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LIEUTENANT-GENERAL JOSEPH SMITH.
[Prophet, Seer, and Revelator.]

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

*TOWARD A
REINTERPRETATION
OF MORMON
HISTORY*

by Klaus J. Hansen

Polygamy, contrary to popular opinion, probably seduced few men into the seraglio that was Mormonism in the mind of a prurient, Victorian America. Yet it lured several generations of historians — not to speak of journalists and popular novelists — into believing that its theory and practice provided the major key to an understanding of the “Mormon question.” Not all historians succumbed to this point of view;¹ nevertheless, further evidence requires another look at the problem, suggesting that the idea of a political Kingdom of God, promulgated by a secret “Council of Fifty,” is one of the important keys to an understanding of the Mormon past.² The polygamy conflict, it now appears, was merely that part of the iceberg visible above the troubled waters of Mormon history. Some Church leaders, for example, once they had reconciled themselves to the inevitability of the attack on polygamy, in a number of instances subtly invited assaults on the “relic of barbarism” in order to shield an institution of infinitely greater significance for Mormon history, the political Kingdom of God.

When, in 1890, Mormon President Wilford Woodruff issued the “Manifesto,” ostensibly ending the practice of polygamy, he did so to save not only the Church but also the Kingdom of God. The semantic distinction between the two terms — the one denoting strictly an ecclesiastical body, the other a political organization intended to prepare the world for a literal, political government of Christ during the Millennium — originated with Joseph Smith, who taught those attending the secret sessions of the Council of Fifty in Nauvoo that

"The Kingdom of God is a separate organization from the Church of God."³ To those who understand this difference, it will be apparent that if the Manifesto marked a watershed in Mormon history because it heralded the beginning of the end for polygamy, the following twenty years, though lacking the dramatic impact of Woodruff's pronouncement, divided Mormon history even more conclusively and permanently because they witnessed the decline and virtual disappearance of the idea of the political Kingdom of God, so vigorously promoted by the Council of Fifty in the nineteenth century. This kingdom had existed for the most part *sub rosa*. Therefore its death, though accompanied by much agony, failed to attract as much attention as the death of plural marriage. Polygamy died with a bang; the political Kingdom of God with a whimper. Hence only those who understand the history of the political Kingdom of God will be able to comprehend the magnitude of the political and intellectual transformation accompanying its death.

That history began formally in the spring of 1844, when Joseph Smith initiated some of his closest associates into the highly secret Council of Fifty with the purpose of setting up the "kingdom of

¹ See for example Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Cambridge, 1958); David Brion Davis, "The New England Origins of Mormonism," *The New England Quarterly*, XXVI (June 1953), 147-68; G. Homer Durham, "A Political Interpretation of Mormon History," *Pacific Historical Review*, XIII (June 1944), 136-50; Robert J. Dwyer, *The Gentile Comes to Utah: A Study in Religious and Social Conflict, 1862-1890* (Washington, 1941); Howard R. Lamar, "Political Patterns in New Mexico and Utah Territories," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXVIII (Oct. 1960), 377-87; William Mulder, *The Mormons in American History* (Salt Lake City, 1957); Richard D. Poll, "The Mormon Question Enters National Politics, 1850-1856," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXV (Apr. 1957), 117-31; Richard D. Poll, "The Political Reconstruction of Utah Territory, 1866-1890," *Pacific Historical Review*, XXVII (May 1958), 111-26; Jan Shipps, "The Mormons in Politics: The First Hundred Years" (doctoral dissertation, University of Colorado, 1965).

² Hyrum L. Andrus, *Joseph Smith and World Government* (Salt Lake City, 1958); Arrington, pp. 31-32, 39-40, 50-62; Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History, The Life of Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet* (New York, 1945), pp. 356-57; Juanita Brooks, *John Doyle Lee* (Glendale, Calif., 1962); Alfred L. Bush and Klaus J. Hansen, "Notes Towards a Definition of the Council of Fifty," MS, 1957 (Brigham Young University Library); James R. Clark, "Church and State Relationships in Education in Utah" (doctoral dissertation, Utah State University, 1958); James R. Clark, "The Kingdom of God, the Council of Fifty and the State of Deseret," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXVI (Apr. 1958), 130-48; Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana, 1965), pp. 278-305; Klaus J. Hansen, "The Political Kingdom of God as a Cause for Mormon-Gentile Conflict," *Brigham Young University Studies*, II (Spring-Summer 1960), 241-60; Klaus J. Hansen, "The Kingdom of God in Mormon Thought and Practice, 1830-1896" (doctoral dissertation, Wayne State University, 1963); J. Keith Melville, "Theory and Practice of Church and State During the Brigham Young Era," *Brigham Young University Studies*, III (Autumn 1960), 33-55; Thomas F. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago, 1957), pp. 165-68.

³ Brigham H. Roberts, ed., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (2d ed., 7 vols., Salt Lake City, 1946-50), VII, 382.

Daniel by the word of the Lord."⁴ Officially known among its members as "The Kingdom of God and His Laws with the Keys and Powers Thereof and Judgment in the Hands of His Servants," the Council was described by John D. Lee as "the Municipal department of the Kingdom of God set up on the Earth, from which all law emanates, for the rule, government & controle of all Nations Kingdoms & touns and People under the whole Heavens but not to controle the Priesthood but to council, deliberate & plan for the general good & upbuilding of the Kingdom of God on earth."⁵ Joseph Smith even insisted that "there may be men acting as officers of the Kingdom of God who will not be members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."⁶ Although it is doubtful that the Saints were able to persuade many Gentiles to join the Council of Fifty, their projected inclusion in the "Government of God" was absolutely essential, for it allowed the Mormons to insist that at least theoretically they observed the sacred American doctrine of separation of church and state.⁷ This theory played an important role in defending the Saints from those perennial accusations, advanced by their enemies, that in Mormondom church and state were one.⁸

Yet even if the Gentiles had accepted this Mormon version of separation of church and state, there were other reasons why the suspected ideas and practices of the Council of Fifty became one of the major causes provoking the harrowing persecutions of the Saints. The non-Mormons clearly could not countenance the establishment of a separatist Mormon state, under whatever political theories. But the creation of a Mormon nation-state, to prepare the way for the Government of God, was precisely one of the major

⁴ Roberts, ed., *History of the Church*, VI, 365.

⁵ Minutes of the Council of Fifty, April 10, 1880 (Brigham Young University Library); Robert Glass Cleland and Juanita Brooks, eds., *A Mormon Chronicle: The Diaries of John D. Lee, 1848-1876* (2 vols., San Marino, Calif., 1955), I, 80; Roberts, ed., *History of the Church*, VI, 260-67, 286, 331, 341, 343, 351, 356; VII, 379-80.

