Every “new beginning” has its forces that spawn and promote its growth. Understanding these forces is necessary in comprehending the essence of what they have produced. The focus of this chapter is to briefly examine the forces that brought about the adult educational schools in Kirtland, Ohio, between 1833 and 1837. In order to accomplish this, it will first be necessary to survey the national and local educational and religious setting of the early 1800's. This will be followed by an overview of the beginnings of the LDS church including a discussion of three particular basic beliefs of the LDS people that influenced the formation of the adult education schools in Kirtland. At the end, the reader should have a historical context in which better evaluate the findings of this research.

The National Setting

The world in which the LDS church’s adult education programs emerged was a world at the beginning of monumental change. Johnson (1991) has insightfully described this period (specifically 1815-1830) as a time in “which the matrix of the modern world was largely formed” (p. xvii). With the ending of both the strained relationship between Britain and America (manifested most recently in the War of 1812) and the Napoleonic Wars, this period saw a relative peace that allowed the untapped world resources, science and technology, and finance management put to constructive purposes. Rapid changes were taking place in Europe and elsewhere in the world.

During this period, “The United States transformed itself from a struggling ex-colony
into a formidable nation, growing fast in territory and population and embracing democratic politics” (p. xvii). America was beginning to fulfill the prophecy made by Benjamin Franklin before the American Revolution in a letter to Lord Kames, the Scottish High Court justice in Edinburgh:

America may suffer at present under the arbitrary power of this country [Britain]; she may suffer a while in a separation from it; but these are temporary evils that she will outgrow. America, an immense territory, favored by nature with all advantages of climate, soil, great navigable rivers and lakes, must become a great country, populous and mighty; and will, in a less time than is generally conceived, be able to shake off shackles that may be imposed on her and perhaps place them on the imposers. (Quoted in Cook, 1995, p. 123)

As part of the Treaty of Paris signed in 1783 which ended the American Revolution, the United States acquired all the land west of the original thirteen colonies to the Mississippi River. With the population of the United States increasing, many began to leave the eastern seaboard in the late 1700's and early 1800's and settle in the newly acquired lands. At this time, several new states were added to the original thirteen states, including Ohio in 1803.

Along with the settlement of new land, other changes were taking place. Fish (1996) began his classic work regarding this time period, The Rise of the Common Man, saying: “In 1815, new winds had begun to blow over the American people. For more than a decade they buffeted the fortresses of old habits and ideas, and then in 1829, with the elevation of Andrew Jackson to the first office in the land, they gained full sweep.” Then speaking of the time period relative to this study, he said: “In the twenty years from 1830 to 1850 these new concepts were to dominate American life; they grew established, respectable, venerated” (p. 517). The winds of change blowing over America affected many aspects of American society including religious expansion and social reform.
Religious Climate

This period saw a tremendous revival of religious feeling as a result of what has become known as the Second Great Awakening (see, Tindall, 1988, pp. 488-497). Fish described this phase of American history as “distinctly and increasingly a religious period” (p. 565). “During and immediately following the American Revolution,” Backman (1965) observed, “there was a decline in church attendance and religiosity in the new nation” (p. 278). But in the early 1800's, a religious awakening began “that would soon surpass the Great Awakening” experienced in the first half of the 1700's (Bushman, 1984, p. 37).

The religious excitement generated at this time profoundly affected the frontier areas. Tindall (1988) noted: “It gave birth, moreover, to a new institution, the camp meeting, in which the fires of faith were repeatedly rekindled. Missionaries found ready audiences among the lonely frontiersmen hungry for a sense of community” (p. 489). As a result of these revivalist camp meetings, the frontier phase of the Second Great Awakening, though beginning in Kentucky, “spread quickly through the West and into more settled regions back east” (p. 490).

