

The Witness

The Foundation For Research On Ancient America



Spring 1990

Commemorative Issue

Number 68



Thelona D. Stevens
1901 - 1989

Commemorative Issue

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The Foundation for Research on Ancient America is a nonprofit 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. A contribution to the Foundation for Research on Ancient America results in membership.

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Cover...

Thelona D. Stevens at 42 years old photographed in 1943 by Iris Palmer.

Annual Meeting

March 25, 1990

2:30 P.M.

Stone Church

Business Session:

Election of Board Members

Program:

Slide Presentation Featuring a
Testimony/Travelog of the
December 1989 Guatemala Tour
Sponsored by the Foundation

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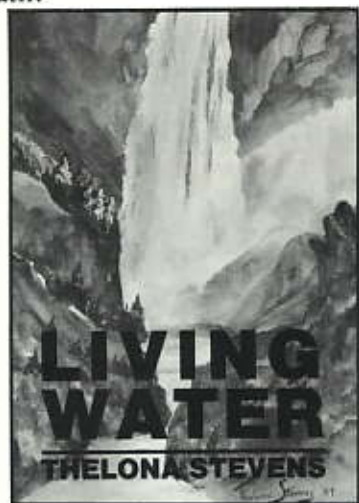
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Foundation News

President Thelona D. Stevens died on November 19, 1989. A memorial service was held on November 27 at the Stone Church where she had taught for 42 years. The Foundation's members will mourn the loss of her dedicated leadership. (See page 18 in this issue for the memorial address given at the service.)

Thelona became president of the Foundation in 1968. During the next 20 years, under her direction, FRAA progressed from a few hundred members to an organization that currently reaches an estimated 50,000 people through its quarterly publication *The Witness*.

The Board of Directors would like to thank all who have sent expressions of sympathy and contributions in her memory. Others who wish to contribute can send memorials to FRAA, 410 N. Pleasant, Independence, MO 64050. These gifts will be used to offset the printing cost of her latest book, *Living Water*, which she completed just before her death.



Thelona's Testimony

At the 1989 Fifth Annual Book of Mormon Day conference,

Thelona gave the first presentation. Her talk, "After the Many Testimonies, I Testify," is available on videotape. The tape also features other conference participants John Sorenson, Richard DeLong, and Vernes Collins. Order from School of Saints, 520 West Maple, Independence, MO 64050 for \$15.95 plus \$1.75 postage and handling.

Annual Meeting

The Foundation's Annual Meeting will be March 25, 1990, 2:30 P.M. at the Stone Church. The agenda includes the election of new board members to fill vacancies. A special board meeting will convene sometime after the annual meeting to elect new officers. The highlight of the annual meeting will be a testimony/travelog slide presentation of the Guatemala tour. Plan now to attend!!

Roy Weldon

In December 1989, First Vice President Roy Weldon fell and broke his hip, resulting in hospitalization. A week later, his wife passed away. We know he would appreciate your prayers. You may write to him c/o FRAA, 410 N. Pleasant, Independence, MO 64050.

Second Annual Children's Book of Mormon Day

Look forward to another Children's Book of Mormon Day

sometime early summer - date to be announced. Participation in the events of the day provides a fun and active way for children to learn about Book of Mormon history and people. Let's encourage our children and grandchildren to attend.

Regional Book of Mormon Day

Plans are underway for a regional Book of Mormon Day conference in the Detroit, Michigan area. This will be either late spring or early summer. For the date, time, and place, please write FRAA at 410 N. Pleasant, Independence, MO 64050. Other regions desiring a regional Book of Mormon seminar, please contact FRAA at the above address.

Helaman's Two Thousand

*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 Foundation is extending a **mighty summons** to all to join Helaman's Two Thousand, a special group of supporters. See the form on page 15 in this issue. Fill it out and send TODAY and become part of this witness for the Lord!



Calendar

March 25, 1990 2:30 P.M.	FRAA Annual Meeting Stone Church
Late Spring	Michigan Regional Book of Mormon Day Call or write for date and place.
Early Summer	Children's Book of Mormon Day RLDS Campus, Independence, Missouri
August 10-19, 1990	Guatemala Tour II
December 22- January 1, 1991	Gulf Coast Tour

Thelona's numerous talents included painting. Those familiar with her last few books know that the covers are photos of her paintings. Thelona had several showings of her works, particularly oils, winning blue ribbons on some.

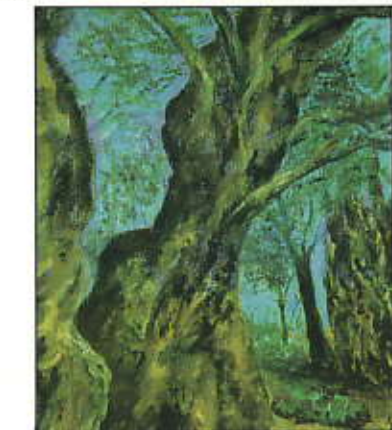


Venna - December 1984 - Oil

Although Thelona excelled in landscapes, her portraits, such as *Nephi and Mormon*, also exhibit her skill. The inscription on the back of this portrait reads, "Venna, my daughter, from a photo of her at 19 years of age, painted by me, her mother, Thelona Stevens, at 83 years of age, December 1984."

Ocean Spray - 1989 - Watercolor

Not long before her death, Thelona took up watercolor. This bears the date October 7, 1989 and was one of her last paintings.



Garden of Gethsemane - 1987 - Oil

Another product of her trips to Israel, the olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane fascinated Thelona.

Alaskan Lake - 1960s - Oil

In 1962 Thelona and her husband took a trip to Alaska. The beauty of the scenery so captivated her she painted several Alaskan scenes. This painting was a particular favorite of hers and hung in her living room.



Jordan River, Israel - May 1983 - Oil

Twice Thelona visited Israel. Depicted here is the spot believed to be the site of Jesus' baptism.



Don Beebe

In The Service Of Her God

Venna M. Johnson

Thelona Davina Stevens, a strong believer in the Book of Mormon and a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ, lived her life following King Benjamin's advice found in Mosiah 1:49: "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God." She devoted her talents, time, and energies to serving others.

Thelona Nicoll was born on March 12, 1901 to parents who were both members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. As Thelona matured, she came to appreciate the gift of being born to parents who accepted the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Serious illnesses plagued Thelona's childhood. When she was ten years old, her mother took her to visit Independence, Missouri. Thelona became very ill on the train. After they arrived, the elders were called to administer to her.

She recalled how she felt as they prayed—she wanted to know more about Jesus. An instant healing took place, and she never again had that ailment. At the close of the prayer, Thelona asked for baptism. She and her sister Venna were baptized at the Stone Church in 1911.

Her early childhood was spent in Canada, Texas, and Missouri. As a young adult, she went to Florida to spend the winter. Here she met and married, in September 1923, Frederick L. Stevens. Their only child was a daughter, Venna M. Johnson, named for Thelona's sister Venna.

A time came when Thelona realized she was drifting away from the church. In a moment of deep contrition, she promised the Lord she would study the Scriptures one hour a day. Thus began

a lifetime of joy in learning God's Word. She longed to share what she was learning, but this did not happen until nine years later when the family moved to Independence. Shortly after the move, Thelona was asked to help in the Department of Religious Education during an emergency situation. She retired 25 years later having served in several different capacities.

As director of the leadership training work, she was largely responsible for the planning and development of the Christian Education and Leadership Training Curriculum. A comment relative to this study program appeared in the *Saints' Herald* (April 30, 1951, p. 2): "Through her stimulus, many persons throughout the church have taken creditable courses of study to better prepare them for various positions of leadership in the church." While this program functioned, literally thousands of individuals took correspondence courses, and study groups were organized throughout the United States and Canada, with some in England and Australia.

When in 1954 Leadership Training was combined with Priesthood Education and transferred to the School of the Restoration, Thelona served as the editor of *Guidelines*, a monthly leadership publication, for two years.

In the summer of 1955, the First Presidency requested Thelona to head a new service, Ministry to the Blind. (Read more about her work with the blind on p. 16 in this issue.) After 12 years in this area, she retired in 1966.

In 1968, Roy Weldon enlisted Thelona's aid for the Foundation for Research on Ancient America. She was elected president, and

served in that capacity until her death in 1989. Motivated by an intense desire that as many people as possible come to know and love the Book of Mormon as she did, Thelona always searched for the best ways to accomplish this. Through her farsightedness, the Foundation expanded its outreach activities to touch the lives of many.

Perhaps, though, Thelona has had more influence on people's lives through her many writings and teachings. Her best-known writings are *Bible Studies* and *Book of Mormon Studies*.

Although Thelona mastered Braille, enabling her to teach, which she did for more than 10 years, most of her teaching was of the Three Standard Books. Along with regular classes at reunions, Stake Women's Department meetings, institutes both local and national, and congregational classes, Thelona taught a church school class at the Stone Church for more than 42 years. Thelona, always eager to tell of God's goodness and of her appreciation for the opportunities she had to serve him, taught until the late spring of 1986.

