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The Foundations and Early Development of Mormon Mission Theory

By

David Golding

Presented to the Graduate Faculty of Claremont Graduate University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Religion

We certify that we have read this document and approve it as adequate in scope and quality for the degree of Master of Arts.

Faculty Advisor, Professor Richard L. Bushman

Faculty Reader, Professor Armand L. Mauss

Date

Preface

After a semester of applying postcolonial critique to the study of religion, students of our graduate seminar shared their final papers in interactive presentations. When it came time for me to discuss my paper's topic—missiology as a colonizing discourse—I was surprised by the instructor's response. He, who had so thoroughly criticized the modern missionary movement as an apparatus for the violent colonization of indigenous peoples, had never heard of missiology nor mission-theoretical discourse. In fact, he insisted on referring to the field as "missionology," displaying a level of inexperience with the large body of literature devoted to the topic and the ongoing debate among missiologists that involves, among many things, postcolonial critique itself.[1] In effect, our class had considered mission without directing any attention to the theories that motivated and sustained the movement—all while criticizing the West for both projecting its own episteme onto others and remaining ignorant of the epistemologies of those it subordinated. To a degree, we had installed the very thing we had made an effort to deconstruct when arguing against mission work as advanced by the West.

A year later, I attended a conference devoted to interfaith dialogue and there encountered another surprise. I brought up postcolonial theory as a means for understanding the technical challenges of interreligious dialogue and noticed that scholars at the table understood the theory in strictly chronological terms; they thought of the theory as post-colonial, i.e., after

1. The name for the study of mission received considerable debate as missiology developed as an academic discipline in the early twentieth century. Missiology, derived from the Latin *missio* and the common Greek suffix *-logy*, won out over "missionology" as a matter of haplography and use (e.g., "sociology" rather than "socialology" and "apostology" rather than "apostolology"). The debate continues over a suitable name for the discipline, involving such candidates as "witnessology" and "martyrology," though the majority of practitioners favor "missiology." Jan A. B. Jongeneel, "Missio(no)logy" in *Philosophy, Science, and Theology of Mission in the 19th and 20th Centuries: A Missiological Encyclopedia*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1995), 1:63.

the fall of colonies and the rise of liberation movements in the twentieth century onward—not as an ongoing effort to value human differences, destabilize violent social structures, and add nuance to communication between and about cultures. Despite their commitment to the appreciation of the Other in religious discourse, these scholars remained largely unaware of the large body of literature from non-missiological avenues which legitimizes their own endeavor.

These anecdotes illustrate to some measure my own navigation between parallel academic discourses. On the one hand, a body of religious studies scholars takes the contemporary issue of religious pluralism very seriously—every bit as seriously as missiologists. However, as exhibited in the encounter between different cultures, these fields operate with distinct vocabularies. Religious studies scholars seek to understand religious pluralism often in naturalistic and humanistic terms; missiologists have no problem acknowledging, affirming, and incorporating supernatural causes while reconciling Christian expansion with the realities of globalization. I realize that this generalizes the two lines of inquiry. Nevertheless, enough discursive gaps exist between practitioners of missiology and of religious studies that one cannot navigate either field long without recognizing that the topic of mission has a uniquely confusing character within the academy. As a result, much work remains to understand better, in mission-theoretical terms, the role of mission and missionaries in the development of American religious history.

This study has grown out of a dissonance between the conclusions drawn by religious studies scholars (particularly historians of American religion) and missiologists, and I hope such tensions will receive added attention as mission, in particular, confronts the studies of religion and religious pluralism.

In the thick of navigating this dissonance, I have benefited from several individuals, most

of whom personally assisted in this study and to whom I owe thanks: Richard Bushman, Claudia Bushman, Armand Mauss, Spencer Fluhman, Reid Neilson, David Whittaker, Esther Chung-Kim, and Karen Torjesen. I appreciate these scholars' professionalism and candor in providing feedback and direction. I am also grateful to the staff of the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University and the Claremont Mormon Studies Student Association for providing exceptional assistance in research and in testing ideas. Their patience and support, in large measure, made this project possible. I owe profound thanks to Charity Brooks for providing assistance at a critical moment during the final editing phase. Above all, I owe my family—most especially my wife Camille: you have guided and supported my own sense of missionary identity from the beginning and you continue to lead the way in the virtues of solidarity, loyalty, and outreach.

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For Kenny, Doug, Chuck, and Jerry—missionaries when few embarked

Introduction

Missiographical Pitfalls and the Study of Mormon Mission

What follows seeks to answer a fundamental question facing missiologists and historians of Mormonism: given their sustained preoccupation with converting others to Mormonism and their thriving tradition of missionary work, how do Mormons conceive of their mission? By focusing on the theoretical frame in which Mormon missionaries imagined the non-Mormon world, prepared for missionary engagement, and derived their expectations for their mission work, this study aims to illuminate the development of Mormon missionary activities and explain the processes by which Mormons fashioned for themselves a missional character. I argue that charting Mormon mission theory identifies moments where practitioners sought to resolve intra- and intercultural dissonances. The ways missionaries formed their theoretical toolboxes from which they built their modes of proselytism and communication remain a crucial element for understanding American religious history, due to the spread of uniquely American values and how prominently mission figured in the greater intellectual climate. An analysis of Mormon mission theory as opposed to mission theology or ideology fills a gap in scholarly writing on mission and Mormonism which has assumed a unicity of theological development within Mormonism or that their body of ideas sprang from a coherent, predetermined system.[1]

How I use "theory" as it pertains to mission and missionaries factors prominently in

1. Rex T. Price Jr. noticed in 1991 how, despite a large number of studies on the Mormon missionary subject, "no one has produced a broad ranging study dealing with the missionaries in descriptive, social, and ideological terms." Though he intended his study to "fill that void in some degree," Price argued that "theology best explained the world of the Mormon missionary.… Theology also best explains the relation between that world and the Mormon conversion experience" [Price, "The Mormon Missionary of the Nineteenth Century" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin–Madison, 1991), viii–x]. I contend that instantiations of the missionary subject, which I will explain in more detail in the following paragraphs, precede the making of theology and informed the belief system to which Mormon missionaries ascribed.

my analysis. Traditional missiologists use "mission theory" and "missiology" interchangeably, sometimes even conflating theology of mission with the two terms. Consequently, a debate has ensued over missiological terminology that splits based on differences in academic precommitments. In general, seminarians defend "mission theory" as the theological system that takes mission as its starting point; historians defend it as the dual complement to missionary praxis and/or the unconscious preconceptions of missionaries; critical theorists use it as the description of rationales behind the installation of hierarchical relationships between missionaries and their recipients.[2] I take mission theory to mean the mental frame of the constituted missionary that motivated, made sense of, and justified missionary actions, and use "missiology" as a synonym of "mission theory" in this sense. The components of such a theoretical frame extend into the seminarian, historical, and critical perspectives, since the dynamic evolution of theology, practice, and social relationships appears in the discursive development of Mormon mission. In discourse, Mormons provided themselves with cultural representations of the missionary which effectively secured a subject status for Mormonism—embedded in these representations, in other words, is a relation of the Mormon self to the non-Mormon other, and their sense of audience, time, and space was informed by the discur-

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2. Seminarian perspectives include: Tom A. Steffen, "Missiology's Journey for Acceptance in the Educational World," *Missiology: An International Review* 31, no. 2 (April 2003): 131–53; Justice Anderson, "An Overview of Missiology," in *Missiology: An Introduction*, ed. John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith, and Justice Anderson (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998); F. J. Verstraelen, A. Camps, L. A. Hoedemaker, and M. R. Spindler, eds., *Missiology: An Ecumenical Introduction* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1995); Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1995).

For historian perspectives, see: Torben Christensen and William B. Hutchison, eds., *Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era: 1880–1920* (Denmark: Aros, 1982); Dana L. Robert, ed., *Converting Colonialism: Visions and Realities in Mission History, 1706–1914* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2008).

Critical theory, especially postcolonial theory, perspectives include: Tinyiko Sam Maluleke, "Postcolonial Mission: Oxymoron or New Paradigm?" *Swedish Missiological Themes* [*Svensk Missionstidskrift*] 95, no. 4 (2007): 503–27; Katja Heidemanns, "Missiology of Risk? Explorations in Mission Theology from a German Feminist Perspective," *International Review of Mission* 95, no. 368 (January 2004): 105–18; Jørgen Skov Sørensen, *Missiological Mutilations—Prospective Paralogies: Language and Power in Contemporary Mission Theory* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2007).

sive interplay between the two. I do not describe the mission theory that emerges as a biological or psychological essence, rather (to borrow from Meyda Yeğenoğlu) as a "set of discursive effects that constitute" this missionary subject.[3]

An example from Mormon folklore helps to illustrate how I understand mission theory and its operation in Mormon discourse and history. Stories of Mormons preaching their religion as an airplane passenger appear throughout cultural representations of member-based missionary work; some Mormons may even feel a conscientious duty to look for ways to start a conversation with fellow passengers when travelling by air.[4] For these Mormons, there comes a moment when boarding the plane that he or she consciously or unconsciously becomes aware that the individual sitting in the neighboring seat is not a fellow Mormon. That moment sees the construction of the missionary subject, where all of the embedded features of one's missionary discourse come into being and inform, motivate, and invent the missionary. Cultural effects, theology, history, and experience all affect the constituted missionary subject, and how he or she will behave toward the constituted non-missionary object.[5] In other words, the non-Mormon in the neighboring seat already occupies a place within the discursive world of the missionary, and a reciprocal effect occurs as the missionary engages the other that either confirms or alters the expectations of the missionary subject. As the

3. Meyda Yeğenoğlu, *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1.

4. See Carlos E. Asay, *Seven M's of Missionary Service: Proclaiming the Gospel as a Member or Full-Time Missionary* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996); William H. Bennett, "Be a Missionary—Always—Everywhere You Go!" *Ensign* 2, no. 7 (July 1972): 82–84. Michael R. Cope, "You Don't Know Jack: The Dynamics of Mormon Religious/Ethnic Identity" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 2009) provides more detail about the construction of Mormon identity and how Mormons anticipate communicating their faith to outsiders which goes beyond my simple example here.

5. This is not to say that the Mormon missionary thinks of his or her audience as "objects" to be manipulated or controlled, rather, to describe the process of objectification within the relationship in the moment of constituting the missionary subject and to point to the unconcious and habitual dynamics that emerge from this relationship.

missionary discourse iterates over time, an overall theory develops from which missionary activities derive. I call mission theory in general, and Mormon mission theory in particular, "the fashioning of a historically specific [theory] whereby members imagine themselves" as missionaries.[6] By looking to the theory as a compliment to assessing the historical development of Mormon missionary activity, and to a larger extent, answering the ongoing question of how Mormonism thrived as a young religion in the early national period, we more fully contextualize and appreciate the complexities of the missionaries' thoughts and worldviews.

Due to the ongoing debate over terms which Mormons take for granted within their own discourse like "mission," "missionary," and "missiology," bringing the Mormon missionary into dialogue with the greater body of literature on mission history introduces semantic and theoretical problems specific to missiography—the writing of mission and the study of how mission texts are synthesized, analyzed, and utilized. After over a century of development of missiology as a discipline, the various schools of thought within missiography have yet to arrive at a consensus of terminology. Mission, by its nature as an unabashed affirmation of religious faith, presents a unique challenge to the academic discourses which take it as a subject: How do practitioners discuss mission when basic terms are so loaded with thousands of years of confessional precommitments and theological underpinnings? This study attempts to respond, if only rudimentarily, to this current impasse (some might say) or discursive disconnect by proffering an underdeveloped mission-theoretical object of study the history of Mormon mission theory provides. In short, current missiography places a constraint on practitioners to carefully define terms and perspective as part of the analysis, otherwise one risks taking up a semantic debate where one intends to engage a missiological or historical one. A look at the historical development of missiography marks the current pitfalls to be avoided for

6. I have borrowed and paraphrased from Yeğenoğlu, 2.

studies that aim to provide impartial and non-confessional analyses of mission.

The fall of European colonies in the middle of the twentieth century inaugurated an epoch of decolonization that in many ways continues to the present. Among the means of destabilizing the power and reach of colonizers, non-Western intellectuals crafted radical critiques of Christian missionaries and their complicity in advancing imperialism. Dana Robert notes that by the early 1970s, scholarly critique in the secular West made of the missionary a "whipping boy for failed colonial policies."[7] The aftermath of colonization and the increasing interconnectedness of world cultures into the twenty-first century kept the critical whips against missionaries cracking, both from within and without the movement. Confessional missiology, or the study of mission from an affirmative perspective, entertained the realities of missionary expansionism as much as the secular West and produced its own body of criticism, though generally with the aim to refine and reconcile mission theology.[8] As a result, missiography involves streams of debate that use different vocabularies. Some question missionary motivations while others question prior theologies of mission. Both lines of questioning overlap here and there, producing a "dizzying complexity" of concepts that weave together mission history, theology, and critical theory—this, on top of the complexities mis-

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7. Dana L. Robert, *Christian Mission: How Christianity became a World Religion* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 68.

8. Examples include Sigbert Axelson, *Missionens ansikte* (Lund, Sweden: Signum, 1976) which provides an analysis of the extent of mission's cultural imperialism; Zachariah Keodirelang, ed., *Responsible Government in a Revolutionary Age* (New York: New York University Press, 1966) contains a collection of twenty-two essays on Christian involvement in politics; Robert J. Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation: Spirituality and Strategies* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1998) relates mission with reconciling human rights movements for social justice; Richard G. Cote, *Re-Visioning Mission: The Catholic Church and Culture in Postmodern America* (New York: Paulist Press, 1996) argues that Roman Catholics must embrace the challenges of inculturation in their missiology; Jacob S. Dharmaraj, *Colonialism and Christian Mission: Postcolonial Reflections* (Delhi: India Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1993) explores the colonialism of missiology in nineteenth-century British missionary societies to India; Stephen Neill, *Colonialism and Christian Missions* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966) provides a comprehensive overview of the relationship between mission and colonialism to 1930; see also Robert W. Hefner, ed., *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

sionary activity and cross-cultural exchange inherently bring to the study of mission.[9]

Missiographical pitfalls arise out of the impulse of missiologists and historians to negotiate the modern dimension of imperialism with the ideologies of the modern missionary. One is to write as though the missionary's discourse developed in isolation, apart from political, educational, or popular discourses. Another is to write as though a unified discourse existed as identifiably missionary.[10] Not only did missionaries in the nineteenth century—the height of the modern missionary movement—cross denominational lines to build coalitions for proselytizing foreign peoples, but they also provided each other with accounts of reaching the interior of far away lands with information about geography, cultures, and languages. Much of world news was channeled through missionary correspondence and media, moving in both directions within the popular discourse, between home-based missions and those abroad.[11] These lines of communication produced a hyperactive discourse that sustained both a steady flow of foreign-bound missionaries and a conscientious construction of unknown peoples. Buddhism, for instance, became a textual object of the British imagination during the Victorian era, judged by missionary depictions of the religion that had passed through the filter of their mission theory. The constructed Buddhism of these British missionaries both legitimized the Christianization of China and recruited others to the effort, based on misrepresentations of the imagined culture.[12] Different characterizations of Buddhism developed among

9. Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2004), 1–2.

10. Anna Johnston in *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800–1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) problematizes the convenient categorization of missionary writings in imperial Britain as actually missionary. She explores the complexity of the female missionary voice, the interplay of indigenous missionaries in the writing, and the greater popular literature of the Victorian era that gave portrayals of Protestant missionaries of the time.

11. Johnston, 6–8.

12. Philip C. Almond, *The British Discovery of Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 12–13.

American missionaries, especially as exhibits toured North America and Europe showcasing "exotic" and far-away religions. Western missionaries' contact with Buddhism produced different discursive effects, depending on various social and religious factors.[13]

Another pitfall is to interpret mission in supernatural terms that cannot be immediately verified. This risks missing the intensely human element in the missionary enterprise which many observers are willing to accept, but which they may intellectually move to the periphery when they intend to justify an ideal theology of mission. Explaining the missionary phenomenon in human terms allows for the missiography to come into dialogue with a half-century of anti-colonial and postcolonial criticism. Moreover, maintaining an awareness of the human element in mission checks against positing the study on a predilection for one faith community and a tendency of many practitioners of mission studies to (implicitly or otherwise) affirm a Christian worldview when taking human injustices into account.[14]

A more fundamental missiographical pitfall than the foregoing confronts scholars of Mormonism: limiting the discourse to a precommitted perspective of missionary activities in history. The Mormon ethic of record-keeping has provided a rich documentary cache, and consequently, much has been said and written on Mormon missions from within the community. And yet, a lacuna of scholarly writing on Mormon mission theory, theology, and comparative history remains in Mormon studies. Mormonism's mission movement began during

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13. Grant Wacker, "A Plural World: The Protestant Awakening to World Religions," in *Between the Times: The Travail of the Protestant Establishment in America, 1900–1960*, ed. William R. Hutchison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Thomas A. Tweed, *The American Encounter with Buddhism, 1844–1912: Victorian Culture and the Limits of Dissent* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Susan Fleming McAllister, "Cross-Cultural Dress in Victorian British Narratives: Dressing for Eternity," in *Christian Encounters with the Other*, ed. John C. Hawley (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

14. Jørgen Skov Sørensen argues for a deconstruction and reconstruction of missiology on the grounds that prior mission theology has in large measure perpetuated power structures in language that deserve to be "mutilated" if mission is to shed itself of asymmetrical power relations and the forcing of religion onto another culture [Sørensen, 19–24].

the inaugural decades of the "great age of societies" alongside the surge of Euro-American Protestant missions where Mormons proclaimed their message even before a church congregation had assembled.[15] Notwithstanding their almost two-hundred-year history of mission work, a sizable documentary history, and an internationally recognizable missionary system, Mormons seldom consider their mission in the "broader historical or cultural context," and remain almost completely absent from the established discipline of missiology.[16] Archivist David Whittaker has pointed out that "no one-volume study on the Mormon missionary experience exists," and seminal works in Christian mission history give only a passing glance, if any, to Mormon missionaries.[17] Most Mormons are unaware of the term "missiology" in the first place, and generally speak of "missionary work" or "missions" using distinct, parochial definitions—a "mission" is a two-year or year-and-a-half term of full-time service undertaken by young men and women respectively, or a geographic and organizational unit of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.[18] Though mission and missionaries permeate

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15. Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964), 252; Steven C. Harper, "Missionaries in the American Marketplace: Mormon Proselyting in the 1830s," *Journal of Mormon History* 24, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 5–6.

16. David J. Whittaker, "Mormon Missiology: An Introduction and Guide to the Sources," Chap. 18 in *The Disciple as Witness: Essays on Latter-day Saint History and Doctrine in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson* (Provo: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies; Brigham Young University Press, 2000), 466. One survey of the globalization of Mormon missions is Donald Q. Cannon and Richard O. Cowan, eds., *Unto Every Nation: Gospel Light Reaches Every Land* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), but this work restricts its scope to Mormons' foreign missions, not the full range of Mormon mission history. References to Mormon missionaries are absent from projects aiming for comprehensive and encyclopedic information on Christian mission such as Gerald H. Anderson, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998); Norman E. Thomas, ed., *International Mission Bibliography: 1960–2000* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2003); and Jan A. B. Jongeneel, *Philosophy, Science, and Theology of Mission in the 19th and 20th Centuries: A Missiological Encyclopedia*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Publishers, 1995). To date, the only article on Mormon missiology published in a non-Mormon missiological periodical is R. Lanier Britsch, "Mormon Missions: An Introduction to the LDS Mission System," *Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research* 3, no. 1 (January 1979): 22–27, which only provides a basic overview of Mormon missions.

17. Whittaker, 469–71.

18. The only appearance of the term "missiology" in the Church's magazine for adults, *The Ensign*, appears as a reference to the academic journal *Missiology: An International Review*; Lavina Fielding Ander-

Mormon identity, Mormons lack a systematic missiology, and their idiomatic use of "mission" precludes a discourse that recognizes the constituted missionary subject and the active theory motivating their enterprise.[19] Scholars of Mormonism have written on the Mormon mission subject for well over half a century, yet "missiology" has only recently come into vogue and even then only represents studies of missionary history or sociology.[20] The pressing concerns of intercultural exchanges rarely enter the Mormon missionary discourse and no treatment of Mormon mission as theory has yet surfaced.[21] Postcolonial critiques, which Catholic and

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son, "The Church's Cross-Cultural Encounters," *Ensign* 10, no. 4 (April 1980): 44. The term has never appeared in any General Conference sermon or Church manual, including missionary guides and scripture indexes. Interestingly, "missiology" receives no formal attention at any of the Church's missionary training centers, though extensive missionary curricula has been and receives ongoing development in these full-time, mission-educational institutions.

19. The closest manifestation of such is found in the LDS Church's standard manual for missionaries, published in 2004 titled *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (Salt Lake City: Intellectual Reserve). Though it articulates official statements of Mormon mission theory, *Preach My Gospel* does not intend to provide an exhaustive or systematic theology of mission; compared with previous missionary manuals, the Church appears to reduce here its conceptualizations of mission rather than catalog them. John-Charles Duffy, "The New Missionary Discussions and the Future of Correlation," *Sunstone Magazine*, no. 138 (September 2005): 28–46.

20. Mormon mission studies have yet to produce a comprehensive treatment of mission theology. Rex Thomas Price Jr., "The Mormon Missionary of the Nineteenth Century" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin–Madison, 1991) made the first serious attempt to survey the ideology of Mormon missionaries in the nineteenth century and argues that such ideas are best explained by developments in Mormon theology. Price makes no attempt to build a comprehensive missiology, or a comprehensive ideology for that matter, and frames his project as a scholarly response to an "uneven" and shallow "historiography of Mormon missionization"; Price, v–vi. Tancred I. King in "Missiology and Mormon Missions," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 16, no. 4 (Winter 1983): 42–50 provided a brief contextualization of mission theology and where Mormonism fits into that picture, but could only speculate on what a general missiology could look like should Mormons theologize as do other Christians.

21. Philip Jenkins, "Letting Go: Understanding Mormon Growth in Africa," *Journal of Mormon History* 35, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 1–25 explains how Mormonism's strong and established denominational history has its weaknesses when involving the dynamics of intercultural exchange: "More seriously, focusing on one religious tradition means that we sometimes miss the broader picture, so that we can describe events in one tradition as if they happened in isolation, while they were really occuring much more widely." He continues, "From the point of view of historical methodology, this study suggests the critical need for a comparative perspective. Many churches speak proudly of their growth and achievements, which might be cited as 'amazing,' 'extraordinary,' even 'miraculous.' But such terms can only be used in a relative sense"; Jenkins, 1–2. Writers sometimes equate missiology with methodology of missionary work when examining Mormon mission: Jay Edwin Jensen, "Proselyting Techniques of Mormon Missionaries" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1974); David G. Stewart Jr., *The Law of the Harvest: Practical Principles for Effective Missionary Work* (Henderson: Cumorah Foundation, 2007).

Protestant missiologists express urgency and eagerness to negotiate, occupy only the peripheries of Mormon scholarly awareness, probably because the theory so directly challenges Mormon epistemology supporting Mormon belief and truth claims.[22]

Much work clearly remains for scholars of Mormonism to bring Mormon missiography into dialogue with established disciplines in missiology and religious studies. Furthermore, despite a significant head start in established missiology and mission history, the larger body of literature from Catholic and Protestant mission studies continues to demand more attention to theory from an uncommitted and naturalistic perspective. When a 1981 consultation of the International Commission for Comparative Church History (ICCCH) introduced their collection of essays on missionary ideologies, its organizers noticed that the study of the Christian missionary enterprise "had been left largely to those most deeply and emotionally committed to the idea of foreign missions, or to those most offended by that idea." Though gains had been made by those who had "managed to transcend" such precommitments by that time, they felt that "the nineteenth century missionary is still an 'invisible man'—or, even more, invisible woman—in the histories of most Western and non-Western societies."[23]

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22. Postcolonial theory needs not undermine Mormon belief, but a reformulation and reinterpretation of the normative Mormon worldview would be required for Mormon hierarchical systems inherent in priesthood, administration, and doctrine to be reconciled with the critique. I borrow from Sørensen's use and explanation of "epistemology" in this study: "The notion of 'epistemology' plays a substantial role within this study. John Greco defines it, positively, as 'the theory of knowledge' which is 'driven by two main questions: "What is knowledge?" and "What can we know?"' Out of these questions arises a third concern, viz. 'How do we know what we do know?' … The employment and understanding of the notion in this study is mostly in line with [the philosophical theory of knowledge] insofar as 'epistemology' is used as an expression of a certain 'frame of reference' or 'mind-set' for agents involved in a discourse, which in its view of knowledge has its 'varieties,' 'sources,' and 'limits.' … Francis Heylighen, writing on the nature of epistemology, suggests a dynamic development within the notion so that '[w]hen we look at the history of epistemology, we can discern a clear trend, in spite of the confusion of many seemingly contradictory positions. The first theories of knowledge stressed its absolute, permanent character, whereas the later theories put the emphasis on its relativity or situation-dependence, its continuous development or evolution, and its active interference with the world and its subjects and objects. The whole trend moves from a static, passive view of knowledge towards a more and more adaptive and active one.'" [Sørensen, 5–6, fn. 14.]

23. Christensen and Hutchison, 5.

This same evaluation could be made of Mormon mission studies as they stand today, with the Mormon missionary remaining invisible to American religious history and missiology.

Almost thirty years later, some historians of American religion remain unsatisfied, though hopeful, of the progress in missionary studies. Kevin Schultz and Paul Harvey have recently argued that American historiography betrays an ignorance of religion in its master narrative. Among their solutions, they advise religious studies scholars to involve the missionary and outsider religions like Mormonism in their study. The movement of Mormonism "partially away from provinciality" toward the mainstream has attracted historians' attention enough to "become central to historiographical dialogue."[24] Missionary studies in addition to Mormon studies should inform our understanding of religion and American life as well. Schultz and Harvey call for:

> the fruition of the much-promised development of missionary studies.… Several scholars are working on projects related to the missionary movement, and we look forward to the publications of these books. If they fulfill the promise of their topics, … then the future of missionary studies should be incredibly helpful in teaching us how these far-flung Christians influenced American life.[25]

If missionary studies at large have improved little from their "primitive" state in 1981 over the rise of postcolonial studies and since the unprecedented age of globalization in the twenty-first century, then scholarly Mormon missiography, which noticeably lags behind, is in its infancy. Taking a cue from the 1981 ICCCH symposium on missionary ideologies, though Mormon missionary studies do "frequently discuss implementation or behavior—what actually happened in the mission fields—we [should try] principally to gain clarity about what it was the [Mormon] churches or societies thought and asserted." William Hutchison continued

24. Kevin M. Schultz and Paul Harvey, "Everywhere and Nowhere: Recent Trends in American Religious History and Historiography," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 78, no. 1 (March 2010), 138.

25. Schultz and Harvey, 152.

(and I paraphrase), it is sufficiently ambitious "in this first step toward larger-scale comparative analyses, to lay out and compare the stated rationales of the [Mormon mission] movement during one crucial period."[26]

Studies, therefore, that intersect these underdeveloped avenues of Mormon missiography, American religious history, and missiology will mutually add to our understanding of Mormonism as an American religious phenomenon, Mormon missions as an elaborate and developing missionary enterprise, and religion in American life at large. As Hutchison noticed, the first steps of these studies must include a laying out and contextualization of the "stated rationales"—the theory motivating and informing the missionary activity—if they are to avoid definitional problems later on and, in an academic sense, avoid "running the train before building the tracks."[27] This study endeavors to fill missiographical gaps in both the Mormon and the larger mission studies forums by assessing the theory of Mormon missionaries in comparison to American missionary thought over time. A better understanding of the constituted missionary subject provides one critical corrective to the historiographical deficiency of ignoring the location, role, and function of religion in American life when narrating history.

Isolating Mission Theory and the Challenge of Panmissionism

Key mission terms appear in such a wide body of literature that a study of mission theory cannot presuppose a unity of definitions. William Hutchison believed that "definitional problems … arise in any research on missions, especially if it adopts a determinedly comparative

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26. William R. Hutchison, "Evangelization and Civilization: Protestant Missionary Motivation in the Imperialist Era, Introduction," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 6, no. 2 (April 1982), 50.

27. Hutchison, 50, 51.

methodology."[28] Rapid changes in mission historiography have only exacerbated this semantic hurdle. Before the 1960s, historians generally treated the subject in terms of the expansion of Christendom. As secular interest in the mission enterprise increased throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, this treatment moved from mission as a variety of European modes of colonization to mission as the locus of interreligious and intercultural exchange. Postcolonialism and gender studies have entered the discourse, mainly since the turn of the twenty-first century, and have introduced terminologies that allow for a hybridity of meanings. All along, theologians have studied mission and history with an emphasis on "missions' role in the transmission and creation of theologies."[29] Dana Robert faced "a major challenge in trying to write a history of the mission theory of American women" because of "the lack of clarity over what scholars mean by 'mission theory.'" She explains:

> American missionaries tended to function as activists rather than theoreticians. Missiologist Wilbert Shenk has noted that the idea of "mission theory" is traceable to the 1820s, but the notion remained fuzzy. After 1850, American mission theory focused on the idea of the indigenous church: the broadly assumed purpose of missions was to plant churches in the non-western world. Looking at the subject from a British perspective, missiologist Timothy Yates notes that American missions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were primarily concerned with the "extension and expansion" of either Christendom or the kingdom of God in history. In the early 1900s, Presbyterian mission executive Robert Speer wrote that mission theory concerned itself with the aim, the means, and the methods of missions. Shenk concludes that mission theory has had an "ambiguous and erratic" existence in American missiology, and that no clear framework exists for American missionary work.[30]

To avoid definitional "fuzzyness" when evaluating the historical construction and movement of mission theory, a description of method and definitions is in order.

One could follow Wilbert Shenk's insistence that only those theoreticians who observe

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28. Hutchison, 50.

