



# The Witness

Newsletter Of The Foundation For Research On Ancient America

OCTOBER, 1988

NEWSLETTER NO. 63

## Train Up A Child Children's Book of Mormon Day

Two hundred children participated in the first "Children's Book of Mormon Day" held in conjunction with the adult conference sponsored by the Foundation of Research on Ancient America, Saturday, October 1 at the R.I.C.S. Auditorium.

Activities were varied. Actors portrayed historical characters. Joseph Smith told of his vision and of obtaining the golden plates. Testimonies were given by his parents, Emma, his younger sister Kathryn, and Oliver Cowdery—all of whom were witnesses of the early restoration development.

Puppets were used to accurately enact the exodus of Lehi from Jerusalem and his sons' return to get the brass plates. Great interest was shown by the young audience.

The Brother of Jared told of his people leaving from the tower at the time of the confounding of the language, and of traveling in the wilderness. Pita bread, representing the unleavened bread baked on hot rocks by the travelers, was served with honey and apple cider.



*Bradley and Andy Hoover, sons of Bret and Shirley Hoover of Raymore, Missouri, pose with symbolic swords of Laban given to each child attending the "Children's Book of Mormon Day."*

An explanation was given of the symbolism of the large Indian tepee which stood in the front of the room. Twelve poles represent the apostles. The main pole is symbolic of Jesus Christ. The skin covering the tepee represents the Holy Spirit.

Sister Lahoma Wilson from Tulsa was a special guest. She is a professional storyteller of wide renown. Her grandfather was a storyteller for the Cherokees. The children listened to Sister Wilson weave the story about a young brave who gave his life for the Cherokee nation. When the Christian missionaries came, it was realized that the young man was Jesus and that he died for the *whole* world, not just for them.

Upon leaving, each child received a plastic sword to remind him of the sword of Laban and the brass plates.

Theo Boyd ably

planned and presented the morning of activities with many talented volunteers playing historic roles. Supervision was provided by over twenty volunteers.

"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

—Proverbs 22:6



## Thousands Gather to "Feast on the Word"

As the beautiful first day of October dawned, thousands of like mind and like faith made their way to the RLDS Auditorium in Independence for one purpose—to "Spend a Day with the Book of Mormon."

As throngs entered the conference chamber they were greeted by familiar hymns being played on the magnificent organ by volunteer Jeffrey King. The mood was one of joy and anticipation.

The opening was a portrayal of Helaman and Moroni by Scott Stayton and Sam Belcher. Thelona Stevens, president of FRAA, welcomed all those who had come to share in this experience. As in previous years people came from far and near. They came from Washington and Oregon in the West to New York and Massachusetts in the East. They came from Florida and Texas in the South to Ontario and Alberta, Canada in the North . . . and all points in between! All seemed as one, as Elder Steve Wiley, master of ceremonies, led the congregation in the singing of "Redeemer of Israel." Elder Ben Lowman, FRAA member from Indiana, offered the invocation.

Patriarch Henry Schaefer was to have been the first speaker, but for reasons of health he was unable to be in attendance. The entire congregation united silently as Seventy Delbert Smith offered a prayer in behalf of Brother Henry.

Others who spoke included Lyle Smith, chairman of the archaeological committee for FRAA, whose subject was "The Sealed Portion." Aleta Page,

teacher and lecturer, spoke very ably on "Promise to the Gentiles." Mildred Smith, author and student of the scriptures, shared her research concerning "The Possible Weight of the Plates of the Book of Mormon" (see page 6 of this issue). The chairman of the Department of Anthropology at Brigham Young University, Donald Forsyth, discussed "The Archaeology of El Mirador" and included a film on that preclassic city. The film "In Search of a Lost World" was also shown.

A portrayal of Alma was given by Richard Harrison, a member of FRAA from Washington state, and Moroni was portrayed by Theo Boyd, chairman of FRAA's Theater Department.

1500 copies of the Book of Mormon were distributed to any who wanted to use them as missionary tools. Funds contributed prior to the meeting made this activity possible. The donations given by the conference participants in a free will offering were enough to pay the expenses of the day. It is because of this generosity that FRAA is able to offer a *free* registration for the Book of Mormon conference.

The afternoon closed with the congregation's enthusiastic singing of "Book of Mormon Hid for Ages," followed by a benedictory prayer offered by Elder Steve Wiley.

Everyone scurried out in order to return refreshed for the evening's activities, for the grand finale was yet to come!





## Moving Upward Toward "Two Thousand"



In appreciation for the overwhelming response to the invitation for our readers to become one of a special group of monthly contributors, or special contributors, called "Helaman's Two Thousand," a reception was given in the early evening of October 1. Sherrie Smith who chairs the FRAA Development Committee greeted guests at the door. A lovely refreshment table had been prepared and members of the Board of Directors of the Foundation enjoyed meeting some of those who are enthusiastically making possible the forward movement of FRAA.



With the expanding role of the Foundation in furthering the knowledge of the Book of Mormon, new challenges are constantly being presented. With this in mind we would like to renew our invitation for more of you to become part of "Helaman's Two Thousand."



If you want to become a part of this latter day army of the Lord, please complete the form on page 16. We believe any who make a commitment to further the Book of Mormon will be blessed.



God is marshaling his army  
For the rescue of his truth;  
He is calling now to battle  
Both the aged and the youth.  
You can hear his mighty summons  
In the thunder of his word;  
Let us then be valiant soldiers  
In the army of the Lord!

*The Hymnal #321*



**Conference chairman Michael Gatrost, and board member Fred Weddle.**



**Mr. and Mrs. Donald Forsyth of Provo, Utah. Mr. Forsyth was a guest speaker at the conference.**



**Lonnie Griffin signs the guest book for Sherrie Smith, chairman of "Helaman's Two Thousand."**



## TO BE A WITNESS BOOK OF MORMON DRAMAS



### *To Be A Witness*

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BOOK OF MORMON DRAMAS

*By Neal E. Boyd*

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## Musical Drama

The musical drama, "Journey to the Promised Land: The Story of Nephi," portrays the flight of Lehi and his followers to the New World. The author, Kim Morgan, has skillfully brought Book of Mormon characters from the printed page and developed their personalities in a way which makes them understandable to even children of today. Mark Colville, who is a talented and experienced composer, wrote the lyrics and music for this drama. The actors and actresses were members of the Enoch Hill Drama Department. Scott Nixon, member of the FRAA Board of Directors, was the set designer and engineer. Many in the audience were fascinated by the skillful manner in which scenes were changed.