Fish (1996) observed, “One striking manifestation of the religious spirit” that characterized the Second Great Awakening “was the development of missionary work” (p. 569). This was manifested in proselyting from one Christian faith to another as well as from Christian to non-Christian. As a result, there were missionary efforts made throughout the United States and eventually into most of the the world. By 1850 there were very few places around the world, if any, in which Americans were not doing missionary work.
Educational Climate

At the same time the Second Great Awakening was sweeping across the nation, there were several movements advocating social reform such as temperance crusades, prison and asylum changes, women’s rights, the abolition of slavery, and education reforms (for discussion, see, Handlin, 1984, p. 109; Tindall, 1988, pp. 511-526). Chief among the education reforms was state sponsored and funded educational programs. Colonial education, for the most part, had been sponsored by various religious sects. In fact, in the early 1800's the best educational programs were sponsored by religious institutions such as the Quakers and the Moravians (Tindall, 1988). Generally, all levels of education could be found in most states along the Atlantic seaboard. In fact, “Opportunities for education beyond the primary schools were most numerous in New England” in the early 1800's (Fish, 1996, p. 575). But education in general and particularly higher education was not consistently available to those living in the frontier states, such as Ohio. Therefore, as the American population spread further west into rural areas chances for education diminished.

There were two main reasons for this: sponsorship and funding. The majority of education beyond the primary level was promoted by private ventures, mainly religious organizations. Such organizations often did not have the monies necessary to offer advanced education to the community. Therefore reformers sought for more statewide funded schools. Initially most states were slow in response but eventually began to provide some funds for educational programs beyond the primary level. Slowly, more opportunities for higher education began to be offered. The sponsorship for these programs remained private for the most part but often the monies came from the state as well as religious organizations. Consequently, “Most students going beyond the elementary grades went to private
academies, often subsidized by church and public funds” (Tindall, 1988, p. 513.)

The same was true of colleges. These “were the creation of religious denominations with the original object of training their clergy” (Fish, 1996, p. 576). This dictated much of the curricula offered, being heavy in theological subjects. But this also began to change. By the 1830's there were several colleges with expanded curricula throughout the country including the frontier states.

Though publically funded education for America’s youth was in its beginning stages, efforts for publicly funded adult education was lagging. But there were many private ventures promulgated during this period. Stubblefield & Keane (1994) note, “Provisions for educating adults, however, did not take shape around a single institutional form. In some instances, activities grew out of the efforts of individuals to improve themselves in various ways. In others, they were initiated by an institution to achieve some larger institutional purpose” (p. 1). It was during this period that the lyceum movement was initiated along with a few other adult educational experiments such as the mechanics institutes, debating societies, and historical and literary societies which sponsored occasional lecturers (Stubblefeld & Keane, 1994).

Ohio

After gaining statehood, the population of Ohio increased dramatically; from 72,000 in 1800 to over 800,000 by 1826 (Backman, 1983). By this date, Ohio was passing through “the later stages of its pioneer period” (Weisenburger, 1941, p. 3). From 1825 to 1850, Ohio was predominantly an agricultural state with the typical Ohioan living “in the country in the midst of much unimproved land” (Weisenburger, 1941, p. 4).
After Ohio was granted statehood the state was divided into townships. Kirtland Township was founded at this time in Geauga County (which was originally part of Trumbull County before being made its own county). Located in the northeastern part of Ohio about 22 miles east of Cleveland and about five miles south of Lake Erie, Kirtland was part of a region known as the Western Reserve. The majority of those who settled in this area were from New England. Weisenburger (1941) offers this description of the Western Reserve:

On the Reserve, in dozens of communities a “common” with white belfried church near-by gave a distinct New England atmosphere to the place. The homes, moreover, were in large degree of a type which would easily have fitted into the landscape of almost any Connecticut or Massachusetts town. Several villages, somewhat specialized in their intellectual opportunities, such as Oberlin and Hudson, became in reality western prototypes of the New England college community. (p. 10)

As in other parts of the state, the early days of Geauga County offered little by way of education. Chaddock (1908) reports that education in the State of Ohio did not become “a matter of state concern, nor was a system of popular instruction, supported by public taxation, established for a quarter of a century after statehood.” He then stated, “Necessarily, the isolation of the scattered settlements long rendered instruction a local and individual matter” (p. 138). Anson Call (1838-1839), who moved to Geauga county in 1817 when he was seven years old and later became a member of the LDS church and participated in the adult education programs sponsored by the Church in Kirtland, gives us this view of educational opportunities in his autobiography: “My parents were born in the state of Vermont. My father removed to the state of Ohio when I was seven years of age, Geauga County. I was sent to school in early life but after removing to Ohio, there were but little opportunities for schools owing to the newness of the country” (p. 1).

