



The Rhetoric of the Gathering and Zion:
Consistency through Change, 1831–1920

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David M. Morris

INTRODUCTION

Central to the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is its theology of the “Gathering”, the doctrine by which nineteenth century British and European converts immigrated to the United States in order to establish a modern-day “Zion.”¹ For modern Latter-day Saints, of which over half now live outside of the United States,² the current policy is to “gather” in their own country and build up the “stakes of Zion.”³ This latter policy appears to be in direct contrast with the instructions that were first given between 1830 and the

¹ “If we throw overboard the principle of the gathering, we cast away one of the most important principles connected with the work of God and salvation of humanity.” Editorial *Millennial Star*, Liverpool, England, hereafter MS, 04 April 1871 33: 209, 326.

² According to the published statistical records, as of 31 December 2005, there were 12,560,869 Latter-day Saints, of which 5,690,672 lived in the United States, conversely 6,870,197 who were living outside of the United States, with only 14% of those living in Utah. <http://www.lds.org/newsroom/quickfacts/0,15325,3882-1,00.html> [Accessed 14 July 2006]

³ “The First Presidency and the Twelve see great wisdom in the multiple Zions, many gathering places where the Saints [should gather] within their own culture and nation.” Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, Edward L. Kimball ed., Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 440. See also Bruce R. McConkie, Area Conference Report, Mexico City, 1972, 45”The place of gathering for the Mexican Saints is in Mexico; the place of gathering for the Guatemalan Saints is in Guatemala; the place of gathering for the Brazilian Saints is in Brazil; and so it goes throughout the length and breadth of the whole earth. Japan is for the Japanese; Korea is for the Koreans; Australia is for the Australians; every nation is the gathering place for its own people.” Also Gordon B Hinckley, UK Area Satellite Stake Conference Broadcast, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 3 June 2007.

1860's. During the 1850's, like today, over half of the Church's membership lived outside of the United States but the call was for them to come to Utah and build Zion there. As Utah's towns expanded, the nature of the public pronouncement of the gathering evolved and began to focus more on the physical necessities of building homes and industry, so a preference for emigrating skilled workers was given. During the later period of the 1870's through to the 1920's, further adjustments to the "gathering" were made in order to slow down Mormon Emigration to a near standstill. These changes were in reaction not to some new spiritual directive, or physical needs but rather in response to more secular obstacles, i.e. economical difficulties, governmental restrictions, effects of polygamy and civil unrest.

In this paper I identify the teachings of Joseph Smith founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints concerning "Zion" and the "Gathering". I will further address the period 1850-1880, and the rhetoric of Church leaders who described a Rocky Mountain Zion as the only acceptable place for gathering, particularly for the numerous European converts. I will also discuss the development of the policy in terms of a 20th-century audience, for whom the definition of Zion was widened to include all foreign lands.

I JOSEPH SMITH'S TEACHINGS OF THE GATHERING AND ZION

In September 1830, nearly six months following the Church's organisation, Joseph Smith taught members of the Church that the doctrine of the "Gathering," directed the Saints that they should be gathered in to one place, in order to prepare for an approaching time of tribulation.⁴ As the doctrine unfolded it became clear that the object of gathering a modern-day Israel was to provide a place of "refuge, a place of safety for the saints," or in other words to create a promised land, a modern-day Zion.⁵ On other occasions Smith reinforced this concept of Zion:

⁴ Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 vols., introduction and notes by B. H. Roberts, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1970, 1:112, hereafter HC.

⁵ HC 1:163

We ought to have the building up of Zion as our greatest object; the time is soon coming, when no man will have any peace but in Zion and her stakes.⁶

Consequently, several locations were identified as places of gathering, namely Kirtland, Ohio⁷, Independence and Far West, Missouri. By 1840, the call for British converts to join with the local Church at Nauvoo, Illinois was made.⁸ However none of these gave long-term refuge or safety. For these Latter-day Saints, the expectation and need for a place of refuge was more than just a wishful thinking or a good intention. They expected each place to be respite from sectarian and physical persecutions both within and without the Church. In reality, however, most remained seeking a city of Zion for the remainder of their lives. Like Moses of old, Smith was only able to contemplate the Promised Land, without yet experiencing it.

