

“Seeking after Monarchal Power and Authority”: Joseph Smith and Leadership in the Church of Christ, 1831–1832

Matthew C. Godfrey

In 1831 and 1832, the organizational structure of the Church of Christ—organized by Joseph Smith in New York in 1830—evolved, in the words of one scholar, from an “informal government to an ‘oligarchy of leading elders.’”¹ New positions were created that gave the Church a more hierarchical and formal leadership configuration, old positions were redefined, and Joseph Smith’s role as head of the Church was solidified. The resulting leadership structure consisted of Smith as president of the high priesthood, the overarching Church authority, assisted by Jesse Gause and Sidney Rigdon, his two counselors in Ohio. Edward Partridge, residing in Independence, Missouri, served as bishop in Missouri, designated in 1831 as the land of Zion, assisted by counselors Isaac Morley and John Corrill, as well as by William W. Phelps (printer to the Church), John Whitmer (Church historian), and Sidney Gilbert (bishop’s agent). This bifurcated leadership structure was necessary because, after Smith dictated a July 1831 revelation declaring Independence the location for the City of Zion, the majority of Church members lived in either Missouri or Ohio.

MATTHEW C. GODFREY (matthew.godfrey@ldschurch.org) is a historian and volume editor with the Joseph Smith Papers Project in the LDS Church History Department. Before his employment with the Church, Godfrey worked for eight and one-half years as a historical consultant, serving as president of Historical Research Associates, Inc., in Missoula, Montana. Godfrey has a BA in history from Brigham Young University, an MA in history from Utah State University, and a PhD in American and public history from Washington State University. He is the author of *Religion, Politics, and Sugar: The Mormon Church, the Federal Government, and the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company, 1907–1921* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2007), which was a co-winner of the Mormon History Association’s best first book on Mormon History.

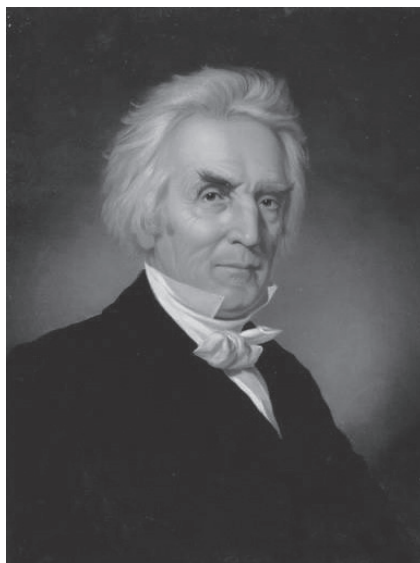
The development of administrative structures in the early Church of Christ is not a new topic; scholars such as D. Michael Quinn, Gregory Prince, and William G. Hartley, among others, have all addressed the subject.² This study, however, attempts to show that the development of new leadership positions in 1831 and 1832 was a major contributor to conflicts that existed in those years between leaders in Missouri and Ohio. Many of the issues centered in disagreements about who was responsible for what in the new leadership structure, especially in reference to the gathering of Church members to Zion and the administration of the Church there. Revelations declared that those responsible for the establishment of Zion needed to take initiative in their responsibilities, but when leaders like Edward Partridge or W. W. Phelps tried to implement what they felt needed to be done, they faced criticism and accusations of insubordination from Smith, Rigdon, and other Ohio leaders. After receiving such criticism, some charged Smith with despotism and autocracy. The distance between Ohio and Missouri exacerbated the problem, as it prevented face-to-face interaction. Since many of the Church's leaders came from other religious bodies in the United States that had more democratic elements of administration, Smith's efforts to centralize authority was difficult for some to handle—especially those who were over nine hundred miles away from the Mormon Prophet—and the resulting contention tested Smith's leadership abilities.

By the time that Joseph Smith organized the Church of Christ in 1830, a rich tradition of egalitarian leadership in religious congregations existed in the United States, in large part because of the political notions of the American Revolution. As they contemplated independence from the British monarchy, American colonists asserted the power of the common people and their right to question authority. As one historian has noted, "Respect for authority, tradition, station, and education eroded," replaced by the concept that "the correct solution to any important problem, political, legal, or religious, would have to appear to be the people's choice." Accordingly, by 1830, Christianity in the United States had been "effectively reshaped by common people who molded it in their own image and who threw themselves into expanding its influence." "Increasingly assertive common people," scholar Nathan Hatch argues, "wanted their leaders unpretentious, their doctrines self-evident and down-to-earth, their music lively and singable, and their churches in local hands."³ Denominations thus placed much administrative authority in individual congregations. For example, the Society of Friends, or Quakers, conducted much of their church business in monthly and quarterly meetings of members,⁴ while individual Puritan congregations had the responsibility to ordain and hire their ministers.⁵ Baptists and Methodists, which experienced explosive growth in the United States in the late 1700s and early 1800s,

and from which many converts to Mormonism in the early 1830s came, also tended to give authority to local members. Methodists held quarterly conferences of members to conduct financial, temporal, and administrative business, as well as to receive spiritual instruction and to commune with each other.⁶ Individual Baptist congregations, meanwhile, selected “ministers, ministries, and programs,” while also making decisions on disciplinary action.⁷ The reformed Baptist movement, led by Alexander Campbell, of which early Mormon leaders like Sidney Rigdon, Edward Partridge, and John Corrill were a part, also placed much authority in individual members. Although Campbell taught the acceptability of two offices—bishop, or overseer (“those who have the presidency or oversight of one congregation”), and deacon (“those males who are the public servants of the whole congregation”)⁸—he downplayed the importance of offices in general, stating that the only authority officers had came from the congregations that appointed them. “The ministry,” he declared, “was in no sense above the laity.”⁹

This milieu, in which authority resided in lay members, was the context into which Joseph Smith constructed his own leadership, although he drew from his reading of the Bible and the Book of Mormon as well, both of which he and his followers accepted as scripture. The writings of Paul in the New Testament, for example, mention specific offices, including deacon, bishop, apostle, evangelist, pastor, teacher, and high priest,¹⁰ while the Book of Mormon explains that the church which Christ established when he visited the American continent after his resurrection had elders, priests, and teachers. All of these offices had various responsibilities, including ordaining other officers, baptizing and bestowing the Holy Ghost on followers, “administering the flesh and blood of Christ unto the Church,” and conducting meetings by the power of the Holy Ghost.¹¹

Perhaps because of Joseph Smith’s familiarity with biblical and Book of Mormon teachings, the organizational structure in the Church of Christ



Alexander Campbell, image courtesy Library of Congress.

in the early 1830s contained some of the specific offices mentioned in those publications. The more egalitarian leadership styles of other congregations may have influenced the Mormon leader as well, since he also held conferences and implemented congregational leadership in administration. The Church's foundational "Articles and Covenants," for example, listed Church offices as consisting of elder, priest, teacher, and deacon. Elders, a subset of male members in the Church that functioned as its leaders in its initial years, were required to "meet in conference once in three Month[s]" to transact "Church business whatsoever is nessessary."¹² In addition to these quarterly conferences, conferences of elders periodically met to conduct other business, including disciplining church members, assigning elders to travel and preach, and ordaining men to offices in the Church.¹³ Not all male members of the Church were elders, but at times lay members attended these conferences and ratified decisions according to what was known as "common consent."¹⁴ With such a participatory form of leadership, the Church, according to historian D. Michael Quinn, had "little sense of hierarchy" in 1830.¹⁵

