

*I believe letting group exclusivity go to the point of siege mentality  
was a mistake then and is now. We need to ask: Unity with whom?  
Unity against what? Why? How?*

# GETTING UP A HISTORY OF MONROE: THE LONG SHADOW OF THE UNITED ORDER

*Karl C. Sandberg*

**M**ONROE, "THE LITTLE GREEN VALLEY," IS today a town of about 1700 people, ten miles south of Richfield in Sevier County, Utah. It sits quietly against the east mountains, five miles off the main highway. A creek running down the canyon supplies water for the town, and the canyon sends down cooling breezes every evening during the summer months. The population has turned over several times since the town was established, with families moving in or out, but there is still a core of fourth and fifth generation citizens. It is an ordinary town, but its story is an interesting one, a story of building and rebuilding within Mormonism, a story of the interplay of the forces of unity and division in the forming of a community.

FIGURING THINGS OUT  
*The Cultural Archaeology of a Town*

**T**HE history of Monroe began in the cold of a gray and windy day toward the end of March 1941, when I moved there at the age of ten. Why did I move to Monroe? Well, I wanted to be near my family, and they were moving there to get a second start on a farm after having been dispossessed during the Great Depression. The town was first settled in 1865, then temporarily abandoned due to Indian wars in 1867, and then resettled permanently in 1871, so the

stuff of history was already there—the people, the events, the place. But the act of *doing* history is always personal and happens only when we ask questions of the past to understand where we are in the present, and thus, for me, the history of Monroe began in March 1941.

An initial geographical survey, with the aid of local informants, apprised me of the fact that I now lived in Monkey Town, the area south of Monroe proper. The area northwest of the town was called Gravel Bed, obvious because of the gravel streaks running through most of the farms, and the area just north of town was Frog Town, because of the adjacent river bottoms. But Monkey Town? The answer came only later, with the aid of historical burrowing.

My first project, however, was to do a synchronic anthropological analysis of the town, which yielded the observation that Monroe was divided into two cultures, the Church culture and the Pool Hall culture. The Church culture met in the cream brick and stone building of the South Ward built around the turn of the century, large enough for stake conference, or in the dark brick double building of the North Ward, where movies were shown on Friday and Saturday nights. It was here that we went on Sunday mornings, wearing our best clothes over a freshly washed skin, to rest from our labors, hear the words and sing the hymns, and occasionally commune with the Spirit. The pool hall on Main Street, or on Sunday morning its adjuncts in the cool of some well-appointed potato pit or horse shed, served as the gathering place for other men to rest from their labors, talk about the government, and occasionally commune with the spirits. I moved in both cultures, attending the meetings at church and working for those of the pool hall mileau, men who kept their word, worked hard, built their haystacks square, and even practiced the theological virtue of

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KARL C. SANDBERG is DeWitt Wallace professor emeritus of French and Humanities, Macalester College, St. Paul, Mn. Versions of this paper were given at the 1996 annual meeting of the Mormon History Association in Snowbird, Utah, and at the 1996 Sunstone Symposium in Salt Lake City (tape #SL96-354).

voting Republican.

Further refinement of my methodology, which consisted of continuing to keep my eyes open, led me to notice over time that there was a third division of the population that did not fit in either category, people who did not attend the services held in any of those edifices. They were among the civic-minded citizens who belonged to the Lions Club (for the men) or the Literose Club (for the women). They were educators or merchants, or were prominent in city, county, or state politics. They were among those that gave the town its flavor and balanced tone, for even though about 96 percent of the citizenry were nominally Mormon, the Church Militant, or more correctly the Church Active, was in a distinct minority. Therefore, the Church did not dominate the town, but rather moved as it could by persuasion, one element among several others in a pluralistic society.

As I grew more familiar with the town, I came to realize that many people of the third group were somehow connected to the family of one of the first settlers, a Welsh immigrant by the name of Walter Jones. And thereby hangs a tale, for which we have to go back to an event that by my time had been lost from the lore of the town, that is, the establishment and disestablishment of the United Order in Monroe from 1874 to 1876—in my growing up years in Monroe, I heard a fair amount of gossip that had stayed fresh for forty years but heard nothing about the United Order.

Now to get the whole picture of communitarianism in nineteenth-century Mormonism you should read *Building the City of God* by Arrington, Fox, and May.<sup>1</sup> The study of United Order at Monroe, which was only one of the some 222 orders that were established at about the same time,<sup>2</sup> will not add anything new or significant to the general picture that has already been so ably drawn. Nevertheless, when I returned to the town two summers ago for a high school class reunion and happened upon a copy of the minutes of the United Order in Monroe,<sup>3</sup> it started to appear that the Order had cast a long shadow upon the town and raised some questions which are today just as fresh as the gossip that had made the town interesting.

