

# Brigham Young's Ideal Society: The Kingdom of God

J. KEITH MELVILLE

Sir Thomas More published his *Utopia* in 1516. It is one of a series of imaginative portrayals, beginning with Plato's *Republic*, suggesting the desirability of, and man's hope for, an ideal society. More did not intend his *Utopia* to exist in the real world as a republic;<sup>1</sup> he meant simply to present a satire on the perversities of government and society.<sup>2</sup> Now the term *utopia* describes a vast literature searching for a society in which "justice" might become a reality in the interactions of man.

Cicero and Rousseau idealized the state of nature; Medieval Christians, beginning with St. Augustine, anticipated a divine Utopia in the future variously called the City of God, the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven; Marx, though critical of the Utopian Socialists, concocted an atheistic Utopia in his "scientific" socialism. Regardless of the approach, the goal of these schemes had similar idealistic features.

Nineteenth-century America was receptive to the utopian ideas of Europe. The New England conscience, with its Calvinistic, egoistic character, was gradually transformed following the Napoleonic Wars into a tender social conscience with sweeping programs of reform.<sup>3</sup> From abolitionist to transcendentalist, varied voices of social conscience contributed to the store of utopian concepts in America.

The New World became the laboratory in which the social dreams of the Old World were applied in numerous communi-

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Dr. Melville is associate professor of political science at Brigham Young University.

<sup>1</sup>It is questionable if Plato intended his *Republic* to be a Utopia, even though McIlwain contends that "his was but an ideal 'laid up in Heaven.'" *The Growth of Political Thought in the West* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1932), p. 39.

<sup>2</sup>George Catlin, *The Story of the Political Philosophers* (New York: McGraw-Hill Co., 1939), p. 543.

<sup>3</sup>See Vernon L. Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1930), II, 339 ff.

tarian experiments.<sup>4</sup> Religious, philanthropic, and Utopian Socialist promotions are evident in the Shaker villages, the Owenite communities, and the Fourierist phalanxes. New Harmony and Brook Farm, two of the more popular experiments, bracketed chronologically the birth of Mormonism. At home in this reformist milieu, Mormonism sketched its own schemes of an ideal society.

Mormon social reform programs, as progressive and daring as they appear at first glance, were tempered with moderation. The Latter-day Saints joined neither the radical abolitionist nor the pro-slavery groups. When Joseph Smith advocated the abolition of slavery in his presidential campaign of 1844, it was to be accomplished by compensating the owners equitably for their slaves. The controversial marriage relationship of polygamy, which was officially sanctioned by the Church before the Manifesto of 1890, provoked a barrage of invectives. Yet the principle and practice of this marital system was morally puritanical and did not embrace the radicalism of free love or "spiritual wifeism" which some other groups espoused during the same era. Most radical of the social programs was Smith's plan for prison reform which he outlined in the 1844 presidential platform. Predicated on the Christian concept of forgiveness, the essence of his proposal was rehabilitation, instead of punishment. Even though more generally accepted today, it was too idealistic for his age and was generally laughed at by those who took notice.

The economic facet of Mormonism was designed to utilize the collective economic potential for the benefit of the entire society. But the Law of Consecration and Stewardship, as the first Church-sponsored economic system was called, promoted the group well-being by emphasizing the individual responsibility of stewardship, which was considerably more moderate than some of the Christian communistic or secular communitarian programs.

The religious or theological face of Mormonism was not reformist; it was restorative. Principles of an eternal gospel could not be new, nor could corrupted concepts be returned to their pristine purity by reformation, but truth could be re-

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<sup>4</sup>See Arthur Eugene Bestor, Jr., *Backwoods Utopias* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950).

established on earth by revelation. This was the religious claim of Mormonism!

Very provocative were the political propositions which at first glance appear revolutionary.<sup>5</sup> The economic and social aspects of Mormonism were communitarian; the religious and political principles were to be universal. The Kingdom of God in its broadest connotation was expected eventually to embrace the world as a world kingdom, wearing the vestments of a sovereign state.<sup>6</sup>