Yet some hierarchical seeds had already been planted. When the Church was officially organized on April 6, 1830, a revelation designated Joseph Smith as "a seer & Translator & Prophet an Apostle of Jesus Christ an Elder of the Church" and instructed the Church to "give heed unto all his words & commandments which he Shall give unto you."¹⁶ David Whitmer later claimed that, although he had not "detected it then," the appointment of Smith to this position was the "first error that crept into the church," since "there [was] nothing in the New Testament part of either the Bible or Book or Mormon concerning a one-man leader or head to the church."¹⁷ There is no evidence, however, that Whitmer voiced complaints at the time. Meanwhile, Oliver Cowdery, who had served as Smith's main scribe for the translation of the Book of Mormon, was, along with Smith, accepted as a "teacher in the things of the Kingdom of God," and the two were both ordained elders—the "first" and "second" elders of the Church.¹⁸ Ordinations of additional elders followed, as did the implementation of the office of high priest in 1831, described by one revelation as "the greatest of all" the offices, to which individuals such as Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Edward Partridge were ordained in June 1831.¹⁹

After a couple of events in 1830 where individuals besides Joseph Smith claimed the ability to receive revelations for the Church,²⁰ additional revelations solidified Joseph Smith's role as head of the Church—in effect, as historian Richard Bushman has written, merging "the charismatic and the bureaucratic."²¹ A revelation in September 1830 declared that "no one shall be appointed to Receive commandments & Revelations in this Church excepting my Servent Joseph for he Receiveth them even as Moses."²² At the same time, Smith began establishing other leadership positions subordinate to him,



Edward Partridge, engraving by Charles B. Hall, circa 1880.



Sidney Rigdon, date unknown. Photograph by J. Gurney (New York City) image courtesy Utah State Historical Society.

perhaps influenced in part by Sidney Rigdon, who had converted to Mormonism in November 1830. Rigdon had previously served as a bishop in Alexander Campbell's reformed Baptist movement and may have called Smith's attention to that office, as well as to the office of deacon, neither of which was present in the Book of Mormon, although both were in the Bible.²³ David Whitmer later claimed that the office of high priest "was [also] introduced at the instigation of Sydney Rigdon." According to Whitmer, "the office of high priests was never spoken of, and never thought of being established in the church until Rigdon came in," even though it was present in the Book of Mormon.²⁴

However much influence Sidney Rigdon may have had, after moving from New York to Kirtland, Ohio, in February 1831, Joseph Smith dictated a revelation that instructed Edward Partridge, a former participant in Campbell's reformed Baptist movement who had converted to Mormonism in December 1830, to be appointed and "ordained a bishop unto the Church"—the first bishop in the Church of Christ. Rigdon ordained Partridge to that position in February 1831.²⁵ Thereafter, another revelation explained Partridge's responsibilities. This revelation, which gave the "Laws of the Church of Christ," declared that Church members were to "consecrate all [their] propertys" to God. Partridge, as bishop, would then apportion to each family a "stewardship"—usually land—to provide for its needs. Whatever property or money remained would be placed in a "storehouse" to be used "to administer to him that hath

not.”²⁶ As bishop, Partridge would oversee this consecration process. Later revelations expanded his duties to include serving as a “judge in Israel,” while also supervising the Church’s temporal concerns.²⁷

In July 1831, Joseph Smith dictated a revelation designating Jackson County, Missouri, as the location of the City of Zion. The revelation instructed Edward Partridge to locate there with his counselors (Isaac Morley and John Corroll, who had been appointed in June 1831²⁸) and specified that he would be responsible for purchasing land in the area so that the members gathering to Zion could have inheritances.²⁹ Partridge apparently believed that the revelation gave him the authority to select the land he thought would best suit them.³⁰ If he was familiar with Alexander Campbell’s definition of bishops as “those who have the presidency or oversight of one congregation,” he may have also believed that, as bishop, it was his prerogative to administer the Church in Missouri as he thought best.³¹ In any event, the stage was set for conflict between Partridge and Smith.

According to Ezra Booth, writing after he apostatized from the Church, Joseph Smith, having arrived in Missouri in the summer of 1831, expressed a strong opinion to Edward Partridge which land he should purchase. The bishop disagreed, stating, in the words of Booth, that “the land which [Smith] and Oliver [Cowdery] had selected, was inferior in point of quality to other lands adjoining.” Instead of listening to Partridge’s opinion, Booth recounted, Smith became upset and exhibited “violent passion, bordering on madness.” Although Booth was probably exaggerating, it is clear that Smith and Partridge argued over the matter and that Partridge felt “abused” by the encounter.³² But Smith did as well; according to Sidney Rigdon, Partridge had “insulted the Lord’s prophet” by acting in an insolent way.³³ A revelation dictated by Smith just a few days later addressed the difficulty, instructing Partridge to repent of his “unbelief & blindness of heart” and declaring, “let no man think he is ruler but let god rule him that Judgeth.”³⁴ Partridge evinced a humble attitude after the rebuke, telling his wife, “I fear my station is above what I can perform to the acceptance of my heavenly father.” A month later, another revelation said that the Lord had forgiven Partridge.³⁵

Other incidents in Missouri that summer indicated that Smith was becoming more assertive in his governance of the Church. Ezra Booth, a member who had converted from Methodism only a few months before, became convinced that Smith held an “unlimited and despotic sway” over the Church—a conviction that ultimately led to Booth’s dissension and departure from the faith. After cutting off ties with the Church in September 1831, Booth claimed that “the relation in which Smith stands to the church, is that of a Prophet, Seer, Revealer and Translator,” and “when he says he knows a thing to be so, *thus* it must stand without controversy.”³⁶ Part of the issue was

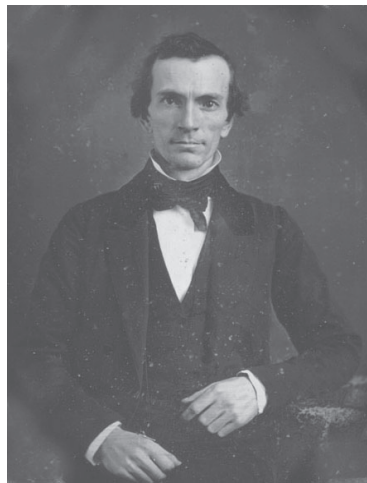
that some of the elders traveling back to Ohio with Joseph Smith in August 1831, including Booth, needed chastisement. This group consisted of some of Smith's closest associates, including Oliver Cowdery and Sidney Rigdon. It also included some who had been designated as leaders in Missouri, such as A. Sidney Gilbert and William W. Phelps, who needed to return to Ohio to retrieve their families and belongings, and some who would hold future leadership positions, such as Frederick G. Williams and Reynolds Cahoon. Before beginning the return journey, a revelation proclaimed that God was "not well pleased" with this group because they would not preach the gospel. "If they are not more faithfull unto me," the revelation declared, "it shall be taken away even that which they have."³⁷ Just a few days later, according to Booth, "a spirit of animosity and discord" was exhibited among some of the elders, although he did not specify which ones. Some refused to "exert their physical powers" in steering the watercraft in which the group traveled, while others responded belligerently when Smith reprimanded them.³⁸ Such conduct led to another revelation declaring that the elders needed to be "chasetened for all your sins that you might be one that you might not perish in wickedness."³⁹ As the prophet, seer, and revelator of the Church, Smith believed himself justified in making such pronouncements against individuals, but, according to Booth, some of the elders considered Smith to be acting in a "highly imperious and quite dictatorial" way when he declared "the judgments of God . . . like a thunder bolt upon" them.⁴⁰

