



The Witness

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NEWSLETTER NO. 49

ANCIENT AZTEC GRAIN DISCOVERED

Submitted by Brenda Evans, Tallahassee, Florida

And we began to till the ground, yea, even with all manner of seeds, with seeds of corn, and of wheat, and of barley, and with neas, and with sheum, and with seeds of all manner of fruits; and we did begin to multiply and prosper in the land. —Mosiah 6:12

The New York Times reported October 25, 1984, in an article by Jane E. Brody, that scientists have rediscovered an ancient, highly nutritious grain that once sustained the Aztecs, but has been lost to the agricultural world for centuries.

The grain, from a large and especially beautiful group of plants known collectively as amaranth, was all but obliterated by the Spanish conquerors who destroyed the Aztec empire in 1521.

Now, however, amaranth may become the first food crop to be developed rapidly for wide cultivation using modern techniques of field breeding, laboratory cultures and genetic engineering. Agricultural researchers are cautiously hailing this relic of antiquity as "the grain of the future" for its potential to provide protein, vitamins and minerals to people throughout the world, including the United States.

Amaranth contains more protein than other common grain foods (the tiny seeds are 16 percent protein, as against 12 to 14 percent for wheat) and the quality of that protein — its ability to meet human protein needs — exceeds that of protein in soybeans and even milk. Unlike other grains, amaranth is rich in the essential amino acid lysine. When combined with corn, for example, which is deficient in lysine a "protein score" of nearly 100 results, meaning virtually all the protein in the two foods is usable by the body.

Even at this stage of development, amaranth is already being grown by about 20 American farmers (and hundreds of home gardeners), and limited supplies of amaranth flour and seeds and foods made from them are being sold. According to one report "Amaranth, Modern Prospects for an Ancient Crop," grain amaranth, which can be ground



Amaranthus hypochondriacus

into flour or popped like corn, can be used to make breads and rolls, crackers and cookies, cereals, soups, porridge, pancakes, pilaf, snacks and confections, breadings, fillings, dumplings and beverages.

Some species of amaranth can be grown for their nutritious green leaves, which resemble spinach in flavor but outrank other leafy foods as a source of essential nutrients, especially protein, calcium and iron. Unlike true grain plants, which are narrow-leaved grasses, amaranth is a broad-leaved plant that can produce huge seed heads, with up to 500,000 seeds per plant. Vegetable amaranth is already a popular food in Greece and West Africa, where it can be grown year-round.

Grain amaranth was as important as corn and beans to the Aztecs who believed that it gave them supernatural powers and used it in ceremonies involving human sacrifice. Some 200,000 bushels of amaranth seeds were delivered by Aztec farmers in annual tribute to their emperor, Montezuma.

In Aztec rituals, amaranth was formed into cakelike replicas of Aztec gods and fed to the faithful, a practice the Spanish regarded as barbaric and a mockery of Christian communion. Hernán Cortes put a stop to it by condemning to death anyone found growing or possessing amaranth.

But enough of the self-seeding and easily grown plants survived to keep the crop alive, and to this day a few small farmers in Mexico and Central and South America grow it. Alegria, a confection of the Aztecs made with popped amaranth and honey or molasses, is still popular in Mexico and Central America. Sometime after Columbus, amaranth seeds also found their way to Asia, where the crop has made steady gains in the last hundred years, especially among farmers in the foothills of the Himalayas. In India, where amaranth is known as rajgira ("king seed") and ramdana ("seed sent by God"), the seeds are popped and mixed with honey or syrup to make a candy called laddoos. This grain from the ancient past has the potential to reach into the future and feed millions of people.

IN MEMORIUM — Harold I. Velt

(1893 — 1984)

by Grace Faunce

When asked to write a tribute to Brother Harold I. Velt, words describing this noble servant of God and dear friend flooded into my mind: love for God, and his Son, Jesus Christ and the Restoration Gospel, love for people, hopeful, joyful, cheerful, gentle yet spirited, love for nature and the land, gentle humor, always seeking the truth, kindness. I realized I was listing the fruits of the spirit described by Paul in Galatians 5:22.

His great love of the Book of Mormon led him not only to treasure the pureness of the gospel contained therein but to search the history and lands of its people. This quest bore fruit in the publishing of *The Sacred Book of Ancient America*, in 1952; *America's Lost Civilization*, in 1948, (second printing in 1949)—which was an elaboration of his *Riddle of American Origins*, published in 1934.

Surely through his studies of the Book of Mormon, he must have felt a strong kinship with his fellow priesthood brothers who had preceded him in serving God on this land. Little wonder then that one man was led to proclaim under the unction of the Holy Spirit that Harold had a faith like the sons of Mosiah in the Book of Mormon story, and that he never asked anything amiss. His enthusiasm for ongoing research on the Book of Mormon was captured by his daughter, Viola Presler. When in a recent conversation with her, she remarked, "Dad would be thrilled with the recent developments that are being brought forth by men like Ray Treat, Neil Steede, and many others who are busily engaged in the FRAA and ZRF."

Harold was born in Craigie, New South Wales, Australia, October 12, 1893, where he grew up in a family that received faithful religious training which helped prepare him for the accepting of the Restored Gospel when he heard it in his late teens. After his baptism and confirmation, in less than a year he was in the mission field in Australia. He was able to bring many of his family, including his parents, into the church.