Daniel's interpretation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar had Church-wide acceptance as prophecy concerning the Kingdom of God which would fill the whole earth and be a "kingdom, which shall never be destroyed. . . but it shall break to pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."<sup>7</sup> The second and seventh chapters of Daniel were coupled by Parley P. Pratt with the Revelation of John as the text of a letter to Queen Victoria of England. "Know assuredly," he wrote, "that the world in which we live is on the eve of a REVOLUTION. . . both religiously and politically—temporally and spiritually; one on which the fate of all nations is suspended, and upon which the future destiny of all the affairs of earth is made to depend."<sup>8</sup> He warned the "Sovereign and people" of England to repent and turn to the Lord. As the elements of clay and iron will not mix, neither will there be unity of the independent kingdoms of the world. He

<sup>5</sup>Klaus Hansen, "The Political Kingdom of God as a Cause for Mormon-Gentile Conflict," *B.Y.U. Studies*, II, 241-260, suggests this position. See also James R. Clark, "The Kingdom of God, the Council of Fifty and the State of Deseret," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXVI (1958), 130-148, which assesses generally the influence of the Council of Fifty and the concept of the Kingdom in social, educational, and political developments in the pre-statehood period of Utah.

<sup>6</sup>It should be noted that the concept, "Kingdom of God," carried several meanings. According to a statement of Joseph Smith, it was as restricted as a righteous man "who has power and authority from God to administer in the ordinances of the gospel and officiate in the priesthood of God, there is the kingdom of God. . . ." Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Period I, ed. B. H. Roberts (2nd ed.; 6 vols.; Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1946, ff.), V, 286. (This history and a seventh volume covering the Apostolic Interregnum are commonly known as the *Documentary History of the Church*, and hereafter will be cited as DHC.) Of course the most general usage of "Kingdom" was loosely applied to the Church in a variety of its operations. But prior to the death of Joseph Smith, the political implications of the Kingdom of God were clearly understood by the leadership of the Church, if not so clearly so by the rank and file.

<sup>7</sup>Daniel, 2:44.

<sup>8</sup>Parley P. Pratt, *To Her Gracious Majesty, Queen Victoria* (Manchester: P. P. Pratt, 1841), p. 1. See also *Times and Seasons*, III, 592.

concluded: "The kingdoms of *this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and his Christ.*"<sup>9</sup>

Verbs which bespeak violence were used freely to indicate the triumphant establishment of the Kingdom of God. Nevertheless the Mormon Church leaders wanted it clearly understood that the Kingdom would be established by the word and not the sword. "We would here remark," editorialized Erastus Snow and Benjamin Winchester in the *Gospel Reflector*, "that it is not our intention to be understood that this destruction is to be accomplished by physical force of the people of God, but by the preaching of the gospel, and the judgments and power of God."<sup>10</sup> Joseph Smith drew a contrast between the kingdoms of the world and the Kingdom of God when he stated that each of the great states of the past "was raised to dignity amidst the clash of arms and the din of war. . . . The designs of God, on the other hand, have been to promote the universal good of the universal world; to establish peace and good will among men; to promote the principles of eternal truth; . . . to make the nations of the earth dwell in peace, and to bring about the millennial glory."<sup>11</sup>

But this did not mean that the Saints had to sit idly by awaiting the second advent of the Messiah to establish the Kingdom. Joseph Smith organized a "special council" on March 11, 1844, which was usually called the General Council or the Council of Fifty.<sup>12</sup> Diary sources adequately support the political significance of this council as the potential legislature of the Kingdom of God. As the Kingdom rolls forth to fill the whole earth the necessary temporal organization should be in readiness for the King, Jesus Christ. When He comes with the Kingdom of Heaven and the two kingdoms are joined, plenary power would be exercised and the Kingdom of God would assume sovereignty over all the kingdoms of the world.<sup>13</sup>

The political significance of the organization of the Council of Fifty was interestingly suggested in a letter dated May 3, 1844, from Brigham Young to Reuben Hedlock, who was president of the European Mission at the time: "The Kingdom

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.* Italics in original.

<sup>10</sup>Reprinted in the *Times and Seasons*, III, 612.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, III, 855.

<sup>12</sup>DHC, VI, 260, 61.

<sup>13</sup>See *The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1947), Section 65.

is organized; and, although as yet no bigger than a grain of mustard seed, the little plant is in a flourishing condition, and our prospects brighter than ever."<sup>14</sup> Brigham Young discoursed on these initial developments throughout his leadership of the church. In 1874, at Lehi, he told the congregation that a full and complete organization of the Kingdom of God had been given by Joseph the spring before he was killed. "I shall not tell you the names of the members of this kingdom," he said, "neither shall I read to you its constitution, but the constitution was given by revelation."<sup>15</sup> Earlier he told the Saints that "Joseph Smith had laid the foundation of the Kingdom of God in the last days; others will rear the superstructure."<sup>16</sup> It was to Brigham Young, first as president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and then as president of the Church, that the primary responsibilities of "rearing the superstructure" fell.

