

20. To get to Santa Fé, the believer must adjust to God's agenda by means of executing simultaneous objectives: (1) the ultimate objective is arrival at spiritual maturity (or Santa Fé) and (2) the immediate objective of getting from one check point to the next—from point A to point B on the trail.
21. The biggest obstacle on the trip is the enemy within, the sin nature which offers unrelenting opposition every step of the way. All opposition has one purpose in mind: keep you from reaching your stated objective.
22. The objective of the sin nature is to prevent you from either learning about your logistics and problem-solving devices or neutralizing your ability to utilize what you know.

### B. William Bucknell: Blazing the Way to Santa Fé

The first entrepreneur to make the trek from Missouri to Santa Fé was William Bucknell in 1821. On the way west he and his partners encountered a party of Spanish Dragoons<sup>5</sup> which informed them that Mexico, following its independence from Spain, had ended its restrictive trade policy with the United States. Becknell's group was persuaded to take their goods to Santa Fé for sale. This trade was truly free. Commerce between the United States and northern Mexico was a lucrative endeavor since the area we know today as New Mexico received all its merchandise from the lower provinces by way of Vera Cruz but at exorbitant rates.

On his return to Missouri, Becknell wrote a journal which was published in April 1823 and contained the following observation:

**An excellent road may be made from Fort Osage to Santa Fé. Few places would require much labor to render them passable; and a road might be laid out as not to run more than thirty miles over the mountains.**

Interest in trade with Northern Mexico increased to the point that the federal government took up the issue of underwriting the survey of a trail from Kansas City to Santa Fé.

Incoming president John Quincy Adams appointed three commissioners for the project: Benjamin H. Reeves of Howard County, Missouri; Thomas Mather of Kaskaskia, Illinois, and George Champlin Sibley of Fort Osage, Missouri.

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<sup>5</sup> "In late 16th-century Europe, a mounted soldier who fought as a light cavalryman on attack and as a dismounted infantryman on defense. The terms derived from this weapon, a species of carbine or short musket called the dragoon. Dragoons were organized not in squadrons but in companies, and their officers and noncommissioned officers bore infantry titles" ("dragoon," in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia*, 15th ed. [2010], 4:210).



The commissioners were determined to assemble a crew where every man was a rifleman and hunter but at the same time qualified to serve as chain bearer or axeman, and willing to submit cheerfully to all the necessary privations of the trip.

It is important to point out early that a chain bearer or chainman is not a slave but a civil engineer. English mathematician Edmund Gunter was professor of astronomy at Gresham College, London, from 1619 until his death in 1626. He developed the first table of common logarithms of the sine and tangent functions and introduced the terms cosine and cotangent.

Gunter's practical inventions included Gunter's chain:

**Surveyor's chain, also called Gunter's chain, measuring device and arbitrary measurement unit still widely used for surveying in English-speaking countries. Invented by Edmund Gunter in the early 17th century, Gunter's chain is exactly 22 yards long and divided into 100 links. In the device, each link is a solid bar. Measurement of the public land systems of the United States and Canada is based on Gunter's chain. An area of 10 square chains is equal to one acre.<sup>1</sup>**

On Sunday, July 17, 1825, the survey began from Fort Osage. The first major objective was to meet with the chiefs of the Osage Tribe which inhabited the Neosho River Valley in Kansas, a distance of about 125 miles.

George Sibley wrote the following in his journal: "As we propose to meet the Osage Chiefs in council here, to negotiate a treaty with them for the road, I suggested the propriety of naming the place 'Council Grove' ... which was done. [Council Grove is located in Morris County on the Neosho River.]

Blazing the trail westward was not too intense a task in the beginning. Many had pioneered the area and certain landmarks were well-known to all who ventured out.

Knowing the way to Santa Fé is one thing, actually making the trip is quite another. There were known dangers reported by those who made the trip. Mules and oxen were the better of the beasts of burden to pull the wagons but were often frightened by generations of rattlesnakes.

There were many other surprises along the trail. Some were learned about from others while new ones occurred without warning. This resulted in learning curves on how to deal with unexpected challenges from the land, rivers, and sometimes mankind.