It is difficult to choose individual outstanding performances, for all thirty participants played their parts well, and the singing voices were outstanding. Kent Eisler as Nephi was a stand-out. Harold Whitehead was a believable aging Lehi. The small children singing for Lehi "Do You Know the Meaning of the Tree?" afforded a tender moment. The bantering of Laman and Lemuel made those two rather infamous brothers seem like some people we might know today! The coy actions of Ishmael's daughters when being introduced to Lehi's sons showed an ageless reaction.

Many others behind the scenes spent hours of preparation—making costumes, applying make-up, recording the sound track, etc.

Some who could not "Spend a Day with the Book of Mormon" came to spend an evening and see "Journey to the Promised Land: The Story of Nephi"—a musical drama by Kim Morgan and Mark Colville. Thousands agreed that this was a fitting and inspiring grand finale to the 1988 "Spend a Day with the Book of Mormon."

### About the Author

Kimberly Sue Morgan has a keen interest in drama and was inspired by the Enoch Hill Drama Department to write the play, "Journey to the Promised Land: the Story of Nephi." She wrote it to fulfill a requirement for graduating with honors from Central Missouri State University. Kim is currently a teacher in Independence and plans to continue writing church related dramas.

### About the Composer

Mark Colville, composer, feels that many of the ideas for the songs in "Journey to the Promised Land: the Story of Nephi," were given to him through inspiration. It is his desire to use his talents to provide a unique ministry. He is presently attending the University of Missouri at Kansas City majoring in musical composition.





# Climaxes Conference



*Kim Morgan, author*



*Mark Colville, lyricist and composer*



*Lila Gilbert, woman of Jerusalem*



*Warren Terry, Laban's servant; John Glandon, Zoram; and Allen Fletcher, Laban's servant*



*Lavone Tompkins and Susan Morgan, women of Jerusalem*



*Jay Davis as Lemuel and Carl Vun Cannon, Jr. as Ishmael*



# Possible Weight of The Plates of The Book of Mormon

by B. Mildred Smith

Recently I was accosted with an old "proof" that Joseph Smith did not have plates inscribed with language from which he translated the Book of Mormon by the gift and power of God. Gold plates, asserted my informer, the size Joseph described would have weighed over 600 pounds. Joseph could not have handled them!

I was curious to discover on what basis the assertion was made, so I called the library and asked about the weight of gold. A cubic foot of the precious metal, I learned, weighs about 1200 pounds. Immediately I knew that basis on which the erroneous conclusion was drawn. Joseph said the plates were about six inches by six inches by eight inches. My informant had assumed that a six inch cube would weigh half as much as a twelve inch cube. But that mathematical conclusion is faulty. Actually 200 pounds is the approximate weight of a solid block of pure gold the size of the plates as described by Joseph Smith, Jr.

Joseph, however, never said the plates were pure gold. In his letter to John Wentworth of the *Chicago Democrat*, Joseph said they had the "appearance of gold" (*Times and Seasons*, 3:707 and Inez Smith Davis, *The Story of the Church*, 55).

The eight witnesses, whose testimony is in every Book of Mormon published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, also describes the plates as having the "appearance of gold." When Nephi told of making the plates on which he made the record of his people, he said, "And we did find all manner of ore, both of gold and silver, and of copper. And it came to pass that the Lord commanded me, wherefore I did make plates of ore [author's emphasis], that I might engraven upon them the record of my people" (1 Nephi 5:217-218). An article in the June 1984 issue of the *Scientific American*, pages 56-63, is entitled "Pre-Columbian Surface Metallurgy." The introduction reads, "The metalsmiths of Andean culture knew how to plate copper with gold or silver and how to treat alloys of copper, gold, and silver so that the surface of the metal consisted only of gold."

The first paragraph reads, "When the Spanish conquistadors melted down the gold and silver objects they looted from the Incas, they were surprised to discover that the bullion they got was quite impure. Although the objects appeared to be made out of silver or gold, they were actually alloys of those metals with copper. At least a millennium before the rise of the Incas, Andean metalsmiths had developed

these alloys along with procedures for treating them so that the finished objects presented a surface of pure silver or pure gold. The smiths also knew how to plate objects made entirely out of copper with a thin layer of gold or silver."

The rise of the civilizations that developed the types of metallurgy that the authors studied were placed at 800-400 B.C. Nephi's plates were made sometime after 600 B.C. 100 B.C.-A.D.800 was the era during which the most sophisticated workmanship occurred. This was also the era in which Mormon and Moroni made the plates on which to complete the record. The authors describe how they were able to duplicate the methods that they believe were employed by those early artisans using only the chemicals and tools available from the environment in which they worked.

Two predominate methods of metallurgy are described, electrochemical replacement plating and depletion gilding. Some objects were simply flushed with melted gold or covered with gold foil.

The artifacts prepared by electrochemical replacement plating (not electroplating), are described as plates of copper covered with a thin coating of silver or gold so as to make the objects appear to have been made entirely of the precious metal. Some of these coatings were between 0.5 micrometer and 2 micrometers thick, yet they were remarkably uniform in thickness, and the precious metal covered all surfaces, including edges that were paper-thin.

In the depletion gilding method, used somewhat before the 100 B.C. to A.D. 800 period, but chiefly developed during that time, an ingot composed of an alloy of varying proportions of copper with silver, gold, or both is first cast. The ingot is then hammered until it becomes too hard and brittle to be worked further. It is then repeatedly heated and gradually cooled (annealed or tempered) and further worked until it holds the desired shape. With each annealing the copper forms an oxide scale that is removed until eventually the outside is depleted of copper and the precious metal forms the apparent surface.

