

Wilford Woodruff and the Mormon Reformation of 1855–57

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FOR ABOUT TWO YEARS after the Mormon pioneers first began to enter the Salt Lake Valley in 1847, they devoted themselves to the dual jobs of developing the territory and promoting the interests of the Church. Joseph Smith's September 1830 revelatory proclamation that "all things unto me are spiritual" (D&C 20:34–35) gave the Saints a singleness of purpose and imbued their struggles for financial and territorial security with spiritual meaning as they sought to build a holistic, temporal, and spiritual kingdom.

As life became more routine and economically stable by the mid-1850s, some of the General Authorities came to believe that many Church members and leaders had fallen spiritually asleep, becoming more enamored of materialism and the other trappings of Babylon than of building the kingdom. Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Jedediah Grant attributed the crop failures and grasshopper plagues of 1855 and 1856, in part at least, to a decline in faithfulness (Peterson 1981, 40–45; Woodruff 1983–85, 4:316, 398, 421). Young preached that such plagues seldom visited the truly faithful. Such trials could, he said, prompt members "more fully to lean" upon the Lord (Peterson 1981, 49–50). Members seemed less committed and

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enthusiastic. Not that prosperity itself was bad; but the Saints seemed unable to maintain spirituality in the face of increasing prosperity.

Like egg-sucking foxes, avaricious members seemed to have left a material shell drained of spiritual substance. Summing up the feelings of a number of the Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, Brigham Young said that many members thought only about "how they can get this House built or a farm, Horses cattle &c. Their whole soul," Young opined, "is in the work of the world not the building of the kingdom of God." In commenting on this tendency, Young warned: "Any man that gets property upon this principle it will Carode him" (in Woodruff 1983-85, 4:506).

During the early 1850s, Church leaders, with no apparent dissent, concluded that the Church needed a "Reformation" (Kimball 1981, 207-8). In 1855 they proposed structural reforms in the organization of congregations to try to reinfuse the temporal shell with spiritual substance. At the October 1855 general conference, President Young outlined a system of home missions. In contrast to traditional proselytizing work, these missions were designed to reactivate the Church members in Zion rather than to convert Gentiles.

On 6 October, President Young called Orson Pratt, Parley P. Pratt, and Wilford Woodruff from the Quorum of the Twelve to supervise the program, and several lay members assisted them. Following President Young's instructions, on 15 October these men, together with George A. Smith and Erastus Snow, both of whom had been called on foreign missions, met to divide Utah into six missionary districts and to appoint home missionaries—usually members of teachers quorums—to serve in each district (Woodruff 1983-85, 4:338-39). Local Church members labored as missionaries in the various wards and communities while the Twelve functioned as traveling supervisors, conducting quarterly conferences in each stake and reporting to the First Presidency and the Twelve on the spiritual condition of the Saints. Working with the local missionaries, the Twelve preached, exhorted, held Church courts in difficult cases, and tried to instill obedience and commitment in the minds of the people. One of the leaders in this reform movement, Wilford Woodruff, began his first assignment on 19 October 1855 when he accompanied Thomas Kington to a quarterly conference in Farmington (Woodruff 1983-85, 4:339). Through the fall and winter of 1855, Woodruff visited Ogden, Tooele, Provo, and Bountiful, usually accompanied by Orson Pratt and Parley P. Pratt (Woodruff 1983-85, 4:339, 353-59).

In establishing this supervisory process for the home missions, Church leaders broke with the tradition of congregational autonomy that had grown during the eight years settlements had spread into out-

lying areas. Previously, although President Young and other members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve had made occasional excursions to the settlements and members of the Twelve often supervised the establishment of towns, local settlements had enjoyed a high degree of freedom from central supervision.

By early March 1856, Brigham Young's own observations together with reports from members of the Twelve led the Church President to believe that the structural changes had not prompted a spiritual rejuvenation among the Saints and that even more intense measures would be required. Being a pragmatic man, he decided to take measures certain to elicit a response. Charging the "people," presumably leaders and followers alike, with sleeping on the job and "working wickedness," Young called upon the elders "to put away their velvet lips & smooth things & preach sermons like pitch forks tines downwards that the people might wake up." Heber C. Kimball, Young's first counselor, followed the President's lead, but it was second counselor Jedediah M. Grant who really led the rally, sometimes attacking the Gentiles but usually raining pitchforks on the Latter-day Saints (Woodruff 1983-85, 4:405). The Reformation entered a second phase.

