Plotting Zion

THIRD WORLD STRATEGIES TOWARD ZION

By Warner Woodworth

It is an experience of incomparable value to have learned to see the great events of the history of the world from beneath; from the viewpoint of the useless, the suspect, the powerless, the oppressed, the despised—in a word, from the viewpoint of those who suffer.

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer

CONVENTIONAL RELIGIOUS THINKING IN UTAH proceeds from the assumption that because Salt Lake City is the headquarters of the LDS church, then this is where Zion is located. Unfortunately, reality suggests otherwise. The accumulation of excessive wealth, exploitation, deception, and financial ripoffs combine to create a framework of materialism. Scriptural notions of Zion—humility, love, equality, and a pure heart—are lost in today's obsessions. The dominant gospel practiced by many consists of time management, dress-for-success images, and free (unleashed) enterprise schemes which legitimize hoarding and glorify wealth and success.

The business environment in Utah is characterized by restructuring and "demassing," as workers suffer plant closings and "hollowing out" of industry. Companies pollute once pristine lakes and streams, while factory smokestacks belch tons of waste into the sky. Yuppie professionals exacerbate ecological destruction with emissions from their BMWs and Mercedeses. No wonder the Lord says he will contend with Zion "and chasten her until she overcomes and is clean before me" (D&C 90:36).

Financial institutions, real estate developers, and corporate executives enjoy lavish lifestyles while Zion's poor struggle to survive. Salt Lake's growing homeless population invades the city's gleaming symbols of opulence—big banks, corporate office buildings, and Temple Square. The poor and the despised struggle to survive in the shadows downtown or under the freeway viaducts to the west. Their cries scream out in contradiction to the extravagant consumption patterns of East Bench residents. Well did Nephi foresee our day:

> But wo unto the rich, who are rich as to the things of the world. For because they are rich they despise the poor, and they persecute the meek, and their hearts are upon their treasures. . . . (2 Nephi 9:30.)

In contrast to scriptural admonitions to "impart of your substance to the poor" (Mosiah 4:26), and that those in power not "oppress" workers and laborers, modern Utah has gained a national reputation for financial ripoffs and fleecing the faithful. Arrogance, designer products, and materialism all combine to "get gain and grind upon the face of the poor" (2 Nephi 26:20).

State politicians slash programs to assist impoverished citizens, cutting back on most social services precisely when the need is greatest. They rationalize their actions by "operating government as a business," implying that Donald Trump, Michael Milken, and Frank Lorenzo are models to be emulated rather than repudiated. While the handicapped are abandoned and the elderly struggle to merely exist, the privileged of Utah rush to the growing number of area shopping malls. For "Ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel. . . " (Moroni 8:37).

Why do we hold up profits instead of prophets? Why do we use big name Mormons as models for our youth—LDS pop personalities, millionaires, TV and movie stars, professional athletes? Where are the Church's Mother Teresas or Albert Schweitzers? Can we not learn service from the widowed and the suffering?

While Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and Orson Pratt taught the need to be "equal in earthly things," Utah today is

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fraught by one of the nation's greatest discrepancies between the Haves and the Have-Nots. The state has the fifth highest per capita number of millionaires while ranking forty-eighth in overall per capita income. Unbridled greed, unethical business practices, and unscrupulous wheelers and dealers have become the "false gods" President Spencer W. Kimball warned the Church about in recent decades.[1] No wonder President Ezra Taft Benson's messages have emphasized the twin problems of pride and selfishness in our day.

In contrast to the status seeking and materialism of the Wasatch Front, poor Saints in "less developed" nations seem to reflect a more Christlike lifestyle. Instead of seeking bigger houses (with pool, hot tub, and tennis court), the emphasis is on simplicity. Sharing is valued over income brackets and the gifts of the Spirit over a Rolex watch. Yet there is also much suffering.

GLOBAL UNDERDEVELOPMENT

THE gap between Utah, or the United States for that matter, and the Third World is tremendous. U.S. citizens spend $5 billion yearly on special diets to lower our caloric intake while 400 million poor people throughout the earth are severely undernourished. They suffer direct consequences of stunted physiques, mental retardation, and death. Some fourteen million children die each year of starvation or disease. The most deprived of the poor struggle simply to survive, eating from garbage dumps, sleeping in the streets. Well-to-do elites in the West pay big money to sip designer water from the Perrier bottling company, while nearly two billion people only have access to water contaminated by parasites and toxic chemicals.

During the past ten years some Americans greatly increased their wealth and today look back on a decade of low inflation, industrial productivity, and financial excess. While the rich become richer, the tragic reality is that the poor have suffered greatly. Third World nations presently stagger under $1.2 trillion in debt to First World banks. Forty countries of the Third World began 1990 worse off than they were in 1980. Per capita income in Latin America is now 9 percent below that of a decade ago. The standard of living in many regions is presently lower than it was twenty years ago. Today's GNP per capita in Sub-Saharan Africa has dropped back to what it was in 1960, while Latin America has slipped from $3,400 per capita in 1980 to approximately $2,900 today.

Within nations, the discrepancy between rich and poor continues to widen. The richest fifth of U.S. households enjoy an income ratio of 12:1 compared to the poorest fifth. The wealthy in Mexico are estimated to have an 18:1 ratio, while in Brazil the well-to-do have 28 times the income of the poorest 20 percent. Joblessness, illiteracy, poor health, and infant mortality become signs of global injustice. During the 1980s life expectancy declined in nine countries in Africa.