Harold and Evelyn Velt August, 1962

One can hardly write of Harold without including his charming wife, Evelyn, always a true helpmate, supporting, encouraging, assisting him in his ministry and a gracious hostess to the many visitors in their home. Daughter Viola said that wherever Mother was, that was "home" for Dad. The writer recalls the spirit of peace, joy, love and unity which was present in their home, in spite of affliction and disappointments in later years. One is reminded of the admonition in the scriptures that the saints should be cheerful in their warfare that they may be joyous in their triumph. I recall with gratitude the visits of this lovely couple in our home and the sweet spirit they brought, sharing their strong testimonies of the Restored Gospel with our little children around the family altar. In later years, an autographed copy of Harold's book, *The Sacred Book of Ancient America*, was an inspiration to our oldest son in his writing of a high school term paper. This study sparked in him a love for the Book of Mormon that continues today.

Brother Velt's latest book, *Not in Word Only*, published in 1963 takes its title from I Thessalonians 1:5, "For our gospel came not to us in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." In this book Harold records his experiences that bear out the truthfulness of this quotation and offers such encouragement to seek the abundant life "through a closer walk with Jesus Christ and his church."

Brother Velt served as priest, elder, seventy, president of seventy and evangelist. His ministry took him from Australia, to the United States, to Canada, to Hawaii and finally to Independence. After it became difficult for him to get about, many people found their way to his home where they received renewed faith and encouragement to continue and endure faithfully to the end. This he surely did.

One can imagine Brother Velt saying to us in the words of Moroni, "Wherefore I would exhort you, that ye deny not the power of God; for he worketh by power, according to the faith of the children of men, the same today and tomorrow and forever". Moroni 10:7. "Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength." Moroni 10:29.



Mr. & Mrs. Harold Velt with daughter, Viola In Hawaii: approximately 1940.

THE REVEALING OF LINEAGE

Harold I. Velt

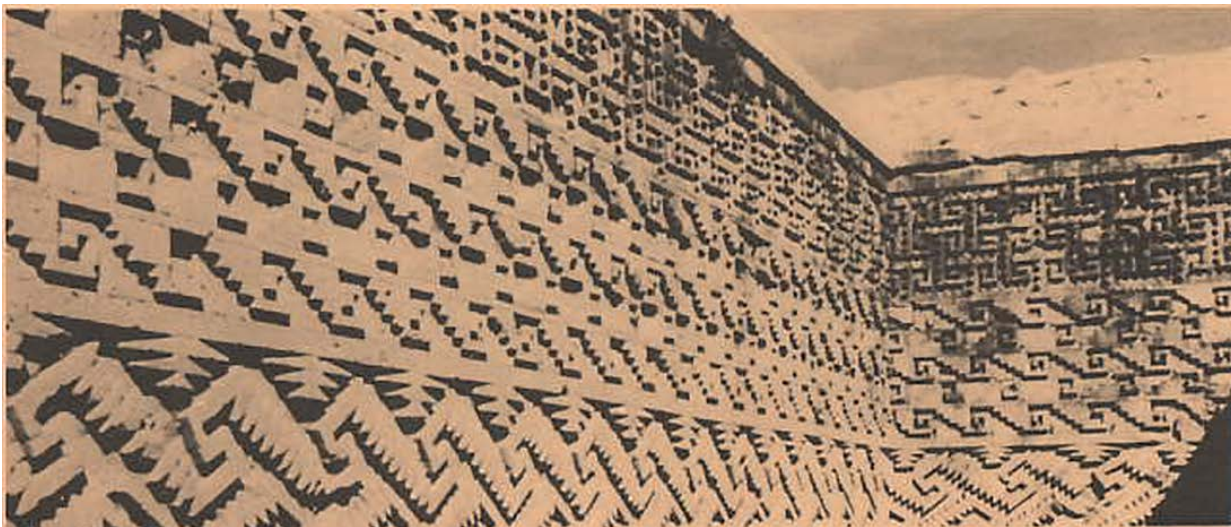
Permission from the publishers has been granted to print the following excerpt from Brother Velt's autobiography, *Not in Word Only* (Herald, 1963). The Book is no longer in print.)

Of the patriarch-evangelist the law requires that he is "to lay on hands for the conferment of spiritual blessings, and if so led, to point out the lineage of the one who is blessed" (Doctrine and Covenants 125:3b). I knew that the Lord by his spiritual gifts could meet this requirement. My own lineage was given through the gift of tongues and interpretation at the time of my confirmation. Also, a year or so before my ordination to the office of patriarch, I was given the following experience.

With a number of friends including Irwin and Elva Petz and Harold and Mildred Smith and son, we (Evie and I) were being guided through the marvelous ruins of Mitla, Mexico. We were particularly impressed with our Zapotec Indian guide. His clear enunciation in Spanish made it easy for me to follow his descriptive explanations and interesting accounts—easier than I had found before. His skin was very dark. This was probably accentuated by the fact that he wore only a cap in the blazing sun. We had noticed how he would doff that cap out of respect whenever we mentioned the name of Benito Juarez, the great Indian emancipator and president of Mexico, who also was a full-blood Zapotec Indian.

Just as we were passing into the hall of mosaics, the thought struck me, "He is the darkest Indian I have seen in this area." Then there came to my mind the statement of Mormon (2:44), "For this people shall be scattered, and shall become a *dark* . . . people, beyond the description of that which ever hath been amongst us; yea, even that which hath been among the Lamanites."