Where schools were found, they were held in small, log cabins. Primary education
consisted of reading, writing, and arithmetic (Weisenburger, 1941). A few communities offered secondary education schools. Eventually, both primary and secondary education became more widespread. Boyd (1916) reported that the growth of secondary education progressed through three “very distinct stages: first, the Latin-grammar school; second, the academy; third, the public high school” (p. 119). The Latin-grammar phase occurred during the colonial period and was only participated in by the rich. The academy phase began in the early 1800's and continued to the mid-1800's. The aim of the academy was to “supply a more practical education to a larger class” of youth, including young women (p. 119). The academy eventually led to the public high school which has continued to present.

Chaddock (1908) states that Ohio, soon after obtaining statehood, “became noted for academies and small colleges.” There was a large number of these institutions due to “the isolation and difficult communication of the early days” and also because of the varied experience and traditions of the settlers. He further states: “The purpose of these academies was to afford an opportunity to the ambitious to fit themselves for leadership and so spread the desire for learning until secondary and primary schools could be started in every settlement.” Chaddock also notes: “It is clear that whatever higher education was provided in Ohio during the first years of its history, above the most elementary training given in the home or private school, was largely controlled by religious sects, or by public-spirited men who established private academies.” He then concluded, “Of course such education was a matter of local concern and there could be no uniformity in the instruction. Whatever unity was found came as a result of sectarian education when an institution appealed to its own denomination over a wider area” (pp. 140-141).

Boyd (1916) offers a similar picture. He stated that “the church seemed to feel the
necessity of making provision for higher education. All denominations entered into aggressive campaigns for secondary education either to strengthen the church or to conserve its membership.” He also observed that since the state settled in “patches” each community “began to work out its own ideals. Therefore, it was commonly found that higher education in one community differed widely from that in another” (p. 119).

Schools of higher education became more frequent in the Western Reserve by 1850, which “became a nursery for school teachers.” After the harvest fruits were in, many young “scholars” spent the winter advancing their learning. These schools of higher education produced many, many teachers. In fact, the supply of teachers was “in excess of the local demand.” Staying home to perform their summer labors on the farms, many qualified teachers left their farms to go “south and west to teach in the winter, leaving in the fall as uniformly as the wild geese and other migratory birds, and returning to spend the summer in labor” (Hinsdale, 1896, pp. 48–49).

During the first decades of the 1800's, some education for adults was possible. Weisenburger (1941) states: “Grammar often was not taught in the public schools but by traveling lecturers who went from town to town, generally holding classes for adults” (p. 1698). But as more immigrants from New England came, there was a greater push for adult education. In the 1820's and 30's, the various forms of adult education spreading along the eastern seaboard, such as, the literary, historical, and debating societies, as well as the lyceum, were readily accepted in Ohio. This is so because of the culture of New England favored these kinds of educational activities and that culture carried over with the New England immigrants (Bode, 1956). The lyceum, which began in New England, became very popular in Ohio. The Cincinnati Lyceum was incorporated in 1831 and continued so until
In fact, “at least sixty lyceums or lyceum-like societies received a state charter. Every town of any size in the entire state is represented” (Bode, 1956, p. 92). It appears that the lyceum was more popular in Ohio than any other state.

The LDS Church

In was in this religious and educational setting that the LDS church began to promote adult education schools for its members in Kirtland, Ohio. As noted earlier, Stubblefield & Keane (1994) observed that many adult educational experiences were “initiated by an institution to achieve some larger institutional purpose” (p. 1). This was certainly true regarding the LDS adult educational schools. A delineation of the “larger institutional purposes” will be given in Chapter Four. The basis upon which these purposes were built will now be considered.