#### THE MIND THAT MOVED A THOUSAND HANDS

*The continuance of the Kingdom depended on remaining separate from the Gentile culture.*

**A**LTHOUGH the United Order of Monroe was influenced by economic forces generated elsewhere in the world and was formed by the several cultures of the immigrants who gathered there, the moving power behind it was the vision of Brigham Young. It was not a vision opened up by heavenly messengers but rather one which grew out of his life's experiences, reaching back to his earliest years and growing by increments. Living in the most meager circumstances in his childhood, he knew what it was to be poor and what it took to become self-sufficient. In an artisan culture where most of the tasks of life could be performed by each individual, he learned what was involved in building, whether it

be a piece of furniture, a house, a barn, or a community. Moreover, during his missionary years in England, he had lived and preached among the working class of the newly industrialized cities of England, the same ones whose grinding poverty and ruthless exploitation Friedrich Engels saw and described in *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. Whereas in 1844 Engels turned to the vision of a socialist state in conjunction with Karl Marx in the *Communist Manifesto*, Brigham Young started to organize emigration facilities to gather the willing Latter-day Saints out of England and Europe to join the Nauvoo Mormons, in whom the idea of the Kingdom of God on earth was running ever deeper. In a new land with all previous authorities and bonds passed away, all things were possible, perhaps even the kind of community seen temporarily in the Primitive Church, where "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things in common" (Acts 4:32). It was, in fact, this kind of communal order that had been in Joseph Smith's mind nearly from the beginning and that Brigham felt an obligation to establish.<sup>4</sup>

All things were possible, but, as it turned out, not right away. Some things required persistence, and a little more. When the attempt to set up a system of consecration of property to the Church failed in the 1850s,<sup>5</sup> Brigham Young pursued self-sufficiency through establishing the largely successful cooperative movement of the 1860s, including a co-op store in every ward in the territory which would enable the members of the co-op to buy collectively and receive dividends of the profit.<sup>6</sup>

But there was more to Brigham Young's vision of the United Order than a self-sufficient community united within itself for mutual help. It was also intended as a means of protection against enemies. Brigham had gone through the searing experience of expulsion from Missouri and Nauvoo under the threat of extermination, which honed in him a sense of the need of absolute unity and loyalty in facing foes from within and without. And what appeared indispensable to him in the late 1860s was unity against the Gentile incursion—the coming of the railroad meant the end of the geographic isolation of the past twenty years, an event big with peril for the establishing of the temporal Kingdom of God. In fact, in his mind, the continuance of the Kingdom depended on remaining separate from the larger Gentile culture by becoming self-sufficient. Missouri and Nauvoo had set the course for the remainder of his life in Utah and often created a garrison mentality in him and those around him.

We can understand something of the mind set of Brigham Young and his entourage by examining their reaction to the Godbeite movement of the late 1860s and 70s. It will be remembered that this "heresy" consisted principally of differing views on economic policies and freedom of individual expression, as expressed in articles in the newly founded *Utah Magazine*. Said George A. Smith, first counselor to Brigham Young:

Now brethren, . . . we know that all the world are



Monroe South Ward chapel



Pool hall building, now a pharmacy

*Monroe was divided into two cultures, the Church culture and the Pool Hall culture. A third division did not fit in either category, although many were connected to the first settlers. And thereby hangs the town's tale of the United Order.*

against us. We know that every court, sect, and denomination, and all political organizations are for our destruction. . . . And here rises up some men to unite with the world in getting up a division. . . . [In Kirtland] numbers of Elders, embracing the highest order of the Priesthood, took the ground that they had a right to question [Joseph's] right to dictate the church in temporal things. They acknowledged that Joseph was a prophet, but they said he had gone into darkness and fallen. . . . The same tune is heard over again. "Oh, I have such confidence in Bro. Brigham! Such confidence in these brethren. Such confidence, kindness, and good feeling. I only want to cut their throats! . . . Latter-day Saints do not fellowship a man who draws the sword to destroy them; do not fellowship a man who invites all hell to come here and cut our throats. . . . I think there is a studied scheme to destroy this Church and break it up; and if ever there were a strong evidence of apostasy it is in that protest [i.e. the articles in the *Utah Magazine*]."<sup>7</sup>

This notion of the unified Saints as a phalanx against a world of enemies intent on the destruction of Mormonism was far from the totality of Brigham's vision of the world or of the United Order, but it was a real part. The United Order was a system that from one perspective may be regarded as [Young's] supreme effort to checking disintegrating forces developing within and without the Church, forces that threatened the economic and political independence of the Mormon people.<sup>8</sup>

Consequently, encouraged by the success of the cooperative movement in Brigham City in withstanding the Panic of '73, Brigham Young made the decision during the winter of 1873-74 to go one step further and establish the United Order of Enoch throughout the communities of southern Utah.<sup>9</sup>

#### THE GRAMMAR OF THE UNITED ORDER

*Property—mine, thine, ours, or its?*

AND so on 26 April 1874, Joseph A. Young, eldest son of Brigham Young and presiding elder over the settlements in Sevier County, effected the organization of a United Order in Monroe. The members, who had been cast together from different cultures and several different language backgrounds,<sup>10</sup> were baptized into the Order, probably using the formula that had been used at St. George:

Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you for the remission of your sins, for the renewal of your covenants with God and your brethren, and for the observance of the rules of the holy United Order, which have been read in your hearing, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.<sup>11</sup>

