

# “Her Borders Must Be Enlarged”

## *Evolving Conceptions of Zion*

TAUNALYN F. RUTHERFORD

The establishment of Zion in preparation for Christ’s Second Coming has always been a vital part of the “ongoing process” of the Restoration of the gospel.<sup>1</sup> It was central to the work of Joseph Smith and has continued to be so with each of his successors from Brigham Young to Russell M. Nelson; however, conceptions of Zion and its establishment have passed through an “ongoing process” of change as well. When the Lord revealed that he had “consecrated the land of Kirtland . . . for a stake to Zion,” he also declared, “For Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness; her borders must be enlarged; her stakes must be strengthened” (Doctrine and Covenants 82:13–14). It is clear that through revelation Joseph foresaw the “enlarged” borders of Zion beyond Missouri. We can see in the foundations laid by Joseph Smith a pattern for a global church—an ever-enlarging Zion. Scholars point to secular influences that have caused changes in Latter-day Saint understandings of Zion and changes in policies of gathering, and it is important to be aware of and understand such explanations. However, it is crucial in a study of the ongoing Restoration to see the hand of the Lord as well as his foreknowledge of modern events as having brought to fruition modern conceptions of Zion. Early revelations can seem to be at odds with the modern globalization of the Church unless viewed through the lens of

the Lord's foreknowledge. As the title suggests, this chapter will show how the Lord revealed and prepared a way for a much larger Zion than what some early Saints initially conceived.

## FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS OF ZION ESTABLISHED THROUGH JOSEPH SMITH: ZION AND THE BOOK OF MORMON

The coming forth of the Book of Mormon was a significant part of the establishment of foundational concepts of Zion in the Restoration. According to Joseph's account, during Moroni's first appearance to him, Moroni quoted Joel's prophecy of events of the "great and the terrible day of the Lord" and that "in *mount Zion* and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance."<sup>2</sup> The Book of Mormon contains numerous references to Zion in addition to the many times that Isaiah quotations mention Zion. For instance, the angel tells Nephi, "Blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day [when the Lord brings forth the plain and precious gospel], for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost" (1 Nephi 13:37). Nephi writes, "All who fight against Zion shall be destroyed" (1 Nephi 22:14).<sup>3</sup> Jacob adds his witness: "He that fighteth against Zion shall perish" (2 Nephi 10:13).<sup>4</sup> Abinadi testifies of a coming Zion, as does the Savior himself in his teachings to the Nephites (see Mosiah 15:29; 3 Nephi 16:18; 21:1). Finally, at a crowning moment in the Book of Mormon, a Zion society was established after the ministry of Christ to the Nephites (see 4 Nephi), and Moroni's final words admonish, "put on thy beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion; and strengthen thy stakes and enlarge thy borders forever, that thou mayest no more be confounded" (Moroni 10:31).

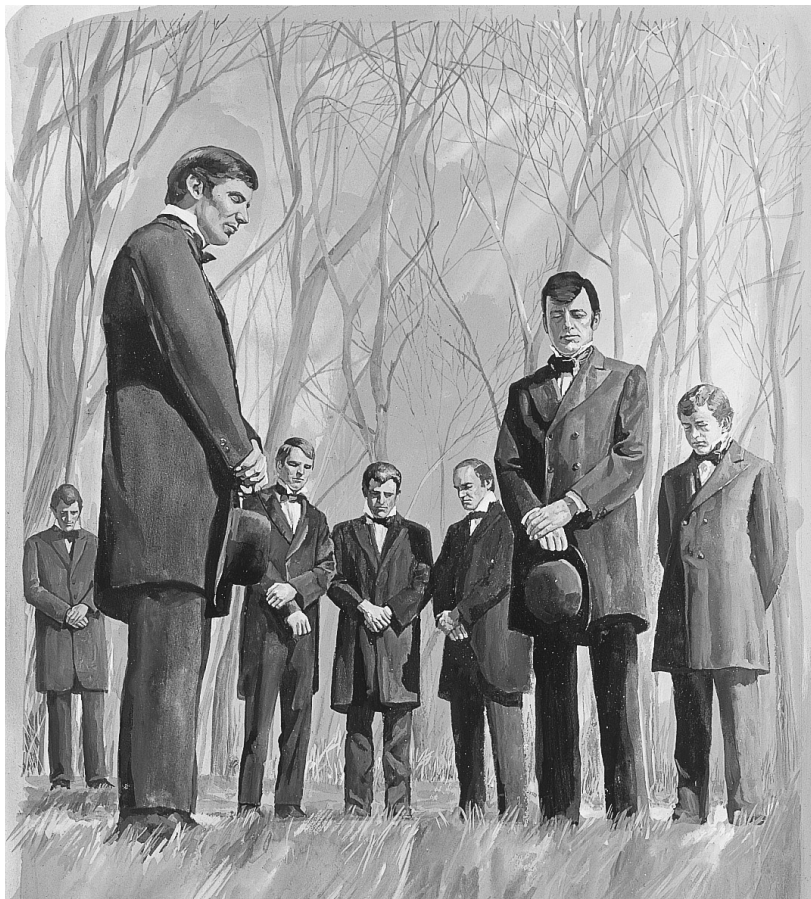
The Book of Mormon is evidence that in the very early stages of the Restoration the concept of Zion was significant. As Joseph and his followers began to read and internalize the message of the Book of Mormon, Ether's prophecy of a New Jerusalem on "this land" (Ether 13:2–12) became a particular interest, as was the prophecy by the Savior to the Nephites of a gathering of his people to Zion in America (see 3 Nephi 20:10–21:29). This interest brought about an enquiry of "Six Elders of the Church and three members" who seemed to believe "that the Book of Mormon prophecy about Zion would soon be fulfilled."<sup>5</sup> The Lord responded by calling the elders "to bring to pass the gathering of [his] elect" and specified that they would "be gathered in unto one place upon the face of this land" in preparation for his

