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Nephi's Outline

Noel B. Reynolds

There are at least two distinct reasons to examine the literary structure of the Book of Mormon. For those who recognize the Book of Mormon as sacred scripture, such a study can enhance their appreciation of its teachings. For others, a literary analysis provides a subtle test of the skeptical hypothesis that this book is a unique product of early nineteenth-century American folk culture. Although the Book of Mormon has been of central importance to both of these groups for a century and a half, it is surprising to discover that very few members of either group have examined it from literary or cultural perspectives. Hugh Nibley's invaluable comparison of the Book of Mormon with ancient Near Eastern culture and John Welch's ground-breaking discovery of ancient literary patterns in the Book of Mormon are among the few such analyses, as is Richard Bushman's insightful and sensitive comparison of Nephite political assumptions to those of early nineteenth-century Americans.¹

The scriptural text which we refer to as the small plates of Nephi was apparently known to the ancient Nephites first as the plates of Nephi and later as the plates of Jacob, a name which distinguished it from the plates of Nephi or the large plates.² Although Nephi refers frequently to the commandment to write the small plates, it becomes apparent only late in his narrative that this commandment was not received until some thirty years after the departure from Jerusalem. Furthermore, it also appears that it took him approximately ten years to write the first twenty-five chapters.³ This ten-year writing period, based on a perspective of thirty years, gave Nephi both the distance and the time he needed to devise a highly complex account with a carefully fashioned rhetorical structure.

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¹Hugh Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Co., 1976); John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," *Brigham Young University Studies* 10 (Autumn 1969): 69-84; and Richard L. Bushman, "The Book of Mormon and the American Revolution," *BYU Studies* 17 (Autumn 1976): 3-20.

²Jacob 3:13-14 (cf. 1 Nephi 9:2).

³2 Nephi 5:30 (cf. 1 Nephi 19:1-5); 2 Nephi 5:34. Certainly part of the reason it took Nephi so long to write these chapters was the difficulty of making and engraving gold plates; see Jacob 4:1.

As I undertook an analysis of Nephi's writings, I was first impressed with their episodic character. Nephi's story reports a number of diverse, selected events which, on first impression, seemed loosely structured and plagued with the author's repetitious moralizing. There seemed to be no clear reason for dividing 1 Nephi from the first several chapters of 2 Nephi, as the latter book continues the same story.

Renewed analysis, however, reveals that 1 Nephi is part of an extended argument based on a thesis which the author announces near the beginning of his narrative and repeats in many forms throughout the book: "Behold, I, Nephi, *will show unto you* that the tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance" (1 Nephi 1:20).⁴ Taking this thesis for a guide and rereading 1 Nephi, we discover that the entire book is a compilation of approximately thirty proofs of this idea that the Lord will deliver those who obey him and endure in faith.⁵

Nephi supports his thesis with a wide variety of evidence designed to appeal especially to the "stiff-necked" and "hardhearted," such as his own brothers, as well as to the righteous. He reports six incidents during his family's journey to the promised land in which the Lord interposes himself: by the power of his spirit, by the appearance and speech of an angel, by his voice, by shock, and also by his power in a tempest at sea. Each of these stories demonstrates that victory does finally come to the faithful in even the most difficult assignments.

An additional range of evidence is drawn from similar stories and experiences from the history of Israel as recorded on the brass plates. Prophecies from the brass plates constitute a further series of proofs for Nephi's thesis, as do the visions and prophecies received by him and his father. Most significant of these proofs is the atonement of Jesus Christ, as revealed to the prophets. For, ultimately, it is by the power of the Atonement that men can be delivered from their greatest enemy, if they will be faithful.

Nephi's faith, as manifest in his writing, is consistently poised against the murmurings and doubtings of his faithless brothers. His primary purpose is to persuade those whose faith might be weak, but who may be receptive. Laman and Lemuel must be persuaded many times; Sariah only once. Nephi repeats his thesis frequently in one

⁴Italics added.

⁵Nephi's father, Lehi, is the first in the Book of Mormon to affirm this; see 1 Nephi 1:14.

form or another so that we cannot fail to see how each of his proofs constitutes independent evidence of the mercy shown by the Lord to the faithful. Finally, the seriousness and the importance of the thesis are dramatically emphasized because both Lehi and Nephi consciously stake their lives on the thesis—with wonderful results.

The recognition that 1 Nephi is a carefully developed argument reveals Nephi as a great champion of the teaching that men must rely on the arm of the Lord and that the Lord will always prepare the way for the faithful to fulfill the commandments given to them, regardless of the opposition they face.

Yet further analysis reveals a far more complex structure. At the beginning of the book, Nephi explains that he will first make an abridgment of his father's record, then an account of his own doings. Beginning at chapter 10, he states that he will now commence with an account of his own proceedings, reign, and ministry. At the end of chapter 9, as at the end of chapter 22 (the last chapter in 1 Nephi), Nephi concludes with a restatement of his thesis, punctuated by the formal ending, "And thus it is. Amen."⁶ The suggestion seems to be that there are two records, an abridgment of Lehi's record followed by an account of Nephi's proceedings, but if those few verses were removed, we would never suspect two records. The story is continuous; Nephi is the narrator of the entire book from beginning to end. And the very next verse continues the speech of Lehi that was interrupted to end chapter 9. We know of Lehi's teachings through Nephi's report, not through a condensation of Lehi's own record. So why does Nephi divide the book in this seemingly arbitrary manner? He even mentions parenthetically that "it mattereth not" to him that he be particular to give a full account of all of the doings of his father . . . "for the fulness of mine intent is that I [Nephi] may persuade men to come unto the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and be saved" (1 Nephi 6:3–4).

The answer seems to be not that there are two distinct records in 1 Nephi, but rather that the book is divided into two parallel structures. The verses previously referred to serve primarily to call our attention to that structural division. A comparison of these two structural halves reveals that the major elements of each portion are directly parallel to each other (see Table 1).⁷

This table raises two questions: First, are the similarities as real as they appear to be, and were they intentionally designed by Nephi?

⁶1 Nephi 1:11–17 (cf. 1:1–3); 10:1; 9:6; 22:31.

⁷The numbering system used in this table is used throughout the article to identify and discuss the various stories in 1 Nephi.

TABLE 1
Lehi's Account Compared to Nephi's Account

(A) 1 Nephi 1-9 (Lehi's Account)	(B) 1 Nephi 10-22 (Nephi's Account)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nephi makes a record (or account) of his proceedings but first gives an abridgment of Lehi's record (1:1-3, 16-17). 2. Nephi gives a brief account of Lehi's prophecies to the Jews, based on visions he received in Jerusalem (1:5-15, 19). 3. Lehi is commanded to journey into the wilderness, and he pitches his tent in the valley he names Lemuel (2:1-7). 4. Lehi teaches and exhorts his sons, and they are confounded (2:8-15). 5. Nephi desires to know the mysteries of God; he is visited by the Holy Spirit and is spoken to by the Lord (2:16-3:1). 6. Lehi is commanded in a dream to send his sons for the brass plates of Laban; this he does (3:2-5:22). 7. In response to a command from the Lord, Lehi sends for Ishmael's family (7:1-22). 8. They gather seeds of every kind (8:1). 9. Lehi reports to his sons details of the great vision received in the wilderness (8:2-35). 10. Lehi exhorts Laman and Lemuel, preaching and prophesying to them (8:36-38). 11. Nephi makes a distinction between the two sets of plates (9:1-5). 12. Nephi ends with a general formulation of his thesis and the formal punctuation: "And thus it is. Amen" (9:6). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nephi now commences to give an account of his proceedings, reign, and ministry but first "must speak somewhat of the things of [his] father, and . . . brethren" (10:1). 2. Nephi reports Lehi's prophecies about the Jews, as given to Laman and Lamuel in the wilderness (10:2-15). 3. Nephi desires to see, hear, and know these mysteries; he is shown a great vision by the Spirit of the Lord and by an angel (10:17-14:30). 4. Nephi instructs and exhorts his brothers, and they are confounded (15:6-16:6). 5. Lehi is commanded to journey further into the wilderness, and he pitches his tent in the land he names Bountiful (16:9-17:6). 6. Nephi is commanded by the voice of the Lord to construct a ship; this he does (17:6-18:4). 7. In response to a command from the Lord, Lehi enters the ship and then sails (18:5-23). 8. Lehi's family plants the seeds and reaps in abundance (18:24). 9. Nephi details the distinctions between the two sets of plates (19:1-7). 10. Nephi preaches and prophesies to Laman and Lemuel, his descendants, and all Israel (19:7-21:26). 11. To explain Isaiah's prophecies to his brothers, Nephi draws on the great vision given to him and Lehi (22:1-28). 12. Nephi ends with the highest formulation of his thesis, focusing on the salvation of man, and with the formal punctuation: "And thus it is. Amen" (22:29-31).

Second, why are elements 3, 5, 9, and 11 rearranged in Nephi's account? The answers that emerge to these questions are very helpful in understanding Nephi's overall intent.

One way to answer the first question is simply to read through the entire book making a detailed comparison. The more obvious parallels appearing in the same order in both accounts are— the statements that Nephi will make a record of his proceedings, the record of the visions and prophecies of Lehi, the discussions of Nephi's desire to know the mysteries of God and his subsequent prophecies and visions, the mention of seeds gathered for use in the promised land, Nephi's discussion of the distinctions between the two sets of plates he is making, the preaching and prophesying to Laman and Lemuel, and the formal endings conjoined with restatements of Nephi's thesis.

The other elements of the comparison are not so obviously parallel. These include the six stories of experiences from the journey of Lehi's family, comprising the three longest elements in both Nephi's and Lehi's accounts (see Table 2 below). As we begin to compare the three stories which appear in Lehi's account with the three appearing in Nephi's, it becomes evident that there are conscious pairings between the two groups. There are too many points of direct resemblance on each side for coincidence.

TABLE 2
(Arrows Connect Stories Containing Parallels)

(A-3)	Lehi leaves Jerusalem.	↔	Lehi crosses wilderness.	(B-5)		
↕	(A-6)	Obtains brass plates.	↔	Constructs ship.	(B-6)	↕
(A-7)	Ishmael leaves Jerusalem.	↔	Crosses ocean.	(B-7)		

Compare, for example, the story of the trip to bring back Ishmael and his family (A-7) with the story of the journey in the ship (B-7):

1. Both accounts are prefaced in the usual way by a command given to Lehi.
2. In each case Nephi's brothers first become rebellious because of their afflictions and lack of faith.

3. After Nephi's exhortations, they rebel against him and bind him with cords.

4. In the first story Nephi is given power from God to burst his bonds, but in the second he specifies that the Lord permitted him to be bound for a purpose.

5. In both instances one of Ishmael's daughters and others plead with Laman and Lemuel to reconcile themselves with Nephi.

6. In the first story they are successful, but in the second these pleas fail and the older brothers are persuaded to relent only when the power of God threatens them with destruction by a storm.

7. In each case relief comes as Nephi prays.

8. Both times Laman and Lemuel repent of their actions.

This analysis shows eight analogous items in the same order in two completely different stories which occupy parallel positions in the structural halves of 1 Nephi. The strength of the claim of parallelism between these two stories does not rest primarily on the uniqueness of the matched items, as only two elements in the series of eight are unique to these two stories. Rather, as in examples which will follow, the strength of the claim rests on the precise order of the parallel elements within each episode.

Analysis reveals this same parallel of details in each of the sets of stories listed in Table 1. Combined with the obvious parallels mentioned earlier, this provides very strong support for dividing 1 Nephi into two parallel accounts, the first labeled "Lehi's account" and the second "Nephi's account." Nephi did not rigorously divide the two accounts⁸ but rather created the appearance of a division primarily to provide us with a guide to the formal structure of the book.

The answer to the second question, concerning the switched ordering of some of the parallel elements, is more complex. Nephi's desire to know the mysteries of God and his experience with the Spirit is reported in Lehi's account (A-5) as part of the story of Lehi's departure into the wilderness. But in Nephi's account (B-3), the discussion of his desire to know the mysteries of God and the recounting of his vision occur as an appendage to Lehi's report of the tree of life, not as part of the parallel story of the journey to the land of Bountiful (B-5). The question remains: if a parallel were intended, why did Nephi allow the reversal of parallel elements to occur twice? One observation which may provide an answer is that these reversals suggest the pattern of chiasmus.

⁸The first nine chapters obviously contain several autobiographical sections which appear to be Nephi's substitutes for Lehi's secondhand accounts of Nephi's experiences.

TABLE 3

LEHI'S
ACCOUNT

(A-3) Lehi is commanded to journey into the wilderness, and he pitches his tent in the valley he names Lemuel.

(A-4) Lehi teaches and exhorts his sons, and they are confounded.

(A-5) Nephi desires to know the mysteries of God; he is visited by the Holy Spirit and is spoken to by the Lord.

NEPHI'S
ACCOUNT

(B-3) Nephi desires to see, hear, and know these mysteries; he is shown a great vision by the Spirit of the Lord and by an angel.

(B-4) Nephi instructs and exhorts his brothers, and they are confounded.

(B-5) Lehi is commanded to journey further into the wilderness, and he pitches his tent in the land he names Bountiful.

TABLE 4

LEHI'S
ACCOUNT

(A-9) Lehi reports to his sons details of the great vision received in the wilderness.

(A-10) Lehi exhorts Laman and Lemuel, preaching and prophesying to them.

(A-11) Nephi makes a distinction between the two sets of plates.

NEPHI'S
ACCOUNT

(B-9) Nephi details the distinctions between the two sets of plates.

(B-10) Nephi preaches and prophesies to Laman and Lemuel, his descendants, and all Israel.

(B-11) To explain Isaiah's prophecies to his brothers, Nephi draws on the great vision given to him and Lehi.

Briefly stated, chiasmus is a peculiar and long-forgotten literary form present in the very earliest Hebrew writing as well as in other ancient Near Eastern works.⁹ In the Hebrew tradition it developed into a rhetorical device in which two sets of parallel elements are presented. The first set is presented 1, 2, 3, etc., but order of presentation is inverted in the second set, 3, 2, 1. An element is often centered between the two sets, usually placed there for emphasis. When the apparently disordered elements of 1 Nephi (Table 1, p. 134) are abstracted and placed together, two chiasms result, as shown in Tables 3 and 4.

As this suggestion of chiastic structure is explored, a further parallel emerges between the halves of 1 Nephi. Each forms a separate chiasm centering on its most important story, the expedition to obtain the brass plates in the first half (A) and the construction of the ship in the second (B).¹⁰ Table 5 outlines this chiastic structure in the first nine chapters of 1 Nephi.

Again the question arises: are such general parallels as Lehi's taking his family into the wilderness and Ishmael's taking his family into the wilderness really sufficiently similar to give them a coordinate location in the formal structure of a chiasm? As in the preceding analysis, a detailed comparison makes the parallels even more evident. There are eight elements in these two stories which occur in the same order:

1. Both open with a family going into the wilderness because of the Lord's command to Lehi.
2. This departure is followed in both instances by the murmuring and rebellion of Laman and Lemuel, who desire to return to Jerusalem.
3. In each case, Laman and Lemuel are then admonished—in the first episode by Lehi, in the second by Nephi.
4. Lehi testifies in the first story that Jerusalem will be destroyed, and in the second story Nephi testifies of the same.
5. In the first episode Laman and Lemuel seek to kill their father, and at the same point in the second they seek to kill Nephi.
6. In the first story Lehi is spared as he confounds Laman and Lemuel by the power of the Spirit, and in the second story Nephi is spared as he bursts his bonds through the power of God.

⁹For a more thorough explanation of chiasmus, see John W. Welch, "A Study Relating Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon to Chiasmus in the Old Testament, Ugaritic Epics, Homer, and Selected Greek and Latin Authors" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1970).

¹⁰These chiasms emerge when major adjacent items in Table 1 are combined. Welch proposes a different chiastic analysis of 1 Nephi which also recognizes the parallel between these key stories; *ibid.*, p. 152.

7. Both stories then report the submission of the rebellious brothers: in the first case as they obey their father and in the second as they seek their brother's forgiveness.

8. Each story ends at Lehi's tent.

TABLE 5
Chiasmus in 1 Nephi 1-9 (Lehi's Account)

-
1. Nephi discusses his record, and he testifies it is true (1:1-3).
 2. Lehi's early visions are reported, followed by his preaching and prophesying to the Jews (1:6-15, 18-20).
 3. Lehi takes his family into the wilderness (2:2-15).
 4. The Lord speaks prophecies to Nephi about Lehi's seed (2:19-24).
 5. Lehi's sons obtain the brass plates, and Nephi records the most striking example of the murmuring of his faithless brothers (3:2-5:16).
 - 4'. Lehi, filled with the Spirit, prophesies about his seed (5:17-19; 7:1).
 - 3'. Ishmael takes his family into the wilderness (7:2-22).
 - 2'. Lehi's tree of life vision is reported, followed by his prophecies and preaching to Laman and Lemuel (8:2-38).
 - 1'. Nephi again discusses his record, and he records his testimony (9:1-6).

Again we have such a wealth of exactly ordered detail that the intended parallelism is hard to deny. Yet here we have compared the Ishmael story to a different story than the one to which it was compared earlier. It is striking that Nephi was able to write each of these stories so that he could use them in parallel construction with two other stories which themselves do not occur as parallels.

This parallel construction is largely facilitated by the single overall pattern in which all six stories are cast. Each begins with a divine command to the prophet Lehi which leads to a conflict between his rebellious, faithless sons and the obedient, faithful Nephi.

In each case the resolution of the conflict is facilitated by some demonstration of divine power, and the command of God is fulfilled by the faithful. In most cases the rebellion of Laman and Lemuel ends in a measure of submission or repentance as Lehi or Nephi forgives them. The lesser details of each story and the variations in the order of the elements are the marks which identify parallel accounts.

The reader will find a similar system of parallels in all four lesser stories of 1 Nephi (see Table 2, p. 135). To show this we must first examine the chiastic structure of 1 Nephi 10–22, as it is outlined in Table 6. Many of the parallels of this chiasm are self-explanatory. The structural requirements of this chiasm explain why Lehi's exposition of his own vision of the tree of life and the prophecies of the Jews and gentiles must be left out in the first report and inserted at this later point. Furthermore, we can now see why Nephi's discussion of how one can come to know the mysteries of God is in a slightly different order in the second half of 1 Nephi as compared to its occurrence in the first half. Its position in the chiasm of the second half apparently has priority.

Again the cautious reader may doubt that all of these chiasms are intentional. But detailed analysis of two stories—the story of Lehi and his family traveling in the wilderness between the valley of Lemuel and the land of Bountiful (B-5) and the story of their journey by ship to the promised land (B-7)—will provide initial grounds for taking these parallels seriously.

1. Each story begins as the voice of the Lord commands Lehi to depart on a journey.

2. In both instances the group gathers all their provisions and their seeds. (It is noteworthy that the only three references to these seeds occur exactly in the parallels that have been mentioned.)

3. In the first they depart across the river; in the second they put forth into the sea.

4. The journey has barely begun before Nephi's brothers begin murmuring—in the first case because of the difficulties resulting from the loss of Nephi's bow, and in the second because they have forgotten the divine power that has brought them there.

5. In the first story Nephi successfully rebukes the murmurers, but in the second he has no such success.

6. Because of his success in the first story, the families receive instructions from the Liahona or "director," which, Nephi explains, works only by faith. At the corresponding point in the second story, the director ceases functioning. The parallel statement in the first

TABLE 6
Chiasmus in 1 Nephi 10–22 (Nephi’s Account)

1. Lehi expands on his great vision, detailing prophecies about the Jews and gentiles (10:1–16).
2. Nephi explains that all men can know the mysteries of God by the power of the Holy Ghost (10:17–22).
3. Nephi reports the great visions and prophecies given to him (11–14).
4. Overcome by the hardness of his brethren, Nephi interprets the great vision to his family, rehearsing one of Isaiah’s prophecies as support (15:2–16:5).
5. Lehi takes his family further into the wilderness (16:9–17:6).
6. Nephi builds a ship and records his most complete reply to the murmuring of his brothers (17:7–18:4).
- 5’. Lehi takes his family across the ocean in the ship (18:5–25).
- 4’. Concerned for those at Jerusalem, Nephi writes for his descendants and all the house of Israel and explains the ancient prophecies of a Redeemer (19:3–23).
- 3’. Nephi quotes chapters of a prophecy from Isaiah which parallels portions of his own great vision (20–21).
- 2’. Nephi explains to his brethren that prophecies are only to be understood by the same Spirit that also manifested these things to the prophets (22:1–3).
- 1’. Nephi offers a final summary of the prophecies about the Jews and the gentiles, drawing primarily from the language of the great vision but also from the brass plates (22:3–28).

story gives the explanation for the failure of the compass in the second story.

7. The death of Ishmael, the afflictions of his daughters, and the attempts of Laman and Lemuel to kill Lehi and Nephi are paralleled in the second story by the report of Lehi and Sariah's grief (almost unto death) and suffering due to the sins of Laman and Lemuel.

8. In the first story the voice of the Lord chastens Laman and Lemuel, thus sparing the lives of Lehi and Nephi. In the second only the Lord's power in the storm can soften Laman and Lemuel's hearts.

9. In each case, the chastening is followed by a period of travel. In the first story, the Lord nourishes the group for eight years in the wilderness. In the second, Nephi guides the ship for many days by following the compass (which now functions perfectly).

10. The first story concludes as the families arrive in the land Bountiful, pitch their tents, and find much fruit and honey. The second story ends as they arrive in the promised land, pitch their tents, find beasts in the forest and a variety of ores.

A first reading of these two stories reveals a certain dissimilarity. During the march through the wilderness (B-5) two separate crises occur: the incident with Nephi's bow and the death of Ishmael; each is followed by rebellion and resolution. However, the list of parallel elements between the stories holds true because Nephi, in effect, makes two crises out of the episode on the ship by excluding part of it on first telling and then going on to a detailed account of the omitted section, treating it structurally as a second episode. This skillful construction orders the events of the second story so that they correspond neatly to those of the first story, confirming that Nephi intended the parallelism.

The combination of ordinary and inverted parallels presented in Tables 1, 5, and 6 suggests a complex set of relationships among the six stories of 1 Nephi (see Table 2, p. 135). Stories A-6 and B-6 parallel each other as center points on Tables 1, 5, and 6. The parallel functions of A-6 and B-6 are emphasized by the facts that (1) these are the only two stories that are given chiastic structures and (2) taken together these stories raise and answer the central issue of 1 Nephi, as will be explained. But the chiastic structures in each half of 1 Nephi (Tables 5 and 6) combined with the direct parallels between the halves (Table 1) indicate that each of the other four stories (A-3, A-7, B-5, and B-7) should have important parallels with *two* other stories to form a second set of parallel narrations. We have shown that A-7 is designed as a parallel for both A-3 and B-7 and that B-7

also parallels B-5. It remains to be seen whether A-3 and B-5 also fit the suggested pattern. Again we note that two stories may be parallel to a third story without being parallel to each other (A-3 is not parallel to B-7; B-5 is not parallel to A-7).

The strongest parallel is the most obvious one: both stories (A-3 and B-5) recount Lehi's journeys in the wilderness. The balanced and ingenious symmetry of the other pairs of stories does not exist here, because A-3 relates the events preceding and following one three-day march, while B-5 relates the events of two short marches plus a summary of the following eight years in the wilderness. Some further evidences of intended parallelism, although not as strong, include the following:

1. Both stories are preceded by verses which state that Lehi had kept all of the commandments he had received from God and that he (A-3) and Nephi (B-5) had been greatly blessed by God.

2. Each story begins with the same elements: the Lord commands Lehi to take his family into the wilderness, they gather provisions, and they depart.

3. In both accounts they pitch their tents after a three-or four-day journey and Lehi names the campsite.

4. When Laman and Lemuel rebel, they are confounded: in the first story by Lehi "filled with the Spirit" and in the second by Nephi speaking "with all the energies" of his soul.

5. Finally, Nephi breaks B-5 into two parts; in both accounts he details the rebellion and chastening of his brothers as a postscript to the stories of the journey. (Although this device adequately establishes the parallel elements in stories B-5 and B-7, it does not have the same effect with A-3.)

Stories A-3 and B-5 have almost as many matched elements as do the other pairs of stories. Even though the elements are not identically ordered, the combination of several parallel elements with some ordered elements, plus the fact that these two stories contain all the wilderness travels, confirms the overall parallelism suggested in the charts.

I have shown that 1 Nephi has a complex structure based on both standard and inverted parallelism, but I have not yet explored the reasons for parallels. Significant ideas can be emphasized by their placement in a chiasm. Alma does this in Alma 36 (see p. 203 of this issue) to call attention to the brief yet crucial central message of his account, "the coming of one Jesus Christ . . . to atone for the sins of the world" (Alma 36:17). This statement is both the turning point in his

dramatic story and an explanation for the important changes in his life which he details in the remainder of the chiasm.¹¹

Analysis of 1 Nephi shows that, not only are A-6 and B-6 related by their central locations in parts A and B respectively, but these are also the only two stories written in chiastic form,¹² as is shown in Tables 7 and 8.

Several important insights are revealed by the chiastic structure of the story of obtaining the brass plates of Laban. The most frequently quoted version of Nephi's thesis—

I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them (1 Nephi 3:7)—

is emphasized by the chiastically parallel testimony of Sariah, stated in almost identical phrases. It is important that each of these testimonies is underscored by the rejoicing of Lehi, who first announced the thesis and who now finds it firmly rooted in the hearts of his wife and son. This may be one reason why Nephi saw the first half of the book as his father's record.

Other interesting details include the parallel between Laban's attempt to slay Laman and Nephi's desire to spare the life of Zoram, Laban's servant. The character comparison between the wicked Laban and the faithful Nephi is very important in helping us to understand the justification for Nephi's midnight execution of Laban. Also, the failure of Lehi's sons to obtain the brass plates through the wordly power of riches is paralleled dramatically by Nephi's miraculous success in obtaining the plates as he is led by the Spirit "not knowing beforehand the things which [he] should do" (1 Nephi 4:6). These comparisons strongly support Nephi's thesis that the Lord protects and aids the faithful.

The central point of this chiasm is but another of the oft-repeated reports that Laman and Lemuel murmured. But in this case, they are murmuring not only because of their real or imagined afflictions but also in direct response to an angelic visitation and to reassurance that the Lord will bless them. This is indeed murmuring par excellence! But why does Nephi choose their murmuring as the central point of both this story and Lehi's entire account (the first

¹¹Welch discusses Alma 36 in detail (Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," pp. 82-84).

