

## **Section 136**

### **Historical Background**

#### **Joseph Fielding Smith**

The Carthage Convention.-On the 1st and 2nd of October (1845) another convention of citizens from nine counties adjacent to Hancock, was held at Carthage. Resolutions were adopted in which the "Mormons" were accused of depredations upon the persons and property of the other citizens of Hancock County, and adjudged guilty, in spite of the personal investigation of the governor, himself unfriendly to the Latter-day Saints. Much bitterness of spirit was manifested at this meeting, which decided that it was too late to settle any difficulties between the "Mormons" and the other inhabitants, and only one thing would suffice and that was the removal of the "Mormons" from the state. They declared that the "Mormons" were not being persecuted, but were suffering for their dishonest acts; at the same time they declared that from "long acquaintance with the old citizens of Hancock County," they could vouch for their "honor, integrity, and strict observance of the laws of their country," notwithstanding it was universally known that these same citizens had taken part in the assassination of Joseph and Hyrum Smith by mob force and contrary to law; moreover, that these same law-abiding citizens within the past few weeks had driven "Mormons" from their homes and burned their houses to the ground; had forced them from their fields where they had gone to gather crops; had whipped their men and stolen their cattle without any protest. It appeared that the old citizens, like the king, could do no wrong, if their depredations were committed against the Latter-day Saints. A most regrettable feature in connection with these troubles is the fact that O. H. Browning, Stephen A. Douglas and others, who had defended the Prophet Joseph Smith, now gave their influence to the mob and assisted in bringing to pass the expulsion of the "Mormon" people from Illinois. Bitter feelings against the Saints increased. Judges were intimidated, and even the officials of the state dared not raise a voice in protest above a whisper, or invoke the majesty of the law...

Preparations to Leave Nauvoo.-During the fall and winter months preparations went steadily on for the removal of the entire body of the Latter-day Saints in the spring. Work on the temple continued with increased diligence, as if there were no thought of a removal, until that

structure was completed. January 1, 1846, the work of finishing the assembly room for dedication was nearing completion. The general conference of the Church was held in the building in October, 1845, according to the commandment of the Lord through Joseph Smith in October, 1841. In December, the ordinance work in the temple was commenced, and thereafter the building was occupied both day and night to afford the Saints the opportunity to receive their endowments. This continued until most all of the Saints had departed on their westward journey. May 1, 1846, after the majority of the people had departed from the city, the temple was publicly dedicated in the presence of about three hundred persons.

In the meantime every available building in Nauvoo had been converted into a shop where wagons, harness and other necessary articles could be manufactured for the journey. The timber for the wagons was cut and brought to Nauvoo, where it was prepared and boiled in salt and water or kiln dried. Teams were sent to various parts of the country to procure iron; and blacksmiths, wheelwrights, carpenters and other workmen were kept busy night and day. There was very little sale of property because of the opposition of the citizens of the country, who used their influence to discourage sales by making threats against the new settlers as well as harassing the Saints.

The Abandonment of Nauvoo.-Wednesday, February 4, 1846, the first of the Saints left Nauvoo and crossed the Mississippi River on the journey to the West. On the 6th of February Bishop George Miller and a company with six wagons crossed the river, and a few days later the work of ferrying the Saints to the Iowa side was kept up day and night. Elder Parley P. Pratt left Nauvoo on the 14th of February, and the following day President Brigham Young, Willard Richards and George A. Smith with a large company of Saints crossed the Mississippi on the ice and continued their journey about nine miles to Sugar Creek, in Lee County, where a temporary camp was formed for the exiles fleeing from Nauvoo...

The Journey Resumed.-March 1, 1846, camp was broken and the journey was resumed. The weather was extremely cold and stormy, and a great number of the people were without proper clothing and necessary shelter. Many of the wagons were without covers and others had covers which would not shed the rain. Several members of the camps died from exposure and lack of proper care. The roads were almost impassable because of the constant storms. At this time there

were some four hundred wagons on the road, heavily laden and without sufficient teams to permit of rapid travel. In this condition the exiles continued their toilsome journey over the plains of Iowa... (*Essentials in Church History* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1950], 397-414)

## **Gerald N. Lund**

Brigham Young left Nauvoo in mid-February of 1846. It took them one hundred and thirty days-four months-to reach Winter Quarters. Those who didn't leave in February but waited until May made the same journey in about three weeks. Why didn't the Lord say, "Brigham, if you leave in February the rains are going to come and the roads are going to be one huge bog. So just wait until May. You'll go so much faster." But no, in February Brigham was out there leading that group on their muddy trek. (In fact, I love Brigham's sense of humor. In his history he records that they "only hit one mud hole, but it was six miles long." And that's the way it was.) (*Selected Writings of Gerald N. Lund: Gospel Scholars Series* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1999], 317)

## **Joseph Fielding Smith**

At the Missouri River.-On the 14th of June, President Young, Heber C. Kimball, Parley P. Pratt and others arrived on the banks of the Missouri, not far from Council Bluffs, with their respective companies. The next day a council meeting was held and it was decided to move back on to the bluffs where spring water could be obtained, and they would be protected from Indians. The Pottawattamie Indians were very friendly, and their chiefs showed the Saints some favor. A ferry boat was built and on the 29th the companies commenced crossing the river. About this time Elder Wilford Woodruff, who had just returned from presiding over the British Mission, and Elder Orson Hyde, who had been laboring in Nauvoo, joined the camp.

President Young was still very anxious to send an exploring company to the Rocky Mountains in advance. The camps were called together, there being about five hundred wagons on the ground and others on the way, and President Young addressed them advising them of his desire to get a company off for the Rocky Mountains. He feared, he said, that something would happen to stop the movement, and was impressed that "everything that men and hell could invent would be hatched up to prevent the camp from making any progress." He spoke plainly on the subject and said if the members of the Church should be blown to the

four winds, and never gathered again, he wished them to remember that he had told them when and where to gather, and if they failed to do so to remember and bear him witness in the day of judgment, that they had received such information and advice.

[Mormon Battalion].-June 26, 1846, Captain James Allen of the United States army, arrived at Mount Pisgah and had an interview with the brethren there. He was the bearer of a message to the "Mormon" people making a requisition on the camps for four or five companies of men, to serve as volunteers in the war with Mexico, which had recently been declared. The brethren at Mount Pisgah did not feel authorized to take any action, and therefore advised Captain Allen to visit President Young and the apostles at Council Bluffs. Captain Allen arrived at Council Bluffs on the 30th day of June, and the following day met with the Church authorities and presented his credentials for raising five hundred men. Such a demand caused some surprise and a little dismay among the camps.

However, President Brigham Young declared that the volunteers would be forthcoming. It was moved by Heber C. Kimball and seconded by Willard Richards, that a battalion of five hundred men be raised, which was carried unanimously at a meeting of the brethren of the camp who were called together to consider the requisition.

Consequently President Young and Elder Kimball returned to Mount Pisgah to raise volunteers, while letters were sent to Garden Grove and to Nauvoo bearing on the subject. Monday, July 13, 1846, in obedience to the call of the authorities, the camps of the Saints met on Mosquito Creek, where they were addressed by President Young,

Captain Allen and Colonel Thomas L. Kane, who had arrived in camp to be of service to the people. Four companies of the battalion were raised on that and the following day, and the fifth company a few days later...

Winter Quarters.-The call of these able-bodied men for the battalion made it impossible for the Saints in their weakened condition, to continue their journey towards the West. It became necessary, therefore, for them to seek quarters where they could prepare for the coming winter. Captain James Allen secured from the chiefs representing the Pottawattamie tribes their voluntary consent for the Saints to make the Indian lands an abiding place as long as they should remain in that country. He also wrote an open letter stating what he had

done in this matter. The Indian sub-agent also endorsed the letter which Colonel Thomas L. Kane forwarded with a communication of his own, to the President of the United States. Measures were taken to gather to this place all the scattered Saints who were on the plains. Twelve men were chosen to form a high council, and a site was chosen on the west bank of the Missouri River for their settlement. A committee of twelve men was appointed to arrange the temporary city into wards, over which bishops were chosen to preside. During the summer hay was cut in sufficient quantities to provide for their stock in the winter. Every family labored diligently to construct some kind of a house in which they could find shelter, although many of these were merely dug-outs built in the side of the hill. The place was named Winter Quarters and was laid out regularly into streets. The Indians gave some trouble and it became necessary to build a stockade around the town. Through kind treatment, President Young and the Saints obtained the good will of most of the Indians, so they lived in comparative peace...