The numbers below paint a gloomy picture of the world's poor.

TABLE 1
PEOPLE ESTIMATED TO BE LIVING IN ABSOLUTE POVERTY, 1989

Region	Number of People (millions)*	Share of Total Population (percent)
Asia	675	25
Sub-Saharan Africa	325	62
Latin America	150	35
N. Africa and Middle East	75	28
World Total	1,225	23

*Estimates are best thought of as mid-points of ranges that extend 10 percent above and 10 percent below listed figures.

Source: Worldwatch Institute

Roughly speaking, absolute poverty is defined as the cluster of people in each region which only have per capita incomes of $50-$500 per year. These Third World societies are characterized by mass homelessness, malnutrition (meaning only one meal a day), squalid surroundings, a lack of formal education, and short life expectancy.

PLOTTING ZION: ALTERNATIVE PATHS TO COMMUNITY

IN spite of so much misery among the world's poor, there exist many efforts to experience joy and love through collective application of the scriptures. What follows is a brief highlighting of intriguing efforts by various groups to enact the essence of true Christianity rather than a Sunday-only gospel shell:

Europe

- In Hungary there is a growing Bush Movement (from Moses' burning bush) in which groups of five to fifteen Christians live very simply and refuse to do military service, thereby forcing the fathers to spend years in prison. Members donate 20 percent of their income for Third World causes and live in unity.
- The Franziskus Community in Austria is a small St. Francis of Assisi community which holds "all things in common," as the Book of Acts reports about the early saints. They put all wages into a collective purse and take out about $40 per month for personal living expenses. The emphasis is on giving, service, peace, and ecological living. Surviving on bare necessities, the group gives away half of its income to the poor. They raise sheep, spin wool, sell products, and grow gardens, meeting three times a day for worship.

Prospective members offer a third of their property at the outset when joining Franziskus. If all goes well, another third is donated after a year. If all parties agree after a second year of testing, the final third is turned over to the community.

- In Czechoslovakia and East Germany various small groups and households have attempted in recent years to reach back to their Reformation heritage of Mennonites, Moravian Brethren, Hutterites, and Quakers to create a more environmentally sensitive existence, a simpler lifestyle, a more integrated community of work and worship. Early Christianity, they feel, had everything in common as true communists. "Yes, they beat us to it," was the reaction of Hans Meier, Secretary of State for Religious Affairs of the German Democratic Republic. Descendants of the Hutterites now number 30,000 scattered throughout southern Canada and northern U.S. communal systems which are admired for their Christian virtue and economic success.
- In the Basque region of Northern Spain a fascinating movement toward economic democracy has developed since the 1950s. Centered in the town of Mondragon, fused by Catholic Social Doctrine and the ideas of Robert Owen and the Rochdale Pioneers, some 26,000 jobs have been created through a rigorous system of over a hundred worker-owned cooperatives. Our BYU research has focused on how labor representatives sit on each firm's board of directors, insuring a democratic, self-managed economy which is more or less equal, high tech, and widely empowering. Cooperative banks, supermarkets, housing, and schools round out this utopian venture which achieves significantly higher levels of productivity and profits than conventional capitalist firms in Spain.

BRIAN BEAN

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Latin America

SINCE the 1960s, many Catholic priests and bishops, and some Protestants, have articulated a vision of Christianity as "liberation theology." The movement today involves millions of Latinos in what is perhaps the most profound religious transformation since the Reformation. Essentially, this new perspective is a radical interpretation of the life and message of Jesus as seen through the eyes of the poor. Traditional Bible themes become action levers for society rather than mere doctrinal concepts. The emphasis is not on "What must I believe?" but "What is just?"

In liberation theology, Christian tenets are fused with personal and/or political activism, leading to praxis. Church leaders began to push for human rights, speaking out against local police and national armies which have slaughtered Latin America commoners, spirited away university students who were tortured and then killed as *desaparecidos*—the disappeared. Nuns, priests, and Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador died as martyrs for their views, usually at the hands of savage right-wing death squads. Such atrocities fueled the movement rather than silencing Christian reforms. Instead of looking the other way or aligning itself with elites, the new theology focused on *conscientizacao*—what the Brazilian Paulo Freire describes as consciousness raising. Aware of social and economic inequalities of society, church officials articulated a new critique of existing injustices and religious contradictions, leading to a dramatic change toward solidarity with the poor.

The vehicle for transforming the church from a passive institution which focuses on a future heaven for its people to a pragmatic set of strategies for action is the creation of *comunidades de base*, "base communities" of small lay-led groups of Christians. Consistent with Jesus' words, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20), groups of believers sit on barrio benches reading scriptures, often by the dim light of kerosene lamps. Rather than big cathedral gatherings in which elaborate rituals are conducted by luxuriously robed priests, the base experience emerges from ordinary men and women—farmers, workers, housewives, shopkeepers, peasants.

Liberation theology has given rise to various experiences of socio-political change: analysis of the structural causes of poverty and the development of new visions and pastoral strategies for transformation of the small Christian community. The form for such activity varies considerably but usually consists of a grassroots initiative to create small-scale groups or "living cells" within the larger institution of the church where warm personal relationships can flourish, injustice can be

attacked, and ordinary people can innovatively muster their faith in constructive change.

