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## Chapter 10

# In Search of the New Jerusalem: Millennial Hopes and Scandinavian Immigrants to America

The immigration from Scandinavia to America started in the seventeenth century, with the establishment of a Swedish colony near today's Philadelphia. A large number of dissident groups followed, leaving their homelands for religious, political, or economic reasons. Utopian and millenarian ideas were exported to America and flourished, partly in a sectarian, religious form, partly in a secularized, communitarian form. Scandinavians arriving with later waves of immigration were often motivated by the ideals of "the Land of Promise," and some by "the Promised Land." Many Scandinavians also joined the religious community who succeeded in establishing their Zion on the American continent, the Latter Days Saints. This chapter traces some of the connections and networks that constitute a Jerusalem code amid Scandinavian immigrants to America.

Where did it come from, this idea of building Zion in America? In this chapter we trace the Jerusalem code through the seventeenth- and eighteenth centuries among immigrants to America, and focus on the Scandinavians. Traditional Norwegian-American and Swedish-American studies in history will hardly see the Jerusalem code as especially relevant for immigration, as the emphasis has been on the Lutheran heritage of those who left Scandinavia with the hope of a better future in America (Fig. 10.1). But we will trace some of the connections and networks that constitute a Jerusalem code amid immigrants to America, especially among German Lutheran Pietists, mystic and visionary Separatists, and utopian millenarians.

*Separatists* is the common word for those groups that leave the established or national churches, for theological or spiritual reasons. Until religious freedom was established in an increasing number of European nations in the nineteenth century, suppression and persecution of religious minorities were among the factors involved in immigration to America. Many of the Separatists were *millenarians*. The millenarians read the Biblical prophecies carefully, in order to find out what was going to happen in the near future. They believed that the establishment of the New Jerusalem would introduce the millennium during which the members of their

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specific religious community would reign with Christ for a thousand years. Some believed that the place was important, that Christ would establish his kingdom in Jerusalem, in the Holy Land. Others believed that the New Jerusalem would come somewhere else, a location usually revealed through a vision or prophecy. For many, Jerusalem was not necessarily a holy place, but a holy community. In America we find combinations of these interpretations of the Biblical Scriptures.

The Protestant Separatists had roots in the Reformation, not only reading the Bible, but reading themselves into the Biblical stories and promises. They commonly saw themselves as the remnant of the Church, keeping faithful to the true Word of God: “in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call” (Joel 2:32).

Philadelphia is mentioned in the Book of Revelation (chapters 2–3), where we find letters written in the name of Christ to the congregations of seven cities in Asia Minor. We can follow the name of *Philadelphia* together with Jerusalem and Zion through the centuries, as a common Separatist name of congregations and cities. The letter to the congregation in Philadelphia is historically of great significance for the understanding of the ideas about the New Jerusalem. It underscores, among other, how the Philadelphia community was asked to remain steadfast during persecution and not deny the name of Jesus (Rev 3:8–11): Thus the later millenarian groups growing out of persecution, identified themselves with the Philadelphians, the beloved of Christ who were uncompromising in loyalty. The Philadelphians became the prototype of those who will inherit “the New Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God” (Rev 3:12).<sup>1</sup>

## The First Scandinavian Colony in America: New Sweden

New Sweden was established along the Delaware River in 1638, in a place where Swedish traders had been visiting as early as 1610. During the Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648) Sweden was among the European Great Powers. The New Sweden Company was established to trade for furs and tobacco in North America. The settlers built a fort at the site of present-day Wilmington, and named it Fort Christina after Sweden’s young queen. It was the first permanent European settlement in the Delaware Valley and the first Scandinavian colony in America, except for the Norse colonization of North America in the late tenth century.

More than 600 Swedes and Finns settled in the area, but New Sweden remained under the Swedish flag for only seventeen years. Still, this enabled the

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<sup>1</sup> *New International Version* of the Bible.

Swedish-Americans to claim that their people were “colonists” rather than “immigrants.”<sup>2</sup> The settlement continued to exist after 1655, when Swedish colonial ambitions had subsided and the Dutch took over. In 1669, the Swedish settlers built a log blockhouse in the area, which in 1682 was established by the English Quaker William Penn as the city of Philadelphia, capital of Pennsylvania. The blockhouse was used as a Lutheran church until 1698, when the Old Swedes’ Gloria Dei Church of Philadelphia was built. This is the oldest Lutheran congregation in America.

In Philadelphia the first colonial immigration and the establishment of an official church in the name of the king, is followed by an immigration of separatist groups leaving their European homelands for religious, political or economic reasons. Among those, some were searching for the “Land of Promise,”<sup>3</sup> others for “The Promised Land.” For those in search of the Promised Land the building of Zion in America became important.

## The Swedes meet the Separatist’s longing for Zion

The first immigration that can (presumably) be interpreted within the “Jerusalem code” was a group of some forty people arriving in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in the autumn of 1694. The original leader of the group immigrating to America was the Lutheran minister, astronomer, and mathematician from Württemberg, Professor Johan Jakob Zimmermann. He was removed from his ministry in 1685 due to his prediction of the advent of the New Jerusalem in 1693, as well as his attachment to the ideas of the German philosopher, mystic, and Lutheran theologian Jakob Böhme. The group gathered in Hamburg in 1693, determined to migrate to the wilderness of Pennsylvania; the best place to be when the New Jerusalem would appear during that year.

Several members of this group were theologians who as students participated in August Hermann Francke’s Pietistic collegium in Erfurt.<sup>4</sup> For theological and political reasons, the Pietistic group was banned in 1691, and Francke lost his position. This connection to Germany is noteworthy, because Francke and German Lutheran Pietism had a significant and long-lasting influence on Scandinavian religion as well as politics, in the established churches and in the lay movements and revivals. Pietism made a strong impact on the Danish Court as well as the University in

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2 Hildor Arnold Barton, “Swedish Americans and the Viking Discovery of America,” in *Interpreting the Promise of America*, ed. Todd W. Nichol (Northfield: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 2002).

3 Odd Lovold, *The Promise of America: A History of the Norwegian-American People* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

4 Rosalind J. Beiler, “Migration and the loss of spiritual community: the case of Daniel Falckner and Anna Maria Schuchart,” in *Enduring Loss in Early Modern Germany: Cross Disciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Lynne Tatlock (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 369.

Copenhagen, which led to a form of “State-Pietism” under which Pietism influenced legislation and public morality in Denmark-Norway (1735–1746).

We are in the early phase of Pietism. In Frankfurt, Germany, Philipp Jakob Spener wrote his *Pia Desideria* in 1675; the book that launched and formed Lutheran Pietism, with its emphasis on personal transformation through spiritual rebirth and renewal. Under his influence, the University of Halle was founded in 1694, replacing Wittenberg University as the Lutheran “mother-university.” Due to Spener, Francke was called to Halle. After the death of Spener in 1705, Francke became the main figure in what is called “Halle-Pietism.” Both Spener and Francke were well informed about Zimmermann’s search for the New Jerusalem, and discussed this case in a letter of May 1693.<sup>5</sup>

Not only among the radical Pietists, but also among the Pietists connected with the University of Halle – whom can be regarded as mainstream-Lutherans in the first decades of the eighteenth century – we see a combination of apocalyptic-chiliastic ideas and critique of the established Church and its order.