Joseph Smith's authority continued to solidify throughout 1831, and the revelations left no doubt as to Partridge's subordination to Smith and to Smith's role as head of the Church. In August 1831, a revelation specified that the bishop needed to judge the people "according to the laws of the kingdom." These laws, however, would be "given by the Prophets of God."⁴¹ A November 1831 revelation further explicated who those prophets were. This revelation directed the Church to establish presidents over the various offices of deacon, teacher, priest, elder, and high priest, specifying, in words reminiscent of the September 1830 revelation discussed above, that the president of the high priesthood would "preside over the whole church & . . . be like unto Moses"—even "a Seer a revelator a translator & a prophet having all the gifts of God which he bestoweth upon the head of the church." The president of the high priesthood was responsible for "the administring of ordinances & blessing upon the Church"; "the office of a Bishop," the revelation continued, was "not equal unto" the president of the high priesthood, because the bishop was responsible for administering "temporal things," not spiritual. Further, the revelation explained that, although a bishop had the responsibility "to be a Judge in Israel to do the business of the Church," the president of the high priesthood had the authority "to call other high priests,

even twelve to assist as counselors” and to hold a court that would consider “the most important business of the church & the most difficult cases.” This president’s court would be “the highest court of the church of God & a final decision upon controvers[i]es.”⁴² On January 25, 1832 at a conference in Amherst, Ohio, Smith was ordained president of the high priesthood, giving him the additional authority which that position possessed.⁴³ A March 1832 revelation reiterated that authority, declaring that the president held “the keys of the kingdom” and had “authority to preside with the assistance of his counsellors over all the Concerns of the church.”⁴⁴

Joseph Smith’s Ohio associates helped ensure that other Church officers understood their place in relation to the Mormon leader. Sidney Rigdon had grown increasingly close to Smith, serving as scribe as Smith “translated,” or revised, the Bible. In August 1831, Rigdon had dedicated Jackson County for the establishment of the City of Zion, while consecrating land just outside of Independence for the building of a temple. By allowing Rigdon to perform these significant acts, Smith showed his increasing regard for him.⁴⁵ The feeling was mutual; Rigdon came to Smith’s defense in the land controversy with Bishop Partridge. Indeed, perhaps because of the leadership positions Rigdon had held before his conversion to Mormonism, he was particularly attuned to hierarchical structure, whereas Partridge, who had not held such positions, may have had a more “highly decentralized view of church authority.”⁴⁶

In the fall of 1831, Sidney Rigdon charged Edward Partridge with “insult[ing] the Lord’s prophet in particular & assum[ing] authority over him in open violation of the Laws of God.”⁴⁷ After Rigdon made his accusations, a conference held in January 1832 in Jackson County, designated by its participants as a “General Conference . . . in the land of Zion,” considered the charges. According to minutes of the conference taken by Oliver Cowdery, participating elders recounted that Rigdon had proffered “certain charges against the said Bishop . . . detrimental to his character and standing as a Bishop in the church of Christ.” However, because Rigdon was not in Missouri, the conference determined it had “no legal right to



Oliver Cowdery daguerrotype, circa 1846. Image courtesy Library of Congress.

proceed to a trial” of Partridge in Rigdon’s absence. Instead, the conference recommended the composition of “a friendly humiliating letter” to Rigdon, “advising that this difficulty be settled and thereby the wound in the Church be healed.”⁴⁸

When Sidney Rigdon read the minutes of this meeting, he prepared a statement of charges of misconduct against the conference, stating that its proceedings were “not according to the laws and regulations which we have received by revelation.” Co-signed by Jesse Gause, David Whitmer, Peter Whitmer Jr., Hyrum Smith, and Reynolds Cahoon, the statement did not address the conference’s handling of the Partridge matter, but charged other abuses of power.⁴⁹ Rigdon and the other signatories originally requested that Joseph Smith, as president of the high priesthood, hold a court in Zion to consider removing the minutes from the Church records—another assertion of Smith’s authority over those in Missouri.⁵⁰ There is no record of Smith ever holding such a court, but the minutes of the conference, as recorded in 1838 in what became known as the Far West Record, were a much more condensed version than those kept by Cowdery at the time of the meeting, indicating that some action was taken.⁵¹

In March 1832, another conference in Missouri met to compose the aforementioned letter to Sidney Rigdon. Admitting that the charges Rigdon had made against Edward Partridge were “partially correct,” the conference emphasized Partridge’s repentant spirit, relating that he had said that “if Br. Joseph has not forgiven him he hopes he will, as he is & has always been sorry.” According to the conference minutes, Partridge and Rigdon had, at some point, met and reconciled themselves, but Rigdon, refusing to let the matter drop, continued to accuse Partridge of improprieties. The conference therefore requested that Rigdon “candidly reflect upon” the accusations he had made “and ask himself whether he was not actuated by his own hasty feelings rather than the Spirit of Christ when indicting” Partridge. Indeed, “the duty of a disciple of Christ is to promote union harmony & brotherly love,” the conference continued, “& not at any time imprudently prefer charges & demand confession & settlement of the same in the absence of a br[other].”⁵²

Although this conference placed the blame for the conflict on the shoulders of Sidney Rigdon, events in the spring of 1832 indicated that Joseph Smith did not necessarily agree with that action. In March 1832, after Rigdon had jointly experienced with Smith a vision of “the economy of God and his vast creation throug[h]out all eternity,” which became known simply as “the Vision,”⁵³ Smith ordained Rigdon, together with Jesse Gause, as his “councillers of the ministry of the presidency of th[e] high Pri[e]sthood,” indicating his approval of Rigdon.⁵⁴ A March 1832 revelation also clarified

the need for Smith, Rigdon, and Newel K. Whitney, who had been appointed a bishop in Ohio in December 1831,⁵⁵ to regulate the Church in Missouri. “Sit in council with the saints who are in Zion,” the revelation declared. “Otherwise Satan seeketh to turn there hearts away from th[e] truth that they become blinded and understand not the things which are prepared for them.”⁵⁶

Because of this revelation, Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Newel K. Whitney, and Jesse Gause traveled to Missouri in April 1832 to meet with Church members residing in Jackson County. Not only did they hope to counsel with the leaders there, they also hoped to resolve the dispute between Rigdon and Partridge, thus restoring unity among the leaders. At a conference held in Independence on April 26–27, 1832, according to a later history of Joseph Smith, the differences between Partridge and Rigdon were “amicably settled.”⁵⁷ According to the minutes of the meeting, “all differences settled & the hearts of all run together in love.” Such unity was emphasized at the conference by the high priests in attendance who acknowledged Smith as the president of the high priesthood, and by Partridge, who extended the right hand of fellowship to Smith on behalf of the Church in Zion.⁵⁸ This act, which was a practice of some Protestant churches at this time, was patterned after Galatians 2:9, which states that James, Cephas, and John gave to Paul and Barnabas “the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.” Some denominations extended it “when men were set apart to the pastoral office, to give them a public pledge of christian and ministerial fellowship.” Partridge seemed to extend the hand for a similar purpose here.⁵⁹ A later history recounted that Joseph Smith regarded the event “as solemn, impressive, and delightful.”⁶⁰