29. Robert, x.

30. Dana Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1996), xix.

mission empirically and in the tradition of Enlightenment rationality qualify as having produced a theory of mission.[31] Such an approach has its benefits. Few individuals (even in the highly active twentieth century) meet this standard, revealing a narrow trajectory with which historians may work. Shenk effectively screens out the "ambiguous and erratic" nature of missionary ideology and the "uncritical dependence on the methods and techniques of modernity" by limiting the scope of what mission theory entails.[32] Unfortunately for historians of Mormonism, so few would qualify as mission theorists under this definition that a subsequent analysis would likely miss the main current of the Mormon missionary movement, or at least, have little guarantee of representing such. The closest to a Rufus Anderson, Henry Venn, or Robert Speer would be John A. Widtsoe who, in 1939, laid out a theory of missions in one chapter of his *Priesthood and Church Government*.[33] Dallin H. Oaks and Lance B. Wickman published an outline of theory in 1999, though Shenk would likely dismiss such as "theory" for its explicit partiality to Latter-day Saint truth claims and subjective approach.[34] Other works like these in Mormon literature range from theological statements for Mormons about their duties at best and parochial self-help guides at worst, and thus fall outside the category of mission theory advocated by Shenk.

Similar problems exist for historians of women's mission theory, yet they have proposed methods to still isolate mission theory in such a way that the patterned missionary voice shows through. Ruth Tucker looked to biographical clues to inform her search for a women's

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31. Wilbert R. Shenk, "The Role of Theory in Anglo-American Mission Thought and Practice," *Mission Studies: Journal of the International Association of Mission Studies* 22, no. 2 (1994): 155–72.

32. Shenk, 169.

33. John A. Widtsoe, "The Missions of the Church," Chap. 27 in *Priesthood and Church Government* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1939).

34. Dallin H. Oaks and Lance B. Wickman, "The Missionary Work of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," Chap. 12 in *Sharing the Book: Religious Perspectives on the Rights and Wrongs of Proselytism*, eds. John Witte Jr. and Richard C. Martin (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999): 247–75.

mission theory and R. Pierce Beaver focused on institutional developments of mainline Protestantism.[35] Dana Robert combines both of these and further concentrates on the social context by "moving from mission field to mission field in chronological order of missionary presence" in an attempt "to chart missiological development as it took place in dialogue with the urgent context of the day."[36] As a result, Robert's method identifies mission theory as how women missionaries articulated it, not as the systematic construction of theory. In other words, Robert looks for ways mission theory is described in the behavior and activity of missionaries; Shenk wants to find where theory is crafted and prescribed by observers. Mormonism's peculiarities allow for both methods. From the start of the movement, the Mormon church consolidated the management of missionary work and directed assignments and ecclesiastical units. A synthesis of administered mission history is therefore possible. It turns out that those who qualify under Shenk's approach as mission theorists include only church authorities who, consequently, could (and did) directly shape missionary thought, lifestyle, and activity. Isolating Mormon mission theory, in this sense, becomes feasible.

Yet one significant challenge remains, even with the advantages Mormonism offers. Because Mormons so fully identify with the missionary impulse, and because their *raison d'être* stems from a duty to proclaim the gospel, almost everything in Mormonism could be classified as relating to mission. Indeed, after surveying the source material of Mormon missiology, David Whittaker concluded that "To study Mormonism is to study Mormon missiology"—the two are one in the same.[37] This kind of conflation of Mormonism with its mission theory

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35. Ruth A. Tucker, *Guardians of the Great Commission: The Story of Women in Modern Missions* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1988); R. Pierce Beaver, *American Protestant Women in World Mission: History of the First Feminist Movement in North America* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1980).

36. Robert, *American Women in Mission*, xxii.

37. Whittaker, 526.

is nothing new in mission studies. Walter Freytag warned against what he called the "specter of panmissionism" in Christian studies, and Stephen Neill critiqued the scholarship of mission history with the adage, "If everything is mission, nothing is mission."[38] Such observations led David Bosch to conclude that, given the centrality of mission in the Christian identity, panmissionism—the overstatement and over-identification of mission in the study of religion or history—was a necessary risk factor for his own project of looking for paradigm shifts in mission theology. He warned of "any attempt at delineating mission too sharply" even while he admitted how it had "become necessary to design definitions of mission in a more conscious and explicit manner" if missiologists were to avoid overstating mission in their work.[39]

Postcolonial theorists (perhaps unintentionally) have provided a useful solution to the challenge of panmissionism in missiography due to their judgment that Western discourse has a pattern of overextending its basis of knowledge into universals; in other words, they argue that the West has a totalizing discourse, one that refers to and presumes of itself as possessing the standard for all knowledge. To combat the colonizing nature of totalizing discourses, Meyda Yeğenoğlu has argued that critiques should first identify the discursive dynamics that "secure a sovereign subject status for the West" and then proceed to deconstruct them. By noting the ways the West imagines itself *by detour through the other*, she is able to locate where the West "comes into being" and the processes by which that moment of generation continues within the culture.[40] Thus, Yeğenoğlu focuses on the source of overextensions

38. Walter Freytag, *Reden und Aufsätze*, vol. 2 (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1961), 94; Stephen Neill, *Creative Tension* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1959), 81; cf. David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Mission Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), 511.

39. Bosch, 511–12. Bosch states, "[The missionary] dimension of the Christian faith is not an optional extra: Christianity is missionary by its very nature, or it denies its very *raison d'être*" [9].

40. Yeğenoğlu, 1–5.

in Western discourse, where discursive effects secure an epistemology of universals.

Applying this method to the study of mission helps clarify where mission theory legitimately appears within a discourse and where related yet non-missional areas of religious identity take shape. One example of this is the role and dynamic of preaching. In many cases, preaching meant an internal, pastoral activity of strengthening or reviving the faith of parishioners. However, missionaries clearly considered in identical terms their work of proselytizing among outsiders, using “preaching” and “proselytizing” interchangeably. The historian is left to ascertain to what extent the preacher is being a missionary and the missionary is being a preacher, and where such differ, with an ambiguous standard for judging between the two if left to an analysis of mission theology. Yeğenoğlu, on the other hand, would have us locate where the discourse *installs a relationship* of pastor over parishioner, in which case the effect would signify a non-missionary theoretical frame; where the discourse installs a relationship of proselytizer over proselytized, the effect would signify a missionary one.

The Constituted Missionary Subject as Mission Theory

This study aims to identify the creation and development of mission theory within Mormon and American missionary contexts; the approaches of Shenk, Robert, and Yeğenoğlu will serve to locate the operative theory of the missionary and curb the effect of panmissionism. This study presupposes the role of “mission” in Mormonism and American missionary work as a human enterprise, though the missionaries themselves believed completely that God and other supernatural phenomena participated in their work. Proposing to intersect various lines of missiography, as this study does, requires a humanist approach, otherwise my observations risk falling into the pitfall of elevating missionary discourse to a supernatural status which evades empirical verification. As recently acknowledged by members of the

Academic Association for Theology and the Administrative Board of the German Association for Mission Studies, the "global context" of the missionary subject "necessitates a repositioning of theological thought" that overcomes the "confusion and stereotyping" that makes the traditional subject title "Mission Studies" the frequent cause of misunderstandings. They suggest that cultural studies and religious studies should play a more integrative role in mission studies in order to counteract this pitfall, particularly since the "recognized research in Religious Studies in the area of contemporary non-Christian religions" involves a familiarity with "current theoretical debates on Cultural Studies."[41]

Chapter 1 begins with Mormonism's founder, Joseph Smith Jr. (1805–1844), and evaluates his most basic and foundational mission thought against the American Protestant backdrop of his time. Because of his particular approach to the historical development of his religious movement, Smith played a pivotal role in shaping the missiological development within Mormonism, and was himself driven by the missionary impulse. The first documentary sources of his life reveal a preoccupation with disseminating the Mormon message, and in dramatic fashion, he launched his prophetic career with his magnum opus, the Book of Mormon—a nearly 600-page book of scripture he composed with the help of scribes at the age of 24. In anticipation of the publication of the Book of Mormon, Smith cultivated the missionary ethos among family members and early supporters. Months before the book became available, volunteer missionaries proselytized with press signatures, encouraged by Smith and his closest associates. Within one year, Smith established a church, dispatched evangelists with the Book of Mormon, and had missionaries reach Indian territory just outside the borders of the United States and Canada. Upon relocating to Kirtland, Ohio in February 1831, Smith and

41. The "Religious Studies and Mission Studies" Section of the Academic Association for Theology and the Administrative Board of the German Association for Mission Studies, "Mission Studies as Intercultural Theology and its Relationship to Religious Studies," *Mission Studies: Journal of the International Association of Mission Studies* 25 no. 1 (2008): 103–04, 107.

other Mormon missionaries had already put a mission theory into action that in many ways resembled the Protestant template of the early nineteenth century. However, characteristic of the rest of his fourteen-year ministry, Smith began and continued to innovate his theory. Within months, Smith galvanized a thriving missionary force into action that branched out from Kirtland into all directions and instituted an ambitious effort to gather together converts to central locations in Missouri and Ohio.

Once an unambiguous missionary identity formed within Mormonism, a missionary persona distinct from preachers, churchgoers, and the ministry took shape within Mormon discourse. Chapter 2 explores the early development of Mormon mission theory as it responded to the unique challenges the young community faced as they gained converts from differing religious backgrounds and cultures. The internal dimension of this missiological development involved Mormons' conceptions of the gathering of Israel, the city of Zion, the Second Coming of Christ, and priesthood authority. Their own scripture and the inclusion of Smith's emerging revelations provided Mormons with a unique understanding of their mission that further separated their missiology from their Protestant neighbors. Significant conflict against the Mormons and the natural outcomes of missionary engagement had an effect on their missionary discourse and thought.

Chapter 3 concludes by taking note of reciprocal effects, or the external factors, that influenced Mormon mission theory, particularly the diminishment of an emphasis on spiritual gifts and the effect of persecution on missionary discourse and self-understanding. Many of the first converts to Mormonism valued the exercise of spiritual gifts their new community offered. When charismatic behavior had gone to extremes, Smith decisively toned down the spiritual expressions. Spiritual gifts as a proof of Mormonism moved to the periphery and the emergence of the Book of Mormon as the chief evidence took their place. As early as 1830,

Smith and fellow Latter-day Saints felt some measure of persecution which followed them at every attempt to establish their community. Conflict reached its climax in Missouri when the so-called Mormon War of 1838 broke out. Mormons fled to Nauvoo, Illinois under an extermination order issued by the governor of Missouri, feeling betrayed by the legal protections of religion the young American nation provided. Mormon missionaries became avid activists, calling upon governments and citizens for redress and support. Persecution became a status symbol that provided them with (hard to swallow) self-assurance that they really were the covenant people of God—to them, their community was so manifestly benign that the only explanation for such ferocity against them was that they had offended the powers of hell with their divinely inspired truth claims. As Mormon missionaries answered critics through the press, they came to view their written work as soteriologically significant. Producing a pamphlet took on such meaning that eventually priesthood leaders clamped down on freelance production and demanded that editorial standards govern missionary publications. Missiological innovation through pamphlet literature thus became reduced to one line of official church oversight.

This study concludes by anticipating key missiological developments that occurred just before Joseph Smith's death and continued throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and calls for further exploration of Mormonism's modern version of mission theory. In 1844, Smith appropriated political theory into his missiology by using missionaries to build his campaign for United States president. He amplified his campaign strategy beyond simply redirecting missionary forces for political advantage, but constructed new mission-theoretical ideas that would cast his run for the presidency as significant for mission. The campaign dissolved when Smith and his brother Hyrum were assassinated, and the Saints soon fled Illinois, eventually settling in Utah territory where the terrain required considerable effort

to sustain their community. Brigham Young instituted a system of colonization which he considered missional, issuing missionary calls for building colonies throughout the American West. These adjustments in mission theory paved the way for a consolidation of missionary involvement. Soon practical challenges would demand that the Church leadership adjust missionary roles, and not long into the twentieth century, church programs came to replace prior modes of missionary administration.

By addressing pitfalls of contemporary missiography through a mapping of Mormon mission theory, this study illustrates how missionary experience and the conceptualization of missionary identities in American religious discourse created a sense of urgency in communicating the faith to outsiders. The Mormons' mission helped shape attitudes about their status as the persecuted faithful and contributed to the fixing of social boundaries in Mormon cosmology. How these missionaries navigated such a world demonstrates dynamic relationships within American religion.

Chapter 1

Joseph Smith's Mission Theory and the Modern Missionary Movement

When Joseph Smith wrote a "sketch of the rise, progress, persecution and faith of the Latter-day Saints" for editor of the *Chicago Democrat* John Wentworth, he might have anticipated that his missionaries would adopt its closing lines as an anthem. "Persecution has not stopped the progress of truth, but has only added fuel to the flame," Joseph affirmed after detailing the persecutions committed against the Mormons in Missouri just a couple of years prior. This "progress of truth" not only had realized recent success, but for the Mormon prophet, could not be stopped by any force.

> Our missionaries are going forth to different nations, and in Germany, Palestine, New Holland, the East Indies, and other places, the standard of truth has been erected: no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing, persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished and the great Jehovah shall say the work is done."[1]

Joseph never systematically spelled out his theory of mission like he did with his thought on priesthood organization or principles of government, but the discursive effects evident in passages like his letter to John Wentworth bring out the ways he imagined and conceptualized the missionary subject and the recipient object.[2] In two paragraphs, Jo-

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1. Joseph Smith, historical sketch, March 1, 1842, in Dean C. Jessee, ed. and comp, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 241, 247. Original spelling, punctuation, grammar, and typographic and/or handwritten effects like italics, small caps, and baseline shifts are retained throughout unless otherwise noted.

2. Timothy Wood felt Joseph Smith had developed a coherent political theory by 1844: "Indeed, despite the historiographical controversy concerning the genesis of Smith's ideas and his real intent in starting a church, by the time the Saints founded Nauvoo, the Mormon founder had developed a coherent and workable theory of government, authority, and power"; Wood, "The Prophet and the Presidency: Mormonism and Politics in Joseph Smith's 1844 Presidential Campaign," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 93, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 186–87.

seph constructs a subject/object relationship between the Mormon missionary and the recipient of the missionary's communication. He embeds personalities into this relationship, agents on one end and converts on the other, and both live out their exchange surrounded by conspiratorial attempts of evil forces to thwart the work of truth. The "elders of this church," Joseph wrote, "proud of the cause which they have espoused and conscious of their innocence and of the truth of their system," had "gone forth, and planted the gospel in almost every state in the Union." Joseph sees the missionaries as penetrators who shock a city or village with the declaration of gospel truth, becoming the cause of the conversion effect, and insofar as recipients entertain them, auxiliaries in the spread of civilized society. "[The gospel] has penetrated our cities," Joseph observes, "it has spread over our villages, and has caused thousands of our intelligent, noble, and patriotic citizens to obey its divine mandates, and be governed by its sacred truths." Joseph had confidence in the methods and message of the missionary subject and in the receptivity of the audience. The missionary effort would emerge triumphant in the end, and Joseph heightens the drama by emphasizing the ratio of few missionaries to many converts: "In the year of 1839 where a few of our missionaries were sent over five thousand joined the standard of truth, there are numbers now joining in every land."[3] Weak as the meager Mormon force was in the world stage, they still possessed the very truth of God, and in this Joseph places all of his emphasis—the great Jehovah directs and brings to consummation the conversion of the whole earth, and will be the one to pronounce the missionary work finished, ostensibly at some event during the unfolding of the eschaton. Joseph reinforces the character of a stalwart male valiantly facing impossible odds with total conviction that he and his associates

3. Jessee, 247.

will win over the world. No amount of calumny or persecution will slow this missionary's impact on converting the noble citizens of the world.

In the Wentworth Letter and through revelations, sermons, meetings, and other letters, Joseph discursively brought the Mormon missionary into being and cultivated a process whereby members of his movement imagined themselves as "missionary" and involved in "mission."[4] Though the term "missionary" never appears in Joseph's revelations, he established it as a referent, the language of his revelations creating and directing the same character elsewhere called "missionary" with terms like "elder," "servant," and "laborer." Joseph conflated "mission" with "ministry" and "work," and used the three interchangeably to describe the main thrust of his new religion.

Throughout Joseph's administration, his mission theory worked as the engine behind Mormon missionary activities and mission work. In the earliest days of Mormonism before its church was formalized in April 1830, Joseph was the principal director of efforts to publicize the Book of Mormon and to evangelize. Joseph also built the hierarchy of officers that would oversee and carry out the Mormon mission enterprise to the present. At times he even took up the cause himself, making one deliberate missionary journey in 1833 to Mount Pleasant, Canada, and sporadically preaching in short stints while traveling through Illinois, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.[5] It was Joseph who dispatched

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4. Terryl L. Givens notes the importance of understanding Joseph Smith's ministry in terms of process as well as products thanks to Smith's labor "to free himself from the burdens of theological convention, intellectual decorum, and—perhaps most especially—the phobia of trespassing across sacred boundaries.… Systemization was, to Romantics, stultifying, deadening, and almost always derivative.… Joseph Smith almost always put himself in an agonistic, if not antagonistic, relationship to all prior systems"; Givens, "Joseph Smith: Prophecy, Process, and Plenitude," in *Joseph Smith Jr.: Reappraisals after Two Centuries*, ed. Reid L. Neilson and Terryl L. Givens (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 107–08.

5. Joseph Smith, journal, 4 October 1833–29 October 1833 in Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers: Journals*, vol. 1 (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2008), 11–16; Dean C. Jessee and William G. Hartley, "Joseph Smith's Missionary Journal," *New Era* 4, no. 2 (February 1974): 34–36.

Heber Kimball to England in 1837 which set in motion a boom in missionary activity in the British Isles that culminated in an estimated 50,000 converts immigrating to the United States by 1890 and the establishment of the first (and most successful) mission unit of the Church in the nineteenth century. Before Joseph's death in 1844, the Mormon community had grown to about 25,000 and missionaries had reached Australia, India, South America, Germany, Jamaica, Palestine, and the Society Islands.[6] Mormon missionaries would continue to sustain annually over an eight percent rate of growth before the Utah War in 1858 on the missiological foundation Joseph had laid; the Church would grow to over a quarter-million members by the turn of the century.[7]

Joseph Smith entered the American missionary scene just after the first wave of the modern missionary movement had gained momentum and precisely when the first traces of formal mission theory began to emerge. The year before Joseph recorded his first statement on missionary work, a British missionary lamented that Protestants had not yet advanced a systematic theory of missions.[8] William Orme in his *Memoirs of John Urquhart* (1828) acknowledged that despite the large numbers of Christian missionaries at work in foreign enterprises, Protestant mission lacked a "condensed view of the knowledge and experience" of the previous decades. Orme felt that his generation of missionaries dedi-

6. David J. Whittaker, "Mormon Missiology: An Introduction and Guide to the Sources," Chap. 18 in *The Disciple as Witness: Essays on Latter-day Saint History and Doctrine in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson* (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies; Brigham Young University Press, 2000), 463.

7. This is based on membership records and reports issued by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and published as "Church Statistics" in Deseret News, *Deseret Morning News 2007 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 2006), 634–37.

8. This statement was later published as Section 4 of the Doctrine and Covenants (hereafter D&C); the earliest version of the revelation (a fragment) appears in Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations* (Salt Lake City: The Church Historian's Press, 2009), 11 (hereafter *Joseph Smith Papers*).

cated their literature and discussion to reporting growth, recording minutes of missionary society proceedings, and defending proselytism, and he criticized his colleagues for not synthesizing or empirically analyzing mission in the tradition of Enlightenment science. The first candidate to take up Orme's critique surfaced two years later with the publication of William Swan's *Letters on Missions* (1830), to which Orme contributed the preface. Though elementary, Swan had provided a foundation on which to build a coherent and systematic theory of mission, and Orme argued for increased attention by missionaries to develop that theory over theology.[9] Within the next two decades, bona fide theoreticians of mission would produce works that went beyond Swan's system through formal explorations of how to deliver the Christian message in a broader and more strategically managed stroke. Institutions like schools, hospitals, and commercial outposts that had previously served non-missional purposes became key mechanisms for accomplishing the conversion and civilizing of non-Christians and foreigners.[10]

Across the Atlantic from Orme and Swan's audience, Joseph Smith launched a religious movement imbued with missionary significance, though he never formulated a systematic mission theory in the ways Orme or Swan would have appreciated. Nevertheless, Joseph provided detailed and coherent instructions to his missionaries that grew out of a mission-theoretical frame loaded with expectations, personalities, truth claims, and a powerful sense of active mission. At first, Joseph openly supported the individual initiative of volunteers who evangelized the neighboring countryside even before the Grandin

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9. William Orme, *Memoirs, Including Letters, and Select Remains, of John Urquhart, Late of the University of St. Andrew's* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1828), 94–96; William Swan, *Letters on Missions, by William Swan, Missionary in Siberia* (London: Westley and Davis, 1830). Orme applauded Swan for "furnish[ing] … evidence of the most satisfactory kind … as to present a complete answer to every objection" (Swan, ii–iii).

10. Wilbert R. Shenk, "The Role of Theory in Anglo-American Mission Thought and Practice," *Mission Studies: Journal of the International Association of Mission Studies* 11-2, no. 22 (1994): 158–59.

press produced a single copy of the Book of Mormon. Joseph eventually recruited larger numbers of missionaries as more and more converts joined the church and assigned them to proselytizing missions on the basis of a complex undertaking that involved a global gathering effort to bring an indeterminate population of Israelites to Zion, administering salvific ordinances through an elaborate organization of priesthood authorities, and evangelizing a fresh book of scripture designed to compliment and expand the Bible. Protestants continued a voluntaristic approach to mission through missionary societies that percolated through America which Joseph seemed to employ before 1831, but later he consolidated missionary activities into explicit assignments declared in a revelatory spirit. The foundations of his mission thought and his missionary discourse parallel Protestant mission of the time, though Joseph increasingly innovated and amplified his mission theory in distinctly Mormon terms.

This chapter evaluates how these mission-theoretical foundations appear in Joseph Smith's thought and discourse, and compares their flavor and variety with other American missionaries of the 1820s and 1830s. Like the societies that surrounded him, Joseph Smith formulated and administered a church mission that sought almost the same objectives as his fellow American missionaries, except with time, he would amplify his theory of mission to include distinctly Mormon elements. While his missionaries proselytized with a book of scripture in hand (in their case, the Book of Mormon), and preached a set of doctrines not altogether different from the ones espoused by their Christian counterparts, they soon conceived of their mission in dramatically different terms. What first appeared like a theory derived from the Protestant missionary template—proclaim scripture, declare repentance, and call for listeners to join a church—shifted by the time

of Joseph's move to Kirtland, Ohio in 1831. Joseph had set his missionaries on a trajectory that would thereafter increasingly depart from the missiological norms of American Christians.

The American Missionary Setting

Joseph Smith entered the scene at the turn of an early surge in missionary activity that developed into what historians classify as the modern missionary movement. Various conditions and elements came together in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century America from which this surge gained strength, many of which paralleled Joseph's principal thoughts on mission. A Puritan worldview of seeing history as bending toward a final, glorious age and America as a wilderness begging to be tilled with the Christian gospel allowed for a Protestant version of mission to deviate from prior patterns of Catholic expansion in the New World. Theologians like Increase and Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards paved the way for a shift in Calvinist thought that turned once inactive missionaries into some of the most committed and inventive of the time. Missionaries like John Eliot and William Carey moved mission toward an emphasis on converting the "heathen" through translation of scripture, voluntarism, church planting, and education. By the 1820s, American mission ran at full speed, pushing the boundaries of Protestantism further beyond Europe and the American colonies.

Europeans arrived with an eagerness to experiment commercially, politically, and religiously in the "New World." Even before landing on the American shore, Puritans spoke of their "errand into the wilderness."[11] Perry Miller described the Puritans' sense of mis-

11. John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity" (1630) in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 3rd series (Boston, 1838), 7:45, 47; Charles L. Chaney, *The Birth of Missions in America* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1976), 9.

sion as not only building a goodly society in a new land but catalyzing the grand drama of history toward Christian devotion. The time had come for “the essential maneuver in the drama of Christendom” when “ultimately all Europe would imitate New England” and live out the ideals of Christianity in fulfillment of biblical prophecy. The spirit of American exceptionalism took root in the Great Migration of 1630 and continued to intensify as European colonies flourished in New England.[12]

Puritan New England produced a series of missionaries and theologians who influenced the spread of the modern missionary movement in America and the heightening of missionary discourse within American churches. John Eliot’s career saw the strategic proselytization of the Native Americans and the organization of “praying Indians” throughout the mid-1600s. His approach mirrored the methods of Catholic missionaries in New France, except that Eliot focused on educating and reforming his proselytes whereas the Catholics generally emphasized communicating the sacraments to unbaptized natives. A revolt in 1675 called King Philip’s War demolished much of what Eliot had attempted in his Christian communities, and in the last quarter of the century, only 74 of 1,100 “praying Indians” were full communicants. Though the full effect for which Eliot had planned never was realized in New England, his techniques did guide mission leaders later, particularly in overseas missions to India and the Pacific Islands. Transcribing native languages and ways of conveying English language and culture led Eliot, the early Moravians, and others to combine the work of civilizing non-Western cultures with mission. They increasingly saw their mission as mutually the civilizing and the conversion of non-Christians.[13]

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12. Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), 11–12.

13. William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions*

American Calvinist reticence for proselytism stemmed from their belief in predestination and natural theology. Calvinists felt that God had already elected whom he would for grace and that he evinced enough of himself in nature that the idea that a missionary agent could *intervene* in an individual's life smacked of oxymoron.[14] They rather considered the spreading of the gospel an act of God and before the eighteenth century, Calvinists displayed less concern for an active and strategic mission.[15] Cotton Mather (1663–1728) helped reverse this reticence among Puritans through his appreciation of practical theology. Mather held that the essence of Christianity "is nothing other than the doctrine of living unto God through Christ; and further, that it is more a practical than a theoretical science, of which the goal is the animation of real, solid, living piety." In 1716, Mather proposed three maxims of piety, and soon thereafter, Puritans would begin to include spreading the religion as a practice of piety and see themselves as pieces in God's grand scheme for effecting conversions.[16]

Puritan theologians constructed a millenarian view which the first missionaries from

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(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 27–28; Wilbert R. Shenk, "Introduction," in *North American Foreign Missions, 1810–1914: Theology, Theory, and Policy*, ed. William R. Shenk (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 2. A comparison of Mormon and Puritan proselytism among Native Americans, especially the theoretical impulses behind their mission work, is Christina Skousen, "Toiling among the Seed of Israel: A Comparison of Puritan and Mormon Missions to the Indians" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 2005).

14. Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964), 261.

15. This is not to say that Calvinists did not engage in mission; to the contrary, John Calvin "took a personal interest in the enterprise and sent pastors to establish the first Protestant church in America according to Genevan form. Its first worship service was held in Rio de Janeiro on March 10, 1557." It did take, however, some time before more concerted efforts to missionize appear in Calvinist history. The second half of the nineteenth century stands out as probably the most active period of Reformed Protestantism's missionary work. Until then, mission only appears on the periphery of Calvinist thought, not a core imperative or duty for the church. Eduardo Galasso Faria, "Calvin and Reformed Social Thought in Latin America," chap. 7 in *John Calvin Rediscovered: The Impact of His Social and Economic Thought*, ed. Edward Dommen and James D. Bratt (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 93–95.

16. E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 69.

New England inherited and adopted as the major motivation for engaging in mission. Premillennial grounds for doing missionary work additionally affected their sense of urgency, compelling missionaries to undertake herculean ambitions lest they run out of time and many potential unevangelized converts perish in the approaching calamities. Cotton Mather and his father Increase emphasized the millennium, spoke of the "conversion of Israel" as taking place in the "imminent future, not the distant past," and argued that the "first resurrection" referenced in Revelation 20:5–6 would usher in the "millennial dispensation." Increase understood the end of the world as a succession of events: "the bodies of the departed righteous would rise to be reunited in a celestial form with their souls"; the "risen righteous and the living saints would then … be caught up in the air in a divine rapture"; Christ would appear before the world and his presence would cause a consuming fire to engulf the wicked; the "New Jerusalem would descend to the earth for a 'dispensation' of at least a thousand years" during which the saints would return to the earth and "the church would flourish, and pain and death would cease"; the resurrection of the wicked would commence at the end of the thousand years, initiating the final judgment.[17] Cotton concluded that Christ's return would inaugurate the millennium, and that this arrival was not far off. He agreed with Increase that the New Jerusalem would descend from heaven, but as a material city "hovering in the air above the restored earthly Jerusalem."[18] Such premillennial views prompted Cotton to support efforts to convert the Native Americans, though, in part because of his belief that the Second Coming could occur at any moment, Cotton gave up on the national conversion of the Jews. He collected offerings to promote missionary work among the Indians and prepared texts for spe-

17. Holifield, 76.

18. Holifield, 77–78.

cific use in those exchanges. In *The Stone Cut out of the Mountain* (1716), Cotton pressed Christians to proclaim "the Maxims of the Everlasting Gospel" and fulfill the prophecy in Daniel of the stone cut out of the mountain without hands filling the whole earth and bringing about "a Restored PARADISE."[19] The Mathers' continued discussion on the linkages between mission and eschatology contributed to the religious atmosphere that would give rise to the Great Awakening a few decades later.

The most profound theological expression to inform missionary activity in America arose out of the theology of Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) and the revivals of the Great Awakening.[20] After over two decades as the most prominent pastor in all of New England, Edwards moved to Stockbridge, Massachusetts to oversee "the potential hub of New England missions," which provided him with a missionary career and opportunities for furthering his theology of mission.[21] He came to believe that various steps would bring about "Christ's coming in his kingdom," which included the destruction of Antichrist followed by the literal appearance of Jesus and the glorification of the church.[22] For Edwards, the Reformation had signaled the beginning of the end of the darkest epoch in Christian history when the Antichrist had reached its full power. Subsequent events like the work of Peter the Great in Russia and the spreading of the gospel among the "heathen"—and most importantly, the revivals of the religion—chipped away at Satan's power, and Edwards expected that little remained before God should completely overthrow the Antichrist. He extended the "preaching of the gospel," which had mainly served as a function of pastoral

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19. Chaney, 53, 56.

20. Chaney, 57.

21. George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 383.

22. Chaney, 66.

care, to a global missionary effort to propagate the gospel.