This populist religious movement has mushroomed in the last two decades. Key voices from within the Catholic establishment include Archbishop Dom Helder Camara from the slums of Rio de Janeiro, Cardinal Silva Henriquez of Chile, Bishop Leonidas Proano of Ecuador, the martyred Archbishop Romero of El Salvador, and, of course, Pope John Paul II. Thousands of nuns and priests from the poor *barrios* and *favelas* throughout Latin America have taken initiatives as change agents working from the grassroots, practicing what is referred to as "Feet-on-the-Ground Theology."

By the mid-1980s it is estimated there were some 80,000 *comunidades de base* in Brazil alone, involving 2.5 million members. Throughout Central and South America, as a whole, are some 160,000 small Christian groups with over 6 million participants. In recent years, the movement has spread dramatically into Asia and Africa where another 15,000 communities have been formed as the church in nucleus. Currently the LDS church is experimenting with "Home Group Meetings" in several African nations in which eight to ten families meet in one home (or yard) weekly for prayer, scriptures, religious reflection and application. They gather with other groups in a chapel only every three months because of the prohibitive transportation costs and the need to simplify the institutional church experience. The result is more of a *communidad de base* than it is a Wasatch Front Sunday with its various programs and organizational infrastructure.

The following several items suggest the range of Catholic liberation activities which function as tactics for utopian experimentation:

- Development of *Cursillos de Christiandad*, church renewal courses, by which to build brotherhood and sisterhood and overcome alcoholism, infidelity, and drug abuse.
- Pedagogical dialogue with groups of poor illiterates through which they become aware of their own dignity and begin to learn to read and write in order to transform the economic oppression in which they have always existed. Rather than remain passive victims of injustice, they detect generative words (such as land, corn, hoe, machete) and develop tools for planning how to gain control over their land and crops.
- Liberation theology has served as a mechanism in many cases for political confrontation between the masses of the church and military dictatorships in Bolivia, Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina, propelling those nations toward eventual democracy and the abolition of death squads.

More specific actions of particular base communities include the examples below:

- In Sao Mateus, Brazil, a small group of members tithe themselves in order to create a pool of money with which to purchase medicine for the sick and food for the children of the group, many of whom suffer from severe malnutrition.
- In Espirito Santo some forty black families meet weekly in five study groups to study the Bible and reinterpret the pathological conditions of their poverty. In the process, they have formed new associations to overcome dependency on the rich: a medical station, health campaigns, a mothers' club, a newsletter, and so on.
- In the urban regions of Latin America, communities have been formed among squatters trying to survive in city streets and shanty camps, leading to mutual support rather than individual "eye-for-an-eye" competition and crime. Street schools are created for homeless children, and rudimentary shelters are built to protect families from heat or cold.
- In the rural areas, peasants have used church cells to organize cooperative farms, collectively purchasing seed and fertilizer and, upon maturation of their crops, marketing in order to reduce costs and thereby lift the overall economic well-being of the group.

OVER the years that I have been a professor at BYU, there have been several Latin American Catholic students and a U.S. nun who sought master's degrees in organizational behavior (MOB) so they could more effectively transform their societies back home. The experience of one student illustrates the viability of liberation theology.

Ernesto and a group of about a dozen high school friends in Mexico formed a soccer club and began some social/religious activity while in their teens. A local priest served as their counselor and resource. Upon graduation, most of the group went on to college and obtained professional degrees. Eventually they married, making six couples. They met weekly for discussion, exploring ways to apply the scriptures in their lives. On the job, they pooled their salaries, thereby being able to purchase a car and other items which were owned collectively.

The group agreed to fund Ernesto's MOB education at BYU in the hope that added training would later spill over into the group's general well being. After two years as a superb student, he finished and returned to the group in Mexico. Careful saving and new, additional revenues enabled the group to buy a large plot of land outside Mexico City among the poorest of the nation's Indian population. The cell members built housing facilities, planted crops, gardens, and fruit trees. They started a poultry co-op with the Indians, taught gardening and how to bottle fruit. They constructed roads and an irrigation system and taught these skills to the natives. A wood shop and handicraft program were established to educate and market products of the poor.

Collective Christianity, education, and outside employment by some members of the group combined to create a well-functioning religious praxis. Community members learned the real meaning of charity, having all things in common, and this served to lift their Indian brothers and sisters. Such utopian ventures usually do not lead to a clear-cut success overnight, but rather an ongoing struggle, a climate of experimentation, within the context of sweat, tears, and prayer.

MORMONS AND POVERTY

CLEARLY there are parallels between the efforts of other churches to address economic injustices and the LDS experience. Joseph Smith's notion in the early days of the Restoration was that the Church which does not have the power to save its people in this life will never have the power to save them in the next. Among the early converts in this dispensa- tion, most were from the poor working class of Europe or small farmers in America.

Even before the Church was organized, the Lord warned, "Seek not for riches but for wisdom" (D&C 6:7). Later people were condemned for having "eyes full of greediness" (D&C 68:31), and the Law of Consecration was given as a mechanism for building a de facto Zion society. However, it did not seem to work. Not unlike the Wasatch Front today, early Mormon history was a period of speculation, fraudulent business deals, and materialistic scheming. Kirtland, Ohio, was eventually fractured by the pursuit of Mammon, and Jackson County, Missouri, became a battle ground for bogus business practices. Later in Nauvoo, Illinois, things were not much different.