The Order in Monroe, using the model and constitution of the St. George Order, did not stipulate having every kind of property in common and taking all meals in common. Rather, each family had its own garden, and on coming into the Order, a member would transfer control of his productive property (not his total property) to the board. In turn, he would receive the value in capital stock and agree to be directed by the central authority, consisting of a president and a board of directors, who would determine policy and assign work responsibility. Some laborers would be assigned to specific specialized tasks, such as tailoring, shoemaking, or blacksmithing, and nominal wages would be agreed upon to be entered as credits on the books of the Order and against which members would be able to draw in the future. Appraisers were to be appointed to set the value of property coming into the Order or going out. Members could not go outside of the Order to work except by direct permission of the board. Superintendents selected by the directors or by the laborers in each class would direct the work of the respective trades and the operation of

farms and stores. Members of the Order and their families could draw upon the products of the Order for their sustenance. Furthermore, any member could accumulate increased capital stock in the Order by contributing more than he withdrew.<sup>12</sup> The St. George model stated that a member withdrawing after five years could take out one-half of the capital credited to his name, with the balance to remain within the Order, both as a penalty against withdrawal and as a return to the combined labors of the remaining members.<sup>13</sup> In the Monroe group, the time commitment was extended to twenty-five years.<sup>14</sup>

During the first summer four foremen were appointed, each in charge of a twenty-acre field. The members of the Order sowed wheat and oats, looked for land for sugar cane, undertook to build corrals, opened up new land, and started to make plans for a store and a school. When the chance came to do work for the railroad, the Order sent eleven men and teams, the payment to be received by the Order and the men to be credited for their time. The same kind of arrangement was made in connection with the contract for carrying the mail. Thus, the Order enhanced its cash flow for necessary purchases.

In September of 1874, the first withdrawals from the Order began—Jeppa Nielsen had thought it over and decided he did not want to be bound for twenty-five years.<sup>15</sup> Over the next year some 200 acres would be taken out of the Order, but that much would be put in from other sources. At its peak, after one year, the Order consisted of 268 members, including children.<sup>16</sup>

When the minutes of the Order end in October 1876, the Order has met with difficulties, but is still planning for the future, and at first glance seems to be prospering. They have just put up a sawmill, although the water has dropped so much that they cannot saw anything until next spring. They are planning to put up a grist mill and finish the shingle-making machine, and they are investigating the possibility of getting their own tannery.<sup>17</sup> In the public meetings there are still people who bear strong testimony of the Order and consider it part of the gospel.

At the same time, we can sense forces moving that foredoom the Order to a short existence. A sharp division is apparent in the community. On the one hand, there are many harsh tales circulating about the board of directors. On the other, rations are being stopped on those who go off to work on their own account without the permission of the board, or on those who are feeding “enemies of the Order.” In the last entry in the minutes, the stake president visiting from Richfield speaks darkly of the forces “preponderating against the United Order.”<sup>18</sup> Then the Minutes stop, and we must assume that the Monroe Order broke up shortly thereafter. By the time Brigham Young died in 1877, only a small handful of the 222 Orders organized in April–May 1874 were still functioning. Soon after his death, his economic policies, including the ones contested by the Godbeites, were discontinued or substantially changed.

#### WHAT WENT WRONG?

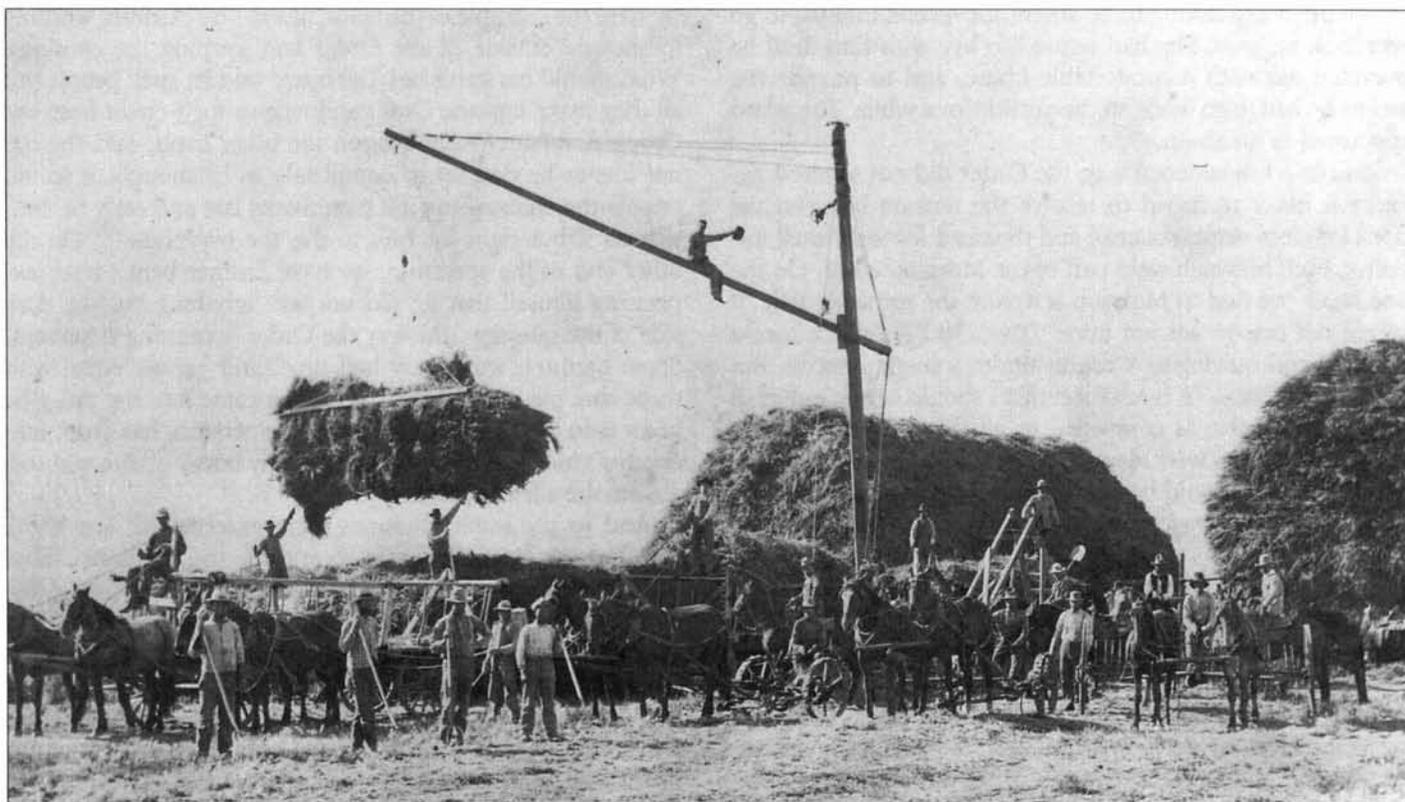
*Inner contradictions, human nature, and shortfall in meeting people's needs undermined the Order.*