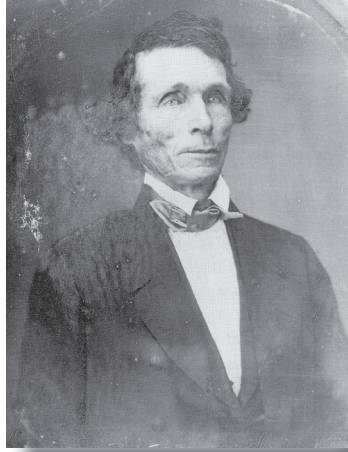
To further increase unity, Joseph Smith took measures to organize the Church’s economic endeavors, specifically joining its publishing and mercantile interests under an umbrella organization called the United Firm. The revelation directing the establishment of the Firm noted that it was to combine the stewardships of nine men “by a bond and Covennant that cannot be broken.” The nine included the two bishops—Partridge and Whitney—as well as six individuals who had been designated as “stewards over the revelations” in November 1831—Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer, Martin Harris, and William W. Phelps. Sidney Gilbert, who had been designated as Partridge’s agent in land purchases in Missouri, and who operated the storehouse there, was the ninth member. Joining all these several stewardships into one firm allowed each of its members “to have equal claims on the properties for the benefit of managing the concerns of your stewardship.”⁶¹ However, Smith also saw it as a unifying device for the leaders in Missouri and Ohio. As his later history declared, “It was my endeavor to so organize the church, that the brethren might

eventually be independent of every incumbrance beneath the celestial Kingdom, by bonds and covenants of mutual friendship, and mutual love.”⁶²

Despite Joseph Smith’s efforts, he believed that an undercurrent of resistance among Missouri leaders still simmered—a discontent that he seemed to sense, in spite of outward appearances that all was well. On the return trip to Ohio in May 1832, Newel K. Whitney broke his ankle and leg in an accident with the stagecoach in which he, Smith, and Sidney Rigdon were riding. Whitney was forced to recuperate in the small town of Greenville, Indiana. Sending Rigdon along to Kirtland, Smith chose to remain with Whitney and spent a great deal of time over the next few weeks pondering his own life and what had transpired in Missouri. As he later stated to William W. Phelps, one of the Missouri leaders, “I in the lonely places [in Greenville] communed with him who is altogether lovely witnessed your case & viewed the conspiracy with much grief and lerned the displeasure of heaven and veewed the frowns of the heavenly hosts upon Zion.” However, the Prophet did not realize the magnitude of the problems until he returned to Kirtland in June and found a letter from John Corrill. This letter, Smith said, showed “that the devel had set to work to reward us by stirring up your hearts . . . by raking up evry fault, which those eyes that are filled with beams could see in looking for motes.”⁶³ He did not explain the exact contents of Corrill’s letter, nor is that letter extant, but Corrill apparently accused Smith of “seeking after Monarchal power and authority”—or at least that is what Smith and his brethren in Ohio took it to mean.⁶⁴ Corrill, a former follower of Alexander Campbell’s reformed Baptist movement, may have objected to Smith’s appointment as president of the high priesthood, which, as noted above, solidified his position as head of the entire Church; or Corrill may have been expressing displeasure with some aspect of Smith’s recent visit to Missouri. Whatever the case, he evidently had some difficulty with the Church’s growing hierarchical structure. In January 1832, he said in a conference that “the office of a Priest Teacher or Deacon” was “as important as that of a High Priest,”⁶⁵ even though a November 1831 revelation had specifically declared that after deacons, teachers, priests, and elders came “the high Priest hood which is the greatest of all.”⁶⁶

But John Corrill was not the only one with whom Joseph Smith had issues. W. W. Phelps had also written a letter characterized by Joseph Smith as “cold and indifferent.” Phelps’ letter, which is not extant, apparently touched at the roots of the conflict between Ohio leaders and those in Missouri—that of who was primarily responsible for leading the gathering to Zion and for administering the Church there. Explaining that “he that is compelled in all things the same is a slothfull & not a wise Servent,” an August 1831 revelation had specified that “men should . . . do many things of their own free will, . . . for the power is in them wherein they are agents unto themselves.” The rev-

elation also stated that “the Bishop or the agent of the Church”—Partridge and Gilbert—were to make known “the privileges of the lands,” or the capacity of the land in Zion for migration. Then, conferences of elders would determine whom to send to Missouri.⁶⁷ However, another revelation declared that Joseph Smith had “power” to “decern by the spirit those who shall go up unto the Land of Zion & those of my Deciples which shall tarry.”⁶⁸ Although this appeared to establish an orderly process for sending people to Zion—first Partridge would say how many individuals could be accommodated and then Smith or a conference of elders would determine who would go—it became in reality a source of contention, especially when Partridge and others in Missouri used their “free will” to provide unsolicited instructions and advice on the gathering.



William W. Phelps, circa 1853.

As early as January 1832, Bishop Partridge voiced some concern over the lack of resources in Jackson County, fearing they were not adequate to sustain the number of people migrating there. Ironically, part of the problem may have been the poor quality of land that Smith chose for settlement over Partridge’s objections. One early settler in Independence later recounted that “the worst portions only” of land in Jackson County “were entered by their bishop, Partridge, and settled upon by them.”⁶⁹ Likewise, Ezra Booth noted in 1831 that those migrating to Missouri could only obtain “less than thirty acres to the family” once they reached Jackson County, “and thirty acres in that country, is little enough for wood and timber land.”⁷⁰ In an attachment to a letter written to Smith by Oliver Cowdery, Partridge himself explained that most of the 1,200 acres he had purchased to that point were “woodland & not in a situation to be improved this season even if it should be thought advisable to clear it faster than what is wanted for timber.” In addition, Partridge continued, “provisions are scarce,” especially since Sidney Gilbert was unable to open his store as soon as Partridge had expected, which “injured us verry much in the purchase of provisions.” Therefore, Partridge explained, “We have not a large supply [of goods] on hand probable not more than enough for the brethren here.” In addition, he said, “We are not in a situation to buy much more land & procure a stock of provisions & cows for those who are coming here this spring.” Facing this situation, Partridge exceeded his own

mandate to make only the privileges of the land known by counseling Smith as to who should come to Zion, declaring that only “mechanics,” or artisans, should migrate that spring, “knowing that others are commanded to come & believing that others will come without a command.”⁷¹ In July 1832, a letter from “the Elders in the Land of Zion,” including Partridge, to “the Church of Christ scattered abroad” provided further direction: “Prudence would dictate at present,” that “the churches abroad, come not up to Zion, until preparations can be made for them.”⁷²