"TO ALL THE KINGS OF THE WORLD, TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: TO THE GOVERNORS OF THE SEVERAL STATES, AND TO THE RULERS AND PEOPLE OF ALL NATIONS," began the momentous "Proclamation" of the Twelve Apostles of the Church on April 6, 1845—at a time when disintegration of this religious organization seemed highly probable. This pamphlet boldly claimed that "the kingdom of God has come, as has been predicted by ancient prophets, and prayed for in all ages; even that kingdom which shall fill the whole earth, and shall stand forever."<sup>17</sup>

The Proclamation earnestly announced that God had once again established the High Priesthood or Apostleship which "holds the keys of the kingdom of God, with power . . . to administer in all things pertaining to the ordinances, organization, government, and direction of the kingdom of God." It further claimed that Christ's "coming is near at hand; and not

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<sup>14</sup>*Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*, XXIII, 422. This letter was sent shortly after the Council of Fifty was organized. The reference "the Kingdom is organized" is pregnant with political, not religious, meaning.

<sup>15</sup>Brigham Young, *et al.*, *Journal of Discourses* (26 vols.; Liverpool: F. D. Richards, *et al.*, 1854-1884), XVII (August 9, 1874), 157. Hereafter cited JD. Date in parentheses indicates the date when the discourse was delivered.

<sup>16</sup>JD, IX (August 31, 1882), 364.

<sup>17</sup>*Proclamation of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Liverpool: Wilford Woodruff, 1845), p. 1.

many years hence, the nations and their kings shall see him coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."<sup>18</sup>

Even though it was announced that the Kingdom of God had come, the apostles recognized that it was at that moment only an embryonic kingdom. The people were commanded to repent and become members and citizens of the Kingdom, devoting their spiritual and temporal resources to its development. Warning the people of the world that a position of neutrality could not be taken, for the people would be either for or against the Kingdom, the Proclamation invited them to aid in "the greatest of all revolutions."<sup>19</sup>

Two centers of empire would be developed during the period of preparation before the advent of Christ at the beginning of the millennial period: one at Jerusalem and one at Zion in the Americas. It was predicted that the nations would oppose the rise of Jerusalem, armies would go against her, and she would be defended by the Lord Himself; a Jewish victory would result. "Jerusalem then becomes the seat of empire, and the great centre and capital of the old world."<sup>20</sup>

Zion at the same time would be undergoing the predicted transformation into the "seat of government for the whole continent of North and South America. . . ." <sup>21</sup> Utopian hopes of brotherhood, freedom, unity and peace were predicted by the proclamation when the Lord would be the King and Sovereign over both seats of government, and "wars shall cease and peace prevail for a thousand years."<sup>22</sup>

This significant tract was printed with the intent of achieving world-wide circulation. The highest officials, commanding respected positions in all walks of life, were not to be avoided in the distribution of the announcement, even though the Church was harrassed by outside pressures of hatred and mob violence and serious internal dissension. In the minds of the non-Mormons this bold announcement must have appeared, to many, as a piece of political lunacy. To the Mormons, however, the Proclamation was an inspiring force. Persecutions by mobs, the hardships of the exodus to the west, privations in a desert wilderness, and even the prospect of

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<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 10.

death lost their sting in the anticipation of the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God as an ideal to be attained in the future was fully used by Brigham Young. He asserted that it required work to usher in the Kingdom in its fulness. Individual righteousness, social unity and brotherhood, and most importantly in the barren western country, economic industry constituted "building the Kingdom." After the initial problems of survival in the Great Basin had been surmounted, the development of a self-sufficient community was demanded, cooperative merchandising was subsequently added, and finally a communitarian life was held to be necessary before the Kingdom of God could be realized. More than spiritual unity was expected. The Saints were constantly exhorted to identify themselves totally with the "Church and Kingdom." All individual activities were to be socially valuable; self-aggrandizement was to be sacrificed.