return (Doctrine and Covenants 29:7–12). Revelations had come previously through Joseph Smith calling followers to “seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion.”<sup>6</sup> This revelation marked an important conceptual change from Zion as simply a cause to a specific, central gathering place for Zion.

## THE LOCATION OF ZION

I acknowledge the complexity of Joseph Smith’s understanding and revelations concerning Zion. It was simultaneously a cause and a geographical location or center to which those who choose Zion and flee Babylon can gather and a condition or internal state of righteousness. A pivotal process of revelation that expanded latter-day understandings of Zion was Joseph Smith’s translation of the Bible, particularly the narrative of Enoch, which from a mere 5 verses in Genesis extended to 110 verses in the Book of Moses.<sup>7</sup> A definition of Zion is proclaimed in the narrative of Enoch: “And the Lord called his people Zion because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness, and there was no poor among them” (Moses 7:18). The quest for just such a Zion became central to all that the Prophet did. The concept of consecration was also an important aspect of the project of Zion. It is impossible to fully separate the cause of Zion, the internal conditions of Zion, and the location of Zion as a gathering place; however, because of the constraints of this chapter, I will focus primarily on the changing conceptions of Zion as a geographical location and the accompanying doctrine of gathering.

As noted earlier, a September 1830 revelation had spoken of the gathering of the Lord’s elect “unto one place upon the face of this land” (Doctrine and Covenants 29:8). In a follow-up to this revelation the Lord called Oliver Cowdery to preach to the “Lamanites” and promised that the location of the “city Zion” would “be given hereafter.” A clue was also added: the location of Zion would “be on the borders by the Lamanites” (28:8–9).<sup>8</sup> That Joseph’s concept of Zion encompassed more than just the much-anticipated geographic location for the city is evidenced in a letter he wrote to members in Colesville from Fayette, New York, dated December 2, 1830, in which he reports, “Zion is prospering here.”<sup>9</sup> The anticipation of the location of the city of Zion, the New Jerusalem increased in March 1831 as revelations encouraged the Saints to prepare to “gather out of the eastern lands” and “gather up” their riches to be prepared to “purchase an inheritance” in Zion, the location of which had still not been revealed (45:64–66; 48:3–6). In July of 1831 the Lord declared Missouri as the land “for the gathering of the



*Dedicating the temple lot in Independence, Missouri.* by Harold T. Kilbourn. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

saints” and as “the place for the city of Zion” (57:1–2). Furthermore, the Lord declared “the place which is now called Independence” as “the center place” and specified “a spot for the temple” that was “lying westward, upon a lot which is not far from the courthouse” (v. 3).

## STAKES OF ZION

While Joseph Smith’s revelations established Independence, Missouri, as the center place and the location of the future city of Zion, the concept of

gathering to Zion in the revelations was always more expansive. For instance, as early as November 1831 Joseph received a revelation in which the voice of the Lord declared, "Send forth the elders of my church unto the nations which are afar off." These elders were to cry, "Go ye forth unto the land of Zion, that the borders of my people may be enlarged, and that her stakes may be strengthened and that Zion may go forth unto the regions round about" (Doctrine and Covenants 133:8–9). By April 1832, the concept of a stake had been further solidified when Kirtland was designated as the first "stake to Zion" (82:13). The reason for the consecration of the stake in Kirtland was given by the Lord: "For Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness; her borders must be enlarged; her stakes must be strengthened; yea, verily I say unto you, Zion must arise and put on her beautiful garments" (v. 14). Independence and later other surrounding cities where the Saints were driven to settle in Missouri were seen as Zion, the center place for the metaphorical tent, and outlying areas became stakes of this central Zion. The importance of stakes in the conception of the expansion of Zion and of gathering was thus established early in the foundations that Joseph Smith restored. Isaiah's metaphor of Zion's stakes, cords, tents, and borders was quoted in the Book of Mormon and in the revelations that came in the process of establishing the Church. In 1836 Joseph pleaded in the dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple that the Lord would "appoint unto Zion other stakes besides this one which thou hast appointed, that the gathering of thy people may roll on in great power and majesty" (109:59).