Such expressions of concern led Joseph Smith and others to charge Missouri leaders with a lack of faith in the Lord’s ability to provide for his Saints. Smith even insinuated that Edward Partridge was holding back consecrated funds for land purchases. “You complain that there have already to[o] many deciples arived there for the means,” Smith told Phelps in July 1832. “Tell brother Edward to remember Ananias & Sophria [Sapphira]”—two individuals in the New Testament who withheld money obtained by selling land and were struck dead by the power of God.⁷³ Sidney Gilbert, who ran the Church’s storehouse, apparently also worried that not enough goods existed for Church members migrating to Zion. “There is manifestly an uneasiness in Bro G[ilbert], and a fearfulness that God will not provide for his saints in their last days,” Orson Hyde and Hyrum Smith wrote in a January 1833 letter, “and these fears lead him on to covitousness.”⁷⁴ This covetousness manifested itself in Gilbert’s refusal to provide goods to some of the “poor brethren that are pure in heart” in Jackson County, and it led Smith to elaborate on Gilbert’s lack of faith. “We are well aware of the great care upon [Gilbert’s] mind in consequence of much business,” Smith wrote, “but he must put his trust in god.”⁷⁵

Although Sidney Gilbert appears to have denied goods to some needy Church members, there is no extant evidence that Edward Partridge withheld land or funds in Zion. In addition, communications from him and others show a legitimate concern that the migration of individuals exceeded the Church’s means. He also appeared to be sincerely trying to fulfill his responsibility to make known the privileges of the land to those outside of Zion. As one letter specifically explained, the Missouri leaders were not trying to “extend our hands to steady [the Lord’s] ark”; they were merely convinced that the Lord would not provide for members who were “imprudent, or lavish, or negligent, or indolent.”⁷⁶ Regardless, revelations and letters from Joseph Smith continued to condemn them for their “vanity and unbelief,” telling them that if they did not repent, “a scorge and a Judgment” would be “poured out upon the children of Zion.”⁷⁷ In a November 27, 1832 letter, Smith warned W. W. Phelps that “that man who was called of God and appointed that puteth forth his hand to steady the ark of God shall fall by the shaft of death like as a tree that is

smitten by the vivid shaft of lightning.”⁷⁸ Oliver Cowdery later explained that this statement “was given for a caution to those in high standing to beware, lest they should fall by the shaft of death as the Lord has said.”⁷⁹ Likewise, in January 1833, Smith condemned “the spirit which is breathed” in letters from Phelps and Gilbert, stating that it was “the very spirit which is wasting the strength of Zion like a pestalence.”⁸⁰

As contention between those in Ohio and those in Missouri continued, Sidney Rigdon called a conference of twelve high priests in January 1833 to discuss ways to resolve the situation. Acting on directions in a September 1832 revelation that those in Zion were “to be upbraided for their evil hearts of unbelief and . . . for their rebellion against you [Smith],”⁸¹ the conference instructed Orson Hyde and Hyrum Smith “to write an Epistle” to those in Zion “in the name of the conference.”⁸² Hyde and Smith did so, telling those in Missouri that previous letters sent by Joseph Smith and others had “failed to bring to us that satisfactory confession and acknowledgement which the spirit of our Master [Jesus Christ] requires.” The two specifically addressed John Corrill’s charge that the Prophet had been “seeking after Monarchal power and authority,” declaring that “we are sensible that this is not the thing Bro J is seeking after.” Instead, he was only trying to “magnify the high office and calling whereunto he has been called and appointed by the command of God.” The two also pointedly asked those in Missouri to consider “the circumstances of the Nephites and the Children of Israel rising up against their prophets and accusing them of seeking after Kingly power &c—and see what befel them.”⁸³ Orson and Hyrum insisted that they and the conference had only “the best of feelings, and feelings of the greatest anxiety for the welfare of Zion,” and counseled the Missouri leaders to not allow Satan to “tempt you to think we want to make you bow to us to domeneer over you.”⁸⁴

This letter, together with another Joseph Smith communication to Zion’s leaders and a revelation transmitted to Missouri as “the Olive leaf” and “the Lords message of peace to us,”⁸⁵ appeared to bring about greater harmony between the two groups. On February 26, 1833, a special council of high priests convened in Missouri and resolved that a committee “write an epistle to our brethren in Kirtland” in response to Orson Hyde and Hyrum Smith’s letter. The high priests in attendance also “kneeled before the Lord & asked him to effect a perfect harmony between us & our brethren in Kirtland which was the desire of our hearts.”⁸⁶ Such actions, according to a letter written by Smith in April 1833, were to the “entire satisfaction” of those in Kirtland, especially since they indicated that leaders in Zion were willing to submit to Smith and his brethren in Ohio. “The expressions of Joy beamed on evry countenance when they saw that our epistle and the revelation was received by our brethren in Zion,” Smith observed. “It had its desired effect.”⁸⁷

The difficulties between those in Missouri and those in Ohio indicated that a sort of power struggle was occurring between the two groups over the administration of the gathering to Zion and the respective roles of Joseph Smith, Edward Partridge, and others in that governance. If Smith or the elders wanted to send people to Zion but Partridge did not think they could be accommodated, Partridge was accused of a lack of faith and of attempting to undermine the Prophet's authority. Conversely, when Smith reprimanded Partridge or others, he was perceived as acting in a dictatorial way. This led John Corrill and Ezra Booth to accuse the Mormon leader of being unduly despotic in his actions as the head of the Church, but other leaders in Ohio, such as Sidney Rigdon, supported the Prophet in the difficulties, believing that Partridge and others were not giving enough respect to the Prophet's position. For his part, Smith denied any tendencies towards despotism, claiming that such charges were "absolutely false" originating in the father of all lies." He claimed that he had "ever been filled with the greatest anxiety" for those in Zion and had "taken the greatest interest for their welfare."⁸⁸

Part of the problem was that these leaders were mostly communicating via mail and not in person.⁸⁹ Joseph Smith lamented to William W. Phelps in Missouri, "I . . . wish, that my heart, & feelings thereof might for once be laid open before [you], as plain as your own natural face is to you by looking in a mirror."⁹⁰ He also informed Sidney Gilbert that his letters contained too many "hints . . . that are not clearly explained" and counseled him to write letters that were "plain to the understanding of all, that no jealousy may be raised."⁹¹ But another issue was the different leadership roles that he had established in 1831 and 1832—including the solidifying of his own authority—and confusion over the duties of those fulfilling the positions underneath him. This may have been one reason why he instigated the United Firm in the spring of 1832—to provide better coordination and unity among those with various temporal and spiritual stewardships over the Saints. Still another reason for the conflict was that many of the leaders with whom Smith had difficulties were individuals who had come from religions with a more democratic form of leadership, where authority was not centered in one individual. Reformed Baptists, Methodists, and other denominations all put more emphasis on the governing power of congregations and conferences, and individuals converting from those religions to Mormonism probably had similar expectations of leadership.⁹²

Yet even with the new leadership structures—which continued to develop in 1833 with the formalization of the presidency of the high priesthood⁹³—there were still many elements of participatory leadership in the Church in early 1833. Conferences of elders and high priests continued to function as the primary body for Church business. As explained above, chastisement of

some of the Missouri leaders came from a conference of twelve high priests in January 1833, convened by Sidney Rigdon, not Joseph Smith (although he participated).⁹⁴ Likewise, elders serving missions had latitude in various aspects of administration. Jared Carter's 1832 missionary journal explains that in one instance, Calvin Stoddard, who was preaching with Carter, decided that he needed to stop preaching and go to work. Carter consulted with Sylvester Smith and Gideon Carter, other elders, and, after "earnestly calling upon the Lord we were convensed that it was requesit that he should have his request and also the authority of an Elder." No coordination was necessary with Joseph Smith or other high leaders to make this decision. Likewise, Carter encountered a member who "had lived unworthy of the commu[n]ion of the Sacrament" and desired to be rebaptized. Carter performed the rebaptism without consulting any higher authority.⁹⁵ Such instances indicate that, even with a more formal leadership structure in 1831 and 1832, elders still had wide latitude to "do many things of their own free will."⁹⁶