Before proceeding with this discussion, it is appropriate at this point to make a procedural comment. The emergence of the LDS church has created voluminous controversy regarding its history, teachings, and practices. It is a given that such things can be disputed. But such controversy is irrelevant to this study. The present study was a history of the adult education programs in Kirtland and not an evaluation of the belief system of the LDS church. It is irrelevant whether the reader of this dissertation believes or disbelieves in the validity of the Church or its teachings. What is relevant is that those who attended the schools in Kirtland did believe. Indeed, the initiation of the schools, including what was taught and how, was a product of their belief system. The sources of this history came from them. Therefore, I will proceed from their viewpoint. In line with this, I will follow Givens’ (2002) lead who made the following comment at the beginning of his recently published
work regarding the *Book of Mormon*, a book held sacred to the LDS people: “In a history of religiously controversial subject, of which the *Book of Mormon* is a premiere example, the disputability of the facts is too obvious to bear repeating on every page. I have therefore avoided constructions like ‘Joseph Smith’s alleged vision,’ or ‘the purported visit of [the angel] Moroni,’ as they would become tiresome and pedantic if repeated on every page” (Author’s Note).

**Origins**

The LDS church was founded during the “cauldron of religious excitement” that typified the early 1800's (Arrington & Davis, 1979, p. 3). As religious interest spread as a result of the Second Great Awakening, very few sections of the United States were left unaffected. As this religious excitement “began to sweep the country, it struck a tinderbox in western New York” (p. 3) where the Church was founded. From 1815 to the early 1820's, the whole region was ignited into a frenzy of religious revivalism. Backman (1969) has noted that “revivals were so habitual and powerful” in western New York “that historians have labeled this ecclesiastical storm center the ‘Burned-over District’” (p. 301; see Cross, 1950).

Joseph Smith, the founder and first head of the Church, was one of many who was spiritually affected by this religious excitement. Indeed, as Allen & Leonard (1992) have observed, he “could hardly avoid the spiritual awakenings of the Burned-over District. During a twelve-month period beginning in mid-1819, religious revivals took place in at least

1 It was Charles G. Finney who “gave this name to the whole region of central and western New York, saying that seeing so much revivalist excitement had caused many to consider religion a delusion” (Hill, 1977, p. 458, note 28).
ten towns within a twenty-mile radius of his home” (p. 29), which was located in the town of Palymra, east of Rochester. As a youth of 14 years of age, Joseph Smith (1980) was confused by the various religious voices promoting a diversity of views of Christianity. Later in life, he recalled that “so great were the confusion and strife among the different denominations, that it was impossible for a person young as I was, and so unacquainted with men and things, to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong” (Vol. 1, p. 3). After months of serious contemplation, he decided to go to a grove of trees on his family’s hundred acre farm and pray to God to ask which church he should join. At this time, Joseph Smith experienced the ultimate epiphany, a vision of God the Father and Jesus Christ. In response to his prayer, Joseph Smith said: “They told me that all religious denominations were believing in incorrect doctrines, and that none of them was acknowledged of God as his church and kingdom. And I was expressly commanded to ‘go not after them,’ at the same time receiving a promise that the fulness of the gospel should at some future time be made known unto me” (Vol.4, p.536; also Smith, 1842, p. 707).

This vision took place in 1820. In 1823, Joseph Smith received another revelation informing him that he would become “an instrument in the hands of God to bring about some of his purposes” in the last days (Vol. 4, p. 536; also Smith, 1842, p. 707) including the restoration of Christ’s original church with the fulness of the gospel. During the next seven years, Joseph Smith continued to receive revelations, many of which formed the basis of the fundamental beliefs of the Church he was to “restore.” Eventually, the Church was organized or “restored” on April 6, 1830. Arrington & Bitton (1979) explain the meaning of this restoration of Christ’s original church:

. . . the [LDS] claimed that the true church of Christ, which had been taken from
the early church as a result of apostasy and corruption, was now again on the earth. The idea meant in part that the practices of the original Christianity were again on the earth – a lay ministry, baptism of believers by immersion, and the gifts of the spirit. But especially basic to the concept of Restoration was the priesthood. The priesthood, or authority to act in God’s name, had been taken from the earth sometime in the early centuries of Christian history but was now restored on earth. The [LDS] church, therefore, was not only like the original Christian church but had the same sacerdotal authority, without which any attempt to restore would result only in dead forms. (p. 28)

The mission of Joseph Smith was to bring about the full restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, both theologically and organizationally. This he continued to do through the rest of his life.

