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RICHARD L. JENSEN

BRIGHAM YOUNG AND THE IMMIGRANTS*

The call to flee from Babylon and gather to Zion had profound effects on the Latter-day Saint movement in the nineteenth century. No one shaped the gathering as much as Brigham Young. In turn, his involvement with it for four-and-a-half decades was one of the major facets of his adult life. We can learn much about Brigham Young from his approach to immigration and the immigrants, and we can gain insights into the dynamics of Mormon society. Perhaps just as interesting is the feeling for the man and his times which can be gained from his correspondence and epistles.

Like most of the early converts to Mormonism, Brigham Young learned early what it meant to relocate one's family. His own experience as a Latter-day Saint emigrant from New York to Ohio, to Missouri, to Illinois provided background for his future leadership in the gathering process. He had major responsibilities for organizing emigration from Great Britain in 1840-41, during the mission of the Twelve to that kingdom. What he expected and required of European emigrants could not help but be influenced by his own experiences with a family and a people on the move, often under stress. Directing the migration of the Saints from Nauvoo to Winter Quarters to the Salt Lake Valley was, in its way, simply another phase in a process which continued with the gathering of European converts to Zion in the Rocky Mountains.

Church organization in Great Britain could already facilitate emigration to Deseret, but aid and encouragement were needed. Some of that came in the form of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company. That enterprise was organized in 1849 to fulfill a covenant made in the

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Nauvoo Temple before the exodus, to the effect that "to the extent of our property and influence, we never would cease our exertions, until all the Saints who desired, should be removed to a place of safety."¹ While that might have seemed applicable only to refugees from Nauvoo, Brigham Young interpreted its intent broadly, designing the Perpetual Emigrating Fund "to increase until Israel is gathered from all nations, and the poor can sit under their own vine and inhabit their own house, and worship God in Zion."² President Young's efforts, and those of the Fund and the Church, would help bring thousands of European emigrants to the Rocky Mountains.

The call to emigrate was particularly urgent in the 1850s and 1860s. Not only was there a need to build a strong base of operations in the Mountain West and a need to provide converts with opportunities they lacked in Europe, there was also a pervasive feeling that the second coming of the Savior was near at hand and that the millennial timetable called for swift action. The First Presidency directed in 1852:

When a people, or individuals, hear the Gospel, obey its first principles, are baptized for the remission of their sins, and receive the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, it is time for them to gather, without delay, to Zion; unless their Presidency shall call on them to tarry and preach the Gospel to those who have not heard it; and generally, the longer they wait the more difficult it will be for them to come home; for he who has an opportunity to gather, and does not improve it, will be afflicted by the devil.³

Feelings of urgency were compounded by world events. The Crimean War in the mid-1850s and the American Civil War in the early 1860s saw Mormons emigrating in large numbers at times when other Europeans were less likely to leave their homes. Crises reinforced the call to flee to Zion. In 1863 George Q. Cannon reported that European Latter-day Saints felt they must emigrate that year, because they were not sure when they would have another chance.⁴

The major immigration drive of 1868 also had overtones of millennialistic urgency. Brigham Young wrote at the beginning of that year: "The nation in which we dwell is surely

¹Minutes of Special Conference, 15 September 1850, Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company Records, Library-Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter referred to as Church Archives). The abbreviation PEF will hereafter be used to denote Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company. See also Second General Epistle, 12 October 1849, in James B. Clark, ed., *Messages of the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75), 2:34.

²First Presidency (Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards) to Orson Hyde, 16 October 1849, in Clark, ed., *Messages* 2:39.

³Seventh General Epistle, 18 April 1852, in Clark, ed., *Messages* 2:98.

⁴Cannon to Young, 2 January 1863, European Mission Letterpress Copybooks, Church Archives, hereafter referred to as EM Letterbooks.

ripening for destruction. . . . Not many years will role away before the sceptre will pass into the hands of the righteous, and the people who possess this land be governed by the oracles of the Almighty."⁵ Encouraged by the number of donations being made to the PEF, President Young contended: "If the Saints who dwell in this Territory were to subscribe the means which they can well spare every honest person who has identified their interests with the Kingdom of God, might be emigrated next season."⁶