As early as 1831, the distinction between the City of Zion as the “centreplace” and Zion was made by Smith.⁹ The City of Zion was to be built at Jackson County, Missouri, and was to have a temple where both the corporeal and spiritual would be administered from and form the centre of all ecclesiastical and civic activity. His ideas for Zion went beyond a paradisiacal notion or a place to simply contemplate the beauties of Zion.¹⁰ For Smith, building the Kingdom of God was not only a spiritual but also a physical endeavour, convert by convert, brick by brick. For example he considered the physical City of Zion as a place with:

regular grid pattern with square blocks, streets 132 feet wide, alternating half-acre lots so that houses face alternate streets on each block, uniform brick or stone construction, homes set back 25 feet

⁶ Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976, 160-61.

⁷ HC 1:139; 346.

⁸ HC 1:189.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Jedediah M. Grant, *Journal of Discourses*, Liverpool England, 1854, 26 vols., 3:66. Hereafter *JD*.

from the street, front yard landscaping, gardens in the backyard, the location of farms outside of town, and the designation of central blocks as a site for temples, schools, and other public buildings.¹¹

The importance of temples in the middle of the city was a deliberate choice, for as Smith taught in any age of the world, the object of gathering the people of God was the same—"to build unto the Lord an house whereby he could reveal unto his people the ordinances" of his temple.¹² The correlation between the temple and the gathering became firmly coupled together. This city intended to be a refuge from the spirit of Babylon and a place of reception for the return of the Messiah. As seen in other places at, tensions in Missouri increased between the Mormons and the local indigenous population, in part due to the disproportionate balance of Mormons which altered the equilibrium of the community. Consequently opposition increased against Mormon bloc voting and economical practices.

Following violent clashes in 1838, the Latter-day Saints were expelled *en-masse*, from Missouri. Although having been forced from Missouri and effectively losing the "centreplace," there grew over subsequent years an expectation that the Saints would return to the City of Zion in Missouri. This matter continued in the mind of some influential leaders as late as 1869. Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt (1811-1881) taught in December of that year:

There is one thing sure-as sure as the sun shines forth in yonder heavens, so sure will the Lord fulfil one thing with regard to this people. What is that? He will return them to Jackson County, and in the western part of the State of Missouri they will build up a city

¹¹ "City Planning," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed., Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols., New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1992, Volume 1. Although Smith never got to see his City of Zion built, other cities and towns were built using these and similar designs, such as Nauvoo, and many western cities in Utah, Idaho, Arizona and California.

¹² Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds. *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph*, Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, BYU, 1990, 212

which shall be called Zion, which will be the head-quarters of this Latter-day Saint Church; and that will be the place where the prophets, apostles and inspired men of God will have their head-quarters. It will be the place where the Lord God will manifest Himself to His people, as He has promised in the Scriptures, as well as in modern revelation.¹³

Within the context of Pratt's teachings, it was understood that Zion and more particularly the City of Zion was tied up in millennial rhetoric of redemption. This, however, did not provide any immediate comfort for those who were still in expectancy of the Second Coming of Christ and were without their place of their refuge. In light of Pratt's prediction of a future time of return, it must be considered that other places that have been designated as gathering places must either be considered as stakes of Zion, or as temporary gathering places.

The Mormon gathering was paradoxically bringing people from throughout the world to a localised area, yet wanting to spread the Church out to all nations at the same time, in effect weakening its periphery as was seen in the British Isles, with the loss of over 55,000 emigrants. One might only speculate what the condition of the European Church might have been like had not they been called to Utah.

In order to accomplish the gathering, Smith needed to "send forth the elders of my Church unto the nations which are a far off."¹⁴ Although the international efforts of the Church commenced in the mid-late 1830's, the fulfilment of taking the "glorious news" of the Latter-day Saint gospel to all parts of the world began with the first preaching in New York State in 1830. It increased steadily, extending out until 1837, which marked the sending of missionaries over the Atlantic to the British Isles.

¹³ Orson Pratt, 19 December, 1869, JD 13:138; see also 2:57, 60; 11:324; 17:291-306 & 26 October 1869 24: 22 - 32. Note the following from Brigham Young: "Where is the centre stake of Zion? In Jackson County, Missouri. Were I to try to prevent you from going there, I could not do it. Can the wicked? No. Can the devils in hell? No, they cannot." 8:198.

