

The Hope for Zion

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Nothing contributed more to the early Mormon identity than the concept and hope for Zion - a sacred place, a holy people, a quality of heart and mind. Almost nothing in early Mormon Church history can be understood independently of the quest to establish Zion. The historical context in which Mormonism arose certainly provides some understanding of this remarkable theological expectation, but in many ways the Mormon hope for Zion was distinctive. Indeed, the concept of Zion provided Mormonism with a symbolic power and theological expression that, in many ways, defined it as a new world religion. For early Mormons, Zion was a fulfillment and culmination of the Judeo-Christian heritage. Zion was the center place where the four corners of the world would be gathered and heaven and earth would meet. Zion was the hope for a more just society predicated on a new economic order, social equality and sacred covenants. Zion was the hope for the New Jerusalem that would prepare the earth for the imminent second coming. Zion was the hope for a new social relationship of which the family, as redefined under a patriarchal system, was a microcosm. Zion was thus a rejection of existing social and economic mores, for these defined Babylon, the society which Mormonism was called to transform. Zion was the hope for a new political order, a "theodemocracy," where a theocracy was governed by common consent of the governed. Zion was the hope for a new world government - the kingdom of God on earth. Only after the hope of Zion had been "delayed" could Mormonism come to terms with and finally assimilate the culture in which it grew up.

Precedents of the Mormon Zion

Mormonism is in many ways heir to the American quest for religious freedom and holy commonwealth. The heart of the early Puritan attempt to order society according to scriptural mandate was the "covenant theology" that had been elucidated by Calvin, Zwingli, Heinrich Bui linger and their successors.¹ Covenant theology premised social relationships and governmental legitimacy on an elaborate system of covenants, both personal and social.² The Puritans who founded the American colonies utilized this covenant theology, developed over centuries, to provide economic, social and political order. They entered into "holy commonwealths" that were incipient governments founded on principles of individual covenants embodied in articles of agreement or compacts. The famous Mayflower Compact is an example of such a political theory:

In ye name of God, Amen. We whose names are underwritten ... doe by these presents solemnly & mutually in ye presence of God, and one of another, covenant and combine our selves together into a civill body politick, for our better ordering & preservation, & furtherance of ye ends aforesaid; and by vertue hereof to enacte constitute, and frame such just & equall lawes, ordinances, acts, constitutions, & offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meete and convenient for ye general l good of ye Colonie, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience....³

The first colonies were indeed corporate bodies bonded together by "contractual" agreements, but the social contract, to use John Locke's then current terms, extended to every phase of life. Formation of a Holy Commonwealth was thought to embody responsibility not only among persons, but a commission from God as well. John Winthrop, Governor of New England, reflected on the relationship between covenant with God and society before entering the New World while still aboard the *Arbella*:

It is of the nature and essence of every society to be knit together by some covenant, either expressed or implied....Thus stands the cause between God and

us: we are entered into a covenant with Him for this work; we have taken out a commission, the Lord hath given us leave to draw our articles....For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us.⁴

The New England colonies utilized the covenantal ideas to curb purely individual endeavors, while the underlying political theory of social compact gave a feeling of solidarity and calling from God.⁵ In many ways the covenant society was a unique balancing of the individual and the demands of the community, for the wellbeing of society depended upon the individual acceptance and performance of the covenant obligations rather than legal coercion. The four primary colonies also were instilled with a sense of corporate unity by a "national covenant," which bound together the holy commonwealths in a common task and predestined calling to shape the new country.⁶ Eventually, the political theories implicit in the Puritan covenant theology were embodied in the United States Constitution.⁷ The respect for the principles underlying the constitution and the covenant theology that gave rise to it were explicitly admired by Mormons, and emulated in their own quest for a more just society.

The early nineteenth century gave rise to numerous Utopian experiments such as the Shakers led by Mother Ann Lee Stanley;⁸ the Society of the Public Universal Friend led by Jemima Wilkinson who founded a community known as the "new Jerusalem" which survived in upper New York until 1819;⁹ the followers of George Rapp who organized Harmony, Pennsylvania in 1804;¹⁰ the New Harmony community founded by Robert Owen who bought the property from the followers of Rapp in 1824 after they had moved to Indiana;¹¹ the Oneida Community founded by John Noyes in 1838 in Putney, Vermont;¹² and the common stock enterprises of the Hopedale Community and the Brookdale Farm both formed in 1841.¹³ Sidney Rigdon, who joined the Mormon Church

in late 1830 and had considerable influence on Joseph Smith after February 1831 was familiar with the communitarian experiments of Robert Owens, the Rappites and the German Separatists at Zoar, Ohio. Yet it would be a mistake to conclude that Joseph Smith simply derived his ideas from these movements. Indeed, in many ways Mormonism is closer to the sixteenth century Anabaptist movement established by Jan Mathijs and John Bueckelson in Munster, Germany in 1534, whose communal and polygamous theocracy gave rise to the "radical reformation," than to the nineteenth century descendents of the radical reformation such as the Quakers, Unitarians and Campbellites.¹⁴

The communitarian utopias shared a number of generally common characteristics. All were formed by innovative and charismatic leaders who rejected codes and statutes, traditions and customs.¹⁵ Most embraced Christian primitivism and expected the renewal of spiritual gifts had among the original apostles and the restoration of the untainted primitive church.¹⁶ Rare were the communities that were not motivated by Christian perfectionism and a conviction that attaining such perfection required a conducive social order.¹⁷ Most also were motivated by a millennial expectation and belief in the imminent second coming of Christ.¹⁸ Usually the new communitarian orders practiced nontraditional kinship and marriage patterns, ranging from celibacy to complex marriage.¹⁹ Some adopted strict new health codes requiring abstention from tobacco and alcohol.²⁰ All rejected the general patterns of private property ownership and adopted new forms of property ownership ranging from communal living to common stock ownership in cooperative businesses.²¹ The early Mormons went out of their way to distinguish their vision of the United Order from other popular communitarian societies,

yet Mormonism shared all of these characteristics, albeit in a distinctive synthesis unique in both its expectation and degree of fulfillment. The rise of the communitarian ideal was perhaps an expression of the Arminian commitment to individual moral responsibility in salvation, so clearly expressed in the Book of Mormon, and the belief that Christianity entailed a commitment to social justice.

One communitarian experiment that was particularly important in Mormon history was "the family," the group formed by Sidney Rigdon after he broke with Alexander Campbell over doctrinal issues. Before joining Mormonism, Sidney Rigdon embraced Christian primitivism which held a belief that the Christian church should be organized precisely as in the New Testament. Rigdon attempted to duplicate the early Christian practice described in Acts 4:32-35, "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things in common." He settled his flock of believers on a farm owned by Isaac Morley near Kirtland, Ohio. The members of Rigdon's community owned all goods in common through a common-stock arrangement, including clothes and other personal goods. As Hyrum Andrus noted, "the first one up in the morning was often the best dressed that day."²² The unity sought through the commonality of ownership was difficult to obtain. Discord arising from a sense of private ownership of personal goods constantly threatened the community, and it was abandoned in February 1831 after Sidney Rigdon and many of his followers were converted to Mormonism.²³

Perhaps the most significant influence on the Mormon hope for Zion was a belief in the literal fulfillment of biblical prophecies of both Old and New Testaments. The Old

Testament speaks of Zion as an eschatological society where the Lord himself would dwell in his tabernacle.²⁴ Zion was the mountain of Yahweh that came to be associated with Jerusalem. In latter-days, the law would go forth from and scattered Israel would return to Zion.²⁵ The eschatological dwelling place of God was described as Zion, the New Jerusalem, in the Apocalypse. It was God's kingdom on earth during His millennial reign.²⁶ Like many in early nineteenth century America, indeed in Christianity in general, the Mormon community looked forward to the fulfillment of the biblical prophecies and reinterpreted and applied them to their own situation. Mormonism appropriated the Hebrew culture represented in the Old Testament to a remarkable degree because it expected the "restoration of all things."²⁷ It looked not only to the Sinaitic covenant as a basis for social order; it also looked to the patriarchal practice of plural marriage and the covenant of a promised land to give meaning to its own "new and everlasting covenant." The Book of Mormon is also one of the best examples of the reinterpretation of Israel and its fulfillment in Mormon history. Through the Book of Mormon, Mormonism was provided with a providential sense of history that allowed it to see purpose in its persecutions and trials that were possibly unparalleled in American religious history. Through the Book of Mormon, Mormonism gained immediate identity with ancient Israel, the Chosen People of God.