Her final wish was for a memorial to our Lord Jesus Christ instead of a funeral. She wrote, "It is my insistent request that the only reference to me be, 'Thelona loved her Lord and sought to serve him.'"

Behold, I say unto you . . . I do not desire to boast, for I have only been in the service of God. And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God. —Mosiah 1:48-49



TRIBUTES TO THELONA

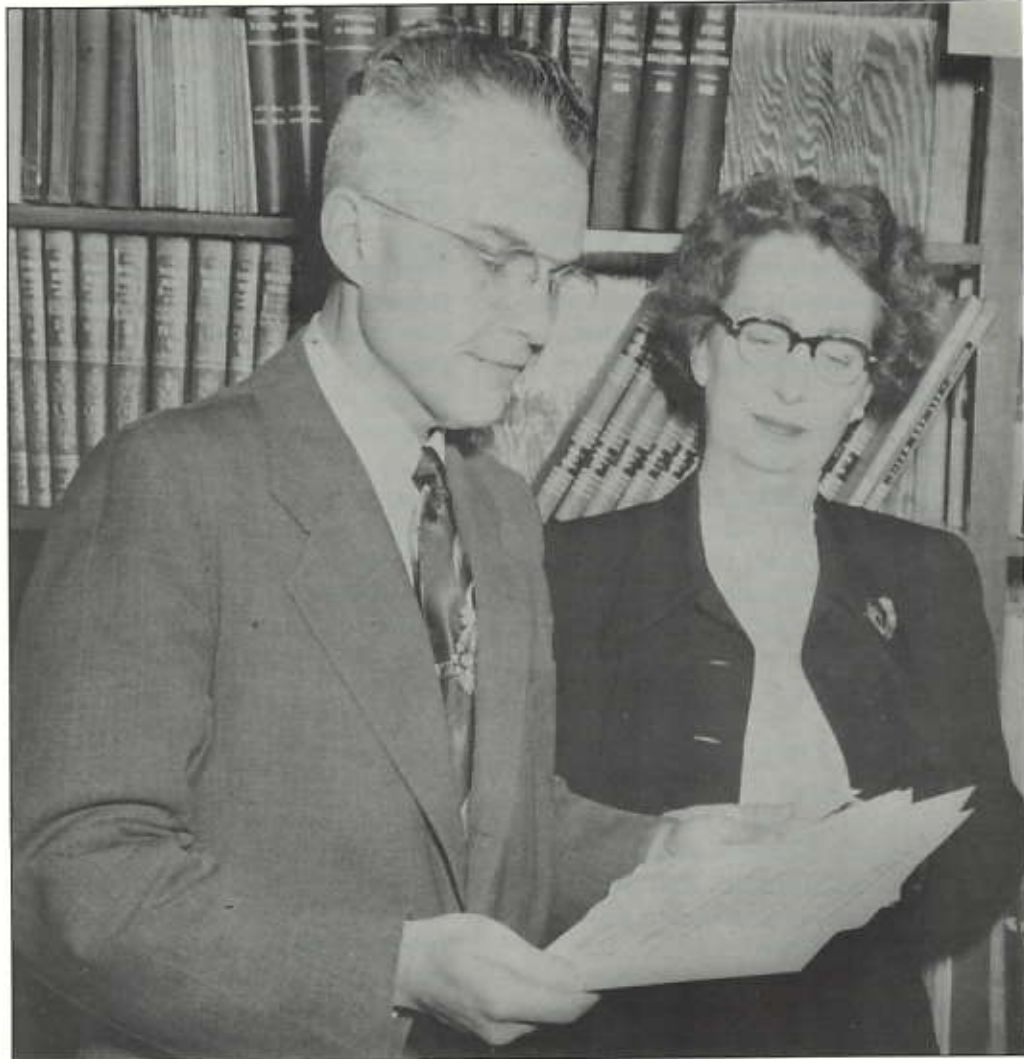
It would be easy for us to want to put Thelona upon a pedestal, but that would be physically impossible. She would jump off even before we had her balanced into position. Thelona was a modest person, giving all credit to God for any ministry she was able to make to others.

I became acquainted with Thelona as a fellow employee in the Department of Religious Education in the fall of 1945. Thelona welcomed me warmly, even though she knew I was hired at a higher salary than she was making. She showed not a speck of jealousy of the “new employee.”

Through the years, I was constantly amazed at Thelona’s ability to do seemingly anything, easily and efficiently. Once Thelona was driving some of us to a meeting. Seeing a parking place, she quickly swung the car into place, too difficult for any of us to try. She was dubbed a New York cab driver.

Thelona never wasted moments. While talking with her mother each evening, she completed handwork. Once she was making an elaborate beaded design on a blouse—steel beads on dark gray material. I marveled how she could follow a pattern of dark beads on dark material. She replied, “I don’t follow a design; I just make it up as I go along.” The result was beautiful.

Thelona dressed attractively, meticulously, modernly. When I would comment about one of her seemingly one hundred dollar dresses, she would answer some-



John Darling and Thelona in offices at the Auditorium in 1959. For 25 years Thelona worked in the Department of Religious Education and other areas.

thing like, “Oh, I got the material for a little less than three dollars, and I had the buttons and trim.” She made dresses, suits, coats, even hats.

Being close to Thelona for 35 years, I could share many more stories showing her skill, dedication, artistry, and breadth of life. I suspect Thelona is not resting in Paradise. She just “touched base” for a moment, then asked for her next assignment.

Edna Easter



I remember an incident in class one day at Gudgell Park Congregation where Thelona had taught for about seventeen years. I am of Hawaiian extraction and a descendant of the Lamanites. Thelona was reading from the Book of Mormon: “And again: I will set a mark upon him that mingleth his seed with thy brethren, that they may be cursed

also" (Alma 1:114). After reading this, she surveyed the class and saw I was present. Immediately she said, "I want you to know that this does not apply to Louise for she is a covenant child of the Lord."

Thelona, thank you for the love we shared and for teaching sound doctrine that not only serves the present age but also the generations yet to come. *Aloha Oe* (Farewell to you until we meet again).

Louise Gregson



Shortly after I moved to Independence in 1978, I accepted Thelona's invitation to serve on the FRAA Board of Directors. Because I was president of Zarahemla Research Foundation, we discussed the advisability of merging the two organizations. We all agreed, however, there was enough work to keep several Book of Mormon organizations busy. I remember Thelona saying it was a healthy sign to have more than

one organization devoted to the Book of Mormon.

Thelona states in her testimony, "Actually I feel extremely impersonal about anything I have ever written, for I know full well that God gave me the understanding and whatever ability I have to express these understandings for which I asked him. So, no credit is due me, and of course the Scriptures are all his. . . . I am only a tool in God's hands. . . ."

Thelona has set a good example for us all.

Ray Treat



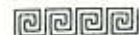
As I look back on four decades of association with Thelona, I can see how much I grew in many ways because of her influence. Her life was solely dedicated to testifying that Jesus is the Christ. This she did in her teaching, her writing, and living an exemplary life.

On one occasion when she was ill and discouraged, I tried to reassure her as to how great her

contribution had been. She wept and disclaimed that she had done any more than any other person. I believe she really humbly felt that she had not served as well as she should have.

Thelona truly pushed forward, feasting upon the words of Christ, and endured to the end. Absolutely no one can take her place.

Donna Weddle



The greatest influence in life for a Christian is our Savior Jesus Christ. By his precepts, we establish rules and guidelines which become a pattern or blueprint for our lives. Thelona Stevens established the pattern for her life upon this Rock.

I had only met Thelona once when I received a call from her telling me she had heard I had been called to the priesthood. She inquired "Has anyone told you your priesthood responsibilities?"

When I replied, "No," she promptly suggested I come to her house and she would tell me. From that meeting and many later, I learned of the dedication and responsibility of discipleship in these latter days.

Shortly before her death, I stood beside her bed holding her hand. I told her positive news of the Foundation, hoping to give her comfort and encouragement. With an inner strength born from a life of purpose, she briefly opened her eyes, looked at me, and almost inaudibly whispered, "What about our building?" A reference to FRAA's need for a headquarters!

How fortunate to have been a part of her life. By her enduring and unwavering faith, her conviction of purpose, she raised the standard of discipleship in each of us who knew her. I will never forget her or that standard.

Michael Gatrost



Thelona's teaching talent influenced many lives to join or remain in the "old, old path." Besides teaching at the Stone Church for 42 years, she participated in many regional institutes. Here she shares the fruits of her many hours of study at a Chicago institute in 1946.



