

Susan Easton Black

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EARLY QUORUMS OF THE SEVENTIES

“**B**RETHREN, I have seen those men who died of the cholera in our camp,” said Joseph Smith to Brigham Young and his brother Joseph. “And the Lord knows, if I get a mansion as bright as theirs, I ask no more.”¹ The Prophet then wept and for a time was unable to continue. After gaining composure, he told Brigham that he would be one of twelve men appointed to spread the good news of Jesus Christ to the nations of the world. Turning to thirty-seven-year-old Joseph Young, the Prophet said, “Brother Joseph, the Lord has made you President of the Seventies.”²

Brigham’s elder brother was startled by the prophetic announcement. He knew something of Moses and the seventy elders of Israel and of Jesus appointing other seventy, but it had never occurred to him that men would be called to be seventies in the dispensation of the fulness

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of times.³ Yet Joseph Young and 3,129 other men were ordained seventies during the early years of the Church. In this paper, read of the early beginnings, the vision, and purpose of the first quorums of the seventies. Learn of the rapid expansion in both the number of men called and quorums organized under the direction of Brigham Young. Discover why the seventies were willing to sacrifice their time and talents to build the first priesthood hall in the Church.

BEGINNINGS OF THE FIRST QUORUM OF THE SEVENTIES

Latter-day Saint historians claim that the First Quorum of the Seventy was composed of veterans who marched with Zion's Camp.⁴ The *History of the Church* lists the names of forty-one Zion's Camp members in the original quorum. Joseph Young, Senior President of the Quorum, adds twenty-nine additional men not named on the earlier list.⁵ By combining and reviewing these lists, it is more accurate to say that sixty-seven members of the First Quorum marched with Zion's Camp. Jesse Huntsman, William D. Pratt, and Jezehi B. Smith were exceptions.⁶ Newly called seventies were not selected from the youngest (Bradford Elliott or George Fordham, both age ten years) or the oldest in the camp (Noah Johnson, age seventy-one years). The average age of the first seventies was 25.6 years. The average age in Zion's Camp was 29.6 years. The oldest man ordained a seventy was Elias Hutchings, age fifty-one. The youngest was Daniel Stephens, age sixteen. From their number, seven men were selected Presidents of the seventies, with Joseph Young appointed Senior President.⁷ Young was responsible for overseeing the purpose and function of the Quorum, an assignment he held until his death in 1881. If for any reason Young failed to carry out his responsibilities, the next senior by ordination would take the leadership role, and so on.⁸ (As occasions arose, those appointed to temporary leadership positions were referred to as alternates.)

When the First Quorum and their Presidency were in place, Joseph Smith spoke of the central role these men now held in the kingdom of God.

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“If the first Seventy are all employed, and there is a call for more laborers,” Joseph said, “it will be the duty of the seven presidents of the first Seventy to call and ordain other Seventy and send them forth to labor in the vineyard, until, if needs be, they set apart seven times seventy, and even until there are one hundred and forty-four thousand thus set apart for the ministry.” Joseph then instructed the Presidency of their right to “choose, ordain, and set . . . apart from among the most experienced of the Elders of the Church” other seventies or especial witnesses of Christ.⁹ And on March 28, 1835, in a “revelation on Priesthood, given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio,” the Lord revealed that the First Quorum was “equal in authority to that of the Twelve special witnesses or Apostles” (D&C 107:26).¹⁰

The responsibility that Joseph rolled onto the shoulders of the newly called seventies was surprising, if not startling, to men relatively young in age and in understanding of the gospel. Comprehending Joseph’s vision of equality with the Twelve and the “seven times seventy” was foreign to men who knew little of the Restoration and even less of the world that awaited their message. They were economically poor, lacking in formal education, and devoid of experience with cultures and nations. Most contended that their Christian upbringing had little prepared them for a leadership role in the Restoration. It seemed only yesterday that men of the cloth led their congregations. Now they were expected to be leaders of the newfound religious faith. Did the Lord not see their weakness in oratory skills and understanding of the nuances of the Bible? How could they rise beyond their natural ability to be messengers of God and share the good news with a world steeped in unbelief?

Although many of their questions went unanswered, the newly ordained seventies left Kirtland to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. Without purse or scrip, and often not knowing where to go or whom to speak with, the seventies began their missionary travels. Many were turned out of doors, abused and frustrated. Others found listeners and a few grateful converts. To those who accepted the gospel and entered baptismal waters, Kirtland beckoned. Converts packed their belongings and headed to the central gathering place

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of the Church. As for the seventies, they came and went as traveling missionaries that first season and the next. Their determination to share the gospel was great, even though their ability to bring others to the water's edge was not remarkably successful.