In early September 1856, Brigham Young said that he planned to take up a mission throughout the territory. He and his counselors would visit the Saints, exhorting them to repent and rededicate their lives to the gospel. He called upon the Twelve to do the same (Woodruff 1983-85, 4:445). To begin the work, Grant, Joseph Young of the First Council of the Seventy, and four home missionaries headed north to Davis County. Young returned to Salt Lake by late September, but Grant remained until general conference, returning again at times he felt the people had awakened to the spirit of the Reformation (Sessions 1982, 203-27).

On 21 September, Presidents Young, Kimball, and Grant preached sermons in Salt Lake City which "sent arrows into the harts of men." In the morning, Young called upon the congregation to covenant to keep the commandments, and in the afternoon he preached the doctrine of blood atonement, denying the full effectiveness of Christ's resurrection, saying that "for some sins [such as murder] no blood would be acceptable except the life & blood of the individual" (in Woodruff 1983-85, 4:451; CHC 4:126-27). In 1854, Jedediah Grant had preached a similar doctrine, and at various times during the Reformation, other Mormon leaders preached similar vengeful doctrines (Peterson 1981, ch. 9; Sessions 1982, 125-29).

Though Young's references to blood atonement were probably hyperbole, they may have prompted some overzealous members to put the doctrine into practice. In March 1857, William Parrish and several

of his family and friends decided to leave the Church and the community at Springville. They were murdered under suspicious circumstances, and although the perpetrators were never found, a number of commentators associated the deeds with the doctrine of blood atonement (Furniss 1960, 88-89; CHC 4:176n).

Clearly, Church leaders promoted spiritual reform hoping to restore the spirituality that the Saints had enjoyed during the hardships of Kirtland, Missouri, Nauvoo, and during the exodus and the early settlement in Utah. After preaching reformation in Bountiful and other Davis County settlements, Church leaders recognized that they would have to goad others into accepting their point of view. They began to work the Reformation among their own number. At the October 1856 general conference, they dedicated a new baptismal font on the east side of the Endowment House on Temple Square. As an example of the recommitment demanded of Church members, President Young rebaptized his two counselors along with Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, and Franklin D. Richards, the only members of the Twelve not out establishing settlements or supervising proselyting work. In the days afterward, Church leaders called others to accept rebaptism (Woodruff 1983-85, 4:458-61).

October conference continued for several days, and the calls for reformation became increasingly intense and personal. In a severe and pointed attack on 7 October, Grant, Woodruff, and a number of the other authorities met in the Old Salt Lake Tabernacle with the seventies quorums. Joseph Young, senior president of the First Council of the Seventy, who had helped Grant inaugurate the Reformation in Davis County, conducted the meeting, calling for contributions to sustain the missionary work. Few offered to donate money. Grant then rose to speak and said he would not recommend that they call the presidents of seventies to preach, since, he said, "they would Preach the people to sleep & then to Hell." Calling several of the presidents including Henry Harriman, Albert P. Rockwood, Zera Pulsipher, Benjamin Clapp, and Horace S. Eldridge by name, he accused them of committing adultery or some other serious sin of commission or omission, and he urged Young to "cut them off & prune the trees around him" (Woodruff 1983-85, 4:468). Several of the presidents spoke up to defend themselves and deny the charges. Woodruff then took the pulpit to reinforce Grant's accusations, announcing that he "would like to bear testimony to what [Grant] . . . had said." He then "said to the people that I wished them not to trifle with the teachings of President Grant for what He has said was true." Woodruff urged them to repent and to "get the spirit of God" (Woodruff 1983-85, 4:469).