Thelona D. Stevens

God has warned against pride in strong language because pride is a dangerous, insidious evil that undermines character and destroys individuals and nations. Unbridled pride is self-seeking and treacherous, watching for opportunities for selfish advancement at any cost without mercy or regard for others.

Self-pride is Satanic

Satan's determination to promote himself caused his downfall.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground. . . . For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation. . . . I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High (emphasis added).

—Isaiah 14:12-14

See also Genesis 3:4-5, D&C 76:3i-k, and 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4. Even though Satan fell from heaven, he never has relinquished his determination to obtain honor and glory.

Satan not only defied God, but influenced one-third of the

DANGER

Beware of Pride

heavenly hosts to do likewise, and they were cast out of heaven along with Satan.

The Devil . . . rebelled against me, saying, Give me thine honor, which is my power; and also a third part of the hosts of heaven turned he away from me because of their agency; and they were thrust down, and thus became the Devil and his angels.

—D&C 28:10a-c

God's Precious Gift of Agency

One of God's great gifts to mankind is the right to choose for himself good or evil. Both God and Satan constantly entice us, but the decision is ours alone.

It must needs be that the Devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be agents unto themselves, for if they never should have the bitter, they could not know the sweet.

—D&C 28:10d

The Lord God gave unto man, that he should act for himself. Wherefore, man could not act for himself, save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other.

—2 Nephi 1:99-100

All things which are good, cometh of God; and that which is evil, cometh of the devil; for the devil is an enemy unto God, and fighteth against him continually, and inviteth and enticeth to sin, and to do that which is evil con-

tinually. But behold, that which is of God, inviteth and enticeth to do good continually; wherefore, everything which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God.

—Moroni 7:10-11

Our choices are made after the promptings (enticings) of God and of Satan. Those who choose Satan's way and will not repent, must be cast out. God offers no alternative. Having chosen to follow Satan, they become part of Satan's kingdom.

Self-exaltation

The wicked who choose to disregard the psalmist's counsel, "Let not the rebellious exalt themselves" (Psalm 66:7), should beware. They will discover that "they are exalted for a little while" (Job 24:24), but it cannot be lasting. The message from the Lord through Ezekiel cannot be overlooked except at great peril to the defiant individual.

"Thus saith the Lord God: Remove the diadem, and take off the crown . . . exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high."

—Ezekiel 21:26

The mighty Nebuchadnezzar knew what it meant to be abased. After his great humiliation (Daniel 4:31-33), he proclaimed,

Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment;

and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.
—Daniel 4:37

Jesus described the Pharisees in scathing language.

All their works they do to be seen of men. They make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues.
—Matthew 23:4

Jesus' warning must stand forever, "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased" (Matt. 23:9). Pride (self-exaltation) represents the exact opposite of God's teachings.

One person, blinded by prideful ambition for a top honor, sacrificed his character in order to achieve his goal. Finally, realization came to him how far he had strayed from righteousness. With his repentance, came admission that he had lied and deliberately misrepresented those who stood in his way. He declared that there was nothing he would not have done in order to gain his objective while he was under that evil influence. This is the story of not only one person. It is the history of individuals and nations who are determined to promote themselves to positions of honor, rather than to be of service to mankind.

God could not tolerate Satan's attitude when he came saying,

Behold send me, I will be thy Son, and I will redeem all mankind... I will do it; therefore, give me thine honor (emphasis added).
—Genesis 3:2

Apostle Arthur Oakman said in my hearing, "When reading mail from my district, it is done with a red pencil in my hand for

encircling the I's. It is easy to get the message (not the one the writer intended) when there are a lot of red I's and it goes quickly into my wastepaper basket."

Love and Humility

Jesus named the two greatest commandments,

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

—Matthew 22:36-38

Godly love and humility are inseparable. One who loves God best of all and his fellowmen as himself cannot be guilty of self-exaltation. He does not selfishly seek honors above his fellowmen, but seeks his brother's welfare and advancement. Humility is absolutely essential to be acceptable of God. Even before the church was organized in the latter days, the Lord declared, "No one can assist in this work, except he shall be humble and full of love" (D&C 11:4b). This does not imply that one lacking these attributes cannot do something great and praiseworthy, but it does mean that he cannot even assist in the Lord's work.

Can there be a greater lesson in humility than that taught by Jesus and recorded by Moroni in the Book of Mormon?

All men shall know... that I have seen Jesus, and that he hath talked with me face to face... in plain humility, even as a man telleth another in mine own language, concerning these things.

—Ether 5:39-49

Christ did everything exactly as his Father commissioned him. He

left nothing undone; he made no mistake. After a sinless, perfect life, he made the perfect, supreme offering. Yet after all this, when a lonely servant of his needed ministry, Jesus appeared to him "in plain humility."

If ever a being had the right to feel self-elation, surely Christ had that right! Yet, he was humble. How dare we puny human beings, with all our faults and limitations ever take any honor or glory unto ourselves!

Meditate often for the depth of meaning encouched in Nephi's words:

Ye must not perform anything unto the Lord, save in the first place ye shall pray unto the Father in the name of Christ, that... thy performance may be for the welfare of thy soul.

—2 Nephi 14:12

Preferring One Another in Love

Paul urged "brotherly love; in honor preferring one another" (Romans 12:10). This follows the example set by Jesus. He "baptized not so many as his disciples; for he suffered them for an example, preferring one another" (John 4:3-4). God's way is love, consideration of others in love and service. Pride is self-seeking and treacherous, watching for opportunities for self-advancement at any cost, without mercy or regard for others.

The desire for self-prominence surfaced early among Jesus' servants in Jerusalem. The disciples came to Jesus asking, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (Matt. 18:1). In answer, Jesus set a little child in their midst, saying,

Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself

as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

—Matthew 18:2

This teaching was not absorbed by two of the disciples, sons of Zebedee, whose mother, evidently with their approval (Matt. 20:24-25), came to Jesus requesting that one son be given the place of honor on Jesus' right hand, the other on his left in his kingdom (Matt. 20:18-20). Jesus' response included the statement, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (verse 27).

God still warns the priesthood against false ambitions and the dangers of jealousy. Speaking to the elders of the church in November 1831, the Lord commanded, "Strip yourselves from jealousies and fears, and humble yourselves before me" (D&C 67:3a). In April 1887, the Lord drew attention to the same evil, saying again to the priesthood that "there should be no conflict or jealousy of authority" (D&C 120:3a).

God Exalts Whom He Will

Although Jesus warned that those who exalted themselves would be abased, he also taught that God would exalt those who humble themselves (Matt. 23:9). Latter day revelation verifies this.

I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and truth unto the end.

—D&C 76:2a

Read the entire paragraph for all that he offers.

The Scriptures are replete with examples of how God has fulfilled this promise. An early example is Joseph who was sold into Egyptian bondage. The evil wife of Potiphar (an officer of Pharaoh), tried to seduce young Joseph, and

when he resisted her advances, she lied about him, resulting in his imprisonment (Genesis chapters 39-41). Yet, God honored Joseph. Pharaoh set him over all the land of Egypt, there being none greater than he except Pharaoh (Genesis 41:40-41).

Other biblical examples of God's honoring the faithful are numerous. Review how God spared the lives of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego in the fiery furnace and promoted them in the province of Babylon (Daniel chapter 3); and how he protected Daniel from the lions, and Daniel's promotion (Daniel chapter 6). A good Book of Mormon example is how God honored the sons of Mosiah in the sight of the wicked Lamanites (Alma 14:1-12).

Countless other examples exist of how God has honored and exalted those who have served him faithfully, not only in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, but also in church history and individual testimonies.

Just as unfailing are the tragic examples of those who have sought power and honor for themselves. Such just won't work. It never has and it never will. Yet, many do not take warning from Satan's continued ambition and the countless scriptural warnings and examples of failures. There continue to be those who, like Satan, believe that they can succeed in defiance of God. We weep in sorrow over many loved ones who are motivated by pride and the fleeting glory worldly recognition offers them. Pride is wicked, and "wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 19:74). All should heed the scripture: "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).

Prosperity and Pride

In the days of Alma, first chief judge and high priest over the

church, there is a fine example of how obedience brought the Nephites to a high state of prosperity, so that "they did prosper and become far more wealthy than those who did not belong to their church" (Alma 1:47). This lasted until they began "wearing costly apparel; being lifted up in the pride of their own eyes" (verse 49). Their decline was rapid, for the same verse says that they were "persecuting, lying, thieving, robbing, committing whoredoms, and murdering, and all manner of wickedness."

This caused Alma to speak with great directness to his people in Alma chapter 3.