Tumbaga is the name given to the most important alloy of gold and copper, or gold, copper, and silver used in these procedures. If only gold and copper are used in the alloy, in the depletion gilding, the final product looks like pure gold even with minimum annealing. If silver is in the alloy, it too must be removed from the surface to give the appearance of pure gold.

(Continued on page 12)



# Tantalizing Glimpses Not So Faint Whisperings

by Roy Weldon

## ARRIVAL OF CORTEZ PREDICTED

Alma M. Reed documents Aztec foreknowledge of the arrival of the Spaniards. In her scholarly book, *The Ancient Past of Mexico* (p. 140), she writes,

According to the legends an uncanny series of coincidences linked the Aztecs Fair God Quetzalcoatl and the destinies of Herman Cortes, Montezuma II, and Cuauhtemoc. The incredible rapidity of the Spanish conquest was entwined with the Aztec belief that Quetzalcoatl would one day return to Anabuac from which centuries earlier he had departed.

By tradition the return of Quetzalcoatl was predicted for One Reed year, and the landing of Cortez at Vera Cruz in such a year constituted a precise fulfillment, with amazing fidelity of ancient prophecy. Alma Reed continues,

Had not Quetzalcoatl, before embarking for the Land of the Sun assured his handful of followers that he would return to reestablish his rule in a "One Reed" year? It would be, he had warned, a time of tribulation for the people.

## CHRIST PROPHECIES THE COMING OF THE GENTILES

In III Nephi 9:65 we find:

And after that ye were blessed, then fulfilleth the Father the covenant which he made with Abraham, saying, In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed, unto the pouring out of the Holy Ghost through me upon the Gentiles, which blessing upon the Gentiles, shall make them mighty above all, unto the scattering of my people, O house of Israel: and they shall be a scourge unto the people of this land.

## TRADITIONS TAUGHT ARRIVAL OF WHITE MAN

A common belief among the natives of the New World before the age of modern exploration was that their white god, the Lord of the sky, would be returning by ship from the East at the close of the thirteenth age of the world.



Kathleen Romoli in *Columbia Gateway to South America* (p. 91), reports on the arrival of the Spaniards. Messengers sent to the coast to get pearls related to their ruler that strange beings had arrived. Their hands sped noisy death. Calling his subjects together, he told them that evil days had come. He, son of Sua, had had a vision and now that vision had come true.

Garcilaso de La Vega in *The Incas* (p. 172), gives an account that in addition to the ancient prophecies about the return of their white god, Viracocha, one Inca had seen a vision in which a personage appeared with a beard and in the attire of a Spaniard.

In *Realm of the Incas* (p. 207), Victor W. Von Hagen states that legend was persistent throughout the Americas concerning ships that would come from over the sea. The creator God, Tui Viracocha would someday return.

L. Taylor Hansen in *He Walked the Americas* (p. 129), quotes a portion of the prophecy given by Kate-Zahl, and recorded by the ancients near Tula, Mexico.

Mark you well, for there shall be portents. A strange star shall cross the heavens... and all the people looking upward as the time grows ever closer, shall remember tonight and the words of Kate-Zahl.

The year is that of Te-Tec-Patl. When the dawn star, Cit-lal-pol... crosses the sun for its thirteenth crossing... then will you know this Cycle is ended.

Stand with me in the Year of Te-Tec-Patl. Look across the Sunrise Ocean. Three ships come like great birds flying. They land. Out come men in metal garments, carrying rods which speak with thunder and kill at a distance. These men are bearded and pale of feature.

(Continued on next page)



We are now at the countdown—Peru, Yucatan, Mexico—and thirteen ages or centuries. In the latter part of the second century Nephite Christianity had come to a total end. “And it came to pass that the robbers of Gadianton did spread over all the face of the land; and there were none that were righteous, save it were the disciples of Jesus [The Three Nephites] (IV Nephi 1:54).

The count is now down to blast-off. Thirteen centuries from the second century A.D. brings us to the fifteenth century and the arrival of the Spaniards in the New World. The following question arises: Where did the Aztecs, Toltecs, Mayas, and Incas come by this prophecy so potent that Cortes took Mexico with 400 soldiers and a few calvary? Montejó conquered the Mayas with less than 400 men. Pizarro marched with 169 men towards Cuzco and Atahualpas’ army of 50,000 men. (The reader is referred to pages 218-223 of *Conquest of Peru* by William Prescott.)

University of Pennsylvania anthropologist Daniel Brinton writes, “Historians have marvelled at the instantaneous collapse of the empires of Mexico, Peru, the Mayas, and the Manoches before a handful of Spanish filibusters” (*Myths of the New World*, p. 220).

Sylvanus Griswold Morley notes that Bishop de Landa relates, “The most learned priest opened a book in which he examined the omens . . . which he announced to all those who were present . . . Other early Spanish writers state that these books, the ancient prophecies, indicate the times appointed for their fulfillment” (Sylvanus Griswold Morley, “From Where Come These Histories of the Future?”, Smithsonian Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 57, p. 31).

There is no text in the Book of Mormon naming an appointed time for the coming of the Gentiles. The answers appear to involve two categories:

1. Both Mormon and Moroni say that their records did not contain a hundredth part of the full Nephite story (Jacob 2:67; Helaman 2:13).
2. The long dark historical emptiness that stretches between Moroni (A.D. 420) and Columbus (1492) is no longer than that which stretches between Lehi and Moroni.

There are misty hints of the existence of prophets and a prophetic book. “Veytia, who had before him the Baturini, the richest collection of manuscripts ever made . . . bitterly bemoans the loss of the most precious of all these documents, the Teomoxtli, Book of God, or of divine sacred things—a work composed by

Hueman [Mormon?], a sort of Toltec bible containing the laws, the religious precepts, the traditions, and all facts relating to Toltec history from the remotest period” (Desire Cheney, “The Ruins of Central America”, *The North American Review*, 1881).