Emergence of the Mormon Zion Concept

Zion was a significant concept in Mormonism right from its beginnings. The Book of Mormon, published in 1830, is a paradigm of Zion. By its own account, it would be brought forth into the modern world through a descendent of Joseph of Israel.

It tells the story of a forlorn colony expelled from a wicked Jerusalem and led through the waters to a promised land where a new law of the gospel was established. The book's history has an unmistakable moral purpose, one that is imbued with the Deuteronomist's sense of providential prosperity following righteousness, but with an interesting twist. The book elucidates a complex cyclic history of prosperity to materialistic pride, pride to social destruction and class divisions, destruction to humility, humility to spiritual rebirth, both national and personal, and rebirth to economic and social prosperity. The book demonstrates how a Christian society is established. It speaks of a certain Alma who leaves the corrupt society and law court to establish a community of believers. The community is established as the people of God upon a covenant entered at baptism:

[A]nd now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they might be light; yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things ... if this be the desire of your hearts, what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him....²⁸

The book also told of how, after the destruction of the more wicked part of the people, Christ established the ideal society among his people. Again, the community is established on a baptismal covenant and a new law.²⁹ The ideal society is envisioned as a communal sharing of property: "there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another. And they had all things in common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift."³⁰ Perhaps most significantly, the book speaks of the New Jerusalem which would come down from heaven to meet the earthly Jerusalem at the second coming of Christ. The New Jerusalem was described as an

inheritance, a holy city to be built during the millennium upon the American continent by the seed of Joseph.³¹ Thus, the Book of Mormon speaks of an ideal society that would be established by the seed of Joseph (Joseph Smith) to prepare the world for the second coming. It also denounces class divisions in society and proposes that God's people are joined together by covenant to bear one another's burdens. Though not even Joseph Smith seems to have fully comprehended the concept of Zion in early 1830, the essential ethic of Zion is established with remarkable clarity in the Book of Mormon.

Like almost all concepts playing an important role in Mormon history, the concept of Zion was first vaguely foreshadowed in the Book of Mormon and/or revelations given through Joseph Smith. In mid-1830, the mission of those involved in bringing forth Mormonism was elucidated in formulaic calls bidding them to "seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion."³² On April 6, 1830, the date of founding the Mormon Church, Joseph Smith's prophetic purpose was made clear in a revelation: "Him have I inspired to move the cause of Zion... Yea, his weeping for Zion I have seen..."³³ Yet the "cause of Zion" had little content in mid-1830.

In September 1830, the concept of Zion as a place was revealed, though the exact location was yet unknown. It was also disclosed that Zion would be located "near the borders by the Lamanites" and the exact location of the city would later be revealed.³⁴ The promise to reveal the exact location of the City of Zion became a principal expectation for Joseph Smith's followers from that time on.³⁵ The significance of the concept of Zion as a concrete place can hardly be overstated, for as William Mulder observed, "while other millenarians set a time [for the Second Coming], the Mormons appointed a place."³⁶

On September 26, 1830, the doctrine of the Gathering was revealed, unquestionably one of the most distinctive and, for the survival of the Mormon people, one of the most significant doctrines in Mormon history.³⁷ Ohio was to be the place of gathering until the location of Zion was established.³⁸ The righteous would be gathered out of “Babylon” to build a holy city and a sacred social order:

Wherefore, I the Lord have said gather ye out from the eastern lands, assemble ye yourselves together ye elders of my Church; go ye forth into the western countries,....build up churches unto me; and with one heart and with one mind, gather up your riches that ye may purchase an inheritance which shall hereafter be appointed unto you, and it shall be called the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of the Most High God; and the glory of the Lord shall be there, and the terror of the Lord also shall be there.³⁹

In December of 1831 the concept of Zion was further defined in the vision of Enoch. This vision made clear that when the earthly Zion was established, the heavenly Zion would descend with Christ at his Second Coming to initiate the millennial reign. Thus, Zion was not a city that would result from the millennial reign as many believed in the early nineteenth-century; rather, the millennium would be ushered in by perfecting Zion.⁴⁰ Zion would be built up through the gathering of "Israel" from the four quarters of the world. The sequence of events was established:

In the last days ... righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare, an Holy City, that my people shall gird up their loins, and by looking forth for the time of my coming, for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem.

And the Lord said unto Enoch: Then shalt thou and all thy city meet them there, and we will receive them into our bosom, and they shall see us.⁴¹

As Steven Olsen has suggested, all the components of concept of Zion are set forth in terms of one another in this vision - the city, the temple, the people, the land, the gathering and the millennium.⁴² The vision of Enoch also clarified the social order of

Zion, often called after this vision the Order of Enoch: "The Lord called his people Zion because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there were no poor among them."⁴³ The concept of Zion had begun to assume important territorial and social dimensions by mid-1831.

Zion in Space and Time

Mythic (or prophetic) history and Mormon history coalesced when, in fulfillment of Book of Mormon prophecies and Enoch's vision, Oliver Cowdery was dispatched to the borders near the Indians on a mission to convert them and to discover the location of the city of Zion.⁴⁴ On July 31, 1831, Independence, Missouri was revealed as the "center place; and a spot for the temple is lying westward."⁴⁵ The saints thus entered sacred history in their attempt to establish Zion. Zion had become the center place, the *centrum mundi* where the four corners of the earth would be gathered and heaven and earth would meet. The Mormons would become the new Israel, the people of God, through building Zion. The sacred place of Zion was at war with the profane Babylon. The symbolic power of Zion and the sense of living out sacred history should not be overlooked, for Joseph Smith had tapped into a way of relating reality common to all significant religious movements.⁴⁶ Zion endowed Mormonism with cosmic significance through its expressions of sacred space and time.

About two years after saints began to arrive in Missouri, on June 25, 1833, Joseph Smith sent a "Plat of the City of Zion" which would be built at Independence, the designated Center Place of Zion, to Church leaders in Missouri.⁴⁷ The city's design was a classic "hierocentric state," a concentric layout one mile square into blocks extending

from a center temple complex that would house government and priesthood buildings, meetinghouses, schools and temples as well as the central bishop's storehouses.⁴⁸ The city was designed to be inhabited by ten to fifteen thousand people. Every family was to receive a lot within the city, and farmers would receive an additional allotment of land outside the city. The sense of sacred space was thus preserved in the city's layout.

An important innovation on the concept of Zion as a location was also introduced by Joseph Smith the June 1833 communication. Zion was not a single city; it was a complex of cities that would be built around Zion until the entire earth had become sacred space: "When this square is thus laid off and supplied, lay off another in the same way, and so fill up the world in these last days."⁴⁹ Joseph Smith appropriated the Old Testament vision of Zion as a tent with a center stake that would be supported by outlying "stakes, for the curtains are the strength of Zion." He took literally Yahweh's words to Isaiah, "[e]nlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not, lengthen the cord, and strengthen thy stakes."⁵⁰ Thus, the outlying cities were designated "stakes of Zion," each built after a plan similar to that of the Plat of Zion. This innovation was extremely important in Mormon history because the saints were able to maintain a hope for Zion even when the Center Place could not be built due to mob persecutions. Zion was not necessarily a single location, it was sacred space defined by the habitation of God's people.

A concept of Zion freed from its territorial moorings was embodied in a revelation to Joseph Smith on July 23, 1833, only a few months before the saints were driven from Jackson County, Missouri. In the face of mob persecution and the likelihood that building the prophesied city would be delayed, Zion was a cause for hope:

"Therefore, verily, thus saith the Lord, let Zion rejoice, for this is Zion - THE PURE IN HEART; therefore, let Zion rejoice."⁵¹ Zion had become a sacred people; it was the identity as God's people that remained essential, not the land. This concept of Zion was dramatically demonstrated in Mormon experience. The saints moved from Kirtland to Missouri, to Nauvoo and finally to Salt Lake City. Always they were commanded to wait patiently for the "redemption of Zion" by the Lord and not through use of force.⁵² When Brigham Young was faced with the threat of federal troops sent to dispossess the Mormons of the city they had built in Utah, he simply decided to abandon the city to the troops under a policy of "scorched earth." The Mormons had established centers in Ohio, Illinois, Missouri to make a home in Utah, and they were prepared to abandon that.⁵³ The location of Zion was subordinated to the identity of the covenant people.