⁶ Roberts, ed., *History of the Church*, VII, 382. See also Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* (26 vols., 1853-86; July 8, 1855), II, 310.

⁷ John D. Lee, in *Mormonism Unveiled* (St. Louis, 1877), p. 173, insists that a Gentile identified only as Jackson became a member of the Council of Fifty. Thomas L. Kane possibly may have been a member. At any rate, Brigham Young discussed matters with the "Colonel" of such a confidential nature as he was accustomed to discuss only in the privacy of the Council. See Brigham Young to Thomas L. Kane, September 1, 1858, in Edward Eberstadt and Sons, *Western America in Documents* (New York, 1963), p. 111. But it is not at all certain that Kane was a bona fide Gentile. Nor is it that Daniel H. Wells was; his baptism into the Mormon Church may have been temporarily deferred so that he might serve the Council of Fifty and the Church as a sympathetic Gentile in Nauvoo.

⁸ Thus George Q. Cannon, as quoted in *Truth*, II (21 vols., 1935-56; 1 Aug. 1936), 43. It should be emphasized, however, that the Saints were hardly consistent. Parley P. Pratt, for one, could see no distinction between church and state: *Journal of Discourses*, I (Jan. 30, 1853), 173-4.

goals of the Council of Fifty.⁹ For Joseph Smith and his successors believed that the Millennium could not be ushered in merely by spiritual preparation. If the Law was to go forth from Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem, both the Church *and* Kingdom had to be organized prior to Christ's reappearance in the clouds. This idea was in keeping with the strong Mormon belief that God required the active participation of man to fulfill His purposes. The Saints believed that the Lord, through His prophets, had indicated that His coming was imminent, and that His return would be delayed only if — through wickedness or sloth — they failed to pave the way. Among present-day Mormons few even of the most fervent and literal-minded are able to equal the zeal and the degree of expectation which compelled most of their ancestors to anticipate the Second Coming at any moment.¹⁰

In the imagery of Daniel's prophecy the Kingdom of God was likened to a stone which, loosened from the mountaintop without a hand, would crush all worldly governments and kingdoms in its path, finally filling the whole world.¹¹ The Gentiles, who could be quite as literal-minded as the Saints, therefore believed that the Mormon kingdom, like Mohammed's, was to conquer the world by fire and sword. Nothing, however, could be further from the truth. Joseph Smith insisted emphatically that the Kingdom was to be ushered in through peaceful means, although some of his followers, admittedly did not always follow this injunction.¹² Still, the Mormon prophet faced a problem — a problem that plagued the Saints not only in Missouri and Illinois, but that followed them relentlessly even into the recesses of the "everlasting mountains" — how to organize such a kingdom peacefully within the boundaries of the United States. Viewed from the vantage point of historical hindsight it is therefore clear that with the formation of a nucleus government for the Kingdom of God, primarily consisting of members of the Council of Fifty, the Prophet had crossed the Rubicon. That the Saints would cross the Mississippi had thus become almost inevitable.

To Joseph Smith, in 1844, this was of course not so obvious. True, he seems to have realized that a temporal kingdom of God in

⁹ Cleland and Brooks, eds., *Mormon Chronicle*, I, 80; John Taylor, *Journal of Discourses*, VI (Nov. 1, 1857), 23-4; Young to Kane, in Eberstadt, p. 111.

¹⁰ See particularly the early issues of *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*, especially VI (Oct. 15, 1845), 140-42, as well as numerous revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, especially 34:7; 35:27; 43:17-35; 49:7; 52:43; 112:24, 34.

¹¹ Daniel 2:44-5.

¹² Roberts, ed., *History of the Church*, VI, 365: "It will not be by the sword or gun that this kingdom will roll on."

an area surrounded by Gentiles faced at best a precarious future. But what if, through a bold stroke, he could capture the United States for the Kingdom? The Council of Fifty thought there might be a chance and nominated the Mormon prophet for the Presidency of the United States. Council of Fifty member George Miller wrote hopefully, "If we succeeded in making a majority of the voters converts to our faith, and elected Joseph president, in such an event the dominion of the kingdom would be forever established in the United States."¹³ As a result, the Council of Fifty decided to send all available Elders on missions to campaign for the prophet and to preach Mormonism at the same time. "If God goes with them," remarked Apostle Willard Richards, "who can withstand their influence?"¹⁴

To anyone who believed with the faith of a Willard Richards, Smith's candidacy clearly was not as irrational as it may appear from hindsight. Still, the Mormon prophet was realistic enough not to stake the entire future of the Kingdom of God on this plan. He therefore commissioned three members of the Council of Fifty to negotiate with Sam Houston for the acquisition of a large tract of land between the Nueces and Rio Grande rivers for the possible establishment of a Mormon state that would serve as a buffer between Mexico and Texas. The Mormon emissaries styled themselves plenipotentiaries, perhaps in a somewhat overeager anticipation of their hoped-for future status.¹⁵ That these hopes were quite within the bounds of official teachings regarding the Kingdom of God is confirmed by as realistic a Mormon leader as George Q. Cannon, who as late as 1862 told a group of Elders about to depart for a church mission that the Kingdom of God was "to become a political power, known and recognized by the powers of the earth; and you, my brethren, may have to be sent forth to represent that power as its accredited agents . . . at the courts of foreign nations."¹⁶

As an alternate possibility to the Texas venture, Smith commissioned scouting expeditions of the Council of Fifty to search out a possible location for the Kingdom in the Transmississippi West.¹⁷ At the same time, Orson Hyde, emissary of the Council in Washington, had instructions to negotiate with the Federal Government for that very purpose. Hyde, significantly, reported that the Saints could

¹³ *Correspondence of Bishop George Miller with the Northern Islander from His First Acquaintance with Mormonism up to Near the Close of His Life. Written by Himself in the Year 1855* (n.p., n.d.), pp. 20-23; Roberts, ed., *History of the Church*, VI, 356.

¹⁴ Roberts, ed., *History of the Church*, VI, 232.

¹⁵ *Correspondence of Bishop George Miller*, p. 20.

¹⁶ *Millennial Star*, XXIV (Feb. 15, 1862), 103.

expect little federal support for their plan and advised the prophet and his associates that "if the Saints [are to] possess the kingdom, I think they will have to take it; and the sooner it is done the more easily it is accomplished."¹⁸ As it turned out, soon this was the only alternative left to the Mormons. For with the death of their prophet, which followed within weeks, the Saints had to bury any hopes of capturing the Kingdom through gaining the Presidency of the United States. The establishment of the Kingdom in Texas, meanwhile, had also become unfeasible. Under the forceful leadership of Brigham Young, therefore, the Council of Fifty attempted to set up the Kingdom in the Rocky Mountains.