- **Could ye say, if ye were called to die at this time . . . that ye have been sufficiently humble? (48).**
- **Are ye stripped of pride? I say unto you if ye are not, ye are not prepared to meet God (50).**
- **Is there one among you who is not stripped of envy? (52).**
- **O ye workers of iniquity . . . ye that have professed to know the ways of righteousness, nevertheless have gone astray, as sheep having no shepherd (61).**
- **Can ye be puffed up in the pride of your hearts . . . upon your riches; yea, will ye persist in supposing that ye are better one than another; yea, will ye persist in the persecution of your brethren, who humble themselves. . . . Yea, and will you persist in turning your backs**

(continued on page 11)



The Junior Witness

The Foundation For Research On Ancient America

SPRING 1990

COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE

NUMBER 13

THE CONFLICT

(A fictionalized account of
1 Nephi 2:12-38.)

Viola Velt Presler

Nephi's heart swelled with joy. As his camel plodded alongside the azure waters of the Dead Sea, he wondered why. Had it been only a year ago that his family had first come here? Then their hearts had been laid low after leaving their beloved Jerusalem.

Was he happy because he and his brothers were bringing Uncle Ishmael's family with them to their wilderness home? Was it because they were returning with their promised brides? Nephi wasn't sure. He knew only that his heart was soaring. He knew only that this, the lowest spot on earth, had become for him a place of incredible beauty.

Smiling, Nephi glanced back at Laman, who last night had volunteered to do rearguard duty at dawn. But Nephi's mouth dropped open. It couldn't be! Laman was leading half of the group in the opposite direction. "Stop!" called Nephi, jerking his camel around sharply, urging her on till her hooves pounded the sand. "Brother, where are you going?"

Laman continued moving, but looked over his shoulder. "Home," he called out, "Home to Jerusalem."

"But you can't leave like this. Let us counsel," said Nephi.

"Did I not tell you," Laman said sighing, turning to Tamara and Dan. "He'll try to prevent our going," said Laman, the corner of his mouth wrinkling down in disgust.



"Death awaits you in Jerusalem, brother," pleaded Nephi, pulling his camel to a stop.

"Do you see how my younger brother seeks to direct my life?" asked Laman.

"Oh," replied Nephi, "that you would obey the Lord God, my brother, and set an example for me! *How is it that you are so hard in your hearts and so blind in your minds that you have need that I, your younger brother, should speak unto you, Yes, and set an example for you?*"

"It is an example now, is it? Listen, little brother. I have waited and watched and listened. I have no desire to become a nomad wandering in a desert. These people here don't choose to go, either."

"But," Nephi replied, "the Lord has told us through the prophets that Jerusalem will be destroyed. *How is it that you have not hearkened unto the word of the Lord? How is it that you have forgotten that you have seen an*

angel of the Lord? Yes, and how is it that you have forgotten how great things the Lord has done for us in delivering us out of the hands of Laban, and also that we should obtain the record? Yes, and how is it that you have forgotten that the Lord is able to do all things according to his will for the children of men, if it so be that they only exercise faith in him? Why will you choose death?"

"Perhaps I'm not one who chooses to go begging for mercy, as you say. I am not one of those visionary people, disturbing everyone's plans and making trouble for others. And I am not taking any more of this from you, do you hear? Who has died and made you elder brother? How dare you shame me, your older brother, in front of all these people? You attack my honor."

"My brother," continued Nephi, "if we be faithful in God

*Words in italics indicate quotes from 1 Nephi 2:12-38.

we shall obtain a new world, a new Jerusalem, a land of promise. And the time will come when you shall know *that the word of the Lord shall be fulfilled concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. For all things which the Lord hath spoken concerning the destruction of Jerusalem must be fulfilled. For behold, the Spirit of the Lord ceases soon to strive with them. Do you not see?*

Already they have rejected the prophets, and Jeremiah have they cast into prison; And they have sought to take away the life of my father insomuch that they have driven him out of the land. Now, listen, I tell you, if you will return unto Jerusalem, you shall also perish with those wicked men!"

"Father's exile is his problem, not mine," Laman replied. "This new Jerusalem may be your dream, but Jerusalem is my home and God's holy city. I'll die where I choose."

"Laman, the Lord loves you. He warns you because he loves you. I love you, my own brothers and sisters. I only want all of you to live," said Nephi, gesturing toward the group.

"Will you force me, then, little brother?" Laman asked, stepping forward menacingly. "I've had my fill of your endless preaching," said Laman, clipping the top of his *ketiyeh* (head covering) with his hand. "I am the elder brother," he said, his eyes becoming pinpoints of steel. "I am the inheritor of the land." His voice broke as he said, "inheritor." "I tell you. **You don't tell me!**"

Nephi felt a stab of pity. The Babylonians with all their swords and fury mattered not to Laman. He could see only his little brother telling him what to do. He could see only the loss of his inheritance.

"If you return, Laman," Nephi said soberly, "you will be responsible for more than the loss of your inheritance. On your head will be the deaths of these—your wife, our sisters and brothers. On your head will be the

death of all."

"Why you little judge, you. Now you will also play the part of God!" Laman growled.

"If you must choose," replied Nephi, sweat and tears streaming down his face even in the chilly dawn, "then *go up to the land. Go to your precious gold and silver! But do not expect the protection of a God you disobey. If you go, you will also die, but remember the words which I speak unto you. For thus the Spirit of the Lord constraineth me that I should speak,*" Nephi replied, trembling.

Something in Laman snapped. Inflamed, he pulled Nephi down off his camel, dragged him to the sand, and grabbed his wrists. Quickly whipping off the cords on his camel bag Lemuel leaped down, tying Nephi's wrists behind his back. The two brothers bound his ankles rudely.

The little crowd that had gathered stood aghast, too amazed to move.

"There!" triumphed Laman, standing over Nephi, legs apart, arms akimbo, "You will make excellent lunch for leopards."

"And dessert for jackals," Lemuel chimed in, laughing. "Come on," he added, as he and Laman turned away.

But Nephi, desperate to save his brothers and sisters, and filled anew with the love of God for these lost ones, cried out in a loud voice, "*O Lord, according to my faith which is in me, Wilt thou deliver me from the hands of my brethren; Yea, even give me strength that I may burst these bands. . . .*"

As Nephi's great muscles strained, the bands snapped, falling from his hands and feet. Delivered, he ran after them, entreating. "Behold, I speak in the name of the Lord. It is the Lord who tells you, Laman, not I. It is the Lord who would save your lives this day, not I."

"Never, never!" Laman shrieked, wheeling around like a trapped lion. "Never will I ever let you tell me what to do again."

"God only wants to save you," pleaded Nephi.

"I don't want to be saved. I want to save myself!" Laman screamed, face aflame.

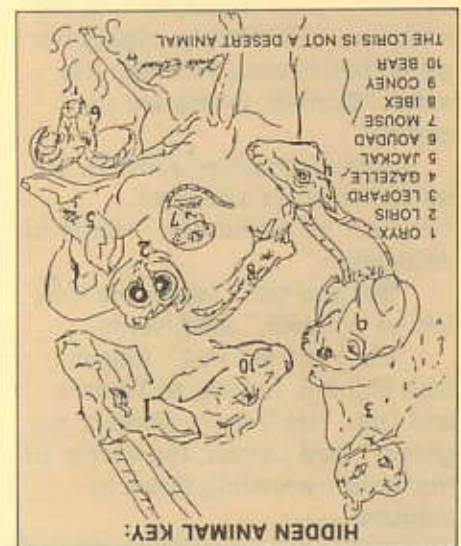
A dagger, whipped out from the folds of his robe, caught a ray of light. "No-o-o-o-o-o-o! Never again. No-o-o-o-o-o," Laman roared, lunging at Nephi.

As the little band gasped as one, Dory, Ishmael's youngest daughter, leaped between Nephi and Laman. She swung Laman's dagger to his side with both little hands.

"Kill Nephi and you may as well kill me first, for my life is as surely bound up with his as yours is with my sister, Tamara." she said, bowing low before him. Her eyes, like a fawn's, searched his stunned, swollen face.

"Laman, Laman," she crooned gently, in that soft voice so peculiar to her. The coolness of her voice, was a caress.

She seemed to seek a wounded spirit lost in a far country. "Laman, Laman, what are you doing?" she soothed. "Think just a minute now. The Lord loves you Laman. He loves us all," she implored, her arm gesturing round the circle. "Do you not know it is the Lord, and not your little brother, speaking to you, telling you of his love? Laman, it is the Lord trying to save our lives. And will you have us wear sackcloth of mourning instead of our beautiful wedding garments?" A



tear sparkled on her white cheek and rolled into the sand.

Nephi, stunned by her courage, knew Laman's strict code of honor towards women. He had never been able to resist his mother's tears. What would he do now?

Quickly Dory's mother, Anna, stepped forward. "Laman and Lemuel, my sons, it is true. The same warning from God has come to my husband Ishmael and to me. It is not Lehi's vision alone, nor Nephi's wish to direct you that causes us to seek a new land. It is the will of God for our families."

"We would, ahem, all rather go on with our lives in Jerusalem," Dory's brother Hiram interjected, "but not like this—at the price of murder."

