of the Church. Then the twelve returned. Brigham Young was in a railroad station in Massachusetts when the prophet was killed. During the succession period, Brigham Young spoke and was transfigured so he sounded and looked like Joseph Smith. Brigham Young said, You can have anyone as president (Ann Lee), but the President of the Twelve hold the keys. Of course, when the president dies, there are 14 members of the twelve. This is OK. It is only temporary. We came together and confirmed Howard W. Hunter as president. Brother Hinckley is President of the Quorum of the Twelve. He is in the First Presidency. So an acting president must be chosen to preside over the Twelve. (Brigham Young Jr. was chosen to be acting president, but they called it acting senior apostle pro temp). The second senior apostle is Thomas S. Monson. He too is in the First Presidency. I am the third senior apostle. They had to reach down three to find an acting president of the twelve. When Brigham Young led the Church, it took three and a half years (until December 26, 1847) before the First Presidency was reorganized. When Brigham Young died, the twelve ruled for three years. When John Taylor died, there was also a period when the twelve ruled. It looked like Wilford Woodruff was going to die, but he didn't. He lived another 21 years. Wilford Woodruff said no more waiting to reorganize the First Presidency. Eleven days after Wilford Woodruff died, the First Presidency was reorganized. After this, the First Presidency has been reorganized very quickly after the death of each succeeding president. President Hunter is frail of body, but spiritually robust. He is presiding over the Church. What do we need in a Church president? An athlete? A genius? A special occupation? No. We need a prophet. One who is wise. One who has judicial wisdom. He will preside as long as it pleases the Lord. This is the Order of the Church. There is no politicking to be in the First Presidency or to be President of the Church.

The apostles do not become apostles by their own nomination. The organization of the Church is marvelous. Such an organization could not have entered into the mind of man, so greed and self-aggrandizement are not there. I remember going to a conference in Washington with President Harold B. Lee. We were both weary. We were walking through the airport. Elder Lee

turned to me and said, "I've known men who aspire to high church office. They should be granted their wish. It would be punishment enough." This stake will be all right. I leave you with my testimony and my blessing. I know that some youngsters are puzzled; I bless them to come to understanding, resolution, and steadiness. The adversary's work is offset by the work of the Lord. I leave my blessing on Brothers Poelman, Bauman, the stake presidency and the stake. I was apprehensive about this meeting. But it was washed away by the spirit and by the admonition that the meeting be conducted by the spirit.

Meeting closed: The meeting concluded with a closing hymn and a prayer.

Excommunication: On Sunday evening, August 14, 1994, Bryan Lloyd Poelman was excommunicated from the LDS Church by the stake presidency and high council of the Monument Park North Stake.

Note: There was no other meeting associated with this stake conference. Specifically, no Saturday night meeting was held. It was rumored that there was a correspondent from Time magazine in the audience.

This report was drafted from handwritten notes made by Paul and Margaret Toscano who were present at this meeting. They were typed on August 28, 1994 and updated on September 1, 1994.

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