

Come Listen to a Prophet's Voice

From a LOG FARMHOUSE

The Church of [Jesus] Christ in these last days . . . [was] organized and established . . . in the fourth month, and on the sixth day of the month which is called April (Doctrine and Covenants 20:1).



The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized in 1830. President Hinckley reviews its miraculous growth as foretold in prophecy.

I have tried to picture in imagination that April 6 of 1830, the day the Church was

organized. The few who believed in Joseph's mission gathered on that day, which was designated by divine revelation as "being one thousand eight hundred and thirty years since the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh" (Doctrine & Covenants 20:1).

One wonders whether any of that group, other than Joseph Smith, who saw the prophetic vision, had any idea of the greatness of the thing they were beginning. From a rural area in Fayette, New York, from the simple Whitmer log farmhouse, there was to grow an organization worldwide in its scope and numbering millions in its membership.

As we think of the growth of the Church, our minds are drawn to the epic and painful movement from the farmlands of rural New York to the



valley of the Great Salt Lake, and [from there] to the nations of the earth.

Following the organization of the Church, persecution soon raised its ugly head. A decision was made to move to Kirtland, Ohio.

There the early members built their beautiful temple, and in its prayer of dedication the young prophet invoked [called on] the powers of heaven that the Church "may come forth out of the

wilderness of darkness, and shine forth fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners" (Doctrine and Covenants 109:73). But the fulfillment of that prayer would not come quickly. The peace of Kirtland was shattered by insults, financial distress, the tarring and feathering of their leader.

In Missouri they built another center. This was to have been Zion. That dream was blasted with rifle fire, the burning of homes, the wolf cries of the night-riding mobs, the illegal expulsion order, followed by the painful march across the bottomlands of the Mississippi and the crossing of the river to the temporary asylum (place of safety) in Illinois.

Their prophet did not make that journey with the fleeing exiles. During the bitter winter of 1838-1839, he was imprisoned in the cold, miserable basement cell of a Missouri jail, the

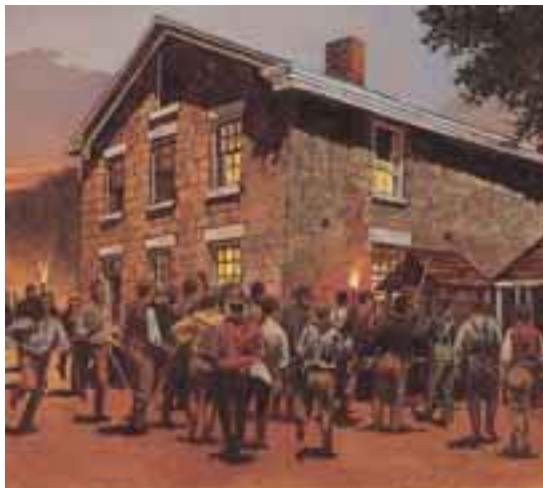
"While the pure in heart, and the wise, and the noble, and the virtuous, shall seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from under thy hand" (Doctrine and Covenants 122:1-2).

My [young friends], all of us who are part of this great kingdom established among the nations of the earth are the fulfillment of that prophecy, as is the Church itself.

Joseph never saw the day of which we are a part, except through the vision of a seer. He died that sultry June 27, 1844, at Carthage, Illinois. I give you my testimony of him. He was the ordained servant of God, raised up to be the mighty prophet of this dispensation.

The Church organized [172] years ago stands today a tower of strength, an anchor of certainty in an unsettled world. Its future is secure as the church and kingdom of God.

May we live its teachings and work to fulfill the



victim of a false arrest.

[Feeling abandoned, helpless, and] lonely, he cried out, "O God, where art thou?" (Doctrine and Covenants 121:1).

In the [Lord's answer] to that prayer came these remarkable words of prophecy:

"The ends of the earth shall inquire after thy name, and fools shall have thee in derision, and hell shall rage against thee;

Lord's purposes as we individually seek to model our lives after its true and living head, the Lord Jesus Christ.

(See *Ensign*, January 1997, pages 2-3.)