In the attempt to reform the Church by promoting spirituality and eradicating what they perceived as exclusively temporal activities, Grant and Kimball took the pruning shears to the community's one thriving literary and performing arts organization. On 20 December 1854, a group of Saints had organized the Polysophical Society to foster the arts and humanities. The group also promoted a children's auxiliary to acquaint the younger generation with those subjects. Meetings consisted of presentations and discussions in the performing and literary arts (Beecher 1981, 146–53). The society held its meetings at Lorenzo Snow's home in a fifteen-by-thirty-foot hall he had outfitted as a theatre. Eliza Snow noted that the meetings were "sacred, elevating, [and] refining" (1884, 253). Participants included General Authorities Wilford Woodruff, Amasa Lyman, and Orson Pratt; prominent laymen David Candland, John Hyde, W. G. Clements, Isaiah Coombs, Henry Naisbett, Samuel Neslen; and prominent women such as Hannah Tapfield King, Alice Young, Charlotte Cobb (later Godbe), Laura Hyde, and Martha Spence Heywood (Woodruff 1983–84, 4:333, 398, 403, 407; Beecher 1981, 148).

However, Jedediah Grant did not share their enthusiasm for the organization. Perhaps he thought these programs detracted from spirituality, perhaps he thought listening to music and reading poetry and literature were frivolous uses of time. Grant said the Polysophical Society was "a stink in my nostrils" and was filled with an adulterous spirit (Beecher 1981, 145). Heber C. Kimball concurred, the official pruning shears nipped at the society, and it died.

It is possible that the two counselors were more zealous in their efforts than President Young would have been. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher reports that Young said he had no objection to literary and musical presentations "if they can be conducted in Righteousness" (1981, 145). He did, however, recommend that they get a globe and "give Lectures upon Geography History & science" (Woodruff 1983–85, 4:479).

Caught up in the movement to increase spirituality by securing individual repentance and commitment, Wilford Woodruff took the Reformation to his own family. On 14 October he called his families together. Confessing his own faults, he "told my families theirs," exhorting them to accept his counsel. They covenanted to do so (Woodruff 1983–85, 4:474).

From his family, Woodruff turned his attention to the Salt Lake City Fourteenth Ward, which he attended. On the evening of 16 October, Woodruff and Apostle Franklin D. Richards, who was also a Fourteenth Ward member, took Grant to a Reformation meeting at the ward schoolhouse. Grant opened the meeting by reproving Bishop

Abraham Hoagland. Then he began to search the spirits of the bishop's counselors, members of the teachers quorum, and "all the people" in the ward with what Woodruff called "the Light of truth & the Candle of the Lord." Grant left the service shortly after he had finished his exhortation, but F. D. Richards, Woodruff, Phineas Richards, and Bishop Hoagland took the pulpit, bearing testimony to Grant's rebuke (Woodruff 1983-84, 4:475).

Grant led the assault on the spiritual condition of the Saints for only a short time. On 22 November 1856 his wife, Rachel, gave birth to a new son whom they named Heber Jeddy. Apostles Woodruff and Richards came to see the proud parents and were shocked to find both the new mother and the father extremely ill. Rachel recovered, but Jedediah had contracted typhoid fever and died the first of December from complications including double pneumonia (Sessions 1982, 247-51).

After Grant's death, Woodruff and other Church leaders continued the Reformation. Citing Grant, whom they accounted a martyr to the cause, as the genius behind the movement, Church leaders devised several catechisms and assigned the teachers to administer them to local members as a test of orthodoxy and faithfulness. These catechisms reminded the members of the spiritual impact of such temporal matters as murder, adultery, profanity, and even paying debts, bathing and cleanliness, and branding animals that belong to someone else (Brooks 1962, 12). In a letter to George A. Smith dated 2 February 1857, Woodruff described the catechism as "containing a part of the law of God, and," he wrote, "we are weighing up all the Quorums of the Church, especially the Seventies and dropping the number who have stood for years as a dead letter upon the books."

Woodruff continued his efforts to keep his own ward in shape. On 6 December, two days after laying Jedediah Grant to rest, Woodruff attended a meeting of the bishopric and priesthood of the Fourteenth Ward. Convinced that Bishop Abraham Hoagland had perverted the meaning of the Reformation, which was to revive spirituality among the Latter-day Saints, he rebuked the bishop for sending teachers to preach and catechize gentile shopkeepers. Calling the merchants "wicked & Corrupt," Woodruff said sending priesthood holders to preach to them "was like casting pearls before swine." The Reformation, he said, should focus on awakening the Church membership, not on admonishing Gentiles in the Mormon kingdom. Franklin Richards supported Woodruff. Bishop Hoagland took offense at Woodruff's challenge to his authority and rose to defend himself. Woodruff thought that the "devil had ensnared" Abraham, when the bishop pointed out that he, not Woodruff, presided over the Fourteenth Ward. He said

that he had sent the teachers out to preach, and he expected them to go to Gentiles as well as to the Saints (Woodruff 1983-85, 4:500-501).