**W**HAT caused the United Order to fail? Is it the case, as many say, that “the people were not ready to live the higher law?”

It is true that the Minutes give occasional examples, large and small, of selfishness in the Order. One brother felt that other families had gotten more than his had.<sup>19</sup> On another occasion, the Order had come into possession of some Navaho blankets, and one brother was nursing hard feelings because he was dissatisfied with the blanket he got.<sup>20</sup> And the term “needs” turned out to be elastic. One family could be going without and sacrificing for the common good, while another could require “a great many things for the comfort of his family that the Order has not supplied him with.”<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, the level of devotion and sacrifice on the part of a significant portion of the members remained quite high right up to the end, if judged by their recorded testimonies. Perhaps the firmly committed were not numerous enough to form a critical mass, but I believe that the more important reasons for failure lie elsewhere.

The world is plural, and unity is something that has to be cultivated anew with every group. From the beginning, the new town was marked by large divisions, and what unity existed was still fragile. There was, for example, an unexpectedly large cultural distance between Brigham Young and the immigrants from England, Wales, and Scandinavia who settled Sanpete and Sevier Counties in the 1860s, bringing their own cultural baggage. (When the United Order was established in Richfield, ten miles north, the talks and organizational business had to be translated into Danish to accommodate about half the population.<sup>22</sup>) These settlers had not known Missouri and Nauvoo; they had not known Joseph; they had not been bonded by making the trek together across the plains or by the life-and-death struggles and sufferings in Southern Utah, as had the founding group at Orderville. They shared a common conviction of Mormonism as Zion, or as the beginning of the Kingdom of God, but they did not share all the presuppositions of Brigham Young and other Church leaders, especially the urgency of defending themselves against foes by remaining separate; they were not moved strongly, if at all, by the siege mentality. Consequently, a substantial number allowed themselves to think independently about the advisability of entering into the United Order—only about two-thirds of the people in the region actually joined.<sup>23</sup>

Such was the case of Moses Gifford and Michael Johnson, both of them among the original settlers of Monroe in 1871, and both evidently adventurous intellectually, since both were readers of Charles Darwin and his views on human evolution. Gifford was made bishop, or presiding elder, of the resettled community in 1872, with Johnson as his clerk. In 1873 these two were co-organizers of the Monroe mercantile co-op, which had seventy-one subscribers. They also initiated the digging of a large canal to bring river water from the Sevier river to the



A Mormon Pioneer haying

*If the United Order is a principle, it might be stated simply in terms like these:  
 "We are not in this thing alone. We need to learn how to work together and  
 to help each other out."*

fields around Monroe. They were, in sum, de facto leaders of the community. It was natural, then, that when Joseph A. Young proposed the establishment of a United Order in Monroe, he asked Gifford to be the president of it. But Gifford was of another mind—he "could not see the Order." He was then immediately released as bishop, and a relative newcomer, James T. Lisonbee, was appointed president of the Order and acting bishop.<sup>24</sup>

Lisonbee was of yet another culture. He was a Southerner from Alabama. Zealous for his new faith, he functioned well under the authoritarian aura of Brother Brigham, better than did many of his fractious flock. He developed a loyal following among some, but his authoritarian ways did little to bring along the others. He did not seem to recognize the creative potential of the fluid situation he was placed in. He governed mostly by fiat, ran afoul of the board of directors, held few if any general public meetings, and was replaced after about a year.<sup>25</sup> The kind of unity required for success in the Order could not be imposed from above. It had to be cultivated from below, and cultivation was not his strong suit.