Although the Council of Fifty never fully realized its goal of establishing the Kingdom of God as a separate nation in the Great Basin, it ceaselessly worked in that direction for as long as it seemed at all possible. When Brigham Young and the Council of Fifty organized the Exodus, they knew that the territory which they planned to colonize belonged to Mexico. In an epistle, circulated in the autumn of 1845, Young admonished the Saints that removal beyond the boundaries of the United States was a test of orthodoxy: "If the authorities of this church cannot abide in peace within the pale of this nation, neither can those who implicitly hearken to their wholesome counsel. A word to the wise is sufficient."¹⁹ When the leaders of the Church finally learned of the ratification of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, however, there was nothing they could do, as Frederick Logan Paxson pointed out long ago, "but make the best of these facts and to seek from the United States the same sort of autonomy they had received from Illinois."²⁰

As a matter of fact, the Council of Fifty tried to do better than that. Although Brigham Young apparently realized in 1847 that it was impossible to cut the political threads with the United States in the near future, he did his best to render those threads as thin and weak as possible. As a result, the Council of Fifty launched the State of Deseret at a time when it was in absolute political control of the Great Basin, so as to present the Federal Government with the accomplished fact of a Kingdom of God before the Gentiles could hamper its development. And even before the establishment of

¹⁸ Roberts, ed., *History of the Church*, VI, 222; James Emmett was instructed to establish a settlement at the Missouri River. Dale Morgan, ed., "The Reminiscences of James Holt: A Narrative of the Emmett Company," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXIII (Jan. 1955), 7.

¹⁹ Roberts, ed., *History of the Church*, VI, 275-77, 372.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, VII, 478-9.

²⁰ Frederick Logan Paxson, *History of the American Frontier, 1763-1893* (New York, 1924), 349.

Deseret, the Council of Fifty observed at least a theoretical separation of church and state. As James Clark was the first to point out, the origins of Great Basin government can hardly be attributed to "well established precedents of frontier impatience and restlessness."²¹ The fact is that the Mormons had migrated to the Rockies precisely for the purpose of setting up their own government, a government that was only incidentally an adaptation to frontier conditions. A commonly held opinion is that the State of Deseret was created because the United States had not yet provided a government for the region and because the presence of gold-seekers and other Gentiles required a civil magistrate.²² This interpretation is incorrect. Had a government already existed in the area, the Mormons most likely would not have migrated there. On the other hand, even if gold-seekers and others had not come to the Great Basin, the Council of Fifty would still have set up a formal government, along precedents worked out by Joseph Smith in 1844.²³

It was obvious, of course, that sooner or later the Saints had to supplement the State of Deseret with a governmental organization approved by Washington, if only to keep relations with the "states" as amicable as possible. Moreover, statehood need not necessarily have diminished the power of the Council of Fifty appreciably. The doctrine of States' Rights, which had worked to the detriment of the Saints in Missouri and Illinois, could be used to great advantage in maintaining a considerable degree of independence for the political Kingdom of God at a time when the Civil War amendments to the Constitution and their interpretation were still in the future. Had Deseret achieved statehood, the political control of the Council of Fifty probably would have continued with little outside interference. Utah Senator Frank Cannon's later assertion that the Mormons attempted to gain admission into the Union in order to escape its authority thus contains a kernel of truth.²⁴ That Deseret, in 1850, failed to be admitted as a state, however, was not a consequence of anti-Mormon sentiment in Congress, so evident in all later attempts. The sectional controversy worked just as effectively to frustrate

²¹ Clark, "The Kingdom of God, the Council of Fifty and the State of Deseret," p. 133. The Quotation is from Leland H. Creer, *The Founding of an Empire: The Exploration and Colonization of Utah* (Salt Lake City, 1947), p. 313.

²² Leland H. Creer, *Utah and the Nation* (Seattle, 1929), p. vii, and *The Founding of an Empire*, p. 312; Andrew L. Neff, *History of Utah, 1847-1869* (Salt Lake City, 1940), p. 108.

²³ Brigham Young was always most emphatic that he was merely carrying out the plans of Joseph Smith in this respect. See *Journal of Discourses*, XVII (Aug. 9, 1874), 156; *Journal History*, January 19, 1863 (L.D.S. Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City).

²⁴ Frank J. Cannon and George L. Knapp, *Brigham Young and His Mormon Empire* (New York, 1913), p. 117.

Mormon hopes when the Southern bloc in Congress combined with Northern advocates of popular sovereignty to relegate the Mormon kingdom to territorial status under the Compromise of 1850.²⁵

But even as a territory the Kingdom of God enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy. Territorial Secretary Benjamin Ferris observed that from 1851 on "the laws of the United States have been *nominally* in operation," although in reality the Mormons governed themselves.²⁶ The Territorial Government ruled *de jure*, while the State of Deseret continued to be the real authority accepted by the Saints. When in 1855 Brigham Young could boldly announce that "The Kingdom of God is actually organized and the inhabitants of the earth do not know it,"²⁷ the context of the speech made it clear that he was not referring to the Church.²⁷ Only too soon, however, it became apparent that the Gentiles knew more about the Kingdom of God than the Mormons suspected. As a result, relations with the Federal Government deteriorated, culminating in the Utah War, 1857-58. When President James Buchanan sent an ill-starred expedition to Utah in 1857, it was as much to suppress an alleged Mormon rebellion as polygamy, although, as Richard Poll has pointed out, the Democrats were in dire need of stealing some of the thunder from the Republican "twin relics" platform of 1856 to prove to a reform-minded North that they, too, were against at least one relic of barbarism.²⁸

To Brigham Young, the expedition meant something else. He announced publicly that perhaps the Lord was about to cut the thread between the Kingdom of God and the United States.²⁹ Privately, he wrote to Thomas L. Kane "that the time is not far distant when Utah shall be able to assume her rights and place among the family of nations."³⁰ This renewed enthusiasm for the Kingdom of God also affected the subalterns of the prophet. Thomas Tauner [Tanner?] of the Nauvoo Legion signed a letter to his commanding officer, Col. Ellerbeck, as "Captain of the Royal Artillery, Deseret."³¹ Although the Lord, by allowing for a peaceful settlement of the conflict, indicated that He apparently did not want the thread cut at this time, Mormon leaders continued to prepare their Rocky Mountain empire for the day when they could permanently hoist the flag of the Kingdom.

