George Barstow, ever published it. In response to other inquiries in 1844, Joseph Smith sent revised copies of this letter to several publishers of works about various churches and religious groups. It has been published several times over the years (for the complete text of the letter, see Appendix item "Wentworth Letter" in Vol. 4).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

EDWARD J. BRANDT

WEST INDIES, THE CHURCH IN

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints took root in the West Indies as English-speaking members moved from the United States to Puerto Rico. Finding no organized group of the Church there, they organized a branch and shared the gospel message with the local population, some of whom joined the Church and later became leaders themselves. Membership in the West Indies grew from 104 members in 1960 to over 50,000 in 1990, with seven stakes and six missions. It grew fastest in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, and Spanish quickly became the language of the Church. The first Caribbean district of the Church was organized in 1963, the first meetinghouse was dedicated in 1970, and the first stake was organized in Puerto Rico by Elder Ezra Taft Benson on December 14, 1980, in Puerto Rico, with Hermnio De Jesus as president. In 1990 Church units were functioning throughout the West Indies in such additional places as Antigua, the Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, Cuba (Guantanamo U.S. Naval Base), Curacao, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Martinique, the Netherlands Antilles, and Trinidad.

Puerto Rico. In the early 1950s, as a few LDS families moved to Puerto Rico on business and to work or to serve in the military at Ramey Air Force Base, they organized the first branch, which met in a member’s home in Guayataca. A second branch was organized in San Juan, and the first Puerto Rican converts were baptized there in the early 1950s. Puerto Rico led the way for the Church in the West Indies, receiving the first district, meetinghouse, stake, and mission. In 1990 it had almost 13,000 members attending more than fifty wards and branches in four stakes and one mission.

Dominican Republic. The Church began in the Dominican Republic in 1978, when the John Rappeley family from Utah and the Eddie Amparo family from New York met in the customs office in Santo Domingo and initiated regular Church meetings. Two months later, Rodolfo Boddan and his family became the first LDS baptisms in the country. In 1986, Brother Boddan was ordained the first stake patriarch of the new Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Stake. In 1990 there were almost twenty thousand members in over seventy Church units, including one stake and two missions.

Haiti. The first LDS missionaries went to Haiti in 1980 and organized a branch of the Church in Port-au-Prince. In 1984 the Haiti mission was es-

Baptizing in the Waters of Mormon, by Henri-Robert Bresil (1897, oil on canvas, 36'' × 24''). The Book of Mormon prophet Alma taught and baptized at a place called Mormon in the wilderness, depicted in a Haitian setting by LDS artist Henri-Robert Bresil of Haiti. "The place of Mormon, the waters of Mormon, the forest of Mormon, how beautiful are they to the eyes of them who there came to the knowledge of their Redeemer" (Mosiah 18:30). Church Museum of History and Art.
tablished, and by 1990 there were 3,000 members in eighteen branches, and the Book of Mormon was being translated into Haitian.

JAMAICA. The Church sent missionaries to Jamaica in 1841, but they were soon recalled because the prejudice against them made their efforts futile. However, the Church was finally established there in 1970 when several LDS families went to Jamaica to work. Victor Nugent and his family became converts in Jamaica in 1974. Brother Nugent was called as president of the Kingston District when the Jamaica Kingston Mission was organized in 1985. The Church in Jamaica is primarily Jamaican, and it had almost 2,000 members in thirteen branches in 1990.

EDWIN O. HAROLDSEN

WESTWARD MIGRATION, PLANNING AND PROPHECY

For Brigham Young and his associates, the 1846 exodus from Nauvoo, far from being a disaster imposed by enemies, was foretold and foreordained—a key to understanding LDS history and a necessary prelude for greater things to come. From a later perspective, too, scholars of the Mormon experience have come to see the exodus and colonization of the Great Basin as the single most important influence in molding the Latter-day Saints into a distinctive people. Popular histories invariably attribute the Saints’ exodus from Nauvoo to increasing violence, mob action, and persecution. This view, that the exodus was forced upon a people who had no choice, is simplistic and fails to account for more complex reasons for the exodus or to explain its importance in LDS belief.

From its beginnings and with each successive move, the Church was seemingly drawn toward the West. As early as 1832, LDS publications connected the destiny of the Church with the American Far West. An 1840 letter preserves Joseph Smith’s prophecy about “a place of safety preparing for [the Saints] away towards the Rocky Mountains” (Esplin, p. 90); and throughout the Nauvoo period the Prophet collected information and prepared for a latter-day Zion to be established in the tops of the Rocky Mountains (see Isa. 2:2–3). Several diaries record Joseph Smith’s February 1844 instructions to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to lead an expedition to the West to locate a new home for the Saints.

Though the Prophet put the plan on hold and his murder three months later further delayed implementation, Brigham Young and his fellow apostles firmly believed that their responsibility was to lead the Church to the West once the Nauvoo Temple was completed and the Saints had received the Endowment ordinances therein. Therefore, even had there been no violence against the Church in Illinois, there still would have been an exodus, a western migration, and western colonization.

Though most of the Saints, comfortable in a prosperous Nauvoo and not anxious to leave, knew little about the plans or the prophecy, some outside the Church were aware. In 1845, Illinois Governor Thomas Ford, anxious to solve the “Mormon problem” by having the Saints leave, chided Brigham Young for remaining when Joseph Smith had spoken of going west. Committed though they were to the West, however, Church leaders would not consider departing until the Saints were endowed in the Nauvoo Temple. Not until late summer 1845, with temple construction nearly completed, did they quietly resume preparations for the West.

When violence broke out in September 1845, Brigham Young had already announced that ordinance work would begin in December. He therefore “capitulated” to mob pressures and proclaimed to the Saints and to the world that he and his people would leave for the West the following spring. That announcement bought a peaceful interlude for ordinance work and preparation, while the threat of violence if they did not leave “put the gathering spirit” in the Saints, in Brigham Young’s words, encouraging the entire community to depart.

In meetings that fall, Brigham Young and the Twelve explained to the Saints the reasons for the exodus. They presented it as the will of God and as a God-given opportunity—a necessary step toward their destiny. They also saw the exodus as an unfolding of scriptural prophecy, including Isaiah’s vision of the last days when “the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it” (Isa. 2:2). Orson Pratt pronounced the proposed movement “a direct and literal fulfillment of many prophecies, both ancient and modern” (MS 6 [Dec. 1, 1845]:192). His brother, Parley P. Pratt, agreed