And then the United Order in Monroe ran into the same problem as any other utopian community: the immense difficulty, or perhaps impossibility, of finding a group that can start

with a clean slate. Even here on the frontier with new land and open country the people could not get beyond the hold of their previous conditions. In addition to their cultural differences, there was the immediate and visible factor of debt incurred nationwide during the Panic of 1873. The settlers of Monroe were no exception. From the beginning of the Order, the most frequent items of business that the board had to deal with were requests from members to be released for periods of several months so that they could work elsewhere and "square off their debts." In many cases they asked to take out the productive capital they had put in (wagons, teams, oxen, harnesses, ox chains). Moreover, some of these debts, such as those to the Church Perpetual Immigration Fund, had a high priority because of religious convictions. Since the Order, according to bylaw, would not accept responsibility for the debts of those coming in, the board could make no fuss about releasing the members, but then they were not available for the labor necessary to get the Order going. One of the results was that a number of people were half in and half out, with their families drawing rations while they themselves were off working elsewhere.

Occasionally problems arose that neither the board nor Brother Brigham had anticipated. A certain brother appeared

before the board asking to be absent for several months to go win back his wife. She had refused to live with him until he provided her with a comfortable house, and to provide the means he had to go work on the outside for a while. The board concurred to his absence.<sup>26</sup>

And in a fundamental way, the Order did not succeed because it never managed to resolve the tension between the need for close central control and the need for individual initiative, both of which were part of the Mormon ethos. On the one hand, we find in Mormon scripture the principle that "If ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27), which meant working and moving as a cohort under a single director. But on the other hand, "it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward. . . . men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will. . . ." (D&C 58:26–28).

To be efficient, the United Order had to have the members' time at its disposal when the work needed to be done, and one of the conditions people accepted in coming into the Order was that they would work at the direction of the board. If hay needed to be cut and member A had left for a week and member B was off working for himself, the hay didn't get cut. As a matter of fact, the Order put in seventeen acres of potatoes the first summer, which failed because the potatoes did not get planted on time. Why? Because too many people were busy getting in their own gardens.<sup>27</sup>

In addition, if people were to be totally responsive to the Order, the Order had to be completely adequate for the needs of all, which was not the case in the Monroe Order. In fact, it does not appear that this or any of the other orders organized at this period ever reached the economic "take off point" where they started to generate enough capital from within to sustain future growth. Hence, we find the example of the blacksmith taking jobs from people outside and keeping the payment for himself, justifying himself on the grounds that the Order could not yet take care of his needs.<sup>28</sup>

But it begins to appear that the collectivist principle was in itself flawed. In the first place, it did nothing to correct the more sluggish aspects of human nature, or so it would seem, as some members tended to become passively obedient. Even when they did everything they were told, they did only what they were told. When people had to be "commanded in all things," they had to be told in every instance what to do. The result? They invested less of themselves and became less punctual in performing their work and more careless about taking care of tools.<sup>29</sup> Since the Order appeared to be in charge of everything, they began to expect the Order to take care of them. It appears shocking to find that the rations of a widow were stopped until we learn that she was drawing rations to feed four grown sons who were not members of the Order. Or some people would draw more grain than they needed and then sell it for their own profit.<sup>30</sup>

The tug between individual initiative and the needs of the collectivity were felt all during the existence of the Order. Here

we have the example of the tailor, like the blacksmith, working for people outside of the Order and keeping the earnings. What should his status be? The board said let such people put all they make into the Order and receive their credit from the Order. Abraham Washburn, on the other hand, said "he did not like to be tied up so completely as he thought it would cripple the enterprising if a man works late and early he considered it but right for him to use the overpluss."<sup>31</sup> On the other end of the spectrum, we have Brother Bent Larsen expressing himself that he did not see "anything but the dark side of the question, the way the Order is running at present. Some brethren work only half time, and yet get equal with those that put in full time." When he came into the order he knew it to be a revelation, but now experience has given him another view: "I cannot see wherein any board of directors can govern the affairs of others."<sup>32</sup>

And so the initial divisions were exacerbated, and those withdrawing from the Order soon came to outnumber those who were joining. What's more, there were divisions on the board. Fifteen months into the effort, the minutes record "A warm dispute entered into by the Pres. and a few members of the board as to the best way of supplying the wants of some of the members of the Order with Butter, Milk, etc."<sup>33</sup> The next week, four members of the board withdrew both from the board and from the Order. Said one of them, "I joined the Gospel for peace, and to stop this chafing and galling, I deem it my duty to withdraw. . . ."<sup>34</sup>

Some six months later, at a general meeting of the Order's stockholders, "A Turbulent Spirit was strongly manifested by many withdrawing from the Order and urgently demanding an Immediate Settlement." The meeting had to be adjourned, with the board agreeing to meet that night with a delegation of three. Tempers were high at the evening meeting. How much would the board allow on payment of labor credits and capital stock credits? In the casting up of accounts, the debits overbalanced the credits. There had been crop failures in potatoes, cane, and corn. People had therefore been credited for labor that had produced nothing. The withdrawing members were obliged to agree to sustain their share of the losses and of the time spent on civic improvements.<sup>35</sup>

In the midst of this growing element of dissatisfaction was its counterpart of faith and affirmation, testimony that the United Order is "part of the Gospel."<sup>36</sup> Said another, "I see no way of gaining that exaltation that we expect but by living according to the revelations of the Almighty."<sup>37</sup> Living the United Order is of the same nature as living baptism or the laying on of hands.<sup>38</sup> This people has to join the Order or lose their exaltation. God will despise us if we don't carry out our responsibility to the Order.<sup>39</sup> In reading the minutes, one has the impression that the strong were getting stronger and the disaffected more disaffected. Discontent and division were lurking in the background. The center was disappearing.