²⁵ Poll, "The Mormon Question Enters National Politics, 1850-1856," p. 117.

²⁶ Benjamin G. Ferris, *Utah and the Mormons* (New York, 1856), p. 167.

²⁷ *Journal of Discourses*, II (July 8, 1855), 310.

²⁸ Poll, "The Mormon Question . . .," p. 131.

²⁹ *Journal History*, August 2, 1857.

³⁰ 1 September 1858, in Eberstadt, p. 111.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

Three years later, these hopes seemed to be on the verge of realization, with the bombardment of Fort Sumter portending the fulfillment of Joseph Smith's prophecy that war, beginning in South Carolina, would envelope the earth and lead to the "full end of all nations."⁸² Young taught that North and South would destroy each other, leaving the Kingdom of God to take over the reins of government of the United States.⁸³ As a result, the Council of Fifty vigilantly kept its organization intact for the time when the political Kingdom of God could send its accredited ambassadors abroad. In a special message to the legislature of the extra-legal state of Deseret in 1862, Brigham Young reminded its members, "This body of men will give laws to the nations of the earth . . . when the time comes, we shall be called the Kingdom of God Joseph Smith organized this government before, in Nauvoo, and he said if we did our duty, we should prevail over all our enemies. We should get all things ready, and when the time comes, we should let the water on the wheel and start the machine in motion."⁸⁴ But the time never came. In vain the Saints kept waiting for the finger of the Lord to lift the yoke of oppression from their shoulders and raise His chosen people to nationhood. Disappointment and frustration thus played an important part in the metamorphosis of the Kingdom of God.

Nevertheless, a Mormon nationalism of such profound intensity would not die overnight, especially in view of its strong theological and philosophical roots. This is a point that cannot be emphasized enough. For it may be possible to argue that the Mormons developed an incipient nationality primarily as the result of enforced unity and physical isolation on the frontier — an inevitable consequence of certain environmental and sociological phenomena. That this influence existed cannot be denied. Park and Burgess, those eminent American sociologists, called attention to it over forty years ago:

Once the sect has achieved territorial isolation and territorial solidarity, so that it is the dominant power within the region that it occupies, it is able to control the civil organization, establish schools and a press, and so put the impress of a peculiar culture upon all the civil and political institutions it controls. In this case it tends to assume the form of a state, and become a nationality. Something approaching this was achieved by the Mormons in Utah.⁸⁵

⁸² Doctrine and Covenants, Section 87.

⁸³ Diary of Charles Walker, April 28, 1861 (Utah State Historical Society).

⁸⁴ Journal History, Jan. 19, 1863. The best account of the Mormons in the Civil War is Gustive O. Larson, "Utah and the Civil War," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXXIII (Winter 1965), 55-77.

⁸⁵ Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Chicago, 1921), pp. 872-73, as quoted in Thomas F. O'Dea, "Mormonism and the Avoidance

This influence, however, was only secondary. The primary source of Mormon nationalism in the Great Basin was intellectual and must be traced to the theology and political philosophy of Joseph Smith as it had originated in the Burned-over District and matured in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois.⁸⁶ That the Rocky Mountain frontier placed its own indelible environmental stamp on this form of nationalism seems self-evident. Thus, although the concept of Mormon nationalism was not the product of the Great Basin environment, that environment encouraged the practice of such theories. It was, of course, precisely for this reason that Brigham Young and the Council of Fifty sought out their Rocky Mountain refuge. But regardless of any environmental influences, Mormon leaders had internal — i.e. theological — motivations for establishing the Kingdom of God, motivations that would have appeared in some form no matter where they had settled.

The same internal motivation resulted in Mormon political unity and a highly centralized control of all political activities. It is frequently claimed that this political cohesion, and the lack of pluralism, were primarily a response to persecution. In the absence of conflict, so the argument runs, Mormon institutions would have been as democratic as those of the United States itself. The disappearance of the Mormon People's Party after the Manifesto, to the subsequent dissolution of the anti-Mormon Liberal Party in 1893, and the alignment of Utah along national party lines are sometimes cited as proof of the validity of this point of view.⁸⁷ This explanation, however, is too simple, involving the old *post hoc propter hoc* fallacy. An examination of the political theory of the Kingdom of God reveals that persecution or no persecution, the Saints were committed to political unity.⁸⁸

The practical results of such a philosophy, to the Gentiles at any rate, seemed singularly un-American. When William H. Hooper, a member of the Council of Fifty, "campaigned" for the seat of Territorial Delegate to Congress in 1856, Apostle George A. Smith, who

of Sectarian Stagnation: A Study of Church, Sect, and Incipient Nationality, *American Journal of Sociology*, LX (Nov., 1954), 293. O'Dea's article is one of the most stimulating on this complex problem.

⁸⁶ Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (Ithaca, 1950), pp. 138-50.

⁸⁷ See, for example, Therald N. Jensen, "Mormon Theory of Church and State" (doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago, 1938), pp. 82-95.

⁸⁸ For representative selections of the political thought of Mormon leaders on this question, see Heber C. Kimball, *Journal of Discourses*, VI (Dec. 13, 1857), 129; *Millennial Star*, V (March, 1845), 150; Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology* (Liverpool, 1855), p. 70; Roberts, ed., *History of the Church*, V, 61; John Taylor, *Journal of Discourses*, VII (Oct. 7, 1859), 326.

accompanied the aspirant on his election campaign, informed the Saints of Mount Pleasant, "What we do we should do as one man. Our system should be Theo-Democracy, — the voice of the people consenting to the voice of God."³⁹ Needless to say, Hooper was "elected." As long as the Council of Fifty controlled politics, Mormon elections were hardly anything more than a "sustaining" of the official candidates. If, however, on rare occasions the people might actually nominate a candidate not approved by the hierarchy, "counsel" by the leaders usually sufficed to bring about the desired results. Hosea Stout, for example, recorded in his diary that on August 2, 1855, he went to Davis County in order to persuade the people to withdraw the name of a popular bishop, Anson Call, for nomination for the impending election to the Legislature and place John D. Parker in his stead. The change was apparently made without much protest. But what Stout did not record, and what the people of Davis County apparently did not know, was that Parker belonged to the Council of Fifty, having been called by none other than Joseph Smith.⁴⁰

In the light of these ideas and practices it appears that the transformation of the idea of the Kingdom of God from a political to a purely ecclesiastical concept and the cessation of centralized control over Mormon politics by the hierarchy involved a penetrating and painful intellectual transformation of assumptions that were basic to the very fiber of the social and political systems of the Kingdom of God. What were the causes for this metamorphosis? They may be classified, perhaps somewhat arbitrarily, into four categories: (1) persecution; (2) the decline of millennialism; (3) the inherent American patriotism of the Saints; (4) the fact that the Kingdom of God had fulfilled important functions and outlived its usefulness.