But a definite centralization of power in Joseph Smith and a select group of elders had occurred in 1831 and 1832. As this centralization occurred, the still-youthful Smith and the infant Church were treading in unfamiliar territory. The Prophet, who was still in his mid-twenties, had never led a large organization—or a small one, for that matter; and at times his inexperience showed, especially when dealing with individuals who were nearly nine hundred miles away. Yet the difficulties in 1831 and 1832 taught him some valuable lessons; several 1833 letters, for example, showed more of a tendency to give subordinates the benefit of the doubt. After hearing about the destruction of the printing office and the tarring and feathering of Partridge in July 1833 by Jackson County vigilantes, Smith wrote a letter to the Missouri leaders telling them, "You have my whole confidence," informing them that the "affliction is sent upon us not for your sins but for the sins of the church."⁹⁷

Perhaps more significant was Joseph Smith's handling of contention with the newly instituted Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1835 and 1836. After hearing in the summer of 1835 that the Apostles were lax in their duty of soliciting donations for the construction of the Kirtland Temple and that they had disparaged the school in which Sidney Rigdon was teaching, the Prophet presided over a council that wrote a letter of chastisement to the Twelve. This letter accused the Apostles of "set[ting] yourselves up as an independent counsel subject to no authority of the church, a kind of out laws."⁹⁸ When members of the Twelve objected to this characterization, Smith held a council in January 1836 to resolve the matter. At this council, he allowed members of the quorum to express their side of the story. He then

acknowledged that the letter sent to the Twelve might have contained “too harsh language” and asked for their forgiveness. “Although I have sometimes spoken to[o] harsh from the impulse of the moment,” he declared, “and inasmuch as I have wounded your feelings brethren I ask your forgiveness, for I love you and will hold you up with all my heart in righteousness before the Lord, and before all men.”⁹⁹ Such expressions of humility and forgiveness—not always present in the conflicts with Missouri leaders in 1831 and 1832—helped heal whatever breach was present. Perhaps Smith was more secure in his own authority in 1835 and 1836 than he had been four years earlier; it is also likely that his experiences in 1831 and 1832 helped mold how in later years he handled those in subordinating positions.

In the end, the conflicts between Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and the Missouri leaders during 1831 and 1832 indicate that it was not a simple proposition to create a more formalized leadership structure in the Church or for the Prophet to centralize power in himself. As the Church expanded and became more geographically diverse, Smith implemented a more formal administrative structure in the Church, but some of his followers—many of whom had been schooled in religions with more democratic structures—did not readily accept such control. The tension between how much latitude leaders had in their administration and Smith’s role as the one presiding over the entire Church created difficulties that were not easily resolved. These issues were most readily seen in the administration of the gathering to Missouri, especially because Smith was residing elsewhere and was not involved in the day-to-day affairs of those living in Zion. As head of the Church and as “a Seer a revelator a translator & a prophet” who was “like unto Moses,” he saw himself as the rightful authority to guide members to Zion. But Edward Partridge and those actually in Missouri had responsibilities as well. Because they were the ones dealing with the actual migration and its effects, they felt that their voices should be heard. This situation created tension that, at least in Smith’s mind, manifested itself in criticism of his rightful calling as head of the Church, and that required personal intervention on many occasions. “I have not given occasion of offence to the brethren or sisters in Zion, neither of jealousy, or evel surmising,” the Prophet insisted in July 1832.¹⁰⁰ Others disagreed, and the resulting conflict tested Smith’s still-developing administrative abilities.

Notes

1. David J. Whittaker, “An Introduction to Mormon Administrative History,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15, no. 4 (Winter 1982): 14.
2. See for example, Whittaker, “An Introduction to Mormon Administrative

History”; D. Michael Quinn, “The Evolution of the Presiding Quorums of the LDS Church,” *Journal of Mormon History* 1 (1974): 21–38; Gregory A. Prince, *Power from on High: The Development of Mormon Priesthood* (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 1995); D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 1994); Joseph F. Darowski, “Seeking After the Ancient Order: Conferences and Councils in Early Church Governance, 1830–1834,” *Mormon Historical Studies* 11, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 27–39; Mark L. Staker, “Sharing Authority: Developing the First Presidency in Ohio,” in David J. Whittaker and Arnold K. Garr, eds., *A Firm Foundation: Church Organization & Administration* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2011), 114–38; and William G. Hartley, *My Fellow Servants: Essays on the History of the Priesthood* (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 2010).

3. Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 5–6, 9.

4. Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 118–20; see also Thomas D. Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism: Orthodox Friends, 1800–1907* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988), xvi.

5. Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith*, 117–18.

6. See John H. Wigger, *Taking Heaven by Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 89–94; Russell E. Richey, *Early American Methodism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), 77–78.

7. Bill J. Leonard, *Baptists in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 78–80.

8. “A Restoration of the Ancient order of Things. No. XXXII. Official Names and Titles,” *Christian Observer* 7 (September 7, 1829): 585–86.

9. Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), 448; Mark Lyman Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People: The Historical Setting of Joseph Smith’s Ohio Revelations* (Salt Lake City, UT: Greg Kofford Books, 2009), 32.

10. See for example, 1 Tim. 3:1–2, 10; Eph. 4:11; Heb. 5:1–10.

11. See Alma 13 and Moroni chapters 2–6 in the Book of Mormon; Prince, *Power from on High*, 11–13; John W. Welch, “The Book of Mormon as the Keystone of Church Administration,” in Whittaker and Garr, *A Firm Foundation*, 14–57.

12. Articles and Covenants, April 10, 1830 [D&C 20], in Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *Revelations and Translations, Volume 1: Manuscript Revelation Books*, vol. 1 of the Revelations and Translations series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church Historian’s Press, 2009), 83 (hereafter referred to as *JSP*, R1).

13. See for example, “Far West Stake (Mo.): The Conference Minutes and Record Book of Christ’s Church of Latter Day Saints” (hereafter referred to as Minute Book 2), 5, 24–25, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter referred to as CHL); Kirtland High Council, Minutes, December 1832–November 1, 1837, CHL (hereafter referred to as Minute Book 1).

14. Revelation, July 1830–B [D&C 26], in *JSP*, R1, 39; Minute Book 2, October 25–26, 1831; Minute Book 2, August 4, 1831.

15. Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy*, 7.

16. Revelation, April 6, 1830 [D&C 21], in *JSP*, R1, 27.

17. David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ* (Richmond, MO: David

Whitmer, 1887), 33–34, 46.

18. Joseph Smith 1838 Manuscript History, vol. A–1, 37, CHL; License, John Whitmer, June 9, 1830, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. According to David Whitmer, before the formal organization of the Church in April 1830, six individuals were ordained as elders: Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer Jr., Samuel H. Smith, Hyrum Smith, and David Whitmer. Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, 32. A history begun by Joseph Smith in 1838, however, stated that Smith and Cowdery were ordained “to the office of an Elder” in the Church on April 6, 1830, indicating that even if Whitmer’s recollection was correct, a reordination after the Church’s organization was necessary. See Joseph Smith 1838 Manuscript History, vol. A–1, 37.