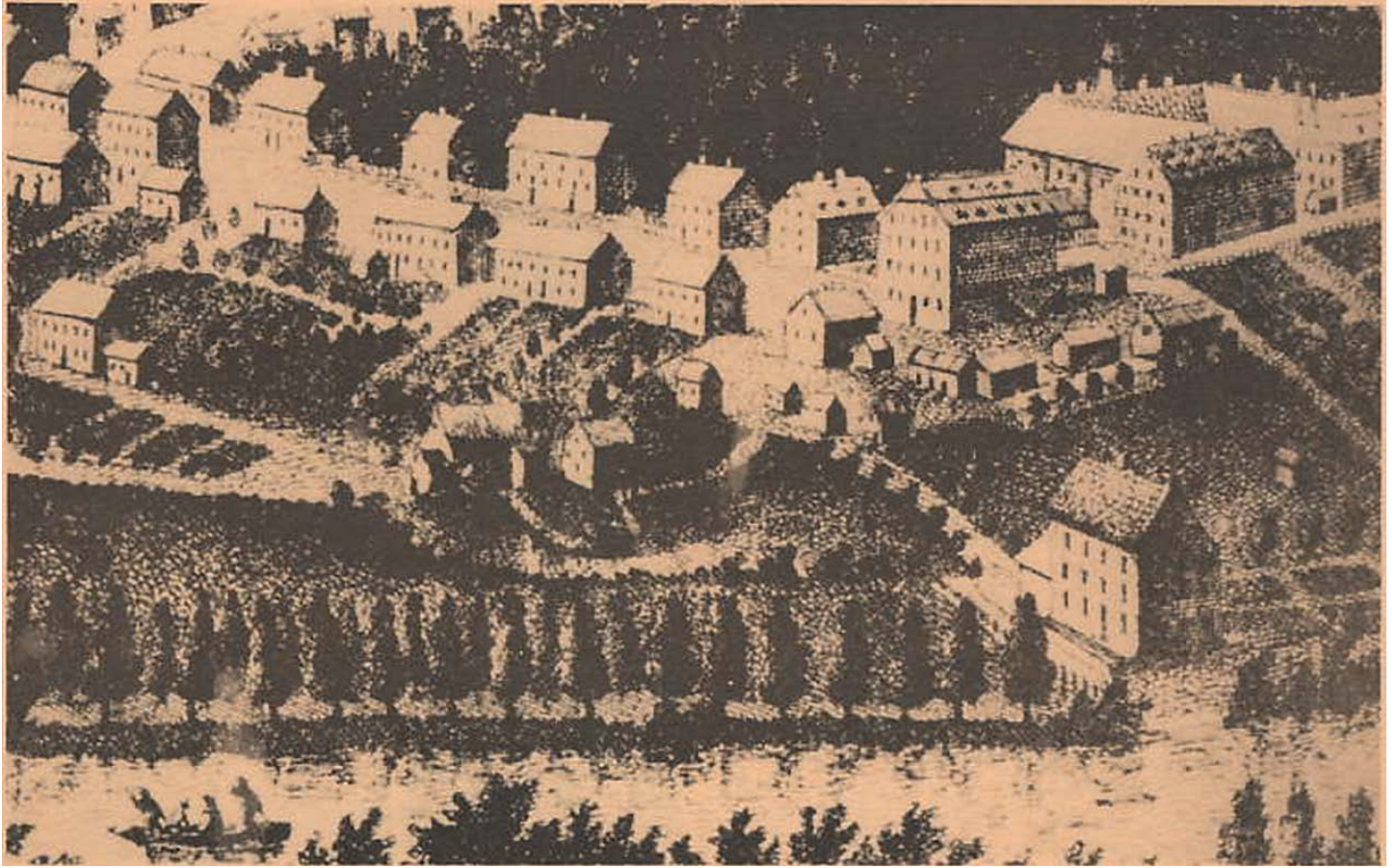
Immediately I found myself bathed in the Spirit of God, and it was made known to me that this Indian was not a Lamanite but a Nephite.



A portion of the Hall of the Mosaics at Mitla, Mexico.

A TESTIMONY

by Joyce Lund



Historic Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, built on the Lehigh River.

I have just returned from a "Fall Foliage Tour" which was sponsored by the Kansas City Park and Recreation Department, and I would like to share an experience with you.

The tour returned home from the New England States through Bethlehem and Pittsburgh, Pa. I was a little disappointed that it didn't come through Philadelphia, but after visiting Bethlehem, I thanked God that we returned this route.

I had always thought of Bethlehem as a steel city and other than that I wasn't very interested in it until now.

We were booked into the Hotel Bethlehem early in the afternoon, and immediately we took a tour of the city. Our tour guide was dressed in the original costume of the time the city was established. She explained that the only difference in the dresses worn were the color of the laces on the bodice of the long dress. The colors denoted whether the girl was single, married, or a widow. A little white cap was worn not as an ornament but to keep the person looking neat. They were early risers and did not always have time to fix their long hair tidily before going to work, so they would hurriedly tie their hair up into a knot and cover it with a little white hood.

I was fascinated with the history she told us of this town. I had never heard of the Moravian people before and

will give a little of the background which she told us. The Moravian Church began as a Protestant movement in the fifteenth century—sixty years before Luther's Reformation. A man by the name of Jan Hus was the leader and was burned at the stake. His followers were persecuted and fled for their lives through Bohemia and Moravia, which are now a part of Czechoslovakia and Poland. These people were known as "The Hidden Seed."

In 1735 they escaped to America and in 1741 they purchased 500 acres of land in the wilderness on the "Lehi" River and founded the city of Bethlehem. She said the river was also pronounced "LeHee" by some. As she told this, it seemed like an electric shock came over me and I tingled all over, for I knew we had been told that the Hebrew pronunciation of "Lehi" was "LeHee." She went on to tell us that this group did not have a head of their church because they considered Jesus Christ as their leader, but they had elders who conducted the business of the church.