¹⁴ HC 1:230

Joseph Smith's inauguration of the first mission to Britain was an inevitable development for a Church whose focus was one of missionary proselytising. It was more significant since many of the Church's adherents were of British origin.

With the commencement of the second mission in 1840, the majority of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles travelled to Britain in order to broaden the work of the Church. From their arrival, they began to proselytise many areas that had been neglected earlier. The mission also represented for the first time the open teaching of the Gathering to Zion, more precisely to the city of Nauvoo, Illinois, the newly appointed place of gathering. During this period, Smith had continued to teach about the establishment of Zion and the gathering; however, it is apparent that even by 1840's those around him seemed unable to grasp the widening implications of what or where Zion was, even though Smith had taught it since 1834. Addressing Church leaders he declared:

You know no more concerning the destinies of this Church and kingdom than a babe upon its mother's lap. You don't comprehend it... this Church will fill North and South America it will fill the world.¹⁵

For many of those present, they would only begin to see this fulfilment decades later. By May 1844, Smith was teaching that the building of Zion and the gathering was a global endeavour rather than just a singular place of assembly, because "all nations [would] hear the glorious news and come to knowledge of the truth."¹⁶ Zion was to expand to include the American continent in addition to Jackson County, Missouri.

¹⁵ 26 April 1834, Wilford Woodruff, *The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1964, 38-39.

¹⁶ "History of Joseph Smith," *Times and Seasons*, vol. 6:899 Letter from Joseph Smith to Moses C. Nickerson.

Following Smith's death in June 1844, and the prospect of having to move again, the next destination appears to have been the Rocky Mountains. Joseph Smith had reportedly prophesied on 6 August 1842 "that the Saints would continue to suffer much affliction and would be driven to the Rocky Mountains."¹⁷ As an attempt to secure a place for the Saints in 1845, Brigham Young (1801-1877) addressed letters to all the Governors of States and Territories in the Union, asking them for an asylum, within their borders, for the Latter-day Saints. "We were refused such privilege, either by silent contempt or a flat denial in every instance. They all agreed that we could not come within the limits of their Territory or State. Three members of Congress came to negotiate with us to leave the confines of the United States, and of the public domain. It was understood that we were going to Vancouver Island; but we had our eye on Mexico, and here we are located in the midst of what was then northern Mexico."¹⁸

The Mormons having been wholly rejected by the United States, Zion could only have been organised away from that country. Temporarily, Nebraska became the staging post until further direction was given. Prior to the eventual arrival of Brigham Young into Northern Mexico, other places were actively being sought to become gathering places for the now vagrant Latter-day Saints.

II BRIGHAM YOUNG, INTERNATIONAL GATHERING

One little known serious attempt to arrange a mass emigration of the Latter-day Saints was made through the British Government, in the guise of Vancouver Island, Oregon. By 1847, it was of such a proposition that Orson Spencer (1802-1855) the serving British Mission President, following a letter from Brigham Young, began to instruct the Latter-day Saints that Vancouver's island was the gathering place for the British Saints. He warned them not to go to the United States.¹⁹ "On

¹⁷ HC 5:85.

¹⁸ JD 5:230-1, 11:18.

¹⁹ Editorial MS 9:104, letter from Brigham Young to Orson Spencer 1 April 1847. This apparently was a subsequent letter. According to Orson Spencer the first letter was written 1 November 1845.

account of the suspension of emigration to the headquarters of the Church”, Spencer wrote, “and the great amount of distress prevailing, at that time, in the British Islands,...[there is] a plan for emigration ...to Vancouver Island”²⁰ Although planned out by apostles Pratt, John Taylor (1808-1887) and Orson Hyde (1805-1878), this endeavour was never carried out on account of two important factors,

- 1) The British government failed to provide funding, shipping and other requested materials, objecting to paying anything out of the already strapped Treasury.
- 2) The British Saints disregarded this and continued to pursue emigration in order to be with the main body of the Church.