19. Revelation, November 11, 1831 [D&C 107], *JSP*, R1, 216–17; Minute Book 2, 3 June 1831; Minute Book 2, October 25–26, 1831.

20. Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy*, 8–10.

21. Richard Lyman Bushman, “Joseph Smith and Power,” in Whittaker and Garr, *A Firm Foundation*, 4. Some historians have argued that the Church also had twelve apostles functioning in 1830, using an account in the *Cleveland Herald* about the Church sending out “twelve Apostles to promulgate its doctrines” and a reference in a letter Ezra Booth wrote in 1831 calling Ziba Peterson “one of the twelve Apostles,” among other sources. However, it is unclear what kind of governing function “apostles” had at this time. See “The Golden Bible,” *Cleveland Herald*, November 25, 1830; Ezra Booth to Edward Partridge, September 20, 1831, in “Mormonism—No. VII,” *Ohio Star*, November 24, 1831; John Whitmer, License, June 9, 1830, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut; Prince, *Power from on High*, 57; Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy*, 11–13.

22. Revelation, September 1830–B [D&C 28], in *JSP*, R1, 50–51.

23. See “Extracts of Letters, received by the last mail, stating the success of the ancient gospel in different parts of the country,” *Christian Baptist* 5 (June 2, 1828): 452; and Prince, *Power from on High*, 63. The office of deacon may not have been introduced in the Church until 1831. The first conference minutes listing deacons in attendance were those related to an October 25–26, 1831 conference. See Minute Book 2, October 25–26, 1831; see also Prince, *Power from on High*, 69.

24. Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, 35.

25. Revelation, February 4, 1831 [D&C 41], in *JSP*, R1, 94–95; see also Edward Partridge bishop license, CHL.

26. Revelation, February 9, 1831 [D&C 42], in *JSP*, R1, 99–101. For an overview of how consecration operated in the Church from 1831–1833, see Lyndon W. Cook, *Joseph Smith and the Law of Consecration* (Provo, UT: Grandin Book Company, 1985), 5–28.

27. See Revelation, November 11, 1831 [D&C 107], *JSP*, R1, 217. Perhaps one reason why Joseph Smith targeted Edward Partridge for this position was that Partridge had had considerable success in Painesville, Ohio, as both a hatter and as a land investor, indications of some financial prowess. See Sherilyn Farnes, “Fact, Fiction and Family Tradition: The Life of Edward Partridge (1793–1840), The First Bishop of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (MA thesis, Brigham Young University, 2009), 22–23.

28. See Minute Book 2, June 3, 1831, 3–4.

29. Revelation, July 20, 1831 [D&C 57], *JSP*, R1, 159–61; Minute Book 2, 3–4.

30. Revelation, August 1, 1831 [D&C 58], in *JSP*, R1, 167.

31. “A Restoration of the Ancient order of Things,” 585–86; see also Staker, “Sharing Authority,” 123.

32. “Mormonism—No. VII,” *Ohio Star*, November 24, 1831. A later reminiscence from an early Independence settler claimed that “nearly all the best land had been entered”

before the Mormons came to Independence and that “the worst portions only were entered by their bishop, Partridge, and settled upon by them” J. C. M., “The Other Side: An Old Settler Gives the Gentile Version of the Mormon Troubles,” *Kansas City Daily Journal*, April 24, 1881.

33. Minute Book 2, March 10, 1832.

34. Revelation, August 1, 1831 [D&C 58], in *JSP*, R1, 163.

35. Edward Partridge to Lydia Clisbee Partridge, August 5, 1831, in Letters, 1831–1835, CHL; Revelation, September 11, 1831 [D&C 64], in *JSP*, R1, 191–93. Partridge also declared before a conference held in Missouri in March 1832 that “he is & has always been sorry” for the disagreement with Smith. See Minute Book 2, March 10, 1832.

36. “For the Ohio Star,” *Ohio Star*, October 13, 1831.

37. Revelation, August 8, 1831 [D&C 60], in *JSP*, R1, 172–73.

38. “Mormonism—No. VII,” *Ohio Star*, November 24, 1831.

39. Revelation, August 12, 1831 [D&C 61], in *JSP*, R1, 174–75.

40. “Mormonism—No. VII,” *Ohio Star*, November 24, 1831.

41. Revelation, August 1, 1831 [D&C 58], in *JSP*, R1, 163.

42. Revelation, November 11, 1831–B [D&C 107 partial], in *JSP*, R1, 217–19. Quoting an 1877 statement from Bishop Edward Hunter, D. Michael Quinn has argued that the language in this revelation resulted from a “jurisdictional conflict with Bishop Edward Partridge who apparently thought that ‘a Bishop was the highest office in the church.’” Although no contemporary account suggests that the revelation stemmed from this conflict, it is instructive that this revelation came after Partridge’s confrontation with Smith. See Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy*, 40; Minute Book 2, March 10, 1832.

43. Minute Book 2, April 26, 1832; Joseph Smith 1838 Manuscript History, vol. A–1, 180; Historian’s Office, “History of Orson Pratt,” 12, *Histories of the Twelve*, ca. 1858–1880, CHL.

44. Revelation, circa March 1832, Newel K. Whitney Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

45. Richard Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 1994), 71; “The Book of John, Whitmer kept by Comma[n]d,” ca. 1838–ca. 1847, 32, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri. A history that Joseph Smith initiated in 1838 stated that Smith dedicated the temple spot. See Joseph Smith 1838 Manuscript History, vol. A–1, 139. However, according to Whitmer’s history, Smith laid the cornerstone for the temple and Rigdon dedicated “this Spot of ground” for the structure. Having Rigdon dedicate the temple spot was in accord with an August 1, 1831 revelation that instructed, “let my servant Sidney consecrate & dedicate this land & the spot of the temple unto the Lord.” Revelation, August 1, 1831 [D&C 58], in *JSP*, R1, 167.

46. Kenneth H. Winn, “‘Such Republicanism at This’: John Corroll’s Rejection of Prophetic Rule,” in *Differing Visions: Dissenters in Mormon History*, Roger D. Launius and Linda Thatcher, eds. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 50.

47. Minute Book 2, March 10, 1832.

48. Oliver Cowdery to Joseph Smith, January 28, 1832, Joseph Smith Collection, CHL.

49. The statement specifically complained about the conference appointing Oliver Cowdery, William W. Phelps, and John Corroll as a committee to superintend schools in Zion, as well as designating that Cowdery help Partridge and Sidney Gilbert write a letter “requesting a special confrence” to consider the operation of the storehouse in Missouri. In addition, the conference designated John Corroll as the keeper of the general Church record of names in Missouri, despite the fact that a revelation and a previous conference

had given John Whitmer that responsibility. See Revelation, circa March 8, 1831–B [D&C 47], in *JSP*, R1, 130–133. Mark Staker has argued that Kirtland leaders were specifically targeting Oliver Cowdery to show him that he “did not have authority over Partridge.” Staker, “Sharing Authority,” 124–25. Although that was certainly true, Sidney Rigdon and others also seemed intent on showing all of the leaders in Missouri that those in Kirtland, and Joseph Smith specifically, had authority over leaders in Missouri.

50. Sidney Rigdon, Jesse Gause, David Whitmer, Peter Whitmer Jr., Hyrum Smith, and Reynolds Cahoon, Charges against Missouri Conference, ca. March 1832, General Ecclesiastical Court Trials, 1832–1963, CHL. The request to hold a court in Zion was ultimately crossed out of the document.