> [This] is a work that will be accomplished by means, by the preaching of the gospel, and the use of the ordinary means of grace.… Some shall be converted, and be the means of others' conversion; God's Spirit shall be poured out, first to raise up instruments, and then those instruments shall be improved and succeeded.… God, by pouring out his Holy Spirit, shall furnish men to be glorious instruments of carrying on his work; shall fill them with knowledge and wisdom and fervent zeal for the promoting of the kingdom of Christ and the salvation of souls and propagating the gospel in the world.… for this great work of God shall be brought to pass by the preaching of the gospel.[23]

Before leaving Stockbridge six and a half years later, Edwards wrote four major treatises on mission as an extension of preaching and pastoral duties, "two of which are often regarded as classics in the history of Christianity and in the history of American intellectual life."[24] He brought attention to the missional dimension of theology through sermons and administrative work among mission groups and in 1749 made David Brainerd, a missionary who died in Edwards' home of tuberculosis, famous through his widely published biography *An Account of the Life Of the late Reverend Mr. David Brainerd*.[25] American missionaries would celebrate Brainerd's rationales for teaching Native Americans to such an extent that one historian concluded that Brainerd's "attitudes concerning Indian capacities were the rule rather than the exception."[26] Missionaries owed their awareness of Brainerd's ministry to Edwards. The popularity of missionary discourse that grew out of the Great Awakening was encouraged by Edwards' own involvement in mission.

Before William Carey (1761–1834), whom missiologists generally credit as the master-

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23. Jonathan Edwards, *A History of the Work of Redemption*, in *Works of Jonathan Edwards Online*, vol. 9, ed. John F. Wilson (New Haven: Jonathan Edwards Center, Yale University, 2008), 459–60.

24. Marsden, 389.

25. Jonathan Edwards, *An Account of the Life Of the Late Reverend Mr. David Brainerd, Minister of the Gospel, Missionary to the Indians, from the honourable Society in Scotland, for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, and Pastor of a Church of Christian Indians in New-Jersey* (Boston: D. Henchman, 1749).

26. Hutchison, 32–33.

mind behind the modern missionary movement, American missionary discourse arranged the world into a binarity of Christians on one side and unevangelized "heathens" on the other. The time frame approached a climax which would culminate in America, in major part by the mission work of Christians to the heathen. Missionaries fully expected their civilized culture to be embraced by their converts, even considering civilized social systems an outcome or byproduct of their proselytism. Their theory situated mission as a starting point for theology, in effect reorienting Christian doctrine and scripture around a central motive of God's to bring about the conversion of the world. Carey would find in the Great Commission the signal impetus for mission, and the effect of organizing volunteer missionary societies around this Christian duty was an upswell in coordinated mission work that would continue to the present.[27]

In his *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (1792), Carey argued that the Great Commission—Jesus' final words to his disciples (Matthew 28:18–20) to go into all the world and preach the Christian gospel—applied to modern-day Christians.[28] Non-Christians deserved the opportunity to hear the gospel, and Carey himself, as one of the first missionaries of the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS), traveled to India to preach in 1793.[29] Carey's missionary outlook focused entirely on the idea of foreign mission; at home, Christians already enjoyed the knowl-

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27. David J. Bosch called Carey "the architect of modern missions" in *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), 280. See also Steven B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2004), 210; Neill, 261; A. Christopher Smith in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 115.

28. William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens: In Which the Religious State of the Different Nations of the World, the Success of Former Undertakings, and the Practicability of Further Undertakings, are Considered* (Leicester: Ann Ireland, 1792).

29. Dana L. Robert, *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 45.

edge of Christianity and had access to the church for further developing their personal piety; but abroad, "heathens" devoid of civilized values lived in ignorance and darkness. He expected scripture to remedy any ignorance, and like Martin Luther of the Protestant Reformation, he set out immediately to translate the Bible into the host language, considering such an effort the key to liberating his audience. BMS missionaries built schools well into the nineteenth century aimed at civilizing the heathen by teaching literacy through the Bible, and American missionary societies would develop similar strategies.[30] On the heels of Carey's and the BMS's success, new missionary societies modeled after the London Missionary Society and the BMS percolated throughout America within a couple of years: the New York Missionary Society (1796), Northern Missionary Society (1797), Philadelphia Missionary Society (1798), Missionary Society of Connecticut (1798), Massachusetts Missionary Society (1799), Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Society (1802), and the Presbyterian Standing Committee of Missions (1802) formed amid a burst of American missionary excitement that carried over into the first years of Joseph Smith's life.[31] These societies grew in popularity and influence so much by the 1820s when Joseph was receiving his first visions, that they outpaced most other benevolent organizations in size and resources.[32] All talk of mission in the American religious marketplace in the 1830s involved themes of eschatology and carrying the gospel to foreign peoples through volunteer effort and capitalist principles.[33]

Mission societies in the nineteenth century would begin a given mission effort by

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30. Neill, 261–66.

31. Chaney, 157–66.

32. Hutchison, 1.

33. Steven C. Harper, "Missionaries in the American Religious Marketplace: Mormon Proselyting in the 1830s," *Journal of Mormon History* 24, no. 2 (Spring 1998), 3–4.

recruiting missionaries and pooling together resources to send them to foreign locations. While they quickly established outposts all throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America, it was not until the end of the century that missionaries began to move further inland. The "first task of pioneer missionaries was to get to know the people, study their culture, and translate the Bible into the local languages." Missionaries like William Carey, Adoniram and Ann Judson, Henry Martyn, Robert Morrison, and former slave Samuel Ajayi Crowther all printed and disseminated vernacular translations of the Bible before 1850. The second stage of a foreign mission involved founding churches or schools to which the missionaries would gather converts. They would live among their potential converts and generally preach out of the Bible once they could acquire skills in the language. Where they could build a school, they would teach literacy and integrate Christian teachings into the curriculum.[34] Carey advanced a theory of a five-pronged advance of mission that bore out in the work of the BMS and other mission societies: they looked for every possible method to produce widespread preaching; they drew support for their preaching through the distribution of the Bible in the languages of the country; they sought to establish a church at the earliest possible moment; they studied in depth the background and thought of the host peoples to better adapt their message; and they strove to cultivate and train an indigenous ministry at the earliest possible moment. Over time, the local churches that resulted from this strategy came under less control of the distant home base of the mission societies, and conversions increased as indigenous varieties of missionaries began to advance from the new churches and schools.[35]

Before Joseph published the Book of Mormon in March 1830, he had begun to con-

34. Robert, 48–49.

35. Neill, 263–65.

sider mission work for his small movement in similar terms to the general discourse of American missionaries of the day. He shared in the urgency for sounding the warning voice of the apocalypse, in looking to the distribution of scripture (for him, the Book of Mormon as opposed to the Bible) as the main modus operandi of mission, in the particular interest in converting Native Americans, and in drawing his missionary force from volunteers. The first missionaries to proclaim Mormonism had from Joseph a basis for their work, albeit barely a skeleton compared to more fleshed-out missiologies just beginning to surface.

Smith's Principal Thoughts on Mission

Joseph Smith communicated his mission thought in ways that pose a challenge for interpreters of his life. One biographer explained,

> His thought is not easily encapsulated or analyzed. His teachings came primarily through his revelations, which, like other forms of scripture, are epigrammatic and oracular. He never presented his ideas systematically in clear, logical order; they came in flashes and bursts. Nor did he engage in formal debate. His most powerful thoughts were assertions delivered as if from heaven. Assembling a coherent picture out of many bits and pieces leaves room for misinterpretations and forced logic.… Despite the difficulty in extracting its essence, the thought cannot be neglected. Doctrine attracted the early converts, most of whom had not met Joseph Smith before joining the Church, and remained a significant reason for the survival of Mormonism after his death.[36]

As random as Joseph's revelations may have appeared, the missionary work he directed exhibited a centralized structure. He personally issued missionary assignments and gave instructions through revelations and meetings. Wherever Joseph lived, the missionaries sought to relocate their converts. Joseph required reports of the missionaries in the field, many times publishing them in church periodicals, forwarding them to

36. Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), xxi.

others through personal letters, and recording them in his diaries. His presence was not peripheral but central in the ways Mormons understood their mission. Though Joseph never provided a systematic expression of that mission, his role in shaping the missionary discourse for his religious community is apparent and unmistakable. The first missionaries, including his own family members, checked in with Joseph before proclaiming Mormonism, and that pattern continued until his death in 1844.[37]

A wealth of effects that secured the missionary and the recipient in Joseph's discourse appears in his revelations, letters, journals, and sermons. The process of imagining and constituting the missionary in the discourse reveals what theoretical motivations and conceptions propelled subsequent missionary practices as Mormonism grew and Joseph occupied a greater influence as a religious leader. The first of his thoughts on mission emerge alongside his first recorded revelations, beginning in 1829, a year before the publication of the Book of Mormon and the formal establishment of the Church.

At twenty-three years of age, Joseph had lost 116 manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon and his first child within a couple of weeks.[38] Months of anxiousness passed before his parents decided in February 1829 to travel roughly 130 miles from their home in Manchester, New York to Harmony, Pennsylvania, where Joseph had purchased a new farm, and learn whether their son had recuperated.[39] During the visit, Joseph Sr. expressed

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37. J. Spencer Fluhman points out, "[Smith] shared administrative power in the church with close associates and shifted considerable responsibilities of governance to administrative councils as the church grew, but he dominated theological and administrative decisions throughout the church's first decade and a half. He presented many of his revelations as scripture; he related visions and visitations from heavenly beings; he asserted that God's authority had been restored to him by prophets of the past and was thus found in Mormonism alone. In short, Smith's declarations of prophetic gifts and divine manifestations were central to the Mormon message and to his acceptance as a leader among his people." Fluhman, "Early Mormon and Shaker Visions of Sanctified Community," *BYU Studies* 44, no. 1 (2005): 82.

38. Bushman, 66–67.

39. Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and his Progenitors for many Genera-*

a desire to know "what the Lord had for him to do" and perhaps requested to be called to the ministry, to which Joseph provided what remains the first of his revelations directed to someone other than himself and his first statement involving mission.[40] Joseph would continue to advise and direct others through additional revelations, and these comprise the only sources of his missionary thought until he published the Book of Mormon and organized the Church about a year later.[41]

The revelation opens by invoking a prophecy of Isaiah: "Behold a Marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men therefore O ye that embark in the service of God see that ye Serve him with all your heart might mind & Strength that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day[.]"[42] Though directing the revelation to his father, Joseph uses the plural "ye" and renders the revelation with a linguistic register of one speaking to a wider audience, implying that he expected that the text would go to those who

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tions (Liverpool: Orson Pratt and S. W. Richards, 1853), 124.

40. Joseph Smith Jr., *A Book of Commandments & Revelations of the Lord given to Joseph the Seer & others by the Inspiration of God & gift & power of the Holy Ghost which Beareth Re[c]ord of the Father & Son & Holy Ghost which is one God Infinite & eternal World without end Amen* (1831–35), 2; *Joseph Smith Papers*, 11; Joseph Smith, history (1839), 9 in Dean C. Jessee, ed. and comp., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 1:288. This revelation appears as Section 4 in the Doctrine and Covenants (hereafter D&C) [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Containing Revelations Given to Joseph Smith, the Prophet with Some Additions by his Successors in the Presidency of the Church* (Salt Lake City: Intellectual Reserve, 1981), 7].

41. I agree with Richard Bushman that a "rhetorical problem vexes anyone who writes about the thought of Joseph Smith. Are his ideas to be attributed to him or to God? Some readers will consider it obvious that the revelations came from Joseph Smith's mind and nowhere else.… Out of respect for the varied opinions of readers, it would seem judicious to compromise with 'Joseph Smith *purportedly* received a revelation about heaven with three degrees of glory.' But there are reasons for not inserting a disclaimer every time a revelation is mentioned, no matter how the reader or writer feels about the ultimate source. The most important is that Joseph Smith did not think that way. The signal feature of his life was his sense of being guided by revelation." [Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, xxi.] Because Joseph himself agreed with, published, defended, and often put into effect his revelations, I make the presupposition that these reflect his thought as much as any of his other holographic writings. I do this aware of the rhetorical complexities that occur once Joseph states the claim that the text reflects the voice of God, or that his active involvement in its production is not responsible for the ideas expressed.

42. *Joseph Smith Papers*, 11; cf. Isaiah 29:14.

would "embark in the service of God" and not Joseph Sr. alone. This godly service did not require any qualifications or affirmations of a confessional position to participate, only a personal desire. Joseph used apocalyptic language to describe where converts would be found, almost quoting directly from Revelation 14:18 and John 4:35: the "field is white already to harvest," and "he that thrusteth in his sickle with his might" would garner salvation for his soul. The biblical theme of angels at the end of the world thrusting in sickles and gathering clusters of the vine which they cast into the winepress of the wrath of God appears here as a signal that the harvest had begun and that the workers of the harvest must practice the cardinal virtues of 2 Peter 1:5–8 to avoid perishing in the final day of judgment.[43]

The mission theory of this revelation remained ambiguous, but Joseph drew upon images prevalent in mission-theoretical discourse of the time like the harvest of souls, a wide field of labor, the apocalypse, and embarking in the service of God, which suggests that he intended the message to direct missionary labors, not to encourage a revivalist ministry. In most denominations, the two were distinguished: preaching meant reviving Christians to piety or caring for the faithful through sermons and instruction; missionary work meant proselytizing or communicating the gospel to non-Christians. Other itinerant preachers in his area spoke more of reigniting the Christian landscape with the fire of the Spirit and intensifying Christian devotion among the faithful, while Christian missionaries were oriented toward foreign settings and bringing about the conversion of non-Christians to the religion. Sereno Edwards Dwight bluntly expressed to the Foreign Mission Society of Boston in 1820 what most Protestant missionaries considered their

43. *A Book of Commandments, for the Government of the Church of Christ, Organized According to Law, on the 6th of April, 1830* (W. W. Phelps & co., 1833), 9. Joseph later added to this list of virtues and explicitly ordered them after 2 Peter 1:5–8; cf. *Doctrine and Covenants*, 7 [D&C 4:6].

objective—"that all mankind may become christian."[44] Many missionaries imagined the civilized culture of Europe and the United States extending to the entire globe and frequently referred to the harvest as the symbol for prosperity and a sign of God's blessings of the righteous.[45] A year after Joseph's birth, Eliphalet Nott called upon the Standing Committee on Missions of the Presbyterian General Assembly to engage in the "harvest of souls—a harvest immense and universal. The veracity of God," he said, "is pledged to this effect. This pledge secures unalterably the event. The seasons may be interrupted in their course … but the purpose of God cannot fail—his promise unaccomplished cannot pass away." Jesus Christ would ultimately receive homage from all nations, Nott insisted.[46]

Missionaries also envisioned the harvest of souls as a uniquely pre-apocalyptic enterprise and looked to it as both a sign of the approaching millennial day and as a prophesied event destined to sift the righteous from among the worldly or the wicked in the latter days. When Joseph was fourteen years old, Joseph Harvey spoke before a mission society in New Haven, Connecticut about the Book of Revelation, specifically distinguishing between the Millennium itself and that period immediately preceding it. The "fulness of the gentiles must be gathered in," he said, "and the latter period may be considered as the dawn of the Millennium" during which the "latter day glory" will bring about the full harvest. "The veil begins to be rent from the heart of the Jew:" he continued, "the covering

44. Sereno Edwards Dwight, *Thy Kingdom Come: A Sermon Delivered in the Old South Church, Boston, Before the Foreign Mission Society of Boston and the Vicinity, January 3, 1820* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1820), 4; Janet F. Fishburn, "The Social Gospel as Missionary Ideology," chap. 9 in *North American Foreign Missions, 1810–1914: Theology, Theory, and Policy*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 240.

45. Chaney, 224–25.

46. Eliphalet Nott, *A Sermon Preached Before the General Assembly of the Church in the United States of America; by Appointment of Their Standing Committee of Missions, May 19, 1806* (Philadelphia: Jane Aitken, 1806), 9–10.

case over all nations is removing. The glorious period promised the church is at hand. The morning star has arisen. The day begins to dawn. The shadows are fleeing away, and at the set time, the millennial sun in all his glory will beam upon the world."[47] One of Timothy Dwight's last sermons was delivered before the American Board of Commissioners on Foreign Missions in 1813. The text was on John 10:16, "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." Dwight interpreted this by invoking terms of harvest, and that the Christian missionary had been "summoned to the work of God" in order to "collect the heathen and gather us into God's heavenly kingdom." Their missionary society, though now small, would before the year 2000 gather all things in one and establish Christianity in all the nations of the earth, Dwight believed.[48] The leader of the American Board, Samuel Austin, later wrote to his missionaries in 1824, "whoever embarks in this cause, then, must do it with all his heart … and with a stronger zeal to help along the cause, the cause that was in Paul's hands."[49]

In the February 1829 revelation to his father, Joseph constituted a basic skeleton for the Mormon missionary subject through an assemblage of biblical motifs and American missionary themes of the time. He located the missionary in a worldwide field during the time of harvest with the "last day" of judgment not far hence. The object relative to the

47. Joseph Harvey, *A sermon preached at Litchfield before the Foreign Mission Society of Litchfield County, at their annual meeting February 15, 1815* (New Haven: Hudson and Woodward, 1815), 8; cf. Chaney, 277–78.

48. Timothy Dwight, *A Sermon, Delivered in Boston, Sept. 16, 1813, before the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, at their Fourth Annual Meeting* (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1813), 25, 30, 32–33.

49. Samuel Austin, *Paul, an example and proof of the peculiar excellence and usefulness of the missionary character: A discourse, delivered in Hartford, Conn. Sept. 15, 1824, at the fifteenth annual meeting of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1824), 28.

missionary subject lies in the field, signified by the wheat image. The missionary's reason for being involves this relationship to the "wheat"; he must collect and gather the object somehow, and not for the object's sake, but for his own. Joseph adds God to this relationship who judges not the actions of the missionary, but the results—the one to lay up in store will escape judgment. The recipient of the missionary's service remains nameless, faceless, a plant, whereas the missionary is described as a male servant of God tending the field. Joseph implies that the missionary lives below a certain standard, though the text never fixes the absolute position of that standard. The imperative forms of "see," "remember," "ask," and "knock," imply that the missionary must begin to perform these actions; he has not yet seen that he has served God with all of his strength, nor yet remembered to practice the cardinal virtues. In the very least, the revelation invites the missionary to continue in these actions, thus assigning expected behaviors to the missionary subject.

The revelation predicates the reason for a constitutive missionary subject on the notion of "departure." A discursive space is constructed in which recipients wait to be gathered. The missionary must embark, moving away from "here" and into the field. This motion anticipates the movement back to "here," a return of the missionary to the Mormon space, but with converts to speak for his labors. Joseph links "the work" with the desire of the missionary to *depart* into the field: "if ye have desires to serve God, ye are called to the work, for behold, the field is white already to harvest."[50]

The revelation does not explicitly define "the work," yet this term would dominate Mormon discourse for describing every facet of Mormonism (even Mormonism itself), from missionary work to temple construction. At this point in his career, Joseph had

50. *Book of Commandments*, 9.

recorded only one other revelation, which used "the work" motif with more detail.[51] This revelation rebuked Joseph for losing the 116-page manuscript and began with "the works … of God cannot be frustrated neither can they come to naught." After chastising Joseph, the revelation promises that God will reissue Joseph's call "to the work" which "shall go forth & accomplish my purposes for as the knowledge of a Saveiour come into the world even so shall the knowledge of my People the Nephites & the Jacobites & the Josephites & Zorumites come to the knowledge of the Lamanites, & the Lemuelites & the Ishmaelites which dwindeled in unbelief because of the iniquities of their Fathers[.]"[52] Though specific responsibilities were assigned to Joseph alone, a broader task of taking the Book of Mormon to the Native Americans was anticipated and emphasized. The revelation for Joseph Sr. continues in this anticipation, beginning with "a marvelous work is about to come forth," possibly referring to the Book of Mormon itself; revelations received after the publication of the Book of Mormon dropped this opening line.[53]

Ironically, the tempo and brevity of the revelation to Joseph Sr. presses the missionary toward an urgent work, but leaves the missionary with nothing to do, or at best assumes the missionary already knows what the "work" entails. Joseph suggests that Isaiah's prophecy would soon be fulfilled through the publication of the Book and Mormon and that his father was called to the ministry because of noble desires, but he does not clarify the overall mission of his nascent movement. Only biblical imagery explains what the

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51. D&C Section 3.

52. *Joseph Smith Papers*, 9, 11.

53. D&C Sections 4, 6, 11–12, and 14 begin with a "marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men," the last of these being received in June 1829; other revelations refer to the "marvelous work," but this reference, too, drops out of use once the Book of Mormon is published: D&C 8:8 (April 1829), 10:61 (circa April 1829), and 18:44 (June 1829). A revelation received circa early 1830 connects the issuing of the copyright for the Book of Mormon with "the work," in *Joseph Smith Papers* 31–33.

Lord invites Joseph Sr. to do. The revelation leaves out how to proceed with a potential convert, how to proselytize, or how to "thrust in the sickle." The language anticipates something—a marvelous work not yet actualized—and focuses on the preparation of the individual missionary. Until the Book of Mormon would arrive, all Joseph Sr. can do is to wait and cultivate virtue. But the wait would not last long. Joseph's magnum opus would fill the satchels of itinerant Mormon missionaries about a year later, and some eager individuals like Christian Whitmer, Thomas Marsh, Solomon Chamberlin, and Oliver Cowdery in less than eight months' time would begin proselytizing with loose sheets taken from the printer during production or would copy by hand and distribute sections of the original manuscript among family members.[54]

Joseph further fleshed out the missionary subject in a revelation received the following April. Whereas the former revelation left out specific directives for the worker in the harvest, this one invoked the image of the two-edged sword written about in Hebrews 4:12 as the beginning of a series of action items in the missionary's arsenal—"I am God, and give heed unto my word, which is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, to the dividing asunder of both joints and marrow."[55] Oliver Cowdery is told that he must establish the word of God using his spiritual gifts. Though the revelation invited them to search out the mysteries of God, which mysteries formed a prerequisite for convincing others of gospel truth, yet Joseph and Cowdery were to remember the sacred character of their gift and to "say nothing but repentance," only sharing knowledge of their gifts with

54. Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture that Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 56–58; Larry C. Porter, "'The Field Is White Already to Harvest': Earliest Missionary Labors and the Book of Mormon," chap. 5 in *The Prophet Joseph: Essays on the Life and Mission of Joseph Smith*, ed. Susan Easton Black and Larry C. Porter (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 73–89.

55. *Book of Commandments*, 14 [D&C 6].

those of the faith. "Trifle not with sacred things," the revelation warned.[56] The mission objective was clear: serve God by finishing the translation project and producing the Book of Mormon, testify of the book's authenticity to others, endure rejection, and keep the commandments. Should they pursue this mission and ministry, not even the combination of earth and hell could prevent them from having "joy in the fruit of [their] labors."[57] By now, Joseph had a coherent mission objective for his movement, one that involved thrusting in the sickle of the harvest (in other words, seeking out converts and gathering the righteous together) and wielding the two-edged sword, or the emerging word of God coming down anew from heaven. Within months, Joseph began calling missionaries through other revelations, referring to these not as "ministers," "preachers," or "missionaries," but as "servants."

Joseph introduces a concept here that would develop into the core mission of Mormons after the New York period. After repeating the themes of the February 1829 revelation to Joseph Sr. that "the field is white already to harvest" and that those that desire to reap may treasure up salvation through thrusting in the sickle, this revelation tells Cowdery to "seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion."[58] Joseph repeats this phrase in the revelations only three more times in those directed to his brother Hyrum Smith and Joseph Knight Sr. in May 1829, and on the day he organized the Church of Christ on April 6, 1830.[59] Joseph connects the "cause of Zion" with "the work" and gives

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56. *Book of Commandments*, 15.

57. *Book of Commandments*, 16–17.

58. *Book of Commandments*, 14.

59. D&C Sections 11, 12, and 21. Though "Zion" appears consistently throughout Joseph's revelations, interestingly, the uniquely rendered "*cause* of Zion" only appears a total of four times and takes on a more limited meaning than the larger concepts of Zion and the building and extending of Zion.

both the same level of meaning. In short, the "cause of Zion" meant the establishment of a church body with parishioners who attend and are taught the gospel. He does not yet assign a more technical meaning of Zion which he later develops, particularly while in Kirtland.

The "cause of Zion" as used by American churches of the time held a similar, basic meaning. One obituary of an American Board missionary mentioned her belief that advancing "the cause of Zion in foreign lands" would have a reciprocal effect on domestic missionaries establishing Zion in the United States and called on readers to join the work through encouraging others toward "concerted prayer" and scripture study.[60] Contributors to the American Board's fund referred to the "cause of Zion" when publishing their donations in the American Board's journal. "The enclosed $20, is forwarded in consequence of reading … the Herald for December," reads one editorial in *The Missionary Herald*. "That [the Herald] may produce a similar effect upon thousands, is the sincere wish of one who loves the cause of Zion."[61] Episcopalians in 1821 noticed how missionaries had planted churches throughout New York, but still came short of repairing the "languishing cause of Zion." What remained included the "concentrated action of [the Protestant Episcopal Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge]" and inducing "those exertions for the prosperity of Zion … and more zeal and more liberality in the missionary cause." They envisioned missionaries succeeding British societies at distributing gospel tracts, and asked readers to contribute to a fund that would finance the missionaries' "cause."[62] One editorial called upon readers to support the cause of Zion by

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60. Obituary of Lucretia Fairbank, *The Panoplist, and Missionary Herald* 14, no. 8 (March 1818): 170.

61. "Donations," *The Missionary Herald* 21, no. 2 (February 1825): 64.

62. *The Churchman's Magazine* 1, no. 5 (May 1821): 147, 149–50.

distributing tracts and evangelizing: "Christian reader, the question is put to you—Do you *love* the cause of Zion? Then what are you doing to promote it? Are you prevailing before the mercy seat?—The God of Zion is unchangeable."[63] To remedy the "languishing cause of Zion" in their state, ministers of the General Association of New Hampshire resolved in 1829 to efficiently preach Christian principles to improve church attendance and to evangelize lapsed Christians.[64] They, like the American Sunday School Union a year later, equated the cause of Zion with building Sunday schools and teaching the New Testament. They understood these schools to cross several lines of mission work: facilitating the work of revival in the country, preaching the gospel message, and, most importantly, prospering God's glorious kingdom in all the earth.[65]

The shortage of Christianized cultures in the world appeared like a pall of darkness covering the earth. Christian mission would change that by reversing the dispersion of Israel influenced by a hard-at-work Satan. One preacher declared during the ordination of missionaries on their way to the Hawaiian Islands in 1819 that they would harvest the world with the cross and the wilderness would become the heritage of Zion.[66] Other preachers saw the establishment of Zion as indicative of the impending final judgment. Francis Brown told the Maine Missionary Society that the events of current history placed the day of Zion's establishment at the precipice of the ages. "We behold harbingers of

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63. George Houston, "Correspondence," *The Correspondent* 4, no. 18 (November 22, 1828): 302.

64. *Minutes of the General Association of New-Hampshire, at their Annual Meeting, at Newport, Sept. 1, 1829* (Portsmouth: Miller and Brewster, 1829), 7.

65. American Sunday-School Union, "The connexion between the interests of Sunday-schools and the interests of the church," *The American Sunday-School Magazine* (May 1830): 130.

66. Heman Humphery, *The Promised Land: A Sermon, Delivered at Goshen* [Connecticut] *at the Ordination of the Rev. Messrs. Hiram Bingham & Asa Thurston, as Missionaries to the Sandwich Islands, September 29, 1819* (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1819), 11.

the approach of the King of Zion to build up and beautify his church," he proclaimed in 1814.[67] For Robert H. Bishop while preaching to the Bible Society of Kentucky, Zion would emerge among all the nations of the earth, through every corner of the world, and erect an empire to endure into the millennium. Their church of the last days "shall awake from the slumber of many generations," he predicted in 1815, "[and] shall shake herself from the dust, and raise her triumphant head amidst the wreck of empires."[68] In general, the cause of Zion meant missionary work that aimed to increase church activity and to build new churches at home and abroad through evangelism. Joseph appears to accept this idea by admonishing the recipients of his revelations to establish the cause of Zion through supporting the Book of Mormon project and the new Church. Cowdery, to whom Joseph had directed the first revelation to mention the "cause of Zion," wrote to Hyrum Smith two months later "feeling anxious for [Hyrum's] steadfastness in the great cause of which you have been called to advocate." He intended to travel to Palmyra, which he refers to as "Zion" and asks Hyrum, "his fellow labourer in the cause of Zion" to "Stir up the minds of our friends against the time we come unto you that then they may be willing to take upon them the name of Christ."[69]

Prior to the publication of the Book of Mormon, Joseph fleshed out his mission theory most fully in a revelation received probably before June 14, 1829, right as Joseph and Oliver neared completing the translation.[70] Details involving the epistemological basis for

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67. Francis Brown, *A Sermon Delivered Before the Maine Missionary Society, at Their Annual Meeting, in Gorham, June 22, 1814* (Hollowell, Maine: N. Cheever, 1814), 18.

68. Robert H. Bishop, *The Glory of the Latter Days, A Sermon, Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Bible Society of Kentucky, Sept. 1815* (Lexington: Thomas T. Skillman, 1815), 4, 10.

69. Oliver Cowdery, letter to Hyrum Smith, June 14, 1829 in Dan Vogel, comp. and ed., *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 2:402–03.