After emigrating west to the Rocky Mountains, the United Order was established by Brigham Young and was manifest in several different forms—joint stock companies, worker cooperatives, and communal systems. Egalitarian logic pushed for a system in which "the poor shall be exalted in that the rich are made low" (D&C 104:16), because "it is not given that one man should possess that which is above another" (D&C 49:20).

In spite of varying degrees of success and failure, the notion of building a Zion society was basically rejected in favor of the capitalism of the Gentiles. Still today, free enterprise is apparently perceived as a useful tool for preying upon one's neighbors. It also serves to sear one's conscience as with a hot iron while many pursue the "cares of the world" (D&C 40:12).

However, all is not yet lost. It may yet be that the principles of Zion can be attained, if not in Utah then elsewhere in the new converts of the Third World. Two sites with which I have been involved suggest the potential for a more egalitarian Mormon community today, at least among the poor.

BRIAN BEAN

Why do we hold up profits instead of prophets? Why do we use big name Mormons as models for our youth—LDS pop personalities, millionaires, TV and movie stars, professional athletes? Where are the Church's Mother Teresas or Albert Schweitzers?

Mexico

AMONG the Saints in Mexico, a number of experiments have evolved with alternative approaches toward Zion. Back in the early 1980s, I was contacted by a group in Mexico City which had decided the pollution, crime, and economic stress was too unbearable. Some sixty LDS families were determined to apply for acceptance in the government's land reform program, known as the *ejidos*.

The request was granted and the group, including bishops and Relief Society leaders, men, women, and children moved to the next phase. About thirty families packed up and relocated to a parcel of land far out in the state of Tamaulipas, while the other thirty remained behind, agreeing to send approximately half of their monthly incomes to support the pioneers on the new *ejidos*. The plan was for the urban group to provide funds for the settlers during a period of transition, after which those who remained in Mexico City would quit their jobs and relocate to the *ejidos* as well.

The project worked remarkably well. The first group built simple houses, cleared the land, and planted crops. Although it was a tough, challenging struggle, others eventually joined them. Ultimately they established a general store, started a community school, and secured heavy equipment donated by North Americans for clearing a road into the area.

Some of my graduate students served with them over a several year period, helping them set up an effective community organization and teaching a systematic planning process. The group drew upon Book of Mormon concepts of Zion as well as the Law of Consecration framework described in the Doctrine and Covenants. Contrasting themselves with Utah Saints, one of the group declared, "We who are descendants of the Lamanites take the Book of Mormon teachings seriously."

Our BYU group also exposed the *ejidos* participants to materials about the Basque cooperative system of Mondragon in Spain and the Israeli kibbutz. Beyond teaching and consulting, O.B. graduate students learned to clear fields, hoe and plant beans, and other practical skills. They lived simply and gained a better understanding of the struggles of the poor.

Mutual awareness and the interchange of ideas and methods enriched both parties. We were successful in obtaining not only travel money and a subsistence income for the students, but also donations from other Anglos which enabled the *ejidos* group to build animal sheds, corrals, and buy young farm animals and chickens with which to enjoy milk, meat, and eggs. Hardwood trees in the region, which had been cut for clearing, were burned to make charcoal which could then be sold in the nearest town.

This "plotting Zion" was an arduous task which evolved over a period of years. The Mexican Saints learned how complicated building a new community is, while the BYU group came to realize the limitations of outside intervention in the Third World. Some of the *ejidos* group eventually abandoned Tamaulipas and returned to the challenges of metropolitan life, having discovered that no utopia is easy. However, in the years since, other groups have launched their own experiments throughout Mexico with rural pioneering.

A mass movement of hundreds of thousands of LDS in Latin America has not yet occurred. But the experimentation and creation of prototypes during the 1980s has begun providing the seeds for a future Zion on a larger scale.

The Philippines

SINCE late 1988, I have been involved in a different approach to Zion building in the Philippines. There are a number of similarities with Mexico—historic domination by Spain, abject poverty, high unemployment and underemployment, numerous Spanish cultural influences, Catholic religious traditions, etc. Both nations have suffered tremendously from economic and political corruption.

Yet significant differences also exist. Instead of the Aztec ancestry of Mexico, Filipinos are largely descendants of Chinese/Malay and Islamic heritage. The Philippines consist of 58 million people scattered over 7,000 islands. There is a relatively high degree of literacy and education at least in the urban areas. English and Tagalog are the two main tongues along with nine other languages and eighty-seven dialects. The United States controlled the Philippines in this century until 1946, and it is still used for basing U.S. armed forces.

At current birth rates, the Filipino population will double in the next twenty-nine years. Two decades ago it was the number two economy of Asia; now it is second from the bottom. Today's minimum wages are officially $2 a day for agricultural workers. Through the 1980s, 12 million Filipinos joined the ranks of the absolute poor. One third of Manila's 8 million residents are squatters. The "informal economy" of underground businesses became the primary way of survival for millions of Filipinos.