The spatial dimension of Zion, nevertheless, remained important in later Mormon settlements. Nauvoo, Illinois was designed following the pattern similar to the Plat of Zion, and was referred to as the center stake of Zion.⁵⁴ The territorial plan of Zion elucidated by Joseph Smith was utilized by Brigham Young to design Salt Lake City, and to direct the settlement of satellite communities throughout the west.⁵⁵ Further, a sense of sacred space was maintained in the Mormon temple. In the same 1833 revelation that defined Zion as the pure in heart, the commandment to build a temple in Kirtland, Ohio was given. The temple became the symbol of Zion for Mormonism that guaranteed the spiritual well-being of the community:

Verily I say unto you, that it is my will that a house should be built unto me in the land of Zion, like unto the pattern which I have shown you. Yea, let it be built speedily, by the tithing of my people. Behold, this is the tithing and sacrifice which I, the Lord, require at their hands, that there may be a house built unto me for the salvation of Zion.... [A]nd my presence shall be there, for I will come into it, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God.⁵⁶

Zion's Covenant Society

In January of 1831, while Oliver Cowdery was still on his Indian mission searching for the location of the city of Zion, Joseph Smith received a revelation which promised to answer the prayers of the poor by giving them a land of promise and a new law that would go forth from Zion.⁵⁷ When Joseph Smith arrived in Kirtland, Ohio on February 1, 1831, he was greeted by Sidney Rigdon and his followers who had just joined the infant Mormon Church. Joseph requested Sidney and his followers to abandon the common stock arrangement of "the Family" so that they might practice "the more perfect law of the Lord."⁵⁸ Some explanation of this new law was necessarily forthcoming, and on February 9, 1831 Joseph revealed the Law of Consecration and Stewardship.⁵⁹ This new law replaced "the Family's" common ownership of goods with a system of property ownership and means of producing goods that allowed a good deal more individual discretion and responsibility.

The law of consecration was premised on the principle of mutual covenant, a promise or compact setting forth a relationship freely entered between two or more parties and obligations of one or more of the parties. The revelation defined the covenant obligations of all who wished to enter the Zion community: "[T]hou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support that which thou hast to impart unto them, with a covenant and a deed which cannot be broken."⁶⁰ Every person was to be a "steward over his own property, or that which he has received by consecration, as much as is sufficient for himself and his family."⁶¹ Those properties that were deemed "more than necessary" for the needs of the particular family were to be retained by the bishop as surplus and administered to those who had need.⁶²

The act of consecration was carried out by the head of each household, a priesthood holder, bringing all that he owned and deeding it over to the bishop. The covenant of consecration made the act binding before God and the community, and the deed was intended to be binding under the secular law. The bishop would then designate a "stewardship" from the properties so received according to the needs of each family jointly determined by the bishop and the steward. The "inheritance" would be determined according to abilities and talents as well as the needs of each individual. The stewardship could be land for a farm, printing shop, store, workshop or simply an appointment as a teacher or church leader. The bishop would "deed" back the stewardship property in what was essentially a life leaseback subject to divestment if the steward left the community. The steward was responsible to improve his stewardship during this period "as to him shall seem meet and proper." After one year, the steward would account to the bishop for his performance, and all that exceeded the needs of his family would be given to the church. Out of the surplus the bishop would grant stewardships to members of the church who had no property to consecrate or too little for essential needs.⁶³

The Law of Consecration and Stewardship was intended to resolve the tension between individual freedom and community ownership that had plagued "the Family." There was to be individual freedom in decisions of production and management of properties held in stewardship. Decisions as to what goods and services were to be produced and the means of production were left to the individual steward. The bishop would counsel with the steward in decisions related to the best use of stewardship properties and the needs of the community, but the law did not envision close

management of the stewardship by any Church official. Moreover, some of the features of the free market economy remained intact. The forces of supply and demand and the profit system were retained to allocate resources. The market demand influenced which goods would be produced and the price that could be demanded for them. The profitability of the steward's enterprise was largely his own responsibility. Finally, there was no communism of ownership of goods. Members of the community did not have a right to another's stewardship property without paying for it after a sales agreement.⁶⁴

The basic principle of property ownership underlying the Law of Consecration and Stewardship was one that could not be cognized by a secular court: The earth and all things therein belong to God. "Behold, all these properties are mine, or else your faith is vain ... and the covenants which ye have made unto me are broken; and if the properties are mine, then ye are stewards; otherwise ye are no stewards."⁶⁵ The purpose of the new law was equally clear: "It is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine," declared an 1834 revelation to Joseph Smith, "[f]or the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare ... therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance of which I have made, and impart not his portion according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and needy, he shall, with the wicked lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment."⁶⁶ The purpose was to bring about economic equality among the saints, for according to another 1831 revelation, "it is not given that one man should possess that which is above another, wherefore the world lieth in sin."⁶⁷ The unity of heart and mind that defined the community of Zion could not obtain in a society divided by class struggles. As an 1832 doctrine taught

[I]t must needs be that there be an organization of my people, in regulating and establishing the affairs of the storehouse for the poor of my people, both in

this place and in the land of Zion ... that you may be equal in the bonds of heavenly things, yea, and earthly things also, for the obtaining of heavenly things. For if ye are not equal in earthly things ye cannot be equal in obtaining heavenly things....⁶⁸

Hence, the dichotomy between sacred and secular, holy and profane, temporal and spiritual was obliterated in the Zion community. A revelation proclaimed, "all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal."⁶⁹ Equality in earthly goods and material possessions was essential to salvation in the Mormon economy of things. The covenant relationship sacralized all transactions between citizens of Zion, for God was a partner to all economic relationships. Above all, Zion was a commitment to the poor, for the redistribution of goods was effected "that the poor shall be exalted in that the rich are made low."⁷⁰ The yearly consecration of surplus profits to the bishop's storehouse would work as a leveling factor, insuring that economic classes could not result from the accumulation of wealth.

The ideal economic order soon ran into problems in some undefined areas. The greatest and most persistent problem throughout the time the Law of Consecration was practiced was the unwillingness of richer members to consecrate their properties. Shortly after the first group of saints to attempt to practice the Law of Consecration moved to Kirtland, Ohio in May 1831, several of the wealthier members breached their covenants and successfully sued in civil courts for the return of their consecrated property. The battle with secular courts pointed to deficiencies in the deeds which apparently were not enforceable in favor of the Church in secular courts. Initially the title of property vested in the Church, which re-conveyed a life-lease subject to cancellation if the steward left the community. The secular law required that the deed given to the steward be a

conveyance in fee simple, thus vesting all rights of ownership in the steward rather than the Church.⁷¹

The size of the stewardship property or "inheritance" was also a problem. Apparently disagreement had arisen between the bishop and some saints over the issue of what constituted "sufficient for the needs" of certain families. The Law of Consecration apparently overestimated human nature, or at least that of the saints. As Brigham Young acknowledged, surplus was hard to come by no matter what the needs of the family: "I was present at the time the revelation came for the brethren to give their surplus property into the hands of the Bishops for the building up of Zion, but I never knew a man yet who had a dollar of surplus property. No matter how much one might have he wanted all he had for himself, for his children, for his grandchildren, and so forth."⁷² In June of 1833 Joseph Smith wrote Bishop Edward Partridge a letter that elucidated the significant deference to be given the judgment of the steward.

Every man must be his own judge how much he should receive and how much he should suffer to remain in the hands of the Bishop. I speak of those who consecrate more than they need for the support of themselves and their families.

The matter of consecration must be done by the mutual consent of both parties; for to give the Bishop power to say how much every man shall have, and he be obliged to comply with the Bishop's judgment, is giving to the Bishop more power than a king has; and upon the other hand, to let every man say how much he needs, and the Bishop be obliged to comply with his judgment, is to throw Zion into confusion, and make a slave of the Bishop. The fact is, there must be balance or equilibrium of power between the Bishop and the people, and thus harmony and good will may be preserved among you.