**Move to Ohio**

As was typical of the various church’s during the Second Great Awakening, soon after the organization of the Church, missionary work commenced. Joseph Smith sent several of the earliest members of the church on missions in neighboring areas where they were met with success. Some missionaries were sent into neighboring states as well. One group was sent to Missouri, teaching and baptizing as they went (see Smith, 1980, Vol. 1, pp. 118-125; Roberts, 1957, Vol. 1, pp. 225-231). On their way, they past through Kirtland, Ohio, where they were met with great success. Though the missionaries pressed on to Missouri, the Church continued to grow in Kirtland. By 1831, there were four branches of the Church in and around the Kirtland area (Backman, 1983; Smith, 1950).

In December of 1830, Joseph Smith received a revelation directing the scattered LDS congregations in New York to “assemble together at the Ohio” (D&C 37:3), meaning the Kirtland area. This was the first revelation directing the LDS people to gather at a central location. In New York, the scattered members of the Church were being persecuted for their
Persecution would hound the LDS people for several decades. For a discussion of the religious persecutions of the LDS people, see chapters 3-5, 9, in Arrington & Bitton, 1979.

It was hoped that Ohio would become a place of refuge for the beleaguered members. In Kirtland, they could create the community they longed to have as Christians. “That community would be built upon a search for spiritual gifts, the claim to new revelation and scripture, and active missionary zeal” (Allen & Leonard, 1976, p. 64). Such a community in LDS theology is known as Zion. Sorenson (1992) explains: “Latter-day Saints use the name Zion to signify a group of God’s followers or a place where such a group lives.” He notes that “Zion refers to the place or land appointed by the Lord for the gathering of those who accept his gospel.” The purpose of gathering is “to raise up a committed society of ‘pure people’ who will ‘serve [God] in righteousness’ (D&C 100:13, 16).” He then observed that the communities of Zion “are places where the pure in heart live together in righteousness. Geographical Church units are called ‘stakes . . . of Zion’ (D&C 101:21-22). The Church and its stakes are called Zion because they are for gathering and purifying a people of God” (p. 1624).

Backman (1983) points out that a major advantage in gathering the members of the LDS church into communities in Ohio would be for education. “With members scattered in several states, it was impossible for [Joseph Smith] to give instructions to all, and the new converts were constantly asking questions concerning Church procedures and doctrines.” He continues, “Individuals who migrated to the headquarters of the Church were in a position to receive regular instructions from the man they respected as a special servant of the Lord. Consequently, this gathering helped establish and maintain doctrinal and organizational beliefs.”

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2 Persecution would hound the LDS people for several decades. For a discussion of the religious persecutions of the LDS people, see chapters 3-5, 9, in Arrington & Bitton, 1979.
In compliance with the December 1830 revelation, in February of 1831, Joseph Smith led a migration of members of the Church to Kirtland. Upon his arrival, he immediately began to establish Kirtland as the headquarters of the Church. Missionary efforts continued and the Church grew in numbers (Roberts, 1957). After his arrival in Kirtland, Joseph Smith continued to receive revelations concerning both Church organization as well as doctrine (Backman, 1983). Some of the revelations concerned the organization of adult education schools and will be considered in Chapter Four.

Three Fundamental Doctrines

Before detailing the history of the LDS adult educational schools in Kirtland, it is necessary that the reader become acquainted with three fundamental doctrinal beliefs that are basic to the Church and undergird the adult educational schools that were established. These beliefs have already been touched on but not directly addressed.