¹²Welch finds numerous chiastic details in this long passage (1 Nephi 3-5), but there seems to be no inconsistency between his findings and the full chiastic structure proposed here (see "A Study Relating Chiasmus," pp. 124-25, 159-60).

TABLE 7
Obtaining the Brass Plates

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1. Lehi summarizes the contents of the brass plates, mentioning his genealogy (3:3).
 2. Nephi testifies to his thesis—Lehi is glad (3:7–8).
 3. Nephi attempts to slay Laman (3:9–14).
 4. Lehi's sons are sorrowful, but Nephi exhorts them (3:14–21).
 5. Nephi fails to obtain the brass plates by using gold and silver (3:22–27).
 6. Laman and Lemuel murmur, and they beat Nephi and Sam (3:28).
 7. An angel intervenes, saying that the Lord will help them obtain the plates (3:29–30).
 8. Laman and Lemuel murmur again! (3:31).
 - 7'. Nephi elaborates the angel's message and refers to Moses and the Israelites (4:1–3).
 - 6'. Laman and Lemuel continue to murmur, but they follow Nephi reluctantly (4:4–5).
 - 5'. The Spirit leads Nephi to obtain the plates (4:6–38).
 - 4'. Sariah is sorrowful, and Lehi exhorts her (5:1–6).
 - 3'. Nephi spares Zoram's life (4:30–37).¹³
 - 2'. Sariah testifies to Nephi's thesis—Lehi is glad (5:7–9).
 - 1'. Lehi reviews the contents of the brass plates, with special reference to his genealogy (5:10–19).

¹³In Table 7, elements 3' and 4' are reversed from the order in which Nephi reports them. He could have avoided this reversal only by having Laman and Lemuel sorrowing before Laban tried to slay Laman or by alternating between the events at Jerusalem and Sariah's sorrowing in the camp. Neither of these options would have been acceptable from a narrative viewpoint; and certainly the reversal does not flaw the literary structure, as chiasmus requires careful, distinct order, but not mathematical precision.

nine chapters of the book)? This story alone does not answer the question fully; we must compare it with its counterpart in Nephi's record (the second half of the book). The second of these two great stories in 1 Nephi—the building of the ship—is also a chiasm, but it has a sharply contrasting central point (see Table 8).¹⁴

The story of obtaining the brass plates (Table 7) focuses on the most remarkable instance of Laman and Lemuel's murmuring and is followed immediately by a highly abbreviated account of Nephi's response to them, which includes references to the exodus from Egypt under Moses' inspired leadership. It is significant that the central point of this last chiasm (Table 8) is the longest verbatim account of Nephi's response to the murmuring of his brothers, and that it is the only other response in which he specifically cites as primary evidence for his thesis the interventions of God on behalf of his faithful servants during the Exodus.

Lehi's account focuses on the murmuring; Nephi's account centers on his own response to that murmuring. Together these focal points give in microcosm the story of 1 Nephi and, simultaneously, explain the distinction between 1 and 2 Nephi. The book of 1 Nephi is addressed to Laman and Lemuel—to an audience which seems to accept the powerful interventions of God in ancient times, as recorded in the history of Israel, but which cannot accept and live the teachings of God's prophet, Spirit, or angel, though the message is the same. It contains Nephi's tireless, ingenious, and inspired effort to appeal to that audience, which included many of his own descendants, and to convince them that Jesus would be the Christ and that through the power of the Atonement he could overcome the effects of all the evil in the world. The transition between the two books is effected by Nephi's growing emphasis on the importance of the coming Redeemer, seen in his exhortations to Laman and Lemuel in chapter 19 and in the final reiteration of his thesis, in which he testifies that those who obey God and endure to the end shall be saved at the last day.

In his second book Nephi addresses a much narrower audience: those who embrace the thesis of the first book. Here he emphasizes a selection of prophecies and speeches on redemption and supports these teachings with the fact that he, his father, his brother Jacob, and many ancient prophets such as Isaiah had been redeemed of

¹⁴Cf. Welch's analysis of the chiastic arrangement of the words and phrases in the first half of the passage which I have outlined as a single chiasm (see "A Study Relating Chiasmus," pp. 162–64). This chiasm finally emerges with clarity, although it is more problematic. The major reason for this obscurity is the very long central section which must be treated as one item in the chiastic structure.

God. He documents what it means to be redeemed and spells out in a powerful conclusion how we might take advantage of the great blessing of redemption, which is made available to all men through the Atonement.

Because of Nephi's persistent concern in the first book to advance his thesis that God preserves the faithful, and because of his focus on

TABLE 8
Constructing the Ship

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1. Nephi is commanded to construct a ship (17:8).
 2. The Lord tells Nephi where to find ore for tools (17:9–10).
 3. The Lord blesses them miraculously in the wilderness, that they might know they are led by him (17:11–15).
 4. Laman and Lemuel murmur and complain, not believing that Nephi can build a ship (17:17–19).
 5. Laman and Lemuel repeat the elements of their standing complaint against Nephi and Lehi, denying both that they have been led or supported by God and that the Jews are wicked or can be destroyed (17:17–22).
 6. Nephi responds to the murmuring of Laman and Lemuel in unprecedented detail of his thesis, invoking the ancient history of Israel as the evidence that they would be most likely to accept (17:23–43).
 - 5'. Nephi summarizes the great errors and sins of Laman and Lemuel, comparing them to the wicked Jews, and testifies to the power and goodness of God (17:44–47).
 - 4'. Nephi, in the power of the Spirit, testifies that if God commanded he could not only build a ship but could even make water earth (17:48–52).
 - 3'. Laman and Lemuel are shaken by the power of the Lord in Nephi, and they testify thereof (17:53–55).
 - 2'. The Lord shows Nephi how to build the ship (18:1–3).
 - 1'. The ship is finished, the workmanship "exceeding fine" (18:4).

a marginal audience, Nephi chose not to include several important items: Lehi's last instructions and blessings for his sons; the Song of Nephi; the teachings of Jacob, Lehi, and Nephi on the Redemption; the teachings and prophecies of Isaiah on the Atonement; and Nephi's detailed discussion of the doctrine of Christ. He incorporates these passages in 2 Nephi, which appears to be a collection of odds and ends, its only unifying features being the thematic emphasis on redemption and the general aim at a higher or more spiritually receptive audience than Laman and Lemuel.¹⁵ It is interesting that the cursing of Laman and Lemuel, who were "cut off from the presence of God" (the antithesis of redemption), is mentioned frequently in 2 Nephi.

We do not have access to Nephi's ideas about the rules governing the use of literary structures. Modern studies of the Bible and other ancient literature have produced a variety of inductive reconstructions of stylistic rules the ancients may have used. The rules for chiasmus were obviously very broad, and they varied considerably from one culture and period to another; a combination of short precise chiasms and long general chiastic structures characterizes the ancient Hebrew authors¹⁶ and some of the writers in the Book of Mormon. Without direct access to their rules it is difficult to analyze fully the structure of their writings. In constructing hypothetical outlines we are not certain how to handle sections of text that do not fall neatly into a pattern or that fit a pattern in an obviously unbalanced way.

This analysis leaves some unanswered questions. Several suggested parallel sections of the text are not the same length. Usually the second member of each pair is longer than the first, and in a few cases it is many times as long. There are a few scattered verses, usually repetitive or parenthetical, that are simply left over; I have not attempted to force them into the pattern. The patterns outlined above provide no extraordinary emphasis for the great dreams of Lehi and Nephi, though they do seem to explain why some of the accounts are so brief and others are interrupted. Also, the specific thesis of 1 Nephi may explain why the message of those dreams is not emphasized until 2 Nephi.

There are undoubtedly other aspects of my hypothesis which may raise doubts in the minds of readers. Whether or not the patterns outlined above are exactly right, however, there is ample evidence

¹⁵Welch does find one very general chiasm which provides at least a semblance of overall unity in 2 Nephi (see "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," a chapter in his forthcoming book, *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, ed. J. W. Welch).

¹⁶Nils W. Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942), pp. 30-47.

that Nephi was consciously working with rhetorical patterns and devices. In this article I have attempted to identify only a few such elements. As others are identified, the patterns suggested here will undoubtedly be revised or even replaced. The more such creative response there is to the hypothesis of this article, the more my objectives in writing it will be fulfilled.

This essay is not an attempt to detail the insights we can glean from the observation of an elaborate rhetorical structure in 1 Nephi. There are several reasons why I feel such an attempt would not have been appropriate. Rather, I have chosen simply to gesture in the direction of the central teachings I see emphasized.

My primary objective is twofold. On the one hand, I am hopeful that this initial effort will prove helpful to others who share my own convictions that this book was written and translated by prophets of God. I hope that it may not only help someone to understand better the prophets but also that it will encourage others to improve on these structural analyses. On the other hand, I hope to draw the attention of those who do not yet share my convictions to certain features of the Book of Mormon which simply cannot be explained away as products of nineteenth-century culture. As chiasmic literary structures were not recognized in Hebrew literature until the middle of the century, it seems impossible that *any* modern man could have written the Book of Mormon. The only plausible explanation is the one Joseph Smith gave—the book is an accurate translation of an ancient work.

The Ambivalants

John B. Harris

The time is trembling into advent
As we stand amazed at the burdening brink
Bursting into Everlastingness like the bang of a balloon
Frightening the child in us.
And souls stretched tip-toe tall shrink timid
While hope, head hanging, hurries headlong
Into expectation of Salvation.
What does it mean
That we expectantly doubt life's sole certainty?

Sweet Counsel and Seas of Tribulation: The Religious Life of the Women in Kirtland

Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery

The Mormons fused their church leadership, developed their strong sense of community, and organized their unique ecclesiastical structure while they lived in Kirtland, Ohio, from 1831 to 1838. The women worked beside the men as they struggled with preparation for Zion's Camp, built the temple, and experimented unsteadily with securing financial stability. At the same time as the temporal building of the community progressed, both the men and the women sought expression for their religious fervor. Motivated by spiritual force, many of the women sacrificed to get to Kirtland, and many of them experienced unusual spiritual phenomena while there. The combination of sacrifice and continued religious exhilaration provided faithful women with the determination to remain with the Saints when the Kirtland era came to an end.

Emma and Joseph Smith's arrival in Kirtland on a crisp February day in 1831 signaled the beginning of that era. They had traveled over 300 miles from Fayette, New York, in a windblown sleigh. Emma was pregnant with twins. As she settled into temporary quarters over the Gilbert and Whitney store, she began a new life pattern that the unsettled Kirtland years would offer her and her sisters in the Church.

Loyalty to conviction was pitted against loyalty to family as bitter prejudice forced men and women to choose between the Church and their parents, spouses, or children. A year earlier Emma Hale Smith had said farewell to a saddened mother and embittered father who said he would rather have "followed her to her grave"¹ than see her

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For several years the authors have been involved in a joint project of preparing a biography of Emma Hale Smith.

¹E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled [sic], or a Faithful Account of That Singular Imposition and Delusion, from Its Rise to the Present Time* (Painesville, Ohio: Published by the author, 1834), p. 234.

cast her lot with the controversial Joseph Smith. There is no indication that she ever saw or heard from her parents again. Joseph's own grandmother, Mary Duty Smith, never joined the Church because of the opposition of her eldest son, Jesse, though her daughter claimed she died "firm in the faith of the gospel."²

Other women felt the wrenching emotions of family conflict that came with their difficult conversion decisions. Their accounts are sprinkled throughout Kirtland diaries and letters; Phoebe W. Carter, who later married Wilford Woodruff, is a case in point. She joined the Church in 1834 and about a year later left home for Kirtland:

I . . . journeyed . . . a distance of one thousand miles—a lone maid, sustained only by my faith and trust in Israel's God. My friends marveled at my course, as did I, but something within impelled me on. My mother's grief at my leaving home was almost more than I could bear. . . . My mother told me she would rather see me buried than going thus alone. . . . Especially was she concerned about my leaving home to cast my life lot among the Mormons.³

Why would a mother rather see her daughter dead than Mormon? What caused such hostility toward this fledgling church? While answers to these questions are very complex, one factor may have pertained especially to women. Although conversion patterns of men and women differed little, there are indications that once some women joined the Church they may have faced insinuations that they were more interested in Joseph Smith than in the restored gospel. Joseph Hervy recalled: "I well remember hearing it talked that women left their husbands and families to [go] with Smith."⁴ Max Parkin, in his essay "Kirtland: Stronghold for the Kingdom," lists three reasons for the tar-and-feathering attack at Hiram, Ohio: fear that the Law of Consecration and Stewardship would gain acceptance in Hiram, concern that Hiram might become another major center for the Church, and disgruntlement "*because a man's wife from Shaller-ville had joined the Mormons and gone to Missouri.*"⁵ It may be significant in light of the above, that a physician by the name of Dennison took part in the attack on Joseph for the reported purpose of

²Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, ed. Preston Nibley (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958), p. 244.

³Phoebe Carter Woodruff, "Reminiscence," Mormon Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley. (Microfilm at Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; hereafter cited as Church Archives.)

⁴*Oneonta* (New York) *Herald*, 18 January 1900, as cited in Larry C. Porter, "The Colesville Branch and the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon," *Brigham Young University Studies* 10 (Spring 1970): 382.

⁵Max Parkin, "Kirtland: Stronghold for the Kingdom," *The Restoration Movement: Essays in Mormon History*, ed. F. Mark McKiernan, Alma R. Blair, and Paul M. Edwards (Lawrence, Kan.: Coronado Press, 1973), p. 81; italics added.

emasculating him but refused to do so at the last minute.⁶ Accusation about Joseph's appeal to women were prevalent during the Kirtland period. They ranged from anti-Mormon attacks like those of E. D. Howe⁷ to rumors of polygamy.⁸ That the men who tarred and feathered Joseph had heard—and apparently believed—those rumors is suggested by Dennison's assigned role in the attack.

Whatever the reasons for family schisms, once the commitments were made and baptism was behind them, the new converts looked for ways to express their new convictions and searched out paths which would teach them more. Helen Mar Kimball, daughter of Heber C. and Vilate, recalled attending a Sunday School where she loved "to go and recite verses and whole chapters from the New Testament." She also remembered that her Sunday School teacher was a woman.⁹ There are accounts of women singing in the choirs, but there were few, if any, other formal outlets available to them in the Church.

Filled with the fervor of their convictions, women were obliged to manifest much of their spirituality in their duties at home, and chief among these duties was the rearing of families. What seems to be the earliest recorded lecture concerning the importance of the proper care and training of Mormon children was given by the Prophet's mother, Lucy Mack Smith. She counseled a group of women on "doing their duty to their children. . . . They should consider [them] a blessing, and if they did not treat them as such, they would be taken from them."¹⁰

The arrival of babies brought great expectations to parents who sometimes expressed their own hopes in the naming of their offspring. Nancy Naomi Alexander Tracy gave birth to a son in October 1834. "We wanted him to have a big name out of the Book of Mormon," she related, "so we called him Lachoneus Moroni after two great men." Hopefully the babe had more going for him than his name, and it seems that he did, as Naomi reported, "He was a beautiful child."¹¹

There were many "beautiful children" who died in Kirtland, and parents who had given them the best possible care found themselves grieving over small graves. Death was no stranger in the

⁶"History of Luke Johnson (by Himself)," *Deseret News Weekly*, 19 May 1858, p. 53.

⁷Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, p. 268.

⁸Danel W. Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage before the Death of Joseph Smith" (Master's thesis, Purdue University, 1975), pp. 75-76.

⁹Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, "Life Incidents," *Woman's Exponent* 9 (15 August 1880): 42.

¹⁰Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, p. 197.

¹¹Diary of Nancy Naomi Alexander Tracy, "Incidents, Travels, and Life of Nancy Naomi Alexander," typescript, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Smith family, nor was it to any family in that era. Three of Joseph and Emma's children died in Kirtland, their own infant twins and their adopted son Joseph Murdock Smith. They had lost their first baby, Alvin,¹² while residing in Harmony, Pennsylvania. In the summer of 1832, Joseph wrote to Emma: "I was grieved to hear that Hiram had lost his little child. I think we can in some degree sympathise with him but we all must be reconciled to our lots and Say the will of the Son be done."¹³ It wasn't until January 1836 that Joseph's vision brought a new comfort to mothers and fathers who lost infant children: "And I also beheld that all children who die before they arrive at the years of accountability, are saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven."¹⁴

Women's roles, of course, also included their relationships with their husbands. Organized missionary work was a man's calling except for contacts made by women among local family and friends.

But the support—more often encouragement than cash—came from the women left at home. It was regarded as an act of faith to stay behind, maintain the home, and rear the children. It was also an act of sacrifice and love.

Caroline Barnes Crosby arrived in Kirtland with her husband, Jonathan, in January 1836. She later described her feelings:

Shortly after our arrival my husband was ordained to the office of an elder and chosen into the seond quorum of seventies. I well recollect the sensations with which my mind was actuated when I learned the fact that my husband had been called and ordained to the Melchezedek priesthood and would undoubtedly be required to travel and preach the Gospel, to the nations of the earth. I realized in some degree the immense responsibility of the office and besought the Lord for grace and wisdom to be given him that he might be able to magnify this high and holy calling.¹⁵

It appears that, for a woman, sending a man into the mission field was a vicarious religious experience.

Emma knew what it was to be left behind, sometimes without a home of her own, to be shifted with little Julia (Julia Murdock Smith,

¹²This baby's name has traditionally been referred to as Alva, but Emma's Bible lists his name as Alvin (see Buddy Youngreen, "Joseph and Emma: A Slide-Film Presentation," *BYU Studies* 14 [Winter 1974]: 199).

¹³Joseph Smith to Emma Smith, 6 June 1832, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago (photocopy of original in Church Archives).

¹⁴B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1965), 2:75.

¹⁵Caroline Barnes Crosby, "Memoirs," holograph, Utah State Historical Society. The authors are indebted to Jill Mulvay Derr for her assistance in locating many of the sources for this article as well as offering insights and suggestions. She also provided us with a typescript of the Caroline Barnes Crosby memoirs. Some punctuation has been added.

the remaining adopted child) from household to household. As wife of the Prophet her lot differed somewhat from that of other sisters. She was, whether she liked it or not, the model Mormon woman—the example. When others arrived in the burgeoning town and had to move in with someone else while a cabin was built, though, they could see that Emma also had to wait. When she finally did have a house of her own, Emma and Joseph had little privacy. Meetings took place in their house, streams of curious people came to see the mummies kept there after Joseph purchased them from Michael Chandler, and a continual influx of men boarded there while working on the temple. Lucy Mack Smith described conditions in Emma's home: "How often I have parted every bed in the house for the accommodation of the brethren, and then laid a single blanket on the floor for my husband and myself, while Joseph and Emma slept upon the same floor, with nothing but their cloaks for both bed and bedding."¹⁶

The building of the temple became another part of everyday life, and women added their strength to the task. Arvet Lucius Hale as a child in Kirtland remembered that "all that was not on Mishons did work all most constant from the time it was commenced till it was completed. Some women and chrelden labord and tended mason. One sister I have forgot the name drove two yoak of cattle and haled rock."¹⁷ Lucy Mack Smith mentioned two young ladies in this regard: "Mary Bailey and Agnes Coolbrith were then boarding with me; they devoted their time to making and mending clothes for the men who were employed on . . . the building of the Lord's house."¹⁸ Other women "spun wool, made clothes for craftsmen, and made drapery and carpets for the temple."¹⁹ Polly Angell, wife of Truman O. Angell, related that she and a group of sisters were working on the veils in the temple when Joseph and Sidney Rigdon stopped by. "'Well, sisters,' observed Joseph, 'you are always on hand. The sisters are always first and foremost in all good works. Mary was first at the resurrection; and the sisters now are the first to work on the inside of the temple.'"²⁰

Tradition has the women sacrificing their fine china and glassware to be crushed and mixed with the stucco which covered the outer stone walls, thus giving a sparkle to the exterior. However, we

¹⁶Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, pp. 231–32.

¹⁷Arvet Lucius Hale, "Reminiscence," in "First Book or Journal of the Life and Travels of Arvet L. Hale," MS, Church Archives. Some punctuation has been added.

¹⁸Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, p. 231. Both of these women became Lucy's daughters-in-law; Mary became the wife of Samuel H. Smith and Agnes married Don Carlos Smith.

¹⁹Parkin, "Kirtland," p. 86.

²⁰Edward W. Tullidge, *Women in Mormondom* (1877; reprinted, Salt Lake City: n.p., 1965), p. 76.

have not found any contemporary accounts relating such a sacrifice. There is no doubt that dishes and glassware were mixed with the stucco, but whether they were old or discarded dishes or the ladies' best is not known.

As rooms in the temple were completed, they were put into use. Soon the brethren attended the School of the Prophets where Jonathan Crosby learned Hebrew with the other brethren; his wife studied it too, but she had to do it at home. Later, washings and anointings along with a partial endowment took place in the temple. These activities and ordinances were exclusively for the brethren.

It soon became apparent to the sisters that they were to be excluded from use of the temple except for public gatherings, and they would have no part in the dedication ceremonies. Understandably, a few of the women who had worked so hard for the completion of the House of the Lord were disgruntled over the situation. According to George A. Smith, later an apostle and a First Counselor to President Brigham Young, "Some of them were right huffy about it."²¹

Although the sisters did not participate directly in the dedication of the temple, they were present. They probably sang the songs from Emma Smith's small hymnal, published just prior to the dedication, and they witnessed many of the spiritual manifestations that took place. About the dedication of the temple, one woman reported:

They were two of the happiest days of my life. . . . It was verily true that the Heavenly Influence rested down upon that house. . . . Heavenly beings appeared to many. Solemn assemblies were called. Endowments were given. The Elders went from house to house, blessing the Saints and administering the sacrament. Feasts were given. Three families joined together and held one at our house. We baked a lot of bread and had the best of wine.²²

Many spiritual experiences occurred in and around the completed temple. Prescindia Huntington told of several spiritual gifts manifest during this time and described a Thursday fast meeting where the entire congregation knelt and prayed softly. During the praying both Prescindia and her sister, Zina, heard "a choir of angels singing most beautifully" overhead and toward one corner of the room. Neither of them saw the angels, but "myriads of angelic voices seemed to be united in singing some song of Zion."²³

On another fast day Prescindia was at home when a child came to her door and told her there was a meeting on top of the temple:

²¹George A. Smith in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints Book Depot, 1855-1886), 2:215 (18 March 1855).

²²Diary of Nancy Naomi Alexander Tracy.

²³Tullidge, *Women in Mormondom*, p. 208.

I went to the door, and there I saw on the temple angels clothed in white covering the roof from end to end. They seemed to be walking to and fro; they appeared and disappeared. The third time they appeared and disappeared before I realized that they were not mortal men. Each time in a moment they vanished, and their reappearance was the same. This was in broad daylight, in the afternoon. A number of children in Kirtland saw the same.²⁴

That evening when the members of the congregation went home they related the events that had taken place in the temple that day. There had been “prophesying and speaking in tongues. It was also said, in the interpretation of tongues, ‘That the angels were resting down upon the house.’”²⁵

There were those who were curious about the Church and considered it a source for a good laugh. The Huntington sisters had a cousin visit them who, for that very reason, wanted to attend a fast meeting and hear someone sing or speak in tongues. Prescindia related the incident: “Accordingly we went with our cousin to the meeting, during which a Brother McCarter rose and sang a song of Zion in tongues; I arose and sang simultaneously with him the same tune and words, beginning and ending each verse in perfect unison, without varying a word. It was just as though we had sung it together a thousand times.”²⁶ The cousin did not go home laughing. Instead, she never felt so solemn in her life.

Others described similar experiences. Mary Fielding, later the wife of Hiram Smith, told of meetings where many prophesied, spoke in and interpreted tongues.²⁷ For Mary and her associates, these times were the peak of their spiritual life in Kirtland. Denied other expressions of their religiosity, the Kirtland women seemed to turn increasingly to spiritual gifts.

Although women relate spiritual manifestations throughout Mormon history, these accounts subsided during the heavy persecution in Missouri, and in the Nauvoo period after the Relief Society was organized. When the Relief Society was disbanded, however, and the followers of Brigham moved to Winter Quarters, the mystical occurrences among women increased. At that time direct threats of persecution were less frequent, and there were no formal outlets or organizations for the sisters within the Church. Once the Saints settled in the Rocky Mountains, the Relief Society was reestablished and other auxiliaries were organized. As women took a larger role within

²⁴Ibid., p. 207.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 208–09.

²⁷Mary Fielding to her sister, 8 July 1837, Church Archives.

the church framework, unusual spiritual phenomena faded again. Certainly official displeasure and cultural changes had their effect. But it might also be concluded that when women did not have ways within the church structure to fulfill their needs, or when they were not preoccupied with their immediate survival and safety, they developed other means to satisfy their spiritual yearnings. Unfortunately, diaries and records of women in the early period of the Reorganization are too sparse to determine if this trend held true for the women who followed Joseph Smith, III.

Spiritual gifts were not confined to speaking in tongues, nor did mystical experiences occur only in the temple in Kirtland. Sarah Leavitt, her husband, and family lived outside of Kirtland. Their daughter Louisa had been ill for over a year. As Sarah grew more concerned about her daughter's condition, she pleaded with the Lord for help. An angel appeared and instructed her to get Louisa out of bed, "lay . . . hands upon her head in the name of Jesus Christ and administer to her and she should recover." Unsure of her authority, but emboldened by the experience, Sarah woke her husband and told him to prepare Louisa for the blessing. Though it was near midnight and Louisa was weak, she arose from her bed and Sarah administered to her. Louisa was soon "up and about."²⁸

That these spiritual powers among women were endorsed by the brethren is clearly emphasized by three examples: (1) Church Patriarch Joseph Smith, Sr., in 1837 pronounced a blessing on the head of Edna Rogers: "In the absence of thy husband thou must pray with thy family. When they are sick thou shall lay hands on them, and they shall recover. Sickness shall stand back."²⁹ (2) Some questioned Joseph later in Nauvoo concerning women venturing into areas believed to be reserved for the priesthood. He responded by "showing how the sisters would come in possession of the privileges, blessings and gifts of the Priesthood, and that the signs should follow them, such as healing the sick [and] casting out devils."³⁰ (3) Eliza R. Snow's minutes quote the Prophet as saying "there could be no more sin in any female laying hands on and praying for the sick, than in wetting the face with water."³¹ He did caution them about speaking in tongues; they were to speak in their own language if they had "matter to reveal" and "not indulge too much in the exercise of the

²⁸History of Sarah Studevant Leavitt, copies from her history by Juanita Leavitt (n.p., 1919), pp. 7, 9-10.