Mob Uprisings at Nauvoo.-In the summer of 1846, hostilities were renewed against the members of the Church who still remained in Nauvoo. The great body of the Saints had left and only a remnant remained, composed of the poor, sick and afflicted, who had been unable to get away. They were all anxious to depart and were exerting all their energies to obtain means for that purpose. President Young and the apostles also were doing all in their power to aid them to depart. Notwithstanding their straitened circumstances and their inability to move-which was due mainly to mob violence they had suffered-their enemies became impatient at their delay and continued their vicious persecution. (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1950], 397-414)

"Wintering Saints had left their homes in Nauvoo, Illinois on relatively short notice and brought limited useful supplies... There they built cabins and sod houses for the winter. One group of cabins became known as Kimball Row. It consisted of thirteen adjacent cabins, with the homes of church leaders Heber C. Kimball and Newel K. Whitney at either end. The Latter-day Saints actively traded with American Indian and trading settlements in northern Missouri and Iowa, exchanging household goods and small amounts of cash for foodstuffs, such as hogs, grain and vegetables, and supplies for the emigration effort. Young Mormon men also produced handcrafted items such as willow

baskets and washboards for sale. Church funds also allowed the community to build a much needed water-powered gristmill.

Even with trade, diet in the camp was mainly corn bread, salt bacon and a little milk, with occasional fresh game or domestic meat. Scurvy, known as "blackleg" during this period, became a major problem. Missouri potatoes and horseradish found at old Fort Atkinson helped ease the level of disease, but all residents lacked fresh vegetables in their diet. Tuberculosis (known as consumption), malaria, and unidentified fevers and chills also plagued the temporary settlement. Church member Louisa Barnes Pratt recalled in her memoirs:

*"I hired a man to build me a sod cave. He took turf from the earth, laid it up, covered it with willow brush and sods. Built a chimney of the same. . . . I paid a five dollar gold piece for building my sod house, 10 x 12. . . . A long cold rain storm brought more severely again the chills and fever. These with scurvy made me helpless indeed! . . . Many of my friends sickened and died in that place, when I was not able to leave my room, could not go to their bedside to administer comfort to them in the last trying hours, not even to bid them farewell. Neither could I go to see their remains carried to their final resting place where it was thought I would shortly have to be conveyed."*

Church records for the first summer do not contain information on disease victims; however, later records indicate that, from mid-September 1846 to May 1848, disease caused the deaths of 359 residents.

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winter\\_Quarters\\_\(North\\_Omaha,\\_Nebraska\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winter_Quarters_(North_Omaha,_Nebraska)) )

"On September 20, 1936, church members and members of other faiths gathered to participate in the dedication of the monument at Winter Quarters. The First Presidency: Heber J. Grant; J.Reuben Clark; and David O. McKay, along with several other General Authorities, were present at the dedication. **Heber J. Grant** said at the dedication that 'there are times and places in the life of every individual, every people, and every nation when great spiritual heights are reached, when courage becomes a living thing . . . when faith in God stands as the granite mountain wall, firm and immovable. . . Winter Quarters was such a time and place for the Mormon people."

<http://www.mormonhistoricsitesfoundation.org/USA/nebraska/florence/winterQuarters/complete.pdf>

### **Introduction: President Brigham Young**

At Winter Quarters, Brigham Young was not the President of the Church; he was the President of the Quorum of the Twelve. However, since the Twelve were the governing quorum of the church at that time, Brother Brigham was essentially the President of the Church. Still the First Presidency had not yet been re-organized. Three and a half years would transpire between the death of Joseph Smith and the ordination of Brigham Young as the President of the High Priesthood.

"The matter of reestablishing the First Presidency had weighed heavily on the Twelve for several months, particularly during the trek to the Salt Lake Valley. As President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Brigham Young felt impressed that the time had come to reestablish the First Presidency. After several months of discussing the matter, nine of the Twelve Apostles (Elders Parley P. Pratt and John Taylor were in the Salt Lake Valley, and Elder Lyman Wight was in Texas) gathered at the home of Elder Orson Hyde near Miller's Hollow on the Iowa side of the Missouri. There, on 5 December 1847, their deliberations culminated in the prayerful action of sustaining Brigham Young as President of the Church, with Elders Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards, both of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, as President Young's counselors." (Richard E. Bennett, "Winter Quarters: Church Headquarters, 1846-1848," *Ensign*, Sept. 1997, 51)

### **DC 136:1 The Word and Will of the Lord concerning the Camp of Israel**

"On Jan. 11, 1847, Brigham Young confided to his closest advisers about a dream he had had the previous night of Joseph Smith conversing with him 'freely about the best manner of organizing companies for emigration.' This dream, accompanied by conversations with Elders Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards, motivated President Young to seek the Lord in prayer. On Thursday, Jan. 14, 1847, he presented a revelation to the members of the Quorum of the Twelve that he had received from the Lord. It began as 'The Word and Will of the Lord concerning the Camp of Israel in their journeyings to the West.' (D&C 136:1.) An important clause at the beginning of the revelation stated that the principles enunciated therein were to be implemented 'under the direction of the Twelve Apostles.' (D&C 136:3.)

"The revelation directed that three additional companies of fifty (besides those of Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball) be organized to leave early in the spring to put in crops in the West. Five apostles and one other man who would later become an apostle (Erastus Snow)-two apiece to head each company of fifty-were appointed to recruit 'pioneers' for this project. The apostle teams were Ezra T. Benson and Erastus Snow, Orson Pratt and Wilford Woodruff, and Amasa Lyman and George A. Smith. These brethren were enjoined to 'choose out a sufficient number of able-bodied and expert men, to take teams, seed, and farming utensils.' They would find the best skilled men with a variety of abilities to blaze the trail and establish a refuge in the Rocky Mountains. (D&C 136:3-16.)

"The apostles present at the Jan. 14 meeting enthusiastically endorsed the revelation. After the revelation was more formally written up by Elder Willard Richards, the scribe for the Twelve, it was presented on Jan. 16 to the Winter Quarters High Council, which also enthusiastically responded to the revelation. For example, council member Lorin Farr said 'it reminded him of the first reading of the Book of Mormon, he was perfectly satisfied that it was from the Lord.' On Sunday, Jan. 17, the revelation was presented to the general priesthood in a Sabbath meeting and sustained by the uplifting of hands. The temperature was 17 degrees below zero that morning. Two days later the general Winter Quarters membership also upheld the revelation.

"Brigham Young was pleased. He recorded, 'The Church has been led by revelation just as much since the death of Joseph Smith as before. . . . Joseph received his apostleship from Peter, and his brethren, and the present Apostles received their apostleship from Joseph, the first apostle, and Oliver Cowdery, the second apostle.'

"Hosea Stout, a loyal follower of Brigham Young and the apostles, recorded in his journal, 'This will put to silence the wild bickering and suggestions of those who are ever in the way and opposing the proper council. They will now have to come to this standard or come out in open rebellion to the Will of the Lord which will plainly manifest them to the people and then they can have no influence.'" (Bruce A. Van Orden, "Revelation Clarifies Role of Twelve," *LDS Church News*, 1997, 01/11/97)

**DC 136:4 this shall be our covenant-that we will walk in all the ordinance of the Lord**

At the time of this revelation, the saints are still in their infancy in learning about covenants. Most of them had received their endowments just months previous in the unfinished Nauvoo temple. Though the temple would not endure, the trip west could not occur until the saints were endowed. As part of their endowment, they learned about *covenants*-they learned about *ordinances*. Here, the Lord reinforces the importance of both with a motto made by covenant: "we will walk in all the ordinances of the Lord."