As the seventies returned to Kirtland, they knew intuitively that an accounting was expected of their missionary travels. Most reported or spoke with a member of the Presidency of the seventies. The Presidency, in turn, reported to the Twelve, and on a more informal basis to Joseph Smith. On December 28, 1835, President Sylvester Smith¹¹ told Joseph Smith that the seventies were “worthy young men, strong, active, energetic, determined in the name of the Lord to go forward and persevere to the end.” He assured the Prophet that they had been traveling missionaries “in various States and generally with good success; many have been convinced, and 175 baptized into the Kingdom of Jesus.”¹² Joseph wrote of this conversation, “My heart was made glad while listening to the relation of those that had been laboring in the vineyard of the Lord, with such marvelous success. And I pray God to bless them with an increase of faith and power, and keep them all, with the endurance of faith in the name of Jesus Christ to the end.”¹³ With an endowment of power, Joseph knew the seventies could magnify their ability to preach to a fallen world and reap a bountiful harvest. Joseph also knew that there was only one place on earth that this singular gift could be bestowed—the Kirtland Temple.

Could the seventies wait until the temple was finished? It appears not. In January 1836, two months shy of the temple dedication, Joseph invited the Twelve Apostles and the Presidents of the seventies to meet him in the unfinished temple. In that holy house, Joseph gave these leaders an endowment, or anointing of power, to enhance their ability to carry out their priesthood assignments. After each had received his anointing, Joseph instructed them to call upon God with uplifted hands to seal the promised blessings. It was then that three of the seventies witnessed holy manifestations. Sylvester Smith saw “a pillar of fire rest down and abide upon the heads of the quorum as they stood in the midst of the Twelve,” Roger Orton saw “a mighty angel

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riding upon a horse of fire, with a flaming sword in his hand, followed by five others, encircle the house, and protect the Saints, even the Lord's anointed from the power of Satan and a host of evil spirits, which were striving to disturb the Saints," and Zebedee Coltrin saw the "Savior extended before him as upon a cross, and, a little after, crowned with glory upon his head, above the brightness of the sun."¹⁴ These manifestations, a precursor to Pentecostal events that followed two months later at the temple dedication, were spiritual outpourings from God. When the manifestations ceased, the Presidents of the seventies were instructed to anoint quorum members with the same power they had received so that they too could fulfill their important role in carrying the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. By so doing, Joseph Smith again rolled responsibility from himself to the Presidency, giving them the administration of blessings in addition to the responsibilities of calling, ordaining, and overseeing the function of the quorum.

EXPANSION OF THE SEVENTIES QUORUMS BEGINS IN KIRTLAND

Ten days later, on Sunday, February 7, 1836, Joseph Smith met with the Presidency of the seventies once again. This time, the meeting place was a loft in the printing office located near the Kirtland Temple. The purpose of the meeting was to organize the Second Quorum from among faithful elders of the Church.¹⁵ As Joseph spoke with the Presidents, he recalled an earlier day when each had marched with Zion's Camp:

Let me tell you, God did not want you to fight. He could not organize His kingdom with twelve men to open the Gospel door to the nations of the earth, and with seventy men under their direction to follow in their tracks, unless He took them from a body of men who had offered their lives, and who had made as great a sacrifice as did Abraham. Now the Lord has got His Twelve and His Seventy, and there will be other quorums of Seventies

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called, who will make the sacrifice, and those who have not made their sacrifices and their offerings now, will make them hereafter.¹⁶

Although some historians claim that the Second Quorum was composed of Zion's Camp veterans, such is not entirely true. Only eleven of the men called to the Second Quorum marched with Zion's Camp—the most famous being Wilford Woodruff, Truman O. Angell, King Follett, and Erastus Snow. Thus Joseph's statement, "Those who have not made their sacrifices and their offerings now, will make them hereafter," had direct bearing on most called to the Second Quorum and subsequent quorums thereafter. The average age of the new quorum members was thirty-five years. Despite seniority in age over those serving in the First Quorum, the Second Quorum was told to look to the First Quorum as leaders. When vacancies occurred in the First Quorum, those in the Second Quorum were invited to take their place.¹⁷ Caroline Crosby, wife of Jonathan Crosby, wrote of her husband's call to the Second Quorum: "I well recollect the sensations with which my mind was actuated when I learned the fact that my husband had been called and ordained . . . 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 his high and holy calling."¹⁸

On December 20, 1836, the Third Quorum of the Seventy was organized, about ten months after the Second Quorum.¹⁹ Thereafter, Wilford Woodruff noted that "the seventies will meet every Tuesday evening through the winter [of 1837] in the Kirtland Temple. He also noted on one occasion "about one hundred seventies were present."²⁰ In their weekly meetings, instruction was given to improve effectiveness in missionary labors until mid-March 1837, when the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company collapsed. The financial collapse of the society triggered an outcry against Joseph Smith and Mormonism that was slow to mend. Twenty-seven members of the First Quorum joined dissidents and abandoned their faith. About a third in the two other quorums followed suit. Benjamin Johnson, a witness to the

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disintegration of the quorums, lamented, “Like Judas, [they were] ready to sell or destroy the Prophet Joseph and his followers. And it almost seemed to me that the brightest stars in our firmament had fallen.”²¹