A system of general economy was instituted by which all crafts, trades, and industries essential to the life of the settlement were managed by the church, and everyone worked for the good of the congregation. The elders would interview everyone as to their preference of work or talent, and in two years there were thirty-seven thriving businesses. Everyone worked in some way for the congregation.

They built buildings from logs, which are still the hub of the city, although they have since been covered by stucco. Many of these buildings are now used as private homes, shops and the university and some preserved as museums, and the church is still in use. The Bethlehem Hotel is built on the site of the first building erected, but when the need occurred, the building was torn down and the hotel erected.

There were separate buildings where married people lived and where the singles and widows and widowers lived. As soon as a child was weaned, it was kept in the nursery while the parents worked. Schools were built and the children were educated and taught how to be industrious.

There was no money involved in this type of living and all things were common and all needs were fulfilled. These people did missionary work among the Indians and many became converted and took Christian names and lived in the manner of the community. In the cemetery one can see where many were buried and have their Indian name and Christian name engraved on the tombstones.

Missionaries were sent westward and the first white baby born in what is now the State of Ohio was of a missionary couple from this organization.

After our guide was through with her story, I asked her who named the River "Lehi" and she said the Indians did. I asked her if she knew that "LeHee" was the Hebrew pronunciation of "Lehi," and she said she didn't but she thought that was very interesting. I was so elated with this information and felt very sad there was no one with whom

I could share this wonderful revelation until I returned home.

I knew that if the Indians had named the river "Lehi," they had to have a record of their forefathers and also of Christ, and this is probably why the Moravians were able to convert so many to Christianity. I tried to find more information on the Indians in that locality, but I didn't have the time to spend searching in the book store, but I'm sure some of the tribes were the Mohawks, Delawares, Senecas, and Iroquois.

These people lived in this manner until the Canal was constructed and opened to traffic in 1829, which brought in many outsiders and in 1844, their system of living changed with the inflowing of the world and development of industry and community.

When I returned to the hotel, I looked at the map of Bethlehem and saw that the river and canal were spelled with a "gh" on the end of Lehi, as "high" is spelled with "gh" on the end. Therefore, I would never have connected Lehigh with Lehi had I not been on this tour. Whether others have known about this, I do not know because I have never heard it mentioned or read about it in any of our literature.

Realizing that this community began about a hundred years before the Book of Mormon came forth, and that the river was named by the Indians for their forefather, Lehi, makes it just another wonderful added testimony to me of the truth of the Book of Mormon and the heritage of the Indians on this land.

Joyce Lund



RESEARCH FOCUSES ON ANCIENT PERUVIAN CITY

By Mike Lundquist

The lofty and oftentimes mysterious mountains of Peru have shed their misty veil of the past a bit further recently upon the revival of interest in what has been reported as one of the possible "lost cities of the Incas." As reported from a story carried by the *Washington Post* from footage aired on the CBS Evening News, the site, Gran Pajaten, promises to be of major importance for archaeologists as well as those who hold fast to the validity of the Book of Mormon.

Dr. Alan Stormo, a plastic surgeon and amateur archaeologist, had been vacationing in a remote region of the country and had learned of a lost city spoken of by the local farmers. To satisfy his curiosity regarding the story, he formed an expedition and departed into a remote section of the Andes mountains that has yet to be mapped.

It took Dr. Stormo five days of difficult travel through dense jungle where machetes were required for the party to cut their way under trees, through trees and over the tops of trees to reach the city. The area consists of mountain peaks and rivers yet to be named and to find Gran Pajaten one walks off the map into uncharted wilderness.

Gran Pajaten has been known to archaeologists since 1963 when a team of scientists first learned of the lost city from farmers who stumbled upon it. Even though mention is made in tourist guides and occasional publications no

extensive study was made, and a map locating the city was never prepared. The site became virtually lost and forgotten—until now.

Archaeologists from the University of Colorado believe that Gran Pajaten dates back to about A.D. 500 and suggest that the city existed long before the rise of the Incan Empire and later the people were absorbed into the Incan society.

The remarkable feature about Gran Pajaten is the condition of the site. Film footage of the discovery reveals a city that seems to have been suddenly abandoned. Human skeletons were discovered among the ruins as well as unbroken vessels of pottery and other artifacts once used by the inhabitants. Rainfall in the region can amount to 100 inches per year, yet wooden objects left by these people have been discovered to have been spared the ravages of rot and decay. The buildings shown in the film bear ornate carvings and figures of people similar to other cities uncovered in Peru.

It is yet unclear what conclusions will result from the five-year study granted to the University of Colorado by the Peruvian government and what significance Gran Pajaten will have on the scientific community, but for those of us who believe in the truths found in the Book of Mormon, Gran Pajaten is a further testimony of the descendants of Lehi.



The Patriarchal Blessing

In this lesson we shall discuss patriarchal blessings, seeking to enhance the meaning of such blessings to individuals in particular, and patriarchal blessings in general. How much does your patriarchal blessing mean to you? How often do you read it? Are you aware of its deeper meanings as the years come and go?

WHAT IS A PATRIARCHAL BLESSING?

When one presents himself to the Lord, asking for a patriarchal blessing, the patriarch lays his hands upon the individual's head, speaking words indited by the power of God. These words have been termed "individually given scripture."

A patriarch is rightly considered to be a spiritual father. People generally, having any biblical knowledge, at once think of the patriarchs of old. They were fathers of the tribes of Israel. Yet there were patriarchs before the tribes of Israel. Many do not recognize that Adam was a patriarch.

Adam was a father in Enoch's city. According to Doctrine and Covenants 104:28c, "The Lord administered comfort to Adam, and said unto him, I have set thee to be at the head"—the patriarch, or father of them at that time. The same paragraph starts with the statement that three years before his death, Adam called certain individuals unto him and "bestowed upon them his last blessing."