Something must have reached far back, into Laman's darkened consciousness, thought Nephi, for the blaze in his eyes that had so quickly ignited, faded. In its place came a look of perplexity such as a lost child might wear when waking in a strange place. Recoiling at the sight of a dagger in his hands, he relaxed his quivering grip. The weapon dropped to the sand. Then, crumpling like a dismantled tent, he fell to his knees before Nephi. "Forgive, my brother, forgive."

Sinking down in the sand beside his brother, Nephi embraced him. How his heart leaped! Perhaps this was the moment he had so long hoped and prayed for—the moment of reconciliation. Together they wept softly in the sand. Then Lemuel too knelt and received Nephi's embrace.

Like lightning Nephi realized his enemy was not Laman, but the spirit Laman had let take control of his heart. That spirit, bent on the destruction of them all, had rebelled not so much against Nephi as against God himself.

"I frankly forgive you, my brothers," Nephi said, raising his



heart. When Laman and Nephi forgave each other, they felt forgiven. When they asked forgiveness of God, peace was restored.

Do you have a testimony of how God helped you when you forgave and asked forgiveness?

Please send to *The Junior Witness* Editor, 410 N. Pleasant, Indep., MO 64050.

Congratulations to Angela Kimbrell, Christy Kimbrell, and Brenda Reynolds for sharing their excellent answers to the question posed by Wendy Young, age 13: What would have been your reaction if, when you got home from school, your father announced that the city where you live was about to be destroyed? You have to leave your home forever and go on an eight-year camping trip!

Here are parts of their letters:

If God told us to move we should do it. I would be very surprised, and . . . then say, "Okay, Daddy, I will go. . . . I know that God, Jesus, and the Scriptures would give us all that we need."

—Angela Kimbrell, age 12

I would be reluctant, but I wouldn't say yes or no right away. . . . I know I would miss all my friends and worldly possessions, and I would complain a lot, but with the Lord's help I know I could do it. . . . There would be a better place that he would lead us to.

—Christy Kimbrell, age 14

Nephi realized that the evil spirit trying to destroy them could be overcome by God's Spirit. The enemy, the story tells us, was not Laman, but the spirit Laman had let take control of his

heart. When Laman and Nephi forgave each other, they felt forgiven. When they asked forgiveness of God, peace was restored.

I would be very upset and sad. I would start packing right away only necessary things like food that doesn't spoil, my Girl Scout knife, medicine and blankets, warm clothes, and flashlights. . . . I would have to give my goldfish away. I would take my cats and my poodle with me. . . . I would take my Scriptures so we wouldn't forget God commandments. . . . I would tell people what's going to happen and see if they would come with us. . . . I would pray a lot that we would be safe, and be able to stay together, and that God would watch over us.

—Brenda Reynolds, age 9

brothers to their feet, "but in truth it is God who has spared our lives this day. Is it not he whom we wound when we wound one another? Therefore, ask forgiveness of the Lord. Ask him."

In the eastern sky, the sunrise blazed like a royal city against mountainous clouds. It seemed far lands gleamed in the golden

rays. To Nephi God was saying, "Peace, my children, peace. There is a new day coming. A new land awaits you."

And when their prayers were done, and peace restored to each trembling heart, the little band continued, shaken but rejoicing, toward the tent of Father Lehi in the wilderness.



HIDDEN ANIMAL PUZZLE

Find the ten animals hiding. Can you name them? Which one is not a desert animal? See answer key on page 2.



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upon the poor, and the needy, and in withholding your substance from them?

- All ye that will persist in your wickedness, I say unto you, that these are they who shall be hewn down and cast into the fire except they speedily repent.

—Alma 3:93-97

Alma said, "I speak by way of commandment unto you that belong to the church; and unto those who do not belong to the church, I speak by way of invitation" (108).

Pride—the Downfall of a Nation

Pride was at the root of the Nephite nation's downfall. Pride is a progressive evil, as is witnessed by the rapid decline unto final destruction of this once highly blessed people. Early in Nephite history, Jacob recognized a dangerous practice among his people.

When they are learned, they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God . . . wherefore, their wisdom is

foolishness, and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish. But to be learned is good, if they hearken unto the counsels of God.

But wo unto the rich, who are rich as to the things of the world. For because they are rich, they despise the poor, and they persecute the meek, and their hearts are upon their treasures; wherefore their treasure is their God. And behold, their treasure shall perish with them also.

—2 Nephi 6:59-64

Wo unto him that has the law given; yea, that has all the commandments of God, like unto us, and that transgresseth them, and that wasteth the days of his probation; for awful is his state.

—2 Nephi 6:56

The record shows (4 Nephi 1:26-55) the Nephites ignored Jacob's and Alma's admonitions and began to:

- be proud and wear costly apparel;
- refuse to have things in common;

- be divided into classes;
- build up churches unto themselves for gain, with false priests and prophets;
- deny and persecute the true church of Christ;
- teach their children not to believe;
- build up secret oaths and combinations.

The deliberate return to wickedness on the part of some, after a golden age of near Zion conditions, quickly spread and engulfed the entire nation with the exception of a few individuals who remained faithful. Destruction was inevitable. Having known the joys of righteous living after Christ, the depravity to which an apostate people sank is almost beyond belief.

Pride in the Latter Days

In the latter days, the Lord spoke in loving-kindness, saying:

If ye seek the riches which it is the will of the Father to give unto you, ye shall be the richest of all people; for ye shall have the riches of eternity . . . the riches of the earth are mine to give.

—D&C 38:9a-b

Then he spoke sternly, "beware of pride, lest ye become as the Nephites of old" (D&C 38:9b).

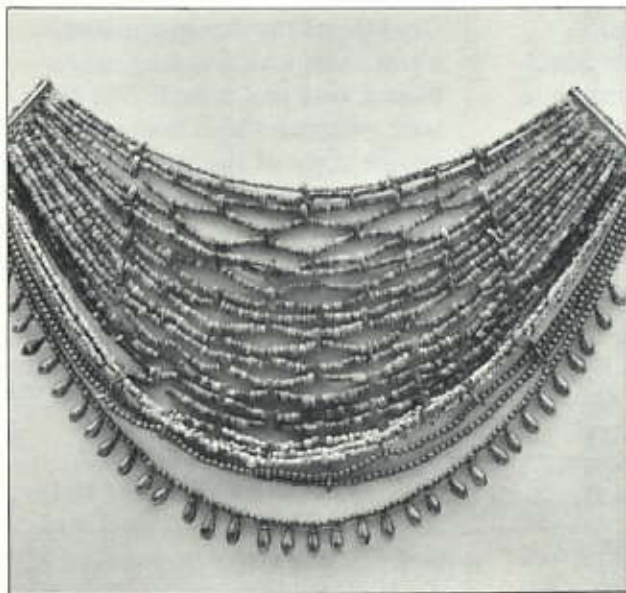


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Explored tombs reveal enormous wealth of the ancient people of Mesoamerica. Gold and jade jewelry testify of "riches" and "costly apparel;" a witness of pride and vanity; a beginning of a nation's downfall.

THE BLIND SHALL SEE

As a youth, I thrilled at many of the exciting stories from the Book of Mormon. I enjoyed seeing pictures of the remains of lost civilizations from South and Central America, but I had never had any kind of personal testimony relating to the Book of Mormon.

Later, as a college student, while reading the 29th chapter of Isaiah I recognized that this chapter was almost wholly about the Book of Mormon, especially verses 11-12. I also recognized the literal fulfillment of the prophecy in verse 29, that shortly after the book was to come forth Lebanon would become a fruitful land. Pictures and articles in *National Geographic* magazines showed reforestation programs had restored much of the forests in Israel.

The words, however, which really startled my attention are found in verse 30.

And in that day [in which the book was to come forth] . . . the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness.

I wondered, Were the blind all healed when the Book of Mormon came forth? The answer was obviously no.

Immediately there flashed into my mind a memory of Mr. Crabtree whom I knew as a youngster. He had a unique ability to read in bed in a dark room. He was totally blind! Yet, he could see out of his "obscurity and darkness" with the use of the Braille system.

I read the scripture again and noted it didn't say the blind would be healed. Instead, it said to me that even while in their blind state



Thelona taught Braille for about ten years, producing some excellent local braillists. One class was held within the walls of the Kansas State Penitentiary. Although much instruction was given by correspondence, numerous trips were also made to the prison where the men, under armed guard, received Thelona's personal instruction. Some certified braillists resulted. Through their excellent work, much material was produced for the church and for Kansas City blind school children.

Pictured with Thelona from left to right: William Osborne (in for 140 years), C. S. Anderson (in for life), and Charles Greer (forger) all reported by Thelona as excellent transcribers.

they would see "out of obscurity and darkness" when the book came forth.

