

Part 5

Joseph Smith and the Making of a Global Religion

Spawned in the Burned-over District of upstate New York and classified by historians for decades as a western American church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints now faces the challenge of broadening its scope and its reach into many countries of the world. In this context, scholars have examined some of the more poignant challenges that Latter-day Saints face in making the transition from being a regional sect to becoming a global religion in terms of teachings, practices, language, and cultural differences. What does it take, beyond a burgeoning membership, to become a bona fide world religion? To a certain extent, this globalization is attributable to Joseph Smith. He spoke in global terms of the work he set in motion, and he anticipated in many ways its international appeal and challenges. What, now, are its worldwide dreams and realities?