

# The Witness

The Foundation For Research On Ancient America



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China's Dragon

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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.

Articles and the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent the view of the Editorial Committee. Unsigned articles are attributable to the editor.

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**Cover...**

Handpainted papercut of the Chinese dragon displayed on imperial yellow, the color sacred to the emperor. For the Chinese, red, the color surrounding the dragon, China's most beloved symbol of goodness, represents joy.

Photo by Don Beebe.



My husband and I lived in Asia (India, Indonesia, and Afghanistan) for seven years. While there, I developed a love of things Chinese. Although I learned appreciation for the cultures of all of these countries, I felt especially drawn to the Chinese artistic expression.

China's presence permeates many places. In India, I purchased my first piece of Chinese blue and white porcelain and have had a passion for Chinese designs and motifs ever since.

We returned to the United States in 1976, and soon thereafter, became acquainted with a book called *Peoples, Places, and Prophecies* by Verneil Simmons. In her book she makes—what was to me—a startling comment. “It is not impossible that the Jaredite colony traveled through the Yellow River basin and left enough people in the vicinity of the Shantung Peninsula to initiate the beginning of the civilization in China” (45).

I'd never considered this before. The record doesn't say ALL the group came to the promised land. It was certainly food for thought.

That some should remain to start a new nation would be in harmony with God's plan to scatter people over all the earth at the time of the great tower. The Chinese themselves agree their civilization began approximately the same time as the great tower.

This idea, along with the reading of *Discovery of Genesis*, and my passion for things Chinese prompted me to a serious study of ancient China. What I have discovered in language, geography, ocean currents, legends, customs, and art forms confirms the Chinese once knew the gospel—whether once a part of the Jaredites or some other group.

This issue presents only one small portion of the evidences. I hope it challenges you to continue prayerful research on this little studied subject.



*Sherrie Kline Smith*

Sherrie Kline Smith  
Editor

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# Foundation News

Election of a new president for the Foundation took place at the Board meeting on April 22, 1990. Michael Gatrost, formerly second vice president, unanimously was elected as president. Roy Weldon was re-elected first vice president; Dale Godfrey as second vice president; Bea Luther and Carol Sue Martin both were re-elected to the positions of secretary and treasurer, consecutively.

The remaining board of directors include Ella Coile, Michael Friend, Scott Nixon, Sherrie Smith, Audrey Stubbart, Carol Turner, Ronald Turner, Donna Weddle, Fred Weddle, and Steve Willey.

Become better acquainted with FRAA's new president by reading the interview with him beginning on page 16.

## FRAA Annual Mesoamerica Tour

Get out your best atlas, settle in a comfortable chair, and plot the course for the FRAA Gulf Coast tour beginning December 22, 1990. Leaving Mexico City, the first stop will be Cacaxtla and its murals. From there to Puebla, city of tiles, and over to Jalapa, the Athens of Mexico. The third day, leave Veracruz and drive to Hill Rabon, a candidate for Hill Cumorah, and then to Catemaco to spend Christmas day. After stopping briefly at Tres Zapotes and La Venta, the tour will head to Palenque. With good luck, Yaxchilan will be included.

Only a few places remain open. If you want to come along, please contact Lyle Smith NOW (816) 229-5192.

## Roy Weldon

We thought our readers would like to know that Roy Weldon now resides at Rest Haven. His address is: Rest Haven, 1500 W. Truman Rd., Independence, Missouri 64050.

## Committee Member Earns Degree

Congratulations to Glenn Scott! In June 1990, Glenn, a member of FRAA's Archaeological Research Committee, received his B.S. degree in anthropology from the University of Kansas.

## Regional Book of Mormon Days

Recently, David Macomber from Fairhaven, Massachusetts, who attended the first FRAA regional Book of Mormon day held at Lexington, Massachusetts, May 1989, wrote: "Like most that believe the angel message, I accept the Book of Mormon on faith first, but do appreciate the many undeniable physical testaments that serve to vindicate all of the Lord's true prophets and add reinforcement to the eternal truths contained therein. For Book of Mormon believers, so many proofs are coming forth, aided by the Holy Spirit, and given (I feel) for strengthening our faith and building courage. That courage will be needed for a valiant testimony of Christ and to be powerful witnesses of his restored Scriptures."

FRAA seeks to share not only "many, undeniable physical testaments," but also spiritual insights, drama, and testimonies at the all-day seminars.

Helaman's Two Thousand makes these regional meetings possible. This year, three all-day meetings will be held: one on July 14 at Arlington, Texas; the second annual at Miami, Oklahoma, August 18; and one in Michigan, September 22, 1990, at the McMorrان Place (Conference Center) in Port Huron, Michigan.