This was a persistent theme: it should be possible to help all the Saints emigrate from Europe who wished to do so. Indeed, the rumor spread that Brigham Young actually intended to help all the faithful Saints from Europe in 1868. But his optimism was actually tempered by the realization that his people as a whole would not tighten their belts enough to make such ambitious aid available to emigrants. In late 1867 he wrote: "Donations for assisting the poor to emigrate from Europe another season are being pretty freely made by the brethren. If the saints would be prudent and not spend their means at the gentile stores, there would be no difficulty experienced in emigrating all who wish to come to Zion another season; but very stringent economy we cannot expect among the masses of people."⁷

President Young used his imagination in his never-ending crusade to encourage donations to help emigrate poor Latter-day Saints. In 1850, with the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company only a year old, he tried a touch of humor: "Come on you tobacco chewers & put your 1000 [thousand dollars] into [the] Poor fund & I will give you liberty to chew anot[her]r year -"⁸ Probably more effective was his own example. For the 1856 emigration season, with emigration funds depleted, he donated one of his homes, the White House, to be sold and the proceeds given to the PEF to help poor emigrants. In addition, he made available a house and farm in Sanpete County and a flour mill.⁹ In 1862 he told a congregation: "If any person or persons would purchase all my property at one half its cost and pay me the money, I would gladly sell all, devote the whole sum to gathering the poor, and begin anew to build and plant, and thus not only greatly bless thousands who are

⁵Brigham Young to John Brown, 1 January 1868, Brigham Young Letterbooks, Brigham Young Papers, Church Archives, hereafter referred to as Young Letterbooks.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Brigham Young to William H. Hooper, 20 December 1867, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

⁸Conference, 8[?] September 1850, 2 p.m., General Minutes, Brigham Young Papers, Church Archives.

⁹List of property, 31 August 1855, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

distressed, but also prove again, as I have already proved scores of times, that there is a giving that enriches."¹⁰

Expecting much of himself, Young also asked much of others, straightforwardly and with confidence. Characteristic was his written appeal to William H. Hooper in late 1867: "If you are willing for me to draw on you for a thousand dollars to assist the poor to emigrate next season please signify as much in your next communication. I shall appropriate two thousand dollars for this purpose, and trust that you will find it convenient to donate the sum above mentioned."¹¹

That same donation drive netted \$1,000 from the Walker Brothers, who, though apostates, were thanked in a personal letter from Brigham Young, with a note that he would be happy to apply the contribution to the names of any emigrants they might wish brought over.¹²

President Young called upon Church members throughout the world to help in the emigration effort. In 1858 he wrote to England: "This we consider the duty of every Saint to help the poor Saints to gather home to Zion and use the means with which the Lord has blessed them to promote the cause of truth and righteousness upon the earth."¹³

If the Mormon people, with limited resources, were to emigrate as many of their fellow-believers as quickly as possible, priorities had to be set. The effort and expense involved in carrying extra luggage and more than minimal provisions would decrease the number of Saints who could be brought west in a given season. Brigham Young expected immigrants—particularly the poor who were being aided—to make do without all the amenities one might appreciate on the overland trek. In 1850 the First Presidency instructed: "The poor who can live in the States with little clothing, and little or no groceries, &c., can live equally as cheap on the road; and when once here, can procure the comforts of life by their industry. Souls are the articles for the Perpetual Fund to gather home, and that, too, as many as possible; and other things will be attended to in their time and place."¹⁴

Not only should unnecessary luggage be eliminated, but immigrants should plan on walking as much of the way as possible. In 1851 the First Presidency pointed out: "Many of the English brethren and sisters think it a trifle to walk fifteen or twenty miles to hear

¹⁰Fourth General Epistle, 22 September 1851, in Clark, ed., *Messages* 2:87-89.

¹⁰Brigham Young to George Q. Cannon, 11 October 1862, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

¹¹Brigham Young to W. H. Hooper, 20 December 1867, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

¹²Brigham Young to Walker Brothers, 7 January 1868, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

¹³Brigham Young to Asa Calkin, 10 September 1858, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

¹⁴Fourth General Epistle, 27 September 1850, in Clark, ed., *Messages* 2:60.

preaching on the sabbath, and return home at evening, and then stand at their labor the remainder of the week; and can they not walk twenty miles per day for fifty days, for the sake of getting to their Father's house; to the home of the Saints in the Valley of the mountains?"¹⁵