Woodruff and Richards called to complain to Brigham Young about Hoagland's attitude. Young then sent for Hoagland, reprimanded him, and told him that "the Twelve held the keys of the Kingdom of God in all the World where the presidency are not, & that No Bishop presided over any one of the Twelve in any place" (Woodruff 1983-85, 4:500-501).

The next day, Sunday, 7 December, Hoagland asked Woodruff to be the concluding speaker in sacrament meeting. While still pressing the Reformation theme, Woodruff's speech nevertheless signalled a change in the tone of the Reformation—in effect opening a third phase characterized by love and concern. He called upon the ward leaders to repent by removing "the fog & darkness from your own minds & then you can see clearly to remove the darkness from the minds of the people." Woodruff also exhorted priesthood leaders to deal with the Saints in "the spirit of God." They did not, he said, need to "knock the people in the Head in order to wake them." Rather, he suggested, they ought to "get a Fatherly feeling & try to save" the Saints. The ultimate purpose of the Reformation, he said in an apocalyptic vein, was to prepare the people "for the great things of God which are Coming upon the Earth & upon this people." Then he urged the "people to repent & do the works of righteousness" and live their religion. He spoke encouragingly to the members but left the ward leaders with no doubt that the Lord required strict obedience of them. Following the meeting, he called the priesthood leaders together privately and instructed them on the improper course Bishop Hoagland had taken in denying the authority of the Twelve. Since the Reformation intended internal reform, it did not involve calling local non-members to repentance. Falling into line, Hoagland recanted (Woodruff 1983-84, 4:502-3).

The rift between Woodruff and Hoagland did not prove insuperable. On 17 December, Woodruff and former United States Attorney Seth M. Blair went to see Hoagland. Finding the bishop sick with rheumatism and "much troubled with Evil Spirits," Woodruff and Blair laid their hands on his head, rebuking the disease and the evil spirits (1983-84, 4:517).

In speeches following this Fourteenth Ward message, Woodruff continued to recast the Reformation in terms of personal improvement and the need for love and kindness rather than raining down pitchforks with imprudent charges of adultery. He found a perfect forum for this change in emphasis as the keynote speaker in a conference of Salt Lake home missionaries and bishops on 8 December. At the

meeting, Young and Kimball represented the First Presidency, and Woodruff and Richards represented the Twelve. Woodruff emphasized that the teachers should go to the people of Salt Lake to "preach the gospel of salvation & repentance." First, however, each man present should purify himself. Then, recognizing that the First Presidency could not carry the burden of the entire Church, each bishop and missionary should "put on the whole armor of God" (Eph. 6:11). "The people," he told them, "will live their religion when you live it yourselves" (Woodruff 1983-85, 4:501-5).

Seconding Woodruff's keynote speech, Young urged each of those present to put his own life in order. Keep the kingdom of God rather than personal prosperity first in mind, Young urged. Fill your hearts with love for God and your neighbor and live together as the Lord's people. Husband your resources and keep them available for God's work. Kimball followed, emphasizing a similar message (Woodruff 1983-85, 4:505-12).

The harsh second phase of the Reformation continued as the milder, third phase built up steam. Later in December, Brigham Young resumed his attack on certain Church leaders. Already upset with Orson Hyde's cooperation with Federal Judge W. W. Drummond in Carson Valley, Young said that Hyde was "no more fit to stand at the Head of the Quorum of the Twelve than a dog." Later he said Hyde "had lost the spirit of his office & was of no account" (Woodruff 1983-85, 4:477, 501). Hyde returned to Salt Lake City on 11 December 1856 and in a meeting with the Church leaders on the twenty-ninth, Young told Hyde that he had "not the spirit of your Calling upon you" and accused him of "trying to build yourself up & not the kingdom of God." At the same time, he said that if Orson Pratt did not "take a different course" in his philosophy and reasoning, "he would not stay long in this Church" (Woodruff 1983-85, 4:523).

By the following day, Orson Hyde had caught the spirit of the reformation and asked to be rebaptized. A revival mood was also sweeping the Utah Territorial Legislature. That day, fifty-five legislators met on the Temple block, filled the baptismal font with buckets of water from City Creek, and were rebaptized and confirmed, along with Orson Hyde (Woodruff 1983-85, 4:524).