Plan now to attend and bring a friend! For more information contact Michael Gatrost at 9201 Cyclone School Rd., Lee's Summit, MO 64064, (816) 525-6391.

## Building Fund

A big thanks to all who have made special contributions to FRAA for procurement of office and library space. A building fund has now been established and anyone wishing to contribute specifically to this fund may do so by sending to the FRAA Building Fund, 410 N. Pleasant, Independence, MO 64050.

## Helaman's Two Thousand

Members of Helaman's Two Thousand, a special group of contributors, constitute the backbone of FRAA. Their unstinted financial gifts and prayers allow FRAA to continue its work of promoting the divinity of Jesus Christ through the Book of Mormon.

The goal of 2,000 members, many who contribute on a monthly basis, is almost half met. Won't you answer the *mighty summons* and join in this "army of the Lord?" Send your contribution to Helaman's Two Thousand, 410 N. Pleasant, Independence, MO 64050. Let us know if you want to be a monthly supporter and 12 envelopes will be forwarded to you for your use.

When you join, you will receive a quarterly newsletter especially for members of Helaman's Two Thousand which keeps you informed on how your money helps the Foundation advance knowledge of Jesus Christ and the Book of Mormon.



## Calendar



August 18, 1990

Miami, Oklahoma Regional Spend a Day with the Book of Mormon Conference

September 22, 1990

Michigan Regional Spend a Day with the Book of Mormon Conference—McMorrان Place (Conference Center) Port Huron

October 6, 1990

Sixth Annual Spend a Day with the Book of Mormon Conference—RLDS Auditorium

December 22-  
January 1, 1991

Mexico Gulf Coast Tour

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# 龍

China's dragon and Mesoamerica's feathered serpent share many similarities. Book of Mormon students believe the feathered

serpent of Mesoamerica, Quetzalcoatl\*, symbolizes Jesus Christ. Could the dragon also represent Jesus Christ? The numerous common characteristics imply the likenesses are not coincidental.

Just as Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent, is the most prominent symbol, art motive, and legendary hero to Mesoamerica (Nicholson 1967:78)—so is the dragon to the Chinese.

**The Chinese most thoroughly believe in the existence of this mysterious and marvelous creature. It is the best known and most important motif in Chinese design.**

—Williams 1976:136

"The dragon, most typical of all the art motifs of China, proves to be also one of the most ancient" (Silcock 1948:5). Archaeology in China has confirmed the presence of the dragon design in earliest times. The neolithic Yangshao, Hongshan, and Longshan† cultures portray definite images of the dragon (Xin 1988:10). The famous Shang dynasty (1766 to 1122 B.C.—dates differ according to author), which follows the legendary Xia dynasty (2205 to 1766 B.C.), employs the dragon profusely on its well-known bronzes.

The dragon was also present in the earliest civilization in Mesoamerica.

**The 'paw-wing' motif, for example, can be shown to be an element of the**



**winged dragon... This whole intricate symbolic code appears to have been in use from the first appearance of the Olmecs.**

—Miller 1986:19

Peter David Joralemon in his study of Olmec iconography identifies one of the Olmec gods as no less than Quetzalcoatl (1971:82-84).

**God VII is a serpent deity who is generally portrayed with avian attributes—feathers and wings in particular. In other words, God VII is a feathered serpent!**

Many Shang dynasty traits show up in Mesoamerica. In a journal article, anthropologist Betty J. Meggers considers corresponding characteristics of the Olmec civilization (mother culture of Mesoamerica believed to be the Jaredites) and the Shang dynasty of China. Enumerated, among others, are writing (similar characters), reverence of jade, prominence of the tiger or jaguar, and the scroll-wing motif.

**Serpents and birds were also emphasized and features of these animals were sometimes combined in the iconography of both cultures to produce a dragon.**

—1975:17

The dragon and feathered serpent are mythological animals.

No known creature alive resembles these images.

While Quetzalcoatl is most commonly depicted as a serpent with wings or avian plumage, China's dragon incorporates a variety of forms. "The earliest known dragon types in decoration, [however], resemble fish or snakes..." (Silcock 1948:5). Three Chinese authors in

a beautifully illustrated recent text agree.

**The oldest image of the dragon discovered in archaeological excavation has the body of a snake. We can therefore say the dragon developed from the deified snake.**

—Xin 1988:11

Allen and Griffiths in *The Book of The Dragon* debate whether the dragon evolved from the snake or vice versa.