Adding to the problems in the quorums, a controversy over priesthood authority arose. The controversy centered on which priesthood body—high priests quorums or seventies quorums—had higher preeminence or authority in the Church. Carved initials on temple pulpits suggested the seventies held the higher authority, for immediately above the initials representing Presidency of the high priests quorum (PHPQ) were the letters PSZ, which referred to the Presidents of the seventy.²² This same issue arose again and again through the succeeding years. In spring 1837, Joseph Smith resolved the difficulty by reorganizing the Presidency of the seventies. Presidents previously ordained to the office of high priest were placed in the high priests quorum. Five of seven Presidents were released, and five ordained to take their place.²³

On March 6, 1838, with a new Presidency in place, the seventies again met in the Kirtland Temple. Their purpose in meeting was to discuss the benefits and perils associated with moving as a group to Missouri. Without reaching a decision in this meeting, they planned a follow-up meeting on March 10. At this meeting, “the Spirit of the Lord came down in mighty power, and some of the elders began to prophesy” that if they traveled together and kept the commandments of the Lord, the expedition would succeed. James Foster, a new President of the seventies, spoke of seeing a company of about five hundred starting from Kirtland and traveling and camping together, concluding that it was the will of God that the seventies should travel as a body to Missouri.²⁴ With the affirmation of Hyrum Smith, specific plans for the journey ahead were made. However, most seventies abandoned the plans. They moved from Kirtland in separate family groupings, seemingly unmindful of their earlier decision to journey in a large contingency.

When the camp finally moved forward, only 30 percent of the men claimed membership in one of the three seventies quorums.²⁵ The fact that so few seventies joined the camp is evidence that unity and brotherhood were waning. It may further evidence that the collapse of the Kirtland Safety

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Society and the controversy over authority had taken their toll. What was once a determined, anointed, and cohesive brotherhood was no more. Yet Joseph Young, Senior President of the quorums, had little time to lament problems within his ranks. It was time to move the remaining members of his quorums, their families, and the poor to Missouri. Under his leadership, the camp consisting of 515 pioneers left Kirtland in July 1838. John Pulsipher wrote, “On the first day of July 1838 we started for Missouri in the largest company of Saints that ever traveled together in this generation, and all the people in the country, town, and cities through which we passed were surprised. It certainly was wonderful at that time to see a company of men, women and children a mile long, all traveling together in order, and pitching their tents by the way.”²⁶

The initial plan was to settle the traveling party in Adam-ondi-Ahman, Missouri. En route to Diahman, the camp tarried at Haun’s Mill. Unfortunately, many in the camp suffered from atrocities committed during a terrible slaughter that occurred in October 1838 at Haun’s Mill. Following the tragedy, a decentralized settling plan was put in place for those in the Kirtland Camp. Some ran to Far West, the main Latter-day Saint settlement. Others scattered. For many, the once cherished brotherhood was lost in the extremities. Regular quorum meetings became a remembrance of the past. Few seventies were called on missions, and even fewer accepted the call. However, amid the strident persecution and scattering of 1838, uncalled and unassigned seventies served self-appointed missions. Neither the sword nor the musket could destroy the spirit of missionary work.

Not long after the seventies found refuge in Quincy, Illinois, Joseph Young once again held meetings and called and ordained seventies. Was he doing so under the direction of the Twelve? Records do not substantiate that fact. Perhaps Joseph Young, like Joseph Smith before him, had reached the conclusion, “What power shall stay the heavens? As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it up stream, as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints” (D&C 121:33). With

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renewed courage, even the strength of dedication, Joseph Young filled vacancies in the first three quorums and created other quorums.

Such vigor did not last long. Limitations to the function and calling of the seventies were forthcoming. In May 1839, after fourteen seventies had joined the Twelve on their mission to England, it was resolved that “those of the Seventies who have not yet preached, shall not for the future be sent on foreign missions.”²⁷ To many, such a resolution countered the purpose of the seventies to take the gospel to all the world. Nevertheless, Joseph Young and his quorums complied. Yet Young and his Presidency kept ordaining more men until they increased their number to 490 in hopes that one day the resolution would be lifted. Instead of being lifted, further restraints to the activities of Young and his Presidency followed. On July 19, 1839, Joseph Smith asked Young “not to ordain any into the quorum of the Seventies.”²⁸ Why? The answer is not readily known. In retrospect, it appears that the Prophet was rethinking the work of the seventies.

When the Latter-day Saints moved from Quincy to the swampland of Commerce, Illinois, seventies were asked to dig drainage ditches and reclaim the swampland—a far cry from their initial purpose. The assignment appears more individual based than quorum based. Individually, the seventies erected cabins, homes, stores, and public buildings. The only collective building built was the Seventies Hall—the first priesthood hall in the Church. Pennsylvania native Edward Hunter²⁹ gave land “for use and benefit of the Quorums of Seventies as President.”³⁰ Architect William Weeks drew plans for the building, and quorum secretary, John D. Lee, supervised construction. Of his assignment, Lee penned:

[In] Fall [1843] I was appointed on a committee, with Brigham Young as counselor, to build a hall for the Seventies, the upper story to be used for the Priesthood and the Council of Fifty. Previous to my being appointed on the committee two committees had been appointed, but had accomplished nothing, and we commenced without a dollar. My plan was to build it by shares, of the value of five dollars each. Hyrum Smith, the Patriarch, told