Some priesthood leaders were still ready to disfellowship or excommunicate unrepentant sinners. A congregation of Saints meeting on 16 December cut off some members who had left the valley for California. And "a house full of the presidents of the 70" excommunicated Federal Judge George P. Stiles for adultery (Woodruff 1983-85, 4:492-519).

The Reformation continued throughout the remainder of the winter but on a much less intense level. On 7 January 1857 in a letter to the *Western Standard*, Woodruff said that an atmosphere of change had settled on the community. "The Saints," he said, "are living their religion and the power of God is resting upon them." On 8 February 1857, Brigham Young pulled back somewhat from his harsh preaching of blood atonement by saying, "*In the name of the Lord, that if this people will sin no more, but faithfully live their religion, their sins will be forgiven them without taking life*" (CHC 4:132-33, italics in original). Woodruff's journal tells that in June 1857 after George A. Smith, John M. Bernhisel, Charles C. Rich, and Amasa Lyman returned to Utah from their various duties outside the territory, they applied to Brigham Young for rebaptism. Young administered the reformation catechism and authorized the baptisms (Woodruff 1983-85, 5:64).

Later in January Woodruff even felt relaxed enough to add a bit of levity to one of his sermons. Speaking to the High Priests Quorum of the Salt Lake Stake, he said that "if you were to drive Methodist, Baptist, Catholic, and Presbyterians, &c, &c all to heaven together it would make a *hell* of a *heaven*."

As the third phase of the Reformation continued into the spring of 1857, Woodruff continued to seek mercy for repentant sinners. A brother from Parowan wrote to Woodruff on 26 March 1857 reminding him of a talk the two had had earlier about a transgression—probably adultery. The man said he had spoken to the woman in question but was afraid to go to his local leaders, who seemed less understanding than Woodruff; however, he would do so if Woodruff asked him to (Dalton 1857). Woodruff had spoken to a high priests quorum on 3 January 1857, reminding them of the need for mercy and telling them never to reveal the name of a brother who had transgressed except to the proper authority. This attitude fostered a feeling of safety and freedom from reprisals that marked this phase of the reformation (Salt Lake Stake).

Nevertheless, by January and February of 1857, the harsh preaching and calls for increased spirituality of the Reformation had created some unexpected problems. The pressure to conform prompted unprecedented numbers of men and women to apply to Brigham Young for permission to enter plural marriages as evidence of their obedience and righteousness (Ivins 1976, 312). In addition, large numbers of deacons, teachers, and priests—members of the Aaronic Priesthood—sought ordination to the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Wilford Woodruff and Lorenzo Snow recognized the potentially disruptive consequences of such large numbers of new plural marriages. On Sunday, 1 February, Woodruff noted a large company of

men and women coming from the President's office and commented that Young had to turn away many whom he could not seal on that day. Woodruff and Snow met the next day with the seventies quorums and addressed themselves to the potential problems created by the mass entries into polygamy. Snow led out, observing that plural marriage entailed more than simply getting sealed to a new wife. Men who entered patriarchal marriage needed even more spiritual power and patience "to preside over that Household" than "to go to the nations & preach the gospel" and organize and administer new branches. Large families with multiple wives placed considerable strain on the marriage relationship because of demands for clothing and other goods and because of jealousy and family disputes. Presiding over multiple families required, Snow said, "Great wisdom [like Brigham Young's] in the perfect order of Government" (Woodruff 1983-85, 5:13-15).

Snow's and Woodruff's predictions proved prophetic as the 65 percent increase in new plural marriages during the Reformation led to a subsequent escalation in the divorce rate (Peterson 1981, 115, 117).

Soon Brigham Young and other Church leaders began to recognize the problems created by the desire of members to demonstrate faithfulness by entering plural marriage. But despite Woodruff's own concerns about polygamy, on 17 February 1857, he offered Brigham Young his fourteen-year-old daughter, Phebe Amelia, in marriage. Young did not wish to marry any more young wives but promised Woodruff he would help his daughter find a husband in due time (Woodruff 1983-85, 5:22). Later, when one otherwise unidentified as "Old Father Alread" brought in three young girls between the ages of twelve and thirteen for sealing, Young refused to perform the ceremony, saying that they "would not be equally yoked together" (Woodruff 1983-85, 5:58).