## THE REDEMPTION OF ZION BY POWER

The Prophet's initial dream of Zion in Missouri "abruptly turned to nightmare"<sup>10</sup> in 1833 when in the midst of violence the Saints in Independence were driven from their Zion and the designation of Independence as the center place became problematic. Some of the greatest ambiguity for Joseph and these early Saints came because of the elusive nature of building Zion in Jackson County, Missouri. For instance, the Lord cautioned Joseph, "Zion shall be redeemed, although she is chastened for a little season" (Doctrine and Covenants 100:13). Yet, for Joseph, this "little season" spanned his lifetime. In a state of perplexity Joseph wrote, "I know that Zion, in the own due time of the Lord will be redeemed, but how many will be the days of her purification, tribulation, and affliction, the Lord has kept hid from my eyes; and when I enquire concerning this subject the voice of the Lord is, Be still, and know that I am God!"<sup>11</sup> As we witness the struggles

and disappointments of Joseph Smith associated with the tenuous nature of building Zion, we can gain strength for our own efforts. In December 1833 a revelation promised, “Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered.” Then the Lord specified that “there is none other place appointed than that which I have appointed; neither shall there be any other place appointed than that which I have appointed, for the work of the gathering of my saints” (101:17–20). President Harold B. Lee interpreted this verse in 1973, explaining, “In the early years of the Church specific places to which the Saints were to be gathered together were given, and the Lord directed that these gathering places should not be changed.”<sup>12</sup> In other words, “none other place than that which I have appointed” referred not only to Jackson County but to all subsequent gathering places designated by the Lord through his prophet. Church history reflects this interpretation as latter-day prophets established gathering places in other areas in Missouri, then Illinois, Winter Quarters, and eventually the valley of the Great Salt Lake and the surrounding territory.

Independence, Missouri, was not forgotten, however, and the uncertainty of this elusive Zion deepened with the seemingly failed attempt to redeem Zion with an army. In what has been called a “purposefully ambiguous” revelation that led to the establishment of an army called Zion’s Camp, the Lord states, “the redemption of Zion must needs come by power,” but without any clear articulation of what kind of power.<sup>13</sup> The efforts of redeeming Zion through temporal power in the case of Zion’s Camp required tremendous faith, perhaps even “Abrahamic” faith and a willingness to sacrifice lives.<sup>14</sup> The Lord allowed Joseph and the members of Zion’s Camp to pass through a trying and seemingly unsuccessful mission to redeem Zion by physical force. After the Zion’s Camp sacrifice was made, and in the midst of the resulting uncertainty and trial of faith, the Lord was more specific, stating that “the power to redeem Zion would come not from a confrontation in Missouri but from an endowment in the house of the Lord back in Kirtland.”<sup>15</sup>

The Lord’s redemption of Zion by power flowing from covenants and endowments in the temple is the consistent thread running through revelations of Zion and all policies given in all times. Nephi saw this redemption of Zion in the latter days as “the power of the Lamb of God . . . descended . . . upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory” (1 Nephi 14:14). The language used in the dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple echoes this prophecy as Joseph

pleaded, "We ask thee, Holy Father, that thy servants may go forth from this house armed with thy power" (Doctrine and Covenants 109:22). The necessity of temples and temple covenants and the power that would flow through them is intricately linked with the cause of Zion at a very early stage of the Restoration. The relationship of the power to redeem and establish Zion with temple covenants and the strengthening of stakes resonates in Moroni's final plea to his latter-day readers: "Put on thy beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion: and strengthen thy stakes and enlarge thy borders" (Moroni 10:31).

Joseph's project of Zion building extended to include the enlarged borders of new cities appointed as gathering places for the Saints who came increasingly from outside the United States. When the Saints left Missouri and settled in Nauvoo, Joseph's conception of Zion enlarged and he is recorded as declaring that "Zion referred to all of North and South America and anywhere Saints gathered."<sup>16</sup> One example of Joseph's enlarged conception of Zion is a March 1841 revelation giving "the will of the Lord concerning the saints in the Territory of Iowa." They were told to "gather themselves together unto the places which I shall appoint unto them by my servant Joseph, and build up cities." Furthermore, "all those that come from the east, and the west and the north and the south" were to "take up their inheritance" in an appointed city "and in all the stakes which" the Lord had appointed (Doctrine and Covenants 125:1-4).

## ZION IN THE WEST

Brigham Young biographer John Turner suggests that in 1844 Joseph's "final" conception of Zion as all of North and South America, as well as his counsel to elders that churches should be built where converts received the gospel, was Joseph hinting about "an end to the doctrine of gathering."<sup>17</sup> Turner sees Brigham Young as turning this vision another direction and seeing Joseph Smith's words as "a prediction of a glorious and expansive future for the church."<sup>18</sup> Joseph may have been foreseeing the end of the gathering as it had been administered during the early years of the Restoration but certainly not the end of the doctrine of gathering. Brigham Young's vision of gathering and establishing Zion was specific to his period of the ongoing Restoration. Changes in conceptions, articulations, and administration do not equal changes in foundational doctrines.