The promotion of the political Kingdom of God by Mormon leaders was one of the major reasons why the Saints were driven so relentlessly for over half a century. Although this point must have been obvious to Wilford Woodruff, it is quite evident that he believed that cessation of polygamy would end or at least diminish the reforming zeal of those crusading for monogamy, thus depriving the political enemies of Mormonism of indispensable support for their crusade against the Kingdom of God. The Manifesto, clearly, was primarily a tactical maneuver to save not only the Church but if pos-

³⁹ Journal History, July 12, 1865.

⁴⁰ Juanita Brooks, ed., *On the Mormon Frontier, The Diary of Hosea Stout* (2 vols., Salt Lake City, 1964), II, 559. Parker was initiated into the Council of Fifty on March 19, 1844; see Roberts, ed., *History of the Church*, VI, 267.

sible the political Kingdom as well. The preservation of the Church alone, as a religious institution, would have made the restitution of polygamy impossible — as demonstrated, indeed, by the history of Mormonism since 1890. But if the Kingdom of God could have been preserved, it might have been possible to continue polygamy once the Gentile onslaught had spent itself.

With the advantage of hindsight, this argument may appear as a mere begging of the question. But to Woodruff, continuation of the political Kingdom of God seems to have been a real alternative. True, in 1889 the First Presidency publicly declared “that this Church does not claim to be an independent, temporal kingdom of God, or to be an *imperium in imperio* aiming to overthrow the United States or any other civil government” and once again affirmed its traditional public position that “Church government and civil government are distinct and separate in our theory and practice, . . .”⁴¹ To those who understood the political theory of the Kingdom of God, however, this declaration was in complete harmony with the one issued four years later, at the completion of the Salt Lake Temple in 1893, by a convocation of 115 select church leaders, who unanimously affirmed that “the Presidency of the Church are set to govern and control the affairs of the Church and Kingdom of God . . . that upon their shoulders rests the responsibility of teaching, governing, controlling and counselling the Church and Kingdom of God in *all* things on the earth.”⁴²

Perhaps Woodruff was merely clutching at straws in a desperate attempt to evade the inevitable. But he was not the only one who attempted to keep alive the belief that the Kingdom of God, and with it the Church, would be delivered from the enemy in the near future. In 1900, Woodruff’s successor, Lorenzo Snow, affirmed at a special priesthood meeting in the Salt Lake Temple that “there are many here now under the sound of my voice, probably a majority, who will live to go back to Jackson County and assist in building that temple.”⁴³

By making polygamy the major issue, the church leaders could always maintain that the persecution of the Saints was of a *religious* nature, involving a violation of their constitutional rights. The

⁴¹ *Official Declaration* (Salt Lake City, Dec. 12, 1889).

⁴² Diary of L. John Nuttall, April 19, 1893 (Brigham Young University Library). Frank Cannon, moreover, insisted that he had heard Woodruff remark “that it was the right of the priesthood of God to rule in all things on earth, and that they had in no wise relinquished any of their authority.” Frank J. Cannon and Harvey J. O’Higgins, *Under the Prophet in Utah* (Boston, 1911), p. 153.

⁴³ John Mills Whitaker, *Journal* No. 5, October 16, 1887 (University of Utah Library).

enemies of Mormonism, of course, also knew their constitution. Thus, John Hyde insisted that "as a religion, Mormonism cannot be meddled with; as a civil policy it may."⁴⁴ Frederick T. Dubois of Idaho, prominent leader in the anti-Mormon crusade, showed that the major motivations behind the attack on polygamy were political:

Those of us who understood the situation were not nearly as much opposed to polygamy as we were to the political domination of the Church. We realized, however, that we could not make those who did not come actually in contact with it, understand what this political domination meant. We made use of polygamy in consequence as our great weapon of offense and to gain recruits to our standard. There was a universal detestation of polygamy, and inasmuch as the Mormons openly defended it we were given a very effective weapon with which to attack.⁴⁵

"As the Mormons openly defended it"; this is the clue. To the frustration of the Gentiles, the Saints always denied the allegations pertaining to the political kingdom. And they could do this most effectively without being technically untruthful, for as mentioned above, according to the Mormon principle of separation of church and state, the political Kingdom of God was not a church organization. Thus, the Mormon leaders could keep their enemies quite effectively in the dark. The Gentiles, of course, sensed this, without being able to support their charges with sufficient evidence. When, and if, the full story of the role of the Kingdom of God in the anti-polygamy crusade is revealed, the verdict of future historians might well be that in 1890 the Saints merely lost a battle, being as yet undefeated in the war. The enemies of Mormonism apparently realized this; the continued altercations with the Saints for at least another twenty years, at any rate, seem to indicate that the Gentiles were less than satisfied with their "victory" in 1890. The Mormon leaders, all the while, continued their tactics of deflecting the renewed onslaught on the Kingdom. In the Smoot hearings, for example, Dubois charged that the Mormons were attempting to cloud the real issues (i.e., relationship of church and state in Mormon dominated areas) by "trying to force the protestants to issues which they themselves have never raised" (i.e., polygamy).⁴⁶ Thus, Dubois's tactics had

⁴⁴ John Hyde, *Mormonism: Its Leaders and Designs* (New York, 1857), pp. 307-8.

⁴⁵ Autobiography of Frederick T. Dubois, MS, p. 29 (Idaho Historical Society), as quoted in Grenville H. Gibbs, "Mormonism in Idaho Politics, 1880-1890," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXI (1953), 291.

⁴⁶ U.S. Congress, Senate, *Proceedings Before the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the United States Senate in the Matter of the Protests Against the Right Hon. Reed Smoot, a Senator from the State of Utah, to Hold His Seat* (4 vols., Washington, 1904-7), I, 126; see also Cannon and O'Higgins, pp. 34-6, 115. Homer Durham's observation that "any purposeful internal direction of the political power inhering in the church may be said

ironically backfired, providing the Saints with subtle means for defending the Kingdom. If these Mormon defense measures were partially successful, internal reasons may have been as important as external ones for the metamorphosis of the Kingdom.