Revelation. One of the most basic fundamental beliefs of the Church is the doctrine of continuous revelation. Joseph Smith declared in the seventh Article of Faith of the Church: “We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth.” And in the ninth Article of Faith he added: “We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God” (Smith, 1980, Vol.4, p.541; also Smith, 1842, pp.710). This belief was echoed by Brigham Young (1978) who became the
leader of the Church after the martyrdom of Joseph Smith: “This people believe in revelation. This people did believe and do believe that the Lord has spoken from the heavens. They did believe and do believe that God has sent angels to proclaim the everlasting Gospel, according to the testimony of John.” (p. 38). The importance of this to the LDS people was emphasized by Joseph F. Smith, the sixth president of the Church, when he said:

Are we to understand, then, that God does not, and will not further make known his will to men; that what he has said suffices? His will to Moses and Isaiah and John is abundant for modern followers of Christ? The Latter-day Saints take issue with this doctrine, and pronounce it illogical, inconsistent, and untrue, and bear testimony to all the world that God lives and that he reveals his will to men who believe in him and who obey his commandments, as much in our day as at any time in the history of nations. (pp. 36-37)

Understanding the LDS view on the doctrine of revelation is important to this study since it was by revelation that the adult education programs were established and organized. Further, it was by revelation that the curriculum of the school was established.

**Missionary work.** Missionary work has from its initial organization been a fundamental practice of the Church. Understanding the purpose and goal of missionary work as pursued by the Church is relevant to this study. “The mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is to invite everyone to come to Christ. This includes a mandate to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people” (Cleverly, 1992, p. 915). This commission was outlined in a revelation to Joseph Smith in November of 1831:

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3On June 27, 1844, Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum “were mobbed and shot while confined at Carthage Jail in Hancock County, in western Illinois. Climaxing more than two decades of persecution across several states, this event gave them an enduring place as martyrs in the hearts of Latter-day Saints” (Bentley, 1992, p. 860)
Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments; and also gave commandments to others, that they should proclaim these things unto the world . . . that faith also might increase in the earth; that mine everlasting covenant might be established; that the fulness of my gospel might be proclaimed by the weak and the simple unto the ends of the world, and before kings and rulers. (D&C 1:17-18, 21-23)

Again, a revelation received shortly after Joseph Smith moved to Kirtland states: “For, verily, the sound must go forth from this place into all the world, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth -- the gospel must be preached unto every creature” (D&C 58:64). In compliance, Joseph Smith (1980) declared:

Our missionaries are going forth to different nations. . . . The Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done. (vol 4, p. 540).

Thus, the goal of missionary work in the Church is to spread the message of the restored Church throughout the entire world. As will be seen, one of the fundamental reasons for organizing the adult education schools in Kirtland was to better prepare missionaries to fulfil this mandate.

**Education.** From its outset, education for both youth and adult has been one of the pillars of the Church. Brigham Young (1978) declared that the LDS religion “is a religion of improvement; it is not contracted and confined; but is calculated to expand the minds of the children of men and lead them up into the state of intelligence that will be an honor to our being” (p. 246). “The educational ideas and practices of the Church grew directly out of certain revelations received by Joseph Smith that emphasize the eternal nature of knowledge and the vital role learning plays in the spiritual, moral, and intellectual development of
mankind” (Gardner, 1992, p. 441). For example, “The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth” (D&C 93:36). “Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come” (D&C 130:18-19). Marion G. Romney (1977), a more recent leader in the Church, declared that the revelations given to Joseph Smith “clearly prescribe learning calculated to prepare for eternity. All our learning should be so oriented.” He observed, “The inability of the learning of the world to successfully deal with our sick society today is due to the fact that both the learned and the unlearned reckon without knowledge of or belief in the realities of eternity, past and future.” Continuing, he used an analogy of a playwright to explain why learning with eternity in mind is so important in LDS theology:

So doing, their prospects for success, in spite of their boasted advances in behavioral and social sciences, are no greater than would be those of a playwright writing what he considered to be a one-act play, but which in fact was to be the second act of a three-act play. The first act would have already been presented and would have dealt with matters that he had not knowledge of or belief in; and the guidelines for the third act, which he likewise had not knowledge of or belief in, would have already been irreversibly established” (p. 51).