Turner suggests, "Whereas Smith built cities of Zion, Young more literally established God's kingdom upon the earth. He spoke of the construction



of many temples and encouraged the planned dispersal of Mormon emigrants throughout the region.” Turner also argues that Brigham Young established “a new model of gathering” in the Great Basin.<sup>19</sup> It enriches our understanding of Church history to envision Brigham Young’s “new model of gathering.” However, we can be mindful of the ways Brigham Young’s administration of the “gathering”—and that of any other Latter-day prophet for that matter—resonates with foundational doctrines of Zion built by Joseph Smith. As another scholar explains, “From its earliest day, Mormonism’s message of restoration of Primitive Christianity went hand-in-glove with a policy of gathering its converts to central locations: initially Ohio, then Missouri, then Illinois, and finally the Great Basin.”<sup>20</sup> Although the central geographical gathering location has varied, the principles have remained unchanged. A revelation given through Brigham Young at Winter Quarters proclaimed “the Word and Will of the Lord concerning the Camp of Israel in their journeying to the West.” The revelation encouraged Saints to use all their “influence and property to remove this people to the place where the Lord shall locate a stake of Zion” (Doctrine and Covenants 136:1, 10). The revelation also echoed a familiar theme promising that “Zion shall be redeemed in mine own due time” (136:18). Brigham Young continued to appoint other places “for the work of the gathering” as the early revelation had specified (101:20). He continued to build temples and stakes, and his success in settling a major portion of the western United States attests to his project of enlarging the borders of Zion.

In 1881 John Taylor spoke of how he was “endeavoring to build up the Zion of our God” by traveling around “all through the Territory, visiting almost all the settlements.” He stressed that Zion was “not confined to our prominent cities, but includes all the cities of the Saints.”<sup>21</sup> During the presidency of John Taylor, Orson Pratt spoke on how the Lord would “stretch forth the curtains of Zion; He will lengthen her cords and strengthen her Stakes and will multiply them not only throughout this mountain Territory, but throughout the united States.”<sup>22</sup> Then, in an attempt to reconcile the place of the “City of Zion when it is built in Jackson County,” Pratt clarified that the city of Zion will not be called a stake since “the Lord never called it a Stake in any revelation.” Rather, “it is to be the headquarters, it is to be the place where the Son of Man will come and dwell . . . ; it will be the great central city, and the outward branches will be called Stakes wherever they shall be organized as such.”<sup>23</sup>

Historical events have played a role in changing conceptions of Zion. An important example of this occurred in 1887 when the antipolygamy-driven



Edmunds-Tucker Act was passed and, among other detrimental financial implications for the Church, dissolved the Perpetual Emigrating Fund. This reality occurred in tandem with the closing of the frontier era, since "by the end of the nineteenth century virtually all habitable locations within the Mormon domain that were suitable for agriculture had been occupied."<sup>24</sup> Thus, during the concluding years of the nineteenth century, Church leaders saw the need to reenvision the policies surrounding the building of Zion and began to deemphasize gathering to the Great Basin. In 1911 an official letter from the First Presidency "urged converts to stay where they were and live according to the ideals of Zion in their own homelands." Scholars have interpreted this to have caused a transformation of "Zion in the hearts and minds of the Latter-day Saints from a literal place to an ideal."<sup>25</sup> Harold B. Lee articulated the way in which this 1911 policy reflected the doctrine of gathering outlined in Doctrine and Covenants 101:20–21. As mentioned previously, President Lee emphasized that gathering places were to be appointed by the Lord. He also emphasized that when the Lord "directed that these gathering places should not be changed," the Lord "gave one qualification: 'Until the day cometh when there is found no more room for them; and then I have other places which I will appoint unto them, and they shall be called stakes, for the curtains or the strength of Zion.'"<sup>26</sup> This qualification was thus present in the foundations of the Restoration and not solely a modification growing out of modernization.

## MODERN CONCEPTIONS OF ZION

Gathering to an appointed place "ended in the early 1950s, when President David O. McKay issued a call for Saints to 'gather' together in their homelands and backed this call up through the creation of stakes, meetinghouses, and temples worldwide."<sup>27</sup> According to biographers, McKay brought the "rise of Modern Mormonism."<sup>28</sup> An illustrative anecdote from McKay's biography tells of an interview by *New York Times* reporter Alden Whitman, who asked McKay, "What do you regard as the most outstanding accomplishment of your ministry as President of the Church?" to which McKay replied, "The making of the Church a world-wide organization."<sup>29</sup> One of the ways he did this was through his expansion of Zion to include international temples and stakes. Scholars argue that McKay's focus on international temples and stake building was in part an effort to "stem the tide of foreign immigration to Utah."<sup>30</sup> While this may be one aspect of the policy, the vision of enlarging the borders of Zion was undoubtedly a central motivation. The temples

built during the McKay administration in Europe and New Zealand proved crucial to expanding the reach of Zion. It was unique to build temples before the firm establishment of stakes in these countries, but it was a “calculated risk” that proved to “anchor church members in their native countries, thus curtailing emigration to the United States and allowing the creation of overseas stakes.”<sup>31</sup> Scholars have argued that McKay abandoned the doctrine of gathering<sup>32</sup> and that “coincident with the decision to urge people to stay in their native lands was a redefinition of the concept of Zion.”<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, policy changes and expansion of international temples and stakes are often cast as a drastic change in the doctrines surrounding Zion, that although Zion “had earlier referred to a geographical location, now it was recast as a state of being.”<sup>34</sup> To conflate policy changes with changing of doctrine is problematic and overlooks the ways Zion has always been both a state of being in the foundational scriptural literature as well having connections to geographical place. As this chapter has shown, from the foundations of the Restoration, Zion was conceptualized to include the building of units that are called stakes, which simultaneously support the “tent of Zion” and function as new center places of gathering. The doctrine of gathering is constant, but the conceptions of *how* to gather logistically change and even expand.