One of the great spiritual blessings God has provided for his covenant people is that of receiving blessings under the hands of his servants whom he has called to the office of patriarch in these last days. The first patriarch in the church established by God in 1830 was Joseph Smith, Sr., father of the seer.

WHEN IS ONE ELIGIBLE FOR HIS BLESSING?

How old were you when you received your blessing? Some have felt that the blessing should be sought when newly baptized. This is usually discouraged by the spiritual fathers, feeling that the individual should be a member long enough to comprehend many things in his new membership in the church.

Some have hesitated to ask for his blessing at all, feeling unworthy. Those who never request their blessing are denying themselves a lifetime of blessings which are rightfully theirs.

Some have deferred asking until late in life. One sister went for her patriarchal blessing in her late seventies. The opening words of the Lord to her were, "It is pleasing to God that you have finally come in the sunset time of your life to receive the blessing which I have waited all these years to give to you. It is the same blessing which you would have received had you sought it in your youth, only had you come for it in your youth, you would have been able to avoid many pitfalls and heartaches which you have experienced needlessly."

These words suffice to answer the question for those who received their blessing in their youth who wonder if they should have waited until they were older, reasoning that then they might have gotten something that would

Study Along with . . .

Thelona Stevens



have helped more than what was given in their youth. According to this testimony, God has one blessing for each person, regardless of the age he asks for it.

Again, some fear that they are too young to be given their blessing at a time when they really want it. One sister in her early teens asked for her blessing and the patriarch commented that she was very young and questioned her as to her reason for wanting it. She hesitated, feeling that perhaps she was asking amiss. He said, "I shall know at once when I lay my hands upon your head if you are old enough for your blessing to be given now." She was evidently mature enough for a beautiful blessing was given her which helped in her "growing-up" years and on and on as a source of strength and courage.

A VERY UNUSUAL BLESSING

Some years ago a patriarch came to our home and related a most unusual situation and testimony which had occurred that day. A sister, having arranged for her blessing, came to Independence from some distance. She brought along her tape recorder and asked if she might record the blessing on her machine. The patriarch responded that he had no objections but that he had his own wire recorder all set up, and anyway she would receive a copy of her blessing in the mail shortly. She still wanted to have a copy of the patriarch's words on her machine to take home with her, to which the patriarch agreed.

After a short petition to God, the patriarch proceeded with the blessing, at the close of which the sister exclaimed in joy, "Oh, this was so wonderful! It was all that I had hoped for and more!" Then, to his dismay, the patriarch discovered that the wire on his machine had broken and there were coils of wire all over the room. He quickly said, "Oh, I am glad that you brought your machine for mine broke down and I have nothing on it." Going to her machine, she burst into tears, exclaiming, "I failed to turn my machine on!"

Tense moments followed. The sister asked the patriarch to just write down what he had said as he could recall it, but he confessed, "I don't know a thing that was said to

you. That was God speaking, and I cannot repeat one single sentence. When he suggested giving her another blessing, she protested, "But it will not be the same blessing, and the one which I was given is what I want and need so much." Reluctantly, she agreed for the patriarch to give her another blessing.

When the patriarch started to speak, the identical words spoken the first time were repeated and continued throughout the entire blessing. Then a paragraph was added, in which the Lord said that he had permitted this experience in order that she would know of a surety that the promises and admonitions given were not of man but of God. Otherwise, the time would have come when she would have doubted that God had really said those things to her.

As the patriarch related this experience, my mind reverted to the experience of Jeremiah when the Lord repeated his words in writing. Jeremiah, in prison, dictated the words of God to Baruch, who recorded them in a "roll of a book." As commanded, he read these words in the house of the Lord. Later when Baruch read them to the king, he angrily burned them in the fire on the hearth. But this did not destroy God's words. God repeated all the words "that were in the first roll," adding "besides like unto them many words." (Jeremiah Chap. 36.)

REGARD YOUR PATRIARCHAL BLESSING SERIOUSLY

As stated, the patriarchal blessing is a great source of encouragement, admonition, instruction—God's revealed will to the individual especially. These words must not be treated lightly. Having sought God's special words—his revelation to him—the individual thereby assumes a responsibility which is his forever. God warns,

Ye call upon my name for revelations, and I give them unto you; and inasmuch as ye keep not my sayings which I give unto you, ye become transgressors, and justice and judgment is the penalty which is affixed unto my law.

—D&C. 81:1d

Doubting and ignoring God's words always brings retribution. Some years ago a young brother sought and received his patriarchal blessing, but he chose to doubt it, reasoning that because the patriarch knew him so well he had spoken those words of himself. He rejected his blessing and turned from God. Seeking to prove his point, he went to another patriarch whom he was positive did not know him and asked for his blessing, not revealing that it had already been given to him. The patriarch laid his hands on the young man's head, and immediately spoke dire words, saying that he had sought to tempt God, having already received his blessing and that God was angry with him. He urged that he confess his deceit and ask forgiveness. Otherwise, his life would be cut short. He refused these words also. He died a miserable death while still in his youth.

WHAT USE DO YOU MAKE OF YOUR BLESSING?

How seriously one regards his blessing is a mark of appreciation—or lack of it. When God urges certain

behavior, it is dangerous to do otherwise.

Although the scriptures themselves contain repeated commandments to study, God's loving mercy is exhibited again in patriarchal blessings. Have you ever known of a blessing in which God has not urged the individual to study His word? Always as far as my knowledge goes, each individual has been urged in his blessing to become better acquainted with the word of God. God cannot force anyone to study, but again and again he pleads, "Rely upon the things which are written" (D&C 16:1c). And he warns, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6).

