



Keith and Myrle Adams

President Adams served April 20, 1997 to October, 2006

Interviewed - November 8, 2017

Everyone knew there would be a change when President Crayk was called to be a mission president. At that time, I was serving as bishop of the 9th ward and assumed I'd continue in that office. While driving to work a few weeks earlier with my mind totally on work, a voice came to me and said "Garner Meads will be involved in the new presidency." It was very clear. I was surprised because the subject had not been on my mind. "Interesting, I don't know why I need to know that."

Two or three weeks later in a stake leadership meeting with President Liljenquist conducting, a second impression came to me, "President Liljenquist will be involved in the new stake presidency. My thought, "Okay, that's interesting." I never felt I'd be involved, even during an interview with Elder Eyring. When the call came, I knew I'd been given the impressions as a kind of a gift to know who my counselors would be since I'd never served in a stake calling and didn't know people in the stake. Otherwise I doubt I could have made the right call.

A lot of us were interviewed when Elder Eyring came to make the change. When we were set apart he gave us great council. He wanted us to operate a little differently, different from most presidencies. Lots of presidencies operate with the stake president seeking inspiration and the counselors sustaining and supporting him. Elder Eyring challenged us that rather than do that, but not to act until as a presidency we had received joint revelation. We tried to do that and this led to a feeling of unity and a great feeling of loyalty which spread throughout the stake. We were so united. I felt we enjoyed joint revelation.

Memorable Events and Highlights

Our stake was assigned to build a float for the 24th of July parade and of all the beautiful floats in the parade that year, our float received the “People’s Choice Award.” Jeff Walker was involved, as well as Dean and Sandy Mackintosh and many others. We were all really excited and happy about winning this award.

The Conference Center down town was dedicated in 2002 and starting from scratch, they needed a huge number of volunteers from the valley willing to serve as hosts. This was not just for the dedication but would be ongoing. We had a huge outpouring of volunteers from the stake. Not just for the Conference Center but also for the Winter Olympics taking place that year. Lots of wonderful people volunteered and took advantage of these opportunities.

Another event was the announcement of the Draper Temple. I got to participate in the ground breaking. By the time the temple was dedicated I had been released. President Parker might have some good stories about the stake’s involvement in the open house and dedication.

Another event that took place during my presidency was a major overhaul of the stake center. It was shut down so renovations could take place. All the furniture was taken out and all the paintings were taken down from the walls. Everything was moved from the offices but we were still conducting interviews and people were still being set apart there. Near the very end I went into the stake president’s office and had a very unusual feeling that the building had become just a building. That maybe we take for granted the spirit in the chapel but it was clear to me then that the spirit was gone. This was no longer a sacred building. The impression was unexpected and surprising to me but a strong testimony of what I’d taken for granted. Prior to that time the spirit had always been there—more or less-- but always there. The re-dedication was a special experience and the spirit returned. I enjoyed participating in that event.

Another major activity in the stake was the trek to Martins Cove. Years ago the youth participated in a trek but the current youth had never participated in a pioneer trek. As a presidency, we decided to focus on the sacrifices the early pioneers made in coming here. Martins Cove was really a special experience for our youth and those who served as leaders. Nearly 500 people participated including the Mas and Pas. We shared lots of pioneer stories to get them prepared. They learned about those that survived and some that didn’t. Each was given a name—some were told to go one way because they died; while those who survived took a different path. We talked about the second rescue where the temple work was done for those who did not survive. Then we had everyone come together on a bridge and brought them across so we were all together again. There was a remarkable spiritual out pouring on that trek. A DVD was made and used at the Visitor’s Center in 2004 for the instruction of other stakes.

At one time we had over 150 missionaries out from Willow Creek Stake. There was such a huge number that we were going to 2 or 3 farewells or welcome homes, each Sunday. I would be setting apart two or three young missionaries every Tuesday night. It was a great experience to

do that. Probably Temple marriage interviews was another of the sweet things I got to do. Almost 1,000 people got married in the temple during the time I served as stake president. I hope our presidency is remembered as one that tried to teach people to love the scriptures and learn their duty. Lots of faithful young men and women were growing as they served the Lord and then got married in the temple.

We also initiated some administrative changes. We made youth conference a ward activity one year, followed by a stake activity the next year; then a ward conference, followed by a family conference. We wanted families to assume the same responsibilities as bishops and stake leaders did as they guided families by promoting spiritual time, service time, family values, etc.

President Adams' Release

One of the hardest things you experience is when the mantle of authority leaves. I missed the close interaction with leaders and members of the stake. One hard thing to let go of was that I clearly went from having impressions to recognizing that I was now simply a member of a ward. I had less involvement in the lives of so many people I had come to respect and love. The mantle of authority was clearly gone. In fact, it was more evident when it left than when I was called to be the Stake President. "Yes, you have done things that the Lord wanted you to do but the mantle isn't yours any more so support the new leaders."

You lose some of the feelings of involvement. Still it's wonderful to go to malls and have people yell out "President Adams!" It's so nice to feel that these relationships have continued. But there is clearly a difference concerning stewardship and the right to receive revelation. Two sisters wanted to council with me after I was released. I told them that they need to go to their bishop or to the new stake president. Both said, "You gave such good council would you be willing to just visit with me?" One was quite adamant about it and so I sat down with her. When our visit ended she said: "You're right! The mantle is gone. It's better for me to go see my bishop or the stake president."

The church is run by the Lord and the stake is run by the Lord. Whoever he has called and set apart has a special mantle and a special authority. He has those keys and the right to preside with those keys. When you are released that goes away.

What prepared you to be a stake president?

I always thought my role in the church would be as a teacher. Not as a leader. Almost all my callings were leadership callings, from elder's quorum president in my 20's, to a member of the bishopric at 29 in another stake, into a stake presidency as a counselor at age 34 in another stake, to a bishopric in another stake. Then as a bishop in the 9th Ward and finally as Stake President. Being a bishop was helpful in understanding how the church is administered. The bishop and stake president have responsibility for the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood and I got to understand how that works. The Stake Presidency ordains elders, high priests and conducts the final temple recommend interviews. A bishop has huge burdens. My goal was to

help the bishops. We tried to take some of the load off them. We set up new meetings that shifted responsibility from the bishop to ward leaders in an effort to lighten the load.

What's Next?

We moved into the stake in our late thirties after a period of rapid growth in the Willow Creek area. We've all aged since the stake was organized thirty-five years ago. We had six children between the ages of 2 and 14. The primaries were huge and there were many young single adults. After being released over a decade ago, our stake has aged. There are a lot of empty nesters. I don't know if other wards are the same but in the past two years there's been this huge turnover in the 9th Ward. Our primary in the last five years has probably doubled and the number of youth has increased. Just last Sunday there was enough Aaronic priesthood to take care of the sacrament—four priests at the table and eight deacons to pass the sacrament. No adults had to help pass the sacrament. That's new. There has been a nice turnover in the ward and probably throughout the stake.

We recently moved out of the stake because our large house was no longer serving us. Last year I felt it was time for me to retire. We had this large house our kids couldn't use. It was time to sell and put in papers to serve a senior mission. I served when I was young in the Melbourne, Australia mission. Myrle and I went back for a visit two years ago. We stayed with a family I'd baptized. So we were excited when we opened our mission call and discovered we had been called to serve as office specialists in the Sidney, Australia South Mission. It's a different mission but I'm pleased to be going back to Australia. We will also be fellow shipping, teaching and have some responsibilities in the ward. We will enter the MTC on January 22nd, 2018.