²⁹Blessing given to Edna Rogers by Joseph Smith, Sr., as cited in Carol Lynn Pearson, *Daughters of Light* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1973), p. 65.

³⁰Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1959-60), 4:602; hereafter cited as HC.

³¹HC, 4:604.

gift of tongues.’’ It was all right for them to exercise that particular gift for their own comfort but teaching ‘‘by the gift of tongues . . . is not to be received for doctrine.’’³²

On balance, however, there are more accounts of women being blessed with faith to be healed than there are of women actually healing others. For example, the crippled arm of John Johnson’s wife was healed by Joseph Smith; Joseph’s sister Sophronia was healed by a blessing given her by her father and brothers after the doctor had given up hope of her recovery; and Lucy was healed of blindness resulting from an eye infection.

Each sister responded differently to religious happenings around her. There does not seem to be any indication that Emma Smith spoke in tongues or experienced other mystical phenomena. She was a practical woman and her religious experiences served her, and she in turn served others, in that light. Although glimpses are all we get of her spiritual involvement, it is clear from her letters to and from Joseph that she relied on both faith and prayer.

There is no question that the early Saints occasionally became overzealous in the practice of their religion. The women were no exception, and mystical experiences were only one of several types of enthusiasms that sometimes brought chastisement. Jared Carter became alarmed in the summer of 1831 by incidents in the Amhurst, Ohio, branch that detracted from the spirit. He attended one meeting in which a woman, just as the sacrament was to be administered, was ‘‘taken with an exercise that brought her to the floor.’’ Jared was not impressed. With great difficulty he tried to rid the meeting of the alien spirit he believed had invaded the gathering. He related that it ‘‘was very trying to the brethren present, as nearly all of them believed that it was of God.’’³³

About that same time Parley P. Pratt, who had been sent to visit the branches in the Kirtland area, was finding the same kind of situation there. Parley reported these happenings to the Prophet, who inquired of the Lord. The revelation he received warned of false spirits which deceive. ‘‘That which doth not edify is not of God and is darkness.’’³⁴ Rolling on the floor, unusual body movements, and fits of screaming and yelling were in the category of ‘‘that which doth not edify’’ and such practices soon came to an end.

Not long after Joseph arrived in Kirtland a woman by the name

³²HC, 4:607.

³³Journal History of the Church, July 1831, Church Archives.

³⁴Joseph Smith, Jr., *Book of Commandments* (Zion [Missouri]: W. W. Phelps and Co., 1833), chap. 53:20 (reprint Independence, Mo.: Herald House, 1972).

of Hubble became the topic of much conversation. It seems that she fancied herself a prophetess and “professed to have many revelations.” She bore testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon and, John Whitmer said, “deceived some, who were not able to detect her in her hypocrisy.”³⁵ Again, Joseph inquired of the Lord:

And this I give unto you, that you may not be deceived; that you may know they are not of me. . . . He that is ordained of me shall come in at the gate and be ordained as I have told you before, to teach those revelations which you have received, and shall receive through him whom I have appointed.³⁶

Attendance at church meetings was expected and Joseph thought his wife should set an example for the other women to follow. He felt it necessary, at one point, to reprimand Emma “for leaving the meeting before Sacrament; she made no reply, but manifested a contrition by weeping.”³⁷ The interpretation of Emma’s tears is Joseph’s.

If the Saints were reprimanded, they were also blessed. Evenings were often filled with gatherings where Joseph Smith, Sr., who was then Patriarch to the Church, pronounced promises and blessings upon the heads of the faithful. It was not uncommon for several families to assemble for the blessing occasion. These gatherings held much significance for the women. Again, it was a way of becoming involved in the religious-social community; consequently, these experiences were relished and described at length in their writings. Caroline Barnes Crosby’s recollection of her blessing is typical:

These blessings cheered and rejoiced our hearts exceedingly. I truly felt humble before the Lord. . . . They led me to search into my own heart, to see if there was any sin concealed there, and if so, to repent, and ask God to make me clean, and pure, in very deed. The Patriarch conversed with us some. . . . Mother (Lucy Mack) Smith was in the room. She added her blessing or confirmed what we had already received.³⁸

Emma Hale Smith was also given a patriarchal blessing by her father-in-law in December 1834. Oliver Cowdery was there to record it. Emma was blessed and comforted. She was told that the Lord had heard her prayer for Joseph’s deliverance from his enemies. She was reminded of her father’s family and told that some of them would

³⁵John Whitmer, *The Book of John Whitmer*, carbon copy of typescript, Church Archives, p. 4.

³⁶Joseph Smith, Jr., *Book of Commandments*, chap. 45:6–7.

³⁷HC, 2:304.

³⁸Crosby “Memoirs.”

“see their folly and repent of their sins”; but only “by affliction” would they be saved.

Thou has seen much sorrow because the Lord has taken from thee three of thy children; in this thou art not to be blamed, for he knows thy pure desires to raise up a family, that the name of my son might be blessed. And now, . . . thou shalt yet be blessed and thou shalt bring forth other children, to the joy and satisfaction of thy soul, and to the rejoicing of thy friends. Thou shalt be blessed with understanding, and have power to instruct thy sex. Teach thy family righteousness, and thy little ones the way of life, and the holy angels shall watch over thee, and thou shalt be saved in the kingdom of God.³⁹

The word *ordination* is seen from time to time in connection with blessings given to women of the Church. Emma was “ordained” by the Prophet to expound the scriptures and to exhort the Church. Later, in Nauvoo, Joseph spoke of the sisters’ being “ordained to preside over and lead”⁴⁰ the other women in the Relief Society. They were also ordained to heal the sick. These ordinations when conferred on women were, apparently, independent from the priesthood; they were what might be termed “callings.”⁴¹

Emma’s role as the Prophet’s wife often took an interesting turn. Newly converted sisters looked to her to set the standard they expected to find throughout the Church. Vesta Crawford, an early editor of the *Relief Society Magazine*, in her unpublished manuscript of Emma Smith, told of one such encounter.

An old lady drove up to the Prophet’s house, desiring to look at God’s mouthpiece before she had even washed the dust from her eyes. Emma thought a cup of strong tea would revive her for she had traveled far over rutty roads. And to be sure she did smack her lips over the cup, but when she went about town she whispered that “Emma did not keep the Word of Wisdom, and if Joseph couldn’t control his own household” . . . She left the Church and left it in company.⁴²

Others left the Church, too, but for more serious reasons. By 1837 apostasy was rampant. Eliza R. Snow reflected on conditions during that time:

For see, ah, see! in yonder eastern land—
In Kirtland City, a promiscuous band,
Where wheat and tares to such a height had grown
That Saints could scarce from hypocrites be known!⁴³

³⁹Joseph Smith, Sr., blessing given to Emma Smith, Emma Smith Papers, Archives of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Independence, Mo.

⁴⁰HC, 4:607.

⁴¹HC, 4:603 (see also *Journal of Discourses*, 21:367–68).

⁴²Vesta Crawford, MS, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, p. 53.

⁴³Eliza R. Snow, “The Gathering of the Saints, and the Commencement of the City of Adam-ondi-ahman,” *Poems, Religious, Historical, and Political*, 2 vols. (Liverpool: R. James, 1856), 1:10.

Mary Fielding's letters provide some excellent insights into the schisms among the leaders of the Church. She told of attending meetings in the temple where Parley P. Pratt vied with Sidney Rigdon over Joseph's leadership, while the Prophet lay deathly ill. Caroline Crosby heard rumors that her neighbors were leaving the Church:

We had taken sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God as friends. . . . I met sister Riggs and asked her if it was true that she had apostatized. She said she was dissatisfied with some things in the Church, but that she still believed in the Book of Mormon and thought she always should. I felt very sorrowful and gloomy, but never had the first idea of leaving the Church or forsaking the prophet.⁴⁴

Hepzibah Richards's letters also serve to illuminate those last volatile months that closed the Kirtland era. "I care not how soon I am away from this place," she writes; "I have been wading in a sea of tribulation ever since I came here. For the Last three months we as a people have been tempest tossed; and at times the waves have well nigh overwhelmed us."⁴⁵

For Lucy Mack Smith the nightmarish episodes of the New York era repeated themselves—her home searched, her husband arrested, and her sons forced into hiding. Undaunted, she prepared to leave for New Portage where Joseph, Sr., was safe after his escape from Kirtland.

Seven years after her arrival, Emma Smith left Kirtland to join her husband who awaited her sixty miles west in Norton. In outward appearance, she left as she had arrived—expecting another child, traveling overland in the dead of winter to a new gathering place, and abandoning three more infant graves.

But Emma Smith, Phoebe Carter, Carolyn Crosby, Sarah Leavitt, Mary Fielding, and the other women who joined them as the Church moved to Missouri were changed by their experiences. The sense of community, the strong bonds of shared testimonials, the triumphs over apostasy, and the knowledge that they had almost made the first experiment work buoyed them on. These women moved from Kirtland with the firm conviction that sweet counsel could meet seas of tribulation and their spiritual strength would triumph. The tares had been weeded from the wheat.

⁴⁴Crosby, "Memoirs."

⁴⁵Hepzibah Richards to Friends, 23 March 1838, Richards Family Correspondence, Church Archives.

The Council of Fifty and Its Members, 1844 to 1945

D. Michael Quinn

Since the mid-1950s, several articles, graduate theses, and books have examined the existence and supposed role of the "Council of Fifty" in Mormon history, so that by now the Council of Fifty is within the general awareness of a large proportion of Latter-day Saints as well as interested non-Mormons. Unfortunately, these writers did not have access to documents presently available; and, in some cases, they did not consult important sources then available. Because casual examination can make anything appear monstrous under the academic microscope, scholarly studies of the Council of Fifty thus far have tended to distort insufficient evidence and sometimes to sensationalize their interpretations.¹ Current research into the documents and historical environment of the Council of Fifty requires a rewriting of these scholarly and highly popular interpretations rather than a rewriting of Mormon history in light of these previous interpretations of the Council of Fifty.

The primary role of the Council of Fifty was to symbolize the otherworldly world order that would be established during the millennial reign of Christ on earth. Aside from its symbolic value, the singular importance of the Council of Fifty is that it reveals Joseph Smith, Jr., as Mormonism's greatest Constitutionalist. The 1844 minutes of the Council contain hundreds of pages of the Prophet's

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¹Robert Glass Cleland and Juanita Brooks, eds., *A Mormon Chronicle: The Diaries of John D. Lee, 1848-1876*, 2 vols. (San Marino, Calif.: The Huntington Library, 1955), 1:xxiii and *passim*; James R. Clark, "The Kingdom of God, the Council of Fifty, and the State of Deseret," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 26 (April 1958): 131-48; Hyrum L. Andrus, *Joseph Smith and World Government* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Co., 1958); Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 31-32 and *passim*; Jo Ann Barnett Shipp, "The Mormons in Politics: The First Hundred Years" (Ph.D. diss., University of Colorado, 1965); Klaus J. Hansen, *Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967). Klaus Hansen's work is most vulnerable to this criticism because his 1974 second edition stated that there was no need for revision, when in fact his interpretations were indefensible in view of diaries and other manuscripts readily available for research at the time of the second edition.

teachings about the meaning of the U.S. Constitution and the application of that document to the Latter-day Saints in the world and during the Millennium.

The secondary role of the Council of Fifty involved its literal, practical functions. The Council of Fifty was only infrequently active throughout its history, and LDS Church leadership dominated and directed it when it was active. The Council was not a challenge to the existing system of law and government but functioned in roles familiar to American political science: special interest lobby, caucus, local political machine, and private organization governed by parliamentary procedures. Because LDS leaders did not regard the Council of Fifty as subversive of American institutions, its existence was common knowledge among the Latter-day Saints as long as it functioned, and its deliberations were no more secret than were those of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. As a non-revolutionary political instrument, the Council of Fifty held its final meeting in 1884, but the organization continued to survive technically until the last of its members died in 1945.

ESTABLISHMENT

Among several historical questions about the Council of Fifty is the matter of dating its establishment. A different date for its organization is provided by each of four reputable original sources—7 April 1842; 10, 11, and 13 March 1844—primarily because each source considered a different event as marking the Council's origin. Each of these dates has significance in the establishment of the Council of Fifty.

The minutes of the Council for 10 April 1880 state that "it was organized by the Lord. April 7th 1842." They further indicate that this was the date of the revelation to Joseph Smith which provided the name and mission of the organization.² Dating the organization of the Council of Fifty in terms of the revelation and not when Joseph Smith acted upon the revelation thus fulfills the prophecy of Daniel that the Kingdom of God was a rock cut out of the mountain without hands (Daniel 2:44-45). LDS leaders often cited the Daniel passage when they spoke of the organization of the latter-day Kingdom of God.³ At present, no document has surfaced that explains why Joseph Smith waited two years to give temporal fulfillment to that

²Minutes of the Council of Fifty, 10 April 1880, typed copy, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

³Examples in Hyrum L. Andrus, *Doctrines of the Kingdom*, vol. 3 of *Foundations of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1973), pp. 40-46.

which “was organized by the Lord. April 7th 1842,” but the 1842 date stands as the divine establishment.

When it comes to the temporal establishment, Wilford Woodruff and Franklin D. Richards state that Joseph Smith organized the Council of Fifty on 10 March 1844.⁴ On that date, Joseph Smith read two letters from Lyman Wight, George Miller, and their associates, who were on a mission in Wisconsin to obtain lumber to build the Nauvoo House and the Nauvoo Temple in Illinois. Lyman Wight complained that the U.S. Indian agent was using his legal powers to prevent the Latter-day Saints from dealing with the Indians who allowed the Mormons to obtain lumber from Indian lands. Elder Wight asked the First Presidency to let his group go with the Indians to the Republic of Texas where they would be free from U.S. laws and could establish a gathering place.⁵

Joseph Smith’s handwritten journal for 10 March 1844 indicates how a 4:30 P.M. meeting of a few associates at the Nauvoo Mansion to discuss these letters was the starting point for the organization of the Council of Fifty:

Joseph asked., can this council keep what I say. not make it
Public—all held up thir [*sic*] hands. [one blank line]
Copy the constitution of the U.S.
hands of a select committee [one blank line]
No law can be enacted but what every man can be protected from.

The meeting adjourned and reconvened at 7 P.M. in the assembly room above Joseph Smith’s store where he had introduced the endowment ceremonies in May 1842, and where he now met “in council” with these men and “enjoined perfect secrecy of them.”⁶

Joseph Smith may not have planned to organize a special council on this occasion, but in the process of this day’s meetings the Prophet made a provisional organization, as indicated by the facts that one of those in attendance, John Phelps, was not among those formally admitted to the Council of Fifty after 10 March 1844 and that Willard Richards remained provisional chairman only three days.⁷

⁴Wilford Woodruff Journal, 10 March 1844, and Franklin D. Richards Journal, 10 April 1880, both at Library-Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; hereafter cited as Church Archives.

⁵Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. Brigham H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1932–1951), 6:255–60; hereafter cited as *HC*.

⁶Joseph Smith Jr. Journal, 10 March 1844, kept by Willard Richards, Church Archives. His long entries for this date were omitted from the published *History of the Church*, 6:160, and his much briefer entry for 11 March 1844 was expanded greatly in *HC*, 6:160–61.

⁷Joseph Smith Jr. Journal, 10 and 11 March 1844; *HC*, 6:160–61; William Clayton Journal, entries from 10 March to 18 April 1844, referred to in James B. Allen, “One Man’s Nauvoo: The Mormon Experience in Illinois as Seen and Felt by William Clayton,” *Journal of Mormon History* 6 (1979).

The Manuscript History of the Church, the published *History of the Church*, and the journals of William Clayton and Joseph Fielding all state that the Council of Fifty was organized on 11 March 1844.⁸ Because this is the date when Joseph Smith first formally admitted men to membership in the organization that became the Council of Fifty, scholars have most often used 11 March 1844 as the organization date. This practice is appropriate as long as it is recognized why members of the Council of Fifty sometimes also identified the establishment of the Council with the other dates under discussion here.

Brigham Young's handwritten journal and manuscript history state that the organization occurred on 13 March 1844.⁹ On this occasion Joseph Smith was chosen the "standing chairman" of the Council of Fifty, replacing the provisional chairman Willard Richards.¹⁰ From this date onward, the President of the Church was always the standing chairman of the Council of Fifty. In view of Brigham Young's emphasis on the primacy of the LDS President, it is natural that he would stress 13 March 1844 as the date of establishment.

NAMES

Original documents not only assign various dates of establishment but also designate this special organization by a variety of names. The specific names must be known in order to identify the Council of Fifty and to avoid assuming that every oblique reference to "council" applies to the Council of Fifty. In a revelation presented by John Taylor to the Council of Fifty on 27 June 1882, as well as in the minutes of the 10 April 1880 meeting of the Council of Fifty and in the journals of William Clayton, Franklin D. Richards, and Joseph F. Smith, the official, revealed name of the Council of Fifty is "The

⁸Manuscript History of the Church, 11 March 1844, and Joseph Fielding Journal, 11 March 1849, Church Archives; William Clayton Journal, 11 March 1844, as cited in Allen, "One Man's Nauvoo," fn. 20.

⁹Brigham Young Journal, 13 March 1844, Church Archives; Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 13 March 1844. In later published versions of "History of Brigham Young," this was altered to conform to the traditional 11 March 1844 date. See *Latter-day Saints Millennial Star* 26 (21 May 1864): 328.

¹⁰William Clayton Journal, 13 March 1844, referred to in Allen, "One Man's Nauvoo," fn. 21; HC, 6:263. "History of Brigham Young," *LDS Millennial Star* 26 (21 May 1864): 328 describes these appointments but puts them on 11 March 1844, contrary to Brigham Young's handwritten journal and to William Clayton's journal.

Kingdom of God and His Laws with the Keys and Power[s] thereof, and Judgment in the Hands of His Servants, Ahman Christ.”¹¹

This name was too complex to be easily remembered or written, and so this organization had a wide assortment of shorter designations. Sticking closely to the revealed name, Heber C. Kimball and John Henry Smith called it “The Kingdom of God.”¹² In a briefer reference to the full name, Joseph Smith, Willard Richards, and Heber C. Kimball mentioned it as “The Kingdom,”¹³ and Heber C. Kimball sometimes called it simply “The K.”¹⁴ After referring to it three times as “Special Council,” the Manuscript History of the Church and the published *History of the Church* henceforth called it “the General Council.”¹⁵ George Miller and Franklin D. Richards designated it “Council of the Kingdom,” whereas William Clayton

¹¹This is the name from the revelation of 27 June 1882 as found in a collection of John Taylor’s revelations copied by his daughter Annie Taylor Hyde in her notebook, p. 67, Church Archives. The William Clayton Journal, 1 January 1845, gives the same reading of the name except that William Clayton makes “Laws” singular and makes “Power” plural (see Allen, “One Man’s Nauvoo,” fn. 21). The 10 April 1880 minutes agree with the 1882 revelation except in leaving out “Ahman Christ” and in making “Power” plural. The Franklin D. Richards Journal for 16 March 1880 and the Joseph F. Smith Journal memorandum, recorded following the 31 December 1880 entry, Church Archives, both agree with the 1882 revelation except for leaving out the words “Ahman Christ” and making “Power” plural. However, Joseph F. Smith in his journal for 16 March 1880 agrees with the singular form of “Power.” Abbreviated versions of the full name yet closing with the words “Ahman Christ” are found in the entry for 9 October 1884 in the Abraham H. Cannon Journal, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, and the 3 March 1849 entry in the John D. Lee Journal as published in Cleland and Brooks, *A Mormon Chronicle*, 1:98. The Wilford Woodruff Journal, 29 May 1847, gives the name in an abbreviated and shorthand form: “The Kingdom of God & his Law & Judgment in [then follows the shorthand:] th[e] h[a]nds [o]f [hi]s s[e]rtnts [sic] a[h]m[a]n [then a cross for Christ].” The preceding transcription is courtesy of Andrew F. Ehat, editorial intern for *BYU Studies*.

¹²Heber C. Kimball Journal, 4 February 1845, Church Archives; John Henry Smith Journal, 18 May 1881, in George A. Smith Family Collection, Western Americana, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

¹³Joseph Smith Journal, 13 May 1844; Willard Richards Journal, 13 May 1844; and Heber C. Kimball Journal, 1 March 1845.

¹⁴Heber C. Kimball Journal, 11 March 1845.

¹⁵B. H. Roberts cited the original manuscript for the *History of the Church* whereas the 1857 compilers of the Manuscript History of the Church footnoted the term “General Council” in the manuscript and identified it as the Council of Fifty (see *HC*, 7:379). It should be noted that the term “General Council” was used to identify the Council of Fifty only in these sources created by the LDS Church historian in Utah, and the term was never used by the members of the Council of Fifty in their contemporary diaries and journals. Moreover, whereas the term “Council of Fifty” has only one possible application, the term “General Council” has had many other applications in Mormon history: an organization of high priests as indicated in Doctrine & Covenants 102:1, 8; a meeting of all general and local Church officers, as indicated in “Minutes of a General Council,” *LDS Millennial Star* 24 (18 January 1862): 33; and meetings during the pioneer exodus involving all captains of companies and other camp leaders, many of whom were not members of the Council of Fifty. Therefore, although some present authors consistently prefer “General Council” when referring to the Council of Fifty, the term “General Council” is the least satisfactory of all possible names.

“General Council” references are in *HC*, 6:274, 286, 331, 341, 343, 351, 356, 369; *HC*, 7:379, 380, 387, 395, 399, 401, 405, 406, 407, 439, 447, 453, 567; and in Manuscript History of the Church under 26 March 1844, 4 April 1844, 11 April 1844, 18 April 1844, 25 April 1844, 6 May 1844, 13 May 1844, 31 May 1844, 1 March 1845, 4 March 1845, 11 March 1845, 18 March 1845, 22 March 1845, 11 April 1845, 15 April 1845, 22 April 1845, 29 April 1845, 6 May 1845, 10 May 1845, 9 September 1845, 30 September 1845, 4 October 1845, 11 January 1846, 12 November 1846, 13 November 1846, 25 December 1846, 26 December 1846, 27 December 1846, 9 October 1868; and in Historian’s Office Journal, 9 October 1868.

expanded that to “the council of the Kingdom of God.”¹⁶ Joseph Fielding in 1844 called it the “Grand Council,” whereas Lyman Wight in 1848 described it as the “Grand Council of the Kingdom of God,” “Grand Council of God,” and “Grand Council of Heaven.”¹⁷ John D. Lee exuberantly called it “councils of the Gods,” whereas Daniel Spencer and Robert T. Burton obliquely listed it as “Council of --.”¹⁸ In 1849 men like Joseph Fielding, Horace S. Eldredge, and John D. Lee called it “Legislative Council” but dropped that name in 1850 when Congress created Utah Territory with a civil legislature in which the upper house was called the Legislative Council.¹⁹ John D. Lee also described it as “Municipal department of the Kingdom of God,” which Brigham Young, Jr., echoed later as “Church municipal board.”²⁰

The identity of the Council of Fifty with the Church was emphasized when Wilford Woodruff, Hosea Stout, and the Manuscript History of the Church called it “Council of Elders” and when Robert T. Burton called it “Council of the Presiding Authorities of the Church.”²¹ Orson Hyde more clearly stated this Church identity when he addressed a letter to the Council of Fifty on 25 April 1844 as “the Council of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.”²² Also, the Council of Fifty sometimes carried the name of the Church President: “Joseph Smith’s Council,” “President Young’s Council,” or “President Taylor’s Council.”²³

¹⁶George Miller to James J. Strang, 28 June 1855, published in *Northern Islander*, 6 September 1855; Franklin D. Richards Journal, 18 May 1881; William Clayton Journal, 1 January 1845, cited in Allen, “One Man’s Nauvoo,” fn. 21; *William Clayton’s Journal, A Daily Record of the Journal of the Original Pioneer Company of “Mormon” Pioneers from Nauvoo, Illinois, to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1921), pp. 202–203.

¹⁷Joseph Fielding Journal, entry after 6 April 1844, in Andrew F. Ehat, “‘They Might Have Known That He Was Not a Fallen Prophet’—The Nauvoo Journal of Joseph Fielding,” *BYU Studies* 19 (Winter 1979): 148; Lyman Wight, *An Address by Way of an Abridged Account and Journal of My Life from February 1844 up to April 1848* (n.p., n.d.), pp. 9, 11, 13, 14.

¹⁸John D. Lee Journal, 31 March 1849, in Cleland and Brooks, *A Mormon Chronicle*, 1:104; Daniel Spencer Journal, 11 April 1845, and Robert T. Burton Journal, 10 October 1883, Church Archives.

¹⁹Joseph Fielding Journal, 11 March 1849; Horace S. Eldredge Journal, 4 March 1849, Church Archives; John D. Lee Journal, 3 March, 4 March, 10 March 1849, as printed in Cleland and Brooks, *A Mormon Chronicle*, 1:97–100.

²⁰John D. Lee Journal, Fall 1848, in Cleland and Brooks, *A Mormon Chronicle*, 1:80; Brigham Young Jr. Journal, 23 January 1867, Church Archives.

²¹Wilford Woodruff Journal, 25 January 1867; Manuscript History of the Church, 25 January 1867; Hosea Stout Memo, 25 January 1867, in Juanita Brooks, ed., *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1964), 2:716. Compare these sources with Brigham Young Jr. Journal, 25 January 1867 (where the Council is specifically identified as “the council of fifty”); or Wilford Woodruff Journal, 10 October 1867, with Elias Smith Journal, 10 October 1867 (“Council of Fifty”), Church Archives; and compare the Robert T. Burton Journal, 10 April 1883, with Franklin D. Richards Journal, 10 April 1883, Church Archives.

²²HC, 6:369, 373; Manuscript History of the Church, 13 May 1844.

²³Example in William W. Taylor Journal, 29 June 1883, Church Archives. Cf. Franklin D. Richards Journal, 29 June 1883. Sometimes, however, such designation referred to a council that was not a meeting of the Council of Fifty.