That is a great motto for us to live by today!

### **Bruce R. McConkie**

To remember and keep the covenants is a standing obligation resting upon the Lord's people. (D. & C. 33:14; 35:24; 42:13, 78; 97:8.) Nothing is ever appointed or required of any of the saints which is "contrary to the church covenants." (D. & C. 28:12; 68:24; 107:63.) All gospel teaching is to be "according to the covenants." (D. & C. 107:89) Those who keep their covenants have the Lord's promised given with "an immutable covenant" that all things shall work together for their good. (D. & C. 98:3. Every member of the Church should subscribed without any mental reservation whatever, to this revealed statement: "And this shall be our covenant - that we will walk in all the ordinances of the Lord." (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], 168)

### **Gordon B. Hinckley**

We are a covenant people. I have had the feeling that if we could just encourage our people to live by three or four covenants everything else would take care of itself; we would not have to have anything else except to go forward with our program... [Think of] the covenants of the temple: Sacrifice, the willingness to sacrifice for this the Lord's work-and inherent in that law of sacrifice is the very essence of the Atonement, the ultimate sacrifice made by the Son of God in behalf of each of us. Consecration, which is associated with it, a willingness to give everything, if need be, to help in the on-rolling of this great work. And a covenant of love and loyalty one to another in the bonds of marriage, fidelity, chastity, morality.

If our people could only learn to live by these covenants, everything else would take care of itself, I am satisfied. We would not have to worry about sacrament meeting attendance. We would not have to worry about willingness to serve missions. We would not have to worry about

divorce and the many requests for cancellation of temple sealings. We would not have to worry about any of those things. (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997], 146)

**DC 136:6 When the companies are organized let them... prepare for those who are to tarry**

"In accord with a 14 January 1847 revelation (see D&C 136), President Young organized the Saints carefully into companies of 100, 50, and 10 (meaning people in this case, not wagons). He served as company president and main captain, aided by 2 captains of 100, 5 captains of 50, and 14 captains of 10. Their story is one of 'organization, foresight, and discipline,' wrote one historian, saying that they stopped more days for Sabbath worship than for delays caused by travel hazards.

"For half their journey, this advance, exploratory company followed the north side of the Platte River. Later travelers joked that the lazy Platte was 'a mile wide and an inch deep, too thin to plow, too thick to drink.' As much as possible, they followed somewhat established trails, smoothing and improving the way for following pioneer companies and only occasionally blazing new trail segments." (William G. Hartley, "Gathering the Dispersed Nauvoo Saints, 1847-1852," *Ensign*, July 1997, 19)

**DC 136:7 Let each company... decide how many can go next spring; then choose out a sufficient number of able-bodied and expert men**

"Organization of the pioneer company was soon moving rapidly. Almost every day, Brigham's journal contained references to the appointment of captains of hundreds, fifties and tens, of company leaders and councilors. Soon the decision would have to be made as to the composition of that first company of pioneers, those who would find the place that God had prepared for them, there to plant crops to sustain the Saints through their first winter in the Rocky Mountains. By the end of March 1847, the personnel of this select group had all been chosen. Twenty-five pioneers said they were ready to go immediately and another thirty-two within a few days.

"There were 148 persons in that first pioneer company: 143 men, 3 women, and 2 children. Eight of the Twelve Apostles were included. Lyman Wight, although still holding his membership in the quorum, had left the main body of the Church before the exodus from Nauvoo and

had already led a body of his followers into Texas. The other three members had been filling urgent missionary duties in Great Britain and returned to Winter Quarters just in time to bid the pioneers farewell. Orson Hyde was placed in charge of the Saints on both sides of the Missouri during the absence of the leaders. John Taylor and Parley P. Pratt formed their own companies, including many newly arrived Saints, to leave Winter Quarters in early summer.

"William Clayton's services as clerk and secretary were valuable on the trip. Such rugged frontiersmen as Howard Egan and Orrin Porter Rockwell proved their worth in breaking trails, fording rivers, and providing protection from the Indians. Appleton Harmon was a skilled mechanic. Hans Christian Hansen, a Danish convert, was an excellent violinist and his mastery of the instrument provided many happy hours at campgrounds along the way. Another musician, a young Irishman named James Craig, found himself assigned as the bugler of the pioneers. Orson Pratt was the chief surveyor and scientist of the company, and Thomas Bullock served as secretary and historian." (Conrey Bryson, *Winter Quarters* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1986], 98)

### **Gordon B. Hinckley**

On April 5 the pioneer company started west. It consisted of 143 men, three women, and two children, with Brigham Young leading the group. Fortunately, when they had gone only a short distance, Apostles Parley P. Pratt and John Taylor arrived at Winter Quarters from England. They brought with them barometers, sextants, telescopes, and other instruments. In the hands of Orson Pratt, an accomplished scientist, these made it possible for the pioneers to determine the latitude, longitude, temperature, and elevation above sea level of their position each day. Such information was invaluable in the preparation of a guide for those who were to come later. (*What of the Mormons?* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1947], 164 - 165)

### **DC 136:8 Let each company bear an equal proportion... in taking the poor, the widows, the fatherless**

One of Brigham Young's greatest moments has been overshadowed by subsequent events. It occurred in the trying times of the extermination order and persecutions in Missouri. In January 1839, Edward Partridge was the

bishop. The saints had been beaten and driven from their homes. They were as sheep without a shepherd. Of course, it was winter.

"About this time President Brigham Young proposed to Bishop Partridge to help the poor out of the state. The Bishop replied, 'The poor may take care of themselves, and I will take care of myself.' President Brigham Young replied, 'If you will not help them out, I will.'" (*History of the Church*, 3:247)

And help them out he did. Doing all he could to provide for the poor, Brigham Young orchestrated the exodus from Missouri long before he orchestrated the exodus from Nauvoo or Winter Quarters. These were tough times and tough jobs, but Brigham would not let the saints neglect their poor.

### **Dallin H. Oaks**

In a day when our prophet has challenged us to reach out to welcome and fellowship new members and to reawaken the faith and fellowship of those who have strayed, we can gain strength from the example of the pioneers. The pioneer legacy is a legacy of inclusion. When the Saints were driven out of Missouri, many were so poor that they lacked teams and wagons to move. Their Church leaders were adamant that none of the poor would be left behind. The response was the same in the exodus from Nauvoo. At a conference of the Church in October 1845, the membership entered into a covenant to take all the Saints with them. Thereafter, in the initial epic struggle across Iowa, the companies that arrived first at their stopping place on the Missouri River sent rescue wagons back toward Nauvoo to gather those who had been too poor to leave earlier. The revelation that guided their next exodus on the trip west directed each company to "bear an equal proportion ... in taking the poor, the widows, the fatherless, and the families of those who have gone into the army" (D&C 136:8). When the wagons and handcarts moved west, their movement was always one of inclusion, and no day's journey ended until every straggler was accounted for.

When the Saints settled in the valleys of the mountains, they promptly established a Perpetual Emigrating Fund to assist the poor to move from Winter Quarters, and later from the nations of Europe. At least half of those who journeyed to join the Saints could not have come without the help of leaders and members who were determined to include everyone who desired to gather to Zion. We need that same spirit of

inclusion to accomplish our prophet's clarion call for retention and reactivation. ("Following the Pioneers," *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 73)

**DC 136:9 Let each company prepare houses, and fields for raising grain**

"The primary objective of the thousands left behind was to plant and harvest substantial crops, gather provisions, organize themselves, and prepare for the exodus west as soon as possible. Some men went to Missouri late in the summer of 1847 to assist in the harvests there, receiving their pay in much-needed wheat. 'All preparation and organization,' they had been counseled, 'is for journeying and not for a permanent location at Winter Quarters.'

"Had family farms been more carefully prepared and sickness not been so prevalent, harvests would have been more abundant. Nonetheless, the fall of 1847 found the pioneers much stronger, more prepared, and better provisioned than the year before.