A helpful metaphor to understand the internationalization of latter-day Zion suggests that religions are like tents with fluid boundaries and thus “yield themselves to be discreetly and deliberately dismantled, relocated and reassembled. Religions are not finished products; they constantly hand themselves over to their adherents.”<sup>35</sup> I find this especially helpful to build on Isaiah’s use of the metaphorical tent of Zion with curtains, cords, and borders and the way the structure of the modern Church has evolved to allow for a metaphorical one-tent structure to stretch over vast distances, oceans, and borders. While never letting go of the ideal of the “one heart and one mind” single tent of Zion, Church leaders clearly saw the need for simplified “tents” (meaning both structural aspects of missions, districts, and branches as well as a more simplified focus on the essential aspects of the gospel of Jesus Christ and a jettisoning of cultural trappings) that could be dismantled, transported, and reassembled anywhere in the world. Then the independent but “correlated” tent-like units become fully incorporated into the larger tent as stakes that anchor and strengthen Zion. Furthermore, when a stake of Zion is organized, it is “handed over to its adherents” in that the local leadership becomes responsible and independent in administering the programs of the Church and a new “center” of Zion is created.

The process of building from small groups of members, which grow into branches that eventually become part of districts, which work persistently to become a stake, is an arduous task. Leaders of the Church before the global expansion that took place in the last half of the twentieth century understood that the “cause of Zion” as it had evolved in the Great Basin was not easily transportable internationally. Priesthood correlation can be seen as part of the process of dismantling that the Church has undertaken in order to make the Church organization transportable. Matthew Bowman charts this correlation effort, noting its initial growth from 1945 to 1978. By the mid-nineteenth century, auxiliary programs of the Church were almost completely autonomous: writing their own curriculum, publishing journals independently, and overseeing their own finances. This resulted in “fragmentation, overlap and dysfunction,” according to Bowman.<sup>36</sup> Thus, during the McKay administration, a correlation committee was organized to “correlate the courses of study given by the quorums and auxiliaries of the Church,” which eventually extended their reach to correlate and centralize authority over budgets, periodicals, and other programs and bring them under the control of committees headed by members of the Quorum of the Twelve.<sup>37</sup> Harold B. Lee, who spoke often of enlarging the borders of Zion through strengthening her stakes, was the chairman of the Correlation Committee.<sup>38</sup> Critics of correlation view it as a complication or added scaffolding, but as Bowman explains, “correlation made it possible for Mormonism to become a global religion,” as it simplified and streamlined what was a before a “patchwork quilt of curriculum,” allowing it to be exportable overseas.<sup>39</sup>

One example of the dismantling of provincial, difficult-to-transport elements of Mormonism was the revelation in 1978 granting priesthood authority to every worthy male member of the Church. The Gospel Topics essay “Race and the Priesthood” explains, “As the Church grew worldwide, its overarching mission to ‘go ye therefore and teach all nations’ seemed increasingly incompatible with the priesthood and temple restrictions.”<sup>40</sup> The wording of the revelation, now canonized as Official Declaration 2 (“The Lord has now made known his will for the blessing of all his children throughout the earth”),<sup>41</sup> indicates not only the extension of priesthood authority but the fact that “the Church’s scope and ambitions were broadening” and “the goal of becoming a truly global church suddenly seemed within reach.”<sup>42</sup> During general conference in October of 1978, President Spencer W. Kimball put an emphasis on the word *must* as he quoted, “The Lord declared: ‘For Zion *must* increase in beauty, and in holiness; her borders

*must* be enlarged; her stakes *must* be strengthened; yea, verily I say unto you Zion *must* arise and put on her beautiful garments.”<sup>43</sup> Then President Kimball reiterated the revised gathering policy by saying: “We are building up the strength of Zion—her cords or stakes—throughout the world. Therefore we counsel our people to remain in their native lands and gather out the elect of God and teach them the ways of the Lord.”<sup>44</sup>

Seeing how international Church growth played an important part in the 1978 revelation can aid in the “dismantling” process that continues today as Latter-day Saints overcome cultural barriers like racism to truly be of one mind and one heart. According to President Dallin H. Oaks, dismantling on an institutional level occurred immediately as “the Church reacted swiftly to the revelation on the priesthood” and performed ordinations and gave temple recommends to worthy members previously denied these blessings. Additionally, “the reasons that had been given to try to explain the prior restrictions on members of African ancestry—even those voiced by revered Church leaders—were promptly and publicly disavowed.” Dismantling, however, happens both institutionally as well as on an individual basis. As President Oaks lamented, “Changes in the hearts and practices of individual members did not come suddenly and universally,” and “some, in their personal lives, continued the attitudes of racism that have been painful to so many throughout the world, including the past 40 years.”<sup>45</sup> Understanding the relationship of the 1978 revelation to the principle of establishing Zion can strengthen members in stakes worldwide.