70. *Book of Commandments*, 34–35 [D&C 18]; Oliver Cowdery appears to quote from this revelation in

deriving their witness and convictions as God's servants, the content of their missionary message, their manner of preaching, and the directive to baptize all come together here in drastically vivid form when compared with the revelations to Joseph Sr. and Oliver Cowdery. Previous revelations had stated the mission as one of bringing forth a new book of scripture and publishing it to the world. A church now occupied a central location in that objective, one built upon a rock against which the gates of hell could not prevail. This clear reference to the Petrine Doctrine attached apostolic significance to their missionary work. "I speak unto you, [Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer] even as unto Paul mine apostle, for you are called even with that same calling with which he was called," the revelation states. Joseph here sees himself as a modern-day Paul, literally an "apostle," charged with the same commission given by Christ in the New Testament. The revelation extends this same apostolic calling to others, including Cowdery and David Whitmer and, it says, a group of twelve disciples, comprising here the basic ecclesiastical structure that would manage their mission work. "And now Oliver, I speak unto you, and also unto David, by the way of commandment: For behold I command all men every where to repent, and I speak unto you, even as unto Paul mine apostle, for you are called even with that same calling with which he was called." The apostles would direct the evangelism of the church as the ones entrusted to preach the gospel to every creature in the world while others would observe a more freelance approach to proselytism, declaring the gospel to whomever they could without any predetermined geographic assignment. Apostles were ordained to baptize and were bound by scripture in how they would perform their missionary task. They could call upon priests and teachers for assistance and perform ecclesi-

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his June 14, 1829 letter to Hyrum Smith (see previous footnote). See also H. Michael Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text and Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 46fn32; Givens, 37n119.

astical ordinations.[71]

The content of their preaching followed a basic formula: "You must preach unto the world, saying, you must repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ: For all men must repent and be baptized; and not only men, but women and children, which have arriven to the years of accountability." Just as previous revelations stipulated, they should preach nothing but repentance and avoid contending against churches, "save it be the church of the devil." This revelation made clear the soteriology behind these declarations of repentance. Salvation came to individuals who repented, were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, endured to the end, and took upon themselves "the name which is given of the Father, for in that name shall they be called at the last day: Wherefore if they know not the name by which they are called, they cannot have place in the kingdom of my Father."[72]

Joseph's rationale for why missionaries should declare repentance had little to do with adding numbers to the church. They literally could amplify God's joy and ease his suffering by helping individuals repent. "Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God: For behold the Lord your God suffered death in the flesh: wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him. And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth. Wherefore you are called to cry repentance unto this people." The missionaries had a responsibility to participate in bringing souls to Christ for Christ's sake, not their own.[73] Missionaries could enjoy that same godly happiness by working hard at preaching the gospel. Joseph incentivized the work in two identical revelations directed to John and Peter Whitmer in June 1829: "the thing which will be of the most

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71. *Book of Commandments*, 34–35.

72. *Book of Commandments*, 36–37.

73. *Book of Commandments*, 35–36.

worth unto you, will be to declare repentance unto this people, that you may bring souls unto me, that you may rest with them in the kingdom of my Father."[74]

Resistance to the Book of Mormon reinforced the location of the missionary subject in Joseph's discourse as caught up in the cosmic struggle of good versus evil. Once Joseph applied for a copyright of the Book of Mormon on June 11, news spread of the book's spectacular origins. Early efforts to spread the word among family and friends by those closest to Joseph attracted negative attention, and this hostility to the book confirmed for Joseph the absolutist notions he had expressed in earlier revelations. He already saw the marvelous work as appearing in the midst of a duality between God's foretold season of renewal and the heightened pitch of wickedness to immediately precede the apocalypse. This conditioned Joseph and the first Mormon missionaries to perceive themselves as engaging in a bitter struggle against Satanic influences that would target them because they possessed a fullness of truth. Cowdery encouraged Hyrum Smith as a "fellow labourer in the cause of Zion" to "Stir up the minds of our friends against the time we come unto you," which Hyrum had already done among his own extended family.[75] Hyrum had sent a letter to his grandfather, Asael Smith, about his younger brother's progress with the translation project which drew fire from his uncle Jesse Smith. Days after Cowdery wrote his June 14 letter to Hyrum, Jesse leveled a rebuke at Hyrum, accusing him of trying to fool his grandfather, "one of the oldest men on earth," with the outrageous claims of gold and angels, which Jesse believed only made obvious that Joseph had entered a pact with the devil to gain a commercially driven upper hand over Palmyra.[76]

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74. *Book of Commandments*, 33/34.

75. *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:403.

76. Jesse Smith, letter to Hyrum Smith, June 17, 1829 in *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:551–52.

Joseph reacted to such criticisms dramatically and thought of his critics as enemies bent on defaming him. He wrote to Cowdery on October 22, 1829 about "formadable persacutors and enimies" who came out of the woodwork once "a great call for our books in this country" surfaced and news spread that the Book of Mormon's copyright had been issued. The "minds of the people are very much excited when they find … that there is really [a] book, about to be printed."[77] Joseph added a preface to the Book of Mormon clearing his name of any possible attacks resulting from the loss of the 116-page manuscript more than a year before. He acknowledged "many false reports" in circulation about the Book of Mormon and fired back at criminals who through "unlawful measures" had tried to destroy him. All of this opposition evinced how Satanic influences were trained on Joseph's work, but God was the wiser and had confounded these enemies through prophetic revelation. Since Satan intended to battle God through the printed word, God would defeat the cunning of the devil by publishing to all what enemies were plotting behind closed doors.[78] The seeds were laid in 1829 of perceiving the landscape as a battleground where the righteous "elect of God" and conspirators dueled each other. This later grew into a full-blown persecution complex that continued in Mormon missionary work. An otherwise benign town was a hellish hotbed of resistance for the Mormon missionary if he was rejected at all. Joseph soon ratcheted up the tension by casting the city of Zion as something feared by the wicked in his *Book of Moses* rendition of Genesis—the boundaries between "us" and "them" formed along acceptance or rejection of the missionary

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77. Joseph Smith, letter to Oliver Cowdery, October 22, 1829 in *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 251–52.

78. Joseph Smith, "Preface" in *The Book of Mormon: An Account Written by the Hand of Mormon, Upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi* (Palmyra: E. B. Grandin, 1830), v–vi; D&C Section 10.

message.[79]

The fall of 1829 saw the beginnings of the first Mormon efforts to effectively proselytize. By now the Grandin press had begun printing the Book of Mormon at full speed. No sooner did proof sheets become available than missionaries started preaching the new scripture. David Whitmer averred that as early as August 1829 they "continued to bear testimony and give information, as far as we had opportunity."[80] Cowdery reported to Joseph in November that Thomas B. Marsh had "talked considerable to some respecting our work," suggesting that Marsh engaged hearers with news of the Book of Mormon in the Charlestown-Boston area of Massachusetts.[81] Solomon Chamberlin traveled over eight hundred miles carrying four sixteen-page press signatures. Along the way into upper Canada and Massachusetts, he enjoined passers by to accept the authenticity of the forthcoming Book of Mormon or suffer in the Second Coming.[82] Warren Cowdery

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79. For instance, one passage from the Book of Moses depicts "Zion" and "the residue": "And it came to pass that Enoch continued to call upon all the people, save it were the people of Canaan, to repent; And so great was the faith of Enoch that he led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them; … and all nations feared greatly, so powerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language which God had given him. There also came up a land out of the depth of the sea, and so great was the fear of the enemies of the people of God, that they fled and stood afar off and went upon the land which came up out of the depth of the sea. And the giants of the land, also, stood afar off; and there went forth a curse upon all people that fought against God; And from that time forth there were wars and bloodshed among them; but the Lord came and dwelt with his people, and they dwelt in righteousness. The fear of the Lord was upon all nations, so great was the glory of the Lord, which was upon his people. And the Lord blessed the land, and they were blessed upon the mountains, and upon the high places, and did flourish. And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them. And Enoch continued his preaching in righteousness unto the people of God. And it came to pass in his days, that he built a city that was called the City of Holiness, even Zion. And it came to pass that Enoch talked with the Lord; and he said unto the Lord: Surely Zion shall dwell in safety forever. But the Lord said unto Enoch: Zion have I blessed, but the residue of the people have I cursed" [Moses 7:12–20].

80. *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, comp. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City, 1932–51), 1:74–75.

81. Porter, 85–86.

82. Larry C. Porter, "Solomon Chamberlain—Early Missionary," *BYU Studies* 12, no. 3 (Spring 1972): 1–3.

shared loose sheets from the press in Freedom, New York, sometime before the book was published in March 1830. William Hyde confirmed that Warren had obtained the sheets from his brother Oliver, "which we had the privilege of perusing, and we did not peruse any faster than we believed."[83] Joseph also participated in advertising his book using press signatures, which some described as a mission to his relatives and neighbors.[84] One Palmyra resident noticed Martin Harris' proselytism. "Harris … gave up his entire time to advertising the Bible to his neighbors and the public generally in the vicinity of Palmyra," wrote Albert Chandler, a resident of the town. Harris would hold public meetings and with enthusiasm preach of the spiritual power given to Joseph Smith. Despite all of their efforts, at least to Chandler, "the Book of Mormon scarcely made a ripple of excitement in Palmyra."[85]

These missionaries appear to practice what theoretical elements the early revelations described. They focused almost all of their attention on the Book of Mormon, particularly in the supernatural origins of the book and not as much on the content.[86] They expected conversions to the book rather than to a church or kingdom and considered their testimonies as binding on the hearer, regardless of whether their message was rejected. Their language pointed to the Second Coming as imminent and their gospel as the only sure protection, leaving no room between accepting or rejecting that gospel as viable options.

The last revelation recorded before the Book of Mormon went for sale assigned Martin Harris to a lifelong mode of proselytism. "Speak freely to all," it commanded, "yea, preach,

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83. William Hyde, journal (1818–73), 46.

84. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon*, 58.

85. Alexander Linn, *The Story of the Mormons: From the Date of Their Origin to the Year 1901* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1902), 48–49.

86. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon*, 85.

exhort, declare the truth, even with a loud voice; with a sound of rejoicing." Unlike the earlier revelations, this one referred to the Book of Mormon by name. The book contained "the truth and the word of God … that soon it may go to the Jew, of which the Lamanites are a remnant." The Book of Mormon served the function of converting the Native Americans and the Jews to Christ. Whereas Joseph had previously spoken of the Book of Mormon as the location of conversion, or the thing to be converted to, he now identified it as the connection between the convert and the Messiah "which [had] already come," and as the apparatus for summoning the scattered House of Israel to Zion. The order in which the missionary presented the message mattered a great deal. If Harris was not careful, he might offer "meat" when the listener could only stomach "milk" and thus endanger the listener's soul. Declaring repentance required preaching the Book of Mormon without talk of tenets or reviling back at critics. This revelation brought dreadful consequences into this mission theory. "Misery thou shalt receive," it cautioned, "if thou wilt slight these counsels: Yea, even destruction of thyself and property."[87] In one sense, the Mormon missionary subject, like Harris, was caught in bind. Either he embraced the permanent duty to publicize the Mormon gospel or he suffered God's vengeance. Other modes of communicating Mormonism were in effect ignored; itinerant proselytism was the only theoretical option.

After the Book of Mormon

The Missionary Subject of the Book of Mormon

With the Book of Mormon now available for distribution, Joseph fastened it to the

87. *Book of Commandments*, 41–42 [D&C 19].

arm of the Mormon missionary, both discursively and physically. The book itself was designed for missionary distribution. Its title page states that the book was written "to shew unto the remnant of the House of Israel how great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they might know the covenants of the Lord … and also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD, manifesting Himself unto all nations."[88] At one time, he placed missionaries on hold until the Book of Mormon was finished, saying to Hyrum Smith, "you need not suppose that you are called to preach until you are called; wait … until you shall have my word.… hold your peace; study my word which hath gone forth among the children of men; and also study my word which shall come forth among the children of men; or that which you are translating."[89] Eleven days after the E. B. Grandin store announced the sale of the Book of Mormon, Joseph and five elders (surrounded by about 40 or 50 other members) formally incorporated the "Church of Christ" according to state law, and the call for official missionary representatives of this new church soon followed.[90] All of the missionary accounts of 1830 describe the Book of Mormon as the chief device and centerpiece of the message. Samuel Smith's departure on June 30, 1830 to proselytize throughout the northeastern United States and Canada marked the first official assignment extended by the Church. The main feature of this mission was his use of the Book of Mormon; he did not even take food, clothing, or money with him on this long journey, but his rucksack brimmed with copies of the Book of Mormon.[91] Local newspapers that took notice of the new "Mormonite" missionaries

88. *Book of Mormon* (1830), title page.

89. *Book of Commandments*, 29 [D&C 11].

90. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon*, 55–56; Bushman, 109.

91. Dean Jarman, "The Life and Contributions of Samuel Harrison Smith" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1961), 35–39. When Phinehas Young recalled meeting Samuel for the first time, he de-

emphasized their use of the Book of Mormon. "The person here, who pretends to have a divine mission," an Ohio journalist wrote four months after Samuel began his mission (speaking of Oliver Cowdery), "came along here with the book."[92] Subsequent accounts of Mormon missionaries in the *Painesville Telegraph* and *Palmyra Reflector* newspapers took issue with the message of the Book of Mormon and criticized the missionaries for their outlandish claims of its authenticity.[93]

When missionaries placed the Book of Mormon into the hands of their listeners, the book likely appeared austere and scriptural. The 1830 edition contained 588 densely printed pages and was bound in brown calf leather which would have given the appearance of cutting-edge bindery for the time only used on best-sellers, Bibles, and dictionaries.[94] Clearly, Joseph had very large ambitions for his book—he ordered five thousand copies for the first run (a demand which stalled production until the printer could acquire more type) and sold the book for the amount of about a week's wages.[95] It was well known

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scribed the entire exchange as a discussion about the Book of Mormon; Phinehas read the book within the following week and himself began to evangelize with it, expecting to improve Methodism rather than join a church, so completely the Book of Mormon dominated the missionary communication. Phinehas Young, journal excerpts, *Millennial Star* 25, no. 21 (May 23, 1863): 326–28; *Millennial Star* 25, no. 23 (June 6, 1863): 360–61.

92. "The Golden Bible," *Painesville Telegraph* [Ohio], November 16, 1830, 3; John W. Welch, ed., *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820–1844*, with Erick B. Carlson (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), 241.

93. *Painesville Telegraph*, December 7, 1830 [*Opening the Heavens*, 241–42]; "Beware of Imposters," *Painesville Telegraph*, December 14, 1830; *The Reflector* (Palmyra), June 1, 1830.

94. Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader's Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 5; Peter Crawley, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church*, 2 vols. (Provo: Religious Studies Center, 1997), 1:31; Gerald E. Jones, "The Journey of an 1830 Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 10, no. 1 (2001): 36–43; P. J. M. Marks, *The British Library Guide to Bookbinding: History and Techniques* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 11; Edith Diehl, *Bookbinding: Its Background and Technique* (New York: Dover Publications, 1980), 177–78; *Publishers' Bindings Online, 1815–1930: The Art of Books*, database, University of Alabama, http://bindings.lib.ua.edu. Printers had begun experimenting with leather covers in the 1830s thanks to innovations from the Industrial Revolution.

95. The Book of Mormon first sold for $1.75 but the price was lowered to $1.25, representing a 52 percent markup. Larry C. Porter, "The Book of Mormon: Historical Setting for Its Translation and Publication," in

as the "Gold Bible" because of negative press leading up to its publication, but the missionaries embraced that label just the same. The book itself had the feel of the Bible, with a table of contents that resembled the Bible's in style and its use of biblical language patterns and lengthy biblical quotations throughout the narrative.[96] Grant Hardy has pointed out that "if the primary purpose of the Book of Mormon were to function as a sign—as tangible evidence that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God—that mission could have been accomplished much more concisely."[97]But a "concise" sign would not compare to the size and location of the Bible in the minds of early national Americans, and Joseph was giving his missionaries their book of scripture in the Book of Mormon with which to proselytize. Some have argued the survival of Mormonism hinged on the differentiation the Book of Mormon provided. The Mormon Church without the book differed little from other options in the 1830s, but gradually the Book of Mormon became "the most visible component of the new religion" and provided the movement with much needed notoriety inside the crowded religious landscape of America.[98]

Surprisingly, missionaries made little use of the content of the Book of Mormon in their preaching, rather, they valued the book as a sign of the latter days. And Joseph followed suit, directing his attention less than three months after publication to a laborious project of reinterpreting the Bible using his prophetic gifts. He would only revisit the Book of Mormon to prepare new editions in 1837 and 1840, and then only to update the gram-

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Joseph Smith: The Prophet, The Man, ed. Charles D. Tate and Susan Easton Black (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993), 53–59; "Minimum Wage in 1830," quoting from *Niles's Register*, April 17, 1830 in *New York Times*, March 15, 1913, 12; Louis Morton Hacker and Helene Sara Zahler, *The Shaping of American Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 855.

96. Bushman, 85.

97. Hardy, 5.

98. Givens, 64–65.

mar from upstate New York English to standard English and to adjust a handful of phrases.[99] When his preaching was most prolific in Nauvoo, Joseph relied entirely upon Biblical verses when quoting scripture and barely mentioned the Book of Mormon.[100] Nevertheless, the Book of Mormon contains a detailed narrative of missionary encounters and mission theology which reinforced contemporary attitudes about the latter days and the recovery of ancient Israel. Its frequent mention and narrative use of the gathering of Israel mirror the themes from which Joseph composed later revelations, reflecting a set of discursive effects that, if not indicative of Joseph's thought (he did not claim direct authorship of the text), does manifest a significant mechanism by which Joseph bound Mormons to the fundamentals.[101]

One of the most striking images of the missionary subject in the Book of Mormon appears in an allegory that the narrator claims belonged to a pre-Babylonian version of the Old Testament. Jacob, a character who inherits the prophetic mantle of his older brother Nephi, takes a passage written by, he says, a biblical prophet named Zenos. Speaking to the House of Israel, Zenos likens Israel to "a tame olive-tree, which a man nourished in his vineyard" (Jacob 5:3), but with time, the tree begins to decay. The "master of the vineyard" makes repeated attempts to save the tree, however, each time the tree grows more wild until the whole vineyard becomes corrupt and at last the master decides to incinerate the vineyard with flame. A servant implores the master to "spare it a little longer," and the

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99. Royal Skousen in *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*, ed. Dennis L. Largey (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 112.

100. See Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo: Religious Studies Center, 1980) for a comprehensive compilation of extant sermons delivered in the Nauvoo period that reflect his use of scriptural sources.

101. Bushman, 108; Grant Underwood, *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 79.

master makes one final effort to recover his vineyard. "Wherefore, go to, and call servants, that we may labor diligently with our might in the vineyard, that we may prepare the way … this last time, for behold the end draweth nigh, and this is for the last time that I shall prune my vineyard" (Jacob 5:61–62). This allegory situates the Mormon missionary in the vineyard, working in concert with the Lord of the vineyard one last time. The sense of finality extends into a prophecy of the future of Mormon mission work that is both encouraging and disheartening. The servants labor, it foretells, "with all diligence, according to the commandments of the Lord of the vineyard, even until the bad had been cast away out of the vineyard," and the preserved trees produce once again "natural fruit" which becomes "like unto one body; and the fruits were equal" (Jacob 5:74). The Lord of vineyard seems pleased: "when the Lord of the vineyard saw that his fruit was good, and that his vineyard was no more corrupt, he called up his servants, and said unto them … blessed art thou; for because ye have been diligent in laboring with me in my vineyard … ye shall have joy with me" (Jacob 5:75). But even the master of the vineyard expects evil to creep into his vineyard once again. When that time comes, the master intends to separate "the good and the bad," and then consume the whole vineyard with fire (Jacob 5:77).

This allegory assigns a missionary status to the work of healing a House of Israel that has grown out of control. Like the revelation to Joseph Sr. in February 1829, the servants are described as laborers in an agricultural space, charged with the duty to gather the good fruit. The mission is attached to Israel, not to non-Christian peoples or to churches. The Lord of the vineyard worries over the covenant people that have become corrupted and the servants are employed explicitly to turn Israel toward producing goodness once again. The grand drama culminates in God's orchestrated effort to give Israel one last

chance and then drawing out all of the evil for the burning.

The Book of Mormon repeatedly emphasizes the corrupted and wandering condition of Israel and presents itself as the final call for Israel to remember its covenant status and repent before time runs out and God demolishes the earth. This theme governs the Book of Mormon from start to finish as it recounts the history of an ancient American civilization that ultimately dissolves into warfare and self-destruction. The parting words of the Book of Mormon commend the reader to God until the final day of judgment, written by the lone Nephite survivor as he looks out upon the utter collapse of his Israelite nation. The writer hopes his words will reach the distant reader like a voice from the grave. A somber tone completes the book, just as Zenos completes the allegory of the vineyard with the dismal prediction that all will end in cosmic destruction per the unavoidable design of God.[102]

The Book of Mormon develops a complex theology of the scattering and gathering of Israel and constructs a history that covers geography unexamined by the Bible. The Americas become the Promised Land that behaves like a magnet trained on Israelites, pulling the scattered remnants of the ancient people of God out of obscurity. When Book of Mormon prophets speak of restoration, they always fashion their prophecies with themes of ancient Israel and the original covenants of God. While restorationist movements in 1830s America focused on "primitive Christianity," and seek a return to first-century Christian living, Joseph pushed his notion of restoration further and further back. With the Book of Mormon, the restoration involves reversing a dispersion that occurred with the destruction of Jerusalem in the seventh century BCE. Only loosely does the Book

102. Underwood, 84–86; Moroni chapter 10.

of Mormon mention a falling away of the primitive Christian religion—it obsesses over Israel.[103] By 1832, Joseph had begun to stretch the significance of gathering all the way to Adam, imagining the original patriarch as a culminating figure in the final restoration of priesthood and a last precursor to the apocalypse.[104]

Like Joseph's revelations, the Book of Mormon does not mention the word "missionary," but the missionary presence is strongly felt in the Book of Alma through the characters of Alma the Younger, Amulek, and the sons of Mosiah. Joseph's injunctions in the pre-Book of Mormon revelations to "say nothing but repentance," to "revile not against revilers," and to appeal to the Holy Spirit for guidance gain a narrative form and a historical context in the stories of missions to lapsed Nephites, uncivilized Lamanites, and apostate Zoramites. Each of these characters expresses a concern for the welfare of wayward or ignorant peoples and risks their personal safety to promulgate their understanding of Christian doctrine among their enemies. Wicked Nephites in the city of Ammonihah compel Alma and Amulek to watch as their converts are murdered, yet are themselves destroyed after miraculous intervention causes prison walls to collapse.[105] Divine protection assists Ammon who walks unarmed into enemy territory and defends the flocks of a Lamanite king against marauders with the strength of God, so much that he astonishes the king and gains an audience with him.[106] His brother Aaron and companions suffer captivity in jail after proselytizing among a separate Lamanite nation, and is eventually

103. 1 Nephi 19, 21, 22, 30; 2 Nephi 6, 10; Jacob 5; Helaman 7; 3 Nephi 21; Ether 13; Mormon 3, 5.

104. D&C 78; also D&C 107, 116–117.

105. Alma 14.

106. Alma 17–19.

delivered by the entreaties by Ammon's convert to the head king of the Lamanites.[107] Alma and Amulek embark with a few others on a mission to a city of apostates and preach for a time a simple message of faith and repentance.[108]

In each of these moments, the missionary subject lives out a linear communication model between a sender and a receiver. The missionary always feels sent on a mission, not pluralistically celebrating the diversity of other religious expressions or inclusively looking for ways his religious truth fulfills or succeeds a separate religious tradition. The theoretical motivation derives from an exclusivistic worldview in which the missionary sees himself as occupying a position of superior knowledge that the recipient either lacks or has lost through deceit, conspiracy, or unrighteous behavior. The altruism extends only to the spiritual consequences of unbelief, not to the temporal needs or sufferings the recipient may be enduring. The narrator, Mormon, explains how the missionaries feel concern for the eternal welfare of non-Christians, sometimes "even unto pain," but mentions only spiritual aspects of that concern.[109]

The full effect of the Book of Mormon on the development of the missionary subject in Mormon discourse involved much more than the two characteristics of the gathering servant laboring in the vineyard and the preacher of repentance. However, the Book of Mormon did solidify a version of the American missionary subject who saw himself as negotiating a field in an effort to build a heavenly kingdom through his consistent eschatological refrain. The Mormon missionary aligned himself to one work that implicitly screened out emerging modes of altruistic mission work emphasized by the modern missionary move-

107. Alma 21–26.

108. Alma 31–35.

109. Alma 17:2–16; Alma 36:16.

ment.[110] The Book of Mormon effectively fastened missionary work to the goal of urgently reclaiming ancient Israel before the end of the world by sounding the warning voice in a linear model of sent, active servants to spiritually lost recipients.

Ministry and Mission

Before September 1830, the term "mission" does not appear in Joseph Smith's documents, and he almost exclusively referred to mission concepts with biblical motifs or generic terms popular in Protestant America. The fact that he favored the word "ministry" to describe both ecclesiastical duties in the new church and missionary service presents a challenge for identifying to what extent he thought missiologically when using the term. The context of his church before 1831 remained confined to upstate New York and Harmony, Pennsylvania. While he anticipated church growth, Joseph's immediate concerns were evangelistic. He needed to spread the word and build a critical mass first; then he could have something with which to shape or develop. Naturally, many of his 1829 and 1830 revelations conflated missionary activities with this earliest form of Mormonism. Thanks to the introduction of the Book of Mormon and the organization of a church, missionary activity picked up speed. Self-motivating evangelists like Solomon Chamberlin could now direct converts to something tangible, like an organized congregation, quarterly conferences of gospel instruction, and ordinances like baptism and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, rather than frighten listeners with impending doomsday. As the number of converts grew, Joseph had increased opportunity for dispatching missionaries on specific assignments. More dimensions of church activity began to take shape and organizational

110. Charles Forman, "A History of Foreign Mission Theory," in *American Missions in Bicentennial Perspective*, ed. R. Pierce Beaver (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1977), 72–73.

concerns came to occupy Joseph's attention in additional ways than promulgating his new movement and forming a foundation on which to establish his religious community. The dimension of members identifiably seeing themselves as participating in the mission process gave rise to the use of "mission" and "missionary" among early Mormons. Their relationship to this dimension gradually intensified until a distinct missionary identity formed in the discourse with its own characteristics and epistemology.

Joseph first refers to "mission" in a September 1830 revelation calling Thomas Marsh "to the ministiry [sic]." Marsh is told to "rejoice for the hour of your mission is come." The revelation defines this mission using the theoretical elements of prior revelations:

> your tongue shall be loosed; & you shall declare glad tidings of great joy into this generation. you shall declare the things which have been revealed to my Servent Joseph. you shall begin to preach from this time forth; yea, to Reap in the field which is white already to be burned: Therefore thrust in your Sickle with all your Soul … & you shall be laden with sheaves upon your Back, for the labourer is worthy of his hire.

Not only does the revelation involve the eschatological timetable, the harvest motif, and the injunction to evangelize the Book of Mormon, but it also installs the discursive effect of departure into the definition of "mission." Marsh is to "go from [his family] only for a little time & declare my word" and plant churches in preparation for the gathering. His travels into "the World" will be guided "whithersoever I will … by the Comforter." Mormons would begin to think of mission as an action of physical movement and of individual commitment: one *goes on* a mission or one *fills* a mission, not doing God's mission or having a personal quest. Upon return, the missionary would assume possession of a "mission," speaking of "his mission" to a location or "my mission" in the field.[111] God does

111. One early example of this appears in a published letter by Simeon Carter, December 11, 1832: "My mission has been rather swift, since I wrote to brother Sidney. Brother Jared and I left Benson, Vermont, for Albany, N. York.… We then went to Chenango, preaching by the way, and visited the church that brother Page built up. From thence to Kirtland; and thence to Amherst and New-London … and since I

not remain detached, though, from this motion of departure, a bystander as missionaries do his bidding and report back their successes. "I am with you, … your Redeemer, by the will of the father" Marsh is assured at the close of the revelation.[112]

The Church, Articles and Covenants, and Millennialism

Scarcely had the Book of Mormon reached the Grandin bookstore than Joseph set out to organize a church around it. About two weeks later, he composed "Church Articles & Covenants," which he presented to a conference of the new church for a sustaining vote the following June. The ecclesiology outlined in the Articles and Covenants provided added structure to initiating new converts and carrying out the Church's mission. Apostles, elders, and priests held authority to baptize and review converts for admission into the faith. They could approve initiates for baptism who confessed a broken heart and contrite spirit, witnessed that they had truly repented of all their sins, and showed a determination to serve Christ to the end. The Articles and Covenants prohibited infant baptism; only those who arrived at "the years of accountability and capable of repentance" could become members of the church.[113]

The Articles and Covenants formed part of the content of early Mormon preaching. Only the subject of the Book of Mormon outnumbered the Articles and Covenants in

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came here, I have baptized four.… I have baptized in all about seventy, and the Lord has kept me and supported me.—The church at this place is expecting to go up to Zion next summer." In *Evening and Morning Star* 1, no. 9 (February 1833): 139. Other references like this appear in other church periodicals: *Evening and Mormon Star* 1, no. 1 (June 1832): 5; *Evening and Morning Star* 2, no. 2 (July 1833): 217; *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 9 (June 1835): 142; *Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 11 (August 1835): 168; *Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 12 (September 1835): 186; *Elders' Journal of the Church of the Latter Day Saints* 1, no. 1 (October 1837): 15.

112. *Joseph Smith Papers*, 57–59 [D&C 31].

113. *Joseph Smith Papers*, 75; Marquardt, 62n8; Bushman, 112.

William McLellin's sermons throughout his missions to fellow Americans in 1831.[114] The correct structure for administering baptism through the authority of priesthood officers signaled the return of apostolic Christianity. For some, just as the Book of Mormon served as proof of biblical prophecy regarding the gathering of Israel, the Articles and Covenants added to the authenticity of the church for its soundness of regulation and ecclesiastical structure.[115]

In a series of missionary calls and revelations before he moved to Kirtland in February 1831, Joseph developed the millenarian landscape in such a way that a new relationship between preachers of the gospel, covenants, and non-Mormons emerged. A revelation on April 6, 1830 declared Oliver Cowdery "the first Preacher of this Church unto the Church & before the world" and a laborer in the vineyard.[116] Days later, a revelation instructed missionaries on requiring baptisms even of non-Mormon Christians, because the Church of Christ as established in the last days was a "New & an everlasting covenant" that had superseded the dead works of an old covenant.[117] Here, a new component of Joseph's mission theory appears that functions like a railroad switch, shifting the theory to a distinct trajectory. He couples the concept of a new and everlasting covenant, one that succeeds even the whole of Christianity, with the mission of the church, thus completely reorienting the way missionaries saw themselves relative to Christians. Regardless of any shared

114. John W. Welch, "The Acts of the Apostle William E. McLellin," in Jan Shipps and John W. Welch, eds., *The Journals of William E. McLellin: 1831–1836* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press; Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 19.