With this context, the condition of LDS converts suggests major challenges for the Church. Missionary work only began there in the 1960s, and by the early 1970s the Church projected the number of members would reach 35,000 by 1990. Today the total LDS population exceeds 220,000, seven times the prediction. Recent surveys of the Filipino Saints reveals that they are poorer than the general population. Twenty percent are squatters and 60 percent have no running water in their houses. The Saints' political sentiments vary: some favor Marcos and the military, a few are sympathetic to the New Peoples' Army of leftist guerrillas, and many voted for Corazon Aquino and her centrist policies.

A group of graduate students and I have been attempting to understand why LDS Filipinos suffer so much, and we have begun exploring possible economic alternatives. As in many other Third World situations, our members are trapped in a societal web of structural imbalance. A small but wealthy elite control most land and capital while the masses have only their labor. The economy is characterized by declining productivity, limited resources, and inappropriate technology. Many LDS achieve only seasonal employment, and large numbers lack access to basic services—electricity, health care, phones, water, sufficient caloric intake, and garbage disposal. Quantitative Church growth has been phenomenal, yet qualitative improvements in one's way of life are largely missing. Many experience high expectations after baptism about new gospel blessings, yet the destitution continues. If Gandhi was correct in saying that "poverty is the worst form of violence," Mormons in the Philippines are suffering greatly.

In our field research, however, we learned that in the past several years a number of local member initiatives have begun as strategies for a Zion-like economy.

- A Chinese merchant and regional representative owns several handicraft stores. Approximately one-third of the items he sells are made by Church members in cottage industries—carvings, shells, dolls, and so on.
- One stake has created a consumer co-op to purchase food wholesale and distribute it to the membership.
- A group of fifteen saints in Cebu has raised 37,000 pesos and set up a stone cutting operation, subcontracting work from a larger company.
- A marketing co-op was started in Paranaque, a Manila suburb, to sell products made in members' cottage industries.
- Some members collectively bought land in the 1970s to create a communal system, but they could not agree on rules to govern the system and the idea collapsed.
- A group of employees from the Presiding Bishop's Office, the temple, and the Church Education System have formed a credit co-op, pledged 500 pesos each to join, and now contribute 2 percent of their monthly gross income through payroll deduction. The idea is to encourage members to save, and they now have a pool of capital from which people can borrow at 5 percent interest.
- Two American members belong to a U.S. women's club in Manila that is encouraging Filipinos to start up micro enterprises in which they will make crafts and ship them to one of the women's fathers who owns a U.S. company.
- The mission president in Davao is planning to remain in that part of the Philippines after his release and help new co-ops such as the pineapple fiber co-op in Cagayen de Oro.

The group has started making paper and fine material for kimonos to market in Japan.

- Many members are very poor and have little, if any, income. In a number of cases they function only in the informal economy and make ends meet by bartering goods and services. Some pay tithing and fast offering in kind only and Church leaders have come to accept such donations.
- Pasay First Ward began a program two years ago to help poor members. A resource committee was established to work on welfare needs. All employed members were asked to bring a handful of rice to church each Sunday, and when they shopped for food, to buy an extra can of goods to also donate. The unemployed were also invited to sacrifice, bringing old clothes, broken toys, or whatever. Everyone was asked to go through their home and take to the chapel everything they no longer used. Members without jobs would go to the church, repair, and paint these used items. A record was kept of time spent. With earned credits they could then take out what they needed from this storehouse of goods. The result? Within a year no more members needed fast offering support; those without jobs had started micro businesses. The idea is now spreading to other wards and stakes in a program called *Isang dakot na bigas*—a handful of rice.
- One bishopric arranged for a $600 loan with which to hire sixty Relief Society sisters to make shell lamp shades.
- The district presidency in Tuguegarao have established a Welfare Assistance Foundation "by inspiration of the Holy Ghost after a long and prayerful consideration by the leaders." Their feeling is that the present economic crisis in the Philippines is affecting the members adversely and severely and that something has to be done by the Church. The presidency is appealing for funds from United States members to provide livelihood ventures and employment for needy Saints. "What is pulling us back is the severe dearth of capital to keep the foundation a viable pillar and instrument of the Lord," says their letter, "Time is of the essence."

BRIAN BEAN

The experiences of Church leaders in Mexico and the Philippines suggest fascinating implications for "plotting zion" as we enter the twenty-first century.

WHERE FROM HERE?

THE experiences of Church leaders in Mexico and the Philippines suggest fascinating implications for "plotting Zion" as we enter the twenty-first century. Various forces seem to be pushing for change within the kingdom at this time in history, perhaps more than ever before. Some of these include:

(1) an outpouring of the Spirit on Church leaders which is manifest through a more sensitive tone in conference talks and official policies—such as missionaries spending one day each week in basic Christian/community service;

(2) media coverage of the wretched conditions of the world's poor as evidenced by extensive press and television programs on the plight of America's homeless, and starvation in Ethiopia;

(3) pressure from the rank and file members who pleaded that Church headquarters do something to help Africa during the famine of the mid-1980s (not only letters flowed to Salt Lake but some sent their tithing to Catholic Relief Services or CARE and still expected temple recommend renewals);

(4) the inability of the old Church welfare system to provide comprehensive service even along the Wasatch Front these days (costing $40 million annually and still not doing the job);

(5) Mormonism has arrived at the end of carrying the gospel into the "easy" countries of the West; in the future it will be a challenge to get the Church into non-aligned and Third World nations. Salt Lake must now do things to show that Mormons really care, to change old stereotypes, and move beyond direct proselyting to confront the question of what the Church is willing to do to make a contribution for societal improvement;

(6) the changing demographics of the Church during the next twenty years clearly suggest that the LDS membership will be between 12 to 15 million members, leaving the U.S. membership but a small minority of that total (and Utah a mere drop in the bucket).