The establishment of international stakes during the last half of the twentieth century accompanied changes in the conception of the gathering and building of Zion. Rather than gathering to a centralized Zion, members were told to remain in their native lands where stakes of Zion would be driven into foreign soil, thus strengthening Saints in “distant” locations. President Harold B. Lee gave the landmark talk, quoted previously, on the need to “strengthen the stakes of Zion” in 1973 and proclaimed, “The borders of Zion, where the righteous and pure in heart may dwell, must now begin to be enlarged. The stakes of Zion must be strengthened.” In the address, President Lee referred extensively to a talk given by Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Quorum of the Twelve at the Mexico City Area Conference in August 1973. Elder McConkie expounded on the themes of Zion, the gathering, and the stakes of Zion and repeated a similar message to a congregation of members in 1977 in Lima, Peru. The 1977 talk was reprinted in the Church’s official periodical, the *Ensign*, at the request of then-Church President Spencer W. Kimball. In the talk, Elder McConkie

divides the “gathering of Israel and the establishment of Zion in the latter days” into three phases or periods.

Phase one began with the establishment of the Church in 1830. It included Joseph Smith’s First Vision and the appearance of Moses in the Kirtland Temple in 1836 to restore the keys of the gathering of Israel. That phase ends, according to McConkie, with the “secure establishment of the Church in the United States and Canada, a period of about 125 years.” Phase two began with “the creation of stakes of Zion in overseas areas beginning in the 1950s” and will end when Christ returns. Phase three spans the Millennium, “from our Lord’s second coming until the kingdom is perfected and the knowledge of God covers the earth” to the end of that thousand-year period.<sup>46</sup>

To explain the change in conceptions of gathering and establishing Zion, McConkie argued that gathering facilitates the community building needed to strengthen the covenant people and the receipt of temple blessings. During phase one it was necessary to gather to “the tops of the mountains of North America,” where there were “congregations strong enough for the Saints to strengthen each other” and where there were temples “where the fullness of the ordinances of exaltation are performed.”<sup>47</sup> McConkie proclaimed, “We are living in a new day. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is fast becoming a worldwide church,” and the evidence of this “new day” is the building of temples and stakes “at the ends of the earth.” He emphasized that “the gathering place for Peruvians is in the stakes of Zion in Peru, or in the places which soon will become stakes. The gathering place for Chileans is in Chile; for Bolivians it is in Bolivia; for Koreans it is in Korea; and so it goes through all the length and breadth of the earth.”<sup>48</sup>

Elder McConkie’s message is indicative of the manner in which modern prophets and general Church leaders have continued to further envision the establishment of Zion. President Ezra Taft Benson taught in his “timeless sermon” on pride, “My dear brethren and sisters, we must prepare to redeem Zion. It was essentially the sin of pride that kept us from establishing Zion in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was the same sin of pride that brought consecration to an end among the Nephites. (See 4 Ne. 1:24–25.) Pride is the great stumbling block to Zion. I repeat: Pride *is* the great stumbling block to Zion.”<sup>49</sup> Elder Neal A. Maxwell’s teachings on the challenges of building Zion in the midst of Babylon have been widely quoted. For instance, Elder D. Todd Christofferson reiterated Elder Maxwell’s quotable phrase about the need for Latter-day Saints

to “establish our residence in Zion and give up the summer cottage in Babylon” in a conference address entitled “Come to Zion.”<sup>50</sup> Elder Christofferson reminded members of the first attempt to establish Zion in Missouri and the reasons the Lord gave for their not obtaining it (see Doctrine and Covenants 101:6; 105:3–4). Then he cautioned, “Rather than judge these early Saints too harshly, however, we should look to ourselves to see if we are doing any better.” Elder Christofferson declared, “Zion is Zion because of the character, attributes, and faithfulness of her citizens.” Then he added, “If we would establish Zion in our homes, branches, wards and stakes, we must rise to this standard.” Elder Christofferson listed three things required for building Zion. “It will be necessary (1) to become unified in one heart and one mind; (2) to become, individually and collectively, a holy people; and (3) to care for the poor and needy with such effectiveness that we eliminate poverty among us. We cannot wait until Zion comes for these things to happen—Zion will come only as they happen.”<sup>51</sup> When Church leaders in the twenty-first century teach about establishing Zion, they are not solely referring to an ideal but are speaking to members in the entire world who are carrying on the work of building actual stakes of Zion. President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke about the establishment of Zion, yet even more importantly he expanded its global existence through the instigation of building smaller temples in more of the world and beginning programs like the Perpetual Education Fund.