Because Joseph Smith admitted more than fifty men to his special council in the spring of 1844, most members called it Council of Fifty. Even this name had several variations: Brigham Young referred to it as “the fifty,” Shadrach Roundy called it “council of fifties,” Charles C. Rich wrote it as “council of ft,” Franklin D. Richards sometimes wrote it as “Council of 50—Kingdom,” Willard Richards and John D. Lee spelled fifty backwards and rendered it “Council of YTFIF,” Joseph F. Smith used the Roman numeral for fifty and wrote “Council of L,” George Miller called it “council of fifty princes of the kingdom,” whereas Willard Richards, Phinehas Richards, and David Fullmer designated it “The Quorum of 50.”²⁴

One additional name for the Council of Fifty deserves separate consideration. Its members also called the Council of Fifty the “Living Constitution” or “Council of the Living Constitution.”²⁵ Some writers have confused this with the name of the fifteen trustees of the Mercantile and Mechanical Association of Nauvoo who were presented in a public meeting on 31 January 1845 as the “Living Constitution” of that association.²⁶ The two “Living Constitutions” were as distinct as their separate organization dates. Although eight members of this business “Living Constitution” were already members of the Council of Fifty’s “Living Constitution,” two others were never members of the Council of Fifty, and five other members of this 1845 business “Living Constitution” did not join the Council of Fifty until from one month to (in one case) twenty-two years later.²⁷

Council members Peter Haws, Erastus Snow, and George Q. Cannon explained why the Council of Fifty had the title “Living

²⁴Brigham Young Journal, 4 February 1845; Shadrach Roundy Journal, end of 1870 entry; Charles C. Rich Journal, 4 March 1845; Franklin D. Richards Journal, 4 October 1881; Willard Richards Journal, 27 March 1846; John D. Lee Journal, 18 April 1846; Joseph F. Smith Journal, 10 April 1880; Willard Richards Journal, 21 August–13 September 1851; Phinehas Richards Journal, 25 August 1851, and 23 January 1867; Fullmer Family Notebook, p. 41—all at Church Archives; and George Miller to James J. Strang, 1 July 1855, published in *Northern Islander*, 20 September 1855.

²⁵Daniel Spencer Journal, 12 April 1845, cf. Heber C. Kimball Journal, 12 April 1845 (“the Kingdom met”); Daniel Spencer Journal, 18 April 1845, cf. Charles C. Rich Journal, 18 April 1845 (“council of ft”), William W. Phelps in meeting of 27 February 1845, miscellaneous minutes at Church Archives; John D. Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled*, ed. W. W. Bishop (St. Louis, Mo.: Bryan, Brand & Co., 1877), p. 173. An unsigned article in *Zion’s Harbinger and Baneemy’s Organ* 2 (January 1852): 3 declared that Joseph Smith “secretly organized a Council of 50 men, which he denominated ‘the Grand Council, and Living Constitution of the Kingdom of God.’” The knowledgeable source of this information was undoubtedly William Marks, who made a less specific description of the Council of Fifty in his letter published in *Zion’s Harbinger* 3 (July 1853): 53.

²⁶Minutes of Mercantile and Manufacturing Association of Nauvoo, pp. 3, 11–12, and Amasa M. Lyman Journal, 28 January, 4 February, 7 February, and 18 February 1845, Church Archives; HC, 7:369.

²⁷Ibid. The 1845 business Living Constitution consisted of John Taylor, George A. Smith, and Amasa M. Lyman as a presidency with the following twelve counselors: Samuel Bent, Alpheus Cutler, Phinehas Richards, Edward Hunter, Daniel Spencer, John Benbow, Theodore Turley, Orson Spencer, David Fullmer, Charles C. Rich, William Weeks, and Joseph W. Coolidge. Compare to biographical sketches at end of this article.

Constitution.” Joseph Smith asked the Council to write a constitution for the Kingdom of God. After a week of unsuccessful effort, Joseph Smith delivered a revelation to the Council of Fifty that stated: “Ye are my constitution.”²⁸ In this view, the latter-day Kingdom of God transcended the confines of a single, written document, and the Kingdom conducted itself according to the words and acts of inspired men. A revelation to the Council of Fifty on 27 June 1882 reaffirmed that “Ye are my Constitution, and I am your God.”²⁹ The designation of the Council as “Living Constitution” has special significance in a later discussion of the subordination of the Council of Fifty to the Church’s First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.³⁰

PURPOSES

Authors often cite the *History of the Church* to describe the purposes of the Council Fifty.³¹ But the revelation of 27 June 1882 gives a more comprehensive statement of the Council’s purpose:

Thus saith the Lord God who rules in the heavens above and in the earth beneath, I have introduced my Kingdom and my Government, even the Kingdom of God, that my servants have heretofore prophesied of and that I taught my disciples to pray for, saying “Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” for the establishment of my rule, for the introduction of my law, for the protection of my Church, and for the maintenance, promulgation and protection of civil and religious liberty in this nation and throughout the world; and all men of every nation, color and creed shall yet be protected and shielded thereby; and every nation and kindred, and people, and tongue shall yet bow the knee to me, and acknowledge me to be Ahman Christ, to the glory of God the Father.³²

This expansive mission of the Council of Fifty was referred to by members Benjamin F. Johnson and John D. Lee, in often-quoted statements.³³

After a virtual silence in traditional LDS histories about the role of the Council of Fifty in Nauvoo and Utah history, the writers of the 1950s and 1960s concluded with increasing enthusiasm that the Council of Fifty was actually the dynamic agent of Mormon history

²⁸Pottawattamie High Council Minutes, p. 137, 20 January 1849, and Charles L. Walker Journal, 5 June 1870, Church Archives; *Salt Lake Herald*, 16 September 1897, p. 5.

²⁹Annie Taylor Hyde Notebook, p. 65. This statement also appears as a quote in the minutes of 21 April 1880, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, and probably was taken from an earlier revelation.

³⁰See fn. 108.

³¹HC, 6:261.

³²Annie Taylor Hyde Notebook, pp. 58–60; see also Franklin D. Richards Journal and John Henry Smith Journal for 27 June 1882.

³³Benjamin F. Johnson, “A Life Review,” MS, p. 94, Church Archives; and Cleland and Brooks, *A Mormon Chronicle*, 1:80. Both statements are requoted in the studies of Hansen, Andrus, and others.

from 1844 to the 1880s. In 1958 James R. Clark stated that "the Council of Fifty or General Council was the policy-making body for the civil government of Utah from 1848 to 1870, if not later."³⁴ Then Jan Shipps observed in 1965 that "the Council of Fifty was as important, if not more so, in building the temporal Kingdom than the Council of the Twelve Apostles."³⁵ And in 1967 Klaus J. Hansen concluded that "without the existence and activities of the Council of Fifty, which contributed significantly to the building of the Rocky Mountain kingdom, Mormonism might well have failed to enjoy its present stature and prestige within the framework of accepted American religious values and persuasions."³⁶ Those conclusions can no longer be supported now that current research demonstrates that the Council of Fifty was most often not functioning and was only a symbolic formality when it was functioning.

ACTIVITY

Two parliamentary rules governed the Council of Fifty: it could convene only when it had a quorum (fifty percent of membership) in attendance, and it existed officially only when it convened to conduct business. Thus, the Council of Fifty had only a technical, non-functioning existence when its members did not meet with or report to convened sessions of the Council.

Although the murder of Joseph Smith and other mob actions threatened the existence of both the Church and civil order at Nauvoo, William Clayton recorded that the Council of Fifty met on 4 February 1845 for the first time since the death of the Prophet the previous June.³⁷ During these critical months, the Quorum of Twelve Apostles acted virtually alone in stabilizing Nauvoo's religious and civil society. From 1 March through May 1845, the Council of Fifty convened nearly every week to respond to current crises and to plan for the westward movement. After May 1845 the Council met sporadically until its final pre-exodus meetings in the Nauvoo Temple on 11, 13, and 18 January 1846.

For nearly three years after January 1846, the Council of Fifty had few meetings because its members were widely scattered during the pioneer exodus, making it difficult to obtain a quorum for meetings. For example, Apostle John E. Page, a member of the Council, was dropped from church office and disfellowshipped in February 1846

³⁴Clark, "The Kingdom of God," p. 143.

³⁵Shipps, "The Mormons in Politics," p. 165.

³⁶Hansen, *Quest for Empire*, p. 190.

³⁷William Clayton Journal, 4 February 1845, cited in Allen, "One Man's Nauvoo," fn. 25.

and was excommunicated from the Church in June 1846. Even though Council of Fifty members regarded John E. Page as a traitor to both the Church and the Kingdom, it was not until 12 November 1846 that a quorum (twenty-six members) of the Council of Fifty could convene to drop him from the Council.³⁸

The Council of Fifty did not meet regularly again until December 1848 and therefore exerted minimal direction of the Mormon pioneer exodus. An examination of the attendance at the scores of "council" meetings which supervised the pioneer exodus from February 1846 to December 1848 shows a consistent pattern: the apostles summoned these pioneer "council" meetings and invited members as well as *non-members* of the Council of Fifty to participate at the direction of the apostles.³⁹ The inclusion of non-members of the Council of Fifty actually diminished the status of Council members who regarded the exodus as their primary mission. This situation undoubtedly was what prompted George Miller's sarcastic comment in 1855 that the Council of Fifty [in 1846-1847] "swelled to a great crowd under Brigham's reign."⁴⁰ Miller's disgruntled remark certainly did not describe an actual enlargement of the Council. Although Brigham Young's additions to the Council of Fifty increased its membership to a temporary high of sixty men in 1845, deaths and disaffections soon reduced the membership to the mid-fifties level established by Joseph Smith. President Brigham Young convened the Council of Fifty occasionally during the pioneer exodus of 1846-1848, but the consistent supervision of the exodus was provided by members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, to which other members of the Council of Fifty were subordinate.

After an initial flurry of activity from 1848 to 1850 in Utah, the Council of Fifty became a virtual relic during the remainder of Brigham Young's leadership. It met weekly from December 1848 through the end of 1849 to provide the foundation for Utah's civil government. The Council did not convene again until 21 August 1851. One comment during the 1851 meetings demonstrates that the Council of Fifty had ceased to function while it was unconvened during this year-and-a-half period: "S. Roundy, was appointed on a mission East two years ago and never made any report, if they want it he is ready to make a report."⁴¹ The Council of Fifty met periodically

³⁸Willard Richards Journal, 12 November 1846.

³⁹Examples in the Willard Richards Journal are meetings of 30 March, 2 April, 18 April, 26 April, 27 April, 20 May, 7 August 1846.

⁴⁰George Miller to James J. Strang, 1 July 1855, published in *Northern Islander*, 20 September 1855.

⁴¹Meeting of 25 August 1851, miscellaneous minutes in Church Archives. Cf. journals of Willard Richards and Wilford Woodruff for this date.

until 4 October 1851, when most members seemed to lose interest: "Oct. 4. 1851 10 ½ a m Nine persons only having met—on motion adjourned to 1 P.M. 1 P.M. Again met—roll called—not a quorum—on motion adjourned to the call of the President."⁴² Brigham Young showed as little interest in calling another meeting for the Council of Fifty as its members had shown for attending its last meeting in 1851. He did not bother to reconvene the Council for more than fifteen years.

When the Council of Fifty met on 23 January 1867 for the first time "since the last meeting of the Council on the 4th. October 1851," Brigham Young gave Council members no encouragement about the importance of their role. "[H]e was not aware of any particular business to be brought before the Council, further than to meet and renew our acquaintance with each other in this capacity. Had no doubt but the brethren had often inquired in their own minds when the Council would again be called together."⁴³ The Council of Fifty met only eight times from this date until 9 October 1868, when it met and voted to establish Zion's Co-operative Mercantile Institution (ZCMI). The Council of Fifty apparently conducted no other substantive business during the 1867–1868 period but occupied itself primarily with the admission of new members to fill vacancies.⁴⁴ Interest in these perfunctory meetings of the Council was so low that on 4 April 1868 the "Council of Fifty met this P.M., but few attended consequently it was turned into a testimony meeting for a short season."⁴⁵ Brigham Young tired of the Council of Fifty and ignored it after October 1868.

His successor, John Taylor, revitalized the Council of Fifty by reconvening it on 10 April 1880 for the first time "since last met, in Oct. 68."⁴⁶ Under President Taylor's direction, the Council assembled for five consecutive years, a record of activity for the Council unequalled since 1849. Nevertheless, the Council of Fifty met only infrequently in the 1880s: five days in 1880, four days in 1881, ten days in 1882, ten days in 1883, and four days in 1884.⁴⁷ It was indeed functioning in "regular" meetings during the 1880s, but the Council

⁴²Miscellaneous minutes for the period 22 August–4 October 1851; and journals of Willard Richards, Phineas Richards, and Wilford Woodruff, beginning 21 August 1851. Another reference to the requirement of the quorum is in Albert Carrington Diary, 5 October 1880, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

⁴³Miscellaneous minutes, 23 January 1867.

⁴⁴Journals of Brigham Young Jr., Elias Smith, Wilford Woodruff, and Manuscript History of the Church, and miscellaneous minutes for 23 January, 25 January, 5 April, 5 October, 10 October 1867; 4 April, 9 April, 9 October 1868.

⁴⁵Manuscript History of the Church, 4 April 1868.

⁴⁶Albert Carrington Diary, 10 April 1880.

⁴⁷Each meeting date of the Council of Fifty often can be verified by as many as nine personal journals of Council members who openly recorded their attendance.

of Fifty convened less than any other civil or religious body in Utah during the period.

Those who have regarded the Council of Fifty as the central policy-making body for Mormon theocracy from 1844 to the 1880s must reckon with the periods in which the Council never convened or conducted business. Amid the tumult at Nauvoo, the Council of Fifty did not meet from June 1844 to February 1845, even though most of its members had returned to the city by August 1844. During the pioneer exodus, it rarely met and its members simply joined with other trusted Mormons in ad hoc meetings convened and directed by the apostles. From 1850 to 1880, the Council of Fifty met on fewer than twenty days, despite the fact that Utah and the Church had a very active political and economic life during those thirty years. Finally, in the early 1880s when the U.S. government was beginning its campaign against Mormon theocracy, John Taylor resurrected the Council of Fifty to meet on only thirty-three days during a four-year period. The evidence of official meeting dates alone argues for the insignificance of the Council of Fifty in practical terms, rather than for its awesome influence as suggested by earlier writers. Instead of the Council of Fifty, it was the Council of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles that provided continuous leadership for the Mormons in religious, economic, political, and social matters.

SUPERVISION

Without question, at certain times the Council of Fifty was centrally involved in extremely important activities of Mormonism. It convened to discuss, approve, and carry out the 1844 campaign for Joseph Smith's presidential candidacy, the 1845 preparations at Nauvoo for the westward exodus, the formation of civil government in Utah in 1849, and the selection of candidates for public office in Utah and the surrounding territories in the 1880s. Nevertheless, even when it was so actively involved, the Council of Fifty was actually under the supervision of the LDS Church leadership. At times, the Council of Fifty was even a rubber stamp for prior decisions of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

From the beginning, the LDS Presidency and apostles directed the Council of Fifty to predetermined ends. On 29 January 1844, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles nominated Joseph Smith for the U.S. presidency and on 4 March nominated his vice-presidential running mate. After the Council of Fifty was formed in March 1844, that body simply repeated what had already been decided and continued

the political campaign begun by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve.⁴⁸ On 21 February 1844, Joseph Smith gave to the apostles the responsibility to plan an exodus into the American West, and they initially chose eight men to act as scouts. After the turmoil of the ill-fated presidential campaign and the succession crisis, the Council of Fifty decided on 1 March 1845 to select nine men to act as scouts for a new location in the far West, and the Council of Fifty “selected” nearly all of the eligible men originally chosen by the Quorum of the Twelve.⁴⁹ Moreover, when twenty members of the Council of Fifty met for prayer with their wives in the Nauvoo Temple on 11 December 1845, Brigham Young asked only ten members of the group (seven apostles, two general bishops, and a clerk) to join him for a council about an urgent letter which warned them that the U.S. government opposed the westward exodus of the Mormons. Because the exodus from Nauvoo was the primary concern of the Council of Fifty meetings in 1845, this exclusion of nine of its members from this crucial meeting is an important evidence of the subordination of the Council of Fifty to Church authority at Nauvoo.⁵⁰

The diminished role of the Council of Fifty from 1846 to 1848 angered Council members who did not have the powerful status of the apostles during the Mormon exodus. George Miller complained: “When we arrived at Winter Quarters the council convened, but their deliberations amounted to nothing. But however, I was not wholly overlooked in their deliberations.”⁵¹ George Miller’s apostasy from the Church in 1847 resulted from his dissatisfaction with the exclusion of the Council of Fifty from governing the pioneer exodus, and other subordinate members of the Council of Fifty soon followed that disaffection. When the high council in Iowa tried Peter Haws and Lucien Woodworth in February 1849, Haws “persisted that the Fifty should be called together. He said had never been legally adjourned [*sic*] He said that Brigham had pledged himself to carry out the measures of Joseph and intimated that it had not been done and that Twelve men had swallowed up thirty eight.” And then, “Elder

⁴⁸Joseph Smith Jr. Journal, 29 January 1844; Willard Richards Journal, 4 March 1844; *HC*, 6:187–88; Hansen, *Quest for Empire*, pp. 77–78.

⁴⁹Willard Richards Journal, 21 February 1844; Heber C. Kimball Journal, 1 March 1845; *HC*, 6:223, 7:379.

⁵⁰The excluded members of the Council of Fifty were Alpheus Cutler, Isaac Morley, Orson Spencer, Joseph Young, Cornelius P. Lott, John Smith, John M. Bernhisel, William W. Phelps, and John D. Lee (see the Heber C. Kimball Journal, 11 December 1845). The published account in *HC*, 7:543–44 is quite abbreviated and does not indicate that these subordinate members of the Council of Fifty, though present, were uninvited to the council meeting of Church authorities about the letter.

⁵¹George Miller to James J. Strang, 1 July 1855, published in *Northern Islander*, 20 September 1855.

G. A. Smith interrupted him by telling him that the fifty was nothing but [sic] a debating School.”⁵² These crucial comments indicate how frustrated some Council of Fifty members felt toward the supremacy of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, as well as underscore the attitude of the apostles toward the subordinate role of the Council of Fifty.

Even when President John Taylor revitalized the Council of Fifty in the 1880s, he continued to maintain actual power in the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and he allowed only symbolic power to the Council. On 1 April 1880, the Quorum of the Twelve considered who should fill vacancies in the Council of Fifty. When the Council reconvened on 10 April for the first time in nearly twelve years, the non-apostolic members of the Council of Fifty had only a perfunctory role in selecting new members of the Council: the day before the Council met, the apostles notified the initiates to attend the meeting.⁵³ The most striking example of this rubber-stamp quality of the Council of Fifty occurred in October 1882. The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve discussed on 4 October who should be the candidate for Utah’s delegate to Congress, and in the morning of 11 October 1882, the Presidency and apostles voted that John T. Caine be the delegate. Three hours later, at the direction of the LDS hierarchy, the Council of Fifty convened, discussed who should be the delegate to Congress, “nominated” John T. Caine, and appointed a committee to inform the nominating committee of the Church’s political party, the People’s Party.⁵⁴

Members of the Council of Fifty who were not in the First Presidency or the Quorum of the Twelve were probably unaware of the extent to which those authorities manipulated meetings of the Council of Fifty so as to arrive at predetermined decisions. Therefore, the unsophisticated Council members developed unrealistic views. It is no coincidence that the most effusive descriptions of the Council of Fifty’s allegedly supreme role in the latter-day Kingdom of God were written by John D. Lee, Benjamin F. Johnson, George Miller, and others who were not privy to orchestration of Council of Fifty meetings by the LDS Presidency and apostles. Even Apostle Lyman Wight exaggerated the Council of Fifty’s importance because his long absences from Nauvoo during 1844 and 1845 prevented his seeing the

⁵²Original draft of letter from Orson Hyde, George A. Smith, and Ezra T. Benson at Carbunca, Council Bluffs, 27 March 1849, to Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Willard Richards in Church Archives; Minutes of Pottawattamie High Council show the preparations for this trial of Lucien Woodworth and Peter Haws, but blank pages were left in the record books for the minutes to be copied for the actual trials.

⁵³Franklin D. Richards Journal, 1 April, 10 April 1880; Junius F. Wells Diary, 9 April, 10 April 1880.

⁵⁴Franklin D. Richards Journal, 4 October, 11 October 1882.

extent to which the Presidency and apostles constituted a shadow government behind the Council of Fifty's shadow government. These overly enthusiastic Council of Fifty members simply did not understand that the Mormon hierarchy was supreme in both Church and Kingdom, and that it allowed no rival.

The Council of Fifty was prosaic rather than awesome. At the most practical level, the Council of Fifty was the "debating School" Apostle George A. Smith called it in 1849. Buttressed by oaths of secrecy, the Council of Fifty provided a forum to give the Church hierarchy different views on pressing questions of political, economic, and social significance for the Latter-day Saints. Undoubtedly, the Presidency and apostles of the Church did not prearrange all the deliberations and decisions of the Council of Fifty, but the opinions and recommendations of the Presidency and apostles carried conclusive weight in the discussions of the Council of Fifty. The Council of Fifty also provided three dozen reliable men to carry out the political and economic programs of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who simply "honored" individual Council of Fifty members with positions of public prominence but did not allow the Council itself to rival the Mormon hierarchy's exercise of power.

The Council of Fifty had a minimal role in the actual exercise of political power but served as an important symbol of the unattained ideal of a democratically functioning Kingdom of God. Like its economic counterpart, the United Order of Enoch and Law of Consecration, the Council of Fifty required greater perfection in the Saints than existed during the years of Mormon isolation in the Great Basin of the American West. Created according to the uncompromising millennial context of divine revelation, the Council had only a sporadic existence which was compromised by the imperfections of its members for whom power and prestige became ends in themselves. Those who most successfully fulfilled their role in the Council of Fifty recognized it as a symbol of what could and would transpire when the hearts of a sinful world and imperfect Church members turned sufficiently to Christ the King.⁵⁵ Those who were least successful in that trust were the men who accepted that symbol in literal terms and thereby became discouraged and bitter at the disparity. In like manner, the greatest weakness of the "Kingdom School" among recent interpreters of Mormon history lies in the confusion of symbol and

⁵⁵The best analysis of the millennial context of the LDS Kingdom of God is Andrus, *Doctrines of the Kingdom*.

substance, in the failure to separate the temporal realities of the Mormon Kingdom of God from its unachieved millennial anticipations.

MEMBERSHIP

Admission to the Council of Fifty came in three stages, which could occur on one day or on three separate days—a man's name was proposed (most often by the LDS President as standing chairman of the Council), and then voted on, and then the man was formally initiated into the Council. On the day of their admission, new members affirmed that they were in fellowship with all other Council members, and then an officer of the Council of Fifty proceeded in "giving them the 'Charge,' 'The name,' & 'Key word,' and the 'Constitution,' and 'Penalty.'" ⁵⁶ Once admitted, men remained members of the Council of Fifty for life, unless they were dropped by the Council for disaffection. Not until 1882 did the Council add the option of release due to old age and disability. ⁵⁷

The specific membership of the Council of Fifty has been another area in which there has been inaccuracy. Part of the problem arose when historians identified men as members on the basis of attendance at "council" meetings that were not meetings of the Council of Fifty. Even some members of the Council made misstatements about its membership when they sought to remember back thirty to sixty years: John D. Lee erroneously indicated that Joseph H. Jackson was admitted to the Council of Fifty, and Benjamin F. Johnson mistakenly claimed that Sidney Rigdon, William Marks, and members of the Nauvoo High Council were not members of the Council of Fifty. ⁵⁸ Moreover, the general silence about membership of the Council of Fifty in Utah has allowed rampant speculation and rumor. However, it is now possible to compare abundant diaries and other sources on the Council of Fifty in order to establish the exact dates of admission or at least the periods of service for all members of the Council throughout its history

The first evident characteristic of the Council of Fifty's membership is the extent to which Church office was important. From 1844 to 1884 the Council of Fifty included every contemporary member of

⁵⁶Joseph F. Smith draft Journal entry, 12 October 1880. In his journal entry for 8 April 1881 concerning new members of the Council of Fifty, Franklin D. Richards referred to "charge obligation & password."

⁵⁷Franklin D. Richards Journal, 24 June 1882.

⁵⁸Lee, *Confessions*, p. 173; Benjamin F. Johnson, *I Knew the Prophets: An Analysis of the Letter of Benjamin F. Johnson to George F. Gibbs, Reporting Doctrinal Views of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young*, ed. Dean R. Zimmerman (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers, 1976), pp. 31–32. Cf. William Clayton Journal statements of 1844 membership in Allen, "One Man's Nauvoo," fn. 25.

the First Presidency except the disaffected William Law, every member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, every Presiding Patriarch except John Smith (b. 1832, son of Hyrum Smith), every member of the Presiding Bishopric except Jesse C. Little, and more than forty-four percent of the First Council of the Seventy.⁵⁹ Of local officers during the period, forty-eight percent of the stake presidents and a much smaller percentage of the ward bishops were members of the Council of Fifty during their ecclesiastical service in these positions. This Church identity of members of the Council of Fifty was mentioned in an 1882 revelation:

Behold you are my kingdom and rulers in my Kingdom and then you are also, many of you, rulers in my Church according to your ordinations therein. For are you not of the First Presidency, and of the Twelve Apostles and some Presidents of Stakes, and some Bishops, and some High Priests and some Seventies and Elders therein? And are ye not all of my Church and belong to my holy Priesthood?⁶⁰

After the exodus from Nauvoo, recently appointed General Authorities filled vacancies in the Council of Fifty.⁶¹ President John Taylor also admitted Francis M. Lyman, John Henry Smith, George Teasdale, and Heber J. Grant to the Council of Fifty in apparent anticipation of his calling these men to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles within a few months. This is all consistent with the previous discussion of the subordination of the Kingdom to the Church and with Brigham Young's comment in 1855 that it was the LDS Church that produced the government of the Kingdom of God.⁶²

The published "History of Brigham Young" stated that several members of the original 1844 Council of Fifty "were not members of the Church."⁶³ This led historian Klaus J. Hansen to suggest plausibly (but inaccurately) that Daniel H. Wells was a member of the Council while he was a non-Mormon at Nauvoo and that Thomas L. Kane later became a friendly non-Mormon member of the Council

⁵⁹Counselors in the Presiding Bishopric were not admitted to the Council of Fifty until the 1880s, by which time Jesse C. Little had resigned his office as counselor. The absence from 1844 to 1884 of a majority of the First Council of the Seventy and of Patriarch John Smith (b. 1832) from membership in the Council of Fifty can be understood in terms of their diminished status within the LDS hierarchy. References to their status can be found in the author's "Organizational Development and Social Origins of the Mormon Hierarchy, 1832-1932" (M.A. thesis, University of Utah, 1973), p. 277, and "The Mormon Hierarchy, 1832-1932: An American Elite," *passim*.