The Toltec-Nahuas between Moroni and Cortes reached their highest eras in the seventh century and the eleventh century. Is the Teomoxtli the work of a Toltec prophet or is it the production of a Toltec Nephite historian who had before him a library of ancient sources? These sources include the following “Tantalizing Glimpses”:

**Montezuma tried to discover who would destroy them. He sought to discover this by looking into the ancient traditions and writings, and prophecies, and he found that the children of the Sun would come from the East to cast down their god and to annihilate the Aztec nation.**

**Montezuma sent for Quilaztli, the chief and best informed in all matters which concerned ancient history and painted books. Said Quilaztli to the sovereign, “O mighty Lord, if because I tell you the truth I am to die, nevertheless, I am here in your presence.” . . . Before showing him the papers, he narrated that mounted men would come to this land in a great wooden house. This structure was to lodge many men, serving them as a home; within they would eat and sleep . . . they would be white, bearded men, . . . other human beings were to arrive with them, mounted on beasts similar to deer. These men were to possess the country, settle in our cities, and multiply in great numbers. . . “So that you may see,” continued Quilaztli, “that what I say is truth, behold it is drawn here. This painting was bequeathed to me by my ancestors.” He then took out an ancient picture on which were depicted the ship and the men dressed in the same manner as those which the king already knew through his painting. . . Montezuma seeing the similarity between what the old man described and what appeared upon his painting, almost lost his senses and began to weep and to show anguish. Uncovering his chest to the elder, he cried out, “O Brother Quilaztli, I now see that your ancestors were verily wise and well informed.” (Frey Diego Duran, *The Aztecs*, p. 139, 270-271)**

Whole massive libraries of the ancient paintings, manuscripts, and books were burned in great piles by the Jesuit priests, or were hidden by the Aztecs. We are dealing not only with exciting glimpses of the highest order, but a whole lost world that could save our world by a great earthshaking discovery in a sealed urn like the Dead Sea Scrolls or a set of inscribed metal plates validating the Nephite Record beyond any further question.







# The Junior Witness

OCTOBER, 1988 ISSUE 8

## SHEREM PREACHES AGAINST CHRIST

by Donna Weddle

Fifty-five years after leaving Jerusalem, Nephi gave his brother Jacob the responsibility to continue recording his people's history on the golden plates. Nephi was getting old and knew he would soon die so according to the will of the people he anointed a man to be king over the Nephites. And Nephi died. So great was the peoples' love for Nephi, and their appreciation for the many things he had done for them that they called each king Nephi—second Nephi, third Nephi, and so on.

Do you remember what happened to the Jaredites when they began to have kings? The same thing happened to the Nephites. They began to take great pride in their riches, and to do many wicked things. The men even started having many wives—a truly great sin.

Jacob kept on and spent his entire life teaching the true gospel to the Nephites. Many were wicked and would not repent, but to those who would listen, and to those who were righteous, Jacob diligently taught the word of God.

Prophets who lived before Jacob had believed in Christ and the covenant people of the Nephites knew of Christ and had a hope of his glory. This was several hundred years before Christ was even born.

A man named Sherem began to preach that there would be no Christ born on the earth. He was a very well-educated man and flattered the people, instead of teaching the truth. He had great persuasive power—the power of the devil. Sherem tried very diligently to influence Jacob and cause him to doubt and disbelieve in Christ, but Jacob had received the ministry of angels and heard the voice of God. He could not be swayed.

Sherem spoke to him in this way: "Brother Jacob, you go around preaching what you call the gospel, or the doctrine of Christ, and you have led many people away from God. You worship a being which you say shall come many hundreds of years in the future. And now, I Sherem declare unto you that this is blasphemy, for no man can tell of things to come."

The Lord poured out his Spirit on Jacob and he confounded Sherem, saying, "Do you deny that Christ shall come?"

"If there should be a Christ, I would not deny him.

I know that there is no Christ, neither has been, nor ever will be!"

Jacob questioned, "Do you believe the scriptures?"

Sherem replied, "Yes."

"Then you do not understand the meaning of the scriptures for they truly testify of Christ. Every prophet has written prophesying of Christ. In addition, the Holy Ghost has made known unto me that if it were not for Christ's atonement (giving his life) for our sins, all mankind must be lost."

Defiantly, Sherem demanded, "Show me a sign by this power of the Holy Ghost!"

Jacob could see his rebellion and spoke boldly, "Who am I that I should tempt God to show you a sign in something you know to be true? You will deny it because you are of the devil. Nevertheless, not my will be done. But if God smites thee, let that be a sign unto you that he has power both in heaven and earth and that Christ shall come. Thy will, O Lord, be done and not mine."

When Jacob said these words, the power of the Lord came upon Sherem in such great force that he fell to the earth. He was helpless for many days.

He finally said to the people, "Gather together tomorrow because I am going to die and I want to speak to you before I die."

The next day a great multitude gathered. Sherem admitted that he had been teaching them false things. He confessed the Christ, the power of the Holy Ghost, and the ministering of angels. He said he had been deceived by the power of the devil.

"I fear that I have committed the unpardonable sin, for I have lied unto God. And because I have lied unto God, I fear that my case shall be awful; but I confess unto God."

When Sherem had spoken these words, he could say no more, and he died.

The power of God came down in such strength over the multitude that they fell to the earth. They began to study the scriptures and paid no more attention to the falsehoods which had been taught by Sherem. Peace and the love of God were restored again among the people.

Jacob 1:1-11; 3:1-7; 5:1-38



**FINISH THE FIRST WORD IN THESE FACTS ABOUT SHEREM:**

**S**

\_\_\_\_\_ do not testify of Christ was one of Sherem's false beliefs.

**H**

\_\_\_\_\_ : Sherem wanted a sign by this power.

**E**

\_\_\_\_\_ to the end leads to eternal life. Sherem did not do this.  
(II Nephi 15:5)

**R**

\_\_\_\_\_ means that Sherem went against God's teaching.

**E**

\_\_\_\_\_ power was given to Sherem by Satan.

**M**

\_\_\_\_\_ cannot know of things to come was a false belief held by Sherem.

**FINISH THE FIRST WORD OF EACH OF THESE THINGS JACOB BELIEVED:**

**J**

\_\_\_\_\_ is the only begotten son of God.

**A**

\_\_\_\_\_ means Christ gave his life for us.

**C**

\_\_\_\_\_ would come to the earth.

**O**

\_\_\_\_\_ to God's commandments brings eternal life.