President Russell M. Nelson has likewise emphasized the establishment of Zion through inspiring members to be a part of the gathering of scattered Israel on both sides of the veil. In a worldwide youth devotional, President Nelson called the gathering “the most important thing taking place on the earth today” and invited the youth to “stand with the youth from all around the world and experience the thrill of being a member of the Lord’s youth battalion in ‘Zion’s army’ by singing the closing hymn, ‘Hope of Israel.’” He has extended the invitation to participate in the gathering to the entire Church membership.<sup>52</sup>

President Nelson is also expanding the borders of Zion through announcing the building of temples near stakes of Zion across the earth. In some cases, as in the announcement of a temple in Shanghai and in Dubai, temples are being built to reach members in branches and districts without waiting for the stake structure to be fully in place. As President Nelson explained, “In God’s goodness and generosity, He is bringing the blessings of the temple closer to His children *everywhere*.”<sup>53</sup>

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is expanding into a global church and is beginning to fully realize the Lord’s prophetic admonition: “For Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness; her borders must be enlarged; her stakes must be strengthened” (Doctrine and Covenants 82:14). Efforts to enlarge the borders of Zion and strengthen her stakes bring beauty that comes from the diversity of members and holiness as the blessings of the temple and the power to redeem Zion flow into the lives of more of the Lord’s children all over the earth. Latter-day Saints in the “borders” of Zion have a strong love for and devotion to the Savior and his restored gospel. Members worldwide are invited to envision themselves in the ongoing Restoration of the gospel and envision their role in the work of establishing Zion. The study of the establishment of Zion in Missouri or any other point in the history of the restored gospel should ultimately lead to a discussion of how the revelations and foundations laid by Joseph Smith prophesy of the eventual internationalization of Zion. As Joseph Smith proclaimed, “The building up of Zion . . . is a theme upon which prophets, priests and kings have dwelt with peculiar delight; they have looked forward with joyful anticipation to the day in which we live,” but “it is left for us to see, participate in and help to roll forward the Latter-day glory.”<sup>54</sup>

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*Taunalyn F. Rutherford is an adjunct professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University.*

Taunalyn Rutherford, “‘Her Borders Must Be Enlarged’: Evolving Conceptions of Zion,” in *Foundations of the Restoration: Fulfillment of the Covenant Purposes*, ed. Craig James Ostler, Michael Hubbard MacKay, and Barbara Morgan Gardner (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2016), 139–155.

## NOTES

1. See Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Are You Sleeping through the Restoration?,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 59. See also Jeffrey R. Holland, “Miracles of the Restoration,” *Ensign*, November 1994. Since the first publication of this essay, the concept of an “ongoing Restoration” has been further emphasized. The doctrine “that the promised Restoration goes forward through continuing revelation” was always implicit but was made more explicit in statements by President Russell M. Nelson (“The Restoration of the Fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: A Bicentennial Proclamation to the World,” April 5, 2020, [churchofjesuschrist.org](http://churchofjesuschrist.org)). In Chile in October 2018 he said, “We are witnesses to a process of restoration. If you think the Church has been fully



- restored, you are just seeing the beginning. There's much more to come. Wait until next year—and then the next year. Eat your vitamin pills. Get your rest. It's going to be exciting!" ("Latter-day Saint Prophet, Wife and Apostle Share Insights of Global Ministry," October 30, 2018, <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/>). In Brazil he said, "I want our members to know that the Restoration is a continuing process" ("'We have a lot to do,' says President Nelson as Latin America Ministry Tour ends in Brazil," September 2, 2019, <https://thechurchnews.com/>). During the April 2020 general conference, in addition to the quotation from the Restoration proclamation above, there were seven other references to the doctrine (see the talks by Douglas D. Holmes, Henry B. Eyring, Gerrit W. Gong, Jean B. Bingham, and Quentin L. Cook in *Ensign*, May 2020).
2. Joel 2: 28–32; emphasis added; Joseph Smith—History 1:40.
  3. See also 2 Nephi 26:30–31; 27:3; 28:21.
  4. See also 2 Nephi 6:13.
  5. See heading by John Whitmer to Revelation, September 1830-A in Revelation Book 1, in *The Joseph Smith Papers*, historical introduction for Revelation, September 1830-A [D&C 29], <http://josephsmithpapers.org/>.
  6. Doctrine and Covenants 6:6; 11:6; 12:6; 14:6; 21:7.
  7. See Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 138.
  8. See also Covenant of Oliver Cowdery and others, 17 October 1830, <http://josephsmithpapers.org/>. According to the historical introduction to the document, "the signed covenant indicates that Cowdery, Whitmer, Pratt, and Peterson were to not only preach the gospel among the Lamanites but also 'rear up a pillar as a witness where the Temple of God shall be built' in the New Jerusalem."
  9. See Letter to the Church in Colesville, 2 December 1830, <http://josephsmithpapers.org/>.
  10. Terryl Givens and Fiona Givens, *The Crucible of Doubt: Reflections on the Quest for Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2014), 124.
  11. Joseph Smith, Kirtland, Ohio, to Edward Partridge, William W. Phelps, John Whitmer, Algernon Sidney Gilbert, John Corrill, Isaac Morley and all Saints, Independence, Missouri, 10 December 1833, Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, <http://josephsmithpapers.org/>.
  12. Harold B. Lee, "Strengthen the Stakes of Zion," *Ensign*, July 1973, 4.
  13. See Steve Harper, *Making Sense of the Doctrine and Covenants: A Guided Tour through Modern Revelations* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2008), 381; and Doctrine and Covenants 103:15.
  14. See Doctrine and Covenants 101:4.
  15. Harper, *Making Sense of the Doctrine and Covenants*, 381; see Doctrine and Covenants 105:11, 18, 33.
  16. See "Zion (place)," <http://josephsmithpapers.org/place/zion-place>. See also Martha Jane Knowlton, Notebook, July 19, 1840, ca. 1850, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; Joseph Smith, "Church History," *Times and Seasons*, March 1, 1842, 710; *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, ed. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 362–85; and Wilford Woodruff Journal, April 8, 1844, in Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*.