Those who received assistance were to "help themselves to the utmost of their ability; and not one bring stores of merchandize, [sic] to the expense of another's tarrying behind If those assisted by the Poor Fund expect to ride in carriages and wagons over the mountains, the number you can forward will be very small; but if they have faith to walk through, a few teams loaded with flour, will make a multitude comfortable, and many can be removed at little cost."¹⁶

President Young did not want to subject the Saints to unnecessary hazards. Although it might raise the total cost of emigration as much as \$10 per person, in 1854 he called for all Mormon immigrants to land at ports in the northeastern United States, rather than at New Orleans, because of the incidence of serious illness had been high on the Mississippi.¹⁷

On the other hand, President Young did not want to provide immigrants with too many opportunities to use illness as an excuse for special treatment. In 1856, during the first season of handcart immigration, he wrote: "I will say that it is all right not to provide wagons for infirm persons to accompany the hand carts for it would encourage infirmity or rather laziness which is quite as bad. There would soon be but few able to walk if such arrangements were made."¹⁸

With a late start, and with many aged and infirm in the last companies, that year's handcart immigrants suffered tragic losses. Yet, overall, Brigham Young considered it an "eminently successful" experiment and hoped it would play a major role in future Mormon immigration.¹⁹ Minor changes would need to be made to avoid some of that year's pitfalls. He directed that a separate wagon train, rather than handcarts, be provided for those who were very aged or who had major disabilities, and that one team and wagon be provided for emergency hauling for every two hundred handcart immigrants.²⁰

¹⁵Sixth General Epistle, 22 September 1851, in Clark, ed., *Messages* 2:87-89.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷Brigham Young to Franklin D. Richards, 30 June and 2 August 1854, Young Letterbooks.

¹⁸Brigham Young to John Taylor, 28 July 1856, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

¹⁹Fourteenth General Epistle, 10 December 1856, in Clark, ed., *Messages* 2:199-201.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 200.

Brigham Young's fascination with the handcart scheme, despite its problems, suggests some interesting facets of his approach to immigration. For one thing, he seemed to have a certain urge to innovate, to explore new approaches. For another, he relished the feeling of equality which the handcarts inevitably brought. He pointed out that the immigrants both with handcarts and with wagons who came in late 1856 had to leave all their extra luggage on the plains, which meant that "All the saints of the last companies came in on a principle of equality such as has not existed since saints began to migrate: they *all* had to be helped in. The Independent companies, and the hand cart saints of all grades and circumstances arrived here, having with them only the clothes they wore, these have cost us less trouble since their arrival and done more good for themselves, than any company that has preceded them, apparently under more favorable circumstances."²¹ Thus he suggested for the future:

1st. That all who can, will come by hand carts, & 2nd, that they bring nothing with them but what they wear, or may wear of necessity on the road, and can carry on their hand carts. Thus you will perceive the money usually spent in England for extra clothing, and unnecessary "fiddle-faddles"—for extra freight on the same, and for hauling this across the plains, can all be saved, and most assuredly, may be more profitably used on the arrival of the Saints here. Who will believe it? Who will act accordingly? Can we persuade men to do right? & to leave the Mo. River by 1st July.²²

Brigham Young's hopes for handcart immigration were part of a dream on which he and his people expended a great deal of effort, one which seemed on the verge of becoming a reality just before its hopes faded. Young's hope was that ultimately Mormon supply stations could be set up every fifty miles along the overland trail, with provisions, feed for animals, and other necessities for immigrants. In early 1857 he wrote to England:

We shall establish a few of such this year, thus you will perceive a man and his family with small means can walk from station to station, and have his supplies renewed at every such place, without encumbering himself with very heavy loads at the first; the time when he is least accustomed to such travel, nor so well able to endure as he afterwards can.²³

These hopes were initially tied closely to the ambitious Brigham Young Express and Carrying Company, a scheme whereby the Mormons would use federal contracts to carry the mail as a base for a system of freighting, passenger transportation, and supply stations between the Missouri River and Salt Lake City. The mail contract was cancelled in 1857, during preparations to send the U.S. Army to Utah. The idea of establishing supply stations and

²¹Brigham Young to W. H. Hooper, 23 February 1860, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

²²Brigham Young to William H. Hooper, 23 February and 8 March 1860, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

²¹Brigham Young to Orson Pratt, 27 January 1857, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

²²Ibid.