Therefore, those persons consecrating property to the Bishop in Zion, and then receiving an inheritance back, must reasonably show to the Bishop that they need as much as they claim. But in case the two parties cannot come to a mutual agreement, the Bishop is to have nothing to do about receiving such consecrations; and the case must be laid before a council of twelve High Priests, the Bishop not being one of the council, but he is to lay the case before them.⁷³

Thus, church courts were given a role in determining the amount of the inheritance if the Bishop and steward disagreed. In April of 1832 a Central Council which consisted of five men (later increased to seven) was organized to assist the Bishop in his heavy burden of administering the Law of Consecration. The Central Council created a "United Firm" or a "United Order" which was a "joint-stewardship of the members of the council with the responsibility of holding properties in trust, assisting the poor, and supervising the establishment of merchandising stores in Ohio and Missouri.⁷⁴ The United Order was essentially a business venture formed through a partnership of stewardship properties and constituted the centralized management of the surplus profits consecrated to the Church for the benefit of the poor.⁷⁵ Each city, however, had a bishop's storehouse and each community's needs continued to be administered by the bishop.⁷⁶ The United Order established a precedent for the management of large companies and corporations formed by joint-stewardship ventures and cooperatives in both Nauvoo and Utah.

The Law of Consecration also presented some pragmatic economic problems. The transfer of property from richer members to the poor, when the poor were incapable of management of property, was undoubtedly inefficient as a means of managing property for profit. That profit was not the primary goal of the Law of Consecration is evident. The bishop was given discretion to increase the stewardship of those who were capable managers of the property, thus maximizing profit, but this redistribution also caused problems. The more capable would be given greater responsibilities without greater return. The surplus profits were due the bishop at the end of the year despite the increased productivity. Thus, the incentive to produce was likely diminished. Love for

others, not the profit motive, was to be sufficient to encourage diligence of the laborer in Zion. The Law of Consecration was not an economic success and wasn't intended to be. It would be entirely improper to judge the Law of Consecration in terms of the bottom line profit. The purpose of the covenant society was not to amass wealth, but to forge a pure people and a just society; profit was subordinate to that purpose. Wealth was a gift from God that was merely a byproduct of love for others.

Whether the Law of Consecration could have produced the desired transformation of the people of God soon became a moot point, for in the summer of 1833, only a half year after the law had been instituted in Missouri, the saints ran into severe persecution from the Missouri mobs. In November the saints were driven, by armed mobs, from Jackson County. In December of 1833 a revelation told the saints, "let your hearts be comforted concerning Zion; for all flesh is in my hands; be still and know that I am God. Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered."⁷⁷ After having exhausted all legal remedies to "redeem Zion" and after the march of Zion's Camp, an attempt to redeem Zion through force, the Law of Consecration and Stewardship was suspended on June 22, 1834 until Zion could be redeemed through peaceful means. The suspension apparently applied also to settlements in Ohio. The failure to redeem Zion was attributed to the saint's failure to "impart of their substance, to the poor and afflicted among them; and are not united according to the union required by the law of celestial kingdom; and Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom."⁷⁸ The energies of the saints were redirected, however, to prepare for an "endowment of power from on high," referring to the promises of the temple in Kirtland.⁷⁹

With the expulsion of the saints from their settlements in Missouri, the Center Place, efforts to build up Zion concentrated on Kirtland, Ohio. The temple to be built in Kirtland became the focal point of the saints' energies and resources. The temple was to be "built in Zion" through the "tithes" of the people. Tithes at this time were essentially freewill offerings rather than a percentage of surplus profits as that term would later be identified.⁸⁰ In March of 1836 the temple was completed, through considerable financial sacrifice, and a dedicatory prayer was offered. The identity of the saints with both the Hebrew and Christian dispensations was evidenced in their experiences following the temple's dedication. Like the first century Christians, the "first—fruits" of their labors were rewarded by an outpouring of divine favor.⁸¹ The saints affirmed that for a full week following the dedication of the temple they experienced pentecost-like manifestations, including a mighty rushing wind through the building, the gift of tongues and visions.⁸² On April 3, 1836, the week of the Jewish Passover, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery reported that Jehovah visited the temple to accept the offering. In addition, Moses, Elijah and Eli as, a forerunner of the millennial reign of the Messiah, also appeared in vision and restored keys of the gathering of Israel and the patriarchal order.⁸³ W. D. Davies, an expert in Jewish and Christian origins, suggests that the Latter-day Saints intended to recapitulate and restore the experiences of Israel and the earliest Christians through their allegiance to the temple and patriarchal order.⁸⁴ The visit of the patriarchs of the Law and the Prophets to the Kirtland temple signified far more to the saints, however, for the keys had been delivered to "turn the hearts of the sons to the fathers." Salvation was understood in terms of familial solidarity with every person who

had ever inhabited the earth. The Kingdom of God on earth would be characterized by universal kinship.

The period of spiritual fulfillment was followed by the devastating economic disaster brought on by the economic depression of 1837 and the fall of the Kirtland Banking and Safety Society. While the Church was faltering in Kirtland, it was growing at a tremendous rate in Far West, Missouri. In the fall of 1837, Far West was declared the new gathering place of the saints.⁸⁵ Seven to eight thousand saints gathered to Far West by 1838 from Jackson County and another thousand from Kirtland. The saints adopted a new form of the law of consecration, with each family consecrating only its surplus property and each given in return a stewardship by deed in fee simple. Instead of consecrating at the end of the year the entire surplus gained from operating the stewardship, they were required only to consecrate "one tenth of all their interest annually."⁸⁶ The saints also dedicated a new lot for a temple and laid out the community after the pattern of Zion. A number of agricultural cooperatives were established called "United Firms," which were the pattern for later cooperatives in Utah.⁸⁷ Corporations were also formed through joint stewardships of mechanics, shopkeepers and laborers.⁸⁸ As in Jackson County, however, the saints were driven out by mobs. They gathered to Nauvoo where Mormonism began a phase of "nation-building" and attempted to establish the Kingdom of God on Earth, or Zion.

Zion's Patriarchal Order

In the fall and winter of 1838-39, nearly 12,000 saints were expelled from Missouri pursuant to Governor Lilburn W. Bogg's infamous extermination order.

Brigham Young led a group of expelled Missouri saints across the Mississippi to Illinois in a desperate attempt to keep the saints from being scattered and slaughtered. During the same time, Joseph Smith was incarcerated in Missouri in a jail pathetically called Liberty. After Smith was released, the quest for Zion began anew. It was soon announced that the new place of gathering was Commerce Illinois, renamed Nauvoo by the prophet, meaning "the beautiful."⁸⁹ Nauvoo was laid out after the pattern of the Plat of the City of Zion and plans to build a new temple were once again begun.

The saints were secluded and protected in Nauvoo. They were granted a city charter that, for all intents and purposes, made Nauvoo an independent state, including legal authority to form their own municipal government, militia, and courts.⁹⁰ The saints were soon to become possessors of the second largest city in Illinois. The residents of Illinois accepted the Mormon outcasts with friendship and even sympathy for their persecutions suffered in Ohio and Missouri. The Mormons were courted by Illinois politicians because the saints represented the balance of political power in the state. The characteristics of Mormonism that aroused hatred and caused misunderstanding in Missouri and Ohio, however, soon returned to plague the saints. The Mormons managed to alienate both political parties by refusing to become aligned with either party. The Mormons posed a perceived threat to citizens of Illinois because of their ever-growing numbers, tightly ordered Church and their powerful militia. In addition, the saints had developed their own identity in opposition to "Babylon," which represented a system of values and mores rejected in the Zion ideology.⁹¹ This rejection of the existing political and social order, inherent in the hope for Zion, proved more than the people of Illinois were willing to countenance.