PREPARING FOR THE BLESSING

When one asks a patriarch for his blessing, it is quite usual that an appointment is made for a later date. This is for two-way preparation. The patriarch wants time to commune with God in behalf of the individual, and the recipient of the blessing needs time to prepare for such a great event. It is almost awesome to think of being presented to God, asking him to speak to us individually. It is sufficient reason for making every possible effort for this great once-in-a-lifetime event. Recognizing that the words spoken are to be for comfort and direction for the present and for as long as one lives.

The preparation must needs involve soul-searching, repentance, fasting and prayer, and daily reading of the scriptures.

ABRAHAM'S SEED

Does your blessing say you are the seed of Abraham? Or did God reveal to you that you are a descendant of Abraham through some particular line, such as, "You are of the lineage of Ephraim," or "Your life lines lie with Manasseh," or "You are of the tribe of Judah," or whatever the Lord said regarding this? Many blessings make no reference to a particular line of descent, whereas many others are specific. Does this have special meaning and interest for you?

After being led to the land of Canaan, God gave Abraham and his seed many great and wonderful blessings. One of them was, "In thee shall the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:2). Abraham's son Isaac was given this identical blessing (Gen. 26:3,4). To Isaac's son Jacob the same blessings were extended. God changed Jacob's name to Israel (Gen. 32:28; 35:10-12). Before his death, Israel pronounced his blessing upon his twelve sons (Gen. 49:1-28) and Joseph's two sons Ephraim and Manasseh whom he had adopted as his own (Gen. 48:5; 1 Chron. 5:1; Gen. 48:14-26). He gave to Joseph the blessing of the birthright, which carried a double portion (Deut. 21:17).

These blessings by Israel were upon his sons as heads of the tribes of Israel. He said, "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days" (Gen. 49:1). Later Moses pronounced very similar blessings upon them, not as *sons* of Israel, but as the *tribes* of Israel (Deut. 33:13-17), reflecting the continuity of the blessings named in Israel's earlier blessings.

This gives rise to the contemplation of the far-reaching effects of God's blessings upon an individual's posterity. Who dares to evaluate the effects upon children reared by God-fearing parents who respond to the words of God given

in their patriarchal blessings? Only God can tell you how many generations may be blessed because a conscientious person went asking for God's special direction for his life. He and his children, even to the third and fourth generation, and beyond, may reflect the blessings granted in the words spoken by God through the patriarch. Frequently we hear one say, "I am a third [fourth or fifth] generation latter day saint. This may carry more meaning than is readily recognized.

Certain "gifts" seem to run in some families. How interesting it would be if we could trace the original recipient of some gifts. Indeed, effecting us today, we can trace some gifts all the way back to the blessings named by Israel upon Judah and upon Joseph. Less well known but easily recognizable were promises made to some of the other sons of Israel. An example is the unique wording of the blessing to Asher, "Out of Asher, his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties" (Gen. 49:20). Later Moses said,

Let Asher be blessed with children, let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil.

—Deut. 33:24

Of this George T. B. Davis wrote in his *Rebuilding Palestine According to Prophecy*:

The portion of the territory that fell to Asher lay along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. It stretched northward beyond Tyre and southward beyond Haifa. Curiously enough, the strip of land assigned to Asher is somewhat in the form of a human limb, ending at the south in a foot. Haifa is in the foot of the territory (p. 72).

That was written in 1935. At that time, Rev. Davis described an oil tanker

only a little way out from the shore, receiving oil from a large hose—oil that had been pumped through the desert all the way from almost a thousand miles distant . . .

It was July, 1934, that the first oil was pumped through the long pipe line from Kirkuk to Haifa, but it was only in January, 1935, that the vast enterprise was officially opened. As the oil flows onward on its journey nearly a thousand miles from Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean, it is carried through twelve inch steel pipes electrically welded together. The oil that arrives in Haifa through the pipes amounts to . . . about a million gallons of oil a day!

The completion of the pipe line and its carrying such quantities of oil to Haifa marks the astonishing fulfillment of an ancient Bible prophecy uttered 1500 years before Christ (pp. 72,73).

In 1979 it was my happy experience to stand on the coast of Haifa and view many ships being filled with oil which would be carried to many parts of the world, marveling how God had opened the eyes of Moses to view the land of Canaan before his death, and his lips to tell

what would happen in Haifa all these centuries after his death. This was also in fulfillment of Israel's blessing that Asher's "bread shall be fat; he shall yield royal dainties"—wealth from oil!

I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done.

—Isaiah 49:9,10

MY TESTIMONY

Patriarch William Lewis gave me my patriarchal blessing at sixteen years of age. It has been a great source of joy ever since, and also a great challenge. Fulfillment of words spoken so long ago have been gradually experienced.

Although there was awareness of the meaning of certain words spoken at that early age indicating something of my responsibilities for service in God's kingdom, it was only in a very recent experience that understanding came as to something of the import of those words.

Throughout my years, in times of temptation, distress, and grief, by turning to my patriarchal blessing there has come strength, comfort, and courage.

QUESTIONS

(To help you evaluate your grasp of this lesson.)

1. Explain the meaning of "patriarchal blessing." Who was the first patriarch?
2. Tell how Israel blessed his twelve sons shortly before his death, giving Joseph the blessing of the birthright (Gen. 49:1-28; 48:8-11).
3. What meaning does the blessing of the birthright have for you (Deut. 21:17)?