115. McLellin and Parley Pratt preached using the Articles and Covenants in early 1833, telling others that the beauties of Mormon regulations attested to their correctness in following Galatians 1; *Journals of William E. McLellin*, 109–11.

116. *Joseph Smith Papers*, 29.

117. *Joseph Smith Papers*, 35.

beliefs about Christ or of previous baptisms into Christian churches, the missionaries were to preach Mormonism to everyone, Christian believers included. This notion departed significantly from the majority of American missionaries at the time who began organizing interdenominational societies. These Christians saw their work in terms of converting non-Christians, not sending missionaries to other sects or denominations of Christianity. Despite the clear admonition to avoid contention, this reconstituted Mormon/non-Mormon environment placed the Mormon missionaries at odds with all other churches. Belief in Christ was not enough to avoid the tribulations that would accompany the Second Coming; one must gather to Zion, otherwise the Lord of Hosts would "burn them up" and "not cleanse them," and the cup of God's indignation would overflow to such a degree that their flesh would "fall from off their Bones & their eyes from their sockets," and flies and maggots would consume them. Grotesque consequences, indeed, for even Christians—believers in the Bible actively anticipating the coming of Christ—that rejected the Mormon message.[118]

By comparison, Joseph Smith shared many of the same expectations as American Protestants for his mission movement, but introduced some key variations that would direct Mormon mission in a distinct trajectory. Though in practice Mormons differed from Protestant missionaries of the time, they all sought the transformation of the world and felt as though they contributed to the cause of Zion. Mormons imagined Lamanites where Protestants pictured heathens, but the two could not ignore the frontier just the same and made repeated attempts to evangelize the Native Americans. Both groups saw God as intimately connected with their mission and themselves as being sent as servants in the

118. *Joseph Smith Papers*, 43–51.

vineyard or the field delivering the word of God. Mormons carried a new book of scripture; Protestants carried the Bible. Missionary societies thrived on a volunteer system and accepted many missionaries without expert or clerical credentials. Joseph from the start encouraged volunteers to step forward and embark in the service of God. The missionary could be more effective by pursuing a godly lifestyle in both communities, and many preachers dedicated sermons to encouraging missionaries toward personal righteousness. Joseph referenced lists of virtues from the Bible as prime qualifications to enter the ministry. By directing the missionary to proselytize Christians as well as non-Christians and by increasingly amplifying his concept of Zion, Joseph crafted a mission with unique qualities that would further differentiate Mormon missionaries from American Protestants. After 1830, Joseph and other Mormons would engage in a distinctive mission effort that by the end of Joseph's ministry would have a thoroughly Mormon vocabulary and theology.[119]

Moving Beyond Modernist Mission Theory

In practice, Joseph's 1829–1830 mission theory had proven effective. Sidney Rigdon's followers who comprised the bulk of the Kirtland conversions felt especially drawn to the Book of Mormon as evidence of Joseph's gift of revelation and to the missionaries' insistence on being baptized by divine authority for the remission of sins. Parley Pratt's talk of the approaching reign of Christ and his positive valuation of spiritual knowledge influenced several of the principal Ohio converts. Lyman Wight attributed his conversion to a sense that the Millennium was close at hand and that the spiritual gifts he sought in

119. Chaney, 269–78; Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, 7 vols. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941), 4:299–324.

the true church were manifest in the translation of the gold plates. The effect of testifying of the work impressed many who sought for evidence of an apostolic ministry. The quality and tenor of the missionaries' witness convinced them that the Spirit of God was at work in America and that the Second Coming was approaching.

Once he relocated to Kirtland, Joseph unleashed a tide of revelations that took Mormonism in a new creative direction. He remained fixed on the Second Coming and on preaching the simple gospel, but he significantly elevated the mission theoretical discourse to include ambitions of building a physically transcendent society. Whereas the Protestant missionaries of his day expected to Christianize the world by civilizing heathen nations, Joseph began to conceive of leading a Mormon community away from the world and into a communal society; whereas Protestant mission theory called for a revival in personal piety, Joseph expected his missionaries to entertain visions and ascend into celestial glory.

Before internal pressures and an economic collapse compelled Joseph to migrate his movement to Missouri in 1838, he had attempted a communal society which he merged with the church polity. The mission to gather the elect to Zion soon assumed elevated ideals of living a divine order apart from the wicked world. Missionaries oriented their message toward the heavenly economic order and once Heber Kimball began baptizing in England in 1837, scores of new converts emigrated to the United States.[120]

Near the end of 1830, Joseph dispatched four missionaries to take the Book of Mormon to the Native Americans—in his new Mormon parlance, "the Lamanites"—and the results of that mission introduced a new religious variety to Joseph's world, one that already espoused restorationism and valued the spiritual gifts emphasized in and evidenced by the Book of

120. Richard O. Cowan, "Opening the British Mission: 1837 to 1841," in *Unto Every Nation: Gospel Light Reaches Every Land*, ed. Donald Q. Cannon and Richard O. Cowan (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 3–14.

Mormon. In his association with Campbellite converts to Mormonism, Joseph not only adapted his thought in response to social developments in Kirtland, but enlarged his vista of mission work. Before long, a systematic mission was in place with missionaries traversing New England and Canada with a more specific message to gather to Zion. The elements in Joseph's early mission thought of declaring repentance, sounding the warning voice before the Second Coming, laboring in the vineyard, baptizing by priestly authority, and preaching the Book of Mormon served as a foundation from which a greater body of Mormon missionaries in the Kirtland period and beyond would develop their theory of mission.

Chapter 2

Early Developments of Mormon Mission Theory

> And we now bear testimony to all, both small and great, that the Lord of Hosts hath sent us with a message of glad tidings—the everlasting gospel, to cry repentance to the nations, and prepare the way of his second coming. Therefore repent, O ye nations, both Gentiles and Jews, and cease from all your evil deeds, and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and be baptized in water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, by the laying on of the hands of the Apostles or Elders of this church; and signs shall follow them that believe, and if they continue faithful to the end, they shall be saved. But woe unto them, who hearken not to the message which God has now sent, for the day of vengeance and burning is at hand, and they shall not escape. Therefore, REMEMBER, O reader, and perish not!
>
> — Orson Pratt, 1840[1]

The first mention of Joseph Smith issuing a missionary assignment to a specified location appears in a newspaper notice written by Abner Cole two months after the incorporation of the Church. "The apostle to the nephites (Cowdery) has started for the east … under a command, (as he says) to declare the truth … 'in all the principal cities in the Union.'"[2] Until this time, Joseph's revelations made general statements about declaring repentance among family members or evangelizing at large. By September 1830, missionaries had successfully established a branch of Latter-day Saints in Colesville, New York, and had grown the young church to at least sixty members.[3] That month, Joseph directed

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1. Orson Pratt, *A[n] Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions, and of the Late Discovery of Ancient American Records Giving an Account of the Commencement of the Work of the Lord in this Generation* (Edinburgh: Ballantyne and Hughes, 1840), 31.

2. Abner Cole, *The Reflector* (Palmyra, New York), June 1, 1830.

3. Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 114; Larry C. Porter, "'The Field Is White Already to Harvest': Earliest Missionary Labors and the Book of Mormon," in *The Prophet Joseph: Essays on the Life and Mission of Joseph Smith*, ed. Larry C. Porter and Susan Easton Black (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 77; Cynthia Doxey, "The Early Latter-day Saints

Oliver Cowdery in a revelation to "go unto the Lamanites & Preach my Gospel unto them & cause my Church to be established among them." Joseph had in mind to build the City of Zion "on the borders by the Lamanites" on the assumption of Cowdery's missionary success among the Indians, apparently referring to the western edge of the United States where Congress had recently enacted the removal of Native Americans to an irregularly drawn territory of frontier land beyond the state of Missouri and the territory of Arkansas.[4] Joseph continued the practice of issuing missionary "calls" to proselytize in specific areas, though the duration would be open-ended and the missionary would be left to determine how to proceed upon arrival.[5] In theory, God called missionaries into his service through the Mormon prophet's revelation, and even what appeared as business assignments would have religious significance for the Mormon missionary as they responded to this official call.[6]

As missionary calls increased in frequency and specificity, a more patterned mission experience developed. By the time of the Mormon exodus to Utah in the 1840s, a normative methodology of issuing missionary calls, establishing churches in new locations, and fulfilling predetermined missionary functions had taken shape which would largely con-

in Livingston County, New York," in *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: New York–Pennsylvania*, ed. Alexander L. Baugh and Andrew H. Hedges (Provo: Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, 2002), 71.

4. Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations*, facsimile ed. (Salt Lake City: The Church Historian's Press, 2009), 53, hereafter cited as *Joseph Smith Papers*; S. George Ellsworth, "A History of Mormon Missions in the United States and Canada, 1830–1860" (PhD diss., University of California–Berkeley, 1951), 74.

5. Milton V. Backman, *Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio, 1830–1838* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 105–09.

6. Rex Thomas Price Jr., "The Mormon Missionary of the Nineteenth Century" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin–Madison, 1991), 57–124; Gary Shepherd and Gordon Shepherd, *Mormon Passage: A Missionary Chronicle* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 13–14.

tinue to the present.[7] This chapter explores the maturation process of Joseph Smith's early mission theory within the Mormon missionary movement as it responded to the concerns and activities of the growing Mormon community from Cowdery's mission to the Native Americans in 1830 to the launch of Joseph's campaign for United States president in 1844.

This period saw the emergence of three central themes in Mormon mission theory that informed the missionaries and constituted their expectations for their work. First, what began as a simple rallying cry for marshalling missionaries to the "cause of Zion" became a major project to build a transnational Zion society involving communal living, the construction of temples, and the concentrated immigration of converts. Mormons began to understand their mission as simply the gathering of the elect to the city of Zion.[8] Consequently, the gathering of Israel of which the Book of Mormon spoke in detail became more doctrinally multivalent and complex within the missionary discourse.[9]

A second theoretical development involved the appropriation of eschatological significance to Mormon mission. By the 1840s, missionaries felt that theirs was a latter-day work and that their generation would live to see the Second Coming. Their warning voice became so crucial in the final judgment of souls that they considered themselves authori-

7. The best studies that focus on the historical events surrounding these changes and which chart the missionary activities of this time period include Ellsworth, "A History of Mormon Missions"; Richard S. Williams, "The Missionary Movements of the LDS Church in New England, 1830–1850" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1969); Price Jr., "The Mormon Missionary of the Nineteenth Century"; Jay Edwin Jensen, "Proselyting Techniques of Mormon Missionaries" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1974).

8. Bushman, "Cities of Zion," Chap. 11 in *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*; Leonard J. Arrington, "Joseph Smith, Builder of Ideal Communities," in *The Prophet Joseph: Essays on the Life and Mission of Joseph Smith*, ed. Larry C. Porter and Susan Easton Black (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988); Martha Sonntag Bradley, "Creating the Sacred Space of Zion," *Journal of Mormon History* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 1–30; Steven L. Olsen, "Joseph Smith's Concept of the City of Zion," in *Joseph Smith: The Prophet, The Man*, ed. Susan E. Black and Charles D. Tate (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1993), 203–12.

9. J. Spencer Fluhman, "Anti-Mormonism and the Making of Religion in Antebellum America" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin–Madison, 2006), 142–49.

tatively able to pronounce ritual cursings upon those that rejected their message. Eschatological urgency provided the missionary with a seriousness that would drive him to vigorously defend Mormonism, which ultimately contributed to a shift away from intense apocalypticism. The public challenges of Mormonism as a valid religion demanded the missionaries' attention to a degree that they devoted more time to debate and writing tract literature and invoked eschatological warnings less.[10]

Finally, Mormon mission theory answered common missionary challenges through an appropriation of missionary duties into lines of priesthood authority. Once Joseph brought missionary work under the function of well defined and distinct priesthood offices, missionaries understood their activities as corresponding to their level of ordination as an apostle, seventy, elder, or priest.[11] This accounts for the virtual absence of women from Mormon missiology until the late nineteenth century, since women were excluded from receiving the priesthood and could only participate as travel companions to their missionary husbands.[12] Mormon mission was at first sustained by voluntarism, but even-

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10. Grant Underwood, "Epilogue: Mormonism, Millenarianism, and Modernity," *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 139–42; Underwood, "Mormonism, Millenarianism, and Modernity," chap. 10 in *Mormons and Mormonism: An Introduction to an American World Religion*, ed. Eric A. Eliason (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 200–06. Underwood points out how early Mormon pre-millennialism fostered an elitist perspective: "Likewise, the Mormons did not expect to convert the world, only to warn it. To modify a phrase from Leonard Sweet, the Saints have always believed that they were called to bring to pass the gathering of the elect, not the broad electorate, of humankind"; Underwood, *Millennarian World of Early Mormonism*, 8.

11. Gregory A. Prince, *Power from On High: The Development of Mormon Priesthood* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 47–50; William E. Hughes, "A Profile of the Missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1849–1900" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1986).

12. Tania Rands Lyon and Mary Ann Shumway McFarland, "'Not Invited, but Welcome': The History and Impact of Church Policy on Sister Missionaries," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36, no. 3 (Autumn 2003): 71–101; Calvin S. Kunz, "A History of Female Missionary Activity in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1898" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1976); Jessie L. Embry, "The Rhetorical Self-Definition of Sister Missionaries, 1930–1970: Oral Histories," in *Annual of the Association for Mormon Letters*, ed. Lavina Fielding Anderson (Salt Lake City: Association for Mormon Letters, 1997), 147–51.

tually the Church consolidated activities enough that missionaries would seek official recognition through calls of service before proselytizing.[13] Priesthood authorities would also limit by the 1840s what had once been a freelance print culture within the missions and either censor or sanction books and pamphlets based on their conformity to official church doctrines.[14]

Zion and the Gathering of Israel

From the start, Joseph intended to take the Book of Mormon to the Native Americans. His first recorded revelation received almost two years before the book's publication stated that the purpose of preserving the plates from which Joseph had translated the Book of Mormon was to fulfill God's promises to "his People & that the Lamanites might come to the knowledge of their Fathers & that they might believe the Gospel & rely upon the merits of Jesus Christ & be glorified."[15] The title page of the Book of Mormon reinforced this aim, claiming to have a Native American origin: "Wherefore, [the Book of Mormon] is an abridgment of the Record … of the Lamanites; written to the Lamanites, which are a remnant of the House of Israel."[16]

In September 1830, about six months after the publication of the Book of Mormon, Joseph made good on this expectation in a missionary call to Oliver Cowdery. "Behold I say unto you that you shall go unto the Lamanites & Preach my Gospel unto them & cause

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13. Steven C. Harper, "Missionaries in the American Marketplace: Mormon Proselyting in the 1830s," *Journal of Mormon History* 24, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 1–29.

14. David J. Whittaker, "Early Mormon Pamphleteering," *Journal of Mormon History* 4 (1977): 37–38, 44–49.

15. *Joseph Smith Papers*, 11.

16. Joseph Smith Jr., *The Book of Mormon: An Account Written by the Hand of Mormon Upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi* (Palmyra: E. B. Grandin, 1830), title page.

my Church to be established among them." The revelation amplified the concept of the "cause of Zion," to which Cowdery had been commissioned in another revelation received about a year and a half prior.[17] Whereas the meaning of the "cause of Zion" had been limited to declaring repentance and building up the Church, a larger Zion project now occupied Joseph's sense of Mormon mission. The revelation promised Cowdery that part of his journey would involve the vicinity where the "City shall be built," which had not yet been specifically revealed but was said to be "on the borders by the Lamanites."[18] The call provided Cowdery with a purpose related to what Joseph would soon describe as a project to build the New Jerusalem where Mount Zion would flourish. Within a month, Joseph assigned Peter Whitmer Jr., Parley P. Pratt, and Ziba Peterson to accompany Cowdery "into the wilderness" to "declare my Gospel … [and] build up my Church among your Brethren, the Lamanites."[19]

These four viewed their mission as a twofold effort to establish a city called New Jerusalem near Indian territory and to present the Book of Mormon to Native Americans whom they understood to be the posterity of Lamanite peoples. They drafted a written covenant, ostensibly under Joseph Smith's supervision, which they signed prior to departing on their mission. "I, Oliver," the agreement began, "being commanded of the Lord God, to go forth unto the Lamanites, to proclaim glad tidings of great joy unto them, by presenting unto them the fulness of the Gospel … and also, to rear up a pillar as a witness where the Temple of God shall be built, in the glorious New-Jerusalem … do therefore

17. D&C 6, received in April 1829.

18. *Joseph Smith Papers*, 53; the revelation is prefaced as Cowdery's "Call to the Lamanitse [sic]," *Joseph Smith Papers*, 51 [D&C 28].

19. *Joseph Smith Papers*, 55, 585 [D&C 30; 32].

most solemnly covenant before God, that I will [do this] business." Pratt, Peterson, and Whitmer pledged to support Cowdery's missionary calling by enduring whatever could possibly befall him, including false imprisonment.[20]

This mission marked the beginning of a series of conceptual developments on the subject of Zion and the gathering of Israel. Cowdery and his companions took their journey sometime in mid-October 1830 just after Joseph had completed a portion of his revisions of the Bible which are now chapters one through five of the *Book of Moses*.[21] By November, Joseph was at work detailing the ministry of Enoch, whom the Bible had mentioned only briefly in the New Testament. Between the Book of Mormon and the character of Enoch in the *Book of Moses*, Joseph had fleshed out a unique theology of Zion before 1831 that became the bedrock and focal point of Mormon mission theory until the Missouri persecutions ended nearly a decade later.[22]

In the *Book of Moses*, Joseph equated the city of New Jerusalem, which would be built in the last days, with Zion. Righteousness and truth, God tells the prophet Enoch in a kind of beatific vision, "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 may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem" (Moses 7:62). J. Spencer Fluhman explains, "Enoch is given a divine commission to call the

20. *The Ohio Star* (December 8, 1831), 1.

21. Grant Underwood, "The Mission to the Lamanites," in *Joseph: Exploring the Life and Ministry of the Prophet*, ed. Andrew C. Skinner and Susan Easton Black (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 144–55. Robert J. Matthews, *"A Plainer Translation": Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible, A History and Commentary* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1985), 26–29.

22. Robert J. Matthews, "How We Got the Book of Moses," *Ensign* 16, no. 1 (January, 1986): 43–49; Kent P. Jackson, *The Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts* (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2005).

wicked to repentance and shown expansive visions concerning the last days. He gathers the righteous together and builds 'a city that was called the City of Holiness, even Zion.'" A communal ideal becomes central to Zion's mission. "The account relates that the 'Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them.' So great was the holiness of the ancient city that 'Zion, in process of time, was taken up into heaven' (Moses 7:19, 21)."[23] Joseph here connects Zion with his own movement and attaches the work of literally erecting a community of believers to its mission. Wherever the Latter-day Saints assemble, Joseph understood that to be the gathering place of Zion. "Zion is prospering here," he would write in December of that year to the branch of Saints in Colesville.[24]

Before relocating to Kirtland in February 1831, Joseph anticipated a change in missionary administration that would branch out from the central gathering place called Zion. In a revelation to a Baptist minister who had converted to Mormonism, James Covill was told to "arise & be baptized … & if thou do this I have prepared thee for a greater work[.]" The call to "Preach the fulness of my Gospel which I have sent forth in these last days" involved laboring in the vineyard "to build up my Church & to bring forth Zion" and "to go to the Ohio … & from thence men shall go forth into all Nations[.]" All of the missionaries sent from Ohio were to prepare the nations for the judgments of God by "crying with a loud voice saying the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" and "Baptizing with water preparing the way before" the face of the Lord of Hosts.[25] Prior missionary

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23. J. Spencer Fluhman, "Early Mormon and Shaker Visions of Sanctified Community," *BYU Studies* 44, no. 1 (2005): 89.

24. Joseph Smith, letter to Colesville Saints in Dan Vogel, ed., *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996), 1:19.

25. *Joseph Smith Papers*, 89–91 [D&C 39]; Robert J. Woodford, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants," 3 vols. (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1974), 504–05.

calls directed missionaries to their families or to a general ethic of evangelism. In only a couple months' time, Joseph would institute a system of specifically assigning companionships to proselytize in separate locales with the expectation of receiving regular reports from missionaries in the field or upon return. A pattern of announcing missionary calls at quarterly or sporadically convened conferences emerged during the early Kirtland period.[26]

The "mission to the Lamanites" would attract the attention of a growing number of critics that balked at the idea of gathering to lands of inheritance as the missionaries passed through Buffalo, New York and northeastern Ohio during the winter of 1830 and 1831. The *Painesville Telegraph* in Ohio reported "Four men are traveling westward, who say they are commanded by their Heavenly Father, to go and collect the scattered tribes of Israel, which they say a new Gospel or Prophecy informs them are the different tribes of Indians." The journalist claimed to have conversed with Pratt about the spiritual effects of an authoritative baptism. Pratt had said "he knew … that when they got among the scattered tribes, there would be as great miracles wrought, as there was at the day of Pentecost."[27] Pratt later confirmed this missiological orientation toward viewing their mission as one of "collecting" the scattered tribes of Israel in his *A Voice of Warning* (1837). The "New Jerusalem, in America, inhabited by the remnant of Joseph, and those gathered with them who have washed their robes" would include "cities of Zion" apart from Jerusalem, which, "in its former place" would be "inhabited by the house of Israel gathered from the north countries and from all countries where they were scattered, having washed their robes, and made them white, in the blood of the Lamb." For Pratt, gathering meant

26. Williams, 18, 227–28; Ellsworth, 122–24.

27. "Beware of Imposters," *Painesville* [Ohio] *Telegraph* (December 14, 1830).

building a New Jerusalem in the United States, "a city of Zion, with the assistance of the Gentiles, who will gather them from all the face of the land," which "gathering is clearly predicted in the Book of Mormon" and other revelations.[28] A Painesville correspondent informed *The Reflector* in New York that "Cowdery and his friends had frequent interviews with angels, and had been directed to locate the *site* for the New Jerusalem, which they should *know*, the moment they should 'step their feet' upon it." The column erroneously ascribed hundreds of Indian baptisms to these missionaries and that the Indians had "followed Cowdery daily, and finally saw him enter the promised land, where he placed a pole in the ground … to designate the *site* of the New Jerusalem," but it did rightly detect how the missionaries talked of the Indians as "the ten lost tribes."[29]

Cowdery and his companions failed to baptize any Native Americans due to competition from Baptist and Methodist missionaries and the hard-handed enforcement of the head of the Shawnee Indian Agency who denied them a permit to preach in Indian territory, despite concerted attempts to maintain a mission there.[30] But this mission was not by any means a setback for the young church. On the way to Missouri, the four missionaries

28. Parley P. Pratt, *A Voice of Warning and Instruction to All People; or, an Introduction to the Faith and Doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 13th ed. (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons, 1891), 187–88. The first edition was published in 1837 under the title, *A voice of warning and instruction to all people, containing a declaration of the faith and doctrine of the Church of the Latter Day Saints, commonly called Mormons* (New York: W. Sanford, 1837) and is widely considered the most influential text in early Mormonism beside the canonical works; Peter L. Crawley, *The Essential Parley P. Pratt* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), xvi; Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 398; Terryl L. Givens, *People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 87–88; David J. Whittaker, "Early Mormon Pamphleteering" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1982), 1–2.

29. *The Reflector* (Palmyra: February 14, 1831).

30. Underwood, "The Mission to the Lamanites"; Cowdery wrote to William Clark, describing their work as an appointment "by a society of Christians in the state of New York to superintend the establishing Missions among the Indians" and their intention to establish "schools for the instruction of their children and also teaching them the Christian religion without intruding or interfering with any other Mission now established"; Oliver Cowdery, letter to Superintendent of Indian Affairs, February 14, 1831 in Leland H. Gentry, "Light on the 'Mission to the Lamanites,'" *BYU Studies* 36, no. 2 (1996–97): 233.

passed through Ohio, calling on Sidney Rigdon who had a year before brought Pratt into the Disciples of Christ movement. They persuaded Rigdon and others of his local congregation that Mormon elders had received divine authority to baptize and that the Book of Mormon demonstrated the gift of revelation. As news spread of the Mormon message, dozens of former Campbellites converted, feeling that none of the other churches of the day rightly taught New Testament doctrine like the Book of Mormon. Within the month the missionaries baptized over 130 converts, forming a critical mass that would establish Kirtland as a base of operations, first for missionary work and eventually for the whole church until 1838. By the summer of 1831, the number of professing Mormons had grown to over a thousand with three-fifths of the church's branches located in the Kirtland area.[31]

Pressures in New York and the now larger congregations outside of New York and Pennsylvania pulled Joseph Smith toward Ohio, and by January 1831 he had determined to relocate all of the Saints to Kirtland.[32] Cowdery and others continued to proselytize in Jackson County, Missouri, and through their correspondence with the Mormon leadership, convinced Joseph to travel to Independence to survey the land as the future location for erecting the temple of the New Jerusalem.[33] In June 1831, Joseph made the trip with eight others including Sidney Rigdon. Upon arrival, he "may have been disappointed by the thin harvest of souls in Independence" since "only a handful had been converted," but he was nonetheless undeterred in realizing his vision for Zion in Missouri. A few days

31. Richard Lloyd Anderson, "The Impact of the First Preaching in Ohio," *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (1971): 474–94; Williams, 12.

32. Joseph Smith, revelation, January 2, 1831 [D&C 38] in *Joseph Smith Papers*, 69–75.

33. Ellsworth, 87–88.

later he declared Independence, Missouri the "center place" of Zion, designated the spot to build a temple, and made assignments—to purchase all of the land between the temple lot and the state's western boundary twelve miles to the west, begin the consecration of properties, manage inheritances of land for each Mormon family, open a store, and launch a printing press. The branch of Latter-day Saints from Colesville, New York soon arrived in Independence, forming the core group of Mormons that would later comprise the Missouri "stake" of Zion, a new ecclesiastical unit for the growing church.[34]

Two revelations received in June and August 1831 capped the conceptual frame of the gathering to Zion and the Zion project at large. Section 52 of the Doctrine and Covenants made clear the mode of proselytism and how missionaries were to gather converts to Zion. The missionaries were to travel in pairs, "preaching by the way" and "in every congregation," saying only "that which the Prophets & Apostles have written" and what "the Comforter" teaches them, "Baptizing by water" and performing the laying on of hands by the water's side. Twelve mission assignments followed, sending pairs of missionaries in every direction with the objective to "assemble yourselves together to rejoice upon the land of [Missouri], which is the Land of your inheritance."[35] Section 58 directed the missionaries further to bear "record of the land upon which the Zion of God shall stand" and to "push the people together from the ends of the Earth." These missions were not permanent; missionaries were told to return home as the Holy Spirit directed them, but not to perform the work of gathering "in haste, nor by flight, but let it be done as it shall be councelied [sic] by the Elders of the Church at the conferences." The gathering became much greater than a freelance effort among family members, a truly global enterprise: "the sound must

34. Bushman, 162–63.

35. *Joseph Smith Papers*, 147–51.

go forth from this place into all the world, & unto the uttermost parts of the Earth. [T]he gospel must be preached unto every creature, with signs following them that believe."[36]

Early Mormon missionaries appear to have internalized this conceptualization of Zion in their operative theory of mission. The object was, simply put, to physically gather Israel and the Gentiles to a central location designated by revelation as the city of Zion. At first, this meant a geographic location declared by the Mormon prophet, not in the spiritual sense of a gathering of individuals to a right way of living or to the knowledge of gospel truths. A notice sent by "the elders in the land of Zion to the church of Christ scattered abroad" through the Church's 1832–1834 periodical, *The Evening and Morning Star*, marked the commencement of "the work of the gathering" as the Mission to the Lamanites and Joseph's 1831 visit to Independence, and described the gathering in terms of immigrants and their challenges to settle in the new area. The scope of the gathering was limited to the missionaries in the field who the notice described as agents needed for conducting a well executed gathering of churches from across the nation to Missouri.[37] "We live in a great time," one article of the *Evening and Morning Star* read, "one of the most eventful periods that has ever been: it is not only the time when the captivity of Jacob's tents will return, but it is the time when the wicked and their works shall be destroyed; when the earth shall be restored to its former beauty.… yea, it is a time when the wicked can not expect to see the next generation."[38] The rest of the edition is steeped in Old Testament imagery to describe Zion's history and to forecast a pattern for the un-

36. *Joseph Smith Papers*, 167–69.

37. "The Elders in the Land of Zion to the Church of Christ Scattered Abroad," *Evening and Morning Star* 1, no. 2 (July 1832): 13.

38. "The Last Days," *Evening and Morning Star* 1, no. 9 (February 1833): 65.

folding of the last days, with references to Ezra, Jeremiah, Noah, Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Balaam, Solomon, and Ezekiel. The writers of the periodical in effect merge the Old Testament gatherings that they consider to have occurred in historical cycles with their own mission to build a kingdom of Zion in the United States. Their discourse positions the Mormon missionary within the tradition of the ancient Israelite priests who declared the covenant and gathered the faithful to the tabernacle of the Lord.[39]

Though they considered a parallel gathering of Jews to the original Jerusalem to be imminent and distinct from their own gathering to the New Jerusalem, Mormon missionaries still viewed themselves as participants in bringing to pass the restoration of the Jews. Joseph Smith called Orson Hyde in 1833 to "go to Jerusalem … and be a watchman unto the house of Israel." Through his efforts, Hyde would "do a good work, which will prepare the way and greatly facilitate the gathering together of that people." When Hyde filled his mission assignment in 1840 to dedicate the Holy Land for the gathering of the Jews, Joseph applauded the endeavor as "a great and important mission," given its significance in fulfilling ancient prophecy.[40] Mormons were just as concerned of the outcome of the Jewish migration to Jerusalem as they were of their own efforts to gather to the New Jerusalem.

Their ideal of forming a center place of Zion encountered enough challenges, however, that missionaries were forced to adapt. For one, the call to gather posed a practical problem for new converts. The costs and logistics of moving their families and acquiring new farmland inhibited mass migrations. In general, many of the missionaries' new congre-

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39. *Evening and Morning Star* 1, no. 9 (February 1833): 65–67.