Zimmermann died before they embarked in Rotterdam. Under the leadership of Johannes Kelpius the rest of the Zimmermann group first sailed to London, before continuing for Pennsylvania. They became known as the *Society of the Woman in the Wilderness*.<sup>6</sup> In London they had arranged meetings with the spiritual leader Jane Leade, and members of the group “*The Philadelphian Society for the Advancement of Piety and Divine Philosophy*.” The founder of this group, the so-called “Philadelphians,” was John Pordage, an Anglican priest and mystic. He was, like Zimmermann, inspired by Jacob Böhme’s belief of a transcendent spirit and “millennial harmony.” Jane Leade, who led the Philadelphians after 1681, claimed to have visions of Virgin Sophia, the Feminine Aspect of God, who taught her how the spirits that are born of God are representing the New Jerusalem on earth, and these spirits can ascend to Jerusalem above in a spiritual way.<sup>7</sup> Her visions were recorded in a series of publications, and they have influenced mystics and millenarians to this day. The common interest in and spiritual speculations about the New Jerusalem, make this meeting understandable and significant. This demonstrates the well-established networks and personal connections between German Pietists and English mystics, as well as other Separatists.

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5 Beiler, “Migration and the loss of spiritual community: the case of Daniel Falckner and Anna Maria Schuchart,” 373, n.15.

6 The Book of Revelation (ch. 12) describes a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head, who “fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God,” and her offspring are “those who keep God’s commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus” (Rev 12:17, NIV).

7 Stacey Searl-Chapin, “Francis Lee and the French Prophets: The History of Montanism (1709),” in *Histories of Heresy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: For, Against, and Beyond Persecution and Toleration*, ed. J. Laursen (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 41.

In 1701 Daniel and Justus Falckner, Francke's students from Erfurt, arranged the sale of 40 square kilometres of William Penn's land in Pennsylvania to the Swedish Lutheran Pastor Andreas Rudman and other Swedish settlers. Daniel Falckner wrote an account of Pennsylvania which inspired many German Pietistic groups to migrate to America.<sup>8</sup> Justus Falckner was convinced by Pastor Rudman to enter into ministry and in 1703 he was the first Lutheran to be ordained in America, at the Swedish Lutheran church at Wicaco, Philadelphia.

The Society of the Woman in the Wilderness made an impact on the early religious history of Pennsylvania, among Lutherans, Quakers, Seventh Day Baptists, and other Separatists. The connection between this Society and the Swedish Lutherans is especially striking. When Justus Falckner was ordained, Johannes Kelpius and other members of the Society attended. An observer wrote that the group came, "partly clad in the habit of German University students," and they "occupied the front benches . . . while the rear of the church was filled with a number of Swedes and a sprinkling of English Churchmen and Dissenters. . . . even a few Quakers and Indians . . ." There was "instrumental music by the Mystics [Kelpius and friends] on the viol, hautboy, trumpets (*Posaunen*) and kettle-drums (*Pauken*)."<sup>9</sup> The Swedish Lutheran congregation would definitely associate the hymns and even the instruments with biblical texts about Jerusalem and the watchmen of Zion.<sup>10</sup> The Jerusalem code was understandable for Lutherans as well as Separatists. Hymns and poems reflected the same biblical universe.<sup>11</sup>

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**8** Donald F. Durnbaugh, "Work and Hope: The Spirituality of the Radical Pietist Communitarians," *Church History* 39, no. 1 (1970): 73.

**9** Julius Friedrich Sachse, "Justus Falckner, mystic and scholar, devout Pietist in Germany, hermit on the Wissahickon, missionary on the Hudson; a bi-centennial memorial of the first regular ordination of an orthodox pastor in America, done November 24, 1703, at Gloria Dei, the Swedish Lutheran church at Wicaco, Philadelphia," accessed January 10, 2018, <https://archive.org/details/justusfalcknermy00sach>, 63–4.

**10** Cf. Jeremiah 6: 17 ("Jerusalem under Siege" NIV): "I appointed watchmen over you and said, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But you said, 'We will not listen.'" Especially important is Jesus' Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt 25:1–13) and 1 Corinthians 15: 52 "In the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." The same texts were used in hymns, cantatas and oratories, like "Zion Hears the Watchmen's Voices," Cantata No.140 "Wachet Auf" (J.S.Bach) or "The Trumpet shall Sound," recitative in "Messiah" (G.F.Händel).

**11** The Church of the True Inspiration in Germany published in 1718 a hymnal (hymnbook) called: *Davidisches Psalterspiel Der Kinder Zions [Davidic Hymnal for the Children of Zion]*. This was the first hymnal for the use of the Separatists: it has had a remarkable historical influence and it has been published as a paperback even in the twenty-first century. In the library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, a copy of this hymnal is bound together with the (poem) book: *Eine hellposauende Zionitische Wächter-Stimme . . . Im Jahr Christi 1718 [The Trumpet Sound of the Voice of Zion's Watchmen . . . In the Year of Our Lord 1718]*. The Ephrata community in America published in 1738 the hymnal *Zionitischer Weyrauchs Hügel oder Myrrhen Berg [The Incense Hill or Myrrha Mountain of Zion]*, while the Brethren Church in Philadelphia in 1744 published the hymnal: *Das*

In 1704, King Carl XII of Sweden formally confirmed Andreas Rudman as Bishop of the Swedish Lutheran Church in America. The German Lutherans attended the Swedish Lutheran church, since they did not yet have their own church. This Church became a point of contact between Scandinavians and Germans in America the following years.

In 1714 Falckner and the Germans established their own congregation, and named it Evangelisch-Lutherische Zionsgemeinde [Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church] in Oldwick, the oldest Lutheran church in New Jersey. This is the first of many Lutheran congregations in America to be named Zion.

## Inspired Networks and Utopian Dreams

The early Christian concept of the New Jerusalem was to have implications beyond strictly religious concerns during the centuries to come. Utopian ideas were combined with the concept of the New Jerusalem and elaborated upon. When millenarian ideas flourished in America, it was partly in a sectarian, religious form, or in a secularized communitarian form. It was part of the millenarian ethos of cataclysm that pervades the Book of Revelation, and it was consistent with Protestant ideas of the small elect group to be redeemed. Although religious, the Norwegian and Swedish immigrants arriving with later waves of immigration were often motivated by the utopian and communitarian ideals of “the Land of Promise,” rather than by purely religious reasons.

There are references to early millennial thought, such as the idea of Three Ages as it was developed and formulated by the Italian monk Joachim of Fiore (died 1202). Fiore claimed that human history was a succession of three ages or “economies”: The Economy of the Father (the Old Testament), the Economy of the Son (the New Testament), and the Economy of the Holy Spirit. In the Age of the Holy Spirit all believers would be living as monks in harmony for a thousand years until the final return of Christ. Millenarian and communitarian ideas were thus mixed, as evidenced by the names of many communitarian communities in America – such as *Harmony* or *Economy* – as well as by the names of many Shaker communities.

Utopia is the name of the ideal society devised by Thomas More in his socio-political satire from 1516. He uses the monastery and monastic life as a model in his description of Utopia.<sup>12</sup> But more important for later millenarians – as a model for Christian utopias or a materialization of the New Jerusalem – was the description

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*Kleine Davidische Psalterspiel Der Kinder Zions* [The Small Davidic Hymnal for the Children of Zion] (Germantown, Pennsylvania); partly consisting of the original from 1718.