NOTE: The birthright was normally the right of the firstborn in the family, who inherited not only the material wealth but also and more importantly, he became the father figure in the family after the death of his father. In some instances, as with Joseph who was sold into Egypt and Nephi, son of Lehi, the Lord chose them rather than their brethren who were older than they. In both of these cases bitterness and hatred of the older brother ensued.

4. Sometimes we hear patriarchal blessings called "patriotical" blessings. How would you help such individuals make correction of this error?
5. How long should one be a member of the church before seeking his patriarchal blessing? What preparation should he make for it?
6. What should I expect my blessing to contain—
 - a. Direction as to my vocation and church responsibilities?
 - b. As to my marriage?

If these things are not touched upon in my blessing, should I feel disappointed and rejected? What should I do?

NOTE: Be sure to talk freely with the patriarch and others in a position to give spiritual insights which perhaps you have failed to see in your blessing. Remember, God has pronounced upon you the blessing which he knows is best for you. Pray that God will help you to see what he is telling you.



PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

A Testimony

by Roy Weldon

I was born and reared in a Latter Day Saint home. From infancy I was taught to believe that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God just as Isaiah and Paul were prophets of God. The questioning age arrived, and suddenly it occurred to me that possibly the reason I was a Latter Day Saint was because I just happened to have been born into a Latter Day Saint home instead of some other religion; that I was a product of my environment, that my religion was a mere happenstance in the lottery of life.

Let no one be afraid to examine the foundation of his religion. To question, investigate, and search into the reason of things is far more healthful, wholesome, and progressive than to accept everything without question. Columbus questioned the traditions, precedents, and concepts of his time and discovered a new world.

Sometime after I got the idea of questioning my religion, I noticed a news article about the discovery of an important prehistoric city in Central America. The article stated that Chichen-Itza was the first of the cities visited and publicized to the English-speaking world by Stephens and Catherwood in 1839. This gave me my clue. The Book of Mormon, published nine years before Chichen-Itza was found by Stephens and Catherwood had been described in the Book of Mormon as the center of the Nephite empire.

Having noted that Joseph Smith was ahead of his time in translating the Book of Mormon in 1830 which told of great cities and vast populations in prehistoric America, I determined to read the Book of Mormon very carefully and note the points upon which science and exploration might now have something to say. I found over four hundred points. These points involve various exact sciences and fields of study.

If the Book of Mormon is the sacred book of the New World and a history of God's dealings with peoples in the Western Hemisphere, including his Son's visit to America, it becomes necessary that the Book of Mormon must face the formidable test of the biblical prophets, the time test.

The Book of Mormon prophets declared that when it should come forth to the Gentiles (1830), "Many shall



Roy E. Weldon at Tula, Mexico

believe" (II Nephi 12:80), and its words would go "forth unto the ends of the earth" (II Nephi 12:44). The Book of Mormon is now the best seller of any full size book of American origin in its field (religion). There are now approximately 15 million copies printed and distributed. It appears to be on its way to overtake and pass all other best sellers. It has now been translated into some twenty-five different languages.

Q. Why were the Lamanites who hated the Nephites so fiercely willing to make a truce not to do battle against them for ten years as told in Mormon 1:60-63, and then at the end of the truce period warn that they were preparing to attack? Was this not strange generosity on the part of the Lamanites?

A. No, there was nothing strange or generous in this behavior. It is now known that among those ancient peoples there was a law which required a ten-year waiting period after declaring war before hostilities could begin.

The descendants of those people still have knowledge of the treaty and tell of a ten-year truce, according to L.E. Hills (*New Light On American Archaeology*, 1924, p. 68):

In a little mountain called Cerro de Istaltapaca, three miles northeast from San Geranimo, on the side of the mountain a treaty stone still stands covered with hieroglyphics. The natives are so superstitious that they will not go near it. It has been preserved to the present time and is still standing.

Bancroft (*Native Races*, Vol. 5, p. 279) says:

Veytin and Ixtlilxochitlo speak vaguely of a truce . . . to the effect that the Toltecs should not be molested for ten years, as an old military usage requiring ten years should always intervene between the declaration of war and the commencement of hostilities.

These references support the Book of Mormon statement by Mormon that

In the three hundred and fiftieth year, we made a treaty with the Lamanites and the robbers of Gadianton, in which we did get the lands of our inheritance divided. And the Lamanites did give unto us the landward; yea, even to the narrow passage which led into the southward. . . . And it came to pass that the Lamanites did not come to battle again until ten more years had passed away.

—Mormon 1:60-63

At the end of the truce period, the king of the Lamanites sent an epistle to the Nephites that they were preparing to start the battle (verse 68).



The annual meeting of the Foundation for Research on Ancient America was held on January 20 at the Stone Church. T. Evan Thomas spoke on "The Witness of the Book of Mormon." His message was enthusiastically received by the more than 300 who braved extreme cold to attend the meeting.

The following officers were elected: Thelona Stevens, president; Roy Weldon, vice-president; Alta Witte, secretary; and Donna Weddle, treasurer.

FRAA wants to express appreciation to those who have made contributions in memory of Harold I. Velt. We welcome any others who want to participate in this tribute to one who was a stalwart for Christ, and a staunch believer in the Book of Mormon. FRAA will notify his family of any donations. We are pleased to honor Brother Velt in this issue.

FRAA sponsored Dr. Richard A. DeLong's attendance to the Maya Hieroglyphic Workshop held at the University of Texas in Austin March 8-10. He was invited to read a paper, "Chiasmus in Maya Hieroglyph Inscription."

Dr. DeLong is a member of the Advisory Board of the Foundation and during the 1984 World Conference was a guest speaker at one of the daily FRAA meetings. He has made numerous trips to Mexico, often taking groups of students during the time he was teaching archaeology classes at Graceland. He is presently living in Colorado.