40. Steven Epperson, *Mormons and Jews: Early Mormon Theologies of Israel* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 140–41.

gations remained in place with few making the move. Due to the temporary stays of the missionaries, local leadership in the newly established branches suffered, and members throughout New England and Canada made repeated requests of the Kirtland councils for more missionaries. The main body of the Latter-day Saints never fully integrated all of the disparate branches, settling for a model of gathering that allowed for a multiplicity of congregations. "While the freelance efforts of converts made for the rapid growth of the church," noted S. George Ellsworth, "the consistent gathering of whole branches to centers in Ohio and Missouri retarded the growth over what would have been achieved had there been no gathering."[41]

The more consequential factors that challenged the gathering effort involved political struggles in Jackson County which prompted Joseph Smith to organize a march of Mormon "foot soldiers" in 1834 to take back Mormon properties from Missouri mobs. "Zion's Camp" eventually dissolved when a June 1834 revelation called off the militant effort to reclaim Zion after about a hundred Mormon men had spent three months walking some two thousand miles.[42] Richard Bushman noted that this single revelation had the effect of rerouting the Zion impulse. "By making sanctification" rather than a physical gathering "the answer for Zion, the revelation united the Church's two programs: the gathering of Zion in Jackson County, and the exaltation of the Saints." The Kirtland temple under construction at the time was necessary for effecting the "endowment of power" that would sanctify the elders "to assist in gathering up the strength of the Lord's house, and proclaim the everlasting gospel."[43] Though Joseph made repeated attempts to construct a

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41. Ellsworth, 93–94, 121–46.

42. Bushman, 237, 244–47.

43. Bushman, 245.

city of Zion to which the righteous could gather, his vision never fully materialized in his lifetime, and by the time Brigham Young had effectively established a Mormon empire in Utah territory by mid-century, the pattern had evolved to include modes of colonization that only adhered to the urban layout Joseph had sketched and recognized the building of Zion as a mainly spiritual exercise.[44]

Missionaries assisted in the migrations of converts to Zion where possible, but generally held to a church-planting model for establishing Zion. Reports from the field continually emphasized the growing number of branches and stakes and over time made less mention of the numbers of convert-immigrants.[45] They had simultaneously attempted both the gathering to one location and the expansion of the church to the nations of the earth, and eventually the incongruity of this strategy caught up to them. The expansionist impulse had always motivated the Mormon missionary, though Joseph Smith had early on spoken in more elitist tones: only the "elect" would respond to the warning voice (D&C 29:7, 33:6, 35:20) and when compared to world population, the church would ultimately be small, only a "few" in number (D&C 33:4, 63:31).[46] Their success at forming new churches

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44. Craig D. Galli, "Building Zion: The Latter-day Saint Legacy of Urban Planning," *BYU Studies* 44, no. 1 (2005): 111–36.

45. *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 2, no. 4 (January 1836): 253–54; "From our Elders Abroad," *Messenger and Advocate* 2, no. 7 (April 1836): 303–04; Parley P. Pratt, "To the Editor of the Latter Day Saints Messenger and Advocate," *Messenger and Advocate* 2, no. 8 (May 1836): 317–18. Heather Howard argues that Mormon emigrants between 1854 and 1885 responded mainly to economic conditions, not religious motivations, when making the journey to join the main body of Latter-day Saints; her analysis combines the Mormon Immigration Index, financial records of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund, and early membership records to assess the economic impact on British convert migrations to the United States. She also notes the fluctuations in migration patterns, revealing a general trend away from consistent migrations. Howard, "An Economic Analysis of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund" (PhD diss., Cornell University, 2008).

46. The Book of Mormon contains a prophecy by Nephi concerning the destiny of the Church's size: "And it came to pass that I beheld the church of the Lamb of God, and its numbers were few, because of the wickedness and abominations of the whore who sat upon many waters; nevertheless, I beheld that the church of the Lamb, who were the saints of God, were also upon all the face of the earth; and their dominions upon the face of the earth were small, because of the wickedness of the great whore whom I saw" (1

and congregations reinforced the renegotiation of the Zion project as a primarily spiritual purification. Joseph himself would teach by May 1844 that the mission was to expand Zion, not centralize it, and that Mormons ought to strive for the global establishment of the kingdom of God.[47]

With the publication of the Book of Mormon and the *Book of Moses*, Joseph Smith provided Mormon missionaries with a revised sacred history that cast the religious landscape into ancient biblical imagery. While American Protestants made use of terms like "wilderness" and "Israel" as frequently as did Mormons in the nineteenth century, Mormons conceived of the two in a more ancient context.[48] The Book of Mormon not only extended the biblical connections of American peoples to the House of Israel, but linked the most ancient American inhabitants with the people at the confounding of the languages and the Tower of Babel. God drew pre-Israelites across the oceans to America to provide them a promised land, and the status of "covenant people" extended even to a people that lived before Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.[49] With the *Book of Moses*, Joseph constructed a covenant narrative that extended back to the first humans, Adam and Eve, and culminated in the City of Enoch being taken up into heaven with the promise of its return to earth at the Rapture. The people of God could be found in any generation; God's intent was to make eternal, unchanging covenants with each people. The Book of Mormon's use of Isaiah particularly highlights this emphasis on the salvation of fallen peoples, and some

Nephi 14:12).

47. David M. Morris, "The Rhetoric of the Gathering and Zion: Consistency through Change, 1831–1920," *International Journal of Mormon Studies* 1, no. 1 (2008): 154–58; William Mulder, "Mormonism's 'Gathering': An American Doctrine with a Difference," *Church History* 23, no. 3 (September 1954): 248–64.

48. William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987), 5–9.

49. I am referring here to the Jaredites who appear in the Book of Ether, particularly chapters 1–4.

have argued that the ominous warnings of the collapse of Nephite civilization is a central theme of the book and a plea for society to return as a people to Christian faith.[50] Mormons imbued the wilderness metaphor with exilic significance: they imagined themselves as children of Israel seeking to follow their prophet toward Zion and away from godlessness. The revelation calling for the march that became Zion's Camp referred to Joseph as a modern-day Moses who would lead the "the children of Israel, and of the seed of Abraham" to redeem Zion.[51] The exodus to Utah beginning in 1846 cemented this identity into the Mormon pioneer worldview; they literally journeyed through the American wilderness under the direction of a prophet and made of a desert wasteland a mountain home with even batallions (like the armies of Pharoah descending upon the children of Israel) in pursuit at times.

William McLellin provided perhaps the most detailed missionary diaries of early 1830s Mormonism which contain not only his own personal descriptions of his missionary thought but also that of influential missionaries like his companions Samuel Smith and Parley Pratt.[52] During several missionary journeys between 1831 and 1836, McLellin recorded his various preaching engagements, sometimes before large congregations numbered in the hundreds, that manifest a discursive appropriation of the mission theory

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50. George D. Smith, "Isaiah Updated," chap. 9 in *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture*, ed. Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 122–23; Jennifer Clark Lane, "The Lord Will Redeem His People: Adoptive Covenant and Redemption in the Old Testament and Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2, no. 2 (Fall 1993): 39–62; Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader's Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 7–8; Hugh Nibley, *Prophetic Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 498–530; James E. Smith, "How Many Nephites? The Book of Mormon at the Bar of Demography," chap. 10 in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997).

51. *Joseph Smith Papers*, 355–61 [D&C 103].

52. John W. Welch, "The Acts of the Apostle William E. McLellin," in *The Journals of William E. McLellin: 1831–1836*, ed. Jan Shipps and John W. Welch (Provo: BYU Studies, Brigham Young University Press; Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 13.

articulated by Joseph Smith months prior. One of the themes that most permeates his missionary journals is the gathering of Zion, and his record is replete with demonstrations of how the early Mormon missionaries put their theory into practice. He joined the Church a month after Joseph Smith received the July 1831 revelation designating Jackson County as a gathering place of Zion and described his own conversion as a longing "to live among a people who were based upon pure principles."[53] Within days, McLellin attended a conference in which Hyrum Smith and Edward Partridge ordained him an elder, and he began proselytizing less than a week later. Before a "numerous concourse of [about 500] people," McLellin and Smith "arose with confidence in Elijah's God" to preach the Book of Mormon and warned "them to flee from the wrath to come and gather themselves to Zion and prepare to meet the Lord at his second coming which was nigh at hand."[54]A year and a half later on a mission with Parley Pratt, McLellin reiterated this warning, urging Missourians to "flee to Zion and save their souls."[55] One of his methods involved seeking "candidates for Zion." McLellin wrote that a convert named John Scott had been "thoroughly convinced now of the truths which you preach and Just as soon as I can settle my business I shall remove to Zion." In connection with the directive in Doctrine and Covenants Section 72 to issue recommends to church members to gather to Zion, McLellin noted in 1834 that four of his converts received official recommends to go to Missouri.[56]

The missionary in McLellin's journals situates himself in an environment of misguided Christians in need of the Book of Mormon and the protections of Zion. He described

53. William E. McLellin, journal, August 20, 1831 in *Journals of William E. McLellin*, 33–34.

54. McLellin, September 10, 1831; *Journals of William E. McLellin*, 39.

55. McLellin, February 15, 1833; *Journals of William E. McLellin*, 94.

56. William G. Hartley, "The McLellin Journals and Early Mormon History," in *Journals of William E. McLellin*, 271–72.

a seeking for a "people" of God, a truly Christian society in which the ideals of the Bible would come to fulfillment. In practical terms, baptisms and relocations to Zion occurred one individual at a time, but the missionaries, nonetheless, maintained a scope of warning whole peoples. Theirs was biblical space, the landscape of America imbued with ancient covenantal significance. A September 1832 article in the *Evening and Morning Star* spoke of "The Jews": "The great day is hastening on when the whole house of Israel will be gathered home from their long dispersion, to Zion and Jerusalem. The United States is a witness to the gathering at Mount Zion, if her population will look at things as they are."[57] Another article published a month later outlined the Bible's depiction of the scattering and restoration of the "ten lost tribes," covering Old Testament prophecies of Ahijah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Ezra, and seamlessly integrating Book of Mormon prophecies in 3 Nephi throughout. The Prodigal Son parable took on significance as a prophecy of the gathering of Israel; the older son represented the Gentiles, and the Prodigal represented Israel falling away and eventually returning.

> For when the younger son came to himself, and said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, who can mistake our day? who, with the love of Jesus Christ in his heart, can view the thousands of meeting houses, chapels, temples and churches, thronged with men, eager to preach; and witness the missionaries sending some to India, some to Africa, some to New Holland, some to one place and some to another; printing the bible in every tongue and language, and blending almost every means on earth with religion,—can mistake the day in which this parable is fulfilled?[58]

Early missionaries identified themselves as "Gentiles" sent to gather the elect which they understood to be remnants of the scattered tribes of Israel. The Bible spoke of the first one day being last and the last being first, which for them meant that the ancient

57. "The Jews," *Evening and Morning Star* 1, no. 4 (September 1832): 67.

58. "The Ten Tribes," *Evening and Morning Star* 1, no. 5 (October 1832): 33–34.

ministry of Christ's original apostles moved out from the tribe of Judah and Israel to the Gentile and that their time was when God had "set his hand the second time to recover Israel." This second time reversed the movement; the Gentiles would receive the gospel through the Book of Mormon and deliver it to Israel, thus gathering the elect into one. Eliel Strong wrote in a March 1833 letter of his mission to Pennsylvania during which he had preached "the word, and blessed by the name of the Lord … insomuch that some who were sick was healed, and some spake with tongues and glorified God," and baptized forty-five, some of whom had "set out for the land of Zion." Strong rejoiced "that the time has come, that the Lord has set his hand again the second time to gather his elect," and "that we, as Gentiles, have the privilege of receiving the light manifested for their restoration." He and his companion Eleazar Miller longed

> to see the time when we can see the tribes of Israel's remnants, coming up to Zion with songs of everlasting joy; we long to see the time when Jacob's face will no longer wax pale; when the bride shall be adorned and ready for the Bridegroom; and finally, we long to see the time, when Jesus shall come in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, and be admired by all his saints.[59]

Millenarianism

Missionaries' rationale for gathering converts to Zion was rooted in their eschatological expectations of Christ's thousand-year reign on earth. They felt an urgency to separate the wheat from the tares before a burning of the wicked would usher in the millennial age. As a consequence, missionary discourse in the 1830s brimmed with apocalyptic imagery. The earliest revelations touched on the harvest metaphor and increased in eschatological intensity over time. A revelation received probably just prior to Cowdery's missionary call to the Lamanites in September 1830 explained the necessity for gathering as a protective

59. Eliel Strong, "Extract of a Letter," *The Evening and Morning Star* 1, no. 12 (May 1833): 95.

measure for the righteous to escape tribulation: "ye are called to bring to pass the gethering of mine Elect, for mine Elect hear my voice & harden not their hearts[;] they shall be gethered in unto one place upon the face of this land to prepare their Hearts & be prepared in all things against the day when tribulation & desolation are sent forth upon the wicked." The revelation claimed no other alternatives besides gathering to Zion for escaping the calamities. "The hour is nigh & the day is soon at hand [that] I will burn them up saith the Lord of hosts."[60] The revelation had only just begun to detail the end of the world and the gathering effort—the warning to flee continued in more graphic and frightening tones. "I will reveal myself from Heaven with Power & great glory," the voice of the Lord says, and "dwell … with men on Earth a thousand years." This revealing of God to the "wicked world" would be a vengeful outpouring of wrath. "Behold my blood shall not cleanse them if they hear me not." A horde of flies and maggots following "a great hailstorm sent forth to destroy the Crops of the Earth" would cause the flesh of those that refuse to repent to "fall from off their Bones & their eyes from their sockets," and "Beasts of the forest & the fowls of the air shall devour them up." The "devouring fire" prophesied by Ezekiel would consume the earth, and a "New Heaven & a New Earth" would replace all "old things." Only two groups of people would appear before God in judgment—those that had gathered and were found on his right hand, and those that had not gathered. "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil & his Angels," God would say to those found at his left.[61]

Parley P. Pratt, considered by some historians the "father of Mormon pamphleteering" and perhaps the most prolific missionary of the nineteenth century, employed the

60. *Joseph Smith Papers*, 43–45 [D&C 29].

61. *Joseph Smith Papers*, 45–47.

same apocalyptic images in his first pamphlet, *A Short Account of a Shameful Outrage*, published in 1835.[62] "That which most immediately concerns this generation is the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," Pratt described as part of his missionary sermon to citizens of Mentor, Ohio. "And he is soon to make his personal appearance in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, taking vengeance on all those who know not God, and who obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ." The terrible judgments of which the Bible predicted were "soon to take place or be poured out upon the heads of this generation, even those who reject his words and turn a deaf ear to the voice of his servants." Pratt imagined himself as one sent by God "to warn the people of this place to repent of all of their wickedness, and be baptized for a remission of their sins in his name, that they might receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, as in days of old, and be numbered with the house of Israel." He continued with a list of signs that would confirm the coming of Christ in the cloud, including "pestilences, famines, wars, earthquakes in divers places and distress of nations with perplexity." During all of this, the Saints would gather to Zion. Ultimately, the archangel would sound the trump, the graves of the Saints would be opened, and Babylon would be burned with the rocks and mountains falling down and the valleys raising up in a majestic display of God's wrath.[63]

Pratt's most important missionary publication, and the most influential nineteenth-century noncanonical work of Mormonism, *A Voice of Warning* continued this apocalyp-

62. Peter J. Crawley, "Parley P. Pratt: Father of Mormon Pamphleteering," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15, no. 3 (1982): 27–41; Whittaker, "Early Mormon Pamphleteering," 58; Peter J. Crawley, *Descriptive Bibliography*, 26.

63. Parley P. Pratt, *A Short Account of a Shameful Outrage, Committed by a Part of the Inhabitants of the Town of Mentor, upon the Person of Elder Parley P. Pratt: While Delivering a Public Discourse Upon the Subject of the Gospel; April 7th, 1835* (Kirtland: Messenger and Advocate Press, 1835), 7–8.

ticism as a core theme.[64] After thoroughly exploring the organizational structure of the New Testament church and defending such as a prophesied pattern for Christ's millennial kingdom, Pratt mourns the pre-millennial environment in which he finds himself. "Were we to take a view of the churches, from the days that Inspiration ceased, until now, we should see nothing like the kingdom which we have been viewing.… O my God, shut up the vision, for my heart sickens while I gaze; and let the day hasten on when the earth shall be cleansed by fire, from such awful pollutions." He pleads for God to fulfill his ancient promise to "call thy people out of [the world]; saying, come out of her my people, lest ye partake of her sins, and receive of her plagues." Pratt imagines "fishers and hunters" to call God's people whom "thou hast promised to send in the last days, just in time to gather Israel; yea, when thine everlasting covenant has been renewed and thy people established thereon." He exults in the destruction of the wicked once the righteous have had their chance to gather to Zion: "then let her plagues come in one day, death, mourning, and famine, and let her be burned with fire."[65]

Missionary millennialist discourse went beyond only warning the world that the "sky is falling" by situating the eschatological basis for mission within their theory of gathering and restoration. The gathering was the means by which the restoration of the ancient order of things would be accomplished, and they understood this restoration as a requisite sign that must occur or be in full thrust before the Second Coming. A letter from missionaries Wilford Woodruff and Jonathan Hale, who had been proselytizing in the Fox Islands near Portland, Maine, illustrates how missionaries interwove the elements of eschatology,

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64. Peter J. Crawley in *The Essential Parley P. Pratt* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), xvi.

65. Parley P. Pratt, *A Voice of Warning and Instruction to All People, Containing a Declaration of the Faith and Doctrine of the Church of the Latter Day Saints, Commonly Called Mormons* (New York: W. Sandford, 1837), 119–20.

gathering, and restoration to mutually support each as a basis for mission. Printed in the first issue of the 1830s periodical *The Elders' Journal* which had aimed to publish missionary reports from the field, the letter went from outlining the missionaries' travels to suddenly ridiculing the "Baptist priest" and "his Methodist brother" for crying against the Book of Mormon. "O ye priests of Baal, your cry is in vain; the God of Israel has set his hand the second time to recover his people.… The Lord is calling his church out of the wilderness with her gifts and graces and restoring her judges as at the first." Woodruff and Hale understood their missionary presence in new areas like Maine, and the news of Mormonism reaching Europe for the first time, as signs that the "horns of Joseph are beginning to push the people together." The triumphant return of Christ followed the mutual fulfillment of the restoration of Israel to American Zion and to ancient Jerusalem, and the gathering effort that was to occur in the latter days.

> And the weapon that is formed against Zion shall soon be broken. And he that raises his puny arm against it is fighting against God and shall soon mourn because of his loss. We say these things are true as God liveth and the spirit beareth record and the record is true and vengeance will be speedily executed upon an evil work in these last days; therefore, O Babylon thy fall is sure.[66]

Other Mormon missionaries viewed the American landscape in similar terms and adopted a practice they referred to as "bearing down in testimony against" their audience as a last resort of their proselytism. As early as 1831 in one of the first missionary diaries to appear in Mormonism, Hyrum Smith emphasized moments of bearing testimony "against [listeners] to [their] own Distruction if [they] Deed not repent."[67] In 1836,

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66. Wilford Woodruff and Jonathan Hale, "To Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Church of Latter day Saints in Kirtland, Greeting," *Elders' Journal* 1, no. 1 (October 1837): 3; William Mulder, "Mormonism's 'Gathering': An American Doctrine with a Difference," *Church History* 23, no. 3 (September 1954): 248–53.

67. Hyrum Smith, journal, December 19, 1831; December 26, 1831. A transcription of the journal from the Harold B. Lee Library Special Collections at Brigham Young University notes this journal is their earliest missionary diary, 30fn1; available through Mormon Missionary Diaries, Digital Collections, http://www.lib.byu.edu/dlib/mmd/.

Abraham Smoot noted how he and his companion Wilford Woodruff levied a barrage of testimonies against virtually everyone in their path: "[we] bore our testimony to God against those who rejected the Gospel … namely the Benton County mob … also against the inhabitants of Paris.… Again against the Academy Branch … also against the people of Bloodriver and Dresden … likewise against Mr. Gilbot's neighborhood … and against Brother Crider's vicinity we bore our testimony for their abominations and unbelief in the oracls [sic] of God."[68] A revelation in July 1830 had told Oliver Cowdery to "leave a cursing instead of a blessing" on those that would not receive his declaration of the gospel message by "casting off the dust of your feet against them as a testimony & cleansing your feet by the wayside."[69] Later, in August 1831, another revelation provided more instruction to missionaries who would "preach in the congregations of the wicked." They were to "shake off the dust of thy feet against those who receive thee not, not in their presence, lest thou provoke them, but in secret & wash thy feet as a testimony against them, In the day of Judgement."[70] The missionaries understood this ritual as their indemnification before God for the consequent judgment that would befall rejectors. By cleansing their feet, they felt more than cleared of any responsibility should an individual or city be consumed at the Second Coming—the ritual literally qualified them to stand as judges in the final judgment. A revelation directed to the largest gathering of Mormon missionaries before the January 1831 Amherst Conference advised, "in whatsoever house ye enter, & they receive you not, shake off the dust of your feet as a testimony against them: & you shall be filled

68. Abraham O. Smoot, journal, October 12, 1836; other similar episodes appear in entries for February 5, 1836; May 17, 1836; and April 6, 1838.

69. *Joseph Smith Papers*, 37 [D&C 24].

70. *Joseph Smith Papers*, 175 [D&C 60].

with Joy & gladness." Know this, it continued, "that in the day of Judgement you shall be Judges of that house, & condemn them." In the final accounting, it would be more tolerable for "the heathen … than for that house."[71] Another revelation in September 1832 connected the ritual to the commission "to reprove the world … and to teach them of a Judgment which is to come." The revelation promises that God will scourge any city or village upon which the missionaries have left this ritual testimony at the last day.[72]

Bearing down in testimony against rejectors, washing their feet in a ritual ordinance, and speaking in apocalyptic tones all reinforced their missionary identity as final servants in the vineyard and their message as the last word in any religious discussion. The import of the feet-cleansing ritual had everything to do with their perceived timeframe of the missionaries' work. The September 1832 revelation placed the ritual inside of an accelerating collision course with the end times, when the Lord would "cut short" his work and suddenly destroy the wicked. Missionaries generally recorded their own observances of feet-washing as occurring after tense debates or angry rejection. Samuel Smith washed his feet against an innkeeper in mid-1830 after being turned out for evangelizing the Book of Mormon in a tavern.[73] An irate minister accused Hyrum Smith of being a false prophet, prompting Smith to wash his feet in September 1831.[74] William McLellin washed his feet against a congregation of Campbellites after they voted to silence the Mormon mission-

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71. *Joseph Smith Papers,* 235 [D&C 75].

72. *Joseph Smith Papers*, 285 [D&C 84].

73. Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and his Progenitors for many Generations* (Liverpool: Orson Pratt and S. W. Richards), 152.

74. McLellin, journal, September 9, 1831; *Journals of William E. McLellin*, 38.

aries.[75] Scores of other missionaries[76] continued this practice until the First Presidency directed mission president Ben E. Rich in 1899 to discontinue the "business of wholesale washing of feet," including recording observances in personal diaries or speaking of it in correspondence.[77]

A general adjustment in Mormon millenarianism accounts for a decline in missionary emphasis on the end of the world. Missionary tracts increasingly functioned as public sparrings over doctrine, particularly due to the success and influence of Parley Pratt's literary methods. All Mormon tract publications of 1843, for instance, emphasized the defense of Mormonism as a valid religion, with such titles as *A Few Important Questions for the Reverent Clergy to Answer*, *Mormonism Consistent!*, and *The Spaulding Story Concerning the Origin of the Book of Mormon*.[78] Joseph Smith admitted in 1843 to praying

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75. McLellin, journal, November 18, 1831; *Journals of William E. McLellin*, 47.

76. Among the many who performed missionary feet-washing: Lyman Wight, John Corrill, John Murdock, Luke S. Johnson, Orson Hyde, Orson Pratt, David W. Patten, Brigham Young, and Thomas B. Marsh. See John Murdock, autobiography, typescript, Harold B. Lee Library Special Collections Manuscript Collection [MSS SC 997], 23; Lucy Smith, 478–79; *Journals of William E. McLellin*, 72, 182–83, 189–90.

77. George Reynolds, letter to Ben E. Rich, March 11, 1899; typescript in Scott G. Kenney Collection, "People" series, box 2, folder 11, J. Willard Marriott Library Special Collections, University of Utah. "I am directed by the First Presidency to say in reply to your favor that the business of the wholesale washing of feet, &c should not be indulged in by the elders. If an Elder feels that he has just cause and is moved upon by the Spirit of God to wash his feet against a person or persons who have violently or wickedly rejected the truth, let him do so quietly and beyond noting it in his journal let him not make it public. Nothing should be published in the *Southern Star* or else-where on this subject. Elders should be privately instructed and should let the matter rest between them, the Lord, and the persons concerned."

78. William I. Appleby, *A Few Important Questions for the Reverent Clergy to Answer, Being a Scale to Weigh Priestcraft and Sectarianism In* (Philadelphia: Brown, Bicking and Guilpert, 1843); Appleby, *Mormonism Consistent! Truth Vindicated, and Falsehood Exposed and Refuted: Being a Reply to A. H. Wickersham* (Wilmington: Porter and Neff, 1843); James Colin Brewster, *Very Important: To the Mormon Money Diggers* (Springfield, 1843); Noah Packard, *Political and Religious Detector: In Which Millerism is Exposed, False Principles Detected, and the Truth Brought to Light* (Medina: Michael Hayes, 1843); John E. Page, *Keep it Constantly Before the Public, that Eternal Life is the Knowledge of God, by Direct Revelation* (n.p., 1843); Page, *The Spaulding Story Concerning the Origin of the Book of Mormon, Duly Examined and Exposed to the Righteous Contempt of a Candid Public* (Pittsburgh, 1843); Joseph Smith Jr., *General Joseph Smith's Appeal to the Green Mountain Boys, December, 1843* (Nauvoo: Taylor and Woodruff, 1843); Thomas Ward, *On the False Prophets of the Last Days* (Liverpool: T. Ward, 1843); Ward, *Why do you not obey the Gospel?* (Liverpool: James and Woodburn, 1843); Benjamin Winchester, *A History of the Priesthood from the Beginning of the World to the Present Time, Written in Defense of the Doctrine and Position of*

fervently to know the "time of the coming of the Son of Man," but felt constrained by "a voice" to "trouble [God] no more on" the matter. He figured the Second Coming would not occur until at least 1890, but still deflected any concrete conclusion or timeframe.[79] Nevertheless, apocalypticism largely continued in Mormon rhetoric. It was not until mission administration became more consolidated and less freelanced that the theoretical basis of the Second Coming began to wane. International factors affected the long-term effort to gather to Zion, and as missionaries succeeded in gaining visibility for the Church, the need to address public controversy increased. By the late 1830s, missionaries began to emphasize "first principles" of belief in the Book of Mormon and Mormonism's restoration of primitive Christianity, repentance, and baptism. Coupled with their publishing strategy to answer critics, this simplification of presented doctrines became standard fare. Grand Underwood suggested that the rise of modernism diluted millenarian intensity, especially as Mormonism came of age in the twentieth century. Missionary literature reflects the seeds of that development, as the emphasis of using rationality, empiricism, and "science" to prove Mormonism replaced the impulse to sound the warning voice.[80]

The theoretical combination of millenarianism and mission was by no means original to Mormon missionaries. During the formative period of American foreign missions in the early nineteenth century, "millennial imagery was frequently invoked … especially

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the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and also a Brief Treatise upon the Fundamental Sentiments, Particularly those which Distinguish the Above Society from Others Now Extant (Philadelphia: Brown, Bicking, and Guilbert, 1843).

79. D&C Section 130.

80. Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 220–21; Underwood, *Millenarian World of Early Mormonism*, Epilogue; Ellsworth, 232–34; Whittaker, 67–68, 71–79; Barbara McFarlane Higdon, "The Role of Preaching in the Early Latter Day Saint Church, 1830–1846" (PhD diss., University of Missouri, 1961), 217–29.

during missionary society meetings and missionary ordinations."[81] American missionaries integrated millennial enthusiasm into foreign missions, some with highly systematic conceptualizations that involved dispensational timetables and biblical chronologies to predict, or at least, presage eschatological events. John Livingston's address to the New York Missionary Society in 1804 linked the angel who flies through the heavens "proclaiming the everlasting gospel" in Revelation 14 with foreign-bound missionaries.[82] Livingston was not the first to make this connection, but he was the first to include foreign mission into his chronology.[83] This eschatological frame served as a catalyst for missionary societies that organized soon after Livingston's address, including the largest enterprise of the time, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.[84]

American missionaries held polarizing eschatological views, though, which contributed to a widening field of theoretical and theological discourse that accepted millennialism as a factor of mission. On one hand, literalists expected a millennial age to dawn at the sudden appearance of Christ to the world, but even they agreed with figurativists that missionary work was incapable of ushering in this age through human activity. The *American Millenarian and Prophetic Review* expressed, "we pray that the angel of his presence may go along with the devoted missionary, to succour, encourage, and prosper him," but having "no promise that [Christ] will convert the nations by our agency, we pray for that which he had promised—his speedy coming and kingdom, and the salvation of all

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81. Richard Lee Rogers, "'A Bright and New Constellation': Millennial Narratives and the Origins of American Foreign Missions," in *North American Foreign Missions, 1810–1914: Theology, Theory, and Policy*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 39.

82. John Livingston, *A Sermon Delivered before the New York Missionary Society at their Annual Meeting, April 3, 1804* (Worcester: Thomas and Stuyvesant, 1807).

83. Rogers, 45fn16.

84. Rogers, 45.

the ends of the earth in his own time and mode."[85] Literalist theologies of the apocalypse tended to foster an antimissionary stance, particularly evidenced by figures like Alexander Campbell and marginal groups like the Millerites and communitarians. Campbell criticized missionary society organizers for engaging in what he called "religious showmanship," though he felt the restoration of the "ancient order of things" depended on human activity. Millerites and communitarian groups emphasized withdrawing from society due in major part to their eschatological framework.[86]

Part of the unique developments of Mormon mission theory involved their simultaneous reinforcement of engaging in domestic and foreign mission, withdrawing from the world into a Zion society, and maintaining a decidedly promissionary sentiment. The Mormon missionary identified himself as both a figure in bringing to pass the gathering that would "cut short the Lord's work" and as an agent for accommodating a mass withdrawal of converts to Zion. This eschatological mission that held a strong pre-millennial outlook set apart Mormon missionaries from the American missionary milieu.