<sup>12</sup> Douglas J. Davies, *Mormon Spirituality: Latter-Day Saints in Wales and Zion* (Nottingham: University of Nottingham, 1987), 58.

and printed visualization of Christianapolis, by the Lutheran theologian Johannes Valentinus Andreae. The book *Reipublicae Christianopolitanae Descriptio* (1619) is the mother of Pietist utopias. The city of Christianapolis is built on the island Capharsalama, the Greek word for “city of peace” and the seventeenth century interpretation of Jeru-Schalem as the peace of Jehova, the New Jerusalem of the millennial expectations. The book is dedicated to Johann Arndt, Andreae’s spiritual father, and is designated “ex magna illa Hierosolyma, quam ingenti spiritu, invitissimis Sophistis, Arndtius exstruxit deducta.”<sup>13</sup>

In the following we will mention some millenarian groups, who became influential for later emigration and establishment of communities in America, building on a vision of the New Jerusalem. In 1694, “The Philadelphian Society” and Jane Leade’s visions reached the Netherlands and became known in wider circles, even in Scandinavia.<sup>14</sup> In 1706 a group of “French Prophets” (Huguenots escaping from France) came to London, bringing inspiration to the Philadelphian Society.<sup>15</sup> They were known as *The True Church of Inspiration*, and the English prophets soon outnumbered the French. One leading prophet was John Lacy, and his “Prophetical Warnings” were written down consecutively and published in three volumes. On the June 27, 1707, Lacy prophesized: “there are Palaces to adorn that Jerusalem that is coming down from above, to be here the Joy of the whole earth, beautiful for situation.”<sup>16</sup> And a little later: “Behold Jerusalem, I tell you: This is she; I repeat it to you. It is the Place of the gatherings of his Servants. It is the Place chosen by him. . . .”<sup>17</sup>

All these groups and societies were part of a continuous, evolutionary tradition of transatlantic radical Protestantism. International correspondence networks among nonconformists and millenarians were established, showing how shared tenets were debated and developed in the discursive space of these epistolary networks; including Scandinavians.

The Scriptures became more important for Church life than the confessional writings of the Reformation, which explains the appearance of separatist movements in Lutheran churches in Germany and Scandinavia, focusing on biblical

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**13** August Tholuck, “Arndt, Johann,” in *Real-Enzyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1877), 691. A wooden translation would be “this great Jerusalem that was destroyed, Arndt – oh, what a grand spirit – has rebuilt, against the will of the Sophists. . . .”

**14** Searl-Chapin, “Francis Lee and the French Prophets: The History of Montanism (1709),” 41.

**15** Hillel Schwartz, *The French Prophets: The History of a Millenarian Group in Eighteenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

**16** John Lacy, *The Prophetical Warnings of John Lacy, Esq: Pronounced under the Operation of the Spirit, and Faithfully Taken in Writing, when They Were Spoken*, vol. 1 (London: B. Bragge, at the Black Raven in Pater-noster Row 1707), 37.

**17** John Lacy, *Warnings of the Eternal Spirit by the Mouth of his Servant John, simam’d Lacy, the Second Part*, vol. 2 (London; Printed for B. Bragge at the Black Raven in Pater-noster Row, 1707), 193.

prophecies and millenarianism. In addition, French and English Separatists had a direct influence. The great Lutheran biblical scholar Johann Albrecht Bengel from Württemberg was read widely in Scandinavia. In his *Ordo Temporum*, on the chronology of Scripture, and his *Exposition of the Apocalypse* (1742), Bengel calculated the exact time of the Second Coming of Christ and the start of the Millennium, and instead of mitigating separatist tendencies among the Lutherans in Württemberg, he encouraged them.<sup>18</sup>

After 1711, several groups of “the Inspired” were founded in Germany, due to French Prophets visiting Lutheran Pietistic congregations in Wetterau (near Frankfurt) as well as radical Pietists in Württemberg. In 1713, three of Francke’s students were enthralled by the message that people should abandon Babylon and strive to reach Zion. They travelled around in Prussia to proclaim the inspired revelations of the French Prophets.<sup>19</sup> Another Lutheran student, Johan Friedrich Rock, was convinced by the message of the inspired and he became the most influential of the “prophets” in Germany in the years to come, as well as the leader of the Church of True Inspiration. Rock was a close friend of Count Zinzendorf, the founder of Herrnhut and the Moravian Brethren. In 1732, Zinzendorf explicitly wrote that he honoured Rock as a father, and that he wished that the group of the Inspired and his own congregation in Herrnhut could form one congregation.<sup>20</sup> Count Zinzendorf visited Copenhagen in 1731 to attend the coronation of King Christian VI, and during his stay he met with theological students and ministers in the city. Norwegian ministers, as well as the Danish, were educated in Copenhagen until 1813, and were thus influenced by Zinzendorf, the Halle Pietism, and radical Pietism.

## Establishing Zion in Norway and Germany

In the 1730s and -40s there are several examples of the establishment of religious communities to whom the idea of Zion was important. Søren Bølle from Jutland in Denmark was a theological student in Copenhagen at the time (1734–1737). This was the era of official state-Pietism and Bølle was additionally influenced by Zinzendorf and the Community of the Inspired. In 1737 he moved to Drammen in Norway, to work as a farmer. Three years later he returned to Copenhagen to complete his theological degree. Back in Drammen in 1741 he re-baptized a group of

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<sup>18</sup> Bengel held that the Millennium would start in 1836.

<sup>19</sup> Albrecht Ritschl, *Geschichte des Pietismus I* (Bonn: Adolph Marcus Sachse, 1880), 423.

<sup>20</sup> August Gottlieb Spangenberg, *Leben des Herrn Nicolaus Ludwig Grafen und Herrn Zinzendorf und Pottendorf III* (n.p.: Barby Brüdergemeinde, 1775), 636.



people in the local river and established his own congregation: The New Zion. This was, according to himself, the process of “Separation” from Babylon. Søren Bølle became Zion’s Apostle, and his followers were called Zionites, wearing a white armlet with Zion in red letters. The members of the congregation were given offices as Zion’s prophets and prophetesses. Visions and revelations were important to decision-making.<sup>21</sup> In 1742 Bølle was sentenced and sent to Fredericia (in Southern Denmark), one of the three cities in the Kingdom where Separatists, due to a Rescript of 1655, were allowed to live. In 1744, Bølle received permission to travel to Altona (today a part of Hamburg), another of the “Free cities,” and the rest of the Zionites in Norway, consisting of 48 people, immigrated to Altona. They even had printed passports for the members of the congregation, stating that they were members of the Kingdom of Zion, issued “in our King’s City Zion, in the year 17XX after our King and Lord’s birth in the flesh.”<sup>22</sup>

The Norwegian theologian and historian Søren A. Sørensen, who wrote the history of the Zionites in Norway, explains to his readers that “Zion is the Temple Mountain in Jerusalem, which in these days (the eighteenth century) was used as a notion for God’s true congregation, and in the various religious groups the true congregation more often consisted only of those who shared the ideas and dogmas of that specific group. The use of Zion in this respect is also known in Norway.”<sup>23</sup> Sørensen also mentions a letter by provost Jens Renord in Bergen, where Renord wrote about Pietistic revivalist ministers in Norway, whom were seeking “the best for Zion.”<sup>24</sup>

A probable inspiration for the Zionites in Norway was the Zionites of Ronsdorf in Wuppertal. This community was founded by Elias Eller, Anna Büchel, and Pastor Daniel Schleiermacher<sup>25</sup> in 1737, inspired by the Philadelphian Society and Jane Leade.<sup>26</sup> All houses in the village were placed so that people from their window could see The New Zion, which meant the house of Elias Eller and Anna Büchel. The village was understood as an image of the Jerusalem Temple, where the “Betlers” (the seeking members) lived in the part called the “Outer Court,” the persons of rank lived in the “Inner Court,” while the initiated, sacred few lived in the “Holy Place.” “Babel muss

<sup>21</sup> Søren Anton Sørensen, *Zioniterne. En religiøs Bevægelse i Drammen og Omegn i Midten af det 18de Aarh.* (Kristiania: Cammermeyers Boghandel, 1904), 61. See also Chapter 7 (Arne Bugge Amundsen), 127–37.

<sup>22</sup> Sørensen, *Zioniterne*, 175.