All the above factors propel Church officials to see and prepare for a very different picture of Mormonism around the globe. Wasatch Front culture, politics, mores, and values will be discarded as a more international approach to Church policy becomes imperative.

Table 2 (next page) captures the flavor of contrasting paradigms within the Church as this shift toward LDS globalization deepens in the next several years.

This changing paradigm, parts of which are already explicit

while other aspects remain subtle, holds significant implications for the emergence of Zion in the Third World. Evidence is beginning to mount that these changes are already occurring. For example, the problems of tens of thousands of LDS blacks in Brazil brought the issue of priesthood for all worthy males to a head in 1978, and since then numerous international and mixed racial leaders have been called to prominent positions of authority. A number of efforts to plan and increase temporal welfare projects (business ventures, stake farms, etc.) out of Salt Lake for overseas Saints have been abject failures. Now such projects are being implemented at the grassroots levels, often through contracts with non-LDS private voluntary organizations such as Africare, Technoserve, and Katalysis.

Area presidencies, after receiving insufficient help from Church headquarters, are developing their own strategies. For instance, Church leaders in the Philippines see parallels between Saints in the early history of Utah and the destitute condition of LDS Filipinos today—factors which prompt the leaders in Manila to encourage cooperative economic programs like those of the Mormon pioneers. In early 1990, a proposal from officers in Frankfurt, Germany, was approved by the First Presidency, allowing them to design and conduct a humanitarian effort in Romania through voluntary donations by LDS members in Western Europe.

Such moves are not without problems, however. The new budget program for wards and stakes which began this year has met with considerable resistance by some bishops and wealthy U.S. leaders who want to retain favored status through their own stake and ward funds so they can buy the highest quality organ or send their youth to Disneyland or on expensive river rafting trips in Colorado. As soon as the policy was announced, some stake officials in Provo raced to clean out their accounts by purchasing luxurious brass chandeliers, Persian rugs, and expensive sofas and wing-back chairs for chapel foyers. Other members were offended that fancier Utah foyers would take priority over the building of much needed rural chapels in the Third World.

Personal attitudes are even more problematic. I know one stake president in Provo who makes over $100,000 a year, yet openly brags that he never gives money to beggars in the street

TABLE 2

ASPECTS OF MORMON GLOBALIZATION

Traditional	Emerging
Church is to primarily preach the gospel and do temple work.	Church has a basic responsibility to serve others.
Exclusive care for the temporal needs of our own (such as earthquake relief).	Brother's keeper; missionaries provide community service, vocational and educational training, broader relief.
Concerns emphasize white American middle class—nuclear family, male head of home with a job and decent education.	New concern for realities of black and brown cultures—the poor, uneducated, female head of home.
Means of building the kingdom: door-to-door tracting, high technology (satellites), expensive look-alike Utah designed chapels.	New means include community organizing, low technology, informal economy, and inexpensive rural chapels.
Key values: percentage of attendance and growth, symbols of success, appearance, status, self-perpetuation, American flag.	New values: public service, charity, humility, equality, the heart rather than appearance, less ethnocentric.
Instrumental motives—do good things in order to heighten the Church's reputation and gain more converts.	Altruistic—do good for the sake of virtue itself.
Top-down planning and implementation: Utah-called and based experts who design the program, pull the strings, and run it all accompanied by a big budget and much fanfare.	Bottom-up, grassroots decentralization: Let local members in various regions of the world develop their own approach using indigenous methods and native skills; work quietly in a low cost, trial and error approach, one step at a time.
LDS church goes it alone, avoiding association with other groups or churches.	Commonality—interfaith collaboration on various causes (such as with Catholic Relief Services in Africa).
Offerings: all monies flow into ecclesiastical programs—tithing for missions, chapels, Utah member welfare, etc.	New channels for Humanitarian Fund—volunteer donations from special fasts to build a parallel stream of resources for community service.

"unless rarely prompted by the Holy Ghost" or his wife. Elsewhere, an older couple wanted to retire and join the Peace Corps to help the world but were berated by their bishop for not going on a mission instead. A student recently told me that her M.D. father was attempting to quit his private practice and go help LDS members in the Third World. Since the Church was not responsive, the doctor has begun to explore how he and his wife could serve under the auspices of a Seventh Day Adventist program.

In spite of such difficulties, improvements will come. In contrast to the top down, hierarchically-based official programs which emanate from Utah, Third World paths to Zion emerge from below, stress the good of the community, and can be characterized best as a movement rather than an edict. The outcome of such activities reflect the validity of Mother Teresa's observation that there is deep happiness and peace to be experienced in abject poverty, for "the real poor know what is joy."

By getting involved, Saints in Utah may yet learn from our humble brothers and sisters in the Third World how to really grasp a vision of Zion as a system of love. Their voices may help us overcome the cultural milieu of competition, selfishness, power, and arrogance in which we now exist. Perhaps we can come to esteem others as ourselves and become less insulated from the unfortunate. If we can change the premises of acquiring and achieving, we just might be able to create an authentic Zion society here in the future.