⁶⁰This revelation was given shortly after the 27 June meeting of the Council of Fifty adjourned (see Annie Taylor Hyde Notebook, p. 80; Franklin D. Richards Journal, 27 June 1882). This revelation was officially adopted at the next meeting of the Council of Fifty (see Franklin D. Richards Journal, 10 October 1882).

⁶¹Examples were Apostles Franklin D. Richards, Lorenzo Snow, Joseph F. Smith, Moses Thatcher, and John W. Taylor, Presiding Bishop's Counselor John Q. Cannon, and Presidents of the Seventy William W. Taylor and Seymour B. Young.

⁶²Brigham Young in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool, England: F. D. Richards, et al, 1854-1886), 2:317.

⁶³"History of Brigham Young," *LDS Millennial Star* 26 (21 May 1864): 328.

during or after the exodus to Utah.⁶⁴ Moreover, Mormon schismatic Lorin C. Woolley circulated the wild claim that U.S. Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Calvin Coolidge were members of the Council of Fifty.⁶⁵ In reality, Joseph Smith admitted to the Council only three non-Mormons, all of whom were dropped from the Council on 4 February 1845, after which date the LDS leadership excluded non-Mormons from the Council of Fifty.⁶⁶

The least is known about the youngest of the three non-Mormons, Marenus G. Eaton. He was thirty-two years old when he entered the Council of Fifty, an honor that the Prophet may have conferred on him when he disclosed on 27 March 1844 the conspiracy against Joseph Smith by dissenters at Nauvoo. Although Marenus G. Eaton was among the proposed defense witnesses for Joseph Smith in June 1844, after the Martyrdom he was no longer of service to the Mormons. The State of New York on 5 September 1844 filed a requisition with the State of Illinois to arrest him for counterfeiting, and it may have been for this personal disability that the Council of Fifty dropped Marenus G. Eaton on 4 February 1845.⁶⁷

Edward Bonney's brother was a Mormon, but Edward at age thirty-six apparently was still a non-Mormon when Joseph Smith admitted him to the Council of Fifty. Edward Bonney is referred to several times in the *History of the Church* as a supporter of Joseph Smith during the difficulties of May–June 1844, but he broke with the Mormons over the destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor*. When the city of Nauvoo tried and discharged Joseph Smith on 17 June 1844 for the destruction of the press, Edward Bonney acted as prosecutor and seems to have been in earnest because he later referred to the dismissal of Joseph Smith by the Nauvoo court as a “mock administration of law.” At any rate, in 1845 he moved to Montrose, Iowa, became a bounty-hunter of criminals, and in 1850 published *The Banditti of the Prairies* with its unfavorable view of the Nauvoo Mormons.⁶⁸ Since the Council of Fifty dropped him before he left Nauvoo, disaffection was undoubtedly the reason for the Council's action in Bonney's case.

⁶⁴Hansen, *Quest for Empire*, pp. 61–63.

⁶⁵Mark J. Baird and Rhea A. Baird, *Reminiscences of John W. Woolley and Lorin C. Woolley*, 4 vols. (Draper, Utah: n.p., n.d.), 3:9.

⁶⁶Biographical sketches at the end of this article, and William Clayton Journal entries for members of the Council of Fifty, cited in Allen, “One Man's Nauvoo,” fns. 20, 21, and 25.

⁶⁷HC, 6:279, 576; Illinois Executive Record, 1843–1847, MS, 4:208, Illinois State Archives, Springfield, Illinois.

⁶⁸HC, 6:405, 412, 488–90, 500, 554, 576; introduction of Philip D. Jordan to Bonney's *The Banditti of the Prairies* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1963), pp. vii–xxi.

The third non-Mormon in the Council of Fifty, Uriah Brown, had the longest association with the Mormons. He had been a friend and confidant of Joseph Smith since 1842. Soon after entering the Council of Fifty at the age of fifty-nine, Uriah Brown served as chairman of the political convention at Nauvoo that nominated Joseph Smith as candidate for the U.S. presidency. Like Eaton and Bonney, he was dropped from the Council of Fifty on 4 February 1845, but the action in Brown's case may have been taken only because he had moved away from Nauvoo and was therefore of less value to the Mormons. A letter from Uriah Brown to Brigham Young on 3 November 1845 indicates that Joseph Smith's interest in Brown centered in his invention of destructive weapons that could be used to defend Nauvoo. In this letter Uriah Brown expressed continued interest in the Mormon situation and offered to give Brigham Young the secret of the weapon "for such just & equitable sum, as it may, perhaps, be in your power to dispose." Whether Brigham Young answered the 1845 letter is not clear, but Uriah Brown was in Salt Lake City in 1851. The Council of Fifty on 25 August 1851 considered re-admitting him to the Council and investigating the purchase of his "invention of liquid fire to destroy an army or navy," but when Uriah Brown became too insistent and impatient, the Council tabled the matter on 13 September 1851.⁶⁹ There had been no non-Mormons in the Council of Fifty since 1845, and this brief reconsideration in 1851 was the only other instance in which non-Mormon participation became an issue for the infrequently meeting Council of Fifty.

Earlier investigators have emphasized the active role of Council members in political office, but these researchers have not commented on significant disparities in that public service.⁷⁰ First of all, more than seventeen percent of the total membership of the Council of Fifty have no discoverable record of public office. In part this can be accounted for by men who left the Church (and thereby the Council of Fifty) prior to the settlement of Utah. Yet even in Utah, where political office was abundant for Mormons, the following Council members apparently held no civil office: Abraham H. Cannon, Amos Fielding, George F. Gibbs, George D. Grant, Charles S. Kimball, David P. Kimball, and Seymour B. Young. In addition, Levi Richards held no civil office in Utah even though he had in Nauvoo,

⁶⁹HC, 5:210, 246, 6:386; Uriah Brown to Brigham Young, 3 November 1845, Young Papers, Church Archives; miscellaneous minutes of 25 August and 13 September 1851.

⁷⁰Hansen, *Quest for Empire*, pp. 128, 131, 135-37; Clark, "The Kingdom of God," p. 145.

and Joseph Fielding, Philip B. Lewis, and John Young held civil office only in the legislature of the provisional State of Deseret (1849–1851) after which the three Council members spent the last decades of their lives without civil office.

The claim that the Council of Fifty was a channel to political power becomes even less convincing when one examines the lives of Council members who held public office. Nearly sixty-three percent of the politically active members of the Council of Fifty at Nauvoo and in Utah began civil service *before* they entered the Council, and some men served more than a decade in public office before entering. These men had loyally served the interests of the Church in public office for years, and the Council of Fifty gave them no added political power nor did it alter their previous pattern of political devotion to the interests of Mormonism as directed by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve. Although the Council of Fifty introduced a minority of its members to political life, it seems obvious that for a much larger number of men their membership in the Council came as an honorary reward for long service on behalf of the Church and the Kingdom in public office. For these reasons, tabulating the number of Council of Fifty members in governmental office gives a misleading impression of the Council's political impact.

Although the religious history of some members of the Council of Fifty is sketchy, it appears that twenty-two percent of the LDS members of the Council had a serious (and usually permanent) break with the Church. The rupture manifested itself through either excommunication, disfellowshipping, being dropped from church office, or going permanently inactive. After the Church authorities disciplined a Council of Fifty member, the Council usually dropped him at its next meeting.⁷¹ For most of these men the problem seemed to be centered in the Church itself—i.e., their loss of faith, violations of Church rules of conduct, religious schism, or their unwillingness to follow the religious leadership of a new Church President.

In several cases, however, the problem was centered in the Council of Fifty itself. Alpheus Cutler, James Emmett, Peter Haws, George Miller, Lyman Wight, and Lucien Woodworth all felt that Brigham Young blocked their personal missions in the Council of Fifty, missions they claimed came from Joseph Smith. They did not agree that the Council of Fifty derived its authority from the Church and was subject to Church leadership and, therefore, dissented from

⁷¹Exceptions to this occurred when the man received Church discipline during one of the periods in which there were no Council of Fifty meetings and then died before the Council met to drop him.

the Church in order to preserve what they felt were their missions in the Kingdom of God.⁷² By contrast, a couple of members of the Council of Fifty felt devotion to the Church but found themselves in opposition to the Kingdom of God to which they had been privately admitted. William Marks as president of the Nauvoo Stake and Moses Thatcher of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles both manifested dissent against the same element of the latter-day Kingdom of God: the anointing and ordination of the LDS President as King, Priest, and Ruler on earth.⁷³ Although these two disaffected groups within the Council of Fifty were divided into dissenters *for* the Kingdom and dissenters *against* the Kingdom, both had one thing in common: they accepted the role and rites of the Kingdom of God in literal terms and did not perceive or accept the essentially symbolic nature of everything connected with the Council of Fifty. In view of what is now known about the Council of Fifty, the experiences of these men have a special pathos.

OFFICERS

Within the organization of the Council of Fifty, there were committees, but most were temporary in nature and did not comprise any set number of committeemen.⁷⁴ There was, however, an executive committee within the Council of Fifty that consisted of seven members whenever it was formed. Alpheus Cutler, who claimed to be a member of such a committee during the lifetime of Joseph Smith, called it the "Quorum of Seven."⁷⁵ Although the functions of this committee are presently unclear, the published *History of the Church* referred to its meeting of 14 April 1844: "Committee of the Council met in the afternoon at my office."⁷⁶ In 1882–1884, Franklin D. Richards also reported the actions of a "committee of 7."⁷⁷ Although the purposes of the 1844 executive committee are still uncertain, Franklin D. Richards clearly described the Committee of Seven when it was established on 23 June 1882:

⁷²The situations of these men in relation to the Church and the Kingdom are discussed in Hansen, *Quest for Empire*, pp. 94–96; Rupert J. Fletcher and Daisy Whiting Fletcher, *Alpheus Cutler and the Church of Jesus Christ* (Independence, Mo.: The Church of Jesus Christ, 1974); Philip C. Wightman, "The Life and Contributions of Lyman Wight" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1971); fns. 51–52 of this article.

⁷³See discussion below, beginning fn. 90.

⁷⁴See examples in *HC*, 7:439, and Cleland and Brooks, *A Mormon Chronicle*, 1:81, 82, 87, 89.

⁷⁵Fletcher, *Alpheus Cutler*, p. 53; William W. Blair Diary, 13 March 1863, Research Library and Archives of The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Independence, Missouri.

⁷⁶*HC*, 6:333; Joseph Smith Journal, 14 April 1844.

⁷⁷Franklin D. Richards Journal, 10 October 1882, 10 April 1883, 8 October 1884.

2 Sessions in Council of the Kingdom Committees were appointed to see after Election affairs in Idaho Territory in Nevada State—and seven John Sharp, Wm. Jennings, W. Hooper R.T. Burton, J.R. Winder, A.M. Cannon & Moses Thatcher—for an executive committee to meet the Commissioners with lists of names from each county for Registration of officers, Judges of Elections & any & all other duties.⁷⁸

Since John Taylor had reestablished the Council of Fifty more than two years prior to the date of the organization of this committee, it is obvious that the “Quorum of Seven” or “Committee of Seven” was not a permanent, self-perpetuating body in the Kingdom of God. Moreover, in 1882 the Committee of Seven was a lobbying body for the Church of a routine political nature and did not have any extraordinary religious or theocratic powers.⁷⁹

Among the officers of the Council of Fifty were the recorder, historian, clerk, and reporters. Despite the name, the historian was actually the recorder of the Council of Fifty, and the terms were used interchangeably to describe the men who were responsible for the records of the Council but who did not actually take the minutes of meetings. Willard Richards was appointed historian–recorder of the Council on 13 March 1844 and served until his death in 1854.⁸⁰ When the Council of Fifty next met on 23 January 1867, it admitted George Q. Cannon and appointed him recorder.⁸¹ The Council did not convene after 1884 and therefore did not choose a recorder as successor to George Q. Cannon after his death in 1901. William Clayton, who was appointed clerk at the provisional meeting of 10 March 1884, was officially appointed “Clerk of the Kingdom” on 13 March 1844 and served to his death in 1879.⁸² When the Council of Fifty reconvened on 10 April 1880, it elected L. John Nuttall to be William Clayton’s successor as Clerk of the Kingdom. Nuttall

⁷⁸Ibid., 23 June 1882.

⁷⁹This committee of the 1880s is undoubtedly the actual source for the mythical “Council of Seven Friends” which Lorin C. Woolley invented and others have used as the self-perpetuating authority structure for continuing polygamy in defiance of LDS Church authority. For a detailed summary of polygamist/schismatic claims concerning the “Council of Seven Friends,” see Lynn L. Bishop and Steven L. Bishop, *The Keys of the Priesthood Illustrated* (Draper, Utah: Review and Preview Publishers, 1971), pp. 61–75, 116–58, 279–88.

⁸⁰HC, 6:263; Manuscript History of the Church, 13 March 1844; William Clayton Journal, 13 March 1844, referred to in Allen, “One Man’s Nauvoo,” fns. 21 and 25. The published “History of Brigham Young,” *LDS Millennial Star* 26 (21 May 1864): 328, gives the names of the historian, clerk, and standing chairman appointed for the Council of Fifty, but it changes the date of appointment to 11 March 1844. Manuscript records indicate that this switching of date from 13 March was in error as regards the officers named.

⁸¹Manuscript History of the Church, 23 January 1867; Brigham Young Jr. Journal, 23 January 1867; miscellaneous minutes, 23 January 1867.

⁸²William Clayton Journal, 10 March–13 March 1844, referred to in Allen, “One Man’s Nauvoo,” fns. 19 and 21; HC, 6:263; Manuscript History of the Church, 13 March 1844. “History of Brigham Young,” *LDS Millennial Star* 26 (21 May 1864): 328 gives the appointment but inaccurately changes the date to 11 March 1844.

also died without a successor.⁸³ Whether or not there was a formal office of assistant clerk in the Council of Fifty prior to 1880 is unclear, but on 10 April 1880, President Taylor's son William W. Taylor was elected assistant clerk and served until his death in 1884.⁸⁴ Although the Clerk of the Kingdom was officially responsible for taking minutes of the Council of Fifty meetings, the Council appointed "reporters" to keep minutes: at least as early as December 1848, Thomas Bullock and Albert Carrington took minutes in addition to William Clayton who was the Clerk of the Kingdom.⁸⁵ Due to Thomas Bullock's infirmities of age, John Taylor appointed George F. Gibbs a reporter on 5 April 1882, even though the Council did not admit Elder Gibbs as a member until 24 June 1882 when it released Thomas Bullock due to old age.⁸⁶ Although the records of the Council of Fifty had been in the personal custody of William Clayton as Clerk of the Kingdom in the 1840s, in Utah the custody passed among various officers: in 1857 President Brigham Young had them in his personal custody and gave them to the Church Historian's Office, by 1880 the recorder George Q. Cannon had them locked in a box in Utah and took the key with him wherever he went, and in 1884 the records were in the possession of reporter George F. Gibbs.⁸⁷

The senior administrative officer of the Council of Fifty was the standing chairman. Although Willard Richards served as temporary chairman at the provisional meeting on 10 March 1844, from 13 March 1844 onward the LDS President was always standing chairman of the Council of Fifty. Joseph Smith served as standing chairman in 1844, Brigham Young from 1845 to 1877 (although the Council did not meet after 1868), and John Taylor from 1880 to 1887 (although the Council did not meet after 1884).⁸⁸ The President of the Church as standing chairman of the Council of Fifty was not simply senior member of the Council (where seniority was determined by age) but was its chief executive. Similar to a *Curia Regis* (King's Council) in a monarchy, the Council of Fifty convened only at

⁸³Junius F. Wells Journal, 10 April 1880; Joseph F. Smith Journal, 10 April 1880.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Thomas Bullock Journal, 6 December–23 December 1848, Church Archives. Cf. John D. Lee Journal for same period in Brooks and Cleland, *A Mormon Chronicle*, 1:80–83.

⁸⁶Miscellaneous minutes, 5 April and 24 June 1882; and Franklin D. Richards Journal, 24 June 1882, Church Archives.

⁸⁷William Clayton Journal, cited in Allen, "One Man's Nauvoo," fn. 24; Wilford Woodruff Journal, 26 November 1857; Franklin D. Richards Journal, 16 March 1880, 20 March 1884; L. John Nuttall 1879–1881 Letter Book, pp. 168, 178, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

⁸⁸William Clayton Journal, 10–13 March 1844, referred to in Allen, "One Man's Nauvoo," fns. 19 and 21; "History of Brigham Young," *LDS Millennial Star* 26 (21 May 1864): 328; Manuscript History of the Church, 9 February 1849; John D. Lee Journal, 5 April 1849; as published in Cleland and Brooks, *A Mormon Chronicle* 1:104; Joseph F. Smith Journal, 10 April 1880; Junius F. Wells Journal, 10 April 1880.

the request of its earthly sovereign, the President of the Church, who was the standing chairman of the Council.⁸⁹

This leads to the final office in the symbolic Kingdom of God on earth as embodied in the Council of Fifty. William Clayton recorded in his journal that in the 11 April 1844 meeting of the Council of Fifty, “was prest. Joseph chosen as our prophet Priest, & King by Hosannas.”⁹⁰ William Marks, who participated in this action, later stated that the Council of Fifty conducted this as an ordinance “in which Joseph suffered himself to be ordained a king, to reign over the house of Israel forever.”⁹¹ Although it has been suggested that William Marks’s statements referred to conventional LDS temple rites rather than to a theocratic ceremony,⁹² the evidence does not support this objection. Aside from the contemporary account of William Clayton and some reminiscent descriptions by William Marks, the revelation to the Council of Fifty on 27 June 1882 also stated that God called Joseph Smith, Jr., “to be a Prophet, Seer and Revelator to my Church and Kingdom; and to be a King and Ruler over Israel.”⁹³

When the Council of Fifty was reestablished in 1880, one of the items brought up was filling the theocratic office to which Joseph Smith had been anointed and ordained in Nauvoo. That not all Council members favored such an appointment is evidenced in George Q. Cannon’s note that the disaffection of Apostle Moses Thatcher from the Church began “when the Council of Fifty met in the old City Hall [1880–1882], and Moses opposed the proposition to anoint John Taylor as Prophet, Priest and King, and Moses’s opposition prevailed at that time.”⁹⁴ Not until 1885, just days after the federal crusade against polygamy forced President John Taylor into exile, was this ceremony performed for him. Franklin D. Richards, among others, described the event:

⁸⁹Throughout the available documents on the Council of Fifty, meetings were adjourned either to a specific meeting date or *sine die*; and in either case were subject to the call of the “President” or “Chairman.”

⁹⁰William Clayton Journal, 11 April 1844, 1 January 1845, quoted in Allen, “One Man’s Nauvoo,” fns. 21 and 22.

⁹¹William Marks to “Beloved Brethren,” 15 June 1853, published in *Zion’s Harbinger and Baneemy’s Organ* 3 (July 1853): 53. See also the earlier reports with nearly identical wording for which William Marks was probably the source: *Upper Mississippian and Rock Island Republican*, 2 November 1844; George T. M. Davis, *An Authentic Account of the Massacre of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet, and Hyrum Smith, His Brother, Together with a Brief History of the Rise and Progress of Mormonism, And All the Circumstances Which Led to Their Death* (St. Louis, Mo.: Chambers & Knapp, 1844), p. 7; *Zion’s Harbinger* 2 (January 1852): 3. Also, see Reuben Miller, *James J. Strang, Weighed in the Balance of Truth, and Found Wanting* (Burlington, Wisc.: n.p., 1846), p. 12.

⁹²Gordon C. Thomasson, “Foolsmate,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 6 (Autumn–Winter 1971): 148–51. The temple ceremony to which Thomasson refers was received by Joseph Smith on 28 September 1843, six months prior to the theocratic ceremony mentioned in William Clayton’s journal (see Wilford Woodruff’s *Historian’s Private Journal*, entry for 26 February 1867, Church Archives).

⁹³Annie Taylor Hyde Notebook, p. 64.

⁹⁴Abraham H. Cannon Journal, 2 December 1895. Abraham H. Cannon was George Q. Cannon’s son.

Wednesday Feb 4th 1885—

Prests. John Taylor & Geo. Q. Cannon having been secluded since Sunday evening word had been given to L. Snow, E. Snow F.D. Richards, A. Carrington, F.M. Lyman, H.J. Grant, John W. Taylor, to meet in Council this evening—Prests. W. Woodruff—George Teasdale Moses Thatcher were oblivious to prevent arrest—B.Y. [Jr.] & J.H. Smith in N. York & Europe—

Soon after 8. p.m. Prests Taylor & Cannon met the seven of the 12 first named at End[owment] house Secretaries Geo. Reynolds and L. John Nuttall were present. After listening to some current items of news, President Taylor stated the object of the Council. directed Br Nuttall to read a Revelation which he said he received more than a year ago requiring him to be anointed & set apart as a King Priest and Ruler over Israel on the Earth—over Zion & the Kingdom of Christ our King of Kings. He also read some extracts from minutes of the Council of the Kingdom after which the President called for any remarks when several spoke their mind and F.M.L. motioned that we proceed to obey the requirement of the Revelation. when we clothed in our Priestly attire. E Snow offered prayer, when after the usual ceremony F.M. Lyman prayed in the circle. L. Snow consecrated a bottle of oil. Counselor Cannon anointed President John Taylor and we all laid hands on the Prest. & Geo. Q. sealed the anointing according to a written form which had been prepared.⁹⁵

Although only the First Presidency, seven apostles, and two secretaries to the First Presidency attended the meeting, they told enough people about this ceremony that the *Salt Lake Tribune* soon reported that George Q. Cannon had “assisted at the coronation of JOHN TAYLOR as king” of the Mormon commonwealth.⁹⁶

The anointing and ordination of John Taylor in 1885 as “King, Priest and Ruler over Israel on the Earth—over Zion & the Kingdom of Christ” is important as a verifying evidence. First, it corroborates the accuracy of earlier statements that Joseph Smith received the same ceremony at the hands of the Council of Fifty some forty years before. Second, it clarifies that Heber C. Kimball was alluding to Brigham Young’s having received the same ordinance when Heber stated:

The Church and kingdom to which we belong will become the kingdom of our God and his Christ, and brother Brigham Young will become President of the United States.

(Voices responded, “Amen.”)

⁹⁵Manuscript in Franklin D. Richards Miscellaneous Papers, Church Archives. Franklin D. Richards Journal, 4 February 1885, reads: “At 8. p.m. attended Council at Endowment House where we had prayers consecrated oil, and Prest. Jno Taylor was anointed K[ing]. P[riest]. R[uler]. of C[hurch]. Z[ion]. & K[ingdom].”

⁹⁶“That Declaration,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, 5 May 1885. Earlier references to this ceremony by the *Salt Lake Tribune* appeared in articles “Is Mormonism Treason?” (8 March 1885) and “They Talk It Over” (10 March 1885). Apostle John Henry Smith commented on the newspaper reports of this ceremony in a letter to his kinsman and counselor in the First Presidency, Joseph F. Smith (John Henry Smith to J. Mack [pseudonym for Joseph F. Smith], 28 August 1885, in John Henry Smith 1884–1894 Letter Book, pp. 434–35, George A. Smith Family Papers, Marriott Library, University of Utah).

And I tell you he will be something more; but we do not now want to give him the name: but he is called and ordained to a far greater station than that, and he is foreordained to take that station, and he has got it.⁹⁷

Although the exact date on which Brigham Young obtained the theocratic ordination of King, Priest, and Ruler over Israel is not presently known, he undoubtedly received it in the same manner that Joseph Smith did on 11 April 1844 and John Taylor did on 4 February 1885. Also, the ceremony performed for John Taylor in 1885 further corroborates that the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles did not require the presence of the rest of the Council of Fifty to conduct crucial matters of the theocratic Kingdom of God.

Although the Council of Fifty did not convene after 1884, members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve may have performed this theocratic ordinance for the Presidents of the Church who followed John Taylor. At any rate, John W. Taylor, former member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and one of the last men admitted to the Council of Fifty, addressed President Joseph F. Smith in 1911 as "Prophet, President and King" in a letter regarding the Council of Fifty.⁹⁸

The 1885 ordinance for John Taylor also verifies the exclusively symbolic nature of the office of "King, Priest and Ruler over Israel on Earth" which Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and John Taylor received in succession as Presidents of the Church. When the apostles conferred this office upon John Taylor in 1885, the political Kingdom of God among the Mormons was in disarray. Polygamists (accounting for most of the prominent political leaders of Mormonism) had been disfranchised for three years and were either in prison or in hiding to avoid arrest. After a four-year renaissance of limited significance, the Council of Fifty could no longer convene because of the federal "raid," and the Council had started its final slide into oblivion. Only days before the theocratic ordinance, President Taylor himself began a permanent exile in hiding from federal authorities.

The 1885 theocratic ordinance was really a magnificent gesture of resignation, similar to the orchestra on the *Titanic* playing "Nearer My God to Thee" as the ship plunged into the icy Atlantic. John

⁹⁷*Journal of Discourses*, 5:219 (discourse delivered 6 September 1856). Andrew Cahoon, an apostate Mormon who was a son of one of the original members of the Council of Fifty, testified in 1889 that Brigham Young had proclaimed himself as king to the 1847 pioneers in Utah (see "Testimony of Andrew Cahoon," *Deseret Evening News*, 14 November 1889). The apostate William Smith wrote: "The people of Salt Lake govern their church by a secret lodge of 50 men. It is in this lodge that Brigham Young is crowned as a King, and is there seated upon a throne prepared for him" (see *Melchizedek and Aaronic Herald*, 1 [February 1850]: 1).

⁹⁸John W. Taylor to Joseph F. Smith, 17 February 1911, Church Archives.