What was the origin and nature of the Kingdom of God in the mind of Brigham Young which carried with it such impelling force for himself and his people? Actually many of his statements about the Kingdom were obscure and incomplete, as he did not intend to develop a systematic political philosophy. "Build up the Kingdom" was a frequent exhortation lacking further explication. In the most common usage the term applied to the Church. The Mormon leader admitted this, but criticized this characterization of the Kingdom of God and demanded of himself, at times, more explicit definitions. The Church, however, could not be left out of the Kingdom, as it was an integral part of the all-encompassing society.

But President Young was impatient with the common beliefs of Christendom concerning the Kingdom. He said: "You know the old theory is that the kingdom of God, and all pertaining to it, is spiritual and not temporal; that is the traditional notion of our brother Christians."<sup>23</sup> In a matter-of-fact manner he continued: "It is nonsense to talk about building up any kingdom except by labor; it requires the labor of every part of our organization, whether it be mental, physical, or spiritual, and that is the only way to build up the kingdom of

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<sup>23</sup>JD, III (October 8, 1955), 122.

God.”<sup>24</sup> Reinterpreting the saying of Christ, “My kingdom is not of this world,” Brigham Young explained that this did not necessarily mean a spiritual kingdom; but rather the kingdoms of the world are born in war and carnage, exist on fraud and corruption, are filled with wickedness—Christ’s kingdom is to be just the opposite. Had the Jews accepted Christ as their king, thought Brigham Young, Christianity would have been more than a code of morals; the belief that “the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of God and his Christ” would have become a reality.<sup>25</sup>

With the conviction that Christ was unable to establish the Kingdom of God in its fulness, because of His rejection by the Jews, Brigham Young considered it his responsibility as the President of the Church to urge, exhort, and lead the Saints in those activities which would bring about the Kingdom in its omnipotence. In addition, the proselyting activities of the Mormon missionaries were to gather the honest and upright people from all parts of the world to gather at Zion, except for the Jews who were to return to Jerusalem, and at some future date the Church would undergo a metamorphosis and a world-state emerge. It is obvious that the Church was expected to be the nucleus of the Kingdom, as Young said: “The kingdom of God will grow out of this Church. . . .”<sup>26</sup> But he wanted it clearly understood that there was a significant distinction between the Church and the Kingdom as suggested in the following:

As was observed by Brother Pratt, that Kingdom is actually organized, and the inhabitants of the earth do not know it. All right; it is organized preparatory to taking effect in the due time of the Lord, and in the manner that shall please him. As observed by one of the speakers this morning, that Kingdom grows out of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but it is not the Church, for a man may be a legislator in that body which will issue laws to sustain the inhabitants of the earth in their individual rights, and still not belong to the Church of Jesus Christ at all.<sup>27</sup>

Young also distinguished between the Kingdom of God and all other kingdoms on the basis of their origin and nature.

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<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>JD, IX (July 13, 1962), 310.

<sup>26</sup>JD., V (October 7, 1857), 330.

<sup>27</sup>JD., II (July 8, 1855), 310. See also XVII (August 9, 1874), 156.

The Kingdom would be established with divine sanction and not emphasize coercion and violence as basic aspects of its nature. The political entities of man conversely come to power by war and force as developed in the following:

When [Christ] was arraigned before Pilate to be tried for his life, he said to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence." Connect this saying with "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God," and we can understand how the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, because it is established in peace, unlike all worldly kingdoms which are established in war. The motto of his kingdom is "Peace on earth and good will towards men," and hence not after the order of worldly kingdoms.<sup>28</sup>

It is true that expressions which suggest violence and conquest were used freely in Young's discourses about the establishment of the Kingdom of God, such as, "God will revolutionize the earth," "The wicked will be destroyed," "Nations will be broken to pieces," "All will be brought into subjection," "We shall gain the victory," and "Our warfare very soon will come to a close." He indeed believed there would be war and carnage during the growth and development of the Kingdom, but Christ and the Saints would not initiate it. "The sinner will slay the sinner, the wicked will fall upon the wicked, until there is an utter overthrow and consumption upon the face of the whole earth, until God reigns, whose right it is."<sup>29</sup> Christ and the Jews would defensively take up the sword at Jerusalem, but the world-wide revolution would be brought about by conversion, not conquest:

The kingdom of God in the latter days must triumph upon the earth, subdue every species of sin, and destroy every source of sorrow to which down-trodden humanity has been subject. The work of making the kingdoms of the world the kingdom of God and his Christ has commenced. . . .

