

## Chapter 3

### **A COMMITMENT TO SERVE: CHALLENGES AND REWARDS**

One of the dominant characteristics of Latter-day Saints who resided in Nauvoo during the 1840s was their commitment to serve, and this commitment was aptly exemplified by missionary service. From 1839 to 1846, Nauvoo was the headquarters of the missionary program of the Church; and in harmony with the commandments of the Lord, fathers and sons of Nauvoo, with the continual support of their wives, thrust in their sickles and reaped a bounteous harvest.

Writings of the early Saints of Nauvoo help us gain a better glimpse into the challenges and rewards of missionary service. In mid-September 1842, Luman Shurtliff left Nauvoo with his companion to serve a mission in New England and proclaim the gospel in the region where he was born. He later wrote that he did not know how long he would serve on that mission but planned on being away from Nauvoo for at least the winter months. He also noted in his journal a motive that led him to accept this and other calls to missionary service. Prior to his conversion, he promised the Lord that if He would guide him to His Church that he would preach the gospel as long as he lived. "I dare not stay at home," he wrote. "My salvation depended upon my keeping this covenant." It was difficult to leave Nauvoo at that time because of the poverty of his family. He sold one of his