Missionary Officers

"During his preparations to leave for Ohio," observed Mark Staker, "Joseph Smith learned in revelation that while in Ohio the Lord would 'give unto you my law; and there you shall be endowed with power from on high; And from thence, … go forth among all nations.' When Joseph first arrived in Kirtland, he came expecting a promised endowment from on high that would initiate missionary work." After Joseph had arrived at

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85. *American Millenarian and Prophetic Review*, November 1, 1843; Rogers, 45–46.

86. B. H. Carroll Jr., *The Genesis of Anti-Missionism* (Louisville: Baptist Book Concern, 1902), 124–55; Rogers, 46.

Kirtland, the Ohio converts still anticipated more of an outpouring of heavenly power though many reports of divine healings and speaking in tongues had surfaced.[87] What added to their quandaries about priesthood authority was confusion over the connections between their former Campbellite thought on the "ancient order of things" and Mormonism's claims to the gifts of the spirit and the restoration of a "new priesthood." Another factor "prompted Joseph Smith to seek additional inspiration and understanding of priesthood: … Campbell's arrival in Ohio to attack [the Book of Mormon] in person."[88] Within months, Joseph responded with several revelations that fleshed out the ecclesiastical structure and theology of priesthood that not only added a new and strong administrative layer to the Mormon movement, but also propelled mission work with new tactical forms of engagement and organization.[89]

At a four-day conference of elders in June 1831, Joseph introduced the "high priesthood" and began a series of ordinations that firmly established a precedent of directing missionary work *through* channels of priesthood authority. Joseph prefaced the ordinations with a long sermon that at one point prophesied how "John the Revelator was then among the ten tribes of Israel … to prepare them for their return." He implied that this conference of elders would initiate a similar work of gathering Israel, and explained that the missionaries "would leave immediately after the conference to begin their work," invoking the parable of the mustard seed to describe how their efforts would culminate in

87. Mark Lyman Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People: The Historical Setting of Joseph Smith's Ohio Revelations* (Draper: Greg Kofford Books, 2009), 147; D&C 38:32–33.

88. Staker, 150–51.

89. Staker, 155–67; Larry C. Porter, "The Restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods," *Ensign* 26, no. 12 (December 1996): 30–47; see also D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994) and Prince, *Power from on High,* for an extended discussion on this development of Mormon ecclesiology.

the gospel reaching the whole earth.[90] Ezra Booth remembered that after this sermon, Joseph laid hands on Lyman Wight and ordained him "to the High Priesthood … and to the gift of tongues, healing the sick, casting out Devils, and discerning spirits," and "set [him] apart for the service of the Indians."[91] Minutes of the conference recorded over forty-four elders in attendance along with fifteen teachers and four priests, using the ecclesiastical categories spelled out in the Articles and Covenants written and sustained by the general church body the year before.[92]

Joseph continued to amplify his ecclesiology and theology of priesthood throughout the Kirtland period. At one of the most critical conferences of the early church for missionary work in which "a new period of missionary activity" was inaugurated at Amherst, Ohio, Joseph assigned twelve pairs of elders to disperse into all directions in connection with the sustaining of himself as President of the High Priesthood.[93] These missionaries reached all the states of New England, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Missouri, Indiana, Illinois, and Canada within the next year and a half, setting up congregations while preaching primarily of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, their authority as members of the priesthood to baptize and ordain others, and the gathering to Zion.[94] In September of that year, Joseph received a revelation on priesthood that linked two priesthoods to the Bible, one Levitical priesthood "after the order of Aaron" and another "after

90. Staker, 158.

91. Ezra Booth, "Mormonism—No. IV," *Ohio Star* 2, no. 44 (November 3, 1831): 3.

92. Staker, 157.

93. Ellsworth, 105–06; Bushman, 202.

94. Ellsworth, 106–14.

the order of Melchizedek."[95] Like their biblical narrative that located the covenant peoples of the God within a genealogy that stretched back past the Israelites to the patriarchs and Adam and Eve, this revelation constructed a lineage of priesthood teeming with ancient biblical characters: Jeremy, Gad, Esaias, Abraham, Melchizedek, Noah, Enoch, Abel, Adam, and a host of others. In effect, Joseph had embedded the Saints "in an order of priests going back through time, part of an ancient brotherhood."[96] No longer did baptism stand out as a requisite for salvation, but baptism performed in the authoritative and millennia-old tradition of ordained priests of various classes. Joseph also declared the necessity for additional ordinances which he understood as extensions of Old Testament temple rituals, such as washings, anointings, and sealings patterned after the consecration of priests. Mormon elders not only felt drawn to a general ordination to priesthood before preaching, like Parley Pratt described of his own ordination and first Mormon mission in 1830, but now participated in a communal, ritualistic expression of commending each other to the work of gathering.[97] By 1836, members of the priesthood would perform washings and anointings on each other in the Kirtland temple as part of declaring covenants to engage in missionary work. "The priesthood doctrines opened a ritual world that Protestantism, with its emphasis on preaching, had closed off. Joseph's temple ordinances had the spirit of Roman Catholic practices but resembled even more the rituals of ancient

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95. D&C 84.

96. Bushman, 202–3.

97. Pratt remembered: "After which I was ordained to the office of an Elder in the Church, which included authority to preach, baptize, administer the sacrament, administer the Holy Spirit, by the laying on of hands in the name of Jesus Christ, and to take the lead of meetings of worship. I now felt that I had authority in the ministry. On the next Sabbath I preached to a large concourse of people, assembled at the house of a Mr. Burroughs. The Holy Ghost came upon me mightily. I spoke the word of God with power, reasoning out of the Scriptures and the Book of Mormon. The people were convinced, overwhelmed in tears, and four heads of families came forward, expressing their faith, and were baptized." *Autobiography*, 43.

Israel."[98]

A June 1829 revelation had promised the selection of twelve disciples by Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer who would take upon themselves the name of Christ and would be "called to declare [the] gospel, both unto Gentile and unto Jew."[99] By the time the "twelve traveling counsellors … called to be the twelve apostles" were organized into a quorum in 1835, the "standing high councils, at the stakes of Zion" and "the high council in Zion" had also received jurisdiction over the gathering effort. The high councils oversaw the cities of Zion, the apostles governed the mission field. A bishopric presided over the Aaronic Priesthood and primarily managed the property in Zion as part of a communal project of consecrating properties to the Church. When calling the Twelve Apostles, Joseph prescribed a revelation extending "down through the ranks" the "blending of priesthood and administrative authority … to the extremities of the Church." A stratum of priesthood officers now comprised the whole male membership of the Church, ranging from the First Presidency of the High Priesthood down to the deacon of the Aaronic Priesthood, with apostles, seventies, and elders in between.[100]

No missionary now operated outside of a defined priesthood office, and each derived his authority from a hierarchical chain of ordination. The administrative duties prescribed to the Apostleship were entirely missional. The 1835 revelation on priesthood distinguished the apostles from seventies by their commission to be "special witnesses of Christ in all the world" whereas the Seventy were to be "especial witnesses *unto the Gentiles* and in all the world." The relationship between the quorums came to mean that the Twelve

98. Bushman, 205.

99. D&C 18:26–38.

100. Bushman, 258–59.

held authority to direct and take the gospel anywhere and independently of other offices while the Seventy worked under the direction of the Twelve and had a specific responsibility to serve foreign missions; before the 1940s, elders more often filled domestic missions.[101]

The aftermath of the Amherst Conference missions left dozens of scattered branches throughout the United States and Canada where missionaries had assumed almost all of the ecclesiastical and preaching duties. A consequent shift occurred in which the periodic convention of meetings called a "conference" became the designation for a geographic ecclesiastical unit abroad in the mission field. Zion's Camp had drawn upon missionaries in the field to such an extent that the conferences suffered—one branch in Vermont wrote to the church periodical *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* in December 1834, "We want … some faithful preacher to labor with us, and stir up our minds by way of remembrance."[102] The first mission of the Twelve came about after Zion's Camp disbanded and council meetings addressed the languishing state of the scattered branches. The Twelve resolved to issue notices in the *Messenger and Advocate* that a series of conference gatherings would convene among the churches in the Eastern States. "All other conferences, heretofore appointed, with few exceptions were to be recalled."[103] Throughout the rest of the year, the Twelve traveled to the various conferences and regulated the congregations through ordinations, training, preaching, and other administrative resolutions. Along the

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101. D&C 107:23–25; James N. Baumgarten, "The Role and Function of the Seventies in LDS Church History" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1960), 38, 42; William G. Hartley, "The Seventies in the 1880s: Revelations and Reorganizing," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 16, no. 1 (1983): 62–63.

102. *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 3 (December, 1834): 46. Other similar requests were published in *Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 3 (December 1834): 43–46; 1, no. 4 (January 1835): 61–64; 1, no. 5 (February 1835): 75–76; *Evening and Morning Star* 2, no. 24 (September 1834); Ellsworth, 143–44.

103. Ellsworth, 156–58.

way, they stopped to proselytize, “holding forth to [the] people this important truth, that the Son of Man will appear to this generation” and called “upon them to repent and prepare for the day.” This “peculiar” mission to the east established the administrative function of the Twelve over mission work that only increased in oversight over time.[104] Two years before Joseph Smith’s death, he increased the authority of the apostles over directing the missions of the Church, and the system of using geographic units for organizing and administering missionary work became standardized, continuing into the twenty-first century.[105]

This theoretical realignment of missionary qualifications directly impacted the decline of voluntaristic structures for mission work and the increased centralization and systematization of Mormon mission. From 1835 on, Mormon missionaries conceived of their authority in highly detailed priesthood terms, and could even point to a recorded lineage of ordination directly extending to the New Testament apostles and further back to Adam, as well as an official ministerial certificate that they could present to the world as evidence of their priesthood calling to administer ordinances and preach the gospel. The non-qualification described in the February 1829 revelation to Joseph Smith Sr.—“if ye have desires to serve God, ye are called to the work”—had evolved into a complex history and genealogy of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, seventies, and elders. It had become no longer appropriate to declare repentance without an ordained office to speak for one’s authority, and many missionaries would challenge other preachers on the grounds of priestly authority. They not only believed they had God’s blessing to proselytize and warn the nations, but that such was essential for any and all mission work. This theoretical loca-

104. Ellsworth, 160–67; *Messenger and Advocate* 2, no. 13 (October 1835): 204–7.

105. Whittaker, “Missiology and Mormon Missions,” 462–66.

tion of priesthood authority within Mormon missiology has endured to the present. The Church continues to issue ministerial certificates to all full-time missionaries signed by the current President of the High Priesthood which explicitly affirm the "duly ordained" status of the missionary as a representative of Jesus Christ to the world.[106]

The ecclesiology of Mormon mission made their theoretical basis of authority distinct among American mission societies. In general, the societies considered their main objective the funding of foreign missions, and their structure reflected a more "business-like" relationship between officers. A board or council would hold conferences in which sermons would be delivered, plans and strategies would be implemented, and missionaries would receive ordinations. Many societies corresponded with the civic leadership, taking on an explicit cosmopolitan outlook and management style. Even so, missionary calls remained almost entirely individual: missionaries responded to an inner call which they believed came from God, and then offered themselves to ministerial service as missionaries. Most of the time, they called upon the societies for financial and material support, not for authority to preach the gospel; the Holy Spirit and the word of God brought them into the authoritative tradition of the apostles.[107] Mormons on the other hand received no financial support from their quorums, but valued a proselytism "without purse or scrip." Ill and feeble, Wilford Woodruff made an attempt to start off on a mission, but, collapsing, stopped to rest near the banks of the Mississippi in 1839 when Joseph Smith suddenly approached. Woodruff wrote in his journal, "'Well, Brother Woodruff,' said he, 'you have started on your mission.' 'Yes,' said I, 'but I feel and look more like a subject for the dis-

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106. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "Missionary Ministerial Certificate—Elder, English," no. 31962 001 (Salt Lake City: Intellectual Reserve, 1995), in my possession; see also Maxine Hanks, *Women and Authority: Re-emerging Mormon Feminism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 322–24.

107. Chaney, 101–28.

secting room than a missionary.' Joseph replied: 'What did you say that for? Get up and go along; all will be right with you!'"[108] Joseph's send-off illustrates the ethic of missionary sacrifice that Mormons prized. They saw the directive to rely completely on God's providence in the New Testament and sought to reflect that as a missionary duty. With their multidimensional mission structure as a source and evidence of their authority and the absence of material and financial support from mission bodies or councils, Mormons carved out a missiology with distinct practical tools unique to them that proved to endure and revitalize their mission effort over time. Organizational adjustments came, but the main theoretical understanding of how mission through priesthood and ecclesiastical lines was to be carried out has remained one of the most dominant features of their overall mission theory.

The Kirtland period saw the development of Mormon mission theory that contributed an enduring foundation for Mormon mission for the rest of the nineteenth century. Mormon missionaries derived their motivations from a millennial expectation of doomsday and sensed that their neighbors would either gather and escape destruction or reject their message and await the wrath of God. Their identity as Gentiles who had received the latter-day word of God in fulfillment of ancient prophecy secured for them an ancient history in which they felt connected to all of the biblical prophets. Their mission involved physical migration as the means for achieving the end, which was the restoration of the lost tribes of Israel to Zion, and even anticipated the restoration of the Jews to the land of their ancient inheritance, Jerusalem. Repentance and baptism were linked to their apocalypticism: by submitting to an authoritative ordinance put into effect by duly ordained

108. Wilford Woodruff, *Leaves from My Journal: Third Book of the Faith-Promoting Series*, 4th ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909), 75.

ministers, converts would enter a protective covenant with God that would guarantee a place in Zion. The missionaries maintained a dual outlook that called for the expansion of Mormonism but the withdrawal from the world to cities of Zion in Ohio and Missouri. Through their ecclesiastical offices and duties, the missionaries responded to practical challenges that further enabled a distributed church structure. Once they began to directly engage in foreign mission work, Mormon missionaries soon employed the strengths of their ecclesiastical system to maintain permanent mission units. The more they turned their focus to the international arena, the more intercultural contact provided reciprocal effects that would call for new responses and further development of mission theory.

Chapter 3

Reciprocal Effects and the Move to Programmatic Theory

> As we are about to leave this place for Halifax, Nova Scotia, we deem it proper to give you a brief account of our mission thus far:
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> We have labored in this part of the vineyard, seven months, and have baptized, 109; … a great number have obtained the Heavenly gifts … also, many of the sick have been healed by the laying on of hands, which strengthens the faith of the saints, and increases the hatred of the wicked, with the hireling priests at their head.
>
> The brethren here, have full faith and confidence, in Joseph Smith, as a prophet, also, a suitable candidate for the Presidency of the United States, and will support him heart and hand.

— Benjamin Brown and Jesse W. Crosby, 1844

> Speculation has been going about that President Hinckley is going to announce some new and glamorous program. I assure you that this is not so. My Brethren of the Twelve, who are deeply concerned about our missionary work throughout the world, have asked that I share with you some feelings that I have on this most important matter.…
>
> Great is our work, tremendous is our responsibility in helping to find those to teach. The Lord has laid upon us a mandate to teach the gospel to every creature. This will take the very best efforts of every missionary—full-time and stake. It will take the very best efforts of every bishop, of every bishop's counselor, of every member of the ward council. It will take the very best interests of every stake president and his council, and particularly the Member Missionary Coordinating Councils.

— Gordon B. Hinckley, 1999[1]

Three major elements of missiological development during Joseph Smith's ministry—the gathering of Israel, the millennialist motivation, and the centralization of missionary activity through ecclesiastical offices, discussed in the previous chapter—were largely influenced by changes within Mormon theology and culture. Some theoretical adjust-

1. Benjamin Brown and Jesse W. Crosby, "Communications," *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 12 (July 1, 1844), 567; Gordon B. Hinckley, "Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep," February 21, 1999 in *Ensign* 29, no. 5 (May 1999): 104–10.

ments, however, came from responses to external influences the missionaries encountered in their mission engagement. Excesses in new converts' charismatic behavior in the early 1830s necessitated a curtailing of spiritual enthusiasm which missionaries had once highlighted as evidence of Mormonism's truthfulness but later limited to Joseph Smith's founding visions and revelatory experiences.[2] Mormon excitement over building a millenarian Zion exacerbated suspicions from Missourians in the mid-1830s, which led to persecutions that missionaries then used as supporting evidence of their truth claims.[3] American politics influenced how Joseph Smith made use of missionaries. In 1844, he called members of the priesthood on political missions with the intent of effecting change in the federal government in order that Mormons could secure their religious freedoms and live out a "theodemocratic" ideal.[4]

As Mormon mission progressed, missionary output entered the realm of theoretical possibilities and considerations. The net effect was iterative; mission praxis came back into the theory, prompting new engagements and new outputs. This cycle brought Mormonism into unique dissonances which Mormons faced in consequence of their missionary endeavors. This chapter explores early reciprocal effects on Mormon mission theory during

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2. J. Spencer Fluhman, "The Joseph Smith Revelations and the Crisis of Early American Spirituality," chap. 10 in *The Doctrine and Covenants: Revelations in Context*, ed. Andrew H. Hedges, J. Spencer Fluhman, and Alonzo L. Gaskill (Provo: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2008), 66–89; Lee Copeland, "Speaking in Tongues in the Restoration Churches," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 24, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 13–34; Dan Vogel and Scott G. Dunn, "'The Tongue of Angels': Glossolalia Among Mormonism's Founders," *Journal of Mormon History* 19, no. 2 (1993): 1–34.

3. Important examples of this include Parley P. Pratt, "An Address by Judge Higbee and Parley P. Pratt, Ministers of the Gospel, of the Church of Jesus Christ of 'Latter-day Saints,' to the Citizens of Washington and to the Public in General," *Times and Seasons* 1, no. 5 (March 5, 1840): 68–70; Pratt, *An Appeal to the Inhabitants of the State of New York, Letter to Queen Victoria, (Reprinted from the tenth European Edition,) the Fountain of Knowledge; Immortality of the Body, and Intelligence and Affection* (Nauvoo: John Taylor, 1840).

4. Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 515–25; Timothy L. Wood, "The Prophet and the Presidency: Mormonism and Politics in Joseph Smith's 1844 Presidential Campaign," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 93, no. 2 (2000): 167–93.

the Kirtland, Missouri, and Nauvoo periods, and briefly examines three turning points—Joseph Smith's use of missionaries to support his 1844 campaign for United States president, Brigham Young's efforts to colonize the American west, and the realignment of the role of seventies in serving foreign missions—that paved the way toward a modern programmatic theory in which Mormons would fundamentally consider their mission as the execution of church programs.

Gifts of the Spirit

When missionaries arrived in Kirtland in 1830, they found a community of Christians who anticipated a return of the spiritual gifts enjoyed by the primitive church yet which were nowhere seen in the churches of the day. Alexander Campbell, whose movement constituted the Kirtland congregation's main denominational affiliation before conversion, had spoken of a restoration of the "ancient order of things," which he understood as the performance of baptism by immersion, the administration of a lay clergy, and the blessings of the Holy Spirit. Kirtland preacher Sidney Rigdon sparred with Campbell over the place of supernatural gifts in this restoration of the ancient order, believing that speaking in tongues, prophecy, visions, and revelations ought to appear in the restored apostolic church. Their disagreements escalated to a point that Rigdon and his congregation withdrew from the Campbellite movement in 1830.[5] A group of four missionaries who had received a call to preach the Book of Mormon to the Native Americans stopped in Kirtland along the way. Their message that the Book of Mormon represented a translation of ancient scripture by the prophetic gift and their appeals to divine authority through

5. Copeland, 16–17; Jonathan A. Stapley and Kristine Wright, "The Forms and the Power: The Development of Mormon Ritual Healing to 1847," *Journal of Mormon History* 35, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 54.

angelic ministration caught the former Campbellites' attention. Parley Pratt recalled, "at length Mr. Rigdon and many others became convinced that they had no authority to minister in the ordinances of God; and that they had not been legally baptized and ordained."[6] Claims of a restoration of spiritual gifts particularly attracted Lyman Wight, who later wrote in his journal, "We called a meeting and one testified that he had seen angels, and another that he had seen the plates, and that the gifts were back in the church again, etc. The meeting became so interesting that I did not get away till the sun was about an hour high at night."[7] Dozens of baptisms followed, and around 130 converts had joined with the Mormons within weeks.[8]

The reciprocal effect of converting a congregation of restorationists seeking the return of Pentecost introduced and intensified the role of healings and tongue-speaking in missionary work. Missionary successes in 1830 and 1831 introduced a group of converts who brought their prior expectations into the religious movement and even voluntarily proselytized on those principles. Because these former Campbellites trained their anticipations on a restoration of heavenly gifts, they were especially prone to exhibit enthusiasm, which, in turn, affected the reputation of the growing church.

With their newfound restored authority, many converts took to proselytizing. Two days after his own baptism and ordination as an elder, John Murdock preached a public

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6. Parley P. Pratt, *The Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt, One of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Embracing His Life, Ministry, and Travels, with Extracts, in Prose and Verse, from His Miscellaneous Writings*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. (New York: Russell Brothers, 1874), 50; Mark Lyman Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People: The Historical Setting of Joseph Smith's Ohio Revelations* (Draper: Greg Kofford Books, 2009), 58.

7. Milton V. Backman, *Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio, 1830–1838* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 4–5.

8. Richard Lloyd Anderson, "The Impact of the First Preaching in Ohio," *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (Summer 1971): 478.

sermon on the Book of Mormon and in three consecutive Sundays baptized over a dozen. In four months, Murdock brought "about seventy souls" who generally did not have access to the Book of Mormon; just hearing sections from the book and feeling a spiritual witness prompted these individuals to convert. Other new missionaries like Levi Hancock and Daniel Stanton followed Murdock's example, preaching of spiritual gifts and the restoration of divine authority to neighbors and family.[9] John Corrill recalled that while attending several Kirtland meetings in December 1830, he observed the laying on of hands "for the gift of the Holy Ghost, which, I thought, would give me a good opportunity to detect their hypocrisy. The meeting lasted all night, and such a meeting I never attended before. They administered the sacrament, and laid on hands, after which I heard them prophesy and speak in tongues unknown to me."[10]

Rigdon left with Edward Partridge in the fall of 1830 to visit with the Mormon prophet in New York. Joseph received a revelation during their stay that emphasized spiritual healings: "whoso shall ask it in my name, in faith, they shall cast out Devils; they shall heal the sick; they shall cause the blind to receive their sight, & the deaf to hear, & the dumb to speak, & the lame to walk."[11] About a month later at the third conference of the Church, Joseph dictated another revelation that promised the members who would migrate to Ohio would be "endowed with power from on high."[12] Once in Kirtland, Joseph

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9. Staker, 61–62.

10. John Corrill, *A Brief History of the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints, (Commonly Called Mormons;) Including an Account of Their Doctrine and Discipline; with the Reasons of the Author for Leaving the Church* (St. Louis, 1839), 9; Copeland, 18.

11. Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *Revelations and Translations: Manuscript Revelation Books*, facsimile ed. in *The Joseph Smith Papers* series, general editors Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2009), 65 [D&C 35]; hereafter cited *Joseph Smith Papers*; Stapley and Wright, 54–55.

12. *Joseph Smith Papers*, 75 [D&C 38].

called together the elders "that they might receive an endowment.… The Melchizedek priesthood was introduced for the first time and conferred on several of the elders. In this chiefly consisted the endowment."[13] Many missionaries understood this endowment of power to mean healing powers. One of Kirtland's most active missionaries recounted his wife's healing after a wagon accident nearly crippled her. "I conversed with her and told her that she need not have any more pain I also spoke of my Brother simeon & told her that he was one that was endowed with power from on high and that she might be healed if she had faith." Simeon Carter then took Jared Carter's wife by the hand and said, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to rise up & to walk and she arose & walked from room to room."[14] A month later, Jared and his missionary companion performed a ritual healing for a woman afflicted with tuberculosis. She "was healed, suddenly, and continued well, being freed from all afflictions." Jared performed other healings during missions throughout 1831 and 1832 in a similar pattern.[15]

Missionaries came to "administer ritual healings contingent upon commitment to the Church or baptism," eventually giving rise to a rather common practice of baptizing for health benefits or healings.[16] Orson Pratt recorded in 1833 that a young girl was "immediately healed" from an illness that had caused her to vomit blood after she covenanted "before God to obey the Gospel" and had hands "laid upon her in the name of Jesus Christ."

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13. Stapley and Wright, 55; Corrill, 18.

14. Stapley and Wright, 56; Jared Carter, journal, June 8, 1831; Davis Bitton, "Kirtland as a Center of Missionary Activity, 1830–1838," *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (Summer 1971): 499–500.

15. Gregory A. Prince, *Power From on High: The Development of Mormon Priesthood* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 100.

16. Stapley and Wright, 58; controversy in the Church brought an end to this practice in the early twentieth century; see Jonathan A. Stapley and Kristine Wright, "'They Shall Be Made Whole': A History of Baptism for Health," *Journal of Mormon History* 34, no. 4 (Fall, 2008): 69–112.

A few days later, she was baptized.[17] William McLellin made spiritual gifts, particularly the gift of healing, the subject of a missionary sermon in October 1831. Taking to the stand before a council of Christian preachers, McLellin "addressed them on the subject of the coming forth of the book of Mormon about 1 ½ hours and also on the subject of the ancient faith, concerning the spiritual gifts in the church." A Mr. Wood asked McLellin and his companion Hyrum Smith whether the missionaries "believed in the gift of Healing by the laying on of the hands of the Elders," to which they answered "that we did most firmly." Wood invited them to minister to his daughter who had taken ill "for some time." After teaching "the nature of faith; The family seemed to be quite believing … and brother Hiram & I laid our hands upon [the child], and in a few minutes the little child got down from its mother's lap and went to play upon the floor."[18]

Missionary modes of healing brought on controversy from outside critics. The *Painesville Telegraph* had already criticized missionaries for failed attempts at healing when Corrill remembered to have witnessed several meetings where miraculous spiritual phenomena characterized the Mormons' worship. The *Palmyra Reflector* two months later accused the Mormon missionaries of pretending to heal the sick, making "a number of unsuccessful attempts to do so." When Joseph Smith failed to heal Warner Doty in early 1831 "in spite of all efforts and promises to the contrary," news reached as far away as Boston. "The Mormonites will probably contradict many of these statements," the *Painesville Telegraph* reported, "but we have our information from a relative of the deceased, who was present

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17. Stapley and Wright, 58; Prince, 100.

18. William E. McLellin, Journal, October 1, 1831 in Jan Shipps and John W. Welch, eds., *The Journals of William E. McLellin, 1831–1836* (Provo: BYU Studies, Brigham Young University Press; Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 42–43.

during the last 18 hours of [Doty's] life."[19] Some successful healings had a reverse effect. Elsa Johnson who suffered with a rheumatic arm was healed when Joseph Smith interrupted a conversation on spiritual gifts, took Elsa by the hand and commanded her in the name of Christ to be made whole. Convinced by the miracle, a Methodist minister named Ezra Booth joined the Mormons. Over time, however, Booth became disillusioned over the ecstatic behaviors that arose in the June 1831 conference in Kirtland and Smith's prophetic leadership style.[20]

Tensions arose over ineffectual healings that brought a response from Joseph Smith. In February 1831, Joseph composed a revelation that provided a caveat to ritual healings: "He that hath faith in me to be healed, and is not appointed unto death, shall be healed." The will of God would determine the final outcome, regardless of human faith or intervention, though the revelation still encouraged the practice of faith. Ritual healings would change within the Mormon community until a normative practice limited to members of the Melchizedek priesthood would involve a set procedure for anointing the sick and declaring blessings of health contingent upon the faith of the individual and the will of God.[21] "For their part, the Saints, ever convinced that God would heal the sick when faith was sufficient, nevertheless came to recognize that their proselytizing efforts could be severely hampered if the elders tried to answer every skeptic with an attempt to heal by faith." Other revelations directed missionaries to perform healings for the benefit of believers, not to prove the faith through signs. He "that seeketh signs shall see signs," an August 1831 revelation declared, "but not unto salvation … but behold faith cometh not by signs,

19. *Painesville Telegraph*, February 15, 1831; Prince, 101.

20. Bushman, 169.

21. Stapley and Wright, 68–69, 70–87.

but signs follow those that believe; yea, signs cometh by faith not by the will of men, nor as they please, but by the will of God." Missionaries would perform healing rituals where possible and still point to ritual healings as evidence of biblical consistency within Mormon practice, despite curbing the public display of ritual healings.[22]

Tongue-speaking controversies vexed the Mormon community more than ritual healings during the first years in Kirtland. Charismatic outbursts of glossolalia—speaking an unknown language, usually under the belief that its origin is heavenly—earned Mormons a reputation for religious fanaticism. Between 1833 and 1837, glossolalic meetings occurred regularly with emphasis. Joseph Smith prayed at the dedication of the Kirtland temple in March 1836 for the day of Pentecost to descend upon the Saints and imbue them with "cloven tongues of fire." "Hundreds of Elders spoke in tongues," one report mentioned, "but, many of them being young in the Church, and never having witnessed the manifestation of this gift before, some felt a little alarmed." Joseph took a moment to instruct on the proper use of the "gift of tongues," and even prayed that God withhold the Spirit. But tongue-speaking resumed with vigor, until more significant worries surfaced. While the attention attracted some potential converts, like future Church president Wilford Woodruff who learned of Mormonism because of its claim to glossolalia, on the whole it risked grouping Mormons with suspicion of hysteria and irrationality among the more mainline American neighbors.[23]

Joseph would repeat his emphasis that the gift of tongues was meant for the "preaching of the Gospel to other nations and languages" and that for administering the Church,

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22. Fluhman, 74–79; *Joseph Smith Papers*, 183 [D&C 63]; Stapley and Wright, 80.

