ever, represent independent inventions. Stronger evidence for contacts may be found in the Tree of Life motif, a common religious theme, on Stela 5 from Izapa in Chiapas, Mexico. Jakeman, in 1959, studied Stela 5 in detail and concluded that it represented the sons of a legendary ancestral couple absorbing and perhaps recording their knowledge of a munificent Tree of Life. This can be compared favorably to the account of Lehi’s vision in the Book of Mormon (1 Ne. 8).

The presence of a bearded white deity, Quetzalcoatl or Kukulcan, in the pantheon of the Aztec, Toltec, and Maya has also been advanced as indirect evidence of Christ’s visit to the New World. The deity is represented as a feathered serpent, and elements of his worship may have similarities to those associated with Christ’s atonement.

Recent work by LDS professional archaeologists such as Ray Matheny at El Mirador and by the New World Archaeological Foundation in Chiapas has been directed toward an understanding of the factors that led to the development of complex societies in Mesoamerica in general. Under C. Wilfred Griggs, a team of Brigham Young University scholars has sponsored excavations in Egypt, and other LDS archaeologists have been involved in projects in Israel and Jordan.

Another area of archaeological investigation is in LDS history. Dale Berge’s excavations at Nauvoo; the Whitmer farm in New York; the early Mormon settlement of Goshen (Utah); the Utah mining town of Mercur; and, most recently, Camp Floyd, the headquarters of Johnston’s army in Utah, have provided information about the economic and social interactions between early Mormon and non-Mormon communities.

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ARCHITECTURE
In the first generation the architecture of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints bore the stamp of individuality and originality. With a membership of less than fifteen thousand, Latter-day Saints undertook three daring projects: the KIRTLAND TEMPLE in Ohio, the master plan for the city of NAUVOO, Illinois, and the NAUVOO TEMPLE.

The Kirtland Temple, designed by the Prophet Joseph Smith and Artemis Millett, has a pristine exterior free of extraneous detail and a well-planned interior bathed in natural light. The master plan for Nauvoo, created by Joseph Smith and others, was similar in concept to Smith’s “plat for the City of Zion.” It consisted of a grid of streets with gardens adjoining each dwelling. The highest hill was reserved for the temple, which rose above all other structures and made Nauvoo, as originally planned, a clear visual statement of the religious
and social priorities of Mormon life. The Nauvoo Temple, designed by William Weeks, was similar to the Kirtland Temple but larger and more ornate.

After the westward migration to the Great Basin, other demanding projects were undertaken. CITY PLANNING for Salt Lake City was similar to the master plan for Nauvoo, with the temple as the dominant feature. Four temples were commissioned to be built in four Utah cities: in Salt Lake City, St. George, and Logan under architect Truman O. Angell, and in Manti under architect William H. Folsom. The block and bulwark form of the earlier temples was retained but, except for St. George, the facades were elaborate. The tower scheme of the Salt Lake Temple became the symbol of the new dispensation and embodied the growing proclivity of the Church to prefer complexity rather than simplicity in its architecture.

In addition to temples, the Church continued to produce other important buildings that were architecturally impressive, notably its tabernacles. Among the most distinguished were the Coleville, Logan, and Brigham City tabernacles. The SALINE TABERNACLE, designed by Truman O. Angell assisted by William H. Folsom and Henry Grow, remains the ideal of architectural integrity and is the zenith of Mormon architecture.

After 1900 the rapidly growing Church continued to produce a wide variety of religious structures, including temples, meetinghouses, and educational buildings, especially at BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY. Meetinghouses typically incorporated an axially organized chapel with pews arranged before an elevated central pulpit and an off-center sacrament table. Works of art and natural light were used sparingly (see MEETINGHOUSES). Early buildings in Salt Lake City included the classically detailed Church headquarters building, whose architect was Joseph Don Carlos Young, and the adjacent Hotel Utah. These structures, with the temple and tabernacle, became the architectural center of the Latter-day Saints and of Salt Lake City.

In the early decades of the twentieth century the Church commissioned temples in the western United States, Canada, Europe, and the South Pacific. The form of these structures differed from the earlier temples. Most were designed by Edward O. Anderson, and each featured a large, rectangular, flat-roofed assembly hall surmounted by a tower and enclosed by a lower mass of ancillary spaces. Natural light was admitted to the interior sparingly. The opaque character became the hallmark of future temples, including the Alberta Temple in Cardston, designed by Harold W. Burton. Its design received architectural commendation from outside the Church.

In response to worldwide growth and changes in organization, new buildings were added to the Church headquarters enclave. On Temple Square an annex was added to the temple, altering its symmetry. A 28-story office tower and plaza were constructed, designed by architect George Cannon Young. Restoration of the Lion and Beehive houses, originally Brigham Young’s residences, was completed.

Burgeoning growth led to a centralized Church Building Committee. Standard plans were developed, first for meetinghouses or chapels and then for temples. The meetinghouses, categorized by size, phases, and configuration, were uniformly designed for wards and stakes regardless of location. The standard-plan temples, initially the work of architect Emil Fetzer, and first built in Ogden and Provo, were designed to accommodate up to 100 ENDOWMENT sessions a day with maximum mobility. These single-towered edifices, of which more than a dozen have been built, all followed the same basic plan but employed changes and decoration in an attempt to capture a sense of individuality. After 1980 a second generation of standard-plan temples, credited to the Church architectural staff, was commissioned. These small, slightly differenti-
The Assembly Hall (c. 1888), on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, has been used for over a century for Church meetings, conferences, firesides, public lectures, and concerts. Photographer: C. R. Savage.

ated structures, built in large urban centers worldwide, typically featured a broad, low roof with various tower arrangements which, by replicating the most obvious elements of the Salt Lake Temple, announced the Church’s presence.

Throughout its history, Mormon architecture has been more functional than experimental, more temperate than ornate, more restrained than innovative. There is a marked tendency to avoid any distraction from direct and personal spirituality. Latter-day Saints’ concern for uniting heavenly principles with earthly practices has been adequately expressed in practical, durable, and extraordinarily well-maintained buildings and grounds.

FRANKLIN T. FERGUSON

AREA, AREA PRESIDENCY

An area is the largest geographical administrative subdivision of the Church and is presided over by an area presidency, composed of three members of the quorums of the Seventy.

An area presidency consists of a president and two counselors who provide spiritual guidance and administrative direction to leaders and members of the Church in their area. As members of the quorums of the Seventy, area presidencies are also called to preach the gospel, to be special witnesses of Jesus Christ, and to build up and regulate the affairs of the Church as assigned under the direction of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

The specific duties of an area presidency include implementing the policies and instructions of the General Authorities presiding over them; instructing area leaders and members in the principles of the gospel; selecting and training regional representatives, stake presidencies, and mission leaders; counseling with local leaders, members, and missionaries about Church-related, personal, and spiritual problems; establishing priorities for a broad range of Church activities; supervising the work of area staff personnel; conferring with community and religious leaders on social and moral issues of common concern; and making regular reports to higher Church leaders on conditions and progress in their area.

Area presidencies in the United States and Canada live in Salt Lake City. On weekends they often travel to their assigned areas and meet with leaders and members in stake conferences and various regional and stake training meetings. They also spend several weeks a year touring missions.