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me that he would give the Patriarchal Blessing to any that labored on the foundation of the building. The Seventies numbered about four hundred and ninety men. I was to create the material. That is, I would watch, and when I could get a contract to take out lumber from the river, as rafts would land at the city, I would take common laboring men, and the portion of the lumber that we got for our pay we would pile up for the building. In this way we got all the lumber needed. The brick we made ourselves, and boated the wood to burn them and our lime from the island.³¹

Donations for the Seventies Hall came in the form of cash or subscriptions. Subscriptions were a type of stock in the sum of five dollars. For example, Hosea Stout purchased stock certificate no. 207 dated December 22, 1844. The certificate reads, "This is to certify that Hosea Stout is entitled to one share \$5.00 of the capital stock of the SEVENTIES HALL. Transferable by endorsement Jos. Young, Pres, John D. Lee, Secretary."³² With others also purchasing certificates and still others donating goods such as lumber and bricks, progress on the hall moved forward until March 1844, when a tornado blew down the unfinished west wall. Supervisor Lee wrote of this event:

In the month of March, 1844, we had the building up on the west side nearly two stories high. One day when the wall was built up nine feet high and forty-five feet long, and was of course green, a tornado came that night and blew the wall down, breaking columns and joists below, doing a damage of several thousand dollars. I was inclined to be down in the lip, but Brigham Young laughed at me, and said it was the best omen in the world; it showed that the Devil was mad, and knew that the Seventy would receive the blessing of God in that house; and as they were special witnesses to the nations of the earth, they would make his kingdom quake and tremble; that when Noah was building the ark he was mobbed three times, but he persevered, and finally they said, "Let the d——d old fool, alone, and see what he

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will accomplish.” “Just so with you; double your diligence and put her up again. If you do not you will lose many a blessing.”³³

Lee and a team of seventies “threw the wall down flat, and commenced a new one, another brick thicker than the former.”³⁴ By May 1844, the Seventies Hall, measuring twenty-eight feet wide by forty feet long, was enclosed. Two inscriptions on the front of the building “high up in italics was the word (Priesthood) another over the lower doors in Roman characters was Seventies Hall No 1,” indicating this was the first hall, but others would follow.³⁵ Double doors at the entrance led to a vestibule. A second set of doors gave access to the lecture-preaching room. The second floor was reached by two quarter-turn stairways in the vestibule. There was such promise in the building that none foresaw a reason to stop construction. But within the month, Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum lay dead in Carthage. News of their deaths brought a deafening halt to the construction of the hall. The moratorium had nothing to do with supplies, materials, or time. Laying aside hammers and saws was a choice. The hall, and indeed the very city of Nauvoo, mourned the death of their Prophet and Patriarch.

THE SEVENTIES MEMBERSHIP AND QUORUMS EXPAND

It was not until Brigham Young returned to Nauvoo that the seventies and their friends picked up tools and returned to construction sites. The silence that had brooded over the city for weeks was broken by the sound of hammers, evidencing that Mormonism had not ended in Carthage. At this time, Joseph’s words “Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward” took on new meaning (D&C 128:22). An October 8, 1844, announcement gave added strength to that meaning. Heber C. Kimball urged, “elders who are under the age of thirty-five, and also all the priests, teachers deacons, and members, who are recommended to be ordained, to withdraw and receive an ordination into the seventies.”³⁶ Within hours, Joseph Young and his Presidency had ordained

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approximately four hundred men to the office of seventy. They filled eleven quorums and created a twelfth with forty members. Pleased by their actions, Brigham Young said to the newly ordained seventies:

You must now magnify your calling. Elders who go to borrowing horses or money, and running away with it, will be cut off from the church without any ceremony. They will not have as much lenity as heretofore. The seventies will have to be subject to their presidents and council. We do not want any man to go to preaching until he is sent. . . . *You are all apostles to the nations to carry the gospel;* and when we send you to build up the kingdom, we will give you the keys, and power and authority. If the people will let us alone we will convert the world, and if they persecute us we will do it the quicker. . . . Inasmuch as you will go forth and do right you will have more of the spirit than you have heretofore.³⁷

Joseph Young's reaction to the announcement is viewed as the beginning of the great expansion or what historian William G. Hartley calls the "mushrooming of the seventies." As to the reason for expanding, Hartley contends that "the Twelve had in mind a massive missionary labor in the near future."³⁸ It is presumed that the barrier placed on foreign missions was soon to be lifted and a large missionary initiative launched in fulfillment of the January 19, 1841, revelation, which called for "traveling elders to bear record of my name in all the world, wherever the traveling high council, mine apostles, shall send them to prepare a way before my face" (D&C 124:139).