Following the entry to the Rocky Mountains in July 1847, Brigham Young reportedly commented, “This is the place” which gave the signal for those in the party to stop travelling and to begin building the new Zion. One of the indications of an intended long term stay in the valley was that construction started immediately, and a program of ecclesiastical, civil and residential buildings were planned. As in all places where Zion was to be established, the temple would take prece-

²⁰ James Linforth, *Route from Liverpool to the Great Salt Lake Valley*, 4. Letter from Thomas D Brown to Dr John Bowring, M.P. 11 February 1847. This was in response to the letters received enquiring how the emigration will be paid for in response to the memorial sent to Queen Victoria. Prior to the memorial being presented to the Queen, the British Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, made a speech in the Houses of Parliament rejecting any idea of sending the poor to America or the Colonies. The memorial was not heard of any further. Despite this John Taylor commenced writing poems of the idea of the British Saints travelling to Vancouver to be among those of Zion (MS 9:28) No Latter-day Saints lived on the island until the 1875 arrival of William Francis and Maria Judson Copley, who settled near Shawnigan Lake. In 1887 Anthony Maitland Stenhouse, a member of the British Columbia legislative assembly, resigned his seat to become the first LDS convert on the island. Stenhouse then moved to an LDS community in southern Alberta. See also MS 9:74-5, 98, 104, 169 see also “Vancouver Island”, *Encyclopedia of Latter-Day Saint History*, McCue, & Robert J. “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Vancouver Island: The Establishment and Growth of the Mormon Community.” *B. C. Studies* (Summer 1979). 4

dent and become the focal point, however it still took six years to begin building from the time they arrived at the Great Salt Lake.

As might be expected in light of the upheavals, questions arose regarding the length of time that the Saints would stay in the Wasatch front, Young defiantly responded:

I will tell you how long we shall stay here. If we live our religion, we shall stay here in these mountains forever and forever... and a portion of the Priesthood will go and redeem and build up the centre stake of Zion.²¹

Later in the same year Young appeared to offer a differing opinion regarding staying forever and forever:

If the people neglect their duty, turn away from the holy commandments which God has given us, seek their own individual wealth, and neglect the interests of the kingdom of God, we may expect to be here quite a time—perhaps a period that will be far longer than we anticipate.²²

However, the notion of returning to the centre place was still being taught by others, including Orson Pratt and John Young. Patriarch John Young taught: “If the people will keep humble and do as they are told, they will stay here as long as they have a mind to, and then go back and build the Temple in the centre stake of Zion.”²³

Rather than witnessing a fulfilment of a return to Jackson County, Missouri, more Saints began to migrate to Utah, the greatest increase coming from Europe. By 1847, 17,849 persons had been baptized in the British Mission alone aside from those of Europe.²⁴ By the end of 1849, Brigham Young’s priority on gathering to Zion broadened. He focused less on the spiritual aspects and more on the physical practicalities of building cities and colonising Deseret, the proposed name

²¹ Brigham Young, JD 11:17

²² JD 11:102

²³ John Young, 25 October 1857, JD 5:371.

²⁴ MS, 8:90, 15 October 1846.

of the new territory. Like Smith, Young needed to build Zion brick by brick. Consequently he began writing letters to the British Saints asking for industrial help, including machinery and skilled workers.²⁵ As a reward for the skilled workers responding to the request to physically build Zion, economical advantages were given in terms of securing transportation for them, and relieving them of the cost of ox and cart once they had arrived in the United States.²⁶

At various times there was a cessation in emigration. On each occasion, however, it was linked to the ongoing physical difficulties faced by the Utah Church, i.e. American Civil War, Utah War, unemployment and the effect of decreasing numbers of European converts.²⁷ Significantly, the greatest arrival of saints was in the 1850's, during which time labour and employment was readily available. However, there was continual decline from the late 1850's onward.²⁸

Brigham Young continued to teach his view of the nature and concept of Zion, often choosing to highlight a particular point that was not so familiar. If some had misunderstood the rhetoric of Brigham Young regarding Zion, it is not surprising. Young often taught different aspects of the same thing, in order to highlight his view that the gospel of Christ has multifaceted meanings. When asked where Zion is, he responded:

25 MS 12:141 01 May 1850; Letter from Brigham Young to Orson Pratt, 14 Oct 1849

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Early in 1858 on account of Johnson's army, a rumour that the Saints were going to move to the British northwest led the Colonial Office to instruct Governor Douglas of Vancouver Island that he was not to allow the Mormons to enter or settle in the territory as a community, and under no circumstances were land grants to be made to them as a group; however, individual families of the faith were to be afforded all the privileges and opportunities of the area. F. O. 5/704, America: Domestic, Various, 1858. This however was not fulfilled and some such as Ron Esplin believe this to have been more of rouse rather than a course of Diaspora. Wilbur Sheppherd 217, *op. cit.*

²⁸ For a full listing of membership and emigration figures between 1837 and 1920 see <http://www.mormonhistory.org> under "British Mission". Last accessed 12 Jan 2008.