**B**

\_\_\_\_\_ in the Scriptures is required of those who worship God.





Use the Code below to discover the scripture which describes the picture:

20	8	5	16	15	23	5	18	15	6	
20	8	5	12	15	18	4	3	1	13	5
21	16	15	14	19	8	5	18	5	13	
9	14	19	15	13	21	3	8			
20	8	1	20	8	5	6	5	12	12	
20	15	20	8	5	5	1	18	20	8	

**Code:**

A <u>1</u>	F <u>6</u>	K <u>11</u>	P <u>16</u>	U <u>21</u>
B <u>2</u>	G <u>7</u>	L <u>12</u>	Q <u>17</u>	V <u>22</u>
C <u>3</u>	H <u>8</u>	M <u>13</u>	R <u>18</u>	W <u>23</u>
D <u>4</u>	I <u>9</u>	N <u>14</u>	S <u>19</u>	X <u>24</u>
E <u>5</u>	J <u>10</u>	O <u>15</u>	T <u>20</u>	Y <u>25</u>

1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 15, 17, 18, 20.

The following numbers should be checked:

Key for page 4:



**PUT A CHECK MARK IN FRONT OF THE  
STATEMENTS WHICH ARE TRUE.**

**YOU MAY WANT TO REFER TO YOUR  
BOOK OF MORMON.**

**JACOB 5:1-38**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Sherem preached things flattering to the people.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Jacob believed Christ would come into the world.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Sherem converted many people to Christ.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Sherem received his power from Satan.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Jacob had faith in Christ.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Sherem was educated in language, speech, etc.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Sherem was encouraged by the voice of the Lord.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Sherem said no one could know of things to come.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Sherem said he knew there was no Christ.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Sherem said he believed the Scriptures.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ Jacob said that Sherem understood the Scriptures.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ Jacob was anxious to have God smite Sherem.
13. \_\_\_\_\_ Sherem asked Jacob to have God show him a sign.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ When Jacob called on the Lord, Sherem was killed instantly.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ Sherem wanted to speak to the people before he died.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ After Sherem repented, he recovered and lived many more years.
17. \_\_\_\_\_ Sherem finally admitted that he had been teaching false things.
18. \_\_\_\_\_ Sherem said he had lied to God.
19. \_\_\_\_\_ The multitude of people did not pay any attention to Sherem's dying words.
20. \_\_\_\_\_ The multitude of people gathered to hear Sherem and began once more to study the Scriptures.

KEY: Sherem: Scriptures, Holy Ghost, Endure,  
Rebellion, Evil, Man.  
Jacob: Jesus, Atonement, Christ, Obedience,  
Belief



**STUDY  
ALONG  
WITH...  
Thelona  
Stevens**



## The Elect

If someone should ask you, "Who are 'the elect'?" how would you answer?

"The elect" means different things to different people. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* gives these definitions:

- "1. Chosen; select.
- "2. Elected to an office but not yet inducted into it; as, mayor-elect.
- "3. Chosen by divine election; set apart to eternal life."

The first and third definitions by Webster seem to be quite generally accepted by many religious groups, upholding the concept that God has chosen some particular ones upon whom to bestow his favors.

The Zoramites (dissenters from the Nephites) had "fallen into great errors," according to Alma and his brethren (Alma 16:86\*), to whom their manner of worship was most strange and unacceptable (Alma 16:88, 95).

The Zoramites prayed:

Holy God, we believe that thou . . . hast elected us to be thy holy children . . . that we shall be saved, whilst all around us are elected to be cast by thy wrath down to hell; for the which holiness, O God, we thank thee.

—Alma 16:91-92

That God would single out certain ones for special honors is untenable in the light of an overwhelming number of scriptural statements. Since God is no respecter of persons (D&C 1:6a), there is no validity to any claim that God is favoring a particular person or group of persons, except according to his own stipulation: "He that is righteous, is favored of God" (I Nephi 5:122).

## Choosing to Be God's Elect

Contrary to the thinking that the elect are select, divinely chosen individuals is the scripturally sound concept that those who choose, *elect* God's way of life and faithfully adhere to his laws and commandments, are accepted, recognized by God as his elect.

Paul, having chosen to serve God, explained that he was a "servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness" (Titus 1:1). This was not an honor bestowed upon Paul, but rather a privilege which he accepted. God recognized Paul's choice and counted him among all others (past, present and future) who similarly serve him. They are "the elect."

Isaiah's writings make this position clear. God called Isaiah "mine elect" because he served him acceptably. He indicated Isaiah's servanthood as a mark of the elect. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth" (Isa. 42:1).

## Satan Is Against the Elect

Satan stands as the great enemy against Christ. Christ was totally without sin. Because he never succumbed to Satan's temptations, Satan had no power over him. Shortly before his death, Jesus said to his disciples,

Hereafter I will not talk much with you; for the prince of darkness, who is of this world, cometh, but hath no power over me, but he hath power over you.

—John 14:30

Satan's power is threatened by those who elect to follow Christ. Nephi foresaw that the time would come when Satan will have no power because of the faithfulness of those who remain true in *every respect to their covenant with God through Christ*.

Because of the righteousness of his people, Satan has no power.

—I Nephi 7:60

After a fervent plea for righteousness, Moroni wrote,

I, Moroni, am commanded to write these things, that evil may be done away, and that the time may come that Satan may have no power upon the hearts of the children of men, but that they may be persuaded to do good continually.

—Ether 3:102

## Jesus Warned the Elect

Jesus warned that Satan would use every possible means to overcome the elect by deception; that he

(Continued on next page)



would use "great signs and wonders" in seeking to "deceive the very elect, who are the elect according to the covenant" (Matt. 24:23). Jesus spoke these words of warning "for the elect's sake" (verse 24). He gave specific warnings regarding the difficulties under which the elect would be struggling right up to the time of his return (Matt. 24:25-38). He promised, "Whoso treasureth up my words, shall not be deceived" (verse 39).

### God's Grace

God cannot tolerate sin in any degree (D&C 1:5f), but because of his great love, he offers sinful man mercy and grace—his great plan of forgiveness whereby it is possible for mankind to be acceptable unto God.