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<sup>1</sup> "Surveyor's chain," in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia*, 11:414.

### C. Moving on Down the Trail: Colorado or the Jornada?

When a wagon train made it to Dodge City it was well known that it could choose one of two established trails to Santa Fé. There was the mountain route that ran into Colorado which followed the Arkansas River west to Bent's Fort where there it turned southwest through the Raton Pass<sup>2</sup> into New Mexico. This was the longest but safest route. The other was known as the Cimarron Cutoff. At the Cimarron River the train would ford across it into a vast, dry, desert landscape known as the Jornada. There were no landmarks in sight as guideposts. It was a flat, hot, waterless wasteland, but if you could make it to Fort Union, it cut a lot of time off the trip.

The best description of these two options is given by Frank Waters' chapter, "The Santa Fé Trail," in his book, *The Earp Brothers of Tombstone*:

**The Mountain, or Pike's Peak Route continued up the Arkansas to the junction of the little stream from the Colorado Rockies called Las Animas by the Spaniards, the Purgatoire by the French, and later the Picketwire by the cowboys. Here, at the most famous rendezvous of trappers, prairie and mountain men in the west, stood Bent's Fort.**

**From here the wagons turned southwest, crawling over Raton Pass at a rate of three or four miles a day and crossing the range to the high plateau on which stood Taos; thence down into the deep gorge of the Rio Grande and so through the river valley to Santa Fé. Or else the wagons from Trinidad [Colorado], at the bottom of Raton Pass, could follow along the base of the mountains to Las Vegas, where they met again the Cimarron Cut-Off.**

**The Cimarron Cut-Off was less arduous than the Mountain Route, but perhaps more dangerous. This region between the Arkansas and the Cimarron, commonly called the Jornada, was a stretch of desert where men traveling fifteen miles a day might go for days without water.<sup>3</sup>**

There are several books available about the Santa Fé Trail. Surely one of the best is Josiah A. Gregg's *Commerce of the Prairies*:

**The ordinary supplies for each man's consumption during the journey, are about fifty pounds of flour, as many more of bacon, ten of coffee and twenty of sugar, and a little salt.**

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<sup>2</sup> Raton Pass [re-tón]. Mountain pass, Las Animas country, southeast Colorado, on Colorado-New Mexico boundary just north of Raton, New Mexico; 7834 feet; formerly traversed by a branch of the Santa Fe Trail" (*Merriam-Webster's Geographical Dictionary* (2007), s.v. "Raton Pass.")

<sup>3</sup> Frank Waters, "The Santa Fé Trail," in *The Earp Brothers of Tombstone* (New York: Clarkson N. Porter, 1960, rept. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1976), 49–51.



The buffalo is chiefly depended upon for fresh meat, and great is the joy of the traveler when that noble animal first appears in sight.

The wagons most in use upon the Prairies are manufactured in Pittsburgh; and are usually drawn by eight mules or the same number of oxen. (p. 10)

Oxen were found, to the surprise of the traders, to perform almost equal to mules. They possess many advantages, such as pulling heavier loads than the same number of mules, particularly through muddy or sandy places; but they generally fall off in strength as the prairie grass becomes drier and shorter, and often arrive at their destination in a most shocking plight. (pp. 10–11)

The inferiority of oxen as regards endurance is partially owing to the tenderness of their feet; for there are very few among the thousands who have traveled on the Prairies that ever knew how to shoe them properly. Mules, for the most part, perform the entire trip without being shod at all.

Supplies being at length procured, and all necessary preliminaries systematically gone through, the trader begins the difficult task of loading his wagons. Those who understand their business, take every precaution so to stow away their packages that no jolting on the road can afterwards disturb the order in which they had been disposed. The ingenuity displayed on these occasions has frequently been such, that after a tedious journey of eight-hundred miles, the goods have been found to have sustained much less injury than upon our western steam-boats.<sup>4</sup> (p. 11)

From Gregg's comments we are able to develop some principles of problem-solving. Here are a few:

1. The major incentive for blazing the Santa Fé Trail was free enterprise. Biblical principles are observed in the traders' preparation process.
2. Christianity and the profit motive associated with free enterprise are mutually complementary. In order to prosper, one must provide the best product to get the best possible price.
3. Further, the more products he is able to sell, the greater the profit. These traders believed there was a bull market in Mexico.