What happened to Moses Gifford and Michael Johnson in all of this? They became part of the disaffected portion of the town and dropped out of prominent community positions, but their ideas, and especially their discussions of Darwin,

stuck in the craw of others. When they both took up land south of town, someone by the name of McCarty wrote a batch of satirical verses about the descendants of monkeys living out there in Monkey Town, and the name attached itself to the region, making it a monument to the Culture Wars of the 1870s, a tombstone of the original divisions in the town.<sup>40</sup>

#### THE LONG SHADOW

*Attempts to force unity fracture it instead, but  
gentler ways work in the longer run.*

IT would almost seem that the more single-mindedly people cast themselves upon any one practice or principle as the very will of God, the more they incur the results of the Law of Unintended Consequences. The intent of the United Order was to create unity within Zion. One of its effects was to create divisions within this particular Mormon community at the outset. The foes became not the "world" bent on the destruction of Mormonism, but other members of the Mormon group who were of a different persuasion. Membership in the Order was not incumbent on all members of the Church, but when the bishop was also the president of the United Order, departure from the Order was also often accompanied by withdrawal from the Church. If someone withdrew from the Order, it is reasonable to assume that this departure had been preceded by substantial discontent and that this discontent had been voiced. The attempt and failure to establish a totally homogenous order of things at the very beginning of the town exacerbated the normal divisions, to the point that the Enochites (members of the Order) would hold their dances in one building and the outsiders in another.<sup>41</sup> The tighter the control and the greater the unity inside the Order, the greater the alienation of those outside the Order.

Here the case of Walter Jones becomes pertinent. His family had been coal miners in Wales, Walter himself starting in the pits at the age of eight. In 1856 Walter, his brothers, and his parents converted to Mormonism and emigrated to America, first to Illinois where they recouped the family fortunes by working in the coal mines there, and later establishing themselves as farmers. In 1861 Walter and his wife Katherine emigrated to Utah and in 1865 were among the first company to settle Monroe, or Alma, as it was first called.<sup>42</sup> Walter became first counselor in the bishopric to Moses Gifford when the first ward was organized in 1872, and in 1873 he was trained by Michael Johnson in the procedures of store keeping and merchandising in order to become the clerk of the Co-op store.<sup>43</sup>

Walter Jones, like Gifford and Johnson, was a man of independent spirit. During the Indian troubles, for example, he was part of a militia taking a load of grain to Manti to be ground into flour. Walter had had a gun accident with his foot which had not healed, but one morning after being en route for a couple of hours, he noticed that he had left his revolver at the campsite. When he expressed his intention to ride back and get it, the commander said he should not go, because it was not safe, Walter persisted, and the commander said he would court martial him if he went back. "Then court martial

and be damned," said Walter. "I'm going after my gun." In spite of his injury, he rode back and retrieved his weapon, and then rejoined the company.<sup>44</sup>

Walter's name is not mentioned in the minutes of the United Order during the thirty months of its existence. What is known through family tradition is that during this time Walter became estranged from the Church over the United Order. The exact cause has not been written down, but it reportedly involved a confrontation with Joseph A. Young, who told Walter one thing in private about the arrangements of the Order and something else in public to the membership.<sup>45</sup> This event, whatever it was, would most likely have occurred at the beginning of the United Order when Moses Gifford was released as bishop, and hence Jones as counselor. Since the co-op store of which Walter was clerk and manager continued to function during the whole period of the United Order, he undoubtedly aligned with Gifford and Johnson. We can see signs of a growing estrangement in the community when the Order moved to set up its own store because "stores out of the order have no interest in us only to get what means we have."<sup>46</sup> In any event, Walter left the Church and took his family with him. Most of his children remained in Monroe, marrying and raising their own families there, outside the pale of the Church.

His son Lewis Jones was likewise a strong personality and community leader, serving variously on the town council, as county commissioner, and as president of the school board. But his most significant leadership was in the economic development of the area. He was the president of the South Bend Canal Company, without which there would have been no water brought from the Otter Creek Reservoir and consequently no further economic development of the town.<sup>47</sup> The spirit of cooperation and community did not die with the United Order, but took a new form in a pluralistic milieu. Where previously it was the United Order that had called men out with their teams and scrapers for civic improvements, it was now the Canal Company. The result in civic improvement was the same. Was the community better or worse off for not all being of one mind and stripe? It is a live question.

The story does not end there. All of Lewis Jones's children grew up outside of the Church, yet those who stayed in Monroe (all of them prominent civic figures) came into the Church as mature adults, serving in bishoprics, stake presidencies, and as temple workers. The unity that had eluded the Church in its grasp for total conformity in the 1870s was achieved three generations later by persuasion and choice, which calls for another example of the pursuit of unity in Monroe.