After the creation of Adam, God associated with him and gave him instructions and warnings, and the privilege of agency (Gen. 2:19-21; D&C 28:9). When Adam sinned and was cast out of God's presence, he became spiritually dead (D&C 28:11a-c), but God withheld temporal death until Adam was given an opportunity to accept His plan of grace whereby it is possible for mankind to repent and return to God's presence.

**I, the Lord God, gave unto Adam and his seed, that they should not die as to the temporal death, until I, the Lord God, should send forth angels to declare unto them repentance and redemption through faith on the name of mine only begotten Son; and thus did I, the Lord God, appoint unto man the days of his probation.**

—D&C 28:12a-b

A dictionary definition of grace is: "Temporary exemption, as free from penalty, or relief, as by postponement of a settlement; reprieve, as a day or year of grace." A common practice of insurance companies is to grant a thirty-day period of grace. God's grace is for that period from repentance and acceptance of his plan of mercy until the day of death to the physical body, which the Lord calls man's days of probation.

The manner in which God dealt with Adam applies to all mankind. Note the sequence, simply stated: Adam, in the beginning, was permitted the presence of God; he sinned; was cast out under sentence of death; became spiritually dead; repented; was granted God's forgiveness and reacceptance; lived his days of probation in obedience; death came to the physical body; was raised to immortality, eventually to the presence of God again.

But for the grace of God, mankind would have died eternally. Nephi put it in these words:

**The fall came by reason of transgression; and because man became fallen, they were cut off from the presence of the Lord; wherefore, it must needs be an infinite atonement. . . .**

**Wherefore, the first judgment which came upon man, must needs have remained to an endless duration. And if so, this flesh must have lain down to rot and to crumble to its mother earth, to rise no more. . . . Our spirits must become subject to that angel who fell from before the presence of the eternal God, and became the devil, to rise no more. And our spirits must have become like unto him. . . in misery, like unto himself. . . . O how great the goodness of our God, who prepareth a way for our escape from the grasp of this awful monster.**

—II Nephi 6:13-24

(The entire chapter is significant.)

Grace is what God has done for man. It is something that he cannot do for himself. Paul wrote,

**By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; but it is the gift of God.**

—Eph. 2:8

Those who elect to repent and serve God are offered his grace and the privilege of eventually dwelling in his presence.

### Sanctification

Grace is what God has given us. What we do with that gift is up to each individual. Sanctification comes through proper use of this gift.

Sanctification is brought about by faithfully keeping God's laws and commandments as given through the words and example of Christ.

In his prayer unto the Father before his crucifixion, Jesus said,

**And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.**

—John 17:19

Just as Jesus sanctified himself for the sake of those he came to teach, even so he requires sanctification (total rejection of sin) on the part of those who fully represent him and his Father.

Sanctification does not come easily. It requires constant vigilance against sin, constant awareness of the covenant made with God in baptism. Every time we partake of the Lord's Supper, we promise anew to "always remember him and keep his commandments" (D&C 17:22).

One who chooses to follow this pattern, *elects* to belong to God's celestial kingdom. It is possible to so faithfully follow this pattern of living as to achieve the goal which Christ set when he said, "Be perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:50). God requires "a righteous people, without spot



and blameless" (D&C 38:7a; 11 Pet. 3:14).

Steady growth can be achieved by daily, even hourly repentance. By that means, the Nephites at one time were able to write of themselves:

The Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent . . . has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually.

—Mosiah 3:3

Now they, after being sanctified by the Holy Ghost, having their garments made white, being pure and spotless before God, could not look upon sin, save it were with abhorrence.

—Alma 10:4

God has honored us with joint heirship with Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:17). Only by becoming Christlike can one become a joint heir with him in the Kingdom of his Father.

### The Gathering of the Elect

The Lord promised,

Even so will I gather mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, even as many as will believe in me, and hearken unto my voice.

—D&C 32:2b

Righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out my own elect . . . [to] a holy city, that my people may . . . be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem.

—D&C 36:12f-g

There is to be the great, eternal gathering when Enoch and his holy city, which God took unto himself, will return to earth, to join those qualified to mingle with them. This will take place when a people become so consecrated to God that they will keep all his commandments (Gen. 9:21). They will build Zion, the New Jerusalem which is to "be built up upon this land" (Ether 6:6).

And blessed are they who dwell therein, for it is they whose garments are white through the blood of the lamb . . . and then also cometh the Jerusalem of old; and the inhabitants thereof, blessed are they, for they have been washed in the blood of the Lamb.

—Ether 6:10-11

Then is to be the general assembly of the church of the Firstborn (Gen. 9:23; D&C 76:5), wherein are to be gathered all those of all time and place who have faithfully resisted Satan's temptations and overcome self and the world.

Thus, the faithful of all ages, the elect of God, shall mingle and associate with one another, but more glorious by far is the promise that "these shall dwell

in the presence of God and his Christ for ever and ever" (D&C 76:5j). These are

just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant: . . . these are they whose bodies are celestial, whose glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God the highest of all.

—D&C 76:5q-r

This is what God offers to those who elect to serve him.

Paul urged upon the brethren "sanctification and honor" (1 Thes. 4:4).

Peter added his appeal,

Give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.

—11 Pet. 1:10

\*Scriptural references are to:

Book of Mormon (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1908).

Inspired Version (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1944).

Doctrine and Covenants (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1952).



## Never Too Young

by Joyce Lund

I have always had a great love for the Book of Mormon. In fact, I cannot remember a time in my life when I did not love and revere it. Even as a child I knew it was a sacred book and that it was true.

When I was twenty-two years of age I read the book from cover to cover. It was so wonderful and exciting to me that it was difficult to lay it down. I would take it to work with me and read it on the street car. I looked forward to the lunch hour when I could pick it up again. Even yet, every time I read or study it, the excitement still exists.

My grandmother told me that when as a tiny infant I would become restless and irritable, my mother would pick me up in her arms, sit in a chair, and read aloud from the Book of Mormon. She said it always amazed her how I responded by settling right down. I appeared to be listening to every word. I know that my mother planted the love for the Book of Mormon in my heart and that it has been a part of me from the very beginning of my life.