²³Brigham Young to Orson Pratt, 1 March 1857, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

even wayside support settlements later surfaced now and again, and eventually flour was deposited for immigrants at a few locations along the route.²⁴

Brigham Young continued to tinker with the handcart arrangements, although they never moved as many people as he would have liked. Before the 1860 immigration season—the last to utilize handcarts widely—he wrote:

The hand carts of last season suited me altogether better than those of any other season, for they are not only more reliable on the road but are also of value and real utility here. But I want those for this year so made that the wheels will track with the narrow track wagons, i.e. 4 feet and 8 inches from center to center of tire, with tire 1/2 inch *thick*, hubs 5 1/2 inches in diameter beds 3 feet long, and the iron axle 1 1/8 inch diameter at the shoulder.²⁵

Yet at the same time President Young was exploring a number of alternatives to cut the costs of immigration and freighting. A week after his handcart letter, he asked William H. Hooper to find a riverboat captain who would be willing to carry Mormon freight and immigrants up the middle stretches of the Missouri River, or even the Yellowstone. He hoped in this way to cut overland travel to a minimum of perhaps four hundred miles.²⁶ With a touch of humor he acknowledged that it would be a challenge to navigate that far upriver: "They will perhaps require boats that can run where the ground is a little damp. . . ."²⁷

Little came of that scheme or of the later idea of shipping by way of the Colorado River. The most successful experiment was what became known in the years before the coming of the transcontinental railroad as the Church Trains system. In 1860 Brigham Young's nephew, Joseph W. Young, helped prove that oxen could leave Salt Lake Valley in the spring, carry flour to be deposited for the use of immigrants, load freight and immigrants at the Missouri River, and return to the valley the same season in good time and full health.²⁸ This provided the basis for efficient, inexpensive emigration during the American Civil War, when millennialistic expectations and anxiety to emigrate were again at a high point.

²⁴On the Brigham Young Express and Carrying Company, see Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints 1830-1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 162-70. On later consideration of way stations and support settlements, see Brigham Young to Joseph E. Johnson, Young Letterbook 4:449-50; to Joel H. Johnson, 17 October 1858; to Horace S. Eldredge, 20 October 1858 and 6 May 1859; to William H. Hooper, 30 January 1860; to J. E. Johnson, 19 April 1860; to William Pyper, 25 April 1860; to W. H. Hooper, 5 December 1865, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

²⁵Brigham Young to W. H. Hooper, 23 February 1860, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

²⁶Brigham Young to William H. Hooper, 23 February and 8 March 1860, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives. Brigham Young first proposed this scheme as early as November 1855. See Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, p. 163.

²⁷Brigham Young to W. H. Hooper, 8 March 1860, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

²⁸Brigham Young to Nathaniel V. Jones and Jacob Gates, 20 December 1860, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

Providing aid to poor immigrants and a support system for each season's overall Mormon immigration often sorely taxed Mormon resources. Brigham Young wrote in late 1861: "The gathering of Israel is so important a part of the great work in which we are engaged that it occupies much of our thoughts, and we are ever anxious to afford it all just facilities and influence, even to the risk of infringing upon other requirements."²⁹ That was, if anything, an understatement. Yet occasionally President Young stepped in to give precedence to other priorities. In 1864, during a heavy immigration season, he decided to focus Church resources the following year on the building of the Salt Lake Temple, rather than sending teams and wagons to help immigrants across the plains.³⁰ Thus the 1865 immigrants came on a strictly private basis—in theory. Actually, delays, loss of cattle, and financial misfortunes for that year's immigrants necessitated a costly relief expedition, with Brigham Young's own teams, wagons, and employees playing an important role.³¹

Even a charitable enterprise like relieving crippled immigrant companies was a businesslike proposition under Brigham Young's leadership. Rather than relieving the disadvantaged immigrants for eventual responsibility for their own welfare, he had a strict accounting kept of the help they were given and expected them to reimburse their benefactors as soon as that was possible. He instructed captains of relief companies in 1854 that they were to charge the immigrants for the flour and provisions they used, because the supplies belonged to individuals. If the immigrants were unable to pay cash, arrangements were to be made for later repayment. President Young suggested that the captains charge the going rate for flour in the Salt Lake market, six cents per pound, plus one-and-a-half to two cents per pound for each hundred miles the flour was hauled before the relief wagons reached the immigrants.³² With characteristic attention to detail, the President directed further that tired animals must never be yoked together with fresh ones, and that captains of the relief companies must appoint overseers to be responsible for all the animals they provided to relieve the immigrants.³³ The captain of each company receiving aid would be responsible to arrange reimbursement for all assistance his company received.