While I was away on a mission to France from 1950 to 1953, Apostle Matthew Cowley was the visiting authority for a stake conference in Monroe. His instructions to the stake president were for the Saturday night session to consist of a banquet for the senior aaronics, to be served by the high priests. He made it clear that he wanted every drinking man in the stake there as his personal guest. The banquet was held in the high school gym, and the hall was packed. I don't know what

he said, or how much to attribute to his visit, but when I got back to Monroe, the pool hall was gone, and a new elders quorum presidency was being installed. The new president's first words were, "I don't want any of you men ever to forget that the quorum presidency has drunk enough to drown the whole quorum." The Gospel of Regeneration had written a new chapter in the continuing story of unity and community.

#### MIDNIGHT THOUGHTS

*The failure of the United Order has lessons for today's struggle against "the world."*

WE can draw several observations from the attempt to establish the United Order. The movement was seen by its participants as a step toward the establishment of the temporal and sovereign Kingdom of God. What is apparent now, however, is that the current was moving in another direction. The nation had just fought a great civil war over the question of a possible sovereignty for any of its constituent parts, and the question had been settled in the negative. The United Order's failure to take root was one more step toward that point sometime in the future when one could look back and see that within this twenty-five year period, from the 1870s until the turn of the century, the Church had lost its economic system, its marriage system, its political system, and its judicial system.<sup>48</sup> It was the beginning of that transition and amalgamation into the national economic system that Brother Brigham had abhorred. Perhaps in the final analysis, the aspect of the United Order that caused it to fail was that it was a reach toward sovereignty, and the sovereignty of God is not of this world.

Some theological questions are likewise raised by the experience of the United Order. Is salvation individual or collective? On the one hand, the Puritan experience of the soul in its peril rescued by the inflooding of God's grace was the most prominent part of early Mormonism. It was Joseph Smith's own original experience, according to his 1832 account of his first vision,<sup>49</sup> and is strongly paralleled in such texts as Alma 36 in the Book of Mormon.

The United Order, on the other hand, was a covenant group—people entered into it by baptism, by which they made covenants as solemn and binding as the covenants for the remission of sins, which were repeated during the baptism into the Order. Those who cast their lot with the Order did so for the most part because they were convinced that until they were one, they were not fit subjects for the celestial kingdom. It would seem to follow, then, that salvation was not something to be attained by the individual, but rather by the individual's relationship to the group.

The same question reasserts itself today, as we see what seems to be increasing emphasis on the importance of being a "covenant people," that is, a "temple-attending people," bound together by the covenants made in the temple. But how covenant and community work on the soul to bring it to salvation will, I believe, continue to provide the matter for much talk.

When I reflect on the wildness and near anarchy of the nineteenth-century West, I am all the more appreciative of the islands of organization and stability created by the Mormons. Better too much organization than none at all. Nonetheless, I believe that letting group exclusivity go to the point of a siege mentality was a mistake. It was harmful then and is harmful now, when it takes the form of seeing everything in terms of "us" versus "the world." The world, it is true, is full of things, deeds, and attitudes that are ugly, false, destructive, and evil. It is also full of things, deeds, and attitudes that are beautiful, true, lovely, and praiseworthy. To renounce the latter in order to avoid the former is to maim our religion.

It is understandable that Mormons of that time had a lively sense of "enemies," since they had suffered much at the hands of others. At the same time, it is worth meditating on how far that mind set is from the rabbi of Nazareth, who began his ministry with the decision that he would not have enemies.

We read the past to get answers about the present, and we seek the answers about the present in order to get better questions for the future. Out of these probings into the history of Monroe, some fruitful questions might be asked about unity: Unity with whom? Unity against what? Why? How?

At the next-to-the-last meeting of the board of the Monroe Order, the visiting stake president said that "the Order is a principal [sic] and not [a] means, that it would exist as much with five dollars as five hundred dollars."<sup>50</sup> This notion must have seemed disconcerting to those who believed that every aspect and procedure of the Order had been directly revealed, so much so that if any change were made it would have to be agreeable to God and Brigham Young. The question is nonetheless pertinent today. If the United Order is essentially a form of economic organization, then it is gone and will not come back until the internal contradictions of the plan are resolved, the grasping and greedy part of human nature is purged out, and the Church disentangles itself from the economic system upon which it currently depends for its existence. If, on the other hand, the United Order is a principle, it might be stated simply in terms like these: "We are not in this thing alone. We need to learn how to work together and to help each other out." In that case, far from disappearing, the spirit of the United Order still feeds the core experience of being Mormon and can find expression in an indefinitely large number of situations.