In Joseph Smith's mind, a mere reform of existing values was not sufficient to accomplish the Kingdom of God on earth. He sought a total revolution of the heart that resacralized the existing society by spiritually transforming an old social order, indeed an entire way of life, and building a new social order established on the family as microcosm. Whereas the existing economic and political order was premised on promoting self-interests for personal gain, Zion was premised in the ideal of familial economics whose chief goal was promotion of the group, willing to sacrifice personal gain for community welfare and nepotism. In Nauvoo, Smith would create an entirely new framework of meaning for the saints through new beliefs, familial patterns, rituals and a concept of a theo-democratic political kingdom of God in which the Mormon priesthood would possess both political and ecclesiastical authority to initiate the millennium. While new doctrines and practices were introduced in the Nauvoo period, there is a recognizable continuity of thought and development from Joseph Smith's earlier doctrines and practices.

Joseph Smith revealed new doctrines that prepared the saints for a new patriarchal order of family relationships and world government. Building on the Kirtland temple experiences, Joseph introduced the doctrine of baptisms for the dead that would link all, living and dead, into the patriarchal order, the human family.⁹² The sealing power of the priesthood delivered at Kirtland was understood to give eternal permanence to family relationships, including marriage. The Mormons believed that their prophet held the keys of Peter to bind and to loose on earth, thereby sealing relationships in heaven.⁹³

In 1842, Joseph Smith introduced the endowment, a ritual drama depicting the pilgrimage and purpose of human existence from the creation and expulsion of Adam and

Eve from the garden (understood to represent the human family), through the trials and temptations of mortality and exalted return to the presence of the Gods. Covenants of all the dispensations of the gospel were also introduced in the endowment ritual.

Additionally, the endowment ritual bound all persons into a great chain of familial relationships. The endowment taught that the divine patriarchal order was Zion's covenant society - a patriarchal kingdom based on Zion's law of consecration. Through receiving the ordinances of washing and anointing preparatory to receiving the endowment, and other sealing ordinances, those who were true and faithful to their covenants would become priests and kings, queens and priestesses in the eternal worlds. Because these rituals were intended to be performed in a temple, great efforts were made to complete the temple in Nauvoo.⁹⁴

Smith's doctrinal development emphasized the continuity between heaven and earth, for the earthly Zion was merely a copy of the society existing in heaven. In Nauvoo Smith taught that there is also continuity between spirit and matter, for spirit is merely more pure and refined matter.⁹⁵ Building on a vision given in 1832 to the effect that in the highest kingdom of exaltation persons would be priests and kings and gods, Joseph Smith taught in Nauvoo that mortal experience was a testing ground and refinement for persons to progress toward exalted Godhood.⁹⁶ Indeed, God had achieved his status through experiences of refinement just as persons were now doing. God was conceived as possessing a glorified body of flesh and bone "as tangible as man's."⁹⁷ Smith thus expanded the anthropomorphism of the Old Testament in his understanding of God, a personal being once again intimately involved in human affairs. Human relationships would continue in heaven just as they existed in this life. "The same

sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there," the prophet declared, "only it will be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy."⁹⁸ Joseph Smith also taught a doctrine of plurality of gods, premised both upon the belief that persons could become gods and upon the belief that the exalted members of the trinity are separate and distinct individuals.⁹⁹

Several recent studies have insisted that Mormonism's most controversial practice, plural marriage or polygyny, must also be understood in terms of the hope for Zion.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, the doctrine of plural marriage was an integral part of the principals of family exaltation and the establishment of the kingdom of God. Plural marriage represented not only a rejection of the then existing definitions of kinship, it was also a natural development of Joseph Smith's idea of the ancient patriarchal order.¹⁰¹ Since Mormons believed that each father would preside over his kingdoms consisting of his own descendents, the family unit became the most important unit in Mormon theology. Joseph Smith once again looked to the Old Testament for his model of kinship. Joseph understood his prophetic role as one who would establish Zion by a "restoration of all things" from all previous dispensation of religious authority. Plural marriage was understood to be a restoration of the patriarchal order established by the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

As early as 1831 Joseph Smith had questioned how the patriarchs and Moses, as well as David and Solomon could be justified in taking plural wives.¹⁰² The Book of Mormon had condemned plural marriage.

For behold, thus saith the Lord: This people begins to wax in iniquity; they understand not the scriptures, for they seek to excuse themselves in committing whoredomes, because of the things which have were written concerning David and Solomon his son. Behold, David and Solomon truly had

many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord. ... Wherefore, I the Lord God will not suffer that this people shall do like unto them of old. Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord: For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none; For I the Lord God, delight in the chastity of women. And whoredoms are an abomination before me; thus saith the Lord of Hosts. Wherefore this people shall keep my commandments, saith the Lord of Hosts, or cursed be the land for their sake.¹⁰³

Yet the Book of Mormon followed this commandment with an exception to the injunction against plural marriage: "For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will command my people; otherwise they shall hearken unto these things."¹⁰⁴ Apparently plural marriage could be justified, according to the Book of Mormon, if God commanded it for the purpose of raising up seed. Joseph Smith reportedly received a revelation in or about 1832 telling a group of his loyal followers that, in time, they would "take unto you wives of the Lamanites and Nephites...."¹⁰⁵ William W. Phelps was puzzled by this revelation, and in a note appended to the reported revelation added:

About three years after this was given, I asked Brother Joseph, privately, how "we," that were mentioned in the revelation could take wives of the "natives" as we were all married men? He replied instantly, "In the same manner that Abraham took Hagar and Keturah: that Jacob took Rachel, Bilhah and Zilpah; by revelation - the saints of the Lord are always directed by revelation."¹⁰⁶

Just what Joseph Smith's understanding of plural marriage was at this early date is unknown, but in 1835 William W. Phelps seems to have had a doctrinal understanding that was fleshed out only in the Nauvoo era. In 1835 W. W. Phelps, Joseph's intimate friend at the time, wrote: "We shall by and by learn that we were with God in another world, and had our agency: that we came into this world and have our agency in order that we may prepare a kingdom of glory; become archangels, even the sons of God where the man is not without the woman, nor the woman without the man in the Lord."¹⁰⁷

Oliver Cowdery, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, had taken a plural

wife as early as 1835, wanting to put into practice the 1832 revelation immediately though "ignorant of the order and pattern" of plural marriage at the time.¹⁰⁸ Joseph Smith also may have taken a plural wife in Kirtland.¹⁰⁹

Joseph Smith had revealed the principle of plural marriage in Nauvoo to a few close associates in the strictest confidence before the revelation of plural marriage was dictated in July of 1843.¹¹⁰ The revelation discussed the conditions and covenants associated with the patriarchal order of marriage practiced by Abraham.

Abraham received promises concerning his seed, and of the fruit of his loins - from whose loins ye are....This promise is yours also, because ye are of Abraham, and the promise was made unto Abraham, and by this law is the continuation of the works of my Father, wherein he glorifieth himself....Abraham received concubines, and they bore him children; and it was counted unto him for righteousness, because they given him, and he abode in my law.¹¹¹

This revelation was presented and accepted by the Church as a body only after they were established in Utah, for confession of plural marriage in Nauvoo was too unsettling and posed a threat to the community. As Lawrence Foster notes, "Mormon initiatory ceremonies, from baptism to the more elaborate temple rites, involved a rebirth into a new and different world that was being created on earth by the Church. Prior to the initiation into the new standards, however, there was a brief but disruptive interregnum when neither set of standards was operative and the basis of social authority was unclear."¹¹² The "new and everlasting covenant of marriage" was, nevertheless, an expression of the hope for a new social order where kinship would redefine economic, social and political relationships. As Daniel W. Bachman noted,

It was in Nauvoo that plural marriage was first practiced in earnestness. The doctrine is not unrelated to the principles of family exaltation and the building of the kingdom of God. In fact, the idea of the kingdom in Mormon thought gave a significance and meaning to plural marriage which is unrecognizable without it. Plural marriage expedited the establishing of growing

interrelationship, through intermarriage, among church leaders. As Michael Quinn has pointed out, Smith's emphasis on "lineage" as a requisite of church leadership led him to establish a sort of hierarchical "dynasty" in the church's presiding quorums. Plural marriage played a vital role in binding Mormon leaders together with Smith's family.¹¹³

Zion as the Political Kingdom of God on Earth

Just a few months before his death in June of 1844, Joseph Smith felt an urgency to unburden his full vision of Zion. Zion was the stone of Daniel's vision that was cut out of a mountain without hands that would continue to roll forward until it consumed the entire world and all secular governments. Zion was a theocratic political kingdom, a world government that would be organized before the imminent Second Coming of Christ, but would continue to reign throughout the millennium with God himself at its head. Joseph Smith once again turned to the Old Testament for his model of Zion's political kingdom.