Taylor was anointed a theocratic King, Priest, and Ruler in the absence of pomp, in a simple ceremony witnessed by a very few trusted associates, and at a time it was obvious that Mormon theocracy in Utah was in its death throes. As God's representative on earth as prophet and President of the Church, it was sufficient to John Taylor that he had witnessed to God spiritually through a symbolic ordinance that it was the right of government under Christ to reign on the earth. Like the Council of Fifty itself, the office of Prophet-King was an ultimate symbol in Mormonism of the heavenly Kingdom of God which could only be foreshadowed on a corrupt world and in a temporal church.⁹⁹

FINALE

During the years of its sporadic activity, the Council of Fifty was an open secret among the Mormons. Some of this knowledge came from unauthorized sources, such as the 1844 disclosures in the anti-Mormon press.¹⁰⁰ More often, however, knowledge of the Council of Fifty came to the Latter-day Saints through official sources. On 13 January 1846, the Council openly identified itself in a meeting with many others who were appointed to lead the exodus from Nauvoo.¹⁰¹ On 17 June 1857 the *Deseret News* first published the account of Joseph Smith's organizing the "special council," and on 26 November 1857 President Brigham Young gave the minutes of the Council of Fifty to the Church historian and "gave his consent [*sic*] for us to publish an account of it so that the Saints might understand it."¹⁰² In 1858, Church publications began referring to the Council of Fifty by this name.¹⁰³ General Authorities of the Church gave sermons explaining that the Kingdom of God was an organization that had already been established among the Saints, and John Pack, a member of the Council of Fifty, instructed the women of the Salt Lake City Seventeenth Ward Relief Society about the organization and purposes of the Council of Fifty.¹⁰⁴ By the 1870s, *Deseret News* obituaries were referring to membership in the Council of Fifty, and

⁹⁹For other discussions of the symbolic role of the LDS Prophet-King, see Andrus, *Doctrines of the Kingdom*, pp. 556-67; Melodie Moench, "Joseph Smith: Prophet, Priest, and King," *Task Papers in LDS History*, No. 25 (Salt Lake City: Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978).

¹⁰⁰*Upper Mississippian*, 2 November 1844; Davis, *An Authentic Account*, p. 7.

¹⁰¹Hosea Stout Diary, 13 January 1846, published in Brooks, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 1:105. Hosea Stout did not become a member of the Council of Fifty until 1867.

¹⁰²*Deseret News*, 17 June 1857; Wilford Woodruff Journal, 26 November 1857.

¹⁰³"History of Brigham Young," 11 March, 19 March 1844, in *Deseret News*, 24 March 1858 and *LDS Millennial Star* 26 (21 May 1864): 328.

¹⁰⁴Examples are quoted in HC, 7:381-82; Andrus, *Joseph Smith and World Government*, pp. 4, 5, 9; Salt Lake City Seventeenth Ward Relief Society Minutes, 1868-1884 Book, pp. 345-46.

in 1901 Assistant Church Historian Andrew Jenson matter-of-factly identified men as members of the Council in his published biographies.¹⁰⁵ The Council of Fifty was secretive in the same way in which the Quorum of Twelve Apostles guarded the minutes of its own meetings, but the Council of Fifty was hardly a secret among the Latter-day Saints of the nineteenth century.

Even more Latter-day Saints would have known of the organization, if the Council had functioned in a regular or lasting manner. After decades of sporadic activity, it last convened on 9 October 1884. This is evident from the diaries of men like Robert T. Burton, Abraham H. Cannon, Heber J. Grant, Franklin D. Richards, John Henry Smith, Wilford Woodruff, and Brigham Young, Jr., who regularly recorded their attendance at Council of Fifty meetings through 1884 but made no mention of attending such meetings during the decades after 1884.

The Council of Fifty's inactivity troubled Apostle John W. Taylor, who had barely entered the Council on its last meeting date in 1884. On 25 October 1887, while the Quorum of the Twelve was in the midst of seeking statehood for Utah,

John W. Taylor expressed it as his opinion that it would be much better if all of our business in relation to a State was transacted through the Council of Fifty.

Prest Woodruff said it would be all right for the Council of Fifty to meet and attend to this matter but under existing circumstances it would not be safe to have them do so.¹⁰⁶

After 1884, members of the Council of Fifty had ad hoc meetings with the Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve concerning the quest for statehood, but that practice was simply a repetition of earlier periods in which the Council itself was nonfunctioning.

By the time the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve shepherded Utah to statehood in 1896, safety was no longer the factor for ignoring the Council of Fifty: the Council of Fifty was obsolete even as a symbol. The voluntary theocracy of Mormon Utah had given way to factional politics which divided Church leaders and members alike along national party lines. This placed Mormonism even further from the theocratic ideals of the Kingdom of God than it was during the imperfect theocracy of territorial Utah. Therefore, when John W. Taylor desperately petitioned Joseph F. Smith to convene the Council of Fifty in 1911 to protect Elder Taylor from being

¹⁰⁵*Deseret Evening News*, 28 November 1877; Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Co., 1901-1936), 1:290, 368.

¹⁰⁶Heber J. Grant Letter Book Journal, 25 October 1887, Church Archives.

disciplined by the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, President Joseph F. Smith wrote on Taylor's letter: "Not granted I think the demand most absurd."¹⁰⁷

A year before John W. Taylor's request, President Joseph F. Smith had made a statement that illuminates the spasmodic history of the Council of Fifty. On 7 April 1910, President Smith stated: "This body of men, this Council of Presidency and Apostles, compose the living constitution of the Church, with power to legislate, judge and decide."¹⁰⁸ The use of the Council of Fifty's name "Living Constitution" to designate the Council of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles is a crucial insight into the Kingdom of God within Mormonism. In theory, theology, and reality, the LDS Presidency and apostles always governed the Council of Fifty when it was functioning, and in the absence of the Council of Fifty, they continue as the apex of both Church and Kingdom on earth until the perfect world order of the Millennium is established. On 3 January 1932, Heber J. Grant recorded that he and Franklin S. Richards were the only surviving members of the Council, and with the death of President Grant on 14 May 1945 the technical survival of the Council of Fifty ended.¹⁰⁹

LEGACY

Although the Council of Fifty no longer exists as an organized body, there remains one of its contributions which historically outweighs any practical influences the Council may have exerted. After 1845, the Council of Fifty focused primarily on immediate issues of the Mormon community—from exterminating wolves to preparing for elections. By contrast, in 1844 and on occasion thereafter, the Council meetings departed from the immediate, often humdrum concerns of the temporal struggles of the Church. These minutes contain numerous discourses and instructions by Joseph Smith and others concerning the role of the U.S. Constitution in the present and millennial existence of the Latter-day Saints, the nature of the all-encompassing Kingdom of God which the Council signified, and other crucial teachings that are in no other records than Council of Fifty minutes. For example, Benjamin F. Johnson reported that in the Council of Fifty meetings, Joseph Smith taught

¹⁰⁷John W. Taylor to Joseph F. Smith, 17 February 1911; John Henry Smith Journal, 18 February 1911.

¹⁰⁸"Instructions given to Elder Joseph F. Smith Jr., at the Salt Lake Temple, April 7th, 1910, immediately prior to his receiving ordination as an Apostle," Smith papers, Church Archives.

¹⁰⁹Heber J. Grant Journal, 3 January 1932. This should disprove any rumors about other persons who allegedly were members of the Council of Fifty but who lived beyond 1931.

of “adopting the God Given Constatution [*sic*] of United States as a paladium of Liberty & eaqual [*sic*] Rights—But this of itself would Require a long Chapter.”¹¹⁰ Both Benjamin F. Johnson and Orson Hyde affirmed that in a meeting of the Council of Fifty, Joseph Smith gave his famous charge to the Quorum of the Twelve to carry forth the Church and the Kingdom of God, which charge became the basis for the apostolic succession established after the death of Joseph Smith.¹¹¹ These teachings of Joseph Smith to the Council of Fifty, found nowhere else, fill hundreds of pages. On 16 March 1880, nearly 200 pages of the Council’s minutes concerning only its “origin and Organization” were read to President John Taylor, Joseph F. Smith, and Franklin D. Richards. Elder Richards recorded that the “whole reading was exceedingly interesting & wonderful to contemplate.”¹¹² Joseph F. Smith wrote that the Prophet’s 1844 instructions to the Council of Fifty were “grand & god like.”¹¹³

When Joseph Smith went to Carthage, Illinois, for his last imprisonment, the Church nearly lost these voluminous teachings of the Prophet to the Council of Fifty. Joseph Smith had already been charged by anti-Mormons with the ridiculous crime of treason for destroying the *Nauvoo Expositor* as a public nuisance. He knew that the frenzied anti-Mormons of June 1844 were incapable of understanding the symbolic nature of the prophet-king ordinance or the millennial context of his teachings about the Kingdom of God. Therefore, Joseph Smith told William Clayton to either burn or bury the records of the Council of Fifty. William Clayton trusted that calmer, more reasonable and more secure times would come for the Latter-day Saints and therefore preserved the records for future generations.¹¹⁴ Though not available at this time, those teachings of Joseph Smith and of his successors in the Council of Fifty are a far greater legacy to the Latter-day Saints than the often-mundane activities of the Council itself.

¹¹⁰Johnson, *I Knew the Prophets*, p. 31.

¹¹¹Johnson, “A Life Review,” MS, p. 96; Minutes of the Nauvoo High Council, 30 November 1844, p. 7, Church Archives.

¹¹²Franklin D. Richards Journal, 16 March 1880.

¹¹³Joseph F. Smith Journal, 10 April 1880.

¹¹⁴Allen, “One Man’s Nauvoo,” fn. 24.

COUNCIL OF FIFTY MEMBERS, 1844-1945¹¹⁵

- Adams, George J. (1810-1880). Admitted between 14 March and 11 April 1844. Dropped 4 February 1845.
- Babbitt, Almon W. (1812-1856). Admitted between 14 March and 11 April 1844. Remained a member until his death.
- Badlam, Alexander (1808-1894). Admitted 11 March 1844. Dropped 4 February 1845. Readmitted to Council and attended its 1851 meetings. Dropped again in 1867-1868 period.
- Benson, Ezra T. (1811-1869). Admitted 25 December 1846.
- Bent, Samuel (1778-1846). Admitted 19 March 1844.
- Bernhisel, John M. (1799-1881). Admitted 11 March 1844.
- Bonney, Edward (1807-1864). Admitted between 14 March and 11 April 1844. Dropped 4 February 1845.
- Brown, Uriah (1784-). Admitted 19 March 1844. Dropped 4 February 1845. Council voted on 25 August 1851 to readmit him but rescinded that vote on 13 September 1851.
- Budge, William (1828-1919). Considered 10 April 1880. Was voted in 24 June 1882. Admitted 26 June 1882.
- Bullock, Thomas (1816-1885). Admitted 25 December 1846. Reporter for the Council meetings from 1848. Released due to old age 24 June 1882.
- Burton, Robert T. (1821-1907). Admitted 25 January 1867.
- Cahoon, Reynolds (1790-1861). Attended provisional meeting of 10 March 1844. Admitted 11 March 1844.
- Caine, John T. (1829-1911). Admitted 8 April 1881.
- Cannon, Abraham H. (1859-1896). Admitted 9 October 1884.
- Cannon, Angus M. (1834-1915). Admitted 10 April 1880.
- Cannon, George Q. (1827-1901). Admitted 23 January 1867. Elected recorder 23 January 1867.
- Cannon, John Q. (1857-1931). Admitted 9 October 1884.
- Carrington, Albert (1813-1889). Admitted 18 or 22 April 1845. Reporter for Council meetings in 1848.
- Clawson, Hiram B. (1826-1912). Admitted 27 June 1882.
- Clayton, William (1814-1879). Attended provisional meeting on 10 March 1844. Appointed clerk on 10 March 1844. Officially admitted on 11 March 1844. Officially reappointed Clerk of the Kingdom on 13 March 1844.
- Clinton, Jeter (1813-1892). Admitted 25 January 1867.
- Cluff, William W. (1832-1915). Admitted 10 April 1880.
- Coolidge, Joseph W. (1814-). Admitted 18 April 1844. Dropped after 1848.
- Cutler, Alpheus (1784-1864). Attended provisional meeting on 10 March 1844. Admitted 11 March 1844. Possibly dropped in 1848-1849 period.
- Dana, Lewis (1805-1885). Admitted 1 March 1845. Dropped after 1848.
- Daniels, Cyrus (1803-1846). Admitted 11 March 1845.
- Dunham, Jonathan (1800-1845). Admitted 1 March 1845.

¹¹⁵All names and other data have been collated from numerous personal diaries, miscellaneous manuscripts and biographies in various locations. The overlapping of these sources is sufficient to justify confidence that the list of members in this article is complete. Contrary to the list of Council of Fifty members in Hansen's *Quest for Empire*, pp. 227-28, John Fielding and John Scott were not members of the Council. Hansen's list also fails to include thirty-eight verified members of the Council of Fifty.

Because of the overlapping of sources mentioned above, there are still some conflicts in dates. The author rechecked some conflicting dates with the research of Andrew F. Ehat. Where there is still some ambiguity the author has relied on his own research and interpretation, resolving these questions to his satisfaction.

Eaton, Marenus G. (1811-). Admitted between 14 March and 11 April 1844. Dropped 4 February 1845.

Eldredge, Horace S. (1816-1888). Admitted 9 December 1848.

Emmett, James (1803-1852). Admitted 13 March 1844. Dropped 4 February 1845.

Farnham, John W. (1794-). Admitted 18 or 22 April 1845.

Farr, Lorin (1820-1909). Admitted 12 October 1880.

Fielding, Amos (1792-1875). Attended provisional meeting on 10 March 1844. Admitted 11 March 1844.

Fielding, Joseph (1797-1863). Admitted between 14 March and 11 April 1844.

Foster, Lucien R. (1806-). Admitted 1 March 1845. Dropped 12 November 1846.

Fullmer, David (1803-1879). Admitted 1 March 1845.

Fullmer, John S. (1807-1883). Admitted 18 or 22 April 1845. Released due to old age 24 June 1882.

Gibbs, George F. (1846-1924). Appointed reporter, but not member, on 5 April 1882. Admitted 24 June 1882.

Grant, George D. (1812-1876). Admitted 9 September 1845.

Grant, Heber J. (1856-1945). Was voted in 26 June 1882. Admitted 27 June or 10 October 1882.

Grant, Jedediah M. (1816-1856). Admitted 6 May 1844.

Greene, John P. (1793-1844). Admitted 26 March 1844.

Hardy, Leonard W. (1805-1884). Admitted 27 June 1882.

Hatch, Abram (1830-1911). Admitted 29 June 1883.

Haws, Peter (1796-). Admitted 11 March 1844. Dropped sometime after 13 November 1846.

Heywood, Joseph L. (1815-1910). Admitted 6 December 1848. Released due to old age on 24 June 1882.

Hollister, David S. (1808-1858). Admitted 18 April 1844. Possibly dropped after 25 December 1846.

Hooper, William H. (1813-1882). Was voted in 5 October 1867. Admitted 10 October 1867.

Hunter, Edward (1793-1883). Was voted in 23 January 1867. Admitted 25 January 1867.

Hyde, Orson (1805-1878). Admitted 13 March 1844.

James, Samuel (1806-). Admitted 19 March 1844. Dropped 4 February 1845.

Jennings, William (1823-1886). Admitted 10 April 1880.

Johnson, Benjamin F. (1818-1905). Admitted between 14 March and 11 April 1844.

Kimball, Charles S. (1843-1925). Was voted in 23 January 1867. Admitted 25 January 1867.

Kimball, David P. (1839-1883). Was voted in 23 January 1867. Admitted 25 January 1867.

Kimball, Heber C. (1801-1868). Attended provisional meeting on 10 March 1844. Admitted 11 March 1844.

Kimball, Heber P. (1835-1885). Was voted in 23 January 1867. Admitted 5 April 1867.

Layton, Christopher (1821-1898). Admitted 29 June 1883.

Lee, John D. (1812-1877). Admitted 1 March 1845.

Lewis, Philip B. (1804-1877). Admitted between 14 March and 11 April 1844.

Little, Feramorz (1820-1887). Admitted 21 April 1880.

Lott, Cornelius P. (1798–1850). Admitted between 14 March and 11 April 1844.

Lyman, Amasa M. (1813–1877). Admitted between 14 March and 11 April 1844. Possibly dropped after 25 January 1867; otherwise technically remained a member until death.

Lyman, Francis M. (1840–1916). Admitted 10 April 1880.

Marks, William (1792–1872). Admitted 19 March 1844. Dropped 4 February 1845.

Miller, George (1794–1856). Attended provisional meeting on 10 March 1844. Admitted 11 March 1844. Dropped after 26 December 1846.

Morley, Isaac (1786–1865). Was voted in 1 March 1845.

Murdock, John R. (1826–1913). Considered 10 April 1880. Admitted 28 June 1883.

Nuttall, L. John (1834–1905). Admitted 10 April 1880. Elected clerk 10 April 1880.

Pack, John (1809–1885). Admitted 1 March 1845. Released due to old age 24 June 1882.

Page, John E. (1799–1867). Admitted 1 March 1845. Dropped 12 November 1846.

Parker, John D. (1799–1891). Admitted 19 March 1844. Released due to old age 24 June 1882.

Penrose, Charles W. (1832–1925). Admitted 26 June 1882.

Peterson, Canute (1824–1902). Was voted in 27 June 1882. Admitted 10 October 1882.

Phelps, John (1800–). Attended provisional meeting on 10 March 1844 but not admitted to Council once formal meetings began on 11 March 1844.

Phelps, William W. (1792–1872). Attended provisional meeting on 10 March 1844. Admitted 11 March 1844.

Pratt, Orson (1811–1881). Attended provisional meeting on 10 March 1844. Admitted 11 March 1844.

Pratt, Parley P. (1807–1857). Attended provisional meeting on 10 March 1844. Admitted 11 March 1844.

Pratt, Parley P., Jr. (1837–1897). Admitted 25 January 1867.

Preston, William B. (1830–1908). Admitted 10 April 1880.

Reynolds, George (1842–1909). Admitted 8 April 1881.

Rich, Charles C. (1809–1883). Admitted between 14 March and 11 April 1844. Released due to old age 24 June 1882.

Rich, Joseph C. (1841–1908). Admitted 25 January 1867.

Richards, Franklin D. (1821–1899). Admitted 17 March 1849.

Richards, Franklin S. (1849–1934). Admitted 10 April 1880.

Richards, Heber J. (1840–1919). Was voted in 23 January 1867. Admitted 5 October 1867.

Richards, Levi (1799–1876). Admitted 11 March 1844.

Richards, Phinehas (1788–1874). Admitted 6 December 1848.

Richards, Willard (1804–1854). Attended provisional meeting on 10 March 1844 and appointed chairman. Admitted officially 11 March 1844. Released as provisional chairman and made recorder on 13 March 1844.

Rigdon, Sidney (1793–1876). Admitted 19 March 1844. Dropped 4 February 1845.

Rockwell, Orrin Porter (1815–1878). Admitted 19 March 1844.

Rockwood, Albert P. (1805–1879). Admitted 1 March 1845.

Roundy, Shadrach (1789–1872). Was voted in 1 March 1845.

Sharp, John (1820–1891). Admitted 25 January 1867.

Shumway, Charles (1806–1898). Admitted 18 or 22 April 1845. Released due to old age 24 June 1882.

Shurtliff, Lewis W. (1835–1922). Admitted 10 April 1883.

Smith, Elias (1804–1888). Admitted between 14 March and 11 April 1844.
 Smith, George A. (1817–1875). Attended provisional meeting on 10 March 1844.
 Admitted 11 March 1844.
 Smith, Hyrum (1800–1844). Attended provisional meeting on 10 March 1844.
 Admitted 11 March 1844.
 Smith, John (1781–1854). Admitted between 14 March and 11 April 1844.
 Smith, John Henry (1848–1911). Admitted 10 April 1880.
 Smith, Joseph, Jr. (1805–1844). Attended provisional meeting on 10 March 1844.
 Admitted 11 March 1844. Appointed standing chairman 13 March 1844. Or-
 dained and anointed Prophet, Priest, and King over Israel on Earth on 11 April
 1844.
 Smith, Joseph F. (1838–1918). Was voted in 23 January 1867. Admitted 25 January
 or 5 April 1867.
 Smith, Silas S. (1830–1910). Admitted 10 April 1880.
 Smith, William (1811–1894). Admitted 25 April 1844. Dropped after 9 September
 1845.
 Smith, William R. (1826–1894). Admitted 10 April 1880.
 Smoot, Abraham O. (1815–1895). Admitted 25 January 1867.
 Snow, Erastus (1818–1888). Admitted 11 March 1844.
 Snow, Lorenzo (1814–1901). Admitted 10 March 1849.
 Snow, Willard (1811–1853). Admitted 6 December 1848.
 Spencer, Daniel (1794–1868). Was voted in 1 March 1845. Admitted 18 March
 1845.
 Spencer, Orson (1802–1855). Admitted 19 March 1844.
 Stout, Hosea (1810–1889). Admitted 25 January 1867.
 Taylor, George J. (1834–1914). Was voted in 23 January 1867. Admitted 25 January
 1867.
 Taylor, John (1808–1887). Attended provisional meeting on 10 March 1844. Ad-
 mitted 11 March 1844. Elected standing chairman 10 April 1880. Anointed and
 ordained as King, Priest, and Ruler over Israel on Earth on 4 February 1885.
 Taylor, John W. (1858–1916). Admitted 9 October 1884.
 Taylor, William W. (1853–1884). Admitted 10 April 1880. Elected assistant clerk
 on 10 April 1880.
 Teasdale, George (1831–1907). Was voted in 26 June 1882. Admitted 27 June or 10
 October 1882.
 Thatcher, Moses (1842–1909). Admitted 10 April 1880.
 Thayer, Ezra (1790–). Admitted between 14 March and 11 April 1844.
 Dropped sometime after 22 April 1845.
 Turley, Theodore (1801–1871). Admitted 1 March 1845.
 VanCott, John (1814–1883). Admitted 12 October 1880.
 Wasson, Lorenzo D. (1819–1857). Attended provisional meeting on 10 March 1844.
 Admitted 11 March 1844. Dropped 4 February 1845.
 Wells, Daniel H. (1814–1891). Admitted 6 December 1848.
 Wells, Junius F. (1854–1930). Admitted 10 April 1880.
 Whitney, Newel K. (1795–1850). Attended provisional meeting on 10 March 1844.
 Admitted 11 March 1844.
 Wight, Lyman (1796–1858). Was voted in 18 April 1844. Admitted 3 May 1844.
 Dropped 4 February 1845.
 Winder, John R. (1820–1910). Admitted 8 April 1881.
 Woodruff, Wilford (1807–1898). Admitted 13 March 1844.

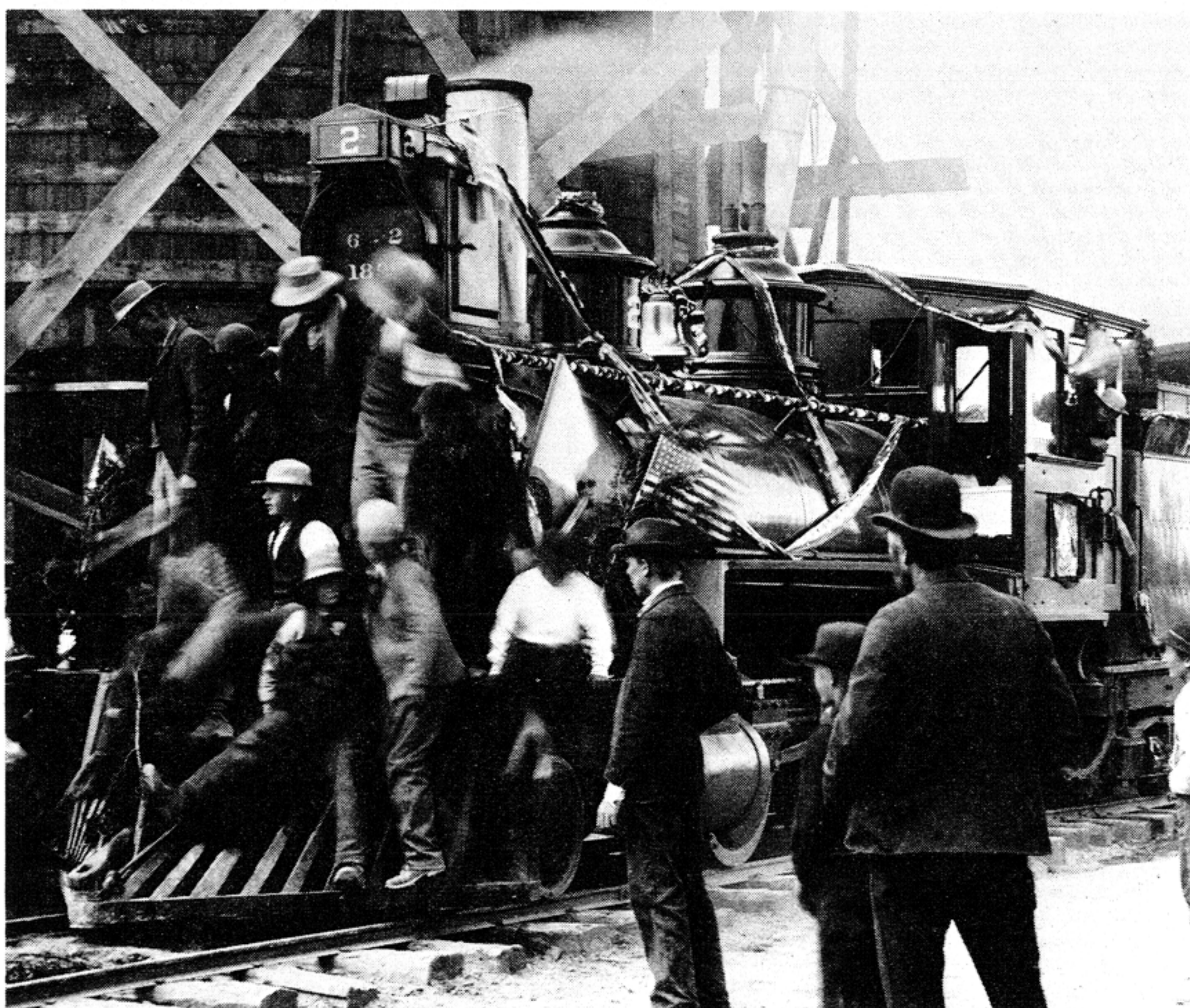
Woodworth, Lucien (1799–). Admitted 11 March 1844. Dropped after 1848.
 Yearsley, David D. (1808–1849). Admitted between 14 March and 11 April 1844.
 Young, Brigham (1801–1877). Attended provisional meeting on 10 March 1844.
 Admitted 11 March 1844. Appointed standing chairman 4 February 1845.
 Anointed and ordained King, Priest, and Ruler over Israel on Earth, probably in
 1848–1849 period.
 Young, Brigham, Jr. (1836–1903). Admitted 23 January 1867.
 Young, John (1791–1870). Admitted 9 February 1849.
 Young, John W. (1844–1924). Admitted 5 October 1867.
 Young, Joseph (1797–1881). Admitted 1 March 1845.
 Young, Joseph A. (1834–1875). Admitted 23 January 1867.
 Young, Phineas H. (1799–1879). Admitted 15 April 1845. His “fellowship” in the
 Council was challenged on 22 August 1851, but he reconciled himself with the
 Council on that date.
 Young, Seymour B. (1837–1924). Admitted 9 October 1884.