This thought was so thrilling I could hardly wait to get to an encyclopedia to check if the idea was valid. There I found the Braille system was first developed in France by a teacher of the blind whose name was Louis Braille in the year 1829. It was first published in the year 1830. These were the very same years the Book of Mormon was translated and published.

I'll never forget this little gem of inspiration which I experienced when this scripture came alive for me. "And in that day . . . the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness."

—Testimony of Delbert D. Smith

Braille Book of Mormon

It wasn't until 1951, though, that the Book of Mormon was brailled. Due to the interest and

efforts of Apostle Reed M. Holmes and the splendid co-operation of Sister Myrtle Fortney of Denver, Colorado, the Book of Mormon was brailled by six members (including Sister Fortney) of the Braille Corps of the Denver Chapter of the American Red Cross. The task required more than a year and a half. The sixteen volumes which make up one Braille copy of the Book of Mormon was turned over to Apostle Holmes in 1951.

Ministry to the Blind

About this time the church began Ministry to the Blind, later called Services to the Blind. In the summer of 1955, the First Presidency asked Thelona D. Stevens to be the director. Her first task—learning to read and write Braille—was undertaken at once. Within ten weeks, Thelona completed the course.

Work for the blind started



Thelona and companion among stacks of Braille books. When the Kansas State School for the Blind discarded these to make way for new ones, they gave the books to Services to the Blind. Many of these, literally truckloads of books and other materials, were sent to Ethiopia.

“from scratch,” and under Thelona’s direction developed into a well-recognized community and worldwide project, serving both members of the church and nonmembers. Not only were church materials brailled, but street directories, textbooks, recipes, and many other practical printed materials.

Ethiopian Blind See

One of the most measurable outcomes of the Services to the Blind occurred in Asmara, Ethiopia. David Seal, one of the Braille trainees, went to Africa as a Peace Corps volunteer.

While there, David met another young man who became his friend. This young man was blind. In a country like Ethiopia, at that time, being blind meant one was destined to life as a beggar—to sleep in the streets and wake each morning crying out pitifully for enough sustenance for another day. Ethiopia didn’t have any facilities or schools for the blind, or special education.

David didn’t want his friend to

become a beggar. He thought if he could obtain a few materials in Braille, he would be able to help him. He wrote to Thelona asking for a small packet of materials.

After some weeks, when David received a call that he had some correspondence from the States, he hurried to the nearby port city. At first when he arrived, disappointment welled up inside him. No packages had come. But then he was ushered into another room where he saw huge boxes filled with books for the blind. Thelona and others had managed to acquire them from a nearby library which had replaced them with newer books.

In the days to come, more and more boxes continued to arrive until not only was there enough for one student, but enough for a school. The wire services in Ethiopia picked up the story, and every major newspaper and radio station in the country broadcast or printed the story of how a few people were trying to help the blind.

David wrote to Thelona, “The

kind deeds of Thelona and the church were known throughout the ancient empire of Ethiopia. Their efforts have been noted in the Amharic, Tigringya, English, Italian, and Arabic newspapers and have been broadcast on every radio station in the country.”

The publicity pricked the hearts of others. Money began to come in from people throughout the country wanting to help. Before long, the first school for the blind in Ethiopia opened. Word came to Thelona that “the Asmara School for the Blind has been officially opened by His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie, the First, King of Ethiopia, and now is in full operation.” In his remarks at the dedication, King Selassie expressed gratitude to the people of the church for making the school possible.

What became of Taye, the blind young man? Because of the materials sent, he was able to continue his education and even to enter the university. Although the only blind student in a class of 2500, he finished first.

Faith made it possible; faith and a desire to serve.

Out of Obscurity

I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people; yea, a marvelous work and a wonder. . . . And the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity.

—Isaiah 29:26, 30

Surely this promise accompanying the prophecy of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon has been fulfilled.



This article was compiled from various sources including the testimony of Seventy Delbert Smith, a sermon by Elder Michael Gatrost, writings of Thelona D. Stevens, and an article, “Ministry to the Blind,” in The Saints’ Herald, February 20, 1956.

NAKBE A Clue to Mayan Beginnings

Lyle Smith

The jungle in northern Guatemala still hides many unexplored cities. Such was the case

with Nakbe until 1989. Known to exist since the 1930s, Nakbe was explored this past year by a team of archaeologists from U.C.L.A. Scholars from BYU, Texas A&M, Smithsonian Institution, and the University of San Carlos in Guatemala also participated.

Of major importance, their findings resulted in the realization that this Mayan city dates between 600 and 400 B.C. This discovery closely following recent excavations at El Mirador, a large neighboring city, will cause current textbooks about the beginnings of the lowland Maya civilization to be rewritten. Until just the last year or so, prevailing opinion believed the lowland Maya only developed beyond a simple decentralized society about A.D. 300. Now, with El Mirador dating 200 B.C. to A.D. 200 and Nakbe dating possibly as early as 600 B.C., archaeologists recognize complex civilization, including large cities, flourished much earlier than previously understood.

Anthropologist David Friedel stated these new discoveries about the Maya are "revealing with breathtaking clarity not only their vision of the world, but also the breadth and complexity of their political organization" (Maugh 1989:4A).



Along with thousands of pieces of pottery, sculptures, figurines, and other artifacts, a large sculptured limestone slab was found at Nakbe. At ten feet tall, four feet wide and 18 inches deep, it depicts two figures and a god. A current theory proclaims the engraving portrays a king transferring power to his son as the deity oversees the exchange.

These findings recall the Book of Mormon account of the peoples of Lehi and Mulek, and fit Book of Mormon geography and chronology. If I understand Book of Mormon geography correctly, Lehi's group landed on the Pacific coast of Central America near today's El Salvador and the Mulekites landed in Mexico, probably on the north coast of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, both about 600 B.C. If the Mulekites came up (going south) the Sidon River (probably now known as the Usumacinta River), they would have spread over the Yucatan and the Peten of Guatemala. Nakbe, in all probability, is a Mulekite city.

On the other hand, El Mirador, beginning about 200 B.C., may well be a city established when Mosiah left the land of Nephi (highland Guatemala) and went down to the land of

Zarahemla (the Peten in Guatemala) to mingle with the Mulekites. Archaeological evidence supports the theory that people from highland Guatemala migrated north into lowland territory (the Peten) about 200 B.C., bringing with them a new religion and the ability to write (Willey and Matthews 1985:4).

Archaeology also documents a population explosion in the Guatemala highlands beginning about 500 B.C. (Parsons 1986:103). There is not much doubt in my mind that the arrival of the people of Lehi caused this growth. I believe the Nephites and Lamanites lived in highland Guatemala the first 400 years of their history in the promised land, and that Mosiah about 200 B.C. took a new religion and the ability to write down (north) into the lowlands, somewhere close to the cities we know today as Nakbe and El Mirador.

Our search for understanding of Book of Mormon chronology and geography moves forward by discoveries such as these at Nakbe. How exciting is our day!

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Note: Thanks to all readers who send clippings concerning new discoveries. Please be sure to include source, date, and page numbers.

Miracle at FRAA

Many who are associated with FRAA can testify of the Lord's keen and intense interest in FRAA's promotion of the Book of Mormon. In November 1989, the Lord's participation in our efforts occurred in a miraculous way. He saved the Foundation's mailing list.

Most of you know that computers, while capable of performing extraordinary tasks, are also subject to staggering failures. An inkling that something was wrong with the Foundation's computer came with the mailing of *The Witness* in August. Somehow all additions and changes made since the last mailing did not incorporate into the master list. It cost over \$1,000 for the returns with wrong addresses.

To discover what was wrong and to work toward printing the labels in-house, the Foundation enlisted the aid of Pat Beebe, who is an instructor in computer software operation. She determined that the version of our software program could not perform all the tasks we envisioned for it. To upgrade to the latest version, it was necessary to expand the memory on the hard disk. This was done.

While transferring the list into the new software version, Pat discovered that the old file with the mailing list had "crashed." The list of 15,000 names had

disintegrated.

After spending hours and days trying to work around the fragmented parts and restore the list, Pat was most discouraged. Pat, Carol Sue Martin, Donna Weddle, and Sherrie Smith talked it over and decided that if all else failed, they would hire someone to manually enter the 15,000 names and addresses again. They calculated it would take approximately four weeks of steady work. It would mean a month's delay in mailing *The Witness*.

Each one also said, "Let's pray about it and ask the Lord for help," which they earnestly did through the weekend.

Pat contacted the company that expanded the memory on the hard disk to return and reinsure it was working properly. On Monday, November 6, Affordable Typewriter came and discovered a couple connections were installed incorrectly.

After the adjustments were made, Pat tried one last time to see what could be done. A list of 13,000 names that previously hadn't shown up appeared. Pat and Sherrie (who was with her) decided that this was better than nothing even though it wasn't up-to-date.