“It is at the City of the Great Salt Lake, in the Valleys of the Mountains; in the settlements of Utah Territory—there is Zion now.”²⁹

As with many things that Young taught, the caveat was at the end of an answer, “there is Zion now.” By implication it could be argued that it would not be in the future. Clarifying the fluidity of Zion he then commented:

But is there a land that ever will be called Zion? Yes, brethren. What land is it? ...that land is North and South America. That is Zion as to land, as to Territory, and location...The children of Zion have not yet much in their possession, but their territory is North and South America to begin with.³⁰

By implication, the Eastern States, The Mid-States and the Wasatch front, were not exclusively Zion. They, like all other places outside of Jackson County, might be considered as stakes of Zion. This sentiment was explicitly stated by the First Presidency, the governing council of the Church, in 1911: “all other gathering places of the Saints, including their present homes in the region of the Rocky Mountains, are merely “stakes” of Zion.”³¹

Other ambiguities still exist over the rhetoric concerning the “children of Zion.” Who are these people that would live in Zion? Are they the members of the Mormon Church that have accepted the tenets of the Church’s gospel, or are they those that are the sons of the Biblical Joseph of old, as the First Presidency said, “even as Jacob

²⁹ Brigham Young, 5 June 1853, JD 2:253.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ President Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund, John Henry Smith. *Messages of the First Presidency* 4:238, “Seventy-eight years have passed since then, [since 1833 when the Saints were driven from Missouri] and though the dispossessed and driven people have never returned to Jackson county, yet that spot is still to them Zion, the place to which they or their children will eventually wend their way to rear upon its consecrated soil the city and temple of God. *All other gathering places of the Saints, including their present homes in the region of the Rocky Mountains, are merely “stakes” of Zion.* (Published in Deseret News by First Presidency, Nov. 4, 1911) italics added for emphasis.

bequeathed it [the American Continent] to his son Joseph, and his posterity?"³² It is more likely that it was meant as encompassing of both.

Broadening the notion of Zion further, Brigham Young said that "Zion is North and South America to begin with" If this is the case, then Zion could not be exclusively the American continent. The rhetoric is inclusive, not exclusive. Therefore the American continent was not to be the whole of Zion, but part of it. In 1861 Young proclaimed: "Zion will extend, eventually, all over this earth. There will be no nook or corner upon the earth but what will be in Zion. It will all be Zion."³³

Young in his day established the doctrine of a worldwide Zion, but proceeded to extend the interpretation of Zion further to a non-physical location:

Unless the people live before the Lord in the obedience of His commandments, they cannot have Zion within them. They must carry it with them, if they expect to live in it, to enjoy it, and increase in it, it is in the hearts of the Saints, of those who love and serve the Lord with all their might, mind, and strength.³⁴

However, this departure from a bricks-and-mortar, priesthood-organised definition did not originate with Brigham Young, but rather with Joseph Smith. It was Smith that taught that Zion is "the pure of heart."³⁵ Young was again asked in 1860 where Zion was located. In replying he gave a different answer to 1853, where he taught it was the Rocky Mountains. On this occasion he said:³⁶

Where the organization of the Church of God is. And may it dwell spiritually in every heart; and may we so live as to always enjoy the Spirit of Zion!³⁷

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Brigham Young, 28 July 1861, JD 9:138

³⁴ *Ibid.* Italics added for emphasis.

³⁵ HC 1:402

³⁶ Brigham Young, 5 June 1853, JD 2:253.

³⁷ JD 8:205 14 October 1860, see also 8:198 7 Oct 1860 "Where is the centre Stake of Zion? In Jackson County, Missouri...Zion will be redeemed and built

So for Brigham Young, Zion would encompass the world, it is within individuals, it is around individuals, and it would be a place to return to.