This is not to say that education is of no present value or use. Joseph Smith (1980) taught that education should be of “practicable utility, and for the public good, and also for private and individual happiness” (Vol. 4, p. 269). The practicality of education is evidenced in making a living. Gordon B. Hinckley (2001), the present leader of the Church recently stated to the youth of the Church: “You need all the education you can get. Sacrifice a car; sacrifice anything that is needed to be sacrificed to qualify yourselves to do the work of the world. That world will in large measure pay you what it thinks you are worth, and your
worth will increase as you gain education and proficiency in your chosen field” (p. 4).

Though education for immediate and practical use should be sought, there should always be a higher motive for education. Henry B. Eyring (2002) of the present leadership of the Church, stated: “Let’s start with the purpose of our learning. The Lord and His Church have always encouraged education to increase our ability to serve Him and our Heavenly Father’s children. For each of us, whatever our talents, He has service for us to give. And to do it well always involves learning, not once or for a limited time, but continually” (p. 17).

Likewise, Mark E. Petersen (1965), also a leader in the Church, declared:

So often people misunderstand the purpose of education. In our Church we believe deeply, wholeheartedly, in education. We believe that “the glory of God is intelligence.” (D&C 93:36.) We believe, likewise, that the glory of mankind is intelligence. We believe that God expects us to serve Him not only with our physical beings, but also with all our minds; and that therefore we should develop our minds so that we may more effectively teach others to join with us in building the kingdom. We should develop our minds so that we may skillfully and effectively, but humbly, be His servants in doing that which is best for His great cause, in better dedicating ourselves to His work. (p. 2)

Therefore, learning, as viewed by the Church, is a life-long process. Brigham Young (1978) declared, “This is our labor, our business, and our calling -- to grow in grace and in knowledge from day to day and from year to year ” (p. 248). Again, “We shall never see the time when we shall not need to be taught, nor when there will not be an object to be gained. I never expect to see the time that there will not be a superior power and a superior knowledge, and, consequently, incitements to further progress and further improvements.” (p. 248).

More recently, Gordon B. Hinckley (1997), stated:

There is a tendency on the part of some graduates to say, “Now all of that is behind me.” No, there is much more ahead than there is behind. We live in a world where knowledge is developing at an ever-accelerating rate. Drink deeply from this ever-springing well of wisdom and human experience. If you should stop now, you will only stunt your intellectual and spiritual growth. Keep everlastingly at it. Read.
Read. Read. Read the word of God in sacred books of scripture. Read from the great literature of the ages. Read what is being said in our day and time and what will be said in the future. (p. 171)

Joseph Smith was the embodiment of the concept of life-long learning. In a journal entry dated 17 February 1836, while attending the Hebrew School, one of the adult education schools sponsored by the Church in Kirtland (to be discussed in Chapter Six), he wrote:

attende[ed] the school and read and translated with my class as usual, and my soul delights in reading the word of the Lord in the original, and I am determined to persue the study of languages untill I shall become master of them, if I am permitted to live long enough, at any rate so long as I do live I am determined to make this my object, and with the blessing of God I shall succed to my sattisfaction (1984, p. 191)

His desire to learn was not easily repressed. He would never allow dire circumstances to choke the yearning to learn. This is vividly demonstrated in a portion of a letter he wrote to the Church during one of the most difficult circumstances Joseph Smith ever faced. During the winter of 1838-39, just months after many members of the Church fled Ohio because of persecution, the LDS people were forced to leave the state of Missouri. Reacting to an “extermination order” given to the military by governor Lilburn W. Boggs, declaring that “The Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the state, if necessary for the public good” (Allen & Leonard, 1976, p. 127; for full details, see Anderson, 1994), many Missourians began to violently enforce the edict. As part of this persecution, Joseph Smith and a few other Church leaders were incarcerated for the entire winter in a jail in Liberty, Missouri. During this time, he and five others were confined to the cellar or dungeon of Liberty Jail which “had two small grilled windows and was 14 feet square and 6 ½ feet high” (Barrett, 1977, p. 423). The conditions were deplorable. Cramped and continually cold, they slept on white-oak logs covered with straw and were forced to eat food that was, as one of the prisoners stated, “very course, and so filthy that we could not eat
it until we were driven to it by hunger” (p. 423). Yet, it the midst of such appalling conditions, Joseph Smith told the exiled saints living in huts along the Mississippi River in Illinois:

The things of God are of deep import; and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Thy mind, O man! if thou wilt lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens, and search into and contemplate the darkest abyss, and the broad expanse of eternity -- thou must commune with God. How much more dignified and noble are the thoughts of God, than the vain imaginations of the human heart! (Smith, 1980, Vol. 3, p. 295)

One of the reasons LDS people initially gathered together into communities is so that life-long learning could take place. This was clearly stated by Sidney Rigdon, a counselor to Joseph Smith, in 1838, shortly after many LDS fled to Missouri from Ohio because of persecution. In an article entitled “To the Saints Abroad” appearing in the Elder’s Journal, a Church newspaper published in Far West, Missouri (see Cook, 2000), where the LDS people were gathering into a new community, Rigdon (1838) said:

We wish the saints then to be apprised of this, that in order to obtain the ends of their calling, they will find it unavoidably necessary that they should be gathered into the cities in as compact order as possible. . . . It will be found that farming as well as all other business, can be carried on to better purpose through a well arranged order of things by living in cities than it possibly can by living in any other situation of life; and the opportunities of education be complete so that not only the rising generation but that which has risen also be able to obtain all the education that heart can wish, and that which will be well pleasing to God. (p. 54; emphasis added)

Understanding the concept of education as espoused by the LDS church is essential to this study. The adult education schools in Kirtland were based upon these principles. In fact, many of these beliefs were engendered through the introduction of these schools and the principles upon which they were founded.
Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to briefly examine the forces that brought about the adult education programs in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1833-37. At a time when a variety of forces were forming the matrix of the modern world, a world in which adult education would become prominent, there were several interacting influences which produced the Kirtland schools. The organization of the LDS church, the major impetus behind the schools, was a direct by-product of the Second Great Awakening, a major influence in the early 1800's. This movement created an atmosphere that caused many to question the validity of the different religions espoused by Christianity. Joseph Smith was one of them. He sought for divine help to help clarify which church was God’s church. He was told that mankind had strayed from the truth. Because of the revelations he received, a new religious organization was formed that restored the original Christian church and the truths of the gospel. Missionary work brought many others who also questioned the prevailing religious views into the Church. Many of these converts came from the frontier states where they had received little education. As we shall see in the next chapter, in order to better spread the news of the restored Church, it was necessary to educate the adult members.

During this time, education reforms that were sweeping the country created an atmosphere in which learning at all ages was promoted. Though this was not the direct impetus of the adult education schools in Kirtland, it did set a stage in which intensive adult teaching was acceptable. This can be seen in an article entitled, “Cultivate the Mind,” that appeared in the first edition of the Church’s first newspaper, The Evening and Morning Star (June, 1832), printed in Missouri a half-year before the revelation came to organize the first adult education school in Kirtland:
MAN was created to dress the earth, and to cultivate his mind, and glorify God. It, therefore, cannot be amiss for us, at this early period, to urge the disciples of our Lord, to study to shew themselves approved in all things. For, when a disciple, educated, even as Paul at the feet of Gamaliel, is guided by the Holy Spirit, he not only edifies his fellow beings correctly, but he improves his faculties agreeable to the will of God.

Then followed a brief abstract of a lecture regarding education given by a visiting lecturer in the Jackson County area. The article highlighted the lecture’s conclusion: “Most of you are as tall as me; most of you are as strong as me; all of you have as many bones and muscles as me; why is it that you are deficient in capacity? -- because of your neglect in cultivating your minds and neglecting the means of raising yourselves by education” (Phelps, 1832, pp. 4-5).

The historical and societal setting discussed in this chapter has only related a general summation of influences which brought about the schools in Kirtland. The most important force which led directly to the organization of the education programs will be addressed in the next chapter as part of the history of adult education in Kirtland in 1833-37.