In July of 1842 he exclaimed:

When the children of Israel were chosen with God at their head, they were to be a peculiar people, among whom God should place his name.... Their government was a theocracy; they had God to make their laws, and men chosen by Him to administer them; He was their God, and they were His people. Moses received the word of the Lord from God Himself; he was the mouth of God to Aaron, and Aaron taught the people, in both civil and ecclesiastical affairs; they were both one, there was no distinction; so will it be when the purposes of God shall be accomplished: when "The Lord shall be King over the whole earth" and "Jerusalem his throne." "The law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."¹¹⁴

The saints were not anarchists, however, nor did they seek to overthrow the governments that existed. The saints were to be subject to the "powers that be, until he reigns whose right it is to reign."¹¹⁵ In 1835 the Church issued a "Declaration of Belief regarding governments and laws in general." This declaration stated that the saints believed "governments were instituted of God for the benefit of man; and that he holds

men accountable for their acts in relation to them, both in making laws and administering them, for the good and safety of society."¹¹⁶ In 1831 the saints were informed the Zion was to be built up in conformance with the secular law: "Let no man break the laws of the land, for he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land."¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, the inevitable course of events leading to the millennium would demonstrate the inadequacy of human laws and governments, and Zion would consume secular governments as it was established in righteousness. A world government was necessary in Smith's mind to overcome the nationalism that led inevitably to wars rather than to peaceful coexistence. In July of 1842 Joseph Smith declared that the governments of men "have failed in all their attempts to promote eternal power, peace and happiness."¹¹⁸ National governments were established by blood and could be maintained only by blood. Nationalism was thus diametrically opposed to the millennial peace that would characterize Zion.

Zion's government would be a "theo-democracy," a government of God's laws administered by his chosen servants according to the common consent of the governed. All actions of Zion's government were to "be done by common consent," with every individual possessing power to veto any governmental action, for all were to be agreed as one and equal in political power.¹¹⁹ The distinction between Church and state would be abolished with the establishment of Zion's political kingdom. The intention to unite secular and sacred was expressed clearly by Joseph Smith:

As the "world is governed too much" and as there is not a nation or dynasty, now occupying the earth, which acknowledges Almighty God as their law giver, and as "crowns won by blood, by blood must be maintained," I go emphatically, virtuously, and humanely for a THEODEMOCRACY, where God and people hold power to conduct the affairs of men in righteousness.¹²⁰

John F. Wilson, professor religion at Princeton, suggested that "religious movements in their early years literally envision and advocate a new world that is conditions of life and culture very different from what prevail. The conventional differentiations that characterize normal life do not exist within such a movement."¹²¹ Mormonism, in particular, envisioned a kingdom growing out of the Church, a kingdom that sacralized every aspect of government:

What is "religious" as opposed to "worldly," when a mission is involved? What is "political" as opposed to "religious" when Zion's camp is to be organized? In short, early Mormonism, like early Christianity and a host of other vital religious movements in their years of origin, did not rest content with the conventional lines of distinction it might establish between itself and the whole society or culture. In the urgency and compellingness of a new movement, conventional distinctions are unimportant and thus disregarded. The categories of the old world are literally rendered anachronistic - and that is precisely why the church-state or religious liberty governmental authority formulations of the society have little claim on the experience of the members.¹²²

The confluence of Church and State had clearly begun in Nauvoo. Joseph Smith served as mayor, lieutenant general of the Nauvoo legion, judge of the municipal court and president of the Church.¹²³ The Mormons had begun to disregard secular laws that conflicted with the order of the new kingdom. They performed marriages, both monogamous and polygamous, without secular authority to do so. They sometimes disregarded secular marriages by performing marriages between Mormons and spouses previously married who had not obtained a divorce under the secular law. The Mormon leaders reasoned that sacraments performed by apostate priesthoods, secular or religious, were not binding on God's people. The revelation on plural marriage clearly disregarded prevailing notions concerning the marriage covenant, replacing traditional views with a new definition of the marriage covenant and adultery.

In August of 1843 Smith taught that the only legitimate government authority was from God: "Those holding the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood are kings and priests of the Most High God, holding the keys of power and blessings. In fact, that Priesthood is a perfect law of theocracy and stands as God to give laws to the people."¹²⁴ Through the endowment, a group of people were given an anointing preparing them to become "Kings and priests ... who shall reign on earth."¹²⁵ In September of 1843 Joseph Smith introduced ordinances completing the endowment that made mortals "kings and priests."¹²⁶ The legitimate authority to establish the kingdom and government on earth during the millennium had thus been conferred.

On March 11, 1844 Joseph Smith organized a special council consisting of about fifty men, both Mormons and non-Mormons. The council was called, according to a revelation, "The Kingdom of God and His Laws with the Keys and Powers thereof, and Judgment in the Hands of His Servants, Ahman Christ."¹²⁷ This council, known more popularly among Mormons as the Council of Fifty, was intended to be the nucleus of the government of the kingdom of God on earth. Though varying positions have been expressed concerning this council in the past,¹²⁸ D. Michael Quinn has suggested that "the primary role of the Council of Fifty was to symbolize the otherworldly world order that would be established during the Millennial reign of Christ on earth."¹²⁹ In the March 11 meeting, Joseph Smith requested the council to amend the Constitution of the United States to conform to the "voice of Jehovah."¹³⁰ When the council could not come to a satisfactory solution, the Prophet announced that he was aware they would be unable to draft a document worthy of the Kingdom of God, and the Lord had given the

constitution by revelation: "Ye are my Constitution and I am your God and ye are my spokesmen, therefore from henceforth keep my commandments." ¹³¹

Though the Constitution of the Kingdom of God gave little or no guidance as to substance of rights and laws, the point was clear: God would guide his people through revelation, received day by day according to their needs and circumstances, as long as they were worthy to be called his people. As the only one on earth with proper authority to receive revelation for the people of God, ¹³² Joseph Smith understood his prophetic role to entail both authority of the Church as a priest and over the State as a king. In an April 11, 1844 meeting of the Council of Fifty, Joseph Smith was chosen by common consent and anointed "Prophet, Priest and King" of the council. ¹³³ Brigham Young and John Taylor, Smith's successors to the theocratic kingdom in Utah, were similarly called and anointed at a later day, for they understood Joseph's vision of Zion. ¹³⁴

Nevertheless, the Council of Fifty remained only a symbol of the millennial kingdom of God. The Council of Fifty did have a role in organizing Joseph Smith's bid for the Presidency of the United States in 1844. After Joseph Smith's martyrdom on June 27, 1844, it played an important role in 1845 preparations at Nauvoo for the exodus to the west. In Utah the Council oversaw the formation of Utah civil government in 1849 and the selection of candidates in Utah in the 1880's. Yet the Council of Fifty was never independent of the Church as it was intended it eventually would be. ¹³⁵ Quinn provides an excellent summary of the Council of Fifty's impact on Mormon history:

The Council of Fifty had a minimal role in the actual exercise of political power but served as an important symbol of the unattained ideal of democratically functioning Kingdom of God. Like its economic counterpart, the United Order of Enoch and Law of Consecration, the Council of Fifty required greater perfection in the Saints than existed during the years of Mormon isolation in the Great Basin of the American West.... Those who most successfully fulfilled their role in the

Council of Fifty recognized it as a symbol of what could and would transpire when the hearts of a sinful world and imperfect Church members turned sufficiently to Christ the King.¹³⁶

After Joseph Smith's death, a leadership vacuum and problems of succession faced the saints. Though Joseph Smith had named numerous potential successors, only the Quorum of the Twelve, led by Brigham Young, had received the rites and keys to the kingdom of God on earth.¹³⁷ Young was Smith's successor received by common consent of the saints, though there were dissenters. Young embarked immediately to complete Joseph's vision of Zion. The Nauvoo temple was completed in 1846 amid threats of mob destruction, and the rites of the endowment were administered round the clock. It was evident that the Latter-day Saints would be forced, once again, to find another center place. In April of 1844 Joseph Smith had proclaimed, "the whole of North and South America is Zion, the mountain of the Lords House in the Center of North & South America."¹³⁸ The place of Zion had, by this time, been conceived as a Center extending to stakes throughout the entire world. Smith went on to request the Mormon Elders to build up branches of the Church throughout the United States, and then to build up stakes until "Zion is built up" throughout North and South America. Though the location of the new Center Place was not clear, he clearly contemplated another Center Place somewhere in the west.¹³⁹

In the winter of 1846, the saints were compelled to flee Nauvoo. Once again the Mormons entered a paradigm of sacred history. They believed God had prepared their exodus by freezing the Mississippi solid enough to cross in wagons.¹⁴⁰ The order of Israel in exodus was replicated when Brigham Young organized the saints into groups of 10's, 50's and 100's for the trek west.¹⁴¹ The saints recounted stories of how, like manna

from heaven, flocks of quail flew into their camps and that could be caught by hand.