<sup>23</sup> My translation. The original Danish: “‘Zion’ (Tempelbjerget i Jerusalem) brugtes i Tiden som Betegnelse for Guds sande Menighed. Af de forskellige religiøse Retninger indskrænkedes nu oftere denne sande Menighed kun til dem, der delte den enkelte Retnings-Opfatning. Ogsaa i Norge var Udtryket kjendt.” Sørensen, *Zioniterne*, 5, fn. \*\*\*

<sup>24</sup> Sørensen, *Zioniterne*, 5, citing a letter in the Danske Rigsarkiv: “Breve til Kirkekollegiet.”

<sup>25</sup> He was the grandfather of the famous Berlin-Professor Friedrich Schleiermacher.

<sup>26</sup> Ariel Hessayon, ed., *Jane Lead and her Transnational Legacy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

untergehen. Jerusalem muss aufgebaut werden” [Babel must go under, Jerusalem must be rebuilt], he claimed. They called themselves “Zionitten”: Elias Eller was the “Zions-Vater” and Anna Büchel the “Zions-Mutter.”<sup>27</sup> The New Jerusalem of Ronsdorf consisted of more than a thousand members, and had influence in higher circles. The Zionites sent missionaries to Holland and the Nordic Countries.

## Georg Rapp and the American Harmony

We will now discuss the most important and long-lasting millenarian group searching for the New Jerusalem in America. This group also had a direct influence on the first wave of Norwegian immigrants. In 1787, Johann Georg Rapp from Württemberg began preaching and he encouraged people to separate from the Church. In reference to chapter eighteen in the Book of Revelation, Rapp exclaimed: “Fallen is Babylon the Great! Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues.”<sup>28</sup> Rapp was imprisoned in 1791 and threatened with exile if he did not cease preaching. In response he claimed to be a prophet.<sup>29</sup> In the years that followed he became the outspoken leader of several thousand Separatists in Württemberg, and he was imprisoned several times.

By 1802, the Separatists had grown in number, to about 12,000, and the Württemberg government decided that they were a threat to social order. Rapp was imprisoned again in 1802 and Separatist books were confiscated. When released, Rapp told his followers to follow him to the Promised Land; the New Jerusalem was to be established as a perfect society in the American wilderness. They should have nothing to do with the “Whore of Babylon” (*i.e.* the state church). The Generalreskript of December 27, 1803, mentions especially the chiliastic hope of the imminent thousand year’s reign of Christ.<sup>30</sup> Rapp refused to withdraw a single word; instead he, like the prodigal son (Luke 15), would turn around and leave the pig trough, set out, and go home to his father’s house. The association with the prodigal son is not coincidental. One of the more popular hymns among the separatists was “Jerusalem, mein Vaterland.” Verses four and five are about the prodigal son who eats with the pigs, but repents, leaves the “Sautrog” [the pig feeding trough] and runs to *Jerusalem, mein Vaterland*.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> G. H. Klippett, “Ronsdorfer Sekte,” in *Real-Enzyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche* 3rd ed. (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1906).

<sup>28</sup> Citation from Revelation 18:1,4. Julian Rauscher, “Des Separatisten G. Rapp Leben und Treiben,” *Theologische Studien aus Württemberg* 6 (1885), 269.

<sup>29</sup> Rauscher, “Des Separatisten G. Rapp Leben und Treiben,” 272.

<sup>30</sup> Rauscher, “Des Separatisten G. Rapp Leben und Treiben,” 286.

<sup>31</sup> The text is taken from the eighteenth-century German translation of Augustine’s Confessions (12:6): “O Jerusalem! Mein Herz zu Dir erheben, Jerusalem, mein Vaterland! Jerusalem, meine Mutter!” Aurelius Augustin, Des heiligen Kirchenlehrers Aurelius Augustinus Bischofes zu Hippon.

In 1803, when Rapp and his followers decided to immigrate to America, land was bought in Pennsylvania. Here, the *Harmony Society* was formally organized in 1805, and about 125 families agreed to put all their possessions into a common stock, to live and dress simply, to hold all things in common, and to labour for the good of the whole body. Harmony developed as a communitarian society. In 1807, celibacy was advocated as the preferred custom in order to purify for the coming Millennium. The group should live in Harmony as did the first congregation in Jerusalem.<sup>32</sup> Harmony was the most successful of all those religious communitarian ventures in nineteenth century America.<sup>33</sup> In 1814, the Harmony Society moved to Indiana Territory, and began to attract new arrivals, including emigrants from Germany.<sup>34</sup> Friedrich Engels writes about the Rappites and the Shakers in America, as the first examples of working communist societies which proved that communism was possible; even if he disliked the religious background of these sects.<sup>35</sup>

In 1820, Rapp seized all property, with the explanation from Acts 4:32: “In Jerusalem no one claimed that any of their possessions was their own.”<sup>36</sup> By 1824, the decision had been made to sell their property in Indiana and search for land to the east. In 1825, the industrialist and social reformer Robert Owen bought the Society’s land and buildings in Indiana for \$150,000, and named it *New Harmony*. Rapp purchased land for a new community back in Pennsylvania.<sup>37</sup> The Harmonites named their third settlement *Economy*, after the spiritual notion of the Divine Economy: “a city in which God would dwell among men” and where perfection would be attained.<sup>38</sup>

Rapp predicted that on September 15, 1829, the three and a half years of the Sun Woman [i.e. Society of the Woman in the Wilderness, cf. note 5] would end, and Christ

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Bekenntnisse in dreizehn Büchern aus dem Lateinischen übersetzt von P. Fridericus von Jesu (Augsburg: Mattheus Riegers sel. Söhnen, 1783), 502.

**32** Rauscher, “Des Separatisten G. Rapp Leben und Treiben,” 292.

**33** The celibacy practice in Harmony was well known in Europe, and mentioned in Lord Byron’s Canto XV in his *Don Juan*: “Why calls he ‘Harmony’ a state sans wedlock? / Now here I’ve got the preacher at a dead lock.” Lord Byron, *Don Juan: In Sixteen Cantos, with notes. By Lord Byron. Complete Edition* (Halifax: Milner and Sowerby 1837).

**34** Karl J. R. Arndt, *George Rapp’s Harmony Society, 1785–1847* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1965), 182–8.

**35** Friedrich Engels, “Beschreibung der in neuerer Zeit entstandenen und noch bestehenden kommunistischen Ansiedlungen,” in *Deutsches Bürgerbuch für 1845*, ed. H. Püttmann (Darmstadt: C. W. Leske, 1845); Vidar L. Haanes, “Norsk lekmannskristendom i USA,” *DIN – Tidsskrift for religion og kultur* 1 (2006): 19.