Following the death of Brigham Young in August 1877, there was a seeming silence by Latter-day Saint Church leaders concerning the gathering and Zion. This was coupled with the efforts of William Evarts, the US secretary of State.³⁸ In August 1879 Evarts established a plan to enlist foreign nations in a campaign against polygamy and Mormon emigration. The plan was to formally hinder Mormon proselytising, harass missionaries, and prevent converts from immigrating to the United States.³⁹ A number of European countries couldn't justify assisting America's demands as their local laws protected such, including Great Britain, France and Italy. Other countries such as Austria and Germany began to imprison, prevent and harass Mormon missionaries and emigrants. This practice officially remained in place until shortly after the 1890 "Manifesto" that began the end of Latter-day Saint polygamy. However, some countries continued to contend with Mormons long after the order had been cancelled.

III THE BEGINNING OF EMIGRATION CONTROL

The policy of the Church towards discouraging its members from gathering to Utah became more hardened as the nineteenth century drew to a close. Not until June 1894, did the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles conclude that converts should:

up, and the Saints will rejoice. This is the land of Zion; and who are Zion? The pure in heart are Zion; they have Zion within them."

³⁸ Ardis E. Parshall, "A Gathering Storm: The U.S. State Department's World-Wide War on Mormon Proselyting and Emigration" *Sunstone* August 2004 Conference Paper. Appreciation is extended to Ardis E. Parshall for use of her research in this area.

³⁹ *Ibid*, William M. Evarts, Circular to Diplomatic Officers of the United States, 9 August 1879. Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of The United States, Transmitted to Congress, with the Annual Message of the President, 1879. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880), 11-12.

Not be encouraged to emigrate until they are firmly founded in the religion by labor and experience... And even those ...in... Favourable circumstances... should not to be encouraged to immigrate to this place, where labor is scarce.⁴⁰

Under similar circumstances in 1898, George Q Cannon announced:

There is one course that has been taken which I think will be attended with good efforts, that is, counselling the Saints in the various lands where they embrace the Gospel to remain quiet for a while; to not be anxious to break up their homes to gather to Zion.⁴¹

Several factors might be deemed as significant in leading to the change of emphasis regarding the policy of the “Gathering.” This change caused a downturn in emigration and consequently resulted in the promotion of the idea of multiple Zions. The following seem significant:

- The Perpetual Emigrating Company had been terminated by the Edmunds-Tucker Act in 1887.⁴²

⁴⁰ As cited in Richard L Jensen, “The Gathering to Zion,” V. Ben Bloxham ed., *Truth Will Prevail: The Rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the British Isles 1837-1987*, Solihull, England, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1987, 189

⁴¹ George Q. Cannon, Report of the Semi-annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints October 1898, Salt lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 4

⁴² “Anti-Polygamy Legislation,” *op cit.*, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 52. The intent of this anti-polygamy act was to destroy the temporal power of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Among its provisions was the dissolution of the Corporation of the Church. All property of the dissolved Church corporation held in violation of the 1862 limit of \$50,000 was to be seized on order of the Attorney General. It also called for the dissolution of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company, the abolition of female suffrage in Utah, and the disinheritance of children of plural marriages. Moreover, it empowered the court to compel the production of books, records, papers, and documents relating to properties held by the Church’s president.

- There was a lack of suitable land in Utah for further colonisation.
- The Church was in debt more than \$1,125,000 by 1898
- The depression of the 1890's caused production shortages, business failures, cash scarcity, and soaring unemployment.⁴³
- The Priesthood concern over many immigrants apostatising as soon as they arrived in Utah.
- The slowdown in European Mormon conversion and those wanting to emigrate.

The emphasis on remaining rather than gathering was not only European based, but also found expression in the *Southern Star*, the Southern States Mormon Mission newspaper (1898-1900), an editorial printed 4 February 1899 stated:

While the doctrine of the gathering had not been suspended, its unwise application had caused problems, and consequently great care should be exercised in advising or urging Saints to immigrate to the Far West...All things considered...it would be better for most of the Church's nine thousand southern members to remain in their homes.⁴⁴

Clearly from this quote the principle of remaining and strengthening the Church in their homelands began to be recognised and implemented. This would spread throughout the world in time and initiate a new phase of gathering.