Nevertheless, the trek was treacherous and many died along the way. Their heroic faith was nurtured by their hope for a promised land where they could live in peace and establish Zion.

When the saints went west they took with them a fully developed ideal of Zion. Joseph Smith had taught that the patriarchal order was Zion's covenant society - a theocracy premised upon Zion's economic law of consecration and stewardship administered under the United Order. Politically, the government of Zion was to reflect the patriarchal family, headed by priests and kings who would receive God's law by revelation and govern by common consent of the people. Zion was a Center Place, the Lord's mountain, from which the law and the gospel would go forth to the world, an ensign of truth and a standard of social justice and equity that would fill the world. Zion was the place of the Lord's temple, to which all nations would gather to be instructed of the Lord. Zion was destined to consume Babylon through converting it to righteousness, not the other way around. Until Babylon was overcome by Zion, the Lord could not come to dwell with his people in righteous government through His millennial reign. Thus was the vision that moved the Mormon pioneers.

Though the hope for Zion was unrealized both in Nauvoo and in the American West, it provided a vision that continued to inspire Latter-day Saints into the twentieth century. Once in Utah, the Saints continued to hope for a perfected community organized according to priesthood directions in economic, political and social affairs; unified by love of God and immanency of the Lord's second coming. As long as the hope for a here-and-now Zion remained, the Latter-day Saints resisted being assimilated into the

American culture, which for them was Babylon. Consideration of any aspect of the hope for Zion, economic, political or social, isolated from the context of the full vision is necessarily a distortion. The hope for Zion could exist independently of polygamy, as it did for many years in Missouri and Ohio, though in the minds of the Utah Saints the principle of patriarchal marriage was essential to their quest. The hope for Zion could exist independently of the United Order as it did in Nauvoo, though this too was essential as only the Celestial Law could prepare the community for God's presence during his millennial reign. Only after the hope for an imminent Second Coming and a here-and-now Zion had been abandoned, the Latter-day Saints realized, like the earliest Christians,¹⁴² they had to prepare for survival in larger society.

¹ Sidney E. Ahlstrom. A Religious history of the American People, 2 vols. (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1975), I: 176-78.

² See, Alan Simpson, "The Covenanted Community" in Religion in America, John M. Mulder and John F. Wilson, eds. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1978): 17-28; Perry Miller, "The Half-Way Covenant," New England Quarterly 6 (1933): 733f.; Edmund S. Morgan, "The Half-Way Covenant," Religion in America, 29-43.

³ Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson, eds. The Puritans: A Sourcebook of Their Writings. (New York: Harper & Row, 1963): Vol. 1, 198-99.

⁴ Cited in Ahlstrom, A Religious History, 195.

⁵ Perry Miller. The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century. (New York: , 1939), 430-40.

⁶ Ahlstrom, A Religious History, 182.

⁷ Hyrum L. Andrus, Doctrines of the Kingdom (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, Inc. 1973): 96-105; Ahlstrom, A Religious History, 437-70.

⁸ See generally, Milton V. Backman, Jr., American Religions and the Rise of Mormonism (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1965); Constance Rourke, "The Shakers," The Roots of American Culture and Other Essays, Van Wyck Brooks, ed., (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1942): 195-237

⁹ Ahlstrom, A Religious History, I: 597-99.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 599-600

¹¹ Arthur Bestor. Backwoods Utopias: The Sectarian Origins and the Owenite Phase of Communitarian Socialism in America : 1663-1829 (Philadelphia: University of Penn. Press, 1950).

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- ¹² Lawrence Foster. Religion and Sexuality: The Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Community (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984): 92-122.
- ¹³ Ahlstrom, A Religious History, 603-05.
- ¹⁴ Leonard J. Arrington, Feramoiz Y. Fox and Dean L. May, Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation Among the Mormons (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976): 4.
- ¹⁵ Backman, American Religions and the Rise of Mormonism, 237 ff.
- ¹⁶ George C. Bedell; Leo Sandon, and Charles T. Welborn. Religion in America (New York: MacMillan Press, 1975): 189-91.
- ¹⁷ Ahlstrom, A Religious History, 593-94; Foster, Religion and Sexuality, 15.
- ¹⁸ Foster, Religion and Sexuality, 15-18.
- ¹⁹ Foster, Religion and Sexuality, 10-12.
- ²⁰ Lester E. Bush, Jr., "The Word of Wisdom in Early Nineteenth Century Perspective" Dialogue 14:3 (Autumn 1981): 46-65.
- ²¹ Charles Nordhoff. The Communistic Societies of the United States (New York, 1875); Donald Drew Egbert and Stow Persons, eds., Socialism and American Life, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952).
- ²² Andrus, Doctrinal Themes of the Doctrine and Covenants (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1970) 7.
- ²³ Arrington et. al., Building the City of God, 19.
- ²⁴ Ps. 9:11; 76:2; Isa. 24:23; 59:20; 60:14
- ²⁵ Isa. 2:3; Micah 4:2; 2 Ne. 12:2
- ²⁶ Rev. 21:1-3
- ²⁷ The phrase "restoration of all things" derived from Doctrine and Covenants 27:6; 77:7; 86:10; 132:40, 45
- ²⁸ Mosiah 18:8-10
- ²⁹ 3 Nephi 11:21-27; 12-18
- ³⁰ 4 Nephi 1:2-3
- ³¹ Ether 13:2-11
- ³² The various calls are found at D&C 6:6; 11:6; 12:6; 14:6
- ³³ D&C 21:7-8
- ³⁴ D&C 28:9
- ³⁵ See Book of Commandments (1833), pp. 68, 80, 802, 90, 92, 94.
- ³⁶ William F. Mulder, "Mormonism's Gathering: An American Doctrine with a Difference" Church History 23 (1954): 252.

³⁷ D&C 29:7-8

³⁸ D&C 37:3

³⁹ “A Prophecy Given to the Church of Christ, March 7, 1831” The Evening and the Morning Star, I (June 1832), 2; cf. D&C 45:64-67

⁴⁰ Richard L. Bushman. Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984) 170-71.

⁴¹ Joseph Smith Jr., The Pearl of Great Price (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1978) Moses 7:62-64

⁴² Steven L. Olsen, “Zion: the Structure of a Theological Revolution,” Sunstone 6 (Nov./Dec. 1981): 24

⁴³ Moses 7:18-21

⁴⁴ Bushman, Joseph Smith and the Beginnings, 186-87

⁴⁵ D&C 57:3

⁴⁶ This thesis is treated by Jan Shipps in Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985). For ideas of the center place defining sacred space and time, see Mircea Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion (New York: New American Library, 1974), 367-87.

⁴⁷ Hyrum Andrus, Doctrines of the Kingdom, 300-304.

⁴⁸ For a treatment of the hierocentric state in antiquity, see Hugh Nibley, “The Hierocentric State,” Western Political Quarterly, IV (1951): 226-53; and Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, supra.

⁴⁹ Joseph Smith. History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 8 vols. (Salt Lake City; Deseret Book Co., 1968) I, 358.

⁵⁰ Isa. 54:2; D&C 82:14

⁵¹ D&C 97:21

⁵² D&C 101:80; 105:2, 9, 34

⁵³ W.D. Davies, “Israel, the Mormons and the Land” in Reflections on Mormonism, Truman Madsen, ed. (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Monograph Series, 1978): 90.