²⁹Brigham Young to Amasa Lyman, 15 November 1861, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

³⁰Brigham Young to Joseph W. Young at Wyoming, Nebraska, 9 June 1864, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

³¹Brigham Young to presiding officers and bishops, 26 October 1865; to Orson Arnold, 28 October 1865, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

³²Brigham Young to captains of relief companies, Brigham Young Letterbook 1:665-66 (September 1854), Church Archives.

³³Ibid.

With the coming of the telegraph in 1861, President Young could keep abreast of the progress and problems of each immigrant company. Captains routinely sent him brief reports from telegraph stations enroute, and more timely relief could be sent when it was required.³⁴

Brigham Young's involvement in immigration arrangements showed not only his concern for details but also some of his homely insights into the idiosyncracies of his people. In 1866 he instructed supervisors of the overland immigrants that they should not caution the European Saints too much about their choice of drinking water along the way, because the immigrants would not be in a position to make good judgments on the matter, regardless of such instructions. "Though the river water will be apt to give them the diarrhea, until they become accustomed to it, yet it is much healthier than the wells and springs usually found in the neighborhood of the river, and it will be better to direct the people to use it."³⁵

President Young and his agents felt that divine aid was a significant factor in the success of Mormon immigration efforts. At the end of a busy, challenging season in 1866, he paused to confide: "The Lord has signally fulfilled his promises; and if the people would open their eyes, they could easily perceive that there has been a greater power than that of man exercised in their preservation in the midst of the varied vicissitudes through which they have passed. . . ."³⁶ He noted that during the Civil War Latter-day Saint emigrants came through unscathed, although "rebel cruisers roamed the Ocean almost unchecked, capturing Federal vessels at their pleasure."³⁷ Looking forward, he exclaimed, "When the great Work shall be fully consummated, and the victory be fully achieved, man will be compelled to give the praise and glory unto the Lord for all that will have been done."³⁸

After their arrival in Utah immigrants sometimes needed practical advice to help them to thrive in the new environment. While President Young was seldom the one to give such counsel directly, he sometimes made suggestions to those who had that responsibility. In 1866 he called Norwegian Canute Peterson and former Scandinavian Mission president John Van Cott to serve as missionaries among the Scandinavian Saints of Sanpete and Sevier Counties, and gave them these instructions:

The Saints who gather here we are glad to see, and we feel to do all that we can to aid, comfort and counsel them, but it is absolutely necessary for every man, woman and child

³⁴Incoming Telegrams, 1862-1866, Brigham Young Papers, Church Archives.

³⁵Brigham Young to Isaac Bullock and William W. Riter at Wyoming, Nebraska, 6 May 1866, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

³⁶Brigham Young to Orson Pratt, Sr., 29 October 1866, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid. Brigham Young to Mrs. E. McMahon, 4 May 1866, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

We wish them to be taught the necessity of taking care of themselves, their stock and all that is entrusted to them. They should learn to handle their guns to advantage, so as to be able to protect themselves and their families against the attacks and ravages of the Indians. Upon this point they have been generally remiss, and have not felt the necessity of taking those precautions which people in new Settlements exposed to Indian attack, should always be vigilant in attending to. They must wake up upon these points, and not allow covetousness to take such entire possession of them that their own true interests and the interests of the Kingdom, are neglected. They should be willing to assist the Indians who are friendly when they need help, and not be so stingy as to disgust them.

You should urge them to seek for and recover the Spirit of the gospel which they received when they embraced this Work, and which, in many instances, has leaked away from them in crossing the Ocean and the Plains and since their arrival here. They should be in possession of the Spirit of their religion and have the power of God resting down upon them; and if they enjoy these blessings, they will not be likely to apostatize.³⁹

The necessity of implementing these instructions was particularly urgent, in that they were given during the Black Hawk War, which involved hostilities in Sanpete and Sevier counties and some evacuations of settlements.