17. John G. Turner, *Brigham Young: Pioneer Prophet* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 106.
18. Turner, *Brigham Young*, 106.
19. Turner, *Brigham Young*, 181.
20. Gregory A. Prince and Wm. Robert Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005), 363.
21. John Taylor, “The Building Up of Zion,” in *Journal of Discourses*, 22:312 (October 19, 1881).
22. Orson Pratt, “The Divine Authority of the Holy Priesthood, Etc.,” in *Journal of Discourses*, 22:27 (October 10, 1880).
23. Pratt, “Divine Authority of the Holy Priesthood, Etc.,” 22:27.
24. Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay*, 363.
25. Seth L. Bryant, Henri Gooren, Rich Phillips, and David G. Stewart Jr., “Conversion and Retention in Mormonism,” *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion*, ed. Lewis R. Rambo and Charles E. Farhadian (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 763.
26. Harold B. Lee, “Strengthen the Stakes of Zion,” *Ensign*, July 1973, 4. See Doctrine and Covenants 101:20–21.
27. Fred E. Woods, “Gathering to Zion 1840–1890,” in *Mapping Mormonism: An Atlas of Latter-day Saint History*, ed. Brandon Plewe, S. Kent Brown, Donald Q. Cannon, and Richard H. Jackson (Provo, UT: BYU Press, 2012), 104.
28. See generally Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay*.
29. Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay*, 358.
30. Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay*, 256.
31. Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay*, 261.
32. Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay*, 372.
33. Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay*, 366.
34. Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay*, 366.
35. Sathianathan Clarke, “Section Three: Transformations of Caste and Tribe,” in *Religious Conversion in India: Modes, Motivations, and Meanings*, ed. Rowena Robinson and Sathianathan Clarke (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 217; emphasis added.
36. Matthew Bowman, *The Mormon People: The Making of an American Faith* (New York: Random House, 2012), 194.
37. Bowman, *Mormon People*, 194.
38. See Harold B. Lee, “Strengthen the Stakes of Zion,” *Ensign*, May 1973, 4; Harold B. Lee, “Make Our Lord and Master Your Friend,” in Conference Report, October 1968, 59; Harold B. Lee, “The Work in Great Britain,” in Conference Report, April, 1960, 106. All of these conference addresses focus on the question of “Where is Zion?” and how the “Lord has place the responsibility of directing the work of gathering in the hands of his divinely appointed leaders” and the importance of stakes of Zion all over the world.
39. Bowman, *Mormon People*, 191.
40. “Race and the Priesthood,” Gospel Topics, <https://lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood>.
41. See Official Declaration 2.
42. Bowman, *Mormon People*, 215.
43. Spencer W. Kimball, “Fruit of Our Welfare Services Labors,” *Ensign*, November 1978, 76.

44. Kimball, “The Fruit of Our Welfare Services Labors,” 76.
45. Dallin H. Oaks, “President Oaks’ full remarks from the LDS Church’s ‘Be One’ celebration,” June 1, 2018, <https://thechurchnews.com/>.
46. Bruce R. McConkie, “Come: Let Israel Build Zion,” *Ensign*, May 1977, 65.
47. McConkie, “Come: Let Israel Build Zion,” 117.
48. McConkie, “Come: Let Israel Build Zion,” 117–18.
49. Ezra Taft Benson, “Beware of Pride” (April 1989 general conference). See Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Pride and the Priesthood” (October 2010 general conference), in which he adds his “voice as another witness” to President Benson’s “timeless sermon.”
50. See Neal A. Maxwell, “A Wonderful Flood of Light” (Brigham Young University devotional, March 1989), quoted in D. Todd Christofferson, “Come to Zion,” *Ensign*, November 2008, 39.
51. Christofferson, “Come to Zion,” 38.
52. Russell M. Nelson, “Hope of Israel,” Worldwide Youth Devotional, June 3, 2018, <https://churchofjesuschrist.org/>. See his related messages: “Sisters’ Participation in the Gathering of Israel,” <https://churchofjesuschrist.org/>; “The Gathering of Scattered Israel,” *Ensign*, November 2006; and “Remnants Gathered, Covenants Fulfilled,” in *Sperry Symposium Classics: The Old Testament*, ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 1–17.
53. Russell M. Nelson, “Go Forward in Faith,” *Ensign*, May 2020, 114–16; emphasis in original.
54. Joseph Smith, quoted in David A. Bednar, “Let This House Be Built unto My Name,” *Ensign*, May 2020, 84–87.