⁴³ As cited in Ross Geddes, "Before Stakehood: The Mission Years in Brisbane, Australia," *Journal of Mormon History*, Vol. 22, No. 2, Fall 1996, p 95. Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints 1830-1900*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966, pp380–83; Richard D Poll, Thomas Alexander, Eugene Campbell, and David E Miller, eds. *Utah History*, Provo, Brigham Young University Press, 1978, pp 237-38.

⁴⁴ Chattanooga's *Southern Star*: Mormon Window on the South, 1898-1900 by David Buice , *BYU Studies*, vol. 28 (1988), Number 2 - Spring 1988

IV THE PRINCIPLE OF MULTIPLE ZIONS

During the first decade of the twentieth century, the rhetoric concerning gathering to Zion was muted, and instructions to remain and build Zion in one's own country increased and subsequently became the policy. More than 103,000 people had emigrated to Utah between the years of 1840 and 1910, an average of some 2,000 annually. In the years between 1911 and 1946, LDS emigration declined to an average of only 291 annually.⁴⁵

One of the catalytic events to stimulate the rhetoric of multiple Zions, or in other words multiple places of gathering, was an announcement in 1903 by Joseph F. Smith (1838-1918) the sixth President of the Church, declaring a practise of worldwide building of houses of worship. In announcing the change he said,

Our mission in Great Britain, for instance, has continued for the last 60 years or more, and yet we have never attempted to build houses of worship there, and many of the people have supposed that our work there was only temporary. But we desire it distinctly understood that "Mormon-ism," ... has come to stay.⁴⁶

Mormon chapels began to be built throughout Europe, with the emphasis on building the "stakes of Zion." Within ten years Joseph F Smith further announced the beginning of extending the programme of temple ordinances, to Mormons further abroad than the American West. The announcement of the Alberta, Canada temple began a long programme of temple building outside of Utah. President Smith explained:

that the purpose of the Church to extend the blessing of holy ordinances for the living and the dead of other lands than Utah, and former dwelling places of Zion, have awakened new interest and confidence in the cause of salvation. More Church edifices have been erected and such property acquired than ever before in our

⁴⁵ "Immigration & Emigration," *op cit.*, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 675

⁴⁶ President Joseph F. Smith, *Conference Report*, October 1903, 97

history, and we congratulate all who sense the importance of these movements on that which has been accomplished.⁴⁷

This sense of importance of these movements became the call to stay. While the nineteenth century was one of gathering to Zion and building, the twentieth became a century of remaining in Zion and building, not just infrastructure, but the spiritual base of non-Utah Latter-day Saints.

CONCLUSION

Brigham Young and subsequent leaders offered different explanations regarding the gathering and Zion, but one must reconsider Joseph Smith's original explanation of what and where Zion would be and how the gathering would be fulfilled. Although the doctrines over the decades have evolved or appeared to change, and places of gathering have come and gone, it is arguable that the worldwide building of the stakes of Zion is more consistent to Smith's original teachings, especially the relationship between the Temple and Zion, particularly in light of the ongoing temple construction programme of the Church.

As with the early Mormon Church, where the majority of whose membership was outside of the United States, today the Church is in a similar situation. With the opening up of nations to Mormon proselytising, the notion of Joseph Smith's Zion is being spread throughout and encompassing the world. The key to establishing his Zion was inextricably related to the establishment of stakes as places of gathering and the erection of temples therein. For Smith it is the temple that is the catalyst and purpose of the gathering. Although multiple changes to the definition, location and principles of the gathering and Zion have been made since Smith, these changes have brought about a synchronicity with Smith's early doctrine. This does not appear to have been a conscious act to do so by Church leaders, but the evidence demonstrates that these changes were more in reaction to economical,

⁴⁷ Christmas message published in *Deseret News*, Dec. 20, 1913, by the First Presidency, *Messages of the First Presidency* 4:295

political, sociological challenges of their day. If this is what Smith perceived as his vision of the future, one must be compelled to reassess the relationship between his original teachings and a 21st-century worldwide Latter-day Saint Church, a Zion, and her stakes under construction.