Several members of the Foundation have sent us archaeology or Book of Mormon related articles from reputable sources. In this issue please note "Ancient Aztec Grain Discovered" on page 1. This was submitted by Brenda Evans of Florida. Mike Lundquist of Independence reports on page 5 of a Peruvian project. The editors of *The Witness* welcome any articles or pertinent information which can be adapted for our publication. Your help and interest is appreciated.

In the not too distant future, FRAA is planning to hold an all day workshop on the Book of Mormon. Watch for details in the next issue of *The Witness*. Plan now to participate!



AN INVITATION

You are invited to share with us and our readers anything you may wish to say about your patriarchal blessing. Do you have a brief testimony as to what your blessing has meant to you? Is there something in your blessing that would be of general interest? You may wish to tell it in your own words, or

you may wish to quote an excerpt from it—in 100 words or less. Your name would not be used, but please include the year the blessing was given. We reserve the right to condense or edit, if necessary

1985 A Year Of Meaningful Witness

1985, a new year, a new start for thoughtful, sharing and witnessing. The Foundation for Research on Ancient America has just finished a year when thousands of individuals shared THE WITNESS for the first time, and 1985 promises to be an even greater year of witnessing and sharing the Book of Mormon.

This year members will

- Travel through the pages of THE WITNESS to vast cities being unearthed in Mesoamerica.
- Share the experiences and testimonies of others.
- Study Along with Thelona Stevens.
- Read of new discoveries bringing back the Book of Mormon to greater life.
- And much more in the months ahead.

New projects include an upcoming annual study calendar with a program for daily Book of Mormon reading; teaching slides on the Book of Mormon for children and young adults; archaeological projects with Neil Steede in Comalcalco, Mexico, and new Book of Mormon publications.

Much of what has been planned is being made possible by the volunteer contributions of members from all over the country. But much more needs to be done. This year FRAA is enabling members to contribute in several categories reflecting their desires to help share the Book of Mormon. These are:

MEMBER — Basic membership in FRAA includes subscription to FRAA's newsletter, THE WITNESS.
Contribution \$10.00

SHARING MEMBER — Membership and subscription to THE WITNESS, but assists in sending THE WITNESS to others.
Contribution \$25.00

SUPPORTING MEMBER — Membership and subscription, but supports FRAA in witnessing to new members with educational types of materials, archaeological projects, and new publications.
Contribution \$100.00

PROVIDER MEMBER — Member receives all mailings and subscriptions but desires to provide additional support to FRAA in promoting the Book of Mormon with *Outreach* in mind

Provider members will receive periodic reports and letters from FRAA president.
Contribution \$250.00

TRUSTEE MEMBER — Receives all membership subscriptions, but desires to be a *cornerstone of support* for FRAA, it's goals and its purposes in seeking greater understanding and and sharing of the Book of Mormon.

Trustees will receive periodic reports from the president, and may submit recommendations to FRAA's executive committee for consideration and discussion.

Trustees will receive all publications, tapes, and materials produced by FRAA as desired without charge.
Contribution \$500.00

Should members desire to support FRAA by volunteer work, articles or testimonies, or in other ways, do let us hear from you.

Let's all work together to make 1985 a year of meaningful witnessing.



Thelona D. Stevens
President



FRAA 1985 Membership Registration

Name _____
 Street _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Country _____

HERE IS MY CONTRIBUTION FOR 1985

Please Check One:

- Member \$10.00 Provider \$250.00
 Sharing Member \$25.00 Trustee \$500.00+
 Supporting Member \$100.00



LETTERS

THE WITNESS, #47, was absolutely wonderful, and I have shared it with some of our friends here. The present excavation at El Mirador should set a lot of people thinking. I was also thrilled over Roy Weldon's article on the prophecies of the Old Testament and their fulfillment in the New Testament. I begin to appreciate more than ever what we have.

—Iowa

I appreciate so much your sending me THE WITNESS. It has been a real source of information to me on Ancient America.

—Washington

The Book of Mormon means so much to me. I believe it is the foundation of the Restoration of the Gospel in these latter days, and if we give it up, we have rejected God's word to our loss.

I am sending a small contribution to help in your work. I am a senior citizen on limited income, but I shall send what I can as often as I can.

—Missouri

I had a chance to glance at your publication at a friend's house. Could you send me a copy and tell me how I might obtain future copies?

—Washington

Many thanks for sending me your information sheets. I live in the country and its my extreme joy to receive it as I rarely get to go to church. Thanks and may you continue to go forward.

—West Virginia

THE WITNESS gets better all the time! Thanks.

—Oklahoma

My deep appreciation of the wonderful work that is being done by the Foundation for Research on Ancient America.

—California

ABOUT THE FOUNDATION .

HISTORY

The Foundation for Research on Ancient America (FRAA) was begun in 1952, as a research committee on the Book of Mormon, approved by the First Presidency of the RLDS Church. Roy Weldon, of Warrensburg, Missouri was its first chairman.

Organized in 1966, as a not-for-profit corporation, the Foundation and its members continue to seek to serve the Church by advancing the use of the Book of Mormon through archaeological research, testimonies, articles, and related projects.

OFFICERS:

President: Thelona D. Stevens

Vice-President: Roy E. Weldon

Secretary: Alta Witte

Treasurer: Donna Weddle

PUBLICATION OF NEWSLETTER:

Quarterly

DISTRIBUTION:

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Eleven foreign countries

MEMBERSHIP IN THE FOUNDATION:

Open to all persons

Supported by volunteer contributions
of its members

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Page 12

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