**36** Rauscher, “Des Separatisten G. Rapp Leben und Treiben,” 296.

**37** Arndt, *George Rapp’s Harmony Society, 1785–1847*, 298.

**38** Arndt, *George Rapp’s Harmony Society, 1785–1847*, 306.

would begin his millennial reign on earth.<sup>39</sup> Opposition mounted when Rapp's predictions did not come to pass. In 1832, the Society underwent a serious upheaval that led to division when Bernhard Müller, who claimed to be the Lion of Judah, left Economy together with one-third of the Society; mainly the younger members who did not want to maintain celibacy. We meet the "one-third" many places in the Book of Revelation, so the number was seen as significant. In Revelation 12:4 they read: "And [the dragon's] tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth." Rapp continued to lead the rest of the group until he died on August 7, 1847, without – to his own surprise – having seen the coming of the New Jerusalem.<sup>40</sup>

## A Decisive Encounter in Bergen

In the autumn of 1817 a Dutch vessel sought refuge in Norway, north of Bergen, due to a storm in the North Sea. Aboard were about 500 emigrants from Württemberg; many of them separatist followers of Johann Georg Rapp. The emigrants had to spend the winter in Bergen, and they had to be provided with housing. The German emigrants did not leave Bergen until the summer of 1818. Followers of the Norwegian lay preacher, Hans Nielsen Hauge, participated wholeheartedly in helping the Rappites. Some leading Haugeans from Stavanger wrote in a letter that they had become acquainted with some of the Germans, whom had arrived with that ship last fall; and among them there were some who kept together for devotions. "And it turned out to be a great joy for them and for our friends when they realized – as far as they could understand each other – that they built on sound foundations . . . It gave us extreme joy to realize that the foundation of your faith accords with the true word of God."<sup>41</sup> Many of the Germans had learned to speak Norwegian during the long stay in Bergen, and they promised that they would never forget dear Norway or "the kindly disposed citizens of Bergen."<sup>42</sup>

Hans Nielsen Hauge, born 1771, was an influential lay revivalist, social reformer and entrepreneur. His influence on Norwegian religious and economic history is profound. In Hauge's interpretation of the Gospel there were obvious elements of both Moravian and Halle-pietism, attacking the spiritual rationalism of the state church and its ministers. He was imprisoned several times, and for many years. One of the charges levelled against Hauge was that he had sought to create a

<sup>39</sup> Fredric J. Baumgartner, *Longing for the End: A History of Millennialism in Western Civilization* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 166.

<sup>40</sup> William E. Wilson, *The Angel and the Serpent: The Story of New Harmony* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), 11.

<sup>41</sup> Ingrid Semmingsen, "Haugeans, Rappites, and the Emigration of 1825," *Norwegian-American Studies* 29 (1983): 12.

<sup>42</sup> "De tyske emigranter" [The German Emigrants]; in "*Morgenbladet*," July 11, 13, and 14, 1826.

separate, independent, religious and economic community within the state. During the early phase of his activity, Hauge leaned toward the idea that there should be joint ownership among the “friends” covering both property and income.

A number of Norwegians had been converted to Quakerism while they were held as prisoners of war in England during the latter years of the Napoleonic era. Hans Nielsen Hauge met some of the prisoners in October, 1814, when they were returned to Christiania [Oslo]. He states in a letter that he had learned a lot by conversing with the Norwegian Quakers, and that they were deeply moved by the same Spirit, even though there were some outward differences.<sup>43</sup> Hauge’s sister was married to a leading Quaker in Norway.

The following years Norwegian Haugeans corresponded with the Rappites, as they settled in Harmony, the new Zion in America. The Germans remembered Bergen with joy, especially the Haugeans. “Ach, how we miss not being able to gather together now with the children of God. Our hearts have often longed for your loving and edifying company since we came to America. We have longed more for Bergen than for Germany because of the love with which you received us and refreshed us in body and spirit.”<sup>44</sup> There was a feeling of religious fellowship and an agreement in fundamentals between the Haugeans and the Rappites. The “brothers and sisters” in Bergen were interested in the Harmony colony. The German letter writers answer questions concerning the community in careful terms.

## The American Land of Promise

In 1825, the first organized Norwegian immigration to America took place, consisting of Quakers and Haugeans from the Stavanger area. Cleng Peerson was the agent for the group. A small sloop was purchased and fifty-two Norwegians sailed for The Land of Promise. The emigrants, referred to as *the sloopers*, moved onward to their first settlement in Kendall, Orleans County, New York. The sloop “Restoration” became the symbol of Norwegian emigration; often referred to as the Norwegian Mayflower.

There is a certain utopian element in every emigration movement that is as deeply imbued with religion as this first Norwegian exodus. Many of the sloopers were Separatists, some of them communitarians. After the founding of the Kendall settlement, Cleng Peerson became inspired by communitarian or utopian ideas.

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<sup>43</sup> Hauge’s Letter no. 211, of 4. Nov. 1814. Ingolf Kvamen, *Brev frå Hans Nielsen Hauge II, 1805–1814* (Oslo: Lutherstiftelsens forlag, 1972), 84. On Hauge, see also Chapter 8 (Jostein Garcia de Presno), 138–61.

<sup>44</sup> German emigrants to “God’s Society in Bergen,” May 14, 1819. Haugean Letter-book, manuscript in Norsk historisk kjeldeskriftinstitutt, Oslo. Citation from Semmingsen, “Haugeans, Rappites, and the Emigration of 1825,” 18.

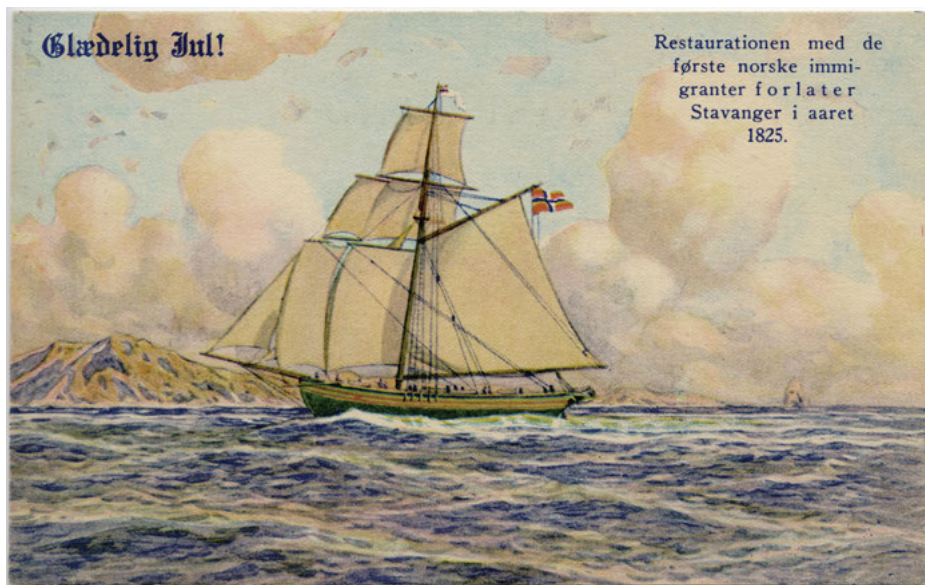


Fig. 10.1: Christmas card with the inscription “Restaurationen with the first Norwegian emigrants leaves Stavanger [in Norway] in the year 1825.”

One day in Illinois, Ole Rynning tells us, “Peerson lay down under a tree and, falling asleep, beheld the wild prairie transformed into a great fruitful garden with herds of fat cattle peacefully grazing between splendid fields of waving grain. This vision he took as a sign from God that the Fox River Valley was to be the Norwegian Land of Promise and he its Moses.”<sup>45</sup> Ole Rynning wrote from Illinois in 1838, that Cleng Peerson’s “endeavor was then [1821–25], to unite all Norwegians into one community owning all its property in common.”<sup>46</sup>

For a few years Cleng Peerson, among a few other Norwegians, joined the community founded by Eric Jansson at Bishop Hill, Illinois (from Biskopskulla in Uppland, Sweden). Bishop Hill was the most successful of the Scandinavian millenarian communities, and the community distinctly perceived itself as the New Jerusalem. Just like Rapp in Germany, Eric Jansson came into conflict with the state authorities after he claimed to be a prophet.<sup>47</sup> As Jansson’s teachings became more radical, he began to lose support from many of his sympathizers and was forced to leave Sweden. First he escaped to Norway, and in 1846 he immigrated to America; bringing 1200 or more followers with him of which only 500 survived the journey.

<sup>45</sup> T. C. Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America 1825–1860* (Northfield, Minnesota: NAHA, 1931), 61.

<sup>46</sup> Mario S. De Pillis, “Cleng Peerson and the Communitarian Background of Norwegian Immigration,” *Norwegian-American Studies* 21 (1962): 141.