To provide seasoned leaders for the newly called quorums, Brigham Young ordained sixty-three members of the First Quorum of the Seventies, not serving in the Presidency, as Presidents over the Second to the Tenth Quorums.³⁹ In the Eleventh Quorum, Presidents were elected from within its ranks. Whether appointed or elected, all quorum Presidents met regularly with or reported to Joseph Young and his Presidency, now referred to as the Council of the Seventy. This was more than a title change. The Council of the Seventy was considered one of the three great councils of the Church—The

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First Presidency, Twelve, and Seventies.⁴⁰ As for the Seventies Hall, it now progressed at a rapid pace. By Christmas 1844, “all the finished carpentry and painting was done and the heating stoves installed.” With all things in place, dedicatory services were planned for December 26 to December 30, 1844. On the designated days, morning and afternoon sessions were held to accommodate the now fifteen quorums and their families. On Thursday, December 26, services commenced under the direction of Joseph Young. Seated on the stand were the Council of the Seventy and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. The Senior President of each quorum was seated on the right, a choir of singers on the left, and the brass band in front. The Second and Third Quorums sat in order of ordination. The remaining seats were filled with family members. A hymn composed by W. W. Phelps for the dedication titled “A Voice from the Prophet: Come to Me” was sung. Brigham Young then offered the dedicatory prayer. His prayer is known as “A Supplication to the Throne of Grace.” In the prayer, he asked the Lord to “increase our knowledge, wisdom, and understanding, that we, thy servants, may be enabled to administer salvation to thy people, even as thou hast committed a dispensation of the same unto us.” He pled, “May we feel the prelude of that power and authority with which thy servants shall be clothed, when they shall go forth and open the door of salvation to the nations and kingdoms of the earth; even thy servants, the seventies, upon whom the burden of thy kingdom does rest.” He asked the Lord to “sanctify [the hall] and make it holy, . . . that it may be filled with thy Spirit that it may be called the gate of heaven.” He prayed that the Lord would “pour out thy Spirit upon the Presidency of the Seventies; wilt thou endow them with knowledge and understanding that they may be enabled to instruct thy servants over whom they are called to preside.” Of his prayer, historian B. H. Roberts wrote, “It is doubtful if Brigham Young ever did anything better in oral expression than this beautiful and timely prayer.”⁴¹

On the second day of dedication, John Taylor told the seventies that “no other people can possibly do this work, for unto us the keys of this last dispensation with the power of the priesthood is given.” He explained that the world

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does not know God's laws or ways: "They don't know enough in reality to save a mosquito." He admonished the seventies, "Never shrink from your calling, nor succumb to the learned because of the advantage they have over you by reason of literary attainments for God is with you. . . . You are the heralds of salvation."⁴² It was not until the fourth day of dedication that Joseph Young gave a second dedicatory prayer. In his prayer, he explained the reason why the seventies had built the hall: "The quorums of the seventies, who have built this hall, not particularly by thy commandment, but in honor of thy name." He asked the Lord to "let them become mighty men in pulling down the strongholds of satan, and bursting the prison doors of darkness, and spread the light of the everlasting gospel to earth's remotest bounds."⁴³ As the dedicatory ceremonies ended, John D. Lee, secretary of the quorums, wrote, "Truly this was a time and season of rejoicing with the saints. Peace and harmony, brotherly love, kindness and charity prevails throughout. The remembrance of this glorious jubilee will never be erased from the minds of those who were participants. Each family was provided with fruits, nuts and every desert that heart could wish. Well might it be said that the saints enjoyed a feast of fat things."⁴⁴ The *Times and Seasons* reported, "The excellent melody of the Choir and Band, mingling with the devout aspirations of a congregation of *all saints*, gave the commencement of [the] services an air of interest, felicity and glory, at once feeling, touching, pathetic, grand, sublime!"⁴⁵

Adding to the sublimity of that occasion was the call for additional seventies. The following excerpts reveal how quickly that call was embraced:

- The *Nauvoo Neighbor* on October 29, 1845, reported, "The Seventeenth Quorum of Seventies, are requested to meet at the Masonic Hall, on Saturday the 8th of November, at 2 o'clock, P.M. All the members of the quorum are requested to attend, as there will be business of importance. D. M. Repsher, Sen. Prest."⁴⁶
- When the April conference of 1845 began, there were twenty-four quorums. By the end of conference, there were twenty-five full quorums.⁴⁷

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- On Sunday June 1, 1845, “the Presidents of the Seventies met and preached to each other, and ordained four presidents for the twenty-seventh quorum.”⁴⁸
- On Sunday June 29, 1845, “This day the twenty-eighth quorum of the seventies has been organized, and is nearly full.”⁴⁹
- On October 8, 1845, twenty-two members were ordained to the Thirty-first Quorum.⁵⁰
- In December 1845, the Thirty-second Quorum was organized.⁵¹

By early January 1846, there were thirty-four quorums, and by late January, thirty-five. The total number of men serving in one or more of the thirty-five quorums was 3,129. They varied in age from teenagers to men in their early fifties. They hailed from the East, South, and Midwest, from states as far away as Maine and as close as Iowa. Over a fourth of the seventies claimed nativity in overseas countries such as England, Scotland, Ireland, France, and Germany. In spite of their diversity, these men shared a common cause and brotherhood in the seventies quorums.