"President Young and other members of the advance, exploratory company returned to Winter Quarters on 31 October after finding the appointed site in the valley of the Great Salt Lake. A few weeks later, in accordance with government demands that the Church vacate Indian lands, President Young announced on 14 November 1847 plans to begin abandoning Winter Quarters in the spring of 1848. Those able to go west by spring should do so, while those remaining should move east across the river." (Richard E. Bennett, "Winter Quarters: Church Headquarters, 1846-1848," *Ensign*, Sept. 1997, 51)

**DC 136:10 remove this people to the place where the Lord shall locate a stake of Zion**

"In April 1847 the first pioneer company from Winter Quarters headed west for the Great Basin, located outside of the early boundaries of the United States. The well-organized Saints, heeding instructions given by revelation through President Young and having covenanted to 'keep all the commandments ... of the Lord' (D&C 136:2), had a relatively uneventful journey of three months. The route they followed became known as the Mormon Trail because for more than 23 years some 70,000 Latter-day Saints made their way to Zion over this route. It became their pathway from persecution, the path to the promised land.

"Even before the Saints left Nauvoo, President Young knew their eventual refuge would be in the central Rockies, no farther north than Bear River Valley (the current Utah-Idaho border area) and no farther south than Utah Valley (around Utah Lake). However, a good many of the Saints were unsure as to their exact destination. From whence did President Young obtain his knowledge? Primarily, he knew their destination as a result of personal revelation. In addition, he had studied the journals of western explorers for some months-perhaps even years-and he had conversed thoroughly about the subject with the Prophet Joseph Smith and others. He said that the pioneers had come 'according to the direction and counsel of Brother Joseph, before his death.'

"Interestingly, as that first group of pioneers journeyed along the trail, a good many of them were unsure of their exact destination. To those who openly inquired about their final stopping place, Elder Erastus Snow of the Quorum of the Twelve shared the guarded but serenely confident words of Brigham Young: 'I will show you when we come to it. ... I have seen it in vision, and when my natural eyes behold it, I shall know it.' Earlier, while in the Nauvoo Temple, President Young had received a vision wherein he saw the Prophet Joseph point to a particular mountaintop with an ensign flying above it and instruct the Saints 'to build under the point where the colors fall.' Shortly after this visionary experience, President Young declared, 'I know where the spot is' and 'I [know] how to make the flag.'" (Paul H. Peterson, "Finding Peace in the Tops of the Mountains," *Ensign*, Aug. 1999, 35)

### **DC 136:12 Let my servants Ezra T. Benson and Erastus Snow organize a company**

Not all the saints were wintering in Winter Quarters. Another camp of saints had settled near the Ponca Indians and were called the Ponca Settlement. They were led by George Miller. Ezra T. Benson and Erastus Snow set out to organize a company, according to the revelation, from this group of saints. History of the Ponca Settlement:

#### **George Q. Cannon**

George Miller and James Emmett had previously assumed to organize a company, including fifty-two wagons, and started westward [from Nauvoo] to find a favorable place to winter. Anson [Call] and such of his command as were ready were advised by the council of the Apostles to

follow on after them, and did so. They left the Elk Horn river on the 22nd of July, 1846, and travelled up the Platte river to the Pawnee missionary station, where they overtook the Miller and Emmett Company. While camped on the west side of the Loupe Fork a message from the apostles at Winter Quarters was received, advising that they proceed no farther westward that season, but to find a good place and establish a camp for the winter. They also advised that a council of twelve men be selected to direct the affairs of the camp, and suggested the names of twelve men to so act. The council was so organized, George Miller being president, and considerable exploring done to find a suitable place to winter, but without success. They were invited by two Ponca chiefs to winter with them on the Missouri river, and guaranteed protection, plenty of feed for their animals, and timber with which to build houses. The invitation was accepted, and nine days spent in journeying to the place. They located on the west side of the mouth of the Running Water river, and one hundred and twenty-five houses were erected in fort form.

Nucanumpa, the aged chief of the Poncas, was taken sick and sent for the brethren composing the council to come and have a talk with him. He had killed and cooked his best dog and had a feast prepared, which the council, on being invited, partook of, and then proceeded to tell them that he had taken a friendly interest in the "Mormons" and instructed the Indians to treat them well, and in return wished the "Mormons" to see that he was properly buried, and to erect at the head of his grave a stone such as he had seen in St. Louis when he once visited that place, with a proper inscription on it, giving his name, age and title. The proposition was agreed to and carried out, and the Poncas proved to be good and peaceable neighbors. The Sioux, however, didn't feel bound by the agreement made with the Poncas, and stole some of the horses and cattle from the Saints. The principal feed for the animals consisted of rushes, and the winter weather was severe, and some of the remaining animals died as a consequence.

George Miller developed an arrogant and rebellious spirit, and was not disposed to submit to the direction of the Apostles, and as many of the people as could be influenced by him and James Emmett also became disgruntled.

On the 27th of February, 1847, Apostles Ezra T. Benson and Erastus Snow arrived at the camp with instructions from the Apostles' quorum for the Saints to return to Winter Quarters before journeying westward,

to replenish their teams and stock of provisions. After delivering their message the Apostles departed without waiting to see what action would be taken as to their requirement.

The members of the council assembled to consider and discuss the message, and James Emmett, although not a member, met with them, by invitation of George Miller. George Miller addressed the council, saying that he did not consider that the Apostles had any right to dictate the camp; that he was their appointed leader, and it was the duty of the camp to follow him into the wilderness, in fulfillment of a special mission conferred upon him by the prophet Joseph. James Emmett followed with a speech in the same strain. The members of the council being then invited to express their views, Anson Call, who had been an active member from the time the council was organized, then spoke. He said the Twelve Apostles were the legitimate leaders of the Saints, and he intended to remain loyal to them and follow their counsel. The other ten members of the council who followed him were unanimous in expressing the same sentiments. Bishop Miller grew furious when he discovered that he was not supported by the council, and gave vent to his feelings in a fiery but impotent speech. A motion was then put and carried by the majority that the people be called together and allowed to decide by a vote whether they return to Winter Quarters or remain with Miller and Emmett. This was done and preparations were immediately made for the journey, with the result that on the 3rd of April when the start was made only five or six wagons remained with Miller and Emmett.

George Miller had formerly been a Bishop and influential man in the Church, but was ambitious and impatient of restraint. He looked for and found faults in those who were over him in the priesthood, and was such a plausible talker that he soon obtained a following of kindred spirits. When, however, he came out squarely in opposition to the counsel of the Twelve Apostles most of his followers saw his true character and abandoned him in time to save themselves from utter ruin. (George C. Lambert [George Q. Cannon], *Gems of Reminiscence: Faith-Promoting Series*, no. 17 [Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1915], 141-143)

## **Erastus Snow**

January, (1847) a revelation was given through President Brigham Young, showing the will of the Lord concerning the organization of the

Saints for the further prosecution of our journey. Elders Orson Pratt, Wilford Woodruff, Amasa Lyman, George A. Smith, Ezra T. Benson and Erastus Snow were designated in the revelation to organize the people into companies and appoint captains of tens, fifties and hundreds, with a president and two counselors over the company, and to teach the people the will of the Lord concerning them. Consequently, Orson Pratt and Wilford Woodruff went to Mount Pisgah and Garden Grove; George A. Smith and Amasa Lyman to the camps east of the Missouri river; and Ezra T. Benson and myself were sent to the Running Water to organize the Saints at Ponca and teach them their duty.

We started February 1, 1847. The weather was intensely cold, and considerable snow. We were accompanied by Brothers O. P. Rockwell and Sam Gulley. We had light wagons and horses and carried our provisions and horse feed with us. We bore northwest on to the Elk Horn river, and followed up the same several days, and then turned north again and struck the Missouri a few miles below the mouth of the Running Water. The Saints there were much rejoiced to see us, and to receive the word of the Lord concerning them, and to hear from their brethren at Winter Quarters. We found it to be about one hundred and seventy miles.