Pat created a clean file and struck the necessary keys to transfer the newfound list into it. To their amazement, 15,000 names were transferred! They looked at each other, and with tears in her

eyes Pat said, "That list wasn't out there. I know it was gone."

After another hour of double checking to be sure, Pat discovered that the new list included even the very latest corrections made since October 12. It was a miracle!

The labels were printed by the end of the week in time for the mailing.

Pat later said, "I knew the information in *The Witness* was important and the Lord's intervention strongly confirmed this. It was a testimony to me that the Lord really cared about his people, that he was concerned enough to restore a physical database even down to the last entry made."

As the new year begins, we at FRAA invite you to take an active part—as the Lord did with the mailing list—in witnessing of Christ through the Book of Mormon to all people. Please RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP, and if you can contribute on a monthly basis, BECOME A MEMBER OF HELAMAN'S TWO THOUSAND.

And may the grace of God the Father, whose throne is high in the heavens, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who sitteth on the right hand of his power, until all things shall become subject unto him, be, and abide with you for ever. Amen.

—Moroni 9:28

Helaman's Two Thousand

I/We want to contribute:

\$20 \$30 \$50 \$100 \$500 \$_____

each month to help the Foundation advance the knowledge of Jesus Christ and the Book of Mormon among the Lamanites, Jews, and Gentiles.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Renew your membership!

I want to help FRAA continue sending *The Witness* detailing recent archaeological discoveries, testimonies, and instruction. Enclosed is my annual contribution.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Contribution \$ _____

Thelona D. Stevens - Writings

Paul Deaver epitomized the thoughts of many who have written to FRAA about Sister Stevens's death.

It was with sorrow and great thanksgiving that I heard of the passing of Thelona. Sorrow because of the loss—thanks because of the fabulous legacy of comprehensive study materials she left for us to utilize. Here was a ministry that has seldom been equaled in our generation.

Without doubt, Sister Stevens influenced thousands of lives through her writings. Thelona's best-known writings were scriptural textbooks—*Bible Studies*, *Book of Mormon Studies*, *Doctrine and Covenants—Church History Research Notes*; and *Doctrine and Covenants—Church History Studies*. She also wrote *The Light of the World*, a senior high quarterly, numerous study guides for leadership training courses; quarterlies and quarterly study helps; brochures; stories for *Stepping Stones*; study material for the Center Stake Women for five years; *Women's Distinctive Stewardship*; numerous articles for church periodicals; and of course her popular "Study along with Thelona Stevens" feature in *The Witness*.

Completed only weeks before her death, *Living Water* is a compilation of Sister Stevens's study articles from *The Witness*. It includes greater analytical research than was possible in the space available in *The Witness*.

Many of her books may be ordered using the form below.

ORDER FORM

Materials by Thelona D. Stevens

Qty.	Name of Book or Item	Price Each	Total Price
	<i>Bible Studies</i>	\$ 4.00	\$ _____
	<i>Book of Mormon Studies</i>	\$ 4.00	_____
	<i>God's Great Gathering</i>	\$ 2.00	_____
	<i>A Summary of the Book of Mormon</i>		
	<i>Book by Book</i>	\$ 2.00	_____
	<i>An Introduction to the Book of Mormon</i>	\$ 1.00	_____
	<i>Nephi, Son of Lehi</i>	\$ 1.75	_____
	<i>The Book of Remembrance, The Brass Plates, and the Inspired Version</i>	\$ 1.75	_____
	<i>Living Water</i>	\$ (TBA)	_____
	<i>Research Notes on the Doctrine and Covenants—Church History</i>	\$ 7.00	_____
	<i>Doctrine and Covenants—Church History Study</i>	\$ 4.00	_____
	<i>Light of the World</i>	\$ 2.50	_____
	<i>Fasting</i>	\$.50	_____
	<i>Seek Ye First</i>	\$.50	_____
	<i>Doctrine and Covenants—World History Study</i>	\$ 4.00	_____
	<i>Overview of the Book of Mormon - VHS Video</i>	\$15.95	_____
	<i>Thelona Stevens—Teacher (3 lessons) - VHS Video</i>	\$15.95	_____

TOTAL COST OF ITEMS \$ _____

ADD POSTAGE AND HANDLING: \$ _____

\$1.75 Minimum \$4.00 for \$30 to \$50
\$2.50 for \$15 to \$29 \$5.00 for over \$50

TOTAL AMOUNT FOR COST PLUS POSTAGE AND HANDLING \$ _____

SEND TO: Name _____

Street _____

City/State/Zip _____

1990 TOURS

Guatemala Tour II - \$1500

August 10-19, 1990

Great interest in the Guatemala tour of 1989 sponsored by FRAA spurred the creation of a second, similar tour. Sites will include the massive city of Tikal, Uaxactun or Seibal, Copan, Kaminaljuyu, the colonial capital of Antigua, and a few surprises.

The twenty reserved places are filling up quickly. If you would like to go, please fill in the reservation form and send in with your deposit NOW! The Guatemala II tour is an "extra" offering of the Foundation.

Gulf Coast - \$1200 (Tentative)
December 22 - January 1, 1991

The annual tour during the 1990 Christmas holidays will concentrate on Olmec (Jaredite) sites and artifacts displayed at Jalapa, Tres Zapotes, and La Venta Park at Villahermosa. It will also include Palenque, hopefully Yaxchilan, and a view of Cerro Rabon, a candidate for Hill Cumorah. For more information write Lyle Smith, 32701 E. Pink Hill Rd., Grain Valley, MO 64029.

Reservation Form

Please make reservations for the person(s) named below for the tour indicated. Make checks payable to FRAA.

- Guatemala II
 Gulf Coast

Enclosed is a deposit of \$ _____
(\$300 per person for Guatemala)
(\$300 per person for Gulf Coast)

Last Name _____ First _____

Street _____

City/State/Zip _____

Area Code _____ Daytime Phone _____ Evening _____

Date _____ Signature _____

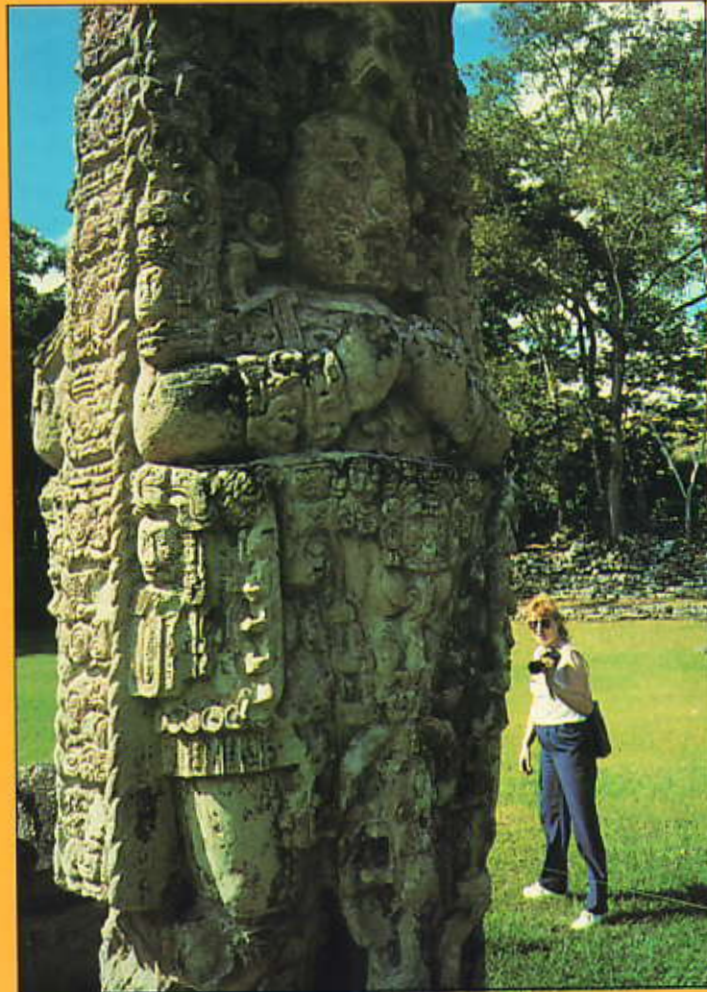
Names of other person(s) going _____

GLIMPSES OF GUATEMALA



Pat Beebe

The usual tourist rarely visits El Ceibal (or Seibal) because of its difficult access. To reach this site, 20 adventurous travelers on the Foundation sponsored tour to Guatemala traveled two hours over bumpy, dusty roads; crossed the Río de la Pasión on a barge; took the bus until it could go no further; and then climbed into the back of a four-wheel drive truck to cover the last six kilometers on a trail through dense jungle with mud holes a rhinoceros would love. This was a never to be forgotten journey!