Knowing that mission calls were forthcoming, the seventies sought opportunities to increase their knowledge of countries and peoples and to improve their speaking and writing skills. They invited James M. Monroe, one of their number, to teach English grammar⁵² and George D. Watt, another seventy, to teach classes in shorthand.⁵³ They devoted a portion of their hall to a circulating library with Amasa Lyman as librarian and John D. Lee as registrar. Lee received 675 donated books, including works on science, philosophy, religion, and history. This later effort was praised in the *Nauvoo Neighbor* on January 1, 1845: “Among the improvements going forward in this city, none merit higher praise, than the Seventies’ Library. . . . It looks like old times, when they had “Kirjath Sapher,” the city of books.”⁵⁴ The seventies also founded a museum in the hall. Addison Pratt, a former whaler, donated “the tooth of a whale, coral, bones of an Albatross’ wing, and skin of a foot, jaw-bone of a porpoise” as the first exhibit in the museum.⁵⁵ But the hall, with all its learning possibilities, could not provide the seventies

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with power to open the doors of nations to the gospel of Jesus Christ. For that endowment, there was no substitute for a temple.

Knowing the importance of this power, seventies worked round the clock to expedite construction on the house of the Lord. But try as they might, labor was slow. Could they wait for the temple to be finished before receiving an endowment, a gift from God that would endow them with power to fulfill their missionary role? Brigham Young, hearkening to an earlier day in Kirtland, did not believe a further wait necessary. On Friday, December 12, 1845, the Council of the Seventy and the Presidencies of quorums and their wives, numbering in all twenty-eight men and twenty-seven women, gathered on the third floor of the unfinished temple to receive their endowment.⁵⁶ After receiving this endowment, “the Twelve delegated to them [the Presidents of the Seventy] the government of the Temple, while the ordinances were being administered to their quorum.”

What has heretofore been interpreted as men and women receiving the endowment must now be reinterpreted as the endowment being received by quorums and family members of quorum members. The *Nauvoo Neighbor* reported, “We have now twenty seventies already organized, waiting for their endowment, and by the time they get it there will be as many more waiting to receive theirs, and thus there will be an eternal increase in the kingdom of God.”⁵⁷ There were 1,858 seventies who received their endowments in the Nauvoo Temple. Counting their wives and extended relatives who joined them, out of the 5,595 receiving endowments in Nauvoo, the vast majority were seventies and their loved ones. Recording their endowments was the quorum secretary, John D. Lee.

CONCLUSION

After receiving their endowments, the seventies left Nauvoo. Of their number, 294 marched with the Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War. Eighty-seven joined the vanguard company of 1847. Most became leaders in small settlements throughout the Intermountain West. Two-thirds served as traveling missionaries. But with the passage of time, their accomplishments have been

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attributed to individuals, not to quorums of brethren with assignments to fulfill. As such, much of the great work of the early seventies quorums has been obscured.

The same was once true of the Seventies Hall. In 1846, real estate entrepreneur James E. Furness of Quincy purchased the hall.⁵⁸ Under his ownership, the hall was known as the First Presbyterian Church of Nauvoo. On July 5, 1847, Furness sold the hall to William Quarter, a Roman Catholic bishop in Chicago.⁵⁹ The hall then became a Catholic facility. By 1866, the top floor of the hall was removed and the first floor divided into two rooms to make way for the Nauvoo First Ward School. In October 1915, the *Nauvoo Independent* reported, “The First Ward School properties were put up for sale Saturday. Nobody bid on the school house and lot, but the site of the old school house was sold to L. K. Parker for \$50.50.” Parker razed the hall for materials and used the land for agricultural purposes.⁶⁰ And thus it remained until 1962. In that year, J. LeRoy Kimball of Salt Lake City acquired the agricultural site. He had bigger plans for the site than farming. An excavation crew was brought in to discover if foundation stones of the once-proud Seventies Hall remained. When stones were found just below the plowline, plans were made to rebuild the hall. Today, a reconstructed hall is open for interpretive and historical tours in Nauvoo.⁶¹

But what of those who built the hall or served in the thirty-five quorums? Efforts have been made to identify each seventy in a reference format so that visitors to the Seventies Hall can find their ancestors.⁶² Should more be done? A reference entry is a notation of remembrance, but only a notation. Underneath the note lies a story of brethren committed to their faith and quorums. It is a story of Joseph Young and thousands of young men who sacrificed to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and build Nauvoo. It is a legacy of quorum activity that was unparalleled in its time. It is hoped that the saga of the largest priesthood organization in Nauvoo will one day be told in great detail.