Millennialism is perhaps the most obvious example. The Mormon Church can of course honestly assert that no transformation in doctrine has occurred. But the perpetuation of doctrinal theories does not preclude a fundamental intellectual transformation. To this day, orthodox Latter-day Saints believe that Christ will return and that in time all earthly governments but that of the Kingdom of God will disappear. Nevertheless, not many Mormons at the present time have organized their lives in such a manner that at practically any moment they can prepare themselves for and welcome this event as a literal occurrence. Not that nineteenth century Saints could always say that of themselves. But they experienced definite and sustained periods of profound expectation. As the years wore on, however, without deliverance in sight, a certain spirit of resignation spread among the faithful. True, some Mormons believed that the Edmunds Act was a harbinger of the Millennium, and in 1890 there was a widespread belief among church members that Joseph Smith's prediction of 1835, that fifty-six years would "wind up the scene," would be fulfilled.⁴⁷ But such enthusiasm was short-lived. In 1903, Patriarch Benjamin F. Johnson, an original member of the Council of Fifty, could not conceal his disappointment when he remarked that "we were over seventy years ago taught by our leaders to believe that the coming of Christ and the millennial reign was much nearer than we believe it to be now."⁴⁸ Johnson's belief seems to have been shared by the majority of the Mormons. By projecting the certain and inevitable return of Christ to an undetermined future date, the Saints had removed a major motivation for building the political Kingdom. Not even the optimistic pronouncements of a Lorenzo Snow could prevent this decline of millennial expectations.

Possibly of even greater significance for the transformation of the Kingdom was the basic American patriotism of the majority of the

to have ceased with the dissolution of the People's Party, June 10, 1890," will thus bear revision: "A Political Interpretation of Mormon History," p. 148. Frank Jonas, who shared with a whole generation of Mormon historians the belief that the political struggle ended in 1890, has recently revised his former opinion, pointing out that "actually the transition from the turbulence of the territorial period to the relative quiet of later years was not easy": "Utah: Crossroads of the West," *Western Politics* (Salt Lake City, 1961), p. 274.

⁴⁷ Roberts, ed., *History of the Church*, II, 182; *Millennial Star*, LII (Oct. 1890), 675-76.

⁴⁸ Benjamin F. Johnson to George S. Gibbs, April-October, 1903, MS, p. 18 (Brigham Young University Library).

Saints. This statement may appear to contradict implications of Mormon disloyalty to the government of the United States inherent in the separatist nationalism of the Kingdom of God. To the Gentiles, of course, the disloyalty of the Saints was merely axiomatic. And they could marshal enough evidence to prove to their own satisfaction that the Mormon protestations to the contrary were either untruthful or patently absurd. The Saints, on the other hand, pointed out that loyalty to the Constitution of the United States was a basic element of their faith.⁴⁹

But how could such allegiance be reconciled with kingdom building? A circular letter which church leaders addressed to the world in 1846 reveals one attempted solution: "Our patriotism has not been overcome by fire, by sword, by daylight or midnight assassinations which we have endured; neither have they alienated us from the *institutions* of our country."⁵⁰ Brigham Young, in cruder fashion, elaborated on this concept by drawing a distinction between the Constitution and the "damned rascals who administer the government."⁵¹

The intellectual position of the leaders of the Kingdom of God was nevertheless fraught with difficulties. The Gentiles clearly would not accept it. Judge Thomas J. Anderson, for example, had this to say: "Will men become attached to the principles of the Constitution of the United States when they hear the government constantly denounced as tyrannical and oppressive? It would be as unreasonable to expect to gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles."⁵² What Anderson of course failed to understand was that men do not always think and do what appears reasonable to others. One of the major problems was that Mormons and Gentiles were using the same words in totally different contexts and with conflicting connotation. Moreover, equally authentic democratic and patriotic motives inspiring the Mormons existed side by side with the separatist tendencies that found expression in the political Kingdom of God.

As Thomas O'Dea has pointed out, these conflicting concepts could coexist because "the Mormons never worked out consistently the political implications of their religious philosophy."⁵³ But sooner

⁴⁹ Doctrine and Covenants, 101:76-80; Roberts, ed., *History of the Church*, III, 304.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Dale Morgan, *The Great Salt Lake* (New York, 1947), p. 223.

⁵¹ Journal History, September 8, 1851, p. 4. For a brief discussion of this problem see Franklin D. Daines, "Separatism in Utah, 1847-1870," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1917* (Washington, 1920).

⁵² Quoted in M. W. Montgomery, *The Mormon Delusion* (Minneapolis, 1890), p. 310.

⁵³ O'Dea, *The Mormons*, p. 171.

or later there came a point in the lives of most Saints when they had to decide which loyalty took precedent. John D. Lee presents a moving illustration of this conflict in a journal entry made in 1851, while on his way to southern Utah as a member of the Iron County Mission. Among the colonists was a large group of converts from the British Isles who accused Lee of "causing national feelings by speaking of great battles that had been fought by the Americans." Vowed Lee, "I hope never again to excite that kind of National Feelings. All governments on earth but one are corrupt & that is the government of God that is my National Interest."⁵⁴ As a member of the Council of Fifty, Lee, of course, knew more about this "National Interest" than those who were traveling with him.

As Mormon isolation decreased after Civil War, however, a younger generation, which had experienced the persecutions in Missouri and Illinois and the hardships of the Exodus only vicariously, had little use for this national interest and exerted pressure upon the Kingdom to identify with the mainstream of American life.⁵⁵ The first important manifestation of internal discontent with separatism was the Godbeite movement. Although the chief demand of the insurgents was the cessation of economic isolation, these men also wanted a closer identification of Mormonism with the United States, both politically and culturally. Several years after his excommunication, Edward W. Tullidge, for instance, insisted that the idea of a separatist political Kingdom of God was in fact a distortion of what he conceived to be the true meaning and purpose of Mormonism. Rather, he affirmed, it was the divine mission of the Church "to give a more glorious destiny to the American nation itself."⁵⁶ Young, understandably, had the heretics excommunicated, primarily on the grounds that they refused to acknowledge the prophet's right to dictate to them "in all things temporal and spiritual."⁵⁷

It is an ironic commentary on social and intellectual change that the liberalism of the Godbeites has become the conservatism of twentieth-century Mormonism, a change vividly illustrated by the

⁵⁴ John D. Lee, "Journal of the Iron County Mission," ed. Gustive O. Larson, *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XX (July 1952), 260.

⁵⁵ This seems to contradict what I have said previously. It should be remembered, however, that the doctrinally determined, inherent separatist tendencies of Mormon nationalism inevitably came in conflict with the patriotic sentiments of the average Saint. Persecution thus served as an effective propaganda foil enabling Mormon leaders to keep the Saints unified. See also O'Dea, "Mormonism and the Avoidance of Sectarian Stagnation: A Study of Church, Sect, and Incipient Nationality."