<sup>47</sup> Haanes, “Norsk lekmannskristendom i USA,” 22.

His plan was to set up a utopian community, a New Jerusalem “brimming with milk and honey.” People continued to join the community, even after Jansson was shot in 1850 due to an internal conflict.

The debate concerning the reasons behind the first Norwegian emigration has been going on for decades. The impetus has been ascribed to either religious or economic circumstances, with a focus on “pull-factors” and “push-factors,” or to psychological factors.<sup>48</sup> Obviously, the sloopers’ relation to the Rappites in Bergen is important, and the reports about the good society in Harmony, where all property was held in common, became the most important pull-factor.<sup>49</sup>

The international network of the Norwegian Quakers was also important. The extremely engaged and influential Quaker philanthropist William Allen (1770–1843) became the mentor of Lars Larsen, the leading Norwegian sloop, as well as “a warm friend of the Haugean.”<sup>50</sup>

Allen was a pronounced communitarian and a former associate of Robert Owen, the new owner of Harmony. In 1817, while Allen was visiting an experimental Quaker community near Avignon in France, his fellow Quakers in England were helping the Zoarites – a communitarian group very similar to the Rappites – to immigrate to the United States. In 1818, Allen and Stephen Grellet, a Quaker missionary who had lived in the United States, visited the Norwegian town of Stavanger and “greatly strengthened” the Norwegian Quakers living there. In 1819, Allen was in Eastern Europe visiting the communities of the Mennonites, and in 1822 he visited the True Inspirationists, who, like the sloopers, were to settle in western New York.

There are also parallels between the two Pietist lay preachers, Hans Nielsen Hauge and Johann Georg Rapp. The Rappites, living in the households of Haugeans in Bergen during the winter of 1817, must most certainly have told stories and compared the struggles and imprisonments of Rapp between 1791 and 1803, and the persecution and imprisonments of Hauge in Norway during the same period. The persecution and imprisonments were caused by Rapp and Hauge’s preaching and their gatherings of groups of followers for Bible readings, without the permission of the official minister, as well as by their communitarian ideas.

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**48** Nils Olav Østrem, “The ‘Psychological Factor’ in Norwegian Emigration,” in *Norwegian-American Essays XI*, eds. Orm Øverland and Harry T. Cleven (Oslo and Hamar: NAHA-Norway and The Norwegian Emigrant Museum, 2005), 235. Hans Eirik Aarek, “The significance of Norwegian Quakers for Early Emigration from Norway to America: How true are the Traditional Views?” in *Norwegian-American Essays*, eds. Harry T. Kleven, Knut Djupedal, Ingeborg Kongslie and Dina Tølsby (Oslo: NAHA-Norway, 2001), 2001.

**49** Haanes, “Norsk lekmannskristendom i USA,” 20.

**50** De Pillis, “Cleng Peerson and the Communitarian Background of Norwegian Immigration,” 143–4.

## Zion in America: an Old Story

In this last part of this chapter we will look into the religious community that succeeded in establishing Zion in America. This Zion was built on the Biblical books, but had new holy scriptures, a new mythology and a new eschatology located on the American continent: “We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion will be built upon this continent (America); that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.”<sup>51</sup>

The Mormon history, according to the Book of Mormon, is also a history of immigration. Other religious Separatists were breaking up from Europe, leaving State and Church authorities representing “Babylon” to build a New Jerusalem in America. But long before the Pilgrim Fathers came with *Mayflower* and the Norwegians came with *Restauration*, America had sheltered refugees from the Old World according to Mormon doctrine: the Jaredites from the actual Babylon, after the building of the Tower of Babel and the Mulekites from Jerusalem in the days of Zedekiah. The survivors of the lost Jewish tribes were the Lamanites (the Native Americans), who were to be won back to true religion.<sup>52</sup> America had been reserved for the righteous in the past, and was now fulfilling its role as a sanctuary. For the redeemed, America would provide an eternal inheritance: The City of Zion. Every Mormon child knew by heart the words of Father Lehi, a refugee from Babylon immigrating to America in 600 B.C.: “We have obtained a land of promise, a land which is choice above all other lands . . . Yea, the Lord hath covenanted this land unto me, and to my children forever, and also all those who should be led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord.”<sup>53</sup>

Joseph Smith established The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in April 1830, the same year the *Book of Mormon* was published.<sup>54</sup> Smith’s early revelations were collected and authorized by Smith, and published as *Doctrine and Covenants* (D&C).<sup>55</sup> In 1830, Joseph Smith first specified a gathering of the elect “in

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<sup>51</sup> Mormon Articles of Faith X. The Articles of Faith were written by the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1842. Mormon FAQ, “Mormon Beliefs: The 13 Articles of Faith,” accessed April 5, 2019, <https://mormonfaq.com/3025/mormon-beliefs-13-articles-faith>.

<sup>52</sup> William Mulder, “Mormonism’s ‘Gathering,’ An American Doctrine with a Difference,” *Church History* 23, no. 3 (1954): 253.

<sup>53</sup> Book of Mormon: 2 Nephi 1:5. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, “The Book of Mormon. Another Testament of Jesus Christ,” accessed April 5, 2019, <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm?lang=eng>.

<sup>54</sup> Mone S. Nyman, “Book of Mormon”. Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Mormonism* I, 1st ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 140.

<sup>55</sup> First published in 1835, with a new edition in 1844: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, “The Doctrine and Covenants of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Containing Revelations Given to Joseph Smith, the Prophet with Some Additions by His Successors in the



unto one place upon the face of this land,” and, though “no man knoweth where the city of Zion shall be built,” it was to be “on the borders of the Lamanites.”<sup>56</sup> This meant the border to the Indian land, the line running between Lamanites (Jews) and Gentiles.

In 1831, the Mormons moved from Palmyra to Kirtland, Ohio. The same year Joseph Smith prophesied that “from this place ye shall go forth into the regions westwards; an inasmuch as ye shall find them that will receive you, ye shall build up my church in every region, until the time shall come when it shall be revealed to you from on high, where the city of the New Jerusalem shall be prepared, that ye may be gathered in one.”<sup>57</sup>

Later that year they established a new, parallel settlement in Independence, Missouri. Joseph Smith laid cornerstones for the City of Zion and the Temple. This was to be the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety.<sup>58</sup> According to Smith, Missouri was the original Garden of Eden; the valley of the Mississippi had been the cradle of mankind and here was even the grave of Adam. In 1838, the rest of the community left Ohio, and moved to Missouri. But the next year they were driven out of Missouri and moved on to Illinois, where they founded the city of Nauvoo on the bank of Mississippi River. They immediately laid the cornerstone of a new temple.

The early Mormons did not differ from contemporary members of other religious communities with roots in European Separatism. Many had been Methodists, Baptists, and Shakers, radical Pietists, or members of the Restoration Movement (Campbellites). The converts embraced Mormonism presumably because it had everything other religions had, but more. “Those who bought the package,” Stegner comments, “revealed a susceptibility that was characteristically 19th century America. And they bought it more eagerly because the package also contained the promise of the Kingdom of God on earth, the New Jerusalem.”<sup>59</sup>

While other millenarians set a time, the Mormons appointed a place. Joseph Smith split the Hebrew metaphor of Zion and Jerusalem: he saw the Jews returning to Jerusalem; Israel to Zion. And America was the land of Zion. Orson Hyde, the Mormon Elder and member of the First Quorum of the Apostles (1835), was sent to Palestine by Joseph Smith in 1841. In the Holy Land, Hyde offered a prayer, asking the Lord to inspire kings and the powers of the earth to help restore the kingdom unto Israel, and he

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Presidency of the Church (D&C),” accessed April 5, 2019, <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament?lang=eng>.