#### THE HEART OF THE MATTER

*Mormonism calls us to better, interconnected lives.*

IN early September 1957, I found myself driving through the middle of Wyoming on U.S. 30, my wife and two small children asleep, and all of our goods and chattels in a U-Haul trailer. We were heading for Madison, Wisconsin, and graduate school. The thought occurred to me, "What am I doing here?" Our assigned apartment in student housing was not yet completed, and our only contact point in Madison was the phone number of the branch president, which we dialed as we approached the outskirts of the city. The branch president's

wife answered the phone. Her husband was out of town, and she had just had a new baby a few days before, so she couldn't come downstairs, but if we would come to their address, she would talk to us from the balcony, which we did, and she did. "Go to the corner of such-and-such streets," she said, "and there you will be met by a man in a green Buick." And we did, and we were. Before they went back to Idaho on vacation, Dean and Joy Wilding had left the key to their two-bedroom apartment with the branch president in case any new people might need a temporary place to stay. We were taken to their apartment, where there was already a couple that we had never met before, Malcom and Pat Asplund and their small child. It was comforting at that time to know how these things worked, so we moved in and organized ourselves into a United Order. 

## NOTES

1. Leonard Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God, Community and Cooperation Among the Mormons*, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992) (first published by Deseret Book in 1976). An account of the Cooperative Movement and the United Order of Enoch is also found in Leonard Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: Economic History of the Latter-day Saints 1830-1900* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1958), 293-349.
2. Arrington, et al., *Building the City of God*, 414-419.
3. I am indebted to Neal Mortensen of Central, Sevier County, Utah, for this copy.
4. Arrington, et al., *Building the City of God*, 1-40.
5. Arrington et al., *Building the City of God*, 63-78. One of the causes of failure was the fact that, under existing federal land laws, people did not yet hold title to the land they were occupying and therefore could not consecrate it to the Church, 77.
6. Arrington, et al., *Building the City of God*, 90, 101. See also Karl Andrew Larsen, *I was Called to Dixie* (St. George, UT: Dixie College Foundation, 1961), 254, 290-91.
7. Leonard Arrington, *Brigham Young, American Moses* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 8-19, 358-59.
8. Arrington et al., *Building the City of God*, 136.
9. Arrington et al., *Building the City of God*, 135-154.
10. There were speakers of English, Welsh, Danish, and probably some Swedish, German, and Norwegian.
11. Arrington, *American Moses*, 380.
12. Arrington, *American Moses*, 379-380.
13. Arrington, et al., *Building the City of God*, 147.
14. "A Minute Book of the United Order Monroe, 1874-1876," 189 pp., 149.
15. Minutes, 11-12, 23, Sept. 1874.
16. Minutes, 31, 19 Feb. 1875.
17. Minutes, 176, 177, 27 Aug. 1876.
18. Minutes, 188, 30 Sept. 1876.
19. Minutes, 106, 31 Jan. 1876.
20. Minutes, 105, 31 Jan. 1876.
21. Minutes, 86, 6 Dec. 1875.
22. Arrington, et al., *Building the City of God*, 179.
23. Ronald O. Barney, "The Life and Times of Lewis Barney," unpublished M.A. thesis, Utah State University, 1978, 89.
24. Barney, 89.
25. Garth Jones, "An Exile in the Covenant: The Missionary Tale of James Thompson Lisonbee Based on His Diary May 1876 to November 1877," unpublished paper, draft in my possession.
26. Minutes, 86, 22 Nov. 1875.
27. Minutes, 17, 11 Nov. 1874.
28. Minutes, 116, 5 May 1876.
29. Minutes, 127, 10 Mar. 1876.
30. Minutes, 53, 4 May 1875.
31. Minutes, 23, 27 Nov. 1874.
32. Minutes, 55-56, 19 May 1875.
33. Minutes, 62, 2 June 1875.
34. Minutes, 66, 7 June 1875.
35. Minutes, 99, 17 Jan. 1876.
36. Minutes, 112, 10 Feb. 1876.
37. Minutes, 121, 2 Mar. 1876.
38. Minutes, 157, 1 June 1876.
39. Minutes, 160, 1 June 1876.
40. Barney, 92. These incidents are also described in an unpublished family history by Clifford Jones, "A History of Monkey Town," n.d.; copy in my possession. Jones is a grandson of Walter Jones.
41. Barney, 94.
42. Clara Jones, *Lewis Jones the Builder* (Provo, UT: Fawcette Publications, 1959), 3-12.
43. Jones, *Lewis Jones*, 14.
44. Jones, *Lewis Jones*, 12.
45. Interview with Neal Jones, age 77, 24 July 1994. Neal is a grandson of Walter Jones.
46. Minutes, 132, in a general meeting 17 March 1876.
47. Jones, *Lewis Jones*, 18-19.
48. These points are discussed in detail by Claude Burtenshaw in "Utah Statehood: The Demise of the Mormon Political Kingdom of God," paper given at the 1996 Sunstone Symposium Salt Lake City, August 17 (tape #SL96-331).
49. Scott H. Faulring, ed., *An American Prophet's Record, the Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), 1-6.
50. Minutes, 188-89, 30 Sept. 1876.



## AUTUMN'S PESTO

Rain trickles into my eyes,  
and a gray day settles.  
I snip parsley and basil  
speared with dry seed and flower,  
take the clean fragrance  
to the sink and listen to Mozart  
woodwinded through spicy air.  
Later, bright light clips  
blue behind everything,  
and oranges and golds  
pierce afternoon.  
The scent of morning,  
like good heavy bread,  
sustains me all the hours  
of falling  
falling  
off the year.

—CAROL HAMILTON