The world will be revolutionized by the preach[ing] of the Gospel and the power of the Priesthood, and this work we are called to do. In its progress every foolish and unprofitable custom, every unjust and oppressive law, and whatever else that is oppressive to man, and that would impede his

<sup>28</sup>JD., IX (July 13, 1862), 309, 310.

<sup>29</sup>JD., II (February 18, 1855), 190.

onward progress to the perfection of the Holy Ones in eternity, will be removed until ever lasting righteousness prevails over the whole earth.<sup>30</sup>

Brigham Young was conscious that the Kingdom of God must include a sovereign, subjects, territory, government and laws.<sup>31</sup> Acknowledging the possibility of different types of government, he said: "Kingdoms are organized to suit the conditions of the people, whether the government is that of the people, in the hands of a few individuals, or centered in one."<sup>32</sup> The Kingdom of God, however, would be the ideal government for all of the people who would be on earth at the time of Christ's millennial appearance: "It is a perfect system of government—a kingdom of Gods and angels and all beings who will submit themselves to that government in heaven or upon the earth."<sup>33</sup>

The Kingdom, thought President Young, would be similar to the United States in organization and operation. He said that "few if any, understand what a theocratic government is. In every sense of the word, it is a republican government, and differs but little in form from our National, State, and Territorial governments; but its subjects will recognize the will and dictation of the Almighty."<sup>34</sup> The incompatibility of the Kingdom, if sovereignty is to be held by Christ, and a republican or democratic government did not seem to trouble Brigham Young. Christ would be the lawgiver, yet the Council of Fifty would have legislative power. The explanation to this obvious contradiction lies in understanding Young's concept of theocracy more fully.

Transferring Church government procedure to the Kingdom, Young envisaged a system of government which would require the consent of the governed. The "voice of the Church" as it functions in Church affairs for the acceptance of officers and doctrines would be carried over to play a similar role politically in the Kingdom, apparently. "The consent of the

<sup>30</sup>JD, IX (July 13, 1862), 309.

<sup>31</sup>JD, XIII (January 2, 1870), 91; XV (October 9, 1872), 160.

<sup>32</sup>JD, XV (October 9, 1872), 161.

<sup>33</sup>JD, VII (May 22, 1859), 142.

<sup>34</sup>JD, VI (July 31, 1859), 342. Young made this comparison: "The Constitution and Laws of the United States resemble a theocracy more closely than any government now on the earth, or that ever has been, so far as we know, except the government of the children of Israel to the time when they elected a king."

creature," the Mormon leader said, "must be obtained before the Creator can rule perfectly."<sup>35</sup> Young's concept of theocracy portrays the Kingdom more as a republic, Christ more as a president than a king. This unique concept was not clarified in President Young's many discourses on the Kingdom.

The legislature of the Kingdom was considered to be a policy-determining body. During the theocratic period of the Church following the death of Joseph Smith, the Council of Fifty served in a legislative capacity. Illustrative of the business of the Council is the following extract from Brigham Young's history:

Tuesday, September 9, 1845.—Forenoon, unwell. Two p.m. General Council met. Resolved that a company of 1500 men be selected to go to Great Salt Lake valley and that a committee of five be appointed to gather information relative to emigration, and report the same to the council.<sup>36</sup>

Other entries indicate that the Council was involved in setting the policy for governing the City of Nauvoo, planning the exodus, and general policy formulation for the Saints until civil government was established in the Great Salt Lake area.

Territorial government replaced the *de facto* State of Deseret when Congress passed the acts known as the Compromise of 1850. It was not long, however, until the desire for statehood was rekindled when friction resulted with the first federally appointed territorial officials. The unsuccessful bid for statehood in 1856 was followed by another constitutional convention and petition for statehood in 1862. Elections were held on March 3 for officers of the new "State of Deseret"; Brigham Young was unanimously elected Governor. For a decade the "Governor" held great hopes for the star of "Deseret" to shine brightly in the Union's firmament, but the ideal of the Kingdom was even brighter:

This body of men will give laws to the nations of the earth. We meet here in our second Annual Legislature, and I do not care whether you pass any laws this Session or not, but I do not wish you to lose one inch of ground that you have gained in your organization, but hold fast to it, for this is the Kingdom of God, and we are the friends of God and you will find that much will grow out of this organization . . . .

<sup>35</sup>JD, XV (August 18, 1872), 134.

<sup>36</sup>DHC, VII, 439. See also *Ibid*, VII, 379.