Emulsion

Dennis Smith

Boys,
hanging on the cowcatcher for a ride,
stir even when the photographer
is outspoken on the importance of holding still.
These young figures blur the plate
like flashing water in a stream
or smoke from a tense firebox.

They cannot stay still;
they are burning up
too fast for the shutter.



Dennis Smith is a poet and sculptor from Alpine, Utah.
The photograph is an 1896 photo by G. E. Anderson. It is in the Robert Edwards Collection, Salt Lake City,
and was reprinted by Rell G. Francis, Springville, Utah.

More Than Meets the Eye: Concentration of the Book of Mormon

Steven C. Walker

Mark Twain, pondering the question of concentration of the Book of Mormon, opined, "If [Joseph Smith] had left that ['and it came to pass'] out, his Bible would have been only a pamphlet."¹ Twain is not the only critic to have declared the Book of Mormon wordy. Even among those of us who are convinced of the divinity of its source and the primacy of its message, there is a tendency to find "the most perfect book ever written" prolix.

Recently it occurred to me that my Book of Mormon always lies by the Bible at my bedside or stands side by side with the Bible on my bookshelf. Could it be that part of the Book of Mormon's prolixity problem is proximity with the King James Version of the Bible? Could it be that the traditional appraisal of Book of Mormon style as wordy results from comparison against a standard which would make the most concentrated modern book look bloated? If we are judging Book of Mormon style by the King James Version of the Bible, we might do well to recognize what we are suggesting by choosing as standard the most concentrated volume in the English language. We might do well, if we are dismissing it as lightly as many have been, to consider more carefully the concentration of the Book of Mormon.

Comparison of Bible originals with Book of Mormon Isaiah passages and the 3 Nephi Sermon on the Mount points up exactly what the circumstances of translation would lead us to expect—overwhelming similarities: the Book of Mormon makes fittingly few alterations in Bible language. However much consolation such close parallels may give to those cynical of the book's origins, it must be conceded that at least the Book of Mormon knows a good thing when it sees it. Consistency with the peerless King James Version, whatever its implications for originality, is high stylistic tribute.

Steven C. Walker, professor in the English Department, Brigham Young University, delivered this paper at the Fourth Symposium of the Association for Mormon Letters, 13 October 1979, at Brigham Young University.

¹Mark Twain, *Roughing It*, ed. Franklin R. Rogers and Paul Bander (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972), p. 125.

And the variations from the Bible are not only tastefully few, but less damning to the Book of Mormon than they at first appear. Take, for example, the Book of Mormon Beatitudes—3 Nephi 12:3–11, which parallels Matthew 5:3–11. Though the *ands* and *alls* and *yea* and *again* of the Nephi version are clearly superfluous, at least a third of the eighteen percent additional words used by Nephi enrich the passage; they are no more redundant than the “and thirst” in “hunger and thirst after righteousness.”

“Blessed are the poor in spirit *who come unto me*, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,”² while using more words than the original, makes it clear that the Sermon was directed to those who had come unto the Savior in the waters of baptism. And verse 6—“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled”—is made specific with the addition of “with the Holy Ghost.” Verse 10’s alteration of “righteousness’ sake” to “my name’s sake” serves a similar focusing function, distinguishing between suffering for any good cause and enduring persecution specifically for devotion to Christ.

Another point of direct comparison with the King James Version, the Isaiah passages, stands the Book of Mormon in even better stead. The first of those passages, 1 Nephi 20, which corresponds to Isaiah 48, is typical. The first verse perhaps unfortunately expands “Hear ye” to the alliterative “Hearken and hear,” but the other extension in that verse clarifies “out of the waters of Judah” with the added “or out of the waters of baptism” to make profound sense of Isaiah’s nebulosity. Similarly, the second verse is thirty percent longer in Nephi’s version, but though that thirty percent includes rhetorical excrescences—“yea”; “nevertheless”—the increased wordage, inserting the missing negative, clarifies the cryptic Isaiah version.

Occasionally the Book of Mormon even goes the Bible brevity one better, as in the removal of excess words from verses 19, 20, and 21, or the excision of the superfluous “and they came to pass” phrase from verse 3, or the cutting of “that” from verse 8 of Isaiah 48—a particularly astute deletion since it illuminates the 1 Nephi 20 passage while concentrating its rhetoric.

Much Book of Mormon expansion of Bible passages, then, adds up not to wasted words but to multiplied meaning. The addition to verse 22—“And notwithstanding he hath done all this, and greater also”—long as it is, serves the solid rhetorical function of enhancing the impact of that climactic “there is no peace, saith the Lord, unto

²Italics added.

the wicked.” Sometimes Book of Mormon rhetoric even manages that kind of heightened vividness without expansion, as when Nephi replaces “them that are in darkness” with “them that sit in darkness” (1 Nephi 21:9).

And occasionally the Book of Mormon beats the Bible at its own good game of succinctness. Perhaps the best example in Isaiah 48/1 Nephi 20 is verse 10. Isaiah puts it:

“Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.”

Nephi pares that down to

“For, behold, I have refined thee, I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.”

The Book of Mormon at its rare best can not only clarify but can condense the eminently concentrated King James Version.

The Book of Mormon holds up surprisingly well under direct comparison with parallel Bible passages, but a more compelling claim to concentration may be the concision of its dominant forms. Book of Mormon literary genres are invariably compact. Its central genre, history, a literary type that tends toward discursiveness, manages in the Book of Mormon a fierceness of focus that would intimidate Will Durant. Book of Mormon history is as selective as Bible history, so exclusively intent upon God’s dealings with man that vast vistas of time and complicated epochs of action sweep by in dizzyingly few words, with precious little attention to such extraneous matters as geography.

Despite the “and it came to pass” handicap, the Book of Mormon manages to cram over three thousand years’ worth of complex migrations and wars and political upheavals and cultural evolutions and intimately detailed religious chronicles of several peoples into its 522 pages.

The density of that selective history is further concentrated by the even tighter literary forms sprinkled through it richly as raisins in good rice pudding. Nephite prophets from Jacob to Moroni are fond of proverbial statements of the Hebrew *hokmah* type which distill centuries of folk wisdom and fathoms of theological profundity. Cast in blunt distich form, these aphorisms are notable for how much they manage to condense into such short space: “Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25); “Fools mock, but they shall mourn” (Ether 12:26); “Wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10).

Even more striking than the proverb as evidence of the conciseness of Book of Mormon forms is the remarkable rhetorical mileage distilled from the question. Book of Mormon writers, like

the best Bible writers, take frequent advantage of the suggestive power of questions; their best questions radiate significance from a simple center with the inexorable outreaching of ripples from a stone cast into a lake: Jacob wonders wistfully, "For why will ye die?" (Jacob 6:6). Mosiah presses our consciences with "Are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend upon the same Being, even God, for all the substance which we have?" (Mosiah 4:19). Alma searches our souls in his asking: "If ye have experienced a change of heart, and if ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, I would ask, can ye feel so now?" (Alma 5:26).

Perhaps the most unappreciated aspect of Book of Mormon concentration is its humor. That lack of appreciation probably testifies to the effectiveness of the humor, since its essence is understatement, a laconic refusal to push the punch line. I suspect that the tongue-in-cheek British laugh more than we Americans in reading the Book of Mormon. The high seriousness of its context can easily distract those used to more explicit humor from the smile on the face of the writer of such a statement as "Whomsoever of the Amalickiahites that would not enter into a covenant to support the cause of freedom . . . he caused to be put to death; and there were but few who denied the covenant of freedom" (Alma 46:35), or "Neither were there Lamanites, nor any manner of -ites" (4 Nephi 17), or "For if their wine would poison a Lamanite it would also poison a Nephite" (Alma 55:32).

One of the most engaging moments in the Book of Mormon for me comes in the studied anticlimax after Ammon has smitten the enemies of the Lamanite king's shepherds, in true heroic fashion, slicing off all arms raised against him. When King Lamoni inquires about this superservant—"Where is this man that has such great power?"—Ammon's fellow servants take great delight in taking the wind out of everyone's overawed sails with: "Behold, he is feeding thy horses" (Alma 18:8-9).

Understated humor, ramifying question, rich aphorism, and selective history formally attest the concentration of the Book of Mormon. Even its more oratorical literary features tend toward concentration. The parallelism of such a passage as the Psalm of Nephi (2 Nephi 4:16-35) manages marvelous density through the repetitions of its Hebraic thought rhyme. Similarly, the chiasmus which John W. Welch has discovered undergirding Book of Mormon rhetorical structure is a concentric form; ontological density is inevitably intensified by the centripetal force of such balanced elements as the structure of Alma 36:

My son give ear to my words (v 1)
Keep the commandments and ye shall prosper in the land (v 1)
Captivity of our fathers—bondage (v 2)
He surely did deliver them (v 2)
Trust in God (v 3)
Support in trials, troubles and afflictions (v 3)
I know this not of myself but of God (v 4)
Born of God (v 5)
Limbs paralysed (v 10)

The Agony of Conversion
destroyed (v 11)
racked with eternal torment (v 12)
harrowed up to the greatest degree (v 12)
racked with all my sins (v 12)
tormented with the pains of hell (v 13)
inexpressible horror (v 14)
banished and extinct (v 15)
pains of a damned soul (v 16)

Called upon Jesus Christ (v 18)

The Joy of Conversion
no more pain (v 19)
oh what joy (v 20)
what marvelous light (v 20)
soul filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain (v 20)
exquisite (v 21)
nothing as sweet as was my joy (v 22)
singing and praising God (v 22)
long to be with God (v 22)

Use of limbs returns (v 23)
Born of God (v 26)
Therefore my knowledge is of God (v 26)
Supported under trials and troubles and afflictions (v 27)
Trust in him (v 27)
He will deliver me (v 27)
Egypt—captivity (v 28–29)
Keep the commandments and ye shall prosper in the land (v 30)
This according to his word (v 30)³

We ought not, then, to be misled by the *and it came to pass*'s, and the *O*'s and *yea*'s and *for behold*'s. The essence of Book of Mormon style is concentration. The working vocabulary of 1 Nephi, according to E. Craig Bramwell's 1960 Brigham Young University thesis, "Hebrew Idioms in the Small Plates of Nephi," has only

³John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," *Brigham Young University Studies* 10 (Autumn, 1969): 83.

twenty-three percent more words than comparable Old Testament sections—2696 root words, a mere tithe of Shakespeare's written vocabulary. Perhaps the most impressive aspect of that compact vocabulary is its sparing use of adjectives; most literary stylists feel that where modifiers are concerned, less is more. The inimitably concentrated Genesis 1, for instance, boasts but sixteen simple adjectives in its nearly nine hundred words. The slightly longer first chapter of 1 Nephi has, impressively enough, only sixteen adjectives.

The first chapter of Genesis, representing as it does the Bible at its best, makes for interesting stylistic comparison with 1 Nephi 1, which I take to be typical of Book of Mormon style. *And it came to pass's*, while something short of Twain's estimate of two-thirds of the total words, do comprise fully five percent of Nephi's first chapter. Yet in Genesis, where there is virtually no feeling of redundancy, there is much more repetition. Thus I suspect it is not rhetorical formulas which make the Book of Mormon less dynamic rhetorically; there are as many *and the morning's* and *and God saw that it was good's* in Genesis 1 as there are *and it came to pass's* in 1 Nephi 1—and more *and God said's*. What becomes in the Book of Mormon a mannerism as annoying as our modern *y'know* is in its essential impulse rhetorically sound: Cornercutting formulas, like blunt *and* transitions, however monotonous they may sound to a modern ear, are attempts at terseness.

That is not to say that the Book of Mormon is total literary concentration. In 1 Nephi 1, such idle repetitions as "being thus overcome with the Spirit" in verse 8 after "being overcome with the Spirit" in verse 7, or "as he prayed unto the Lord" in verse 6 following immediately upon "as he went forth prayed unto the Lord" in verse 5, are difficult to forgive, let alone defend. And *yea* becomes so consistently an announcement of unnecessary repetition or superfluous explication that it doesn't take a sensitive reader long to learn to skip those arid *yea* passages as religiously as he avoids pedantic footnotes.

But even this weakness is relative: We ought not to let the fact that much more is said in Genesis 1 than 1 Nephi 1 obscure the fact that a great deal is said in 1 Nephi 1. Nephi may not get the world created in those 934 words, but he manages masterfully to establish persona, place, purpose, even spirit. His first chapter, radiating out in its careful chiasmic structure from the visionary center of verse 9, reminds me of such artful beginnings as Dickens's opening to *A Tale of Two Cities*: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." As Hugh Nibley has shown us in *Lehi in the Desert*, from its formal

introductory Egyptian colophon to its climactic statement of thesis, succinctness marks 1 Nephi 1 to be the abridgement Nephi informs us that it is:⁴

I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father; and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days, nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days; yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God, therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days

falls something short of the concentration of “In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.” I’d prefer the Nephi statement in half the words:

I, Nephi, born of goodly parents, and having been highly favored of the Lord, make a record of my days.

But then I’m an English teacher, and what’s worse, a Bible-reading English teacher. In the concentration contest, the Book of Mormon clearly comes in second to the King James Version; but in this race, that’s admirably high place.

The Book of Mormon is impressively concentrated. Our choosing as standard against which to measure it the most superlatively understated volume in the English language attests that concentration. Concentration could well be the weakest area of Book of Mormon style. Even here, at its worst, the Book of Mormon invites favorable comparison with the King James Version of the Bible.

⁴Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert & The World of the Jaredites* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1952), pp. 13–20.

The Irrigation Turn

Sally T. Taylor

Placing his sinking steps
Along the ditchbank's
Straight-ridged and muddy path,
He paced the racing water
Flowing to his field.

Shovel-staffed, he followed
Force and flow with miser's
Eyes and gauged the stream
Against past time-tithed turns
To weigh his water rights.

He scooped the weeds and mud
With dripping strokes to free
From damming stands the moving
Water, the pale blood's field
Flow, his crop's communion.

Then down each row, the flow
Like silver veins dispersed.
The man, at field's end paused
And bowing to the labor,
Removed the second-field gate.

Sally T. Taylor is an assistant professor in the English Department, Brigham Young University.
"The Irrigation Turn" was the 1979 First Place poem in the Ann W. Hafen category of the Utah State Poetry Society Contest.

“Brother Joseph Is Truly A Wonderful Man, He Is All We Could Wish a Prophet to Be”: Pre-1844 Letters of William Law

Lyndon W. Cook

Although now seldom recognized as being anything more than a bitter apostate, William Law was for several years a Church member of considerable faith. Born in Northern Ireland in 1809, William immigrated to America with his family about ten years later, finally settling in Mercer County, Pennsylvania. He later moved to Churchville, Ontario, Canada, where he owned and operated a mill and served as local postmaster. Here in Upper Canada William married Canadian-born Jane Silverthorn, who bore him eight children. It was here that William Law was converted to the Church in 1836 through the efforts of John Taylor and Almon W. Babbitt.

Located nearly twenty-five miles northwest of Toronto, Churchville was for a time recognized as a major stronghold of Mormonism in Upper Canada, and William Law appears to have presided over the Churchville branch after his ordination to elder by Parley P. Pratt on 24 April 1837. Some of William's close Mormon friends in Churchville and neighboring settlements were the Jacob Scott family, Robert B. Thompson, James Mulholland, and the Edward Lawrence family, all of whom would have interesting relationships with the Prophet in Nauvoo, Illinois.

After the major Mormon exodus from Kirtland in 1838, many Canadian Saints, possessed of a gathering spirit, made preparations to remove to Far West, Missouri. William Law, however, was unable to dispose of his business concerns in Upper Canada until 1839, when Nauvoo had become the new gathering place. Bent on gathering with the Saints, William led a seven-wagon caravan of Canadian Saints to Nauvoo, arriving the first week of November 1839. Nauvoo would be home for William and his family until the summer of 1844.

Lyndon W. Cook, a research historian, teaches part time for the College of Religious Instruction at Brigham Young University. He is preparing a definitive biographical essay on William Law.

William wasted little time putting down roots at Nauvoo. With his brother Wilson as partner, he purchased properties, opened a store, and proceeded to build a mill. He saw in the large influx of Mormons to Nauvoo an opportunity to personally take advantage of the economic growth of the community, and though not rich, William became a man of means, possessing some influence and power, particularly among many of the Canadian converts then settling in the Mormon city. His abilities soon came to the notice of the Prophet Joseph Smith, who with divine confirmation selected him as a counselor in the First Presidency in 1841. For nearly three years William Law served in this high position with dignity, making two important missions to the eastern states. Though the Prophet and William did not always see eye to eye politically and had divergent, even conflicting, financial interests, they did nevertheless, maintain a relative stability in the Presidency. By the summer of 1842, primarily because of his ecclesiastical position, William was drawn into the Prophet's inner circle and introduced to additional sacred truths. When weighed in the balance, however, to test his faith, William faltered.

By the fall of 1843, William had become convinced that the Prophet had abused his authority in the matter of plural marriage. A complete and permanent rupture between William Law and Joseph Smith had occurred by Christmas 1843, when William opted to side with other disaffected Mormons who opposed the Prophet. In addition to rejecting the principle of plural marriage, William Law and other dissidents balked at two other of the Prophet's teachings—a plurality of Gods and unconditional sealing up unto eternal life. By the spring of 1844 William and his cohorts had determined not merely to leave Mormonism behind, but to publicly denounce Joseph Smith's private teachings, which they called doctrines of devils. After their excommunication in April 1844, William and his brother, with others, established a printing office and issued one number of a paper called the *Nauvoo Expositor*, 7 June 1844. By publication of personal statements and sworn testimony, they sought to expose Joseph Smith to Nauvoo Mormons and to publicly traduce his character. The city council's decision to defend Joseph and to destroy the printing press as a public nuisance had far-reaching effects, ultimately resulting in the death of the Prophet.

Menaced by angry Mormons, the Laws left Nauvoo in June 1844. Traveling north, up the Mississippi River, they settled first at Burlington, then at Rock Island, later near Galena, Illinois. In 1866 the Laws moved a final time, across the Illinois border into Wisconsin,

William had become involved in the practice of medicine. At Shullsburg he established a fairly successful medical practice which he maintained until his death on 12 January 1892. But he remained estranged from the Church.

The following six letters, written by William Law while he was still a member in good standing, breathe a spirit of faith and brotherly concern for his fellow members in the restored gospel. Concerning the missionary efforts of Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, Isaac Russell, and others in England in 1837, William Law wrote: "I rejoice that so many are likely to join the Church in England, I trust that they will prove faithful that we may all meet in Zion from every clime" (see letter dated 10 November 1837). Similarly the letters reflect William's conviction that Joseph Smith was a divinely called prophet. Penned at a time when Mormon dissenters throughout the Church, including William Law's close friend and once idol Isaac Russell, were denouncing Joseph Smith as a fallen prophet, the correspondence goes far in its defense of Joseph Smith. After living in close proximity to Joseph Smith for a year in Nauvoo, William wrote of the Prophet: "I have carefully watched his movements since I have been here, and I assure you I have found him honest and honourable in all our transactions which have been very considerable. I believe he is an honest upright man" (see letter dated 29 November 1840).

Our knowledge of William Law's later disaffection should not discolor his earlier good deeds. Nor should it distort our understanding of the man nor lessen our appreciation of his early championing of Mormonism. These letters preserve for us an important insight into a man and a cause. Chosen as counselor in the First Presidency and being one of nine men to whom the Prophet Joseph Smith first administered the endowment in 1842 speaks well for William Law's earlier efforts for the cause of truth.

Mr. Isaac Russel¹
City of Toronto

Churchville² May 12th '37.

Dear Friend & Brother

I this day had the pleasure of hearing from you by Mr. Turley,³ he says you intend to remain in Toronto for a few days. I therefore write you, or rather request that you will allow Mrs. Russel⁴ and Children to spend a few weeks at Churchville, we will be extremely happy of the addition to our family till your return from Kirtland—I really wish you would have her and the Children to stay with us till your return, they will be no trouble but a pleasure, therefore do not deny my request—You know that mail comes here on Friday, therefore if you will write me what time Mrs. Russel would be at the mouth of the Credit⁵ I would send down a team for her, or I could send a waggon to Toronto for them which ever you would prefer.

Mrs. Law⁶ wishes Mrs. Russel to stop with ~~with~~ her till you come back, and you know she will be safe here, so just write me and I will send down to the City for her and the children which I think the best way—'tis better than going on the boat,

There has nothing of moment occurred since I saw you,

We are as well as usual thanks to the Giver of every good and perfect gift—

Perhaps you will come and see us again before you go away.—⁷

Please Remember me to the Friends, And believe me yours

Most Affectionately,

Wm. Law.

Churchville, U.C.
May 12th '37

Wm. Law PM
Free

¹Isaac Russell (1807–1844), the son of William Russell and Isabella Peart, was born 13 April 1807, in Windy Hall, Cumberland County, England. His family immigrated to Upper Canada in 1817. Isaac married Mary Walton, also from Cumberland County, in 1823. They settled in Toronto where he was converted to the Church by Parley P. Pratt. Isaac Russell accompanied Heber C. Kimball and others on the first British mission in 1837, where he had much success in his native land of Cumberland County. After returning from England, Isaac settled in Far West, Missouri, in 1838. He became convinced that Joseph was a fallen prophet. He influenced several Canadian as well as British Saints to leave the Church. Isaac Russell died in Richmond, Ray County, Missouri, 25 September 1844. (See *HC*, 2:494; see also Joseph Fielding Journal, Church Archives.)

²The community of Churchville, for a time one of the strongest branches of the Church in Upper Canada, was situated on the Credit River, about twenty-five miles northwest of Toronto. A post office was established in 1837 with William Law as postmaster.

³Theodore Turley (1801–1871) joined the Church in Upper Canada. He operated a gunsmith shop in Nauvoo.

⁴Mary Walton Russell (1811–1864) was the daughter of John Walton and Ann Millican and the wife of Isaac Russell.

⁵The Credit River.

⁶Jane Silverthorn Law (1814–1882), wife of William Law.

⁷"Go away," i.e., to England. This is an early reference to the plans of several Canadian converts to preach the gospel to friends and relatives in England.

Isaac Russell
Care of Mr. Jackson Wanless
Alston Post Office
Cumberland, England

8

Churchville Nov. 10th 1837.

My Dear Friend

I had a short time ago the pleasure of receiving your kind Epistle, which gave much joy to your friends in this neighbourhood, I need not say how glad I was to find you well, and the work of Our Lord prospering, you had a very favourable voyage, an[d] although trials persecutions, privations and sorrows await the Saints, yet God will not forsake them; yea, in the hour of their greatest need, he will stand by them to deliver.

You wish to know how we stand here, I shall tell you how we appear to stand, (but God knoweth the heart,) all who belong to this branch are faithful I believe, but Bro. Hunter & Sister Bell, who appear to me to be rather doubtful, however I wont judge,

I baptized Isaac and Robert Scott,⁹ so you see the old man¹⁰ has all his sons,—The old lady¹¹ and Sarah¹² are still obstinate. John Scott's¹³ brotherinlaw has joined the Church also, George Nelson's Mother is also a member,¹⁴ Mrs. Graham stands fast in the faith I believe, and I have heard but little of Mrs. McKnoll, The little branch down at Bro. Larances¹⁵ has not lived up to their privileges, but I hope they will do better for the future. Mrs. Rowse and her mother went to Rochester some time ago, the old Lady is not what we took her to be I am afraid, but God knoweth, therefore I dare not condemn,

Bro. Turley¹⁶ and Bro. Thompson¹⁷ have built up a little branch in the upper part of Chyugeonsy[?]¹⁸ of 12 members, Mrs. Thompson¹⁹ has resided with us for some weeks, She is very anxious to hear from her brother²⁰ who went with you—

⁸Isaac Russell and John Snyder, after arriving with others of the British mission in Preston, England, in July 1837, were assigned to preach in Alston, Cumberland County, England.

⁹Isaac and Robert Scott were sons of Jacob and Sarah Warnock Scott. Isaac married Sarah H. Hall in Nauvoo 17 March 1844. Isaac and Sarah were influenced by William Law to leave the Church in 1844. (See George F. Partridge, ed., "The Death of a Mormon Dictator—Letters of Massachusetts Mormons, 1843–1848," *The New England Quarterly* [December 1936].)

¹⁰Jacob Scott, born in Armagh, Ireland, was baptized in Churchville on 22 March 1837 by Isaac Russell. He died in Nauvoo 2 January 1845.

¹¹Sarah Warnock Scott, wife of Jacob Scott.

¹²Sarah Scott was the daughter of Jacob and Sarah Warnock Scott.

¹³John Scott (1811–1876) was the son of Jacob and Sarah Warnock Scott. He married Elizabeth Menerey. John Scott died a member of the Church at Millcreek, Utah.

¹⁴George Nelson, his mother, and other members of the family became converts to the Church in Upper Canada, moved to Far West, Missouri, where they were influenced by Isaac Russell's apostasy and were excommunicated on 26 April 1839. They later settled in Nauvoo.

¹⁵The Edward Lawrence family included his wife Margaret and at least six children: Sarah, Maria, Henry, Nelson, James, and Julia. After the death of her husband and the family's move to Nauvoo, Margaret married Josiah Butterfield.

¹⁶Theodore Turley.

¹⁷Robert Blashel Thompson (1811–1841) joined the Church in Upper Canada in 1826. He served as the Prophet's scribe from 1839 to 1841.

¹⁸The word is nearly illegible.

¹⁹Mercy Rachel Fielding Thompson, sister of Joseph Fielding.

²⁰Joseph Fielding (1797–1863) was baptized in Upper Canada in 1836.

Your Sisters in Toronto are well, and stand fast in the faith, desiring to be remembered to you, Mrs. Walton²¹ was over in Kirtland a short time ago, and wishes me to say to you that your wife is well, and appears to be more comfortable and contented than she has seen her for some time—your children are in good health &c—We had the blessing of a visit from Bro. Joseph Smith Jr. and Bro. Sidney Rigdon, they were here for four or five days,²² from whom we received much information, one thing I would mention he says we have a right to administer to such as Sister Graham, who is prevented by their husbands from baptism, we may confirm such and give the Sacrament &c.—

Bro Joseph is truly a wonderful man he is all we could wish a prophet to be—and Bro. Sidney what Eloquence is his, and think how he has sacrificed for the Truth.