Having instructed them and organized them, we returned home to commence preparations for starting early in the spring with a company of pioneers, which the revelation directed to be sent in advance to make roads, search out the place where the Lord should locate a stake of Zion, and prepare for putting in crops, etc. (From Nauvoo To Salt Lake in the Van of the Pioneers. the Original Diary of Erastus Snow. Edited by His Son, Moroni Snow., *Improvement Era*, 1911, Vol. Xiv. May, 1911. No. 7)

**DC 136:13 let my servants Orson Pratt and Wilford Woodruff organize a company**

"The arctic-like weather at Winter Quarters continued, with a temperature recording of 20 degrees below zero. Wilford Woodruff recorded that it was the coldest season he had ever experienced. In spite of the cold, Elder Woodruff, along with several others, spent much of the day digging dirt from an embankment and then using it to cover the roof of his house. During the early evening, President Brigham Young preached to those who had been assigned to be in his (and Heber C. Kimball's) company. A total of four pioneer companies would be organized and headed by Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball,

Ezra T. Benson and Erastus Snow, Orson Pratt and Wilford Woodruff, and Amasa Lyman and George A. Smith. President Young warned his company that iniquity would not be tolerated in the Camp of Israel and he did not want any to be members of his company who were not willing to obey 'The Word and Will of the Lord.' He further instructed that each company would be responsible to take an equal proportion of widows and orphans.

"Tuesday, Jan. 19, [1847] Wilford Woodruff organized his pioneer company, consisting of 40 men. He recorded that those company members who were present 'entered in a covenant with uplifted Hands to Heaven to keep all the commandments & Statutes of the Lord our God And to sustain me in my office.'" (Organizing Begins in Winter's Cold, *LDS Church News*, 1997, 01/18/97)

#### **DC 136:18 Zion shall be redeemed in mine own due time**

"[The saints] had not forgotten that the center stake of Zion would one day be located in Jackson County, Missouri. (See D&C 57:1-3.) But the persecutions and tragedies of Missouri in the 1830s had made it plain that this center stake would not be established immediately. In fact, for the time being, the Lord had excused them from the commandment to build a temple there (see D&C 124:45-55) and had counseled them that Zion 'shall be redeemed in mine own due time.' (D&C 136:18.) Until then, they would have to find another home.

For those who shared the unfolding vision of a promised refuge in the American West, the exodus represented both hardship and long-awaited opportunity. It was also the end of a quest. Brigham Young told the first Latter-day Saints in the Salt Lake Valley that Joseph Smith had for years longed to be there. Finally 'we are here, thank the Almighty God,' he said, 'for here is the place of beginning.'" (Ronald K. Esplin, "A 'Place Prepared' in the Rockies," *Ensign*, July 1988, 7)

#### **DC 136:19 If any man shall seek to build up himself**

##### **John A. Widstoe**

We are learning the great truth that man is insignificant in his individuality, in comparison to the mighty cause which involves the salvation of the children of men, living and dead, and those who will yet live in the earth. Men must set aside their own prejudices, their own

personal desires, wishes and preferences, and pay deference to the great cause of truth that is spreading abroad in the world.

And if any man shall seek to build up himself, and seeketh not my counsel, he shall have no power, and his folly shall be made manifest.-D&C 136:19.

Until a selfish, individual interest is banished from our minds, and we become interested in the general welfare, we shall never be able to magnify our Holy Priesthood as we should. (*Priesthood and Church Government* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], 52)

**DC 136:20 covet not that which is thy brother's**

### **Brigham Young**

*Sin of Covetousness*-How the Devil will play with a man who so worships gain! 10:174.

I am more afraid of covetousness in our Elders than I am of the hordes of hell. 5:353.

Those who are covetous and greedy, anxious to grasp the whole world, are all the time uneasy, and are constantly laying their plans and contriving how to obtain this, that, and the other.

Men are greedy for the vain things of this world. In their hearts they are covetous. It is true that the things of this world are designed to make us comfortable, and they make some people as happy as they can be here; but riches can never make the Latter-day Saints happy. Riches of themselves cannot produce permanent happiness; only the Spirit that comes from above can do that. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, selected and arranged by John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954], 306)

**DC 136:21 Keep yourselves from evil to take the name of the Lord in vain**

### **Gordon B. Hinckley**

In the revelation given to President Brigham Young on January 14, 1847, while the Saints were preparing to leave Winter Quarters for these valleys in the West, the Lord said to them, "Keep yourselves from evil to take the name of the Lord in vain, for I am the Lord your God,

even the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob" (D&C 136:21).

In a general epistle to the entire Church issued by the First Presidency on April 8, 1887, a hundred years ago, they said concerning this problem, which evidently was serious then as it is now, "The habit ... , which some young people fall into, of using vulgarity and profanity ... is not only offensive to well-bred persons, but it is a gross sin in the sight of God, and should not exist among the children of the Latter-day Saints" (in *Messages of the First Presidency*, comp. James R. Clark, 6 vols., Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75, 3:112-13).

I once worked with a group of railroad men who seemed to pride themselves on the use of profanity. They tried to make an art of it. I recall handing a written instruction to a switchman. It was his job to take care of the matter as instructed, but he thought it inconvenient that he should have to do so at that time. On reading the order, he flew into a tantrum. He was a fifty-year-old man, but he acted like a spoiled child. He threw his cap on the ground and jumped on it and let forth such a string of expletives as to seem to cause the air to turn blue around him. Every third or fourth word was the name of Deity spoken in vain.

I thought, how childish can a grown man be? The very idea of a man acting and speaking like that was totally repugnant. I could never again give him my full respect.

When I was a small boy in the first grade, I experienced what I thought was a rather tough day at school. I came home, walked in the house, threw my book on the kitchen table, and let forth an expletive that included the name of the Lord.

My mother was shocked. She told me quietly, but firmly, how wrong I was. She told me that I could not have words of that kind coming out of my mouth. She led me by the hand into the bathroom, where she took from the shelf a clean washcloth, put it under the faucet, and then generously coated it with soap. She said, "We'll have to wash out your mouth." She told me to open it, and I did so reluctantly. Then she rubbed the soapy washcloth around my tongue and teeth. I sputtered and fumed and felt like swearing again, but I didn't. I rinsed and rinsed my mouth, but it was a long while before the soapy taste was gone. In fact, whenever I think of that experience, I can still taste the soap. The

lesson was worthwhile. I think I can say that I have tried to avoid using the name of the Lord in vain since that day. I am grateful for that lesson.

On one occasion, Jesus said to the multitude, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man" (Matt. 15:11). ("Take Not the Name of God in Vain," *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 45-46)

### **DC 136:22 I am he who led the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt**

Invoking the term "Camp of Israel" (v. 1) draws immediate parallels with the Exodus out of Egypt. The Lord declares, "I am he who led the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; and my arm is stretched out in the last days, to save my people Israel."

### **Russell M. Nelson**

Moses and Brigham Young had much in common. They were astute followers before they became great leaders. Moses had been prepared in the courts of Egypt and had gained much experience in military and other responsibilities (see Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, trans. William Whiston, 2.10.1-2; see also Acts 7:22; Heb. 11:24-27). Brigham Young was likewise prepared for his leadership role. In the march of Zion's Camp he had observed the leadership of the Prophet Joseph Smith under difficult conditions (see *History of the Church*, 2:61-134, 183-85). Brigham Young aided in the removal of the Prophet Joseph from Kirtland (see *History of the Church*, 3:1-2;...). He also directed the move of the persecuted Saints from Missouri to Nauvoo (see *History of the Church*, 3:250-52, 261...).

For both the Israelites and the Saints, civil and ecclesiastical law were unified under one head. Moses bore that responsibility for his people (see Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* [1976], 252). Brigham Young—the modern Moses (see D&C 103:16)—led the Latter-day Saints' movement west, with the Lord's blessing (see D&C 136). Moses and Brigham Young followed parallel patterns of governance (see Ex. 18:17-21; D&C 136:1-3). Brigham Young organized the large group of men, women, and children for an orderly migration to the West...

Both groups shared many miracles that are memorialized annually. The celebration of Passover relates to the travels of the ancient Israelites.