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<sup>4</sup> Josiah A. Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies* (London: Pantianos Classics, 2019), 10–11.



4. Extreme care in packaging their merchandise meant a maximum inventory would arrive unharmed in Santa Fé.
5. The first order of business for these traders was to pack as many of their wares in the limited space provided and to so do in such a manner that they could survive an 800-mile trip without benefit of what is referred to today as infrastructure.
6. Christianity provides the entrepreneur with norms and standards which will enable him to earn the highest profit on his goods. These principles simply make sure that both the trader and his customers benefit equally in their transactions.
7. Some of these principles can be seen in the following verses:

**1 Corinthians 14:40** Let all things be done professionally and in an organized manner.

**Deuteronomy 25:15** You shall have a full and just weight; you shall have a full and just measure, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.

**Romans 12:8** Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another.

**Proverbs 30:24** An excellent wife makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies belts to the tradesmen.

**Colossians 3:23** Whatever you do, do your work from the soul, as for the Lord rather than for men;

**v. 24** Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance.

**Ephesians 4:28** Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need.

**1 Thessalonians 4:11** Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you;

**v. 12** so that you may behave properly toward outsiders and have need of nothing.



**2 Thessalonians 3:10** When we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone will not work, neither let him eat.

**v. 11** For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.

**v. 12** Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.

It was on May 15, 1831, that our little party set out from Independence. The general rendezvous at Council Grove was our immediate destination. It is usual for the traders to travel thus far in detached parties, and so to assemble there for the purpose of entering into some kind of organization, for mutual security and defence during the remainder of the journey. (Gregg, p. 11)

8. The ultimate objective is Santa Fé, but the current objective is in Council Grove. You do not seek to make the trek to the ultimate objective alone, you must become organized for security and defence.
9. The spiritual application is that no one makes it to experiential sanctification alone, that is attempting to do it by yourself through human energy.
10. The soul must be fortified if it is to maintain an environment in which safe travel is possible. Fortification occurs during the exercise of the two power options: **(1)** the filling of the Holy Spirit and **(2)** a high inventory of working objects in the stream of consciousness.
11. Your spiritual Council Grove is the rendezvous with the Holy Spirit through confession alone to God alone. He will teach you all you need to know to make the journey and retain that information in your memory traces for recall and application along the way.
12. Preparation for the advance to your spiritual Santa Fé demands proficiency in the three spiritual skills: **(1)** the filling of the Holy Spirit, **(2)** facilitation of biblical absolutes in the frame of reference, and **(3)** modus operandi of the protocol plan of God.



13. The filling of the Holy Spirit energizes the system, positive volition to the teaching of the Word of God facilitates biblical truth as spiritual growth advances through positive volition. The protocol plan is basically the coordination of the plan of God for your life with your positive response to His leadership and guidance from your biblical inventory.
14. **Principle:** The sovereignty of God and the free will of man coexist by divine decree. The believer's free will functions in unison with the integrity of God in order to execute the plan of God.
15. Therefore, every believer is the product of his own decisions whether positive or negative. Volition is the source of a believer's spiritual status quo.
16. It is beneficial to associate yourself with others who are of like mind. Circumstances will present themselves which require the assistance of others whose destination is the same as yours.
17. This principle is found in church unity and the mission which comes from it which is to function with fellow believers in the advance toward this ultimate objective.
18. On occasion, one believer can help a fellow traveler reach an immediate objective, after which he is then able to continue his advance toward the ultimate objective: arrival at his spiritual Santa Fé.
19. No one can make it to Santa Fé alone. Each of us needs the Holy Spirit's mentorship and the support of our fellow believers in Christ.
20. Christian fellowship is primarily the display of a believer's mental attitude of encouragement, comfort, and sometimes guidance.
21. The power in the unity of believers occurs when they are able to consistently defend their souls during the long, grueling journey to our spiritual Santa Fé.

**Hebrews 10:24** Let us consider how to stimulate one another to unconditional love and divine good production,

**v. 25** not forsaking our own assembling together, as the habit of some is, but encouraging one another ...