⁵⁶ *Tullidge's Histories* (Salt Lake City, 1889), p. 154.

⁵⁷ Edward W. Tullidge, "The Godbeite Movement," *Tullidge's Quarterly Magazine*, I (Oct. 1880), 32.

testimony of the church leaders in the Smoot hearings. When in 1903 a powerful group of Senators protested against seating Reed Smoot, Senator from Utah, on the grounds that he was a member of a hierarchy controlling political affairs in Utah in violation of agreements presumably made in 1890 and that his election ignored the principle of separation of church and state, most of the Mormon leaders, Church President Joseph F. Smith among them, were subpoenaed by the committee. In a particularly significant statement that would have startled Brigham Young considerably, Smith testified, "Our people are given the largest possible latitude for their convictions, and if a man rejects a message that I may give him but is still moral and believes in the main principles of the gospel and desires to continue his membership in the church, he is permitted to remain and he is not unchurched."⁵⁸ This statement, of course, was an affirmation of future intention rather than past practice.

The political Kingdom of God, understandably, received considerable attention at these hearings, with the writings of Orson Pratt coming under particularly close scrutiny. These no self-respecting critic of Mormonism could ignore, particularly not the famous assertion that:

The Kingdom of God . . . is the only legal government that can exist in any part of the universe. All other governments are illegal and unauthorized. God, having made all beings and worlds, has the supreme right to govern them by His own laws, and by officers of His own appointment. Any people attempting to govern themselves by laws of their own making, and by officers of their own appointment, are in direct rebellion against the Kingdom of God.⁵⁹

Perhaps no other statement by a Mormon leader gained as much notoriety in anti-Mormon literature. The task of refuting Pratt before the committee fell to Apostle James E. Talmage, whom the Church had appointed to digest the massive testimony of its witnesses and iron out any contradictions. Talmage attempted to demolish Pratt's statement by drawing support from a remark by Brigham Young, who had once dismissed Pratt's "vain philosophy" as being "no guide for Latter-day Saints."⁶⁰ What Talmage did not reveal to the committee was that Young had levelled the charge in a totally different context and that the Mormon leader shared Pratt's views regarding the Kingdom of God.⁶¹

⁵⁸ *Smoot Proceedings*, I, 97-8; an excellent introduction to Smoot in a broader context is Milton R. Merrill, *Reed Smoot: Utah Politician* (Logan, Utah, 1953).

⁵⁹ Orson Pratt, *The Kingdom of God* (Liverpool, 1851), p. 1.

⁶⁰ Salt Lake City *Deseret News*, August 23, 1854.

⁶¹ Especially revealing is a note by Brigham H. Roberts in the James E. Talmage Papers (Brigham Young University Archives), which is a request for information that would min-

Talmage's approach, however, was the only realistic one, especially since church leaders in the past had defended the Kingdom against the Gentiles only by pointing out that church and state were separate in Mormondom and that the charge of church control of politics was a distortion because in a Mormon community the political leaders inevitably belonged to the Church.⁶² The Mormon leaders obviously could not publicly reverse their stand on a doctrine as fundamental as that of the political Kingdom of God, especially since they had always denied its existence to the Gentiles. Hence church leaders could only continue to affirm that a political Kingdom of God was in no way part of the Mormon dream. The hierarchy could exorcise the separatist tendencies of Mormonism only by insisting that they had never existed. The intellectual transformation of Mormonism could best be accomplished under the pretense that it was not going on.

Because Gentile accusations frequently distorted Mormon aims, and because the enemies of Mormonism were unaware of the distinction between church and kingdom, church leaders could quite effectively bury the political Kingdom of God by taking refuge behind semantics without being technically guilty of untruthfulness. Even before Talmage took the stand, the First Presidency had published an article in the 1903 Christmas edition of the *Deseret News* reiterating its public stand on the Kingdom of God. The Mormon organization, the article affirmed, "does not attempt to exercise the powers of a secular government, but its influence and effects are to strengthen and promote fidelity to the law and loyalty to the nation where its followers reside. The phrase 'church and kingdom' . . . [denotes] solely an ecclesiastical organization. It is separate and distinct from the state."⁶³

The Presidency could not have chosen its words more carefully. The word *kingdom*, as used in this context, had always been synonymous with *church* in Mormon usage. Any mention of the *political* Kingdom of God was of course scrupulously avoided, although, ironically, the avowed purpose of the Church "to strengthen and promote fidelity to the law and loyalty to the nation where its followers reside" was applicable to the political Kingdom of God as well. The Mormon leaders must have known that this statement —

imize the temporal and political aspects of the Kingdom of God: "The above references are wanted to aid Brother Talmage in forming testimony to be given before the Senate Investigating Committee." See also *Smoot Proceedings*, III, 25.

⁶² For Talmage's testimony, see *Smoot Proceedings*, III, 35-38.

⁶³ December 19, 1903.

introduced by Talmage as evidence for the defense in the Smoot hearings and reminiscent of the one issued shortly after the Manifesto, as well as foreshadowing the official declaration of the Church regarding relations of church and state published in 1907 — could be interpreted by the Gentiles as a Mormon concession; yet to those who understood the true purposes of the political Kingdom, it was nothing of the kind. In fact, the statement could be viewed as a subtle statement of defense in behalf of the Kingdom. It was, of course, a supreme paradox that the Mormon leaders could apply a theoretical separation of church and state to the very purpose of preventing such a division.

Nevertheless, although the Saints regarded Smoot's vindication as a victory for their side, the church leaders would not have been able to survive many such victories. For with each new controversy the survival of the political Kingdom depended increasingly on a private interpretation of words. As time went on, it became more and more apparent that the Kingdom could not live by semantics alone, especially when it was being deserted by its own citizens.

Led by a vocal minority of intellectuals in the Godbeite tradition, a new generation of Mormons began to identify with the mainstream of American culture. Frank Cannon, later to become a notorious enemy of his own people, illustrated through a description of his patriotic feelings sentiments that were most likely shared by many young Mormons. During a stay in Washington some time before the Manifesto, he remarked, "I wonder whether another American ever saw that city with such eyes of envy, of aspiration, of wistful pride, of daunted admiration. Here were all the consecrations of a nation's memories, and they thrilled me, even while they pierced me with the sense that I was not, and might well despair of ever being, a citizen of their glory."⁶⁴

On a more intellectual level, Nels L. Nelson, professor of English at Brigham Young University, attempted to show in his *Scientific Aspects of Mormonism*⁶⁵ how much Joseph Smith had anticipated the thought of Charles Darwin, John Fiske, T. H. Huxley, and Herbert Spencer. Nelson was looking for evidence to demonstrate that Mormonism was in the mainstream of Western thought and culture and in the forefront of those forces that were pushing America ever onward and upward in a cosmic process of scientific and moral evolution; he was satisfied that he had found this evidence in abundance.