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NOTES

1. Historian William G. Hartley refers to the vision as “an unrecorded revelation ‘showing the order of the Seventy.’” “Nauvoo Stake, Priesthood Quorums, and the Church’s First Wards,” *BYU Studies* 32, no. 1 (1991): 71; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 2:181.
2. Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:181; see also Levi Edgar Young, “Joseph Young,” *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 5 (July 1914): 105–7.
3. See Milton V. Backman Jr., *The Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio, 1830–1838* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 252; Joseph Young Sr., *History of the Organization of the Seventies* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1878), 1–2; Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:181; Andrew Jenson, “Church General Authorities: First Council of Seventy,” 1925, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. Exodus 24:2, 9, 22 and Numbers 11:16–30 reveal little of the definition or function of the seventy. It is conceivable that the Sanhedrin (consisting of seventy members and a high priest) at the time of Jesus had some relationship to the ancient council of seventy, but a historical connection is not affirmed. The Gospel of Luke reveals that “the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place” (Luke 10:1). For modern scriptural references to the office of Seventy, see Doctrine and Covenants 107:23, 25, 34, 38, 90, 94, 95–98; 27:12; 103:33–34.
4. See Karl Ricks Anderson, *Joseph Smith’s Kirtland: Eyewitness Accounts* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 143.
5. Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:203–4.
6. There were 228 participants in Zion’s Camp, of which 205 were men. Half the camp participants were below age thirty-one. See James L. Bradley, *Zion’s Camp 1834: Prelude to the Civil War* (Logan, UT: Publishers Press, 1990): xxi.
7. According to an 1835 revelation, the Seventy were to be led by seven Presidents (see D&C 107:93).
8. Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:202.
9. Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:221–22.

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10. The Community of Christ (RLDS) claims that Doctrine and Covenants 107:96 limits the number of seventies quorums to seven quorums. See “History, Calling, and Function of the Seventy,” *Saints’ Herald*, November 7, 1955, 10–11.
11. Sylvester Smith left the Church and took with him early records of the seventies quorums. Hazen Aldrich was appointed to take his place as a president and a clerk. Like Sylvester Smith, Hazen Aldrich left the Church. However, in 1837, when Elias Smith was appointed clerk of the seventies, Aldrich allowed Elias to copy records from December 20, 1836, to April 6, 1837. See Jenson, “Church General Authorities: First Council of Seventy,” 6.
12. Sylvester Smith, “Report on Meeting of the Seventy December 27, 1835,” *Messenger and Advocate*, January 1836, 253–54.
13. Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:346.
14. Andrew Jenson, “A History of the Third Quorum of Seventy,” 3–4, Church History Library.
15. B. H. Roberts, ed., *The Seventy’s Course in Theology: First Year* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1907), 5.
16. Young, *History of the Organization of the Seventies*, 14; Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:182n.
17. Antoine R. Ivins, “The Seventy,” *Improvement Era*, April 1935, 214.
18. “Caroline Barnes Crosby (1807–1884),” in Kenneth W. Godfrey, Audrey M. Godfrey, and Jill Mulvay Derr, *Women’s Voices: An Untold History of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 48.
19. Twenty-seven men were ordained to the Third Quorum. It is assumed that other men were ordained later to fill up the Quorum. Antoine R. Ivins points out that on “May 6, 1839, forty-five men were ordained seventies without designation to any particular quorum.” He suggests that they became members of the Third Quorum of Seventies. See Ivins, “The Seventy,” *Improvement Era*, April 1935, 214; Dean C. Jessee, “The Kirtland Diary of Wilford Woodruff,” *BYU Studies* 12, no. 4 (Summer 1972): 375.
20. Jessee, “Kirtland Diary of Wilford Woodruff,” 376.

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21. Benjamin F. Johnson, "Autobiography of Benjamin F. Johnson," typescript, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.
22. See Roger D. Launius, *The Kirtland Temple: A Historical Narrative* (Independence, MO: Herald Publishing, 1986), 48.
23. The five high priests released as Presidents of the First Quorum of the Seventies were Hazen Aldrich, Leonard Rich, Zebedee Coltrin, Lyman Sherman, and Sylvester Smith. This left Joseph Young and Levi Hancock in the Presidency. Hazen Aldrich, Leonard Rich, and Sylvester Smith were disfellowshipped. The following five elders were called to fill the vacancies in the Presidency of the seventies: James Foster, Josiah Butterfield, John Gaylord, Daniel S. Miles, and Salmon Gee. See Minutes of the Seventies, Book A (1835–1838), 18, in Young, *History of the Organization of the Seventies*, 4–5.
24. Smith, *History of the Church*, 3:87–89.
25. See Smith, *History of the Church*, 3:91–93.
26. "A Short Sketch of the Biography of John Pulsipher," Seventies Quorums Genealogical Records, Part I, Second Quorum Biographies, 220–21 (microfilm), in James M. Baumgarten, "The Role and Function of the Seventies in L.D.S. Church History" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1960), 27. See also Gordon Orville Hill, "A History of Kirtland Camp: Its Initial Purpose and Notable Accomplishments" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1975), 22; Smith, *History of the Church*, 3:98–100.
27. Smith, *History of the Church*, 3:347.
28. Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:162.
29. Edward Hunter (1793–1883) was the bishop of the Nauvoo Fifth Ward from 1844 to 1846. He became the third Presiding Bishop of the Church. See "Autobiography of Edward Hunter," in Kate B. Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage* (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1963), 5:319–26.
30. On February 6, 1844, Edward and Ann Hunter, grantors, sold to Joseph Young ("for use and benefit of the Quorum of Seventies as President"), Lot 3, Block 127 in Nauvoo for one dollar. In the description that followed, the Hunters stipulated that they did "convey and confirm unto the said Joseph Young, President of the Quorum of