Some immigrants had more difficulty adjusting to life in frontier Utah than others. A poignant illustration is the story of a British-born divorcee, converted in India, who immigrated in 1865. About fifty years old, she wrote that she was "not used to any out door or in door work, such being the matter we are brought up in India, not from choice but from custom of the country where there are many servants to work for us. . . ."⁴⁰ She hoped to be able to teach reading, writing, arithmetic, knitting, and sewing to the children of Brigham Young or another "well regulated family," and she assured the President that she could produce good recommendations. Bothered by rheumatism, unable to tolerate the cold Utah winters, she wrote: "I cannot stir from the fireside much less do out door work, I do not wish to live upon the Church for my entire support but I shall do what I can to work a living for myself shall make myself generally useful in a family if I have time from my other duties but will be excused cooking & washing."⁴¹ Brigham Young was frankly perplexed. He wrote: "I really do not know what to do with you. It would not be convenient for me to take you into any of my families. My own folks have to work, carry water, wash, build their own fires, cook, &c., and mostly wait upon themselves."⁴² Then he added some homely advice about frontier Mormon hospitality:

The Saints who gather here we are glad to see, and we feel to do all that we can to aid, comfort and counsel them; but it is as absolutely necessary for every man, woman and child

³⁹Brigham Young to Canute Peterson, 16 May 1866, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

⁴⁰Emilia McMahon to Brigham Young, 7 February 1866, Brigham Young Papers, Church Archives.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Brigham Young to Mrs. E. McMahon, 4 May 1866, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

who embraces this work and gathers to Zion to do all that he or she can to forward the work of God to build up Zion, and to aid in the redemption thereof. We, all of us, have as much as we can do to discharge the duties which devolve upon us. Our zeal in this labor, and the earnestness with which we pursue it, causes us sometimes to appear, in the eyes of the inexperienced, indifferent to the situation of new-comers. Still, this has a tendency to develop energy and self-reliance in the Saints that they could not otherwise have, were they not to be thrown on their resources.

I should advise you to get acquainted with the people around, and see if you can get situated to suit yourself; and then if you are not able to provide yourself as you need we will render you assistance.⁴³

Mutual acquaintances tried to help, and President Young himself offered his aid, but the woman could not accommodate herself to the climate and the frontier way of life. She asked if she might have her endowments and have help to return to England, where she had friends who might help her back to India. Although the president advised her to stay in Utah and try to fit in, she apparently left the territory after more than three years of maladjustment.⁴⁴

Some immigrants left the faith. Of these Brigham Young wrote:

It is often the case that so soon as a man who never owned a cow or a pig nor any living animal gets here and begins to rise in regard to property that he forgets his God and all that has been done for him, and from thenceforth is not satisfied until he gets back into hell from whence he came. It is manifestly better for all such persons to remain and even die in the world without gathering at all so they die in the faith than come here only to apostatize and finally go to hell at last.⁴⁵

In view of all the problems of acculturation of immigrants, President Young could be permitted a little tongue-in-cheek enthusiasm over an alternative for swelling the population of Zion. In 1867—another year without official Church promotion of immigration—he wrote to England:

Of late we have felt led to give considerable instruction to our young people respecting marriage—encouraging them to enter into the bonds of matrimony, and in the absence of a foreign emigration, endeavor to increase our home emigration, which we have, heretofore, found to be far the best, very few ever apostatizing and proving recreant to the truth.⁴⁶

Actually, at the same time he was putting together plans for a very heavy immigration season in 1868. Thus he was not abandoning the “foreign” emigration—far from it.

A major frustration for President Young for the last quarter-century of his life was the failure of many immigrants to promptly repay for aid they had received for the journey. More conscientious repayment could have enabled the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company to

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Mrs. E. McMahon to Brigham Young, 8 April, 3 May 1866; to Young, undated letter received 5 August 1866, Brigham Young Papers, Church Archives. Brigham Young Letterbook, 5-7 January 1869, Church Archives.

⁴⁵Brigham Young to Asa Calkin, 10 September 1858, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

⁴⁶Brigham Young to Franklin D. Richards, 25 September 1867, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

extend help to many hundreds more than it did, but its effectiveness was constantly hampered by lack of the resources to which it was entitled. In September 1855 Young sent PEF debtors an exhortation through their bishops and presidents:

Will the Lord, Angels, and holy beings fellowship you if you longer neglect these matters, if you longer exhibit a careless indifference to this important subject? Will the church and the brethren sustain you in their faith and prayers, while the lamentations and cries of the worthy poor are filling the ears of the Almighty for release and deliverance?