23. Fluhman, 75–85; Copeland, 13, 20–21.

"we speak our own language in all such matters."[24] He began to issue missionary calls with an emphasis on the gift of tongues as an ordination to preach in the language of the proselytized.[25] Missionary diaries reflected this xenoglossic emphasis, especially once Mormons engaged in foreign settings.[26] "If a servant of God," Orson Pratt affirmed in 1884, "were under the necessity of acquiring in the ordinary way a knowledge of languages, a large portion of his time would be unprofitably occupied. While he was spending years to learn the language of a people sufficiently accurate to preach the glad tidings of salvation unto them, thousands would be perishing for the want of knowledge."[27]

What began as a positive feature of early Mormonism attracted antagonism and even a degree of infighting and tension. By holding to divine authority as a central truth claim with healings and xenoglossia as extensions, Joseph Smith and others shaped the missionary interactions to favor a message that emphasized the Book of Mormon, the revelations, and the priesthood authority of the Mormon evangelists. Missionaries like William McLellin and Orson Pratt would point to the visions of Joseph Smith above their own spiritual experiences as the biblical proof of a restoration of spiritual gifts in the church, a shift from the Carter brothers and others who made the gifts their core message.[28]

Spiritual gifts had served a function in the mission theory for evincing the presence of the Holy Spirit in the acts of the missionaries and of the Church. While missionaries

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24. Copeland, 20–21.

25. Staker, 175.

26. *Xenoglossia* refers to the miraculous speaking of a human language unknown to the speaker.

27. Copeland, 22; Orson Pratt, *A Series of Pamphlets on the Doctrines of the Gospel* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1884), 99.

28. M. Teresa Baer, "Charting the Missionary Work of William E. McLellin: A Content Analysis," in Shipps and Welch, eds., *The Journals of William E. McLellin, 1831–1838*, 382–84, 392–94, 399; Orson Pratt, *A[n] Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions.*

appealed to faith and belief as fundamental precursors to baptism, they still had to offer some measure of proof that could incline the convert toward taking the message seriously. Correct doctrine found a place in missionary communication, and positing the soundness of the Mormon gospel did receive more attention in missionary sermons than the gifts of the spirit, but when the missionary sought to offer as compelling a case as possible, he generally appealed to the gifts in some way. The divinity of the Book of Mormon, miraculous healings, and other manifestations of the Spirit made for outward, tangible effects that the missionary could convincingly offer as support of God's involvement in the Mormon community.[29] Furthermore, spiritual displays corroborated Mormon claims of a restoration of the New Testament church. Divine healing and miraculous signs were trademarks of Christ's mortal ministry, and Mormons felt that such must appear in any contemporary ministry claiming to be efficacious and in harmony with the true gospel.

Persecutions

Between 1832 and 1838, Kirtland remained the hub of missionary organization and activity. Joseph Smith set up classes for educating missionaries in not only doctrinal fundamentals but also in secular topics, including English grammar and Hebrew.[30] He issued mission calls regularly, and missionaries generally enjoyed long stints away from home until the change in seasons required their return. The ebb and flow of missionary activity from Kirtland outward sustained a steady growth of the Church until opposition disrupted mission work before the Saints could regroup in Illinois in 1839 and 1840. Tensions between missionaries and Christian clergymen blackened the Mormon reputa-

29. Baer, 379–405.

30. Bitton, 500.

tion in the press and among other church congregations.[31] An economic collapse brought an experimental banking system in Kirtland to ashes, and significant internal troubles threatened the continuation of the movement.[32] Worst of all, as mounting persecutions in Missouri against the Mormon settlements there beginning in 1833 intensified in the late 1830s, the Missouri arm of the Church had a reduced impact on maintaining missionary work and administration.[33] Missionaries' attention would center on the Missouri persecutions, especially once the Mormon War broke out and all of their energies were required to withstand the concerted attacks on the religious community.[34]

At the onset of the Mormon War in August 1838, the Mormon missionary force took a considerable drop in effectiveness and reach. Nevertheless, several contributions by a few individual missionaries carried the mission work along in ways that made resuming more integrated work a possibility once the Missouri troubles subsided. Erastus Snow managed to take Mormonism to Maryland, thus opening a new field for Mormon missionaries. Jedediah Grant proselytized in New Jersey and North Carolina. Wilford Woodruff reached the Fox Islands off the coasts of Maine. John E. Page realized reasonable success in Upper Canada. Most significantly, Heber C. Kimball maintained a presence in the British mission which would supply the largest migration of converts to the Church during the Nauvoo period and throughout the 1846 exodus to Utah Territory. The year before and during the Mormon War, Parley Pratt produced and distributed the most significant

31. Max H. Parkin, "The Nature and Cause of Internal and External Conflict of the Mormons in Ohio between 1830 and 1838" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1966), 149–51.

32. S. George Ellsworth, "A History of Mormon Missions in the United States and Canada, 1830–1860" (PhD diss., University of California–Berkeley, 1951), 207.

33. Parkin, 326–43; Bitton, 502.

34. Ellsworth, 207–26.

missionary publication, *A Voice of Warning*. Despite their troubles in Missouri, Mormons helped their missionary work along by these measures and individual efforts; they never completely broke from their missionary enterprise, even when the worst atrocities plagued them at home.[35]

The Missouri persecutions had a reciprocal effect on the Mormon missionary's theoretical location in the field. The missionaries viewed themselves as outnumbered protagonists facing a formidable adversary bent on their extermination. Preaching the gospel soon followed behind activism aimed at securing religious freedom and seeking redress for stolen and destroyed property. All of the missionary literature reflected a preoccupation with the Missouri persecutions and a new self-identity emerged that cast the Mormon as the victim of not just injustice but a strategic attack by the devil's forces to snuff out their religion and their truth.

Four missionary tracts were published in 1839, each dealing with the Missouri persecutions as the central theme. Francis Gladden Bishop wrote a history of the Mormons, but from the perspective of their recent tribulations in his *A Brief History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*. The pamphlet combined the defensive accounts that appealed for sympathy and justice with the declaration of repentance and the truth claims of Mormonism.[36] John P. Greene produced *Facts Relative to the Expulsion of the Mormons* which made a similar plea for relief and justice.[37] John Taylor likewise emphasized the

35. Ellsworth, 209–11.

36. Francis Gladden Bishop, *A Brief History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, from Their Rise Until the Present Time, Containing an Account of, and Showing the Cause of Their Sufferings in the State of Missouri, in the Years 1833–38. And Likewise a Summary View of Their Religious Faith* (Salem: Blum and Son, 1839).

37. John P. Greene, *Facts Relative to the Expulsion of the Mormons, or Latter-day Saints from the State of Missouri, under the "Exterminating Order"* (Cincinnati: R. P. Books, 1839).

physical violence committed against the Mormons in his *A Short Account of the Murders, Roberies* [sic] *Burnings, Thefts, and Other Outrages*.[38] The ever active Parley Pratt crafted the most effective of the four in his *History of the Late Persecution* in which he outlined the crimes committed against the Mormons and took a decidedly offended and vengeful tone in his call for justice.[39]

Pratt's *History* captured the appropriation of the persecuted victim into the mission theory. After first reproducing the sworn declaration of the mob to drive the Mormons out of the state—calling them "fanatics" and "knaves" because of their pretending to converse with God face-to-face, heal the sick by the laying on of hands, receiving revelations, and speaking in unknown tongues—Pratt continues with elements that emphasize his missionary message. "Before I proceed with the history … I would inquire whether our belief as set forth in this declaration, as to gifts, miracles, revelations and tongues, is not the same that all the apostles and disciples taught, believed and practiced, and the doctrine of the New Testament?"[40] He appeals to the reasonableness of the Bible and how Mormonism conforms to its practices and doctrines. The problem of slavery had exacerbated tensions between Mormons and Missourians, and Pratt is quick to disavow any involvement of "negroes and mulattoes" which he claims less than a half-dozen had ever "belonged to our society."[41] How Missourians could find Mormonism so repulsive is

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38. John Taylor, *A Short Account of the Murders, Roberies [sic] Burnings, Thefts, and Other Outrages Committed by the Mob & Militia of the State of Missouri upon the Latter Day Saints* (Springfield, 1839).

39. Parley P. Pratt, *History of the Late Persecution Inflicted by the State of Missouri Upon the Mormons in which Tens Thousand American Citizens were Robbed, Plundered, and Driven from the State, and Many Others Imprisoned, Martyred, &c., for their Religion, and all this by Military Force, by Order of the Executive* (Detroit: Dawson and Bates, 1839).

40. Pratt, *History of the Late Persecution*, 10.

41. Stephen C. LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987), 17, 84–85; Pratt, *History of the Late Persecution*, 11.

beyond Pratt's ability to comprehend; he is aghast that they could afflict this benign community of faithful Christians with such persecution. Surely, this makes Mormons equal to martyrs: "The spirits of the ancient martyrs will hail their brethren of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as greater sufferers than themselves, and the blood of ancient and modern saints will mingle together in cries for vengeance, upon those who are drunken with their blood, till justice will delay no longer to execute his long suspended mission of vengeance upon the earth."[42]

Pratt tries to evoke an undeniable display of Mormon charity by portraying Joseph Smith's missionary demeanor and engagement, a preacher to the vipers that seek his blood.

> One of the women came up and very candidly inquired of the troops, which of the prisoners was the Lord whom the Mormons worshipped? One of the guard pointed to Mr. Smith, with a significant smile, and said this is he. The woman then turning to Mr. Smith, inquired whether he professed to be the Lord and Savior? Do not smile gentle reader, at the ignorance of these poor innocent creatures, who are thus kept under, and made to believe such absurdities by their men, and by their lying priests. Mr. Smith replied, that he professed to be nothing but a man, and a minister of salvation sent by Jesus Christ to preach the gospel. This answer so surprised the woman, that she began to inquire into our doctrine; and Mr. Smith preached a discourse both to her and her companions, and to the wondering soldiers, who listened with almost breathless attention, while he set forth the doctrine of faith in Jesus Christ, and repentance and baptism for remission of sins, with the promise of the Holy Ghost, as recorded in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.—The woman was satisfied, and praised God in the hearing of the soldiers, and went away praying aloud that God would protect and deliver us. Thus was fulfilled a prophesy [sic] which had been spoken publicly by Mr. Smith, a few months previous; for he had prophesied that a sermon should be preached in Jackson County, by one of our elders, before the close of 1838.[43]

Persecution occupied a more central location for Joseph Smith as well. In his 1838 history, he retold the First Vision and his conversion experience within a drama of baffling

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42. Pratt, *History of the Late Persecution*, 56.

43. Pratt, 45.

animosity from "those who ought to have been my friends."[44] After sharing an innocent visionary experience with others, including a Methodist minister he admired, Joseph is shocked to discover such acrimonious responses. Everyone hedged up against him, which he struggled to understand, he says—he thought of himself as highly inconsequential in the master social or historical narrative.

> I soon found however that my telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion and was the cause of great persecution which continued to increase and though I was an obscure boy only between fourteen and fifteen years of age or thereabouts, and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no consequence in the world, yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me and create a hot persecution, and this was common among all the sects: all united to persecute me.[45]

Joseph never abandoned this sense of persecution and went so far as to travel to Washington, D.C. on a political mission to gain federal protection for the Church.

The Mormon as the oppressed and persecuted becomes central in the self-concept of the missionary by 1839. The missionary felt assured that his was a pure doctrine, based on scripture, and reasonable to any honest individual. Pratt and other missionaries reflected in their literature a defensiveness that betrayed activist motivations behind their mission. A very real commission to secure religious freedom and security took center stage until the persecutions abated for a time in the Nauvoo period. The missionary resolved the cognitive dissonances persecution introduced by simultaneously installing persecuted status and rallying support for redress and government protection. Persecution became a sign of their chosen status; they were "brothers" with the ancient martyrs. Missionary literature would consistently highlight their history of persecution to gain sympathy or as a last

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44. Dean C. Jessee, ed. and comp., *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 232–33.

45. *Personal Writings*, 231.

word in debates over Mormonism's biblical basis.[46] The missionary resolved the intercultural dissonance by imagining the landscape as one of forces drawn either to the persecutors' side, or the side of the persecuted. They appealed to humanity for justice and compassion and intensified social boundaries with their discourse. Little scuffles could take on the same level of attack as any other persecution, since so much eternal consequence rested in their mission. Throughout the nineteenth century and the polygamy years, Mormon missionaries would fashion an identity colored by persecution and dramatize their work in militaristic terms. They were at times soldiers, not preachers, defending the faith, and could embrace bold tactics to assert their truths in hostile environments.

Politics

The Missouri persecutions left Joseph Smith feeling defensive and concerned for the security of his Mormon community even as Nauvoo provided the Mormons with a period of respite and growth. Joseph sent the Twelve to Britain to manage what had become a thriving mission overseas, and an increasing number of missionary calls continued at great personal sacrifice of the missionaries and their families. Thousands of Mormon converts crossed the Atlantic to gather to Nauvoo, and within a short time, Joseph had begun another temple construction project which he would not live to see completed. As in Kirtland, Joseph worried about apostates, urging his followers to be patient, trust in his prophetic leadership, and live prudently by the Holy Spirit's inspiration, but his introduction of polygamy fostered animosity among close associates, and by 1843, some disaf-

46. Dan Jones provided an excellent illustration of this in his *History of the Latter-day Saints, from their establishment in the year 1823, until the time that three hundred thousand of them were exiled from America because of their religion, in the year 1846* (Merthyr Tydfil: Capt. Jones, [1847]) in Ronald D. Dennis, trans. and ed., *Defending the Faith: Early Welsh Missionary Publications* (Provo: Religious Studies Center, 2003).

fected Mormons began taking to the press to criticize the Mormon prophet. Shunned by Congress and the president of the United States, and aware of apostate resentment against him, Joseph opted to make a run for the presidency, and in January of 1844 announced his candidacy with clear intentions to change the federal government, if elected, to more fully honor constitutionally guaranteed rights of religion.[47]

Joseph did not manage or design his campaign like a seasoned politician or businessman, rather, he employed his church structure to advertise his platform and build a voter base. In a few short months he began calling missionaries to stump for him, this time arming them with his views on government rather than the Book of Mormon. Even missionaries that had no explicit assignment to electioneer for Joseph Smith considered the campaign a key part of their missionary message.[48] Missionaries sent to Canada (outside of U.S. voting districts) reported not only large numbers of baptisms and the manifestations of spiritual gifts attending their missionary work, but also implied their own conflation of Joseph as prophet with Joseph as U.S. president. "The brethren here, have full faith and confidence, in Joseph Smith, as a prophet, also, a suitable candidate for the Presidency of the United States, and will support him heart and hand," Elders Benjamin Brown and Jesse Crosby submitted to the editor of the *Times and Seasons* in July 1844.[49]

Campaigning for Joseph Smith as president merged with proselytism in the minds of most of the electioneers. Margaret Robertson's study of the electioneers found that they "did much more than merely campaign for Joseph Smith: one of the purposes of the candidacy, which becomes obvious from the journals of the campaigners, was to prosely-

47. Wood, 178–79.

48. Wood, 185–86.

49. Brown and Crosby, "Communications," 567.

tize. By their own accounts, campaigning seemed secondary in comparison to the amount of time they devoted to preaching."[50] Bringing missionary work into the public relations sphere on a theoretical level had the dual effect of spiritualizing their sense of political work and mainstreaming their sense of missionary work. When Joseph was assassinated and the presidential campaign dissolved, missionaries still would answer politics with their mission organization and mission calls.

Political activism, particularly during the tense anti-polygamy years in the latter half of the nineteenth century, was a natural function for many elders who looked to the mission field and missionary work as the outlet for responding to the struggles. A missionary conference in August 1852 switched the strategy on how the Church would handle polygamy in the public sphere from defensive to offensive. At the close of the conference, Brigham Young dispatched Orson Pratt to Washington, D.C. to publish a periodical that would defend Mormon doctrines and practices of polygamy.[51] The same conference issued missionary calls to foreign lands: Richard Ballantyne and Jesse Haven, in particular, were sent to India and South Africa, respectively, where they eventually followed Pratt and printed periodicals that defended the theology of polygamy. Missionary literature continued in this vein, looking to the press as a key forum for communicating and defending Mormonism within political arenas.[52]

From Political and Colonial to Programmatic Theory

Where mission work merged most manifestly with the political was in Brigham

50. Margaret C. Robertson, "The Campaign and the Kingdom: The Activities of the Electioneers in Joseph Smith's Presidential Campaign," *BYU Studies* 39, no. 3 (2000): 152.

51. David J. Whittaker, "Early Mormon Polygamy Defenses," *Journal of Mormon History* 11 (1984): 44.

52. Whittaker, 45.

Young's colonization project of the Pioneer period. From Salt Lake City, Young coordinated a thorough, long-term, and systematic effort to build settlements throughout the American west, as well as parts of Mexico and Canada. Young directed colonization and mission work hand-in-hand, managing both and conceiving of both as one in the same. "Excluding the informal missionary work performed by the members themselves (which has always been important)," David Whittaker reminds us, "the formal missionary work during Brigham Young's administration … must be seen as a function of the larger patterns of emigration to and colonization of the American West."[53] This function is illustrated by a series of mission calls that originated from Utah conferences in the 1850s. In 1853, Orson Hyde was charged with the call to organize an Indian mission. Thirty-nine young men were selected to participate, one of whom was James Brown who helped lead the mission. Brown said their mission was "to build an outpost from which to operate as peacemakers among the Indians, to teach civilization to them, to try to teach them to cultivate the soil, to instruct them in the arts and sciences if possible, and by that means prevent trouble for the frontier settlements and the immigrant companies."[54] They had as their goal not the conversion of the Indians, but the establishment of amicable and diplomatic relations that would mutually favor both the settlers and the Natives. No baptisms were performed until missions to southern Utah succeeded at building farms with Indian tribes.[55] In 1855, Indian missions rapidly expanded; reports indicate only eight missionaries received calls to the English mission while over a hundred proselytized among the

53. David J. Whittaker, "Brigham Young and the Missionary Enterprise," in *Lion of the Lord: Essays on the Life and Service of Brigham Young*, ed. Larry C. Porter and Susan Easton Black (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996), 89.

54. Eugene E. Campbell, *Establishing Zion: The Mormon Church in the American West, 1847–1869* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988), 114.

55. Campbell, 118–20.

Indians throughout the west. The missionary enterprise as primarily the function of colonizing the west and civilizing the Indians took on increasingly industrial, political, and economic terms before the end of the nineteenth century.[56]

The exodus and colonization effort adversely affected the coherence of the main body of ordained missionaries: the quorums of the seventy. Assignments to establish colonies and the challenges of coordinating a mass migration of Mormons across the continent scattered the seventies across the west, frustrating communications within the quorums.[57] The basis of the seventies' office in the priesthood had been purely missional: they were entrusted with the work of taking the gospel to foreign peoples and by the mid-1800s the Twelve, burdened with managing the Salt Lake church and the threat of another conflict which culminated in the Utah War, delegated all missionary responsibility to the seventy.[58] Two problems aligned at this point. Missionary demand exceeded supply by mid-century and by 1880, seventies quorums had very little missionary work to do.[59] Inevitabilities caught up with the demands for filling international mission calls once the seventies reached old age and lacked the means, usually because of debt, to either finance mission assignments or leave their families on solid financial ground while they preached abroad.

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56. Campbell, 120–22; David Whittaker points out, "the economic and colonization missions of the nineteenth century … were just as significant and required the same commitment as the proselyting missions"; Whittaker, "Mormon Missiology: An Introduction and Guide to the Sources," chap. 18 in *The Disciple as Witness: Essays on Latter-day Saint History and Doctrine in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson* (Provo: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University Press, 2000), 534fn19. See Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958) for an overview of the various modes of economic development Mormon missionaries considered and put into practice.

57. William G. Hartley, "The Seventies in the 1880s: Revelations and Reorganizing," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1983): 63.

58. Council minutes from the Twelve after Brigham Young's death made explicit what had been occurring years prior: "[we are] now throwing the labor of preaching the Gospel upon" the seventies; Hartley, 65.

59. Hartley, 65.

The First Presidency expressed dissatisfaction to the Twelve in 1885: Too many seventies were "so embarrassed by debt that they cannot go."[60]

Church leadership consolidated into committees the various tasks of coordinating the missions of the seventies. Together with restructuring strategies in the late 1880s, leaders hoped to improve the seventies' effectiveness as full-time, foreign-bound missionaries.[61] The older the seventies became, the more apparent the solution to have the elders shoulder foreign mission. Between 1860 and 1875, seventy percent of all missionaries called were seventies. After the 1880s restructurings took effect, that figure increased to ninety-two percent by 1900; forty years later, only twenty-seven percent of all missionaries were seventies.[62] This gradual decline correlated with the ages and finances of the seventies. In October 1934, church leaders announced changes in ordination procedure. All missionaries over 21 would be ordained seventies, 18-year-olds would be ordained elders and would receive specific training through the Sunday School. The policy was not fully implemented and a year later, the rapid decline of the seventies as the core missionary force began to show.[63] What Orson Pratt had theorized was the proper role and outcome of the seventies' mission work suddenly moved under the purview of the elders. Before the decline, the Twelve would serve to open the doors to the nations and wherever they could not go (after all, they were only twelve in sum), they would first send the seventies in preference to any others. A new tier appeared, theoretically, between the apostles and the elders. Now the apostles would open the door to the nations, the seventies would oversee the international

60. Hartley, 78.

61. Hartley, 82–83, 87.

62. Whittaker, "Mormon Missiology," 475.

63. James N. Baumgarten, "The Role and Function of the Seventies in LDS Church History" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1960), 75–78.

administration of the missions under the direction of the apostles, and the elders would serve as the foot-soldiers to carry out the specific task of mission.[64]

The appropriation of mission into the political arm of the Church and into a colonization strategy opened up the space to envision Mormon mission as measurable and expandable. The quorums that had grown and splintered under the practical necessities of surviving on the western frontier underwent restructuring which introduced new organizational schemas and alignments of duties and responsibilities. As more missionaries built settlements with an overt intent to civilize the Indians, missionary experiences and expectations evolved, with even tighter centralized administration taking the reins of mission than before. By the turn of the century, the theoretical and discursive world of the Mormon missionary not only included concepts of foreign mission, modes of preaching the gospel, and individual expectations of how to teach and whom to teach, but also broadened the possibilities for mission work than it had in previous decades. The work of church planting gave way to community building and colonization, though Mormons formed more coherent boundaries of congregational units at this same time. More foreign missions were available, more land to cultivate for Mormonism, more peoples to engage, and a longer timeframe for carrying out that mission than the pre-millennial fervor of the 1830s. The forces of political, colonial, and programmatic impulses took of the unique missiology that Mormons had cultivated and set in motion changes that would further develop Mormon mission into something vastly different than its early foundations by the middle of the twentieth century. Once church presidents like Heber J. Grant and David O. McKay came along to improve mission, they would work with a set of policy ideals based

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64. Orson Pratt, "Personal Reminiscences and Testimony Concerning the Prophet Joseph and the Church, etc.," *Journal of Discourses Delivered by President Brigham Young, His Two Counselors, The Twelve Apostles, and Others*, vol. 7 (Liverpool: Amasa Lyman, 1860), 186–87; Baumgarten, 61.

on the expectation to grow the Church to occupy the globe and would principally look to measurable effects to inform their understanding of effective methodology and practice. The age of mission programs in the church stood a far cry from the days of physically gathering to a city named Zion, preaching a restoration of the people Israel to the lands of their inheritance, and voluntarily taking up the call without ordination nor credentials.[65]

65. Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 213–38; Richard O. Cowan, *Church in the Twentieth Century* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 95–102; Gregory A. Prince and William Robert Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005), 227–32.

Conclusion

Measuring Mission Theory in Mormonism

Five weeks after the assassination of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, three of Mormonism's most prolific writers memorialized the prophet with verse, song, and eulogy. "Thou Chieftain of Zion!" wrote Eliza R. Snow, "henceforward thy name / Will be class'd with the martyrs and share in their fame; / Thro' ages eternal, of thee will be said, / 'With the greatest of prophets he suffer'd and bled.'"[1] William W. Phelps penned what would become the signal anthem of Joseph Smith in Mormon hymnody, "Praise to the Man who Communed with Jehovah," in which he extolled Joseph as the greatest of prophets and the revealer of the final dispensation before the end of time.[2] Both Snow and Phelps prized Joseph's prophethood and leadership using images of the warrior, leader, and champion to honor their fallen hero.[3] John Taylor gave the boldest eulogy of the three by casting Joseph as a martyr second only to Jesus, but, interestingly, drew upon *missionary* values to justify Joseph's preeminent status among all the prophets. Taylor emphasized the rapid production and distribution of a book of scripture on two continents, how Joseph had "*sent* the fulness of the everlasting gospel, which [the Book of Mormon] contained, to the four quarters of the earth," and how Joseph's revelations

1. Eliza R. Snow, "To Elder John Taylor," *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 14 (August 1, 1844): 607.

2. "Joseph Smith," *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 14 (August 1, 1844), 607. The *Times and Seasons* does not list Phelps as the author, but later hymnals attributed the text to him: Karen Lynn Davidson, *Our Latter-day Hymns: The Stories and Messages* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 55; Newell B. Weight, "The Birth of Mormon Hymnody," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 10, no. 1 (Spring 1975–1976), 40–41; Karen Lynn, "Our LDS Hymn Texts: A Look at the Past; Some Thoughts for the Future," *Dialogue* 10, no. 1 (Spring 1975–1976), 45.

3. Snow and Phelps both see Joseph as a chieftain, Snow explicitly mentioning the title and Phelps ostensibly deriving his opening lines from Walter Scott's *Lady of the Lake*: "Hail to the Chief who in triumph advances! / Honour'd and bless'd be the evergreen Pine! / Long may the tree, in his banner that glances, / Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line!" Davidson, 56.

had instructional value for teaching the commandments of God to "the benefit of the children of men." Most importantly for Taylor, Joseph had "*gathered* many thousands of the Latter-day Saints, founded a great city, and left a fame and a name that cannot be slain." Taylor devotes the remainder of his eulogy to giving his eyewitness account of the murders and to defending Joseph and Hyrum as martyrs and the victims of a calculated attack on Mormonism's truth.[4]

How Snow, Phelps, and Taylor memorialized differently the founder of their religion illustrates the ways their discourse about "prophethood" and "martyrdom" blended together discrete values. Each interpreted Joseph's achievements using concepts and categories layered with meaning and theoretical depth. Joseph as a chieftain could call to mind, for a Mormon like Snow, not just a historical persona that surfaced when Joseph led Zion's Camp or when he donned military regalia as Lieutenant General of the Nauvoo Legion, but could evoke scriptural and historical meaning as well. The Book of Mormon esteems the chieftain-prophet with characters like Mormon, Moroni, and Alma the Younger who all went to battle while also presiding over the covenant people of the Americas as prophets. This discursive character of the chieftain-prophet receives added complexity as concepts of persecution, hierarchical church leadership extending upward to God, just war theory in Mormon scripture, and the campaign for political support and federal protection all involved Joseph as a prophet taking the lead. The seasoned missionary of the three, John Taylor, says nothing of Joseph's chieftain qualities, rather, he emphasizes Joseph as a martyr. In his eulogy of the martyr, Taylor combines a prophet-missionary with the martyr persona. This study has explored the theoretical complexity of the Mormon missionary, suggesting the breadth of possible meanings a missionary like Taylor could consider when hailing Joseph's unique mission. Distinguishing

4. John Taylor in *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; Carefully Selected from the Revelations of God, and Compiled by Joseph Smith President of Said Church*, 3rd ed. (Nauvoo: John Taylor, 1844), 444 [D&C 135, Section 111 in the Nauvoo editions]; emphasis added.

between the embedded values of the constituted chieftain in Snow and Phelps' tributes and the constituted missionary in Taylor's is no simple task, indeed, when taking the scope of Mormon thought by 1844 into account. To enter the theoretical frame of the Mormon missionary, however, requires this kind of exercise, otherwise one risks missing the depth of the theory below the surface that might be guiding, albeit implicitly, the missionary's motives, expectations, and behaviors.

One important and probably customary analysis might involve unpacking the ways Joseph either fit or differed from Taylor's perceptions. One could ask, however, how Taylor constitutes *himself* in his eulogy of Joseph Smith. His valuation of the prophet shows through as though filtered by a hermeneutical key that excludes personas like the chieftain or prophet-of-prophets held by other Mormons eulogizing Joseph at the same time. The mission of the prophet, which Joseph willingly sealed with his own blood as a martyr, is what arrests Taylor's adulation, and though more prophetic than missionary in effect, Taylor nevertheless thinks in terms of mission and the fulfillment of mission at the individual level. Joseph had a mission, and four bullets could not stop him from accomplishing it, and this fact renders him a martyr in Taylor's mind. In short, to spot the martyr motif Taylor employs is expected and demanded in an accurate analysis of his eulogy, but we must ask where other discursive effects that constitute other theoretical constructs might appear as well.

Does this analysis, though, risk panmissionism—does it force missionary readings where such do not belong? My conclusion is that only a constant check against a foundational or developing mission theory will lead to a viable answer. One can distinguish the discursive effects the missionary installs (as opposed to other actors within Mormonism) when a holistic portrait of Mormon mission is held in view from which to judge the missional from the non-missional. This study offers the foundational elements of Mormon mission theory of

the early 1830s and some key developments of that theory over the course of Joseph Smith's ministry. The missionary environment in which Joseph fashioned his own mission consisted of active volunteers with an outlook for reaching foreign peoples, autonomous missionary societies that recruited Protestants and financed their work, and an urgency for Christianizing the world within a generation. Religious innovations of new scripture, a broadened concept of saving covenant peoples, and reciprocal effects of converting charismatic restorationists, enduring persecution, and merging political action with mission further developed Mormon mission theory enough that by the Pioneer period, Mormons conceived of mission in unique ways.

Further development on the complexities of Mormon colonialism, the evolution of Mormon ecclesiology, and the more synthesized theories of twentieth-century Mormonism would provide a more accurate measuring stick for assessing missionary activity. Once missionaries expected church programs to accomplish mission, their orientation shifted toward centralized modes of proselytism, training, translation of scripture, and church planting. To what extent would the Mormon missionary of the twenty-first century, with his or her uniform appearance and systematic approach, seem alien to the early Latter-day Saint? Without sharing the eschatological worldview, the strategy to migrate converts to a central location, or the emphasis on redeeming Israel, the twenty-first-century missionary would likely be unable to replicate the methodology in a globalized, postcolonial, or modern context. Comparisons between the mission theory of today's missionaries and the early Mormons, as well as contextual comparisons of their social environments, would yield new understanding of just how much Mormon mission has changed. Against this backdrop of comparative missiology and historical investigation, the dynamism of the Mormon mission enterprise would emerge in clearer detail.

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