BRIAN BEAN

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WHAT CAN WE DO?

GIVEN the grassroots efforts of serious Christians in the Third World to apply scriptural injunctions to their lives, families, and communities, the kinds of developments reviewed above will likely continue to multiply. Feet-on-the-ground theology, pragmatically moving toward having all things in common, experimenting with collective economic systems in order to build religious solidarity and lift the well-being of the group—all are likely to increase regardless of the Utah church.

However, conventional Wasatch Front thinking still needs to change: especially the assumption that if one serves a mission at age nineteen, goes to college, marries in the temple, pays tithing, serves in various callings, and helps out on the stake farm, one's mortal purpose is thereby fulfilled. These acts may be necessary but they are not sufficient conditions for complete gospel living. We need to look beyond our own provincial circumstances to the great needs of the poor—the bare survival situation in which millions within the Church lack basic housing, food, and jobs. A few suggestions for building a Zion community follow.

BYU's Potential Role

GROWING numbers of voices raise concern about the Provo campus becoming an elite training ground for future American yuppies. An increasing debate is whether Church tithing funds should be used to educate a smaller and smaller part of the Church's U.S. youth while international candidates cannot obtain entrance. The time may be ripe to create a target population from the lands of new Church growth, for young people unable to obtain quality higher education who could be sent to BYU on scholarships, trained, and prepared to return to their native lands and have a real impact in home governments and corporations, as well as build a skilled cadre of Church leaders. Undergraduate and masters programs could allocate a certain proportion of slots for qualified Third World students. For instance, imagine the possible impact of 2,000 Latin American students returning from a BYU education to their home countries and what that could mean after ten to twenty years of building a critical mass of expertise and influence in politics, education, and the economy. Then consider the same for Africa, Eastern Europe, and Southeast Asia.

All this could be further leveraged through a serious BYU effort to expand programs for U.S. students in international development, agriculture, community organizing, and small business. The Marriott School of Management, for example, has 130 to 140 MBAs graduating yearly, 75 percent of whom speak a foreign language. Why not channel them into international careers as a leavening force throughout the world instead of sending them off to Fortune 500 corporations or Wall Street? Recently a number of Provo undergraduates have begun exploring the possibility of creating a BYU student peace corps through which Mormon youth might obtain six-month or one-year internships in Egypt, Greece, etc. Although

it would take careful planning and cultural preparation, such a venture makes much more sense for the Church than the current distortion of the motto at the campus entrance: "Enter to learn, go forth to earn."

A further extension of changes at BYU would be to utilize the Church's satellite system for more than twice-a-year conference instruction by harnessing that technology for BYU professors to teach courses and offer degrees in remote regions throughout the earth. Imagine converts in Ghana, Guatemala, or a Navajo reservation studying through televised courses until they obtain a bachelor's degree from BYU.

The Institutional Church

LDS leaders at various levels undoubtedly need to become more sensitive to the problems and potential for building Zion globally. Bishops, stake presidents, Relief Society presidents, regional representatives, mission presidents, and area presidencies can and should become more involved in searching for new models. The bulk of innovation throughout Mormon history has come from the trenches, not the headquarters. Sunday School, Primary, Mutual, the welfare plan, stake missions, seminary and institutes were all grassroots experiments before becoming legitimate policies. They grew out of particular needs and circumstances which served as catalysts for creative problem solving. Today, globalization and greater diversity of the Church make bottom-up innovation an even greater imperative.

Church headquarters can do much in facilitating the movement toward Zion. Certain policies and programs, such as the new more equitably distributed financial system, have already begun. The Humanitarian Services Fund, begun in the mid-1980s, is another useful step in this direction. It has provided critical material aid in cases of hurricane, drought, floods, earthquakes, and starvation. Volunteer services to channel teaching, medical services, nutrition, employment counseling, and refugee assistance have been attempted with mixed success throughout much of the past decade. Some ninety long-term Third World development projects have also been launched—digging wells, small farming, credit co-ops, and so on. Collaborative efforts with government and private organizations, other churches and foundations have led to much good.

Yet the opportunities to do much more engulf the Church of the 1990s. A greater effort with even a few professional staffers could geometrically heighten the impact of such programs. Why not a Mormon soup kitchen in every major U.S. city? What would the impact be of 10,000 older American couples volunteering a year or two in the Third World—serving in educational institutions, rural medical clinics, and so forth? I have a sixty-three-year-old friend who is semi-retired from his construction business. He puts up a couple of homes each season and spends the rest of the year watching sports on ESPN. If the Church were to mount a "service mission" program, he and his wife could help returned missionaries in Chile or Mexico start small construction co-ops. We have hundreds of thousands of potential volunteers who would respond if invited.

Even now, Humanitarian Services could do more but most of the Church is unaware that the fund even exists. Some of us have donated money to the Armenian earthquake victims only to later discover our contributions ended up in a ward budget because the local bishopric did not know where to send it. A simple letter to all ecclesiastical officials and a new donation form with a Humanitarian Fund designation would alleviate the confusion. Many inactive LDS would donate, even though they might not pay tithing for temple or missionary work, because they could be confident the funds would go to the needy in other lands.