<sup>56</sup> The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, “Doctrine and Covenants,” 28–9.

<sup>57</sup> The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, “Doctrine and Covenants,” 42.

<sup>58</sup> The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, “Doctrine and Covenants,” 52.

<sup>59</sup> Wallace Stegner, *The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 18.

dedicated the city of Jerusalem to the Jews from atop the Mount of Olives.<sup>60</sup> According to Mormon doctrine, two separate Jerusalems, the old and the new, will serve as headquarters of the millennial kingdom from which Jesus will rule.<sup>61</sup> Old Jerusalem will be rebuilt by Judah, the New Jerusalem, or Zion, will be built by Ephraim (the Latter Day Saints) in Jackson County, Missouri. But to accommodate the final gathering of the Saints in America, it would require both continents, North and South. For this, all history had been mere prologue. The discovery of America by Columbus, the Reformation, the coming of the Pilgrim Fathers, the founding of the Republic, and the raising of the Constitution, were all preliminary to this design. “The Mormons,” said William Mulder, “made this common Protestant view of providence controlling America’s destiny peculiarly their own.”<sup>62</sup>

The vision of Zion was not new in America, as we have seen among the Separatists and the many communitarian societies, both secular and religious. What was different was the magnitude of the Prophet’s dream, and its nativism. Joseph Smith naturalized Biblical prophecies and events to the American scene. America was the Promised Land and Missouri remains the site of the New Jerusalem. Utah would become the resting place of Israel for the last days and “the ultimate joy of the whole earth is the State of Zion established in the mountains.”<sup>63</sup>

## Mormon Mission among Norwegian Immigrants

One of Joseph Smith’s elders, George P. Dykes, visited the Norwegian settlement Fox River in La Salle County, Illinois, in March 1842. Within a few weeks Dykes had convinced a number of respected Haugean lay leaders of the Mormon doctrine. Among these were Ole Heier, “a winning personality and gifted speaker,” who in Telemark, back home in Norway, had been considered a pious reader; the schoolteacher Jørgen Pedersen; Endre Dahl, one of the sloopers of 1825 and a first settler at Fox River; and another sloop, Gudmund Haugaas from Tysvær in Norway.<sup>64</sup> The latter, Gudmund Haugaas, was ordained an elder by Dykes, and described in a letter to Joseph Smith as “a man of strong mind, and well skilled in the scriptures; he can preach in Norway, Sweden and Denmark, having an understanding of their languages.”<sup>65</sup>

<sup>60</sup> David B. Galbraight, “Orson Hyde’s 1841 Mission to the Holy Land,” *Ensign*, accessed January 19, 2018, <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1991/10/orson-hydes-1841-mission-to-the-holy-land?lang=eng>.

<sup>61</sup> Ludlow, *The Encyclopedia of Mormonism* II, 723.

<sup>62</sup> Mulder, “Mormonism’s ‘Gathering,’ An American Doctrine with a Difference,” 251.

<sup>63</sup> Dan Erickson, “As a Thief in the Night” *The Mormon Quest for Millennial Deliverance* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 152.

<sup>64</sup> Haanes, “Norsk lekmannskristendom i USA,” 22.

<sup>65</sup> William Mulder, “Norwegian Forerunners among the early Mormons,” *Norwegian-American Studies and Records* XIX (1956), 46.

Joseph Smith hoped to recruit missionaries for Scandinavia who would persuade converts to settle in Nauvoo to strengthen Zion.<sup>66</sup> Knud Peterson of Hardanger (in Norway), an immigrant of 1837, better known as Canute, was baptized soon afterward. Canute remembered Elder Dykes as a very able man: “Many of our most intelligent men, including the minister, came to his meetings and opposed him, but none were successful in argument against him, or the doctrine he was advocating.” Another convert was Aagaata Sondra Ystensdatter, an immigrant of 1837 from Telemark, Norway. She took the name Ellen Sanders Kimball, after she married Brigham Young’s counselor Heber C. Kimball. Gudmund Haugaas, reached the rank of “High Priest after the Order of Melchisedek in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,” while Ole Heier and Canute Peterson became Mormon Bishops. Peterson eventually became a Patriarch and a member of the “Council of Fifty.”

In the following we will see that the Mormon preaching of the gathering for the millennial Kingdom and establishment of Zion in America was central to their mission. In May 1843, Dykes wrote to Joseph Smith, in review of the year’s work among the Norwegians, that the La Salle congregation numbered fifty-eight “in good standing.” In the Wisconsin territory “there are fifty-seven members of the church from Norway and the time is not far distant when the saying of Micah 4: 2 will be fulfilled.”<sup>67</sup> Micah 4:2 was a favourite Mormon quotation: “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

Fourteen-year-old Goudy Hogan (Gaute Eriksson Haugen) frequently travelled by foot the eight miles from Fox River, alongside his father, to hear Joseph Smith in Nauvoo. Hogan wrote in his diary of 1844: “On one occasion when I went with my father to Nauvoo to a meeting on April 6th, the same year of the martyrdom, while they held meetings in the grove not far from the Temple, a very large congregation was gathered having come a long way on foot . . . sitting close behind the Prophet Joseph Smith so that I nearly touched his clothes . . . In this meeting he said that North and South America would be Mount Zion and that the constitution would hang on a simple untwisted thread and that the Latter Day Saints would save it.”<sup>68</sup>

Most of the Norwegian immigrants had little experience to equip them for leadership in the local congregation. From 1825 to 1844 no ordained clergy from the Church of Norway accompanied emigrants to their new homes in America. After several years of informal association under the leadership of a number of lay leaders, Norwegian immigrants began organizing permanent congregations and

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<sup>66</sup> Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America 1825–1860*, 248.

<sup>67</sup> Mulder, “Norwegian Forerunners among the early Mormons,” 47.

<sup>68</sup> Manuscript: Goudy E. Hogan, *Goudy E. Hogan biography, 1837–1880*, Digital History Collections, Utah State University, accessed January 15, 2018, <http://digital.lib.usu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/Diaries/id/14701>, 5–6.

denominations in 1843.<sup>69</sup> The Norwegian Lutheran minister J.W.C. Dietrichson visited the Fox River settlement in Illinois, a few miles from Nauvoo, in 1844. He wrote a detailed travel narrative which was published in Norway in 1846.<sup>70</sup> One chapter concerns the Mormons and describes the ongoing construction of the temple; a splendid building of stone with interior dimensions of 140 by 80 feet. The baptismal font was designed like the molten sea in Solomon's temple (1 Kings 7:23), and supported by a beautifully sculptured and gilded oxen. The Mormons payed tithe toward the building of the temple, with money or with labour, as in the old Israel, Dietrichson writes.

When the Norwegian Saints at Fox River sent Endre Dahl to Nauvoo with one hundred sheep, cattle, and a little money as a contribution toward building the temple, Dahl met the Prophet Joseph Smith on the street. The Prophet invited Dahl to come home with him, but Dahl protested that he was a simple Norwegian, unworthy to enter a prophet's dwelling. The Prophet, who finally prevailed on Dahl to accompany him, was much impressed. Soon afterward the Prophet told the Apostle George A. Smith that the Scandinavians would in time come to play a significant role in the church.<sup>71</sup> Glorious promises were linked with the completion of the Nauvoo temple, when The Lord would come to reign in this Jerusalem for a thousand years on earth with his Latter Day Saints.<sup>72</sup>

After the murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith in 1844, tensions grew in Illinois. The "Mormon Trail" – the trail they used to go west from Nauvoo to Utah – was established in 1847. The first group, the "Spies into Kanaan" who were in search of the new Promised Land, consisted of 143 men and three women. The women were the wives of the new Mormon leadership: Brigham Young, Lorenzo Young, and H.C. Kimball; Kimball's wife being the Norwegian Ellen Sanders Kimball. They arrived in Salt Lake Valley in July 1847.