⁵⁴ Laurel B. Andrew. The Early Temples of the Mormons: The Architecture of the Millennial Kingdom in the American West (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1978): 57-59.

⁵⁵ Treated in Leonard J. Arrington & Davis Bitton, The Mormon Experience (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 116 ff.

⁵⁶ D&C 97:10-12

⁵⁷ D&C 38:16-20

⁵⁸ Arrington et. al, Building the City of God, 19.

⁵⁹ Id. cf. HC 1:146-47; The Evening and the Morning Star I (July 1832); Book of Commandments ch. 44.

⁶⁰ D&C 42:30

⁶¹ D&C 42:32

⁶² D&C 42:33-34; 55

⁶³ Arrington et. al, Building the City of God., 24-31. An excellent description of the function of Consecration and Stewardship is found in Leonard J. Arrington, "Early Mormon Communitarianism: The Law of Consecration and Stewardship" The Western Humanities Review, 7 (1953): 341-69.

⁶⁴ Arrington et. al, Building the City of God., 17.

⁶⁵ D&C 104:55-56

⁶⁶ D&C 104:13-18

⁶⁷ Book of Commandments, ch. 52:20, p. 97 (1833).

⁶⁸ D&C 78:5-6

⁶⁹ D&C 29:31-35

⁷⁰ D&C 104:16

⁷¹ Leonard J. Arrington. Great Basin Kingdom (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 11.

⁷² Journal of Discourses (hereafter JD) 16:11 (April 7, 1873 discourse).

⁷³ HC 1:364-65

⁷⁴ Arrington et. al, Building the City, 31

⁷⁵ Robert L. Millet. The Development of the Concept of Zion in Mormon Theology (Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, 1983): 109-111.

⁷⁶ Id. See especially, Lyndon W. Cook, The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith (Provo: Seventies' Mission Bookstore, 1981): 167-68.

⁷⁷ D&C 101:16-17

⁷⁸ D&C 105:3-5

⁷⁹ D&C 105:11

⁸⁰ The "Law of Tithing" had not yet been revealed, and the "tithe" mentioned in D&C 11-12 refers to offerings rather than an increment of surplus income. The "law of tithing" was revealed on July 8, 1838. See D&C 119.

⁸¹ Millet. The Development of the Concept of Zion, 191.

⁸² Millet, The Development of the Concept of Zion, 191-92.

⁸³ D&C 110 cf. Malachi 4:5-6. The burden of Moroni's Sept. 23, 1823 message dealt with restoring these keys according to Joseph Smith.

⁸⁴ Davies, "Israel, Mormons and the Land," supra.

⁸⁵ Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, 15.

⁸⁶ Arrington et. al., Building the City, 34; Andrus, Doctrines of the Kingdom, 253-58.

⁸⁷ Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, 15.

⁸⁸ Andrus, Doctrines of the Kingdom, 249-52.

⁸⁹ Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, 17.

⁹⁰ James L. Kimball, Jr., "The Nauvoo Charter: A Reinterpretation," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, 64 (Spring 1971): 66-78.

⁹¹ W. Kenneth Godfrey, "Causes of Mormon – Non-Mormon conflict in Hancock County" (Ph. D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1967).

⁹² D&C 128

⁹³ D&C 128:10.

⁹⁴ Millet, "Development of the concept of Zion," 198-99.

⁹⁵ D&C 131:7-8

⁹⁶ Daniel W. Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage Before the Death of Joseph Smith" (M.A. Thesis: Purdue University, 1975): 41f. cf. D&C 76:58. See also, T. Edgar Lyon, "Doctrinal Development of the Church During the Nauvoo Sojourn" BYU Studies 15:4 (Winter 1975) 437-39; Blake T. Ostler, "The Idea of Pre-Existence in the Development of Mormon Thought" Dialogue 15 (Spring 1982): 59-78.

⁹⁷ D&C 130:22

⁹⁸ HC 5:323

⁹⁹ Ostler, "Idea of Pre-Existence in Development of Mormon Thought," 61-62.

¹⁰⁰ Bachman, "A Study in Plural Marriage," 42-43; Foster, Religion and Sexuality, 142-46; Andrew F. Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Mormon Succession Question" (MA Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1982); Andrus, Doctrines of the Kingdom, 439-88.

¹⁰¹ Herbert Ray Larsen, "'Familism' in Mormon Social Structure" (Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1954).

¹⁰² Bachman, "A Study of Plural Marriage," 57-61.

¹⁰³ Jacob 2:23-29

¹⁰⁴ Jacob 2:30

¹⁰⁵ Discussed in Bachman, "A Study of Plural Marriage," 68-73; Foster, Religion and Sexuality, 134-35.

¹⁰⁶ Id.

¹⁰⁷ Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate I (June 1835): 10.

¹⁰⁸ Bachman, "A Study of Plural Marriage," 77-86. cf. JD 20:29

¹⁰⁹ Id.

¹¹⁰ Id. at 189-217.

¹¹¹ D&C 132:30-34

¹¹² Foster, Religion and Sexuality, 161.

¹¹³ Bachman, "A Study of Plural Marriage," 42-43. cf. Michael Quinn, Organizational Development and Social Origins of the Mormon Hierarchy, 1832-1934: A Prosopological Study. (MA Thesis: University of Utah, 1973): 125-76.

¹¹⁴ "The Government of God" Times and Seasons (July 1842); HC 5:64

¹¹⁵ D&C 58:22; 134:5

¹¹⁶ D&C 134:1; HC 2:247-49

¹¹⁷ D&C 58:21

¹¹⁸ HC 5:65

¹¹⁹ D&C 20:63; 20:65-66; 26:2; 28:13; 38:34; 104:21, 71-72

¹²⁰ Times and Seasons, vol. 5, p. 510; cf. Journal History, July 12, 1865, in Church Historical Office; JD 6:346

¹²¹ John F. Wilson, "Some Comparative Perspectives on the Early Mormon Movement and the Church-State Question," Journal of Mormon History 8 (1981) 71.

¹²² Id., 71.

¹²³ Millet, "Development of the Concept of Zion," 146-47.

¹²⁴ Joseph Fielding Smith. Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1967): 322.

¹²⁵ HC 5:1-2

¹²⁶ David John Buerger, "The Fulness of the Priesthood: The Second Anointing in Latter-day Saint Theology and Practice," Dialogue 16 (Spring 1983): 21.

¹²⁷ Andrew F. Ehat, "'It Seems Like Heaven Began on Earth:' Joseph Smith and the Constitution of the Kingdom of God" BYU Studies 20 (Spring 1980): 254.

¹²⁸ D. Michael Quinn, "The Council of Fifty and Its Members, 1844 to 1945," BYU Studies (Winter 1980): 163-97. Some studies have concluded that the Council of Fifty played a more important role in both Nauvoo and Utah. Hyrum Andrus, Joseph Smith and World Government (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1958); Klaus J. Hansen, Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History (East Lansing: Michigan State Univ. Press, 1967).

¹²⁹ Quinn, "The Council of Fifty," 163.

¹³⁰ Ehat, "Joseph Smith and the Constitution," 259

¹³¹ Id.

¹³² D&C 28:2

¹³³ Journal of William Clayton, April 11, 1844. cf. Ehat, "Joseph Smith and the Constitution," 263.

¹³⁴ Millet, "Development of the Concept of Zion," 217-18.

¹³⁵ Id., 167-72

¹³⁶ Quinn, "The Council of Fifty," 190.

¹³⁷ Andrew F. Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Mormon Succession Question," (MA Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1981).

¹³⁸ Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, The Words of Joseph Smith (Provo: Religious Studies Center Monograph, 1980): 362-63.

¹³⁹ William Clayton Journal, March 1, 1845. Cited in Ehat, "Joseph Smith and the Constitution," 269.

¹⁴⁰ Ivan J. Barrett, Joseph Smith and the Restoration (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1974): 646.

¹⁴¹ D&C 136:3. cf.

¹⁴² John G. Gager, "Early Mormonism and Early Christianity: Some Parallels and Their Consequences for the Study of New Religions," *Journal of Mormon History* 9 (1982): 53-60.