And each July we repeat legendary stories of our pioneers. Both groups traversed deserts, mountains, and valleys of untamed wilderness. Ancient Israelites left Egypt via the parted waters of the Red Sea "as by dry land" (Heb. 11:29). The pioneers left the United States crossing the wide waters of the Mississippi River-frozen to become a highway of ice.

The book of Exodus reports that quail were miraculously provided to feed the hungry people of ancient Israel (see Ex. 16:13; Num. 11:32; Ps. 105:40). The pioneers had an equivalent experience. After the last of them had been driven out of Nauvoo, many were sick and some had died. Their provisions were meager. On the river bottoms near Montrose, Iowa, on 9 October 1846, many quail miraculously flew into camp. The quail were cooked and fed to some 640 destitute people (see Stanley B. Kimball, "Nauvoo West: The Mormons of the Iowa Shore," *BYU Studies*, winter 1978, 142). ("The Exodus Repeated," *Ensign*, July 1999, 9)

**DC 136:23 Cease to contend one with another**

**Marvin J. Ashton**

When one considers the bad feeling and the unpleasantness caused by contention, it is well to ask, "Why do I participate?" If we are really honest with ourselves, our answers may be something like: "When I argue and am disagreeable, I do not have to change myself. It gives me a chance to get even." "I am unhappy and I want others to be miserable too." "I can feel self-righteous. In this way I get my ego built up." "I don't want others to forget how much I know!"

Whatever the real reason, it is important to recognize that we choose our behavior. At the root of this issue is the age-old problem of pride. "Only by pride cometh contention." (Prov. 13:10.)

If Satan can succeed in creating in us habits of arguing, quarreling, and contention, it is easier then for him to bind us with the heavier sins which can destroy our eternal lives. A contentious spirit can affect almost any phase of our lives. An angry letter written in haste can haunt us-sometimes for years. A few ill-advised words spoken in hate can destroy a marriage or a personal friendship, or impede community progress.

As we take a stand against the evils of the day, such as abortion, homosexuality, immorality, alcohol, drugs, dishonesty, intolerance, etc., can we express our beliefs without clenching our fists, raising our voices, and promoting contention? Can we talk about the beneficial principles of the gospel such as the Word of Wisdom, keeping the Sabbath day holy, maintaining personal purity, and the other truths found in the scriptures without making our listeners defensive? This is not easy, but it can be done. Ours is, if you please, to plow our own furrow, plant our own seeds, tend our crops, and reap the harvest. This can best be accomplished not only by plowshares rather than by swords, but by appropriate commitment rather than contention.

Let me share with you some suggestions for alleviating contention:

1. Pray to have the love of God in your heart. Sometimes this is a struggle, but the Spirit of the Lord can soften hard feelings and mellow a callous spirit.
2. Learn to control your tongue. There is an old maxim and an excellent one: "Think twice before you speak and three times before you act."
3. Don't allow emotions to take over; rather, reason together.
4. Refuse to get embroiled in the same old patterns of argument and confrontation.
5. Practice speaking in a soft, calm voice. The peaceful life can best be attained not by those who speak with a voice of "great tumultuous noise" but by those who follow the Savior's example and speak with "a still voice of perfect mildness." (Hel. 5:30.)

There is no time for contention. We must have the will and discipline in our daily lives to fight contention. I promise the valiant God's help in their efforts to conquer this horrendous foe. Let us "Cease to contend one with another; cease to speak evil one of another." (D&C 136:23.) We only have time to be about our Father's business. To these truths I leave my testimony, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ("No Time for Contention," *Ensign*, May 1978, 9)

**DC 136:23 cease to speak evil one of another**

**Dallin H. Oaks**

Faultfinding, evil speaking, and backbiting are obviously unchristian. The Bible commands us to avoid "evil speakings." (See 1 Pet. 2:1.) It tells us to "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you." (Eph. 4:31.) Modern revelations direct us to avoid "backbiting," "evil speaking," and "find[ing] fault one with another." (See D&C 20:53-54; D&C 42:27; D&C 88:124; and D&C 136:23.)

We are given these commandments for a reason. The Apostle Paul advised the Saints to "grieve not the holy Spirit of God" (Eph. 4:30) by evil speaking. Of faultfinders, **President Brigham Young** said, "The Spirit of God has no place in [such] persons." (*Journal of Discourses*, 8:13.) The primary reason we are commanded to avoid criticism is to preserve our own spiritual well-being, not to protect the person whom we would criticize.

**Elder George Albert Smith** said this about criticism: "Aren't we rather prone to see the limitations and the weaknesses of our neighbors? Yet that is contrary to the teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ. There is a class of people who find fault and criticize always in a destructive way. There is a difference in criticism. If we can criticize constructively under the influence of the Spirit of the Lord, we may change beneficially and properly some of the things that are being done. But if we have the spirit of faultfinding, of pointing out the weaknesses and failings of others in a destructive manner, that never comes as the result of the companionship of the Spirit of our Heavenly Father and is always harmful." ("Criticism," *Ensign*, Feb. 1987, 68)

**DC 136:25-26 If thou borrowest of thy neighbor, thou shalt restore that which thou hast borrowed**

In Winter Quarters, many saints were more destitute than in any other time in the church's history. The temptation to hold on to another's property was certainly present. The Lord's warnings against such dishonesty have an Old Testament ring to them. Again, the parallelism between the Moses' "children of Israel" and the Brigham's "Camp of Israel" is underscored.

If thou borrowest of thy neighbor, thou shalt restore that which thou hast borrowed (D&C 136:25)

If a man borrow ought of his neighbor, and it be hurt, or die... he shall surely make it good (Ex. 22:14)

If thou canst not repay then go straightway and tell thy neighbor (D&C 136:25)

If there be among you a poor man... thou shalt not harden thine heart... but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need (Deut. 15:7-8)

If thou shalt find that which thy neighbor has lost, thou shalt make diligent search till thou shalt deliver it to him again (D&C 136:26)

If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again (Ex 23:4)

### **Joseph B. Wirthlin**

A little lying, a little cheating, or taking a little unfair advantage are not acceptable to the Lord... Nearly every day we hear of fraud, misapplication of funds, false advertising, or other dealings designed to obtain gain by cheating or deception. The Lord abhors such practices. A proverb states, "A false balance [that is, a deceptive scale] is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is his delight." (Prov. 11:1.) The Lord commanded, "If thou borrowest ... , thou shalt restore that which thou hast borrowed." (D&C 136:25.) He commanded the ancient Israelites:

Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another.

...

Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him. ...

Ye shall do no [injustice] in judgment, ... in weight, or in measure. Just balances, just weights ... shall ye have. (Lev. 19:11, 13, 35-36.)

The Lord commanded the Israelites to be more than honest. If they came upon a lost ox, they were to search out the owner so they could return the animal. Today, our intentions and dealings must be similarly pure and sound before the Lord. We must be fair with suppliers, customers, and employees; repay obligations and keep agreements; and never deceive by failing to disclose all the facts about an investment or business venture. If our selfish "hearts are set so much upon the things of this world" (D&C 121:35), we can easily lose our integrity. We must remember that "we believe in being honest, true,

chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men." (A of F 1:13.) ("Personal Integrity," *Ensign*, May 1990, 32)

**DC 136:28 If thou art merry, praise the Lord with singing, with music, with dancing**

"On the evening of the 23<sup>rd</sup> [Jan. 23, 1847] a celebration and dance was held in the Council House. The camp historian records the event as follows:

'President Young told the brethren and sisters he would show them how to go forth in the dance in an acceptable manner before the Lord. President Young then knelt down and prayed to God in behalf of the meeting, imploring his blessings upon those present and dedicating the meeting and house to the Lord. At the sound of music the President then led forth in the dance.'

"President Young knew the value of recreation to the Saints and more than one entertainment was indulged in in the Council House during this lonely winter on the banks of the Missouri, but it is beautiful to see that in all his activities he carried on, 'as ever in his great Task-Master's eye.'" (Preston Nibley, *Brigham Young: The Man and His Work*, 4th ed.[Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1960], 87.)