I thank God for my goodly parents who taught the principles of the gospel in our home and lived accordingly. There was always the spirit of love and peace in our family and our home was truly blessed.





### “Possible Weight” (Continued from page 6)

Of interest is the observation of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology scientists whose work reported that the emphasis in metal production in the New World centered on “the domain of life associated with political power, the display of social status and the communication of religious beliefs” while those in Europe and the Near East centered on warfare, transportation and agriculture.

The largest artifact with a “dazzling” gold surface known to the M.I.T. scientists has been found to be made of tumbaga alloy that is 40% gold, 48% silver, and 12% copper. Some of the tumbaga alloys that appear as “gleaming gold sheet metal” contain only 12% gold.

The use of a combination of metals in pre-Columbian metallurgy to give the appearance of gold to objects stronger, lighter, and more rigid than gold is of interest in our exploration of the possible weight of the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated.

Plates made of one of these alloys would have the *appearance of gold* and might well be referred to as “gold” plates just as I refer to a necklace of mine as “gold” when I am well aware that it has little if any gold in it.

There is a concurrence of information that makes it apparent that the plates were probably not made of pure gold. Nephi, as we have already noted, says he had gold, silver, and copper when he made his plates of *ore*. Mormon says simply that he made plates on which he abridged the record of his people with his own hands (III Nephi 2:94-95). It is interesting to note that Mormon worked with the records during the period in which depletion gilding was chiefly developed, and this method required principally ore, fire, and a strong hammer. Moroni says he had not enough room on the plates his father had made to write all that he would have liked to have written and had no *ore* with which to make more at the time of the destruction of the Nephites about 400 years after Christ’s birth (Mormon 4:6). Apparently he found either more ore or more plates, for he later abridged the account which the prophet Ether had written on plates that Mosiah described as “pure gold” (Mosiah 5:64), and he added more of his own counsel and history. However, he spoke only of needing *ore* for plates, not necessarily gold.

If these Book of Mormon prophets used tumbaga gold or other methods found to have been used by early artisans to make the plates on which they inscribed their records, those plates would have weighed much less than the 200 pounds that a solid block of gold the size that Joseph Smith, Jr. estimated the

plates to be would have weighed. Heather Leachman and her associates at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Laboratory for Research on Archaeological Materials reported that some of the pre-Columbian copper-gold alloys contained “as little as 12 percent gold by weight” (*Scientific American*, June 1984, 60). In that proportion, a solid block of metal the size of the plates would weigh approximately 98.9 pounds.

The plates however, were not a solid block. They were separate leaves held together by rings. Joseph Smith, Jr. described the leaves as “not quite as thick as common tin” in the previously cited Wentworth letter. Martin Harris thought they were a little thicker than tin (*The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints 1896*, 1:52) (hereafter cited as *RLDS Church History*). David Whitmer said they were as thick as parchment (*RLDS Church History*, 4:362). Emma Smith recalled that they were like thick paper (*RLDS Church History*, 3:356). Whatever their thickness, being separate leaves with carved inscriptions on them would further reduce their density.

To illustrate one may take a specified number of sheets of metal, for example, aluminum foil. Divide them into two equal piles. Leave one set tightly pressed together but separate the other sheets and write on them. Then compare the volume of the two piles.

Although it is not possible for us to know how much space there was between the engraved sheets, we know that the space between the leaves and around the characters would have reduced their weight significantly. Reed H. Putnam, whom John W. Welch of the *Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies* characterizes as a metallurgist-blacksmith in a recent private communication, addressed the subject in an article printed in the *Improvement Era* (69, Sept. 1966, 788-789). Under the title, “Were the Golden Plates Made of Tumbaga?” Reed H. Putnam estimates that the space would “reduce the weight to probably less than 50% of the solid block.” His estimate of the total weight considering the possible alloys he described is between 53 and 86 pounds.

If we assume that the space reduced the weight by only one third using the alloys described by the M.I.T. scientists, the weight of the plates would have been approximately 66 pounds if tumbaga carrying 12% gold was used, and 86 pounds if the proportion of gold was 40%. If however, Putnam’s estimate of 50% reduction is applied to these alloys, the approximate weight of the plates would be 49.5 pounds for the tumbaga carrying 12% gold, and 64.9 pounds for the tumbaga carrying 50% gold.

William B. Smith, brother of the prophet Joseph Smith, Jr., preached a sermon at Deloit, Iowa in 1884



which was reported by C. F. Butterworth in the *Saints Herald*, 31:644. Although William was never permitted to see the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated, he like the witnesses did heft them and he felt them through their covering. He like the witnesses, declared that they were not a solid block of wood or stone as some had charged but were separate leaves weighing more than a stone of their size and much more than wood would have weighed. He even ventured to suppose that they were made of gold and copper. When asked directly how much they weighed, William is reported to have replied, "As near as I could tell, about sixty pounds."

Martin Harris is reported to have estimated the weight of the plates between 40 and 60 pounds (see *Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies Update*, Oct. 1984, "The 'Golden' Plates", revised February 1985; *Tiffany's Monthly*, 1859, 2:165-166).

The facts are that the plates from which the Book

of Mormon was translated would not have weighed "more than 600 pounds." They would not have been too heavy for Joseph Smith to carry. Even Emma would have had little difficulty moving them from place to place on the table, as she testified she did, when doing her housework (*RLDS Church History*, 3:357). Although we have no way of knowing their exact weight, we have ample evidence that they were well within the capability of those who said they hefted and handled them to do exactly as they said they did.

Editor's Note: The technical information which is quite involved has been deleted from Sister Smith's article in order for it to be more easily read and understood. However, if anyone is interested in that portion of the paper, please make that request to FRAA, 410 N. Pleasant, Independence, MO 64050, and we will be glad to send it to you.



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Dear THELONA,  
 I would like to join  
 Helaman's army.  
 I will pledge \$100 a month.  
 I am 8 years old.  
 God bless your work.  
 Love

Wisconsin

This is a great idea. May God continue to bless you in all your work.

Missouri

Thanks for including me in the opportunity to share in the "Helaman's Two Thousand" program. God bless you all.