I rejoice that so many are likely to join the Church [in?]²³ England, I trust they will prove faithful that we may all meet in Zion from every C[lime?]²⁴ Bro. Babbit²⁵ & Taylor²⁶ are labouring below Toronto and and the Lord is bringing many in.

You ask me if I would join you in your labours and be your Companion in the work. I would rather travel with you as than any other one, when I do travel, but I think I shall be directed by the Presidency to what quarter of the world I shall go—. I do not know how soon my way will be open but when it is I shall go forth in the strength of Jacob's God—

I am aware we must endure affliction, but I wont shrink from my calling though I should have to sacrifice all things—

The difficulties at Kirtland are all settled²⁷ and the high minded ones have become humble, Mr. Scott²⁸ and family send their Love to you, Mrs. Law²⁹ & Mrs. Thompson³⁰ send their love to you, and all your old friends wish to be remembered to you, if Bro. Snider³¹ is with you remember me to him, and tell him his family is well &c. I believe we will have a rebellion in the Lower Province and perhaps in this [i.e., Upper Canada]³²—I suppose Bro. Turly told you that he sold and will move off next spring &c.—I would go very thankful if you would write me soon again, as I am very desirous to hear from you often—

Mrs. Walton wishes you to ask Robert Walton if there is anything coming from the Holyfield Lead Mine now, and mention it when you

²¹Undoubtedly Isabell Walton, sister of Isaac Russell and one of Parley P. Pratt's first converts in Toronto in 1836.

²²The Prophet's visit to Upper Canada occurred in August 1837, where he was engaged "in visiting the churches in Canada, preaching, baptizing, blessing the Saints and strengthening the branches" (HC, 2:508).

²³Torn.

²⁴Torn.

²⁵Almon W. Babbitt (1813–1856).

²⁶John Taylor (1808–1887) became a convert to the Church in Upper Canada in 1836.

²⁷Widespread apostasy in Kirtland in 1837.

²⁸Jacob Scott.

²⁹Jane Silverthorn Law.

³⁰Mercy Rachel Fielding Thompson, sister of Joseph Fielding.

³¹John Snyder (1800–1875) was baptized in Upper Canada in 1836.

³²In 1837 revolts broke out in both Upper (Ontario) and Lower (Quebec) Canada with rebels demanding responsible government from the British. While the uprisings were a military fiasco, they play no small part in bringing about the 1839 Durham Report: a constitutional document which proposed the unification of Upper and Lower Canada and the establishment of a popularly elected legislature with ultimate authority (see R. MacGregor Dawson, *The Government of Canada* [Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1970], pp. 11–12).

write.—And that the God of our Fathers may always bless, comfort and deliver you is the prayer of your Brother in the Bonds of the Ever lasting Gospel of Christ,

/s/ Wm. Law.

[vertically along the margin] I wish very much to see you but I suppose you wont return for some time. Remember me in your prayers and I shall you—

Georgetown Mercer Cy. Pa.
January 17th 1839

Dear Brother

It is now near three months since I wrote to Sister Walton³³ & Bro Snider³⁴ and also to Bro. Thompson,³⁵ I have looked for a reply with the utmost anxiety but have not heard a word from any of you yet, perhaps my Letters did not reach you,

Please tell Sister Walton that Mary Ann³⁶ is in good health and would be quite content if we had a Letter from her brother shewing that you are all well &c. I was detained here in the fall waiting from day to day for some money which I expected from Canada but which has not even yet come to hand but will in a short time, I have some prospect of selling out in Canada as the Estate will be divided this winter, at all events I shall have enough to take us up in the spring³⁷ & a little over—Tell Sister Walton that I regret exceedingly that I did not get up to Missouri on account of Mary Ann least she should need her, but it was out of my power.³⁸ I shall take as good care of Mary Ann as if she were my own child we live in a comfortable rented house and I keep my teams at work, so we are getting along very well &c.—

We have heard of much trouble in Missouri which I suppose is true in part—the Missourians are determined to drive our people all out of the State but I trust the Lord will not suffer it to be so, I fear there has been wickedness in the Camp, but I hope this chastisement will be for the good of all, I wish very much to hear what the latest revelations say about these things, for if the Church will ask the Lord no doubt he will make known his will to them and tell them how to act &c. &c.

I wrote to Bro. Snider and requested him to be so good as to let Sister Walton have forty dollars if he would and I will would settle with him for it in the spring when I come up, if Bro. Snider did not get my

³³Isabella Walton.

³⁴John Snyder.

³⁵Robert B. Thompson.

³⁶Mary Ann Walton appears to be the daughter of Isabella Walton.

³⁷"Up" to Missouri.

³⁸Mary Ann Walton appears to have traveled to Nauvoo with William Law's family in late 1839. Robert Walton, undoubtedly her brother, came to Nauvoo from Far West, Missouri, to "fetch" Mary Ann in October 1839. See Leonora Taylor to John Taylor, October 1839, Church Archives.

Letter please mention this to him and if he can spare the money I would be very glad to have it given Sister Walton as she has no one to help her to work, tell her that Mary Ann had a Letter from John Walton³⁹ he is in Canada and said he would come up to Missouri, he cut his foot badly while in Ohio or Indiana and when it got well his money was done, and I suppose he was discouraged and thought he would go home, so he worked along from place to place till he got back, but I suppose he will come up next summer to Missouri—

Sister Walton might send me an order on Mr. Milburn for any rents or moneys that may be in his hands, as perhaps I may go over in a month or two, and could bring it to her.—

I wish you would write to me as soon as you get this and tell me all the news &c.

I would like to know how Bro. Snider lost his horses and which ones he lost.

Tell Father Scott⁴⁰ to write me and tell Bros. Mulholland⁴¹ and Turley,⁴² and all my old friends who are writers to write me. I cant get Letters enough.

I have preached a little and intend to preach more, I baptised one in this place—

We enjoy pretty good health thanks be to our heavenly father for all his mercies—

One of my brothers⁴³ thought of going up with me in the spring and taking a store of goods, I wish you would let me know how it would answer he is a strong advocate for our doctrines and will I hope eventually be a member of the Church at present I have very little hope of the rest of my brothers but the Lord can turn any heart from the error of education—

My mother⁴⁴ died a few weeks ago after many years of sickness which she bore patiently—

My father⁴⁵ is much opposed to these things from evil reports &c. which he has heard—

The Hicks⁴⁶ are here and intend going up in the spring—

The evil reports which we hear did not discourage us, as we know in whom we trust, we are determined to hold out to the end though we may have to suffer all things—

I hope you will not forget us in your prayers—

Remember us to all our friends with devoted love—

Mary Anns love to all her f[r]iends,

³⁹John Walton appears to have been Mary Ann's brother.

⁴⁰Jacob Scott.

⁴¹James Mulholland (1804–1839) was born in Ireland and was converted to the Church in Upper Canada. He served as Joseph Smith's scribe from 1838 to 1839.

⁴²Theodore Turley.

⁴³Wilson Law (1807–1877). William was the youngest of five brothers. Contrary to William's later statements, his brother Wilson was baptized and ordained an elder in Nauvoo. Joseph Smith married Wilson Law and Elizabeth F. Sikes on 25 December 1842 at Nauvoo. Elizabeth died in Nauvoo 31 March 1844. (See Joseph Smith Diary, 31 March 1844, Church Archives.)

⁴⁴Mary Wilson Law.

⁴⁵Richard Law.

⁴⁶Possibly William Hicks or John A. Hicks.

Direct your letters to Mercer Post Office, Mercer County, Pennsylvania—

Believe me most affectionately

Yours in the Bonds of the Everlasting Gospel of Christ.
/s/ Wm. Law.

To Mr. Isaac Russel

Let me know whether Mr. Glines⁴⁷ is in Missouri or if you know where he and his family are, as they left Churchville for Missouri—W.L.
Do not delay writing even for a day.

Georgetown, Mercer Cy, Pa.
March 27th /39

Dear Brother

I recd. you[r] kind Letter of the 5th Feb'y, and am happy to find you well and in good faith. I judge you have stood the trial pretty well, it is wisdom in the Almighty that these things should be, that the Church might be purged and made clean, that the pure in heart alone might remain, I am glad to hear that Orson Hyde⁴⁸ has returned to the bosom of the Church and as to our other brethren who are a little out of the way I have no doubts but they will all come right again. The Devil is seeking by every means to destroy us and we should pray for each other and uphold each other by faith—I had a Letter from Bro. Russel⁴⁹ some time ago—I could not say that there was any thing in it out of the way, he said nothing against Joseph.—he said there was much pride and avariceousness in the Church, said they had broken the commandments as to obtaining an inheritance in Zion, which should be by purchase, See page 143 Doctrine & Covenants.⁵⁰ I have no doubt but there has been transgression in the Church or the Lord would not scourge them, but all things will work together for good to those who love and fear God—. And as to Joseph building a Bank at Kirtland, I look on it as like unto the affair of David being moved by God to number the people when [he was?]⁵¹ displeased with Israel,—See 2d Samuel 24 Chap. 1st. verse—So the Lord was angry with the Saints and suffered them to have the Bank as a snare that he might punish them for their love of riches and speculation &c.

When Joseph ordains another in his stead⁵² I shall be willing to receive him but not till then, but I have not the most foreign idea that

⁴⁷Undoubtedly John Glines, a Canadian convert from Churchville. He later settled near Nauvoo.

⁴⁸Orson Hyde (1805–1878) was disfellowshipped because of his disaffection in Missouri in 1838, but after sincere repentance he was restored to his position in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on 27 June 1839.

⁴⁹Isaac Russell.

⁵⁰See Doctrine and Covenants 63:27–31.

⁵¹Torn.

⁵²D&C 43:4 speaks of Joseph Smith's having authority to appoint another in his stead.

the Lord will remove Joseph from the presidency ever,—I have heard many dreadful reports about the Mormon War,⁵³ but found at last a true account of the affair in the Quincy Argus

Dear Bro. we do not live in the right generation for temporal happiness, but then the happiness and glory of that City which we seek beyond the sufferings of mortality, is such as to enable us to bear the ills of this present life with some degree of fortitude, we should be very careful to observe the commandments and to walk humbly before the Lord, and to have our whole trust placed in him, and not to trust to our own wisdom for the Devil seeketh to destroy us that Zion should not be built up but it shall be built up by the pure in heart, yea it shall yet be glorious and terrible to the praise of the Lord, and to the safety of his people—.

I hear you are married to my particular friend Sister Sarah⁵⁴—may the richest blessings of Heaven rest on your heads forever.—

As soon as I learn the fixed place of resting for the Saints I shall endeavour to move there, for I long to be with the Saints, to be gathered with the people of God, and I trust that after this chastening the Saints will strive to serve the Lord in truth and righ[t]eousness,

The inhabitants of Missouri have been filling up their cup of iniquity, and the Lord will doubtless soon bring judgments upon them, and they will be cut off that the Saints may possess the land in peace &c—

We are all well, Our love to our friends—

Yours in The Gospel of Christ

/s/ Wm. Law.

To Mr. Ja[me]s Molholland

[March 27–29, 1839]⁵⁵

Dear Brother

You see I have left but little room to write to you nor have I much to write, I am somewhat astonished at my old friends concerning the box,—but let it go so, they are paid the Am't of their claims and I revoke the order to give Sister Walton⁵⁶ & Bro. Russel⁵⁷ the contents of the box, and I beg to request of you to sell so much of the contents of it as will pay you back the \$16, Sister Thompson⁵⁸ paid on it and also for the expense of bringing it to Quincy the rest if there be any left please keep till we reach you, we are very thankful to Sister Thompson for her

⁵³Mormon extermination from Missouri 1838–1839.

⁵⁴James Mulholland married Sarah Scott, daughter of Jacob Scott and Mary Warnock Scott.

⁵⁵This letter to Robert B. Thompson was appended to the Mulholland letter and would have been written sometime between 27 March 1839 and the date of postmark, 29 March 1839.

⁵⁶Isabella Walton.

⁵⁷Isaac Russell.

⁵⁸Mercy Fielding Thompson.

care of the box, she did wisely in bringing it with her, but it was a great trouble, which we shall not forget.—

As to the Merchantile business I wish you would give me, all the information you can on that subject as early as possible as my brother⁵⁹ wishes to go to the West this season, let me know how the people pay, what kind of goods is most suitable, how much capital would be needed whether there are many stores there and where the best situation would be for doing business in that line—give me a description of the country, climate &c. &c. and tell me where the Saints are going to settle if you know, would a first rate new horsepower for grinding and sawing be useful there is a new invention come out that is excellent.

I hope our brethren in prison⁶⁰ will soon get out to the joy of the Church,

I hope you, Sister Thompson & child, enjoy good health, we long exceedingly to see you, our love to all our friends—

Tell Brothers Turley⁶¹ & Snider⁶² to write me

Yours in The Gospel

/s/ Wm. Law.

Mr. R[obert] B. Thompson

[on verso:] Write soon and direct as formerly to
Culbertson's P.O.
Mercer Cy
Pa.

If you go out to Preach, just come here it is perhaps as good a place as any, and I will go out with you, should any good preacher come here I could be glad to receive him and would try to preach along with him

Nauvoo Ill.
Nov. 29th 1840,

Bro. Russell
[Far West, Missouri]

Dear Sir

As some of my former Letters have not been answd I thought perhaps you did not get them, and as I can now send you a few lines by Bro. Goodson,⁶³ I tho't I would improve the opportunity.

⁵⁹Wilson Law.

⁶⁰Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Lyman Wight, Caleb Baldwin, and Alexander McRae in Liberty Jail and Parley P. Pratt, King Follett, Morris Phelps, and Luman Gibbs in Boone County Jail, Columbia, Missouri.

⁶¹Theodore Turley.

⁶²John Snyder.

⁶³John Goodson, a Canadian convert who accompanied Heber C. Kimball and others on the British mission in 1837, was influenced by Isaac Russell's apostasy; Goodson himself was excommunicated in 1839.

It is needless for me to express my regret that you remain so long from the Body of the Church, you who have been so very zealous for the cause of Christ, you who have been willing to Sacrifice all things for the building up of the Kingdom in the last days, read the Book of Mormon and you will find that Joseph has not fallen, he has not done his work yet, and if he sins is there no room for repentance, can not God forgive him, and can not we forgive him very often in a day.

I have carefully watched his movements since I have been here,⁶⁴ and I assure you I have found him honest and honourable in all our transactions which have been very considerable I believe he is an honest upright man, and as to his follies let who ever is guiltless throw the first stone at him, I shant do it.

he continues to bring forth the deep mysteries of the Kingdom, and we feast upon them til our souls are made fat, and our hearts rejoice exceedingly. I wish you lived here you would soon change your views of matters and become reconciled. pardon me when I say that I fear some evil spirit has prejudiced your mind and then takes the advantage of you. you now stand opposed to the only organised Church on the Earth, a Church which God now acknowledges by revelations and the gift of his holy Spirit. I know that God has not cast off his people, though there are some wicked amongst them, you know the Kingdom is a net which gathereth of every kind, and the tares are allowed to remain for a time &c.

There never was a time when the Church prospered as much as at present, throughout the world, the good and the honorable of the earth are obeying the gospel and rejoicing in its gifts and blessings why do you keep away from the work of the Lord. You can do nothing where you are, you cannot advance the work of the Lord there, come forth then and submit to the order that God has established, and let your voice be heard amongst the nations, you were once a mighty man, why then be rebellious because of offences, or from any other cause, as to you being cut off from the Church, Joseph disapproved of it with much warmth and wishes you and the rest to appeal at the general assembly of the Church, you would be received here with open arms were you to come back.

I wish you would write me immediately as I want to hear from you. Mr. Good[s]on is here I have not learn'd his business—he starts back today—

My love to your family and all our friends, we are well thanks be to our heavenly Father,

yours

/s/ Wm Law

Give our love to Mary Ann Walton⁶⁵ tell her we get along as usual that the Church is prospering &c. and that we are all well, and would like to see her &c. our love to her mother

W. L.

⁶⁴William Law arrived in Nauvoo in early November 1839.

⁶⁵Daughter of Robert and Isabella Walton.

Book Reviews

HILLAM, RAY C., ed. *By the Hands of Wise Men: Essays on the U.S. Constitution*. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1979. 128 pp. \$4.95.

Reviewed by Donald Q. Cannon, professor of Church history and doctrine, Brigham Young University.

By the Hands of Wise Men contains an introduction and seven essays by authors trained in the disciplines of history, economics, law, philosophy, and political science. Because "this book is an outgrowth of a symposium sponsored by the College of Social Sciences in commemoration of the centennial of Brigham Young University," it has both the strengths and weaknesses of that relationship. It includes the work of some eminent scholars, but it also has some material that does not fit comfortably with the other essays. *By the Hands of Wise Men* contains an introduction and seven essays by authors trained in the disciplines of history, economics, law, philosophy, and political science.

The first essay, "The Doctrine of an Inspired Constitution," by Noel Reynolds,¹ deserves to be the lead essay because its title and basic assumptions are central to the book's theme. Reynolds believes that the U.S. Constitution is an inspired document. Furthermore, he argues that the process of divine inspiration related to the Constitution is similar to the process involved in the welfare program of the Church; that is, inspiration comes through the historical process of growth and experimentation.

While Reynolds's essay contains many brilliant insights, it is marred by some questionable assumptions. On page three, for example, he claims that most early Americans saw the hand of God shaping American destiny, when, in fact, many early Americans were clearly skeptical of such a notion. Professor Reynolds also says that notable historians of the nineteenth century echoed this providential

¹Noel B. Reynolds, "The Doctrine of an Inspired Constitution," *Brigham Young University Studies* 16 (Spring 1976): 315-40.

view of America, citing specifically George Bancroft. Although Bancroft did believe that, it should be noted that he was an exception. On the positive side, some of Professor Reynolds's conclusions are excellent. He warns his readers, for example, "Some Latter-day Saints seem to take the prophetic teaching that the Constitution was inspired as a reason for insisting that the original document was a final achievement, which should never be modified or revised."

In "Virtue and the Constitution" Richard L. Bushman claims that virtue is absolutely essential to the proper functioning of the U.S. Constitution. His definition of virtue—the avoidance of self-indulgence, and the sacrifice of personal interest for the good of the whole—is borrowed from the noted American historian, Gordon S. Wood. The Constitution, argues Dr. Bushman, was an effort to compensate for the lack of virtue in Americans. Even though the Constitution guards against selfishness, Americans must be vigilant in promoting virtue, which is its opposite. Bushman says we can accomplish this best by teaching faith and virtue.

In his essay on J. Reuben Clark,² Martin B. Hickman deals with three aspects of President Clark's commentaries on the Constitution: (1) his belief that it was an inspired document, (2) the centrality of the separation of powers, and, (3) the freedoms of the first amendment. He summarizes President Clark's thinking on the inspired nature of the document in this manner: "He viewed history through the lens of faith." The balance of the essay is a clear and persuasive statement of J. Reuben Clark's views on the U.S. Constitution. Reading this essay persuades me to agree with Dean Hickman that J. Reuben Clark's unique contribution was his ability to write with precision about the Constitution.

L. Dwight Israelsen's essay on "Mormons, the Constitution, and the Host Economy" describes the ideal system of economics and government as the Law of Consecration. He points out that the capitalist system fostered by the U.S. Constitution is the best "host economy" because it allows the Church the option of activating or deactivating the Law of Consecration as necessary. Israelsen cautions Mormons: "Having been taught the superiority of capitalism as a host system, they [Mormons] begin to attribute capitalistic institutions, as well as the attitudes and operational characteristics of capitalism, to the ideal system." This is a solid essay, but there seems to be too much on economics and too little on the Constitution.

²See *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 7 (Spring 1972): 37-46 and *BYU Studies* 13 (Spring 1973): 426-40.

Consequently, this article does not integrate as easily as it should with others in the book.

“The Constitution as Change” is the subject of the essay by William Clayton Kimball. Exploring the relationship of the written constitution to American constitutional culture, he concludes that the real U.S. Constitution is not the document but “what the people say it is, and what they will sustain it to be.” In this insightful essay Professor Kimball tells us that genuine change must take place in the minds and hearts of the people, and not just in the wording of the Constitution.

Rex E. Lee, in his essay “The Inspired Quality and the Flexibility of the Constitution,” says that the U.S. Constitution is inspired in its overall structure, but not necessarily in each individual provision. He goes on to tell us that the breadth of the Constitution is its most important inspired quality. This breadth has enabled the U.S. Constitution to endure for almost two centuries. Professor Lee wisely cautions Latter-day Saints: “We find it easy to lapse into the expansive notion that the Constitution, like the gospel, embraces all truth.”

In the concluding essay, “Some Thoughts about Our Constitution and Government,” Elder Neal A. Maxwell writes that “our American Constitution places heavy duties on the individual citizen.” Some of those duties include seeking wise, good and honest political leaders, rendering community service, and being personally righteous. Emphasis in this essay is on political responsibility rather than on the Constitution. Although it is written in Elder Maxwell’s characteristically brilliant manner, the political interest of this essay does not blend in as comfortably with the others as it might.

Although it has some unevenness, *By the Hands of Wise Men* certainly is worth buying and reading. It is an important contribution toward an understanding of the U.S. Constitution. The non-LDS reader might be uncomfortable with some of the material, but this book succeeds in addressing some important issues for Mormon readers concerning the Constitution.

LEONE, MARK P. *Roots of Modern Mormonism*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979. 250 pp. \$15.00.

Reviewed by Steven L. Olsen, a Ph.D. candidate in anthropology, University of Chicago.

Roots of Modern Mormonism is complex and insightful, innovative and challenging . . . and troubling. This attempt to analyze Mormonism from the perspective of cultural ecology is the first major study on Mormonism in a number of years to come from a nationally recognized scholar outside the Church and one of the few studies on Mormonism to employ anthropological field techniques. Dr. Leone applies understanding of the Church gained from temporary residence and study in the Little Colorado River area in south central Arizona to reveal several fundamental characteristics about post-pioneer Mormonism. His basic thesis is that Mormonism is fundamentally dynamic, pragmatic and relativistic and that its successful and radical adaptation to the twentieth century is a function of an essentially individualistic ideology. Examining how tithing, stake conferences, church courts, and testimonies have allowed Mormons to adapt to changing conditions in the world around them, Leone concludes that Mormonism maintains an appearance of authority, stability, and confidence primarily by discouraging the development of professional theologians and historians from among its ranks who would identify contradictions in its doctrines and significant alterations in its practices. As a result, Mormons wear theological and historical blinders to protect themselves from the realization that they have become, not the Kingdom of God as they originally intended, but only one of many religious minorities in the United States. In short, Mormonism's adaptability is a function of its deceptiveness—making the Saints think they are working for God when the Church, in practice, is subject to Mammon.

Before such a critique of Mormonism could be accepted, several elements of the analysis must be clarified or corrected. First of all, in his effort to make a point, Leone commits some glaring errors. Consider, for example, the following: "The nineteenth century regarded Mormonism as the perfect American religion and a microcosm of America" (p. vi); Church leaders in the twentieth century "separated the church as an institution from the welfare of its people" (p. 163); and ". . . most Mormons, especially older ones, can report virtually nothing about the past" (p. 209). These statements fly in the face of some of the most well-documented aspects of Mormon history and culture.

Furthermore, obvious internal contradictions detract from the analysis. On successive pages, Leone declares, "Mormon society does not suffer from the 'old age' problem as much as the rest of the country does," and "... Mormon elderly are displaced, like the elderly everywhere" (pp. 178-79). Consider also, "Mormons . . . bestow most of the meaning in their lives within the institutional framework of Mormonism," and "Mormons create their own theology and philosophy in the literal sense. . . . They do their own thinking" (p. 168). Finally, "Whenever Mormons get together, they are invited to talk about all aspects of their faith and church and they do so without a structure which actively prescribes the right answer to any question," and "Sunday School for the children corresponds to the divisions of grade school, with the teacher trying to elicit spontaneous, extemporaneous responses that nonetheless coincide with what the manuals indicate is an appropriate way of answering" (p. 188).

Leone also employs an overabundance of theoretical jargon which often muddles his insights: "Mormon ideas cannot be arranged to create a negative commentary on the events which they classify. Through overlap, on the one hand, and isolation, on the other, the relation between the pieces of the system have been disintegrated; the internal logic that the system once had has been functionally destroyed. Thus, like the past, it has ceased to exist" (p. 192).

Leone's analysis of Mormonism's transformation is more central to his study, and his criticism of the "hierarchical, authoritarian, and fundamentalist" approach to Mormonism is well taken. There is "conceptual looseness" in Mormon theology and "ethical looseness" in Mormon behavior, both having contributed significantly to Mormonism's dynamics. But, to classify Mormon theology and history as essentially "do-it-yourself" is to ignore a great deal of cultural identity and meaning which lie beyond the control of the individual Mormon. Leone shows how the boundaries of orthodoxy, as defined by ecclesiastical courts and temple recommend interviews, have changed throughout Mormon history, but he does not show that these and other institutional boundary markers are weaker than they were in pre-modern Mormonism. One could make the point that these sanctions are actually more significant in the lives of contemporary Mormons than ever before. A "modern religion" in Robert Bellah's terms and an "invisible religion" in Thomas Luckman's is one in which the standards of faithfulness have become individualized and subjective. Mormonism is far from this stage in its growth.

A final concern addresses Leone's fundamental theoretical

framework. An ecological analysis considers culture to be a mechanism for its members to ensure their survival through successful adaptation to a material and temporal setting. Leone states, "The fact that they planned and that the planning netted them survival is the sum of the Mormons' history" (p. 72). Although survival is a need for all cultures, a serious question is raised for those who view Mormonism primarily as a survival technique. Why did the Mormons maintain their "peculiar institutions" to the point of negating their basic survival quest, only to generate an adaptive mechanism less efficient than that of its mother country and accept so enthusiastically the permanent status of a subordinate religious minority in America? To answer this question Leone must attribute irrationality to Mormon behavior, nonsense to its ritual, and deception to its ideology. The limitations of Leone's theoretical framework seriously distort his perspective of Mormonism. Neither Mormonism nor any other culture can be reduced to a struggle for material existence.

Roots of Modern Mormonism contains useful and provocative insights, but I cannot recommend it as the landmark study it was expected to be.

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