We are called the State Legislature, but when the time comes, we shall be called the Kingdom of God. Our government is going to pieces, and it will be like water that is spilt upon the ground that cannot be gathered. . . . For the time will come when we will give laws to the nations of the earth. Joseph Smith organized this government before, in Nauvoo, and he said if we do our duty we should prevail over all our enemies. We should get all things ready, and when the time comes, we shall let the water on to the wheel and start the machine in motion.<sup>37</sup>

It was expected that complete harmony would exist between the executive and legislative departments in the government. Considering the composition of the legislature as being primarily chosen from the leadership of the Church, this might be expected. In 1857 Brigham Young explained that the legislators of the Kingdom of God were among the Latter-day Saints. The legislators would see the wisdom of Christ in his ruling capacity, "and the laws of that kingdom will be made in accordance with the revelations from Jesus Christ."<sup>38</sup>

A suggestion of group rather than geographical representation in the legislature of the Kingdom is evident in Young's political thought. Not only did he believe that there would be different religious groups on earth during the millennium, but these groups would also be represented in the Kingdom's legislature:

A man may be a legislator in that body which will issue laws to sustain the inhabitants of the earth in their individual rights, and still not belong to the Church of Jesus Christ at all.

And further, though a man may not even believe in any religion, it would be perfectly right, when necessary, to give him the privilege of holding a seat among that body which will make laws to govern all the nations of the earth and control those who make no profession of religion to all; for that body would be governed, controlled, and dictated to

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<sup>37</sup>"Journal History of the Church," *Ms*, January 19, 1862. It is interesting to note that the disunion forces of the Civil War did not prompt the Mormons to attempt the establishment of the Kingdom of God as a separate political entity. Even though Brigham Young spoke about the imminent destruction of the United States, the Saints looked to the Constitution of the United States as the proper source of their own political authority. Young's discourses on the Kingdom make it quite clear that he felt that it would be a transition of minor consequence from the governmental system under the Constitution to the Kingdom of God.

<sup>38</sup>JD, V (October 7, 1852), 330.

acknowledge others in those rights which they wish to enjoy themselves.<sup>39</sup>

The sermons of Brigham Young idealized the Kingdom of God as a society where special interests would disappear, political quarrels would cease, and a near-celestial harmony prevail. Even so, he said: "I most assuredly expect that the time will come when every tongue shall confess, and every knee shall bow, to the Savior, though the people may believe what they will with regard to religion."<sup>40</sup> All would acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, but many would nevertheless refuse to embrace the gospel. Indeed he conjectured that "their feelings may be couched in these words, 'I will be damned if I will serve you.'"<sup>41</sup> Young said that seeing the Lord did not make you a Saint, and that it would be some time, apparently after the establishment of the Kingdom, before all humanity would be "one" with Christ. Regardless of this lack of complete unity, in his mind the ideal still remained valid.

The Kingdom would not be self-administering, however. There would be the necessity of having a perfected organization to administer the laws. "When the government of God is in force upon the earth," Young announced, "there will be many officers and branches to that government as there are now to that of the United States. There will be such helps, governments, etc., as the people require in their several capacities and circumstances; for the Lord will not administer everywhere in person."<sup>42</sup> The organs of enforcement, both executive and judicial, would also be necessary. The Kingdom would not be born in conquest, but initially coercion would be necessary. Sheriffs, marshals, constables, magistrates, jurors, and judges would be needed during the initial period of the Kingdom as not all people would be "in the Lord and all walk in his way." When this full unity with the mind and will of the Lord arrives, then mankind would be governed by the word of the Lord, not the sword. "But the kingdom of heaven, when organized upon the earth, will have every officer, law and ordinance necessary for the managing of those who are unruly, or who transgress its laws, and to govern those who desire to do

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<sup>39</sup>JD, II (July 8, 1855), 310.

<sup>40</sup>JD, II (February 18, 1855), 189.

<sup>41</sup>JD, II (July 8, 1855), 316.