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Seventies, or his successor in office, for the use and benefit of said Quorum of Seventies, his assigns forever.” Nauvoo Municipal Court, Book B, February 19, 1844, 73 (entry 300) and Nauvoo Recorder’s Office, Deed Book B, 73, in Susan Easton Black, Harvey B. Black, and Brandon Plewe, *Property Transactions in Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois and Surrounding Communities, 1839–1859* (Wilmington, DE: World Vital Records, 2006), 3:1958. Although there is evidence that Edward Hunter and his wife sold the property to Joseph Young, on June 1, 1846, Edward and Ann Hunter, grantors, sold to James E. Furness, grantee, for \$1,400 Lot 3, Block 127, Nauvoo Plat, Town of Nauvoo, and all of Block 130 in the same plat and town. See Hancock County Deeds, Book P, June 2, 1846, 419–20 (entry 8459), in Black, Black, and Plewe, *Nauvoo Property Transactions*, 3:1961.

31. John D. Lee, *The Life and Confessions of John D. Lee* (Philadelphia: Barclay & Co., 1877), 145–46.
32. Stout Papers, no. 8, 71, Utah Historical Society, Salt Lake City.
33. Lee, *Life and Confessions of John D. Lee*, 145–46.
34. Lee, *Life and Confessions of John D. Lee*, 145–46.
35. Journal of Peter M. Wentz, 6–7, Nauvoo Restoration Files, Land and Record Office, Nauvoo, IL.
36. *Times and Seasons*, November 1, 1844, 695–96.
37. B. H. Roberts, ed., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Period 2: Apostolic Interregnum*, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1932), 7:307–8. See “Dedication,” *Nauvoo Neighbor*, December 25, 1844, 2.
38. Hartley, “Nauvoo Stake,” 72.
39. See Roberts, *History of the Church*, 7:279.
40. Roberts, *History of the Church*, 7:260n.
41. See Roberts, *History of the Church*, 7:332–33; “Dedication of the Seventies Hall,” *Times and Seasons*, February 1, 1845, 794–99.
42. Roberts, *History of the Church*, 7:340–41.
43. Roberts, *History of the Church*, 7:343.
44. Roberts, *History of the Church*, 7:345.
45. “Dedication of the Seventies Hall,” 794.
46. “Notice,” *Nauvoo Neighbor*, October 29, 1845, 3.

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47. "The Conference," *Nauvoo Neighbor*, April 16, 1845, 2.
48. Roberts, *History of the Church*, 7:424.
49. Roberts, *History of the Church*, 7:432.
50. Roberts, *History of the Church*, 7:481.
51. Roberts, *History of the Church*, 7:549.
52. Roberts, *History of the Church*, 7:365.
53. In 1837, Isaac Pitman published *Stenographic Sound-hand*. Shorthand at that time was called "phonography." George D. Watt was proficient in the use of Pitman shorthand. See Ida Watt Stringham and Dora Dutton Flack, *England's First "Mormon" Convert: The Biography of George Darling Watt* (Salt Lake City: David J. Ellison, 1958).
54. "Seventies' Library," *Nauvoo Neighbor*, January 1, 1845, 3.
55. Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:406; Louisa Barnes Pratt, "Journal and Autobiography of Louisa Barnes Pratt, 1801–1880"; "The History of Louisa Barnes Pratt: Being the Autobiography of a Mormon Missionary, Widow, and Pioneer," in Addison Pratt Family Collection, 1831–1924, Church History Library.
56. Roberts, *History of the Church*, 7:544.
57. "Elder Kimball's Remarks at the Music Hall during the Concert on the Evening of the 5th ult.," *Nauvoo Neighbor*, April 7, 1845, 3.
58. See Black, Black, and Plewe, *Nauvoo Property Transactions*, 3:1961.
59. See Hancock County Deeds, Book T, August 16, 1847, 2 (entry 10722), in Black, Black, and Plewe, *Property Transactions in Nauvoo*, 2:1439.
60. See *Nauvoo Independent*, October 1915 (reprint October 18, 1965), in Ida Blum Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.
61. "In the Warranty Deed of Purchase, Hugh R. Whitlock and his wife, Kathryn B. Whitlock of Nauvoo, acting as grantors, . . . paid, convey, and warrant to J. LeRoy Kimball of Salt Lake City all four lots of Block 127 on May 12, 1962." Hugh R. Whitlock to J. LeRoy Kimball, Warranty Deed, May 12, 1962, Hancock County Records, Book of Deeds.
62. See Harvey B. Black, *Seventy Quorum Membership, 1835–1846: An Annotated Index of Over 3,500 Seventies Organized in the First Thirty-Five Quorums of the Seventy in Kirtland, Ohio, and Nauvoo, Illinois* (Provo, UT: Infobases, 1996).