51. Compare Minute Book 2, January 23, 1832, with Cowdery to Smith, January 28, 1832.

52. Minute Book 2, March 10, 1832.

53. Vision, February 16, 1832 [D&C 76], in *JSP*, R1, 415.

54. Journal Entry, March 8, 1832, in *JSP*, R1, 433–35.

55. Revelation, December 4, 1831 [D&C 72], *JSP*, R1, 237; Hyrum Smith, Diary, February 10, 1831, photocopy in Manuscript Series, CHL.

56. Revelation, March 1, 1832 [D&C 78], in *JSP*, R1, 444–45.

57. Joseph Smith 1838 Manuscript History, vol. A–1, 210.

58. Minute Book 2, April 26, 1832.

59. Rev. Brown Emerson, “Right Hand of Fellowship,” in Lyman Beecher, *The Design, Rights, and Duties of Local Churches: A Sermon Delivered at the Installations of the Rev. Elias Cornelius, An Associate Pastor of the Tabernacle Church in Salem* (Andover, MD: Flagg and Gould, 1819), 51; see also W. P. Strickland, ed., *The Backwoods Preacher: An Autobiography of Peter Cartwright* (London: Alexander Heylin, 1860), 31.

60. Joseph Smith 1838 Manuscript History, vol. A–1, 210.

61. Revelation, April 26, 1832 [D&C 82], in *JSP*, R1, 229–31; Minute Book 2, April 26–27, 1832; Revelation, June 8, 1831 [D&C 53], in *JSP*, R1, 153; Revelation, July 20, 1831 [D&C 57:8], in *JSP*, R1, 159.

62. Joseph Smith 1838 Manuscript History, vol. A–1, 213. For more information on the United Firm, see Max H. Parkin, “Joseph Smith and the United Firm: The Growth and Decline of the Church’s First Master Plan of Business and Finance, Ohio and Missouri, 1832–1834,” *BYU Studies* 46, no. 3 (2007): 4–39.

63. Joseph Smith to William W. Phelps, July 31, 1832, Joseph Smith Collection, CHL.

64. Orson Hyde and Hyrum Smith to “The Bishop and his council and the inhabitants of Zion,” January 14, 1833, Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, 20–25, Joseph Smith Collection, CHL.

65. Cowdery to Smith, January 28, 1832.

66. Revelation, November 11, 1831–B [D&C 107 partial], in *JSP*, R1, 217. Kenneth Winn has argued that “John Corrill’s commitment to republican liberty was closely tied to his Christian primitivism—and was deeply ingrained in his nature.” Therefore, he “would never surrender his private judgment to the authority of prophetic rule” Winn, “Such Republicanism at This,” 46–50.

67. Revelation, August 1, 1831 [D&C 58], in *JSP*, R1, 164–67.

68. Revelation, August 30, 1831 [D&C 63], in *JSP*, R1, 186–87.

69. J. C. M. “The Other Side”: An Old Settler Gives the Gentile Version of the Mormon Troubles,” *Kansas City Daily Journal*, April 24, 1881.

70. “Mormonism—No. V,” *Ohio Star*, November 10, 1831.

71. Cowdery to Smith, January 28, 1832.

72. "The Elders in the Land of Zion to the Church of Christ Scattered Abroad," *The Evening and the Morning Star* 1 (July 1832): 13.

73. Joseph Smith to William W. Phelps, July 31, 1832, Joseph Smith Collection, CHL; Acts 5:1–11.

74. Hyde and Smith to "The Bishop and his council and the inhabitants of Zion," January, 14, 1833.

75. Joseph Smith to Brethren in Zion, April 21, 1833, Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, 32–36, Joseph Smith Collection, CHL.

76. "The Elders Stationed in Zion to the Churches Abroad, In Love, Greeting," *The Evening and the Morning Star* 2 (July 1833): 110.

77. Revelation, September 22 and 23, 1832 [D&C 84], in *JSP*, R1, 280–81.

78. Joseph Smith to William W. Phelps, November 27, 1832, Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, 1–4, Joseph Smith Collection, CHL.

79. Oliver Cowdery to John Whitmer, January 1, 1834, in Oliver Cowdery Letterbook, 1833–1838, 15, Henry H. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

80. Joseph Smith to William W. Phelps, January 11, 1833, Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, 18–20, Joseph Smith Collection, CHL.

81. Revelation, September 22 and 23, 1832 [D&C 84], in *JSP*, R1, 282–83.

82. Minute Book 1, January 13–14, 1833, 5–6.

83. What incidents Hyde and Smith are referring is unclear. The Book of Mormon recounted the fate of Laman and Lemuel, the brothers of Nephi, and their followers after they attempted to kill Nephi for "think[ing] to rule over us." See 2 Ne. 5:2–5, 10–11, 20–24. In the Bible, Numbers chapter 16 explains how Korah, Dathan, and Abiram rebelled against Moses and Aaron because of their belief that Moses was trying to make himself "altogether a prince over us." The three were eventually swallowed up by the earth. See Num. 16:12–13, 31–33.

84. Hyde and Smith to "The Bishop and his council and the inhabitants of Zion," January 14, 1833.

85. Smith to Phelps, January 11, 1833; Revelation, December 27 and 28, 1832 [D&C 88:1–126], in *JSP*, R1, 292–309.

86. Minute Book 2, February 26, 1833.

87. Smith to Brethren in Zion, April 21, 1833; see also Joseph Smith 1838 Manuscript History, vol. A–1, 282; and Warren A. Jennings, "Zion is Fled: The Expulsion of the Mormons from Jackson County, Missouri (PhD diss. University of Florida, 1962), 77–79.

88. Smith to Phelps, July 31, 1832.

89. For an excellent discussion of the mail system between Ohio and Missouri from 1831–1833 and the problems it could cause, see William G. Hartley, "Letters and Mail Between Kirtland and Independence: A Mormon Postal History, 1831–33," *Journal of Mormon History* 35, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 163–89.

90. Smith to Phelps, July 31, 1832.

91. Smith to Brethren in Zion, April 21, 1833.

92. See Winn, "'Such Republicanism as This,'" 49–50.

93. See Revelation, March 8, 1833 [D&C 90], in *JSP*, R1, 514–23; Minute Book 1, March 18, 1833, 16–17.

94. See Hyde and Smith to "The Bishop and his council and the inhabitants of Zion," January 14, 1833; Minute Book 1, January 13, 1833, 5–6.

95. Jared Carter, Journal, typescript, 11, CHL.

96. Revelation, August 1, 1831 [D&C 58], in *JSP*, R1, 164–67; see also Darowski, "Seeking After the Ancient Order," 31–32.

97. Joseph Smith to William W. Phelps, John Whitmer, Edward Partridge, Isaac

Morley, John Corrill, and Sidney Gilbert, August 18, 1833, Joseph Smith Collection, CHL.

98. Joseph Smith and Kirtland High Council to Quorum of the Twelve, August 4, 1835, Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, 90–93, Joseph Smith Collection, CHL.

99. Joseph Smith, Journal, January 16, 1836, in Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*, vol. 1 of the Journals series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard yman Bushman (Salt Lake City: The Church Historian's Press, 2008), 156–59.

100. Smith to Phelps, July 31, 1832.