**Joseph Fielding Smith**

"If thou art merry," the revelation read, "praise the Lord with singing, with music, with dancing, and with prayer of praise and thanksgiving. If thou art sorrowful, call on the Lord thy God with supplication, that your souls may be joyful." During their travels in the wilderness the exiled Saints had many hardships to endure. The lack of necessary food, of clothing and other substance, was lamentable. Yet, in the midst of poverty, and distress, they were happy for they were free from enemies and the persecutions of mobs. They were going to a land of promise where they could dwell in peace, and worship the Lord without fear of men. The Lord desired that they should be cheerful and promised to bless them with his Spirit, in the hour of their sorrow, if they would call upon him. That they might be light of heart and filled with joy, the Lord commended music, singing and dancing, if done in the spirit of reverence and prayer. It was the custom, at the close of the day's journey, for the Saints to assemble in the dance, or to have an informal concert; to relate reminiscences and otherwise employ their time, that

the cares and hardships of their travel might be forgotten, and their burdens lessened which they were forced to bear. At the sound of the bugle, night and morning, all assembled for prayer. The Sabbath day was strictly kept, and undue levity was discountenanced in all the camps. They were commanded to be honest, sober, unselfish and to "contend not one with another," but always speak with edifying words. (*Essentials in Church History*[Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1950], 356 - 357)

### **DC 136:28 with a prayer of praise and thanksgiving**

"Those Pioneers had endured much hardship. Some lost what was closest and dearest to them, namely the love and association of family and friends who rejected them when they joined the Church. Quite a number mourned the deaths of loved ones who died in towns and settlements where the Saints gathered earlier, or while crossing the Atlantic Ocean or along various byways as they traveled to join the main body of Saints. Some lost loved ones in the winter cold of Iowa as the exodus from Nauvoo began. Many lost homes and other properties.

"If conditions were seen only through the eyes of logic and human reasoning, practically every man, woman and child among those Pioneers in Winter Quarters had many reasons to mourn. Yet, they were counseled to offer 'a prayer of thanksgiving.'" (A Grateful Heart, *LDS Church News*, 1993, 11/27/93)

### **Marion G. Romney**

"If thou art merry, praise the Lord with singing, with music, with dancing, and with a prayer of praise and *thanksgiving*." (D&C 136:28; italics added.)

This... commandment that I have just read came through the prophet Brigham Young at Winter Quarters when the Saints were on their way across the plains. At that time the Saints were suffering the greatest of hardships, but the Lord was commanding them to be full of praise and thanksgiving.

These commandments that I have read put us under a solemn obligation to develop gratitude and the spirit of thanksgiving. We should be thankful and express appreciation for all of our blessings.

To the Lord Jesus, who bought us with a great price, we owe an undying debt of gratitude. It is impossible for us, weak mortals as we are, to fully comprehend and appreciate the suffering he endured on the cross so that he might gain for us victory over death. And even less can we understand the suffering he endured in Gethsemane so that we might obtain forgiveness of our sins. "Which suffering," he said, "caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit-and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink." (D&C 19:18.)

But nevertheless, he endured it for our sake. None of us could have endured that suffering. No mortal man nor any number of men together could have endured it. All people who understand what Jesus did for us ought to love him and demonstrate that love by rendering to him, in a realistic manner, thanks and gratitude. ("Gratitude and Thanksgiving," *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 50-51)

**DC 136:29 If thou art sorrowful, call on the Lord thy God with supplication**

"When I joined the Church, I began attending a very small Filipino branch where the members were very close and worked in unity to get things done.

"As we grew in numbers, the branch prospered little by little. New chairs came, then a new sacrament table. In time we moved to a spacious apartment and even had a new organ. Three years later a lot was purchased for our future meetinghouse.

"During this period of growth the unity of our branch was occasionally tested. After some particularly hurtful gossip reached me, I decided to leave the Church. For the next six Sundays I did not attend my meetings, although in my heart I wished I were there. I especially wanted to partake of the sacrament and renew my covenants.

"One day I knelt in prayer and asked for strength, courage, and especially enlightenment. I was still on my knees when my eyes caught sight of a book on the floor near the foot of my bed, partly hidden by the bedcovers. I picked up a dusty and neglected volume of scripture and began paging through it, hoping to find some lines that would ease my pain. I stopped at Doctrine and Covenants 136:29-30: 'If thou art sorrowful, call on the Lord thy God with supplication, that your souls may be joyful. Fear not thine enemies.'

"After reading the verses, I felt lighter in spirit, and my faith and courage returned. I would go back to church. I sank to my knees again, this time to offer a prayer of gratitude to my Heavenly Father.

"As I neared the meetinghouse, I felt very apprehensive. Would they welcome me again? Would I hear even more whispering behind my back? Or would they ignore me altogether? My feet dragged the closer I got to the door. Then I felt a gentle tap on my shoulder, and before I could turn around, an arm encircled me in a tender embrace. Then another hand reached out to clasp mine. Other friends burst from the door with warm smiles and greetings, each one expressing joy and happiness for my return.

"As the sacrament service began, we turned to the opening hymn, 'Though Deepening Trials' (Hymns, no. 122). A soothing feeling of calm and peace filled me as each word was sung, and the feelings of hurt and resentment I had harbored melted away. Warm tears blurred my vision, and I could no longer see the words in the hymnbook. I closed my eyes tightly and gratefully whispered, 'Father, thanks for leading me back to the fold.'" (Aurelia S. Diezon, "Would They Welcome Me Again?" *Ensign*, June 1996, 55-56)

## **Joseph Fielding Smith**

During their travels in the wilderness the exiled Saints had many hardships to endure. The lack of necessary food, of clothing and other substance, was lamentable. Yet, in the midst of poverty, and distress, they were happy for they were free from enemies and the persecutions of mobs. They were going to a land of promise where they could dwell in peace, and worship the Lord without fear of men. The Lord desired that they should be cheerful and promised to bless them with his Spirit, in the hour of their sorrow, if they would call upon him. That they might be light of heart and filled with joy, the Lord commended music, singing and dancing, if done in the spirit of reverence and prayer. It was the custom, at the close of the day's journey, for the Saints to assemble in the dance, or to have an informal concert; to relate reminiscences and otherwise employ their time, that the cares and hardships of their travel might be forgotten, and their burdens lessened which they were forced to bear. fn At the sound of the bugle, night and morning, all assembled for prayer. (*Essentials in Church History* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1950], 356 - 357)

## **DC 136:31 My people must be tried in all things**

"Adversity is no excuse for losing faith. On the contrary, there are many historical examples where faith has been intensified in direct proportion to the intensity of affliction. When the storms of adversity begin to howl, the Lord's people react by wrapping their faith, like a warm mantle, more tightly around them.

"And so the painful changes and vicissitudes of life, instead of breaking down the orderliness and goodness of the universe and its Master-Creator, are actually stepping stones to glory, an assurance that our yearning to attain perfection may one day be satisfied." (David S. King, "Dealing Successfully with Change," *Ensign*, Feb. 1981, 24)

### **Brigham Young**

If it is necessary for us to be tried in all things, then weep not, mourn not because we are tried, neither let us object to the Lord directing our course in that path wherein the trials necessary for our perfection lie. If it is in sailing across the sea in ships, in being sick and cast down, in witnessing the sorrow of our dear friends, in receiving temptations and trials to which we have before been strangers; if it is in crossing the country from the United States to this place, by railroad or by ox team, no matter how, the Lord leads His people in this way expressly to give them trials which they have not passed through before, and which it is necessary they should have. While it is necessary that we should be tempted and tried, it is not necessary that we should give way to temptation. (*Journal of Discourses*, 12:163)

### **Brigham Young**

All intelligent beings who are crowned with crowns of glory, immortality, and eternal lives must pass through every ordeal appointed for intelligent beings to pass through, to gain their glory and exaltation. Every calamity that can come upon mortal beings will be suffered to come upon the few, to prepare them to enjoy the presence of the Lord. ... Every trial and experience you have passed through is necessary for your salvation. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 345)

### **Thomas S. Monson**

That first trek of 1847, organized and led by Brigham Young, is described by historians as one of the great epics of United States history. Mormon pioneers by the hundreds suffered and died from disease, exposure, or starvation. There were some who, lacking wagons and teams, literally walked the 1,300 miles across the plains and through the mountains, pushing and pulling handcarts. In these groups, one in six perished... Tombstones of sage and rock marked graves the entire route from Nauvoo to Salt Lake City. Such was the price some pioneers paid. Their bodies are buried in peace, but their names live on evermore.