During the year, Woodruff proposed to enter two plural marriages himself. On 23 January Young gave Woodruff permission to marry Lydia Maxline (Woodruff 1983-85, 5:11). However, there is no available record that this marriage ever took place. On 31 July 1857, Young sealed Woodruff to Sarah Delight Stocking, who had turned nineteen three days before (Woodruff 1983-85, 5:70).

Though Woodruff's first wife, Phebe W. Carter Woodruff, later attacked the practice of plural marriage in print (Van Wagoner 1989, 101), she seems to have approved his entry into plural marriage at this time. On 2 January 1856, she wrote a letter to Woodruff saying that if he felt "like getting 1 or 2 of the &c and see any one or two that will answer your purpose please do so. . . . I do not wish to prevent it in any way."

On reflection, Woodruff would see some humor in the old men chasing adolescent girls with marriage in mind. In a letter to George A. Smith on 1 April 1857, Woodruff talked about the Reformation and said that "all are trying to pay their tithing, and nearly all are trying to get wives, until there is hardly a girl 14 years old in Utah, but what is married, or just going to be." The pressure to perform sealings had placed a considerable strain on Brigham Young who "hardly [had] time to eat, drink, or sleep, in consequence of marrying the people and attending to the endowments."

Woodruff also saw the problems created by the pressure to prove loyalty by entering the Melchizedek Priesthood. Although some boys were called to the Aaronic Priesthood as early as 1849, Brigham Young discouraged the practice, urging instead the calling of Melchizedek priesthood holders as acting teachers. Not until 1877 did Brigham Young formally change the policy and urge the calling of boys to the Aaronic priesthood. The teachers were assigned to preach within the organized wards and stakes; they did most of the home missionary work during the Reformation (Hartley 1976, 375-90).

However, the spirit of the Reformation pressured many men to seek the Melchizedek Priesthood as a way of demonstrating their increased faithfulness. This created problems for the Church leaders. No sooner did they organize a teachers quorum than those teachers petitioned to enter the Melchizedek Priesthood. Since the practice of ordaining teenage boys to the Aaronic Priesthood was not common as it is today, soon there were very few adult male Aaronic Priesthood holders to administer the home missionary program. The result was that many of the Aaronic Priesthood responsibilities were shifted to the Melchizedek Priesthood. Woodruff also noted in his journal that sometimes seventies encouraged teachers to apply for the Melchizedek Priesthood, and that too often bishops called seventies to serve as counselors, thus requiring their ordination to the high priests quorum. Woodruff, who had filled his first mission as a teacher, called upon members of the Church not to "despise the lesser priesthood, for it is honorable & if they fully magnify that office they will have great power & many blessings" (5:16-17; Hartley 1976, 392-93).

How do we assess the Reformation? Like many other enthusiastic movements, the Reformation had created unanticipated disruption within the community as lay members scurried to prove their loyalty and faithfulness. The harsh discipline and Brigham Young's exercise of power in demanding obedience during the second phase of the movement provoked excessive demonstrations of loyalty and consequent disruption. The destruction of the Polysophical Society temporarily stymied the development of the humanities and fine arts in the com-

munity. The sermons on repentance and blood atonement seem to have led members to confess to sins they had not committed and may also have incited a few fanatics more orthodox than the General Authorities to murder dissidents (Larson 1958, 54). The emphasis on the visible trappings of orthodoxy that fueled those new plural marriages led inevitably to divorce or unhappy homes among the unprepared. The effort to achieve status in the kingdom or to demonstrate loyalty and spirituality by seeking advancement to the Melchizedek Priesthood disrupted the normal functioning of the Aaronic Priesthood quorums. Moreover, the excesses of the second phase of the Reformation added fuel to the charges lodged in Washington against the Mormons that led to the Utah War.

On the other hand, in spite of the harsh beginnings and in spite of the excesses, the reformation produced some worthwhile reforms. One of these was the increased emphasis on kindness and love in the third phase. This emphasis on love and charity may have contributed to the revival of the Female Relief Society in early 1857. Joseph Smith had first organized the Relief Society in Nauvoo on 17 March 1842. Although some Church members had organized Relief Societies to provide charitable help for Indians as early as 1854 and some general purpose Relief Societies had been organized as early as January 1855, the larger association authorized by Joseph Smith had remained dormant since the exodus from Nauvoo (Jensen 1983, 105-25).