Lyle Smith

Stela "C" at Copan, Honduras with its original paint still visible, dwarfs Pat Beebe, FRAA computer consultant. For more about Pat, see "Miracle at FRAA" in this issue.

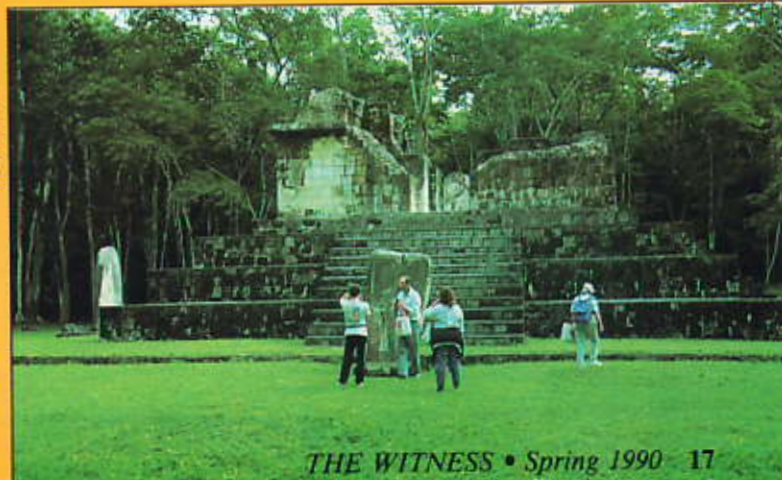
Tropical rain forest surrounds the site of El Ceibal. Only an occasional call of a macaw or monkey shatters the hushed stillness. The best-known part of Ceibal is this small temple and four magnificent stelae standing at the base of the stairways on each of the four sides. The stelae, carved on only one side, depict personages in full regalia accompanied with hieroglyphs.



Lyle Smith

Vendors like this young Maya girl encircle Antigua's main square with their brightly colored woven wares spread on the ground. Maya women weavers inherit their skill from their forbearers. According to *Guatemala Guide* by Paul Glassman, "Weaving and the manufacture of clothing were highly developed crafts in Guatemala for centuries before the arrival of the Spaniards. In all parts of the highlands, women spend long hours spinning thread, weaving intricate and brilliantly colored pieces of cloth, and sewing them into garments not for special use, but for everyday wear (31)." Helaman 2:133 records: "Their women did toil and spin, and did make all manner of cloth, of fine twined linen, and cloth of every kind . . ."

Pat Beebe



SHE GAVE HER LIFE

Jim Rogers

Memorial Address for Thelona D. Stevens, November 27, 1989, at the Stone Church.

Jesus said, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15). I don't believe that I've ever met anyone that more qualifies to fit the name of saint than Sister Thelona Stevens; so totally dedicated and consecrated to her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Forty-two years in this building she taught a class—over four decades. Her husband was a priesthood member and served this congregation through his priesthood. She wrote how many books and how many articles!

I'm a convert to this church. In 1957 we had to drive 120 miles, round trip, in order to meet with just a handful of saints, about ten or fifteen members. We met in a little upstairs apartment; very humble surroundings. I remember distinctly the first book we studied was *Book of Mormon Studies* by Thelona Stevens. I still have that little book. The pages are ragged and torn, the back is off, it's held together by masking tape.

When we finished it, we started to study *Bible Studies*. These two books helped introduce me to the Scriptures and to my Lord. I'm absolutely convinced that these two books, as well as her other writings, have been a blessing to thousands of people across many lands.

In the last two or three years since I "gathered in," Brother Lee Bodiford and I, on many occasions went to administer to Sister

Thelona. Every time, she got better. It wasn't anything that we did, it was because of her great faith in God and her strong belief in priesthood.

Being a humble, shy person, she left instructions for me not to say much about her. She asked me to talk about two things: the Book of Mormon and the Lord Jesus Christ, whom she loved so much that she gave her life in trying to serve him.

And so it is a pleasure for me this afternoon to stand before you to bear witness of the Book of Mormon and its truthfulness. For the Book of Mormon is indeed a marvelous work and a wonder, just like the prophet Isaiah said it would be.

It's not just another incident in our Restoration movement. The Book of Mormon has literally ushered in this last dispensation of time in which we live.

The Book of Mormon is a second witness that Jesus is the Christ. Our Lord has told us that in two or more witnesses shall all truth be established. The Book of Mormon is that second witness and is to go together with the Bible to confound false doctrine. The Book of Mormon is for the convincing of the Jews and the Gentiles that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

This restored work was designed to prepare the way for the second coming of Christ, and designed to be the preparatory work for Zion and his coming kingdom. The Book of Mormon is the greatest revelation that has

come to this world since the advent of Jesus Christ and the compilation of the New Testament Scripture.

It is through the Book of Mormon that we have the fullness of the gospel, and it is only through the fullness of the gospel that we can ever have Zion and the kingdom. That is why this book means so much to you and me. That's why it meant so much to Sister Thelona. She gave her life to study and promote this great book.

Sister Thelona loved her Lord greatly and deeply. Her faith was not only unwavering, but she always found joy in his service.

And the Lord Jesus Christ—he died on Calvary's cross so that on November 19, 1989 at 5:45 p.m. Thelona Stevens might have eternal life. The King of Kings commanded her spirit to be free from this body and this world, and find rest. Her sickness and death have passed; no more congestive heart failure, no more shortness of breath.

In reality we ought to rejoice! I think we have it backwards. We ought to weep at birth because of what a child might have to face, and we ought to rejoice at death. I feel today we should truly rejoice because Sister Thelona is with her Lord. Today she is with Moses, Abraham, Isaac, Alma, Mosiah, and the Brother of Jared. And who knows, tomorrow she may sit down and talk with Joseph Smith. Wouldn't you like to hear that conversation? As a

servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, I testify to you that Sister Thelona Steven's salvation is sure and her reward is certain.

Now I would commend you to seek this Jesus

Jesus Christ is going to come back some day—not too long in the distant future—and when he does, all eyes shall be upon him, every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. When he comes back, he will speak in a soft voice, yet penetrating, and say, "Arise, and go forth" (D&C 108:3c). When he says that, the whole earth will shake, the mountains will tremble, the graves will be opened (D&C 28:7a), and the sea will give up its dead (Rev. 20:13), and Sister Thelona, and many more like her will come forth. They will then spend, with the Lord Jesus Christ on this earth, a thousand years.

Sister Thelona believed in the resurrection. I went back just recently to the last publication of *The Witness*. In it she had an article about the resurrection. I read with great interest about the things that were on her mind not too long ago. It testified of her deep faith and love for her Lord and her strong belief in the resurrection.

When the Holy City comes down Sister Thelona will be there

with many others, and we will fall on their necks and they will fall on our necks and we will kiss each other. The Lord says in Revelation 21:4:

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.

How do we know this? The Lord God has spoken and God cannot lie.

If Sister Thelona were here today, I would like to say this to her. I hope that she can hear.

Sister Thelona, according to the eternal plan, the body returns to the earth as it was and the spirit to God who gave it. Of all that is material, we say earth to earth, ashes to ashes, and dust to dust. But to the Spirit we cry, now thou art free. Free from pain and sickness and sorrow; free from all physical handicap; free to dream, to sing, to work, and live and love; free to greet old friends and new, even Jesus Christ; and free to adventure with them forever. Therefore, we say, Sister Thelona, goodbye until tomorrow. Goodbye until we meet again.

And I think Sister Thelona, if she were here today, would say to us, paraphrasing the words of Nephi and Moroni:

And now all those who are of the house of Israel, and all ye ends of the earth, I speak to you as the voice of one crying from the dust.

For I now bid farewell to all those whom I love, to both the Jews and the Gentiles, that all men shall know that my garments are not spotted with the blood of this generation. For in the end ye shall know that I have seen Jesus, and that he has talked with me face to face.

Now I would commend you to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written, that the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which bears record of them, may be and abide in you for ever.

And now I bid you all farewell until my spirit and body shall reunite, and I am brought forth triumphant through the air to meet you before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah, the eternal Judge of both the quick and the dead. Amen.

(The above are scriptures paraphrased from: 2 Nephi 15:16; Ether 5:31-41; and Moroni 10:31.)

An audio cassette tape of the full memorial service may be purchased at the School of Saints, 520 West Maple, Independence, MO 64050.



There's an old, old path,
Where the sun shines through
Life's dark storm clouds
From its home of blue.

Find the old, old path,
'Twill be ever new,
For the Savior walks
All the way with you.

In this old, old path,
Are my friends most dear,
And I walk with them,
With the angels near.

'Tis an old, old path,
Shadowed vales between,
Yet I fearless walk
With the Nazarene.

Refrain

In this old, old path,
Made strangely sweet
By the touch divine of
His blessed feet.

Vida E. Smith

The Old, Old Path

Oil painting by Thelona D. Stevens
May 1982



Don Beebe

The Witness

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