Tired oxen lumbered, wagon wheels squeaked, brave men toiled, Indian war drums sounded, and coyotes howled. Our faith-inspired and storm-driven ancestors pressed on. They, too, had their cloud by day and pillar of fire by night.

Often they sang:

Come, come, ye Saints, no toil nor labor fear;  
But with joy wend your way.  
Though hard to you this journey may appear,  
Grace shall be as your day. ...  
All is well! All is well!  
("Come, Come, Ye Saints," Hymns, no. 30.)

These pioneers remembered the words of the Lord: "My people must be tried in all things, that they may be prepared to receive the glory that I have for them, even the glory of Zion." (D&C 136:31.)

As the long, painful struggle approached its welcomed end, a jubilant spirit filled each heart. Tired feet and weary bodies somehow found new strength.

Time-marked pages of a dusty pioneer journal speak movingly: "We bowed ourselves down in humble prayer to Almighty God with hearts full of thanksgiving to Him, and dedicated this land unto Him for the dwelling place of His people."

The crude homes were described in these terms by one who was there as a small boy: "There was no window of any kind whatever in our house. Neither was there a door. My mother hung up an old quilt, which served as a door for the first winter. This was our bedroom, our parlor,

our sitting room, our kitchen, our sleeping room, everything in this room of about 12 by 16 feet. How in the world we all got along in it I do not know. I recollect that my dear old mother stated that no queen who ever entered her palace was ever more happy or proud of shelter and the blessings of the Lord than was she when she entered that completed dugout."

Such were the trials, the hardships, struggles, and heartaches of a former day. They were met with resolute courage and an abiding faith in a living God. The words of their prophet-leader provided their pledge: "And this shall be our covenant-that we will walk in all the ordinances of the Lord." (D&C 136:4.)

The passage of time dims our memories and diminishes our appreciation for those who walked the path of pain, leaving behind a tear-marked trail of nameless graves. But what of today's challenge? Are there no rocky roads to travel, no rugged mountains to climb, no chasms to cross, no trails to blaze, no rivers to ford? Or is there a very present need for that pioneer spirit to guide us away from the dangers that threaten to engulf us, and lead us to a Zion of safety? ("Come, Follow Me," *Ensign*, July 1988, 2, 4)

**DC 136:32 Let him that is ignorant learn wisdom**

**Marion G. Romney**

One of the best ways to learn the gospel is to search the scriptures. Our purpose in urging all bearers of the Melchizedek Priesthood to read the Book of Mormon is that they may learn more about the gospel. One cannot sincerely study the Book of Mormon without learning gospel truths, because it contains "the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and to the Jews also" (D&C 20:9). So impressed was the **Prophet Joseph** with it that he "told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book" (*History of the Church*, 4:461).

Learning the gospel from books, however, is not enough. It must be lived by one who would magnify his calling in the priesthood. As a matter of fact, getting a knowledge of the gospel and living it are interdependent. They go hand in hand. One cannot fully learn the gospel without living it. A knowledge of the gospel comes by degrees.

One learns a little, obeys what he learns, learns a little more, obeys that, and repeats this cycle in an endless round. Such is the pattern by which one can move on to a full knowledge of the gospel. ("The Oath and Covenant Which Belongeth to the Priesthood," *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 44)

**DC 136:33 my Spirit is sent forth into the world to enlighten the humble and contrite**

**James E. Faust**

Humility is all about keeping one's balance. For example, when you receive a compliment, receive it graciously, but don't let it go to your head. You young ladies have learned much, but you have more to learn. A person who is humble is teachable. Indeed, the Lord has promised, "For my Spirit is sent forth into the world to enlighten the humble and contrite." (D&C 136:33) One of my favorite sayings is this: "Learn to say, 'I don't know.' If used when appropriate, it will be often." ["Rumsfeld's Rules," *Parade Magazine*, 18 Nov. 2001, 9] ("The Virtues of Righteous Daughters of God," *Ensign*, May 2003, 108)

**DC 136:34-35 now cometh the day of their calamity**

**B.H. Roberts**

I think our country at that time did not repent of the wrongs they had done in this and other things, for this proclamation was immediately followed by the war with Mexico, in which at least those regiments that were selected from western Illinois—one of them at least, was well nigh wiped out of existence in the war with Mexico; and it was about the only disastrous engagement that we had in that war. Then followed the awful war, between 1861 and 1865, in which, as I believe, the hand of God severely punished the United States of America, in fulfillment of the wonderful prediction that was made by the Prophet Joseph Smith, in relation to the calamities that would befall the nation. But they rejected the gospel, and that is foreshadowed in this Book of Mormon passage, and confirmed in the passage in the revelation through Brigham Young. And, by the way, in confirmation also of what President Grant said about the Prophets Joseph and Hyrum sealing their testimony with their blood this revelation has a word on that also. Speaking of the worth of the labors of the Prophet, how he laid the foundation of it and was faithful:

And I took him to myself.

Many have marveled because of his death; but it was needful that he should seal his testimony with his blood, that he might be honored and the wicked might be condemned. Have I not delivered you from your enemies, only in that I have left a witness of my name?

Earth must atone; the nation in which he lived had to atone for the blood of that just man-Joseph Smith-a prophet-and I witness to you that our nation did suffer and did atone, as I believe, for the great crime against human liberty and the work of God, which, as a nation, they rejected when they expatriated the Latter-day Saints. (*Conference Report*, October 1922, First Day-Morning Session 18)

### **Wilford Woodruff**

Somebody has got to pay the bill for the shedding of that innocent blood. Shedding innocent blood has cost the Jews eighteen hundred years of suffering, mourning, woe and destruction; it has cost this nation already four years of war, with two millions of men laid in the dust, and four thousand million dollars in money; and woe be to that nation, tongue or people that sheds the blood of the Saints of God, or undertakes to oppose the work of God in this or any other generation. They will have to reap what they sow; for what you sow you will reap, and the reward you mete will be rewarded to you again, whether you are Saints or sinners, in all nations, kindreds, tongues and people under the whole heavens. (*Journal of Discourses*, 13:166, December 12, 1869)

**DC 136:39 Many have marveled because of his death**

### **William C. Staines**

I was in St. Louis at the time the news [of the martyrdom] arrived and well recollect my feelings. I could not speak to the party who informed me, for nearly a minute... It was a terrible loss to the relatives and Latter-day Saints; and none can imagine the sorrow and grief of the people but those who witnessed the scenes when their bodies were brought to the city for burial. It was not the mourning of a family only, or of a few friends following a dear relative to the grave.

I have seen England mourning for two of her kings, and for the husband (Prince Albert), of the present Queen Victoria, in London, when every shop was closed; when every church bell tolled; when every man who drove a coach, cab, or conveyance of any kind had a piece of crape tied to the handle of his whip. Accompanied by Bro. Amasa Lyman, I rode for miles through the city of London while the burial services were being performed at Windsor Castle. It was indeed a solemn sight. I have seen this nation mourn for its chief magistrate Lincoln, but the scene in Nauvoo at the time mentioned, was far more affecting than these. The grief and sorrow of the Latter-day Saints were heartfelt. It was the mourning of a whole community, of many thousands—all of whom revered these martyred brethren as their fathers and benefactors; and the sight of their bleeding bodies—for their blood had not ceased to flow as they lay in their coffins—was a sight never to be forgotten. The mourning I witnessed for kings, and our nation's chieftain was only here and there manifested by tears; but for the two who suffered for their religion and their friends, the whole people wept in going to and from the scene; all, all were weeping. (*Contributor*, vol. 12 [November 1890-October 1891], Vol. Xii. April, 1891. No. 6. 208.)