When the Reformation turned from raining pitchforks to urging love and charity, local leaders revived the organization to aid the poor in a number of wards in Salt Lake City. The Salt Lake Fourteenth Ward furnished some of the leadership of this movement. On 14 February 1857, Woodruff, Hoagland, Joseph Horn, and Robert L. Campbell attended the organizational meeting. Bishop Hoagland had called Phebe Woodruff as president, and Mary Isabella Horn and Mary Southworth as counselors. They and the other sisters in the ward spent their Relief Society meetings quilting, sewing, and making carpets for the poor. By June 1857, they had clothed all the poor of the ward and made a sizeable donation to the Perpetual Emigrating Fund (Woodruff 1983-85, 5:20, 59-60).

The home missionary system of the first phase inaugurated an effort at cooperative revival that promised much for the future and undoubtedly contributed to the development of a Godly community. Regular visits to the homes of members by such priesthood holders and Relief Society women as home teachers, home missionaries, and visiting teachers have provided a sense of concern and connection with the larger community of the Saints.

In summary, the Reformation moved through three overlapping phases—a structural reform phase, a phase of intense demand for a demonstration of spiritual reform, and a phase of love and reconstruction. In the first phase, Church leaders tried to achieve reform through the home missionary effort. After Brigham Young and his counselors had become convinced that the missionaries had not achieved the desired result, they pressed the movement into the second phase. Missionaries continued to preach as the leadership rained pitchforks on member's heads and hearts. Generally loyal to their leaders, members scurried to prove their faithfulness by confessing sins and asking for rebaptism, entering plural marriages, and seeking advancement from the Aaronic to the Melchizedek priesthood.

As Wilford Woodruff nudged the Reform movement into the third phase in December 1856, home missionaries continued their labors, and some of the effects from the second phase continued. Newly inaugurated reforms such as the revival of the Relief Societies and the emphasis on love and forgiveness helped moderate the residual excesses. Fortunately for the stability of the community, the excesses of the second phase eventually receded, and the community resumed its normal life.

What role had Woodruff played in the Reformation? During the first phase, he had helped to organize the home missionary districts and to supervise the work of calling members to repentance. During the second phase, he served as loyal follower. Woodruff supported Young and his counselors by chastising the Saints and calling them to repentance. Loyally, he stood by and watched without comment as the Polysophical Society, to which he belonged, died.

After Jedediah Grant's death, Woodruff assumed the role of leader he had relinquished during the second phase. Attempting to reconstruct the community, he spoke out with love, concern, and charity. The third phase more than any other bears the mark of Woodruff's character. He was essentially a moderate.¹ Loyal to a fault, he followed Young, Kimball, and Grant, working as a leader in the home mission movement and calling for repentance during the first and second phases of the Reformation. After Grant's death, however, Woodruff's 8 December sermon keynoted the third phase.

¹ Philip Greven discusses types in *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), especially 13–14. Greven outlines three types of temperament that he saw in early American Protestants: evangelical, moderate, and genteel. None of these temperaments quite fit the Mormon leaders, in part because Mormons were not Protestants. Moreover, none of Woodruff's colleagues had ever exhibited the "genteel" temperament. Jedediah Grant seems to have come closest to the evangelical temperament, and Brigham Young was closer to it than Woodruff.

Preaching moderation and love, he encouraged charitable works and reconstruction.

Although he was somewhat inconsistent—for instance, offering Phebe Amelia to Brigham Young as a plural wife and taking at least one other wife himself while warning of the hazards of polygamy for the unprepared—during the third phase of the Reformation, he sought to moderate the excesses of the second phase. He and Lorenzo Snow tried—rather hopelessly because of the overwhelming desire of the Saints to prove their spirituality—to discourage the unprepared from entering plural marriage and to encourage Aaronic Priesthood holders to magnify their callings rather than to seek ordination to the Melchizedek Priesthood.

On balance, then, Woodruff proved himself both a loyal follower in a movement that led to excesses among the members and leaders, and a moderate leader who attempted with modest success to refashion the Reformation through an emphasis on the virtues of love, charity, and reconstruction.

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