No, they will not; and if you do not act, feel, and do different, the withering curse of the Almighty will be upon you to darken your minds, to lessen your faith, and cause a famine spiritual and temporal to consume you.⁴⁷

President Young asked all bishops to find the PEF debtors in their wards, notify his office, assess the debtors' circumstances, and obtain repayment as expeditiously as possible. None should be unable to begin to pay something, but many might lack the skill or judgment to succeed financially. The bishops were to counsel with these and do everything possible to help them increase their earnings and repay the Fund.⁴⁸ Bishops were to allow no one still owing the Fund to leave their wards without first either repaying their loan or giving security for future payment.⁴⁹

In 1859 a collector was appointed for the PEF, as well as other debts owed the Church. President Young instructed him to be energetic, thorough, and systematic. But he counseled that rather than to "oppress the poor," when the collector found someone too poor to pay he should give the debtor additional time and ask for a promissory note.⁵⁰

In an economy largely based on barter of perishable goods, repayment of PEF indebtedness sometimes became rather involved. Brigham Young advised the bishop of Moroni: "We will receive an ox from Sister Martha Blackham to apply on her indebtedness to the P.E. Company for her immigration, at such price as it may be appraised at when it reaches here. Should the ox be in condition for beef and you soon meet a good chance for sending it before it *shrinks*, it may be well to forward it at once, otherwise sister Blackham had better winter it and forward in the Spring, for cattle, other than those fit for beef, are of no use to us until another season."⁵¹

In order to carry forward the "gathering" of the Latter-day Saints, Brigham Young expected much of his people, both the immigrants and those who were already gathered.

⁴⁷Circular to presidents and bishops in Utah, September 1855, in Clark, ed., *Messages* 2:174-76.

⁴⁸Notice, 2 November 1854, in Clark, *Messages* 2:156.

⁴⁹Circular, September 1855, in Clark, *Messages* 2:174.

⁵⁰Brigham Young to Patrick Lynch, 8 March 1859, Brigham Young "Nauvoo Legion" Letterbook, Church Archives.

⁵¹Brigham Young to Bishop George W. Bradley, 26 November 1861, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

Spartan travel arrangements, strict expectations for repayment, and the requirement to do as much as possible for oneself were just as much hallmarks of the Mormon immigration process as were effective organization and mutual aid. Yet when arrangements were found which could save lives or make more effective use of manpower, Brigham Young demonstrated that he had no fixation for rigor or economy for its own sake. Although the transcontinental railroad—and initially the steamship—brought higher costs in cash, they made important savings in time and lives, which he was quick to appreciate. In 1868, with the railroad having eliminated about 650 miles of travel by foot or wagon, he reported enthusiastically to a missionary in Hawaii that the change “renders their journey far less tedious and wearisome than formerly, to which, the health and spirits of these later arrived amply testify.”⁵²

In 1877, shortly before President Young's death, a missionary suggested that a group of poor converts travel by handcart. Although the handcart scheme had been a pet project of his, by now Brigham Young was far beyond that. He suggested that the money saved would be inconsequential in comparison to the time and exertions it would require. Rather than resorting to handcarts, he preferred to let the people work for the Church an equivalent number of days to the handcart journey in order to pay for their rail travel.⁵³

Brigham Young's day-to-day involvement with immigration matters tapered off after the coming of the transcontinental railroad, if his correspondence is any indication. His resignation as president of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company in 1870 was part of this process, signalling a transition to a different style of management for the immigration effort. With cash, not manpower or oxen, the key to passenger arrangements, and with fewer worries about immigrant companies encountering problems enroute, Young could relax a bit more. Still, he continued to maintain a lively interest in the enterprise.

The extent of President Young's emotional involvement in the “gathering” process is evident in his 1869 response to a question posed by an eastern periodical about the mission of Mormonism. As he discussed his people's accomplishments, he passed lightly over the proverbial conquering of the desert and their material achievements. His main emphasis was on their success in gathering together converts of diverse backgrounds to form a remarkably harmonious community. For Brigham Young, this was evidence of divine inspiration.⁵⁴

⁵²Brigham Young to George Nebeker, 3 September 1868, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

⁵³Brigham Young to James A. Little, 31 May 1877, Young Letterbooks, and Letterbook 14:946-48, Church Archives.

⁵⁴Brigham Young to Editor, *The Religio-Philosophical Journal*, 7 January 1869, Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.