<sup>42</sup>JD, VI (July 31, 1859), 346.

right, but cannot quite walk to the line; and all these powers and authorities are in existence in the midst of this people," Young explained.<sup>43</sup>

Brigham Young happily believed, however, that the officers of the Kingdom would perform their duties justly. He said: "Every man that officiates in a public capacity will be filled with the Spirit of God, with the light of God, with the power of God, and will understand right from wrong, truth from error, light from darkness. . . ." <sup>44</sup> Just administration of righteous laws, which were to be based on the revelations of Jesus Christ, would result in the universal justice to be found only in the Kingdom of God. Young summarized his great hope as follows: "If you and I could live in the flesh until that Kingdom is fully established, and actually spread about to rule in a temporal point of view, we should find that it will sustain and uphold every individual in what they deem their individual rights, so far as they do not infringe upon the rights of their fellow creatures."<sup>45</sup>

The government of the United States served as Brigham Young's conceptual framework for the structure of the Kingdom in organization and division of power. It was conceived to be a federal world-state. All of the nations of the world would be incorporated. The "kings and potentates of the nations will come up to Zion to inquire after the ways of the Lord, and to seek out the great knowledge, wisdom, and understanding manifested through the Saints of the Most High."<sup>46</sup> Christ will rule over all nations as "the kingdom of God will be extended over all the earth. . . ." <sup>47</sup> Brigham Young continued: "Suppose the Kingdom of God is compared to the American Eagle; when it spreads over the nations, what will it do? Will it destroy every other bird that now flies, or that will fly? No, but they will exist the same as they do now."<sup>48</sup>

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains . . . and all nations shall flow unto it.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>43</sup>JD, XV (October 9, 1872), 161.

<sup>44</sup>JD, VI (July 31, 1859), 345.

<sup>45</sup>JD, II (July 8, 1855), 309.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 316.

<sup>47</sup>JD, VI (July 31, 1859), 345.

<sup>48</sup>JD, II (July 8, 1855), 315, 16.

<sup>49</sup>Isaiah, 2:2.

And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people. . . . And he shall set up an Ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.<sup>50</sup>

All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye.<sup>51</sup>

These prophecies of Isaiah are representative of Brigham Young's own views, as he visualized the Kingdom of God with a mighty "ensign" or "standard" unfurled in the breeze and beckoning an invitation for the nations of the world to come up to Zion.<sup>52</sup> On this standard would be a flag of all the nations of the world. Brigham Young's attachment to his native country, however, could not be suppressed even in the prospect of this glorious vision of a world-kingdom. He said:

When the day comes in which the Kingdom of God will bear rule, the flag of the United States will proudly flutter unsullied on the flag staff of liberty and equal rights, without a spot to sully its fair surface; the glorious flag our fathers have bequeathed to us will then be unfurled to the breeze by those who have power to hoist aloft and defend its sanctity.<sup>53</sup>

Transcending the scope of a sovereign world-state even, the Kingdom of God which Young envisaged would be a perfect society. The instruments of coercion, which are identified with the state, are to be gradually reduced and ultimately eliminated. This utopian civilization would become a reality, thought Brigham Young:

When the Lord shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither learn war any more. When the world is in a state of true civilization, man will have ceased to contend against his fellow-man, either as individuals, parties, communities, sects, or nations.

<sup>50</sup>Isaiah, 11:11, 12.

<sup>51</sup>Isaiah, 18:3.

<sup>52</sup>See B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Century I* (6 vols.; Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), III, 276.

<sup>53</sup>JD, II (July 8, 1855), 317.

This state of civilization will be brought by the holy Priesthood of the Son of God; and men, with full purpose of heart, will seek unto Him who is pure and holy, even our Great Creator—our Father and God; and he will give them a law that is pure—a government and plan of society possessed by holy beings in heaven. Then there will be no more war, no more bloodshed, no more evil speaking and evil doing; but all will be contented to follow in the path of truth, which alone is calculated to exalt and dignify the whole man, mentally and physically, in all his operations, labours, and purposes.<sup>54</sup>

Impatient with systematic theory, the Mormon prelate did not develop a precise treatise on the Kingdom of God. A thorough search of his discourses and writings on the subject leaves many gaps unclosed. Governmental organization, operation, and powers are hinted at, not developed. Because of Young's incomplete or incompatible political concepts, some might suggest a political naiveté; or, conversely, a realistic comprehension of the potential of the notion of the Kingdom as a motivating force to achieve succeeding objectives of survival, expansion, and eventually a bountiful life for the Saints in the arid West. These conclusions, though partially valid, are inadequate. The Kingdom of God, as idealistic and utopian as it was in many of its aspects, was more than an unattainable ideal "laid up in Heaven" to the Mormon leader. Faith in the Kingdom prompted Brigham Young and many of his followers to labor industriously and sincerely in transforming Utopia into Reality.

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<sup>54</sup>JD, VIII (March 4, 1860), 7.