⁶⁴ Cannon and O'Higgins, *Under the Prophet in Utah*, p. 66.

⁶⁵ (New York, 1904).

Even more important in this enterprise was the work of the historian. Liberal students of Mormon history, for example, insisted that the separatist tendencies of Mormonism had existed only as a figment of the imagination of the enemies of the Church. To these writers the Turner thesis provided a ready-made vehicle for the Americanization of Mormon history. In fact, these scholars probably would have invented Frederick Jackson Turner had he not existed, so readily did they apply the frontier hypothesis to the Mormon past. By portraying the Saints as typical frontiersmen, they created the impression that Great Basin social and political institutions, from their inception, reflected the values of American democracy. Whatever departures had occurred from the main currents of American thought and behavior were mere back eddies, explainable as temporary but necessary responses to a hostile environment. Once the Mormon pioneers had conquered this environment, the true American character of the pioneers, both socially and politically, would reveal itself. These historians had thus employed one of the most time-honored uses of history — that of reading the present into the past in order to reshape the future along ways parting from the old — to the reconstruction of the Mormon past.⁶⁶

Yet all these efforts might have failed had it not been for the fact that Mormon nationalism had outlived its usefulness. The idealistic conception of a temporal Kingdom of God that would dominate the world could comprise a powerful motivating force for a society of farmers and artisans to carve an inland empire out of a hostile environment and thus provide a physical basis of survival for Mormonism. In fact, the positive leadership of the Council of Fifty may well have been one of the primary reasons why Mormonism, unlike most sects originating in the early half of the nineteenth century, not only survived but continued to thrive. Yet, having success-

⁶⁶ Some representative Mormon works in this tradition are Creer, *Utah and the Nation* and *The Founding of an Empire*, Milton R. Hunter, *Utah in Her Western Setting* (Salt Lake City, 1943); Neff, *History of Utah*; and Levi Edgar Young, *The Founding of Utah* (New York, 1923). Of considerable interest is a letter of Neff to George H. Brimhall, president of Brigham Young University, April 1, 1906 (Brimhall Papers, Brigham Young University Archives): "To my mind the greatest fact in American history is the spread of settlement from the Atlantic seaboard to the Pacific ocean. And I hope to ascertain the relative part of the Mormons in blazing the trail and opening up of the continent to settlement." Others following this same interpretation are Ray Allen Billington, *Westward Expansion, A History of the American Frontier* (New York, 1949) pp. 532 ff.; Dean D. McBrien, "The Influence of the Frontier on Joseph Smith" (doctoral dissertation, George Washington University, 1929); and Thomas Weldon, "The Turner Thesis and the Mormon Frontier" (master's thesis, Stetson University, 1964). Two carefully reasoned studies refuting the concept of Mormonism as a frontier religion are Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-over District*, pp. 138-50; and S. George Ellsworth, "A History of Mormon Missions in the United States and Canada, 1830-1860" (doctoral dissertation, University of California, 1950), pp. 327-42.

fully accomplished its important mission of establishing a home for the Saints, the Council of Fifty may have found it difficult to employ the millennialistic vision of a world empire as the justification for the more mundane direction of everyday Mormon endeavors, especially in view of the onslaught of a hostile world that attempted to crush this empire, partly in response to the ideas and activities of the very organization that had created it.⁶⁷

Several years ago, the founder and leader of the Theocratic Party, Homer A. Tomlinson, appeared on the campus of Princeton University to campaign for his election to the Presidency of the United States in preparation for the establishment of the Kingdom of God in America, with himself as king and president. Tomlinson proclaimed his doctrines to a cheering crowd of 1,500 undergraduates. After the speech, they mockingly paraded him around the campus. His picture, in jest, appeared on the front page of the *Daily Princetonian* the following day.⁶⁸

The Mormon kingdom of God was spared such a fate — a fate far worse than persecution — because at one of the most crucial periods of its history it had responded to the values of twentieth-century American culture, at the same time preserving much of its identity. And yet, paradoxically, without the existence and the activities of the Council of Fifty, which contributed much to the building of the Great Basin Kingdom, Mormonism might well have failed to enjoy its present stature and prestige within the framework of accepted American religious values and persuasions.

⁶⁷ Several of my colleagues, after reading the manuscript, have suggested that I have overemphasized the role and importance of the Council of Fifty at the expense of other church organizations. This is a distinct possibility, particularly since much of our knowledge about this organization is based on circumstantial evidence. Moreover, it may be difficult to decide in a particular instance whether Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders acted in their ecclesiastical capacities or as members of the Council of Fifty. And even if the two functions can be separated, such knowledge may not always prove very enlightening. Frank Jonas, for example, reports in "Utah: Crossroads of the West," p. 273, that "Former United States Senator Elbert D. Thomas (Utah, 1933-51) used to relate that Brigham Young, with the traditional American concept of separation of church and state strongly in mind, sat on one side of his desk in the morning, when he did state business, and then moved his chair to the other side, when he did church work in the afternoon." And yet, in the light of this very theory of separation of church and state, there can be no question that Mormon leaders, when performing political functions, acted in their authority as members of the Council of Fifty.

⁶⁸ December 2, 1960.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress Assembled:

GENTLEMEN--The undersigned residents of the Territory of Utah, of all parties, creeds and opinions, hereby petition your honorable body and respectfully ask that you will not enact either of the bills which have been recently introduced for the purpose of disfranchising the majority of the voting citizens of this Territory because of their membership in an unorthodox religious organization.

We consider such legislation a dangerous innovation upon the liberties for which the founders of this nation struggled and bled; that it would be inimical to the material interests of the Territory; that it would accomplish no practical purpose except the establishment of minority rule, for the benefit of a comparatively small class of the community, and that composed of elements which would not be truly representative of the better portions of any party or society; that it would create division between persons of different views who have become united in public and private business relations, and that it would be harsh, unjust and impolitic, in that it would virtually punish those who have not broken the law, with the same political penalties as have been framed against those who are charged with having violated the law.

For these and other reasons we earnestly protest against the passage of the proposed Utah bills, and ask that further action upon them be indefinitely postponed.

And your memorialists will ever pray, etc.

City (or Town)

County, Utah, May, 1890.

Total No Names

Arizona	2080
Colorado	542
Idaho	5958
Nevada	113
New Mexico	31
Utah	43505
Wyoming	643

Grand Total 52,872 Names