Private Organizations

ANOTHER strategy for strengthening the Third World would be for the Church to launch its own private voluntary organization to help the poor, an idea which is now being seriously developed in Salt Lake. But even after that happens there is much we can do as members to labor with non-LDS institutions doing work in various regions of the globe. Many Mormon professionals now hold significant positions in such organizations as Laubach Literacy International, Choice, the InterAmerican Foundation, the World Bank, United States Agency for International Development, and other programs. Several new nonprofit foundations based in Salt Lake City have been started to serve the poor in Latin America (the Andean Children's Fund) and Africa (*Ouelessebougou*).

In some cases these charitable groups have been initiated by U.S. returned missionaries who, being able to speak native languages, desire to return to the countries they once served and donate time and educational or medical skills. Working through such organizations allows service to be done independently from the Church, thereby avoiding tax and legal liabilities which would otherwise be problematic. These institutions also free the new organization from the control and red tape of LDS bureaucracy.

New institutions for helping Saints in the Philippines are illustrative. One was started by an M.D. mission president in 1988 who desired to perform reconstructive surgery for poor Filipinos and enlisted other skilled physicians to help. Called Mabuhay Deseret Foundation, this organization has blessed the lives of many not only medically but has given people a new, more positive self-image and, in some cases, vocational training and new jobs as well.

Another organization, the International Enterprise Development Foundation, grew out of the work of a BYU project we started over a year ago in the Philippines. To strengthen the life quality of Filipino people, we created a technical assistance center in Manila to help street vendors, family firms, and small businesses grow and become more productive. Business councils, cooperatives, and other new structures will strengthen the Saints and create more employment, providing spillover benefits to the larger Filipino society. Two more centers will be

created in other islands of the Philippines in 1991-92. They hold great promise for creating sustainable economic systems which utilize indigenous technologies to empower the poor. Within four to five years we plan to create similar centers in Africa, South America, and other regions which will ensure long-term self reliance and community transformation.

Ventures such as these reflect the spirit of Doctrine & Covenants 58:26-29: "It is not meet that I should command in all things . . . men [and women] should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will . . . for the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves."

BRIAN BEAN

Ultimately, moving toward Zion ends up in the realm of the personal, the self; rather than waiting for the institutional church to adopt a contemporary version of the United Order.

The Individual Level

ULTIMATELY, moving toward Zion ends up in the realm of the personal, the self; rather than waiting for the institutional Church to adopt a contemporary version of the United Order. One hundred fifty years of Mormon history reveals a pattern of hesitation if not resistance to communitarian endeavors. Yet within the humble corners of the kingdom are Saints who live the essence of consecration and who willingly share what little they have with others—not only in the Third World or on tribal reservations but even within the center stakes of the Church. Over the last decade I have met a number of unassuming people who continually pray for a restoration of the practice of consecration and stewardship. In addition to international Saints, I think of certain LDS graduate students around the United States, and farmers in central Utah who strive to raise their families with a practice of having "all things in common."

In my own experience, every day becomes an explicit choice point. Do I head to the mall and purchase designer clothes or another suit? Should I buy an expensive new car, or a bigger high status home? Or can I live with what we have and give the money to the poor? I know a number of families who have experienced a great joy through rejecting the conspicuous consumption patterns so rampant around us and live more simply. Such a lifestyle is not a sacrifice but an opportunity, a real satisfaction. I have found that personal commitments along this line grow out of a lifetime of Zion values and the promptings of the Spirit to act consistently with the scriptures. It all leads to a sense of genuine liberation.

There is a deep inner fulfillment that occurs as one writes to a bishop communicating a willingness to consecrate everything one has and/or owns to the Church. We can realize a certain peace by consecrating our time, talents, and services to the Lord and actually carrying it out in everyday life—not just stating a readiness if one is called to resettle Missouri.

It may be that the Church will never demand the institutional practice of Zion-building, but the practice can still be carried out on an individual or family level. Zion building derives from a voluntary, personal offering to strengthen the poor. Such actions come from within rather than an official assignment or a Church manual. In the end, it becomes not an intent to maneuver or scheme for changes within institutional Mormonism, but the alignment and dedication of oneself to the disenfranchised, the poorest of the poor.

Through my life's experiences I have come to understand the words of the hymn "I Walked Today Where Jesus Walked" to signify something quite different from the occasional Mormon interpretation—we ought to take an expensive, BYU-sponsored tour to the Holy Land and retrace Christ's travels in ancient Palestine. I see a different idea. To walk "where Jesus walked" is to step into the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro, to assist *squatters* in Calcutta, to labor among the residents who struggle to survive on Smokey Mountain, a huge, overflowing dump on the outskirts of Manila.

Plotting Zion at this point in Church history thus becomes a process of individual commitment. Perhaps Brigham Young's prophetic utterance back in 1855 best captures the present situation.

> [The Law of Consecration] . . . was one of the first commandments or revelations given to this people after they had the privilege of organizing themselves as a Church, as a body, as the kingdom of God on the earth. I observed then, and I now think that it will be one of the last revelations which the people will receive into their hearts and understandings, of their own free will and choice, and esteem it as a pleasure, a privilege, and a blessing unto them to observe and keep most holy.[2]

NOTES

1. Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969), 40-42.

2. *Journal of Discourses*, 2:299.