## Mormon Mission in Europe and the Gathering

The Mormon journal "The Millennial Star," first published in Manchester, England, in May 1840, is a good source for early Mormon preaching in Europe. In an essay

<sup>69</sup> Vidar L. Haanes, "Pastors for the Congregations: Transatlantic Impulses," in *Crossings: Norwegian-American Lutheranism as a Transatlantic Tradition*, ed. Todd W. Nichol (Northfield, Minnesota: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 2003), 94–6.

<sup>70</sup> Johan W.C. Dietrichson, *Reise blandt de norske Emigranter i "De forenede nordamerikanske Fristater"* (Stavanger: Kielland, 1846). Translation in: E. C. Nelson, *A Pioneer Churchman. J. W. C. Dietrichson in Wisconsin, 1844–1850* (New York: Twayne, 1973), 45–145.

<sup>71</sup> Mulder, "Norwegian Forerunners among the early Mormons," 48.

<sup>72</sup> Nelson, *A Pioneer Churchman. J. W. C. Dietrichson in Wisconsin, 1844–1850*, 123.

printed in the first issue we can read about the millennium: “the seventh or last thousand years.”<sup>73</sup> God will first restore the Jews to their own land, and will then judge the nations according to the help or hindrance they gave to the gathering of the people of Israel. The Second Coming of Christ will then be connected with the restoration; it will be personal and visible. All the former denominations and religious organizations will be part of the one and same universal kingdom of Christ. All will follow God’s laws, the saints will have risen from their graves, and Christ shall rule from the rebuilt Jerusalem. Those alive at the Second Coming will not be immortal, but will possess the earth with all its riches and blessings. The earth will be fertile as in the beginning and illness, sorrows, and tribulations will not exist. Peace, love, knowledge, glory, and the abundances of the good gifts of nature will fill the earth. “Robert Owen (New Harmony) would hardly have needed to alter any other phrases [in this sermon] except perhaps about Messiah and the Jews,” William H. Oliver comments.<sup>74</sup>

The Mormon mission in England focused in the beginning on the gathering of the Jews in Israel, as demonstrated by the early editions of the Mormon magazine the “Star”. But after 1841 the focus shifted to the gathering of the gentile saints to the American Zion. The symbols and statements in the Mormon message are familiar to many Christian groups, especially Pietistic, millenarian Christians. But the arrangement of the elements, as well as to situate them in America, was novel. The new Zion was to be found in America, rooted on two former Jewish settlements, and untainted by the influence of the European Babylon. Hence emigration became a theological imperative. In addition to the familiar biblical language and the new theology of America, we may add the significant personal decision to break up from Babylon for Zion in America. This became the typical doctrine of the Latter Day Saints: the gathering to Zion.

William Mulder mentions several examples in his article “Mormonism’s Gathering”:<sup>75</sup> A Danish shoemaker toasts his friends on New Year’s Eve: “May next year find us together in Zion.” A Norwegian, released from his labours as a missionary, rejoices in his return to Zion: “My absence to me an exile.” The first Mormon missionaries to Norway sailed along the coast with their ship *Sions Løve* [The Lion of Zion], bringing “strength and light from Zion to all nations.”<sup>76</sup> In his article Mulder describes a universal yearning among the proselytes; an experience to which they loved to bear witness after their arrival in Zion. As he put it, the proselytes exhibited

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<sup>73</sup> William H. Oliver, *Prophets and Millennialists: the Uses of Biblical Prophecy in England from the 1790s to the 1840s* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1978), 223.

<sup>74</sup> Oliver, *Prophets and Millennialists*, 223.

<sup>75</sup> Mulder, “Norwegian Forerunners among the early Mormons”.

<sup>76</sup> Hilmar Freidel, *Under Nordlysets himmel, Jesu Kristi kirke i Norge, den Norske misjons historie 1851–1966* (Oslo, 1966), 34–8.

“a strange and irresistible longing which ravished them and filled them with nostalgia for Zion, their common home:

Oh Zion when I think of thee  
I long for pinions like the dove  
And mourn to think that I should be  
So distant from the land I love.”<sup>77</sup>

Citations from the history of the Danish Mormon emigration present similar testimonies: “I do not *believe* that this is Zion, but I *know* that here is Zion. I live as a citizen of Zion, and I own a small part of the free land of America.” “I know that here is Zion and the place for the gathering of Israel in the last days and that a millennium is at hand, when Christ the Son of God will come to the earth and dwell among his holy and the New Jerusalem will be built with all its glory, as the Scripture witnesses.” “The time for the emigration of the holy is at hand, and all that receive the Gospel in these days will have an irresistible longing to gather in one place.”<sup>78</sup>

Jens Vahl, a Danish Lutheran pastor, voiced critique against such sentiments in 1857:

When they speak about Zion, they don't mean the first Jerusalem or the spiritual Zion in Heaven, but a place they have given the name of Zion, a voluptuous paradise. And this place, which they have given the name of Zion, they transfer God's promises on the spiritual Zion. This is as if the King of Denmark should name his country England, and thereafter insist that all England's colonies belonged to him.<sup>79</sup>

Across the Atlantic Mormonism's predominant missionary message continued to include hope of an imminent millennium.<sup>80</sup> But in Europe the first step in preparing for Christ's return was to get to Zion in America. As one writer affirms, for Mormons “crossing the ocean became an act of obedience to the command to come out of Babylon” and join the Saints awaiting Christ's return.<sup>81</sup> The preaching of the millennium underwent development and change in Mormonism. From 1851 until the 1880s, the Mormon leadership preached a millennial doctrine based on “the gathering” in Zion, encouraging converts to emigrate from their home countries and gather in the American Zion. The “gathering” was gradually de-emphasized, and by 1907 church authorities had begun urging converts to remain in their own countries to build the kingdom there. As

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<sup>77</sup> Mulder, “Mormonism's ‘Gathering.’ An American Doctrine with a Difference,” 250.

<sup>78</sup> Jørgen W. Schmidt, *Oh, Du Zion I Vest. Den danske mormon-emigrasjon 1850–1900* (København: Roskilde og Bagger, 1965), 106, 135, 138.

<sup>79</sup> Schmidt, *Oh, Du Zion I Vest. Den danske mormon-emigrasjon 1850–1900*, 80.

<sup>80</sup> Davies, *Mormon Spirituality: Latter-Day Saints in Wales and Zion*, 14.

<sup>81</sup> Oliver, *Prophets and Millennialists*, 221.

a Mormon historian put it, “Zion was moving to the scattered members rather than the scattered members to Zion.”<sup>82</sup>

## Conclusion

We have seen that the idea of building Zion in America was rooted in earlier millenarian traditions and was widespread among European Separatists in the seventeenth century. Early Scandinavian immigration was inspired by German and English Separatists, some of them communitarians. Utopian and millenarian ideas were exported to America and flourished, partly in a sectarian, religious form, partly in a secularized, communitarian form. Scandinavians arriving in America with later waves of immigration were often motivated by the ideals of “the Land of Promise,” and some by “the Promised Land.” Many Scandinavians also joined the religious community who succeeded in establishing Zion on the American continent, the Latter Days Saints. Thus, we end where we started. In 1882, five Swedish immigrants founded Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Salt Lake City, the city where the Temple of the Mormon Zion in America was under construction, oriented towards Jerusalem.

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<sup>82</sup> Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 140.



**Fig. 11.0:** *Christ*, c.1821/39, by Bertel Thorvaldsen. The Church of Our Lady, Copenhagen.  
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