Michigan

I am truly interested and wish you much success in this outstanding adventure.

Iowa

I am proud to be able to contribute to "Helaman's Two Thousand."

Australia

What a wonderful surprise to receive a letter about the latter day's "Helaman's Two Thousand." I feel I must join. I believe it is a small way of helping others believe in the Book of Mormon.

British Columbia, Canada

I think it is a good idea to give copies of the Book of Mormon for missionary purposes. I received on last year and the young lady who received it has now been baptized. Thank you.

Missouri

We are sending you our sum all in one lump. We do want to support the FRAA!

Illinois

I am delighted with your plan for promoting the Book of Mormon, and wish to be among the "Two Thousand." May God bless your endeavor.

South Wales, United Kingdom

Thank you so very much for the envelopes already stamped in which to send my monthly contribution. This is great and much appreciated. God bless you greatly.

Michigan

Sorry I can't send more. It's wonderful what the Foundation is doing. May God bless all the people working so hard that others will know about the Book of Mormon.

Iowa

I consider it a privilege to be a part of this great work. God bless your endeavors.

Missouri

We want to contribute each month to help the Foundation advance the knowledge of Jesus Christ and the Book of Mormon.

Ohio

Yesterday I read your letter to our branch and they voted to send the enclosed check. I am sure we will all be blessed as we work in this new program.

Colorado

I have been wanting to help and this gives me my opportunity to do so. I will always hold fast to the "rod of iron."

Ohio

My heart is filled with gratitude and sincere brotherly love for you people who are interested enough in the Restoration gospel to give so much of yourselves to promote it and keep it alive and well. My prayers often ascend in your behalf for strength, guidance and direction.

Oklahoma

We do so much appreciate all the work done by so many volunteers to make FRAA possible.

Missouri

Sounds thrilling, Thelona!

Missouri

I was talking to my twelve year old daughter about "Helaman's Two Thousand" and she said she would like to contribute. I asked my fourteen year old son if he would like to take part, and he said he would. They are helping toward our monthly payment. I appreciate *The Witness* so much and look forward to each issue. God bless you all in your work.

New Mexico

We are glad to help promote God's work in this way. Even though we are well-advanced in years, it is *still* our desire to aid in spreading the restoration gospel. Thank you for giving us this opportunity.

Ohio



# Mesoamerican Wheel Controversy

by Linda Trimble

One of the joys of following developments in archaeological theories about Mesoamerica is to see the gradual convergence of ideas between scholastic theory and the Book of Mormon text. Until recently, archaeologists' theories have directly contradicted the Book of Mormon. With recent findings, however, many of the theories are being modified thus causing them to more readily support the Book of Mormon text.

Though many of the theories have been modified, some are still adhered to with fierce determination. One such theory is that the Maya, although possessing a knowledge of the wheel, did not use the wheel for such purposes as transportation because they considered it to be sacred. This appears to be in direct conflict with the Book of Mormon text which mentions the use of horses and chariots (Alma 12:77,79,82).

For a major civilization to have the knowledge of the wheel, yet not use it, is beyond the comprehension of many people. Such was the case for John D. MacDonald, an author and avid traveler. The following excerpt is taken from an article by MacDonald which was published in the December 13, 1987 edition of the *Chicago Tribune*:

One aspect of the Mayan culture puzzles me more than all the others. I have read and been told, repeatedly, that they did not have the wheel... Too bad. Think of what they could have accomplished.

When you go to Chichen Itza, when you have seen the main part of the ruins, you will cross the highway and explore the less dramatic structures on the other side. Over a doorway you will see, carved in bas relief on a sheer stone wall, a big cog wheel. It has square cogs sticking out all the way around it. Next to it is a smaller cog wheel. It has cogs of the same size. These cogs are meshed with the cogs on the big wheel, so if you turned one of them, you would turn them both, if they could possibly move.

I said to a learned companion we had met at the hotel, an anthropologist, self-proclaimed, "If they never had the wheel, what's that?"

"Oh, that depicts the sun."

"With short square rays?"

"That's similar to many other carvings all over the Mayan areas."

"Oh. What's the little one?"

"Well, some believe that the two of them are pictures in stone of flowers in bloom."

"With little square petals?"

"Yes, of course. If those are the flowers, then those are the petals."

"Nobody has ever said they might be cog wheels?"

"Never. That's nonsense."

"Look. Over at Coba they have a big cylindrical thing about five feet high and ten feet long, with a hole bored right through the middle of it. It is carved out of limestone, I think they said. And what they would do, they would put a long piece of wood right through the middle of it, maybe the straight trunk of a small tree, and then a lot of men would use it to roll the road flat, the road they built that once went all the way from Coba right here to Chichen Itza."

"I'm familiar with that, yes."

"Isn't that actually a wheel?"

"Not really. It's a roller."

"But it stands on the ground and goes around and around."

"What's your point?"

"If you could call that a wheel, then maybe these are cog wheels."

He stared up at the stone flowers and said: 'Ah, here are my friends. Nice to have been able to help you.' And so we are blessed or burdened with memories sweet and memories wry.

The above account, although humorous, serves as a poignant reminder of the limitations in archaeology often due to the biases of the researchers. Cherished ideas are hard to give up, yet several popular theories in archaeology have been modified in recent years. Perhaps the theory that the Maya did not have the wheel will eventually give way to a more plausible theory as well.



## AN APOLOGY

We always look forward to having in *The Witness* many pictures of people attending our Book of Mormon Day. I personally took these pictures and proceeded to lose the exposed film, with the exception of a few on the film still in the camera. I especially regret losing the shots of many of the adorable children in attendance. I am so sorry!

Donna Weddle  
Editor of *The Witness*



# The Witness

October, 1988

Issue Number 63

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Published quarterly by the  
Foundation for Research on Ancient  
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The foundation for Research on Ancient America is a not-for-profit corporation comprised of individuals who desire to advance the knowledge of Jesus Christ and the Book of Mormon. Through instructional materials, archaeological research, testimonies and related projects members of FRAA seek to assist in bringing forth the light that is contained in the ancient scriptures of the Book of Mormon.

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