**It is interesting to consider whether the serpent was gradually elaborated into a dragon, or whether the one-time dragon degenerated into a serpent, whose past glory is sometimes remembered in dragon legends. Surprisingly enough, the suggestion that the ancient dragon may have degenerated into a snake, rather than the other way around is at least a possibility.**

—1979:8

The authors of *Discovery of Genesis*, a book that discusses how the Chinese language or characters reveal the Genesis story, support this idea. They ask the question, "Is it possible that the serpent, which allowed itself to be the medium for Lucifer, actually had wings at this time, and was able to stand upright?" (Kang and Nelson 1979:61). The serpent's punishment infers such a situation. What greater penalty could be given to a creature formerly

\*The Nahuatl name of Quetzalcoatl, employed throughout also refers to the Maya Kulkulcan and Quiche Gucumatz gods, all meaning "plumed serpent."

†Transliteration of Chinese characters into the Roman alphabet varies. For instance, Longshan formerly read Lungshan. Dragon was *lung*, but in Pinyin, the system adopted by the Republic of China in 1979, is *long*. Words in this article and chart appear as found in each source referenced; not all follow the same system.

able to move through the heavens on wings than “upon thy belly shalt thou go” (Gen. 3:20)? The Chinese character for reptile, according to Kang and Nelson, includes feathers (figure 1).



Figure 1. Reptile Feathers

From the earliest times in Sumer, Egypt, China, Mesoamerica, and other cultures, wings (or feathers) have been added to creatures which normally do not have wings, creating unnatural forms. The bird, which naturally has wings, is often combined with other images such as bulls, lions, humans, and serpents. Both China and Mesoamerica join birdlike features to the serpent figure to produce a dragon. (The legs on China's dragon appeared later [Silcock 1948:5].)

Why this combination? Authorities for both cultures propose nonconflicting answers. It's the uniting of the earthly/matter (serpent) with the heavenly/spirit (bird)—a visual expression of man's inherent desire to communicate with God in the heavens and an acknowledgement of God's reciprocal involvement in man's life.

Quetzalcoatl, whose name translates feathered serpent, represents to the Mesoamericans a god (heavenly) come to dwell on earth (Sejourne 1960:38). His complex symbolism deserves its own article. It should be pointed out, though, that not every feathered serpent found in Mesoamerica may signify the God Quetzalcoatl (Weaver 1972:205).

For China's dragon, because a bird moves naturally in its ability

to fly, it was “taken to symbolize access to the realm above. . .” (Childs-Johnson 1989:59). The *feng* bird motif found on Shang bronzes denotes the *feng* wind spirit depicted on Shang oracle bone inscriptions. The *feng* wind spirit acts as intermediary between heaven and man (Childs-Johnson 1989:58).



This eleventh century B.C. Chinese Bronze *yu*, unearthed in 1965, depicts interchangeable bird and dragon motifs. Photo of plate 101 used by permission from *The Chinese Exhibition* published in Kansas City, Missouri by the Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum in 1975

Childs-Johnson believes the iridescent peacock is the model for the *feng* bird motif. Mesoamericans use the rare and beautiful quetzal bird as a model. (To Christians, the gentle dove symbolizes the Holy Spirit, a manifestation of God.)

The serpent embodies some basic characteristics of symbolic significance which make it a suitable image to combine with the bird to produce a dragon, an ancient symbol of deity (Simmons 1986:276). “Because it sheds its skin, it symbolizes resurrection” (Cirlot 1962:287).

**Both [dragon and serpent] are also connected with immortality—they either possess it, or can confer it, sometimes both. It has often been suggested that one of the reasons that the snake, in particular, attracted more reverence**

**than any other living creature was because it was seen to shed its skin and emerge slightly larger and infinitely brighter than before. This led to the belief that the snake died but was reborn, and had therefore conquered death.**

—Allen 1979:11

The serpent was also regarded as possessing the secrets of life, thus wisdom and healing (Whittick 1935:99-103).

The uniting of the bird with the serpent creates a mythical animal. It is difficult to trace an analogy between the dragon and any natural species.

**There are no such things as dragons. Yet the dragon as a symbol has been used by virtually every culture throughout the history of the world. . . . The dragon has immense power as a symbol. . . .**

—Allen 1979:6

The use of symbols (“a visible material representation of an immaterial object, idea, or personality suggested by a sign or mark” Miller 1958:713) permeates all cultures and civilizations since the beginning of recorded time. Human nature seems to demand an expression of deity and its teachings in a tangible way. For the Christian it means the good shepherd for Jesus Christ; dove for the Holy Spirit; pomegranates for fruits of the spirit; pelican for the sacrificial Christ, and so forth.

To the uninitiated, understanding the symbols may not occur readily or easily. Different groups of people develop their own symbols. Interpreting symbols from a foreign culture or even a group within one's own country

(Continued on page 8)



## Similarities

### China's Dragon

- Best known and most important art motif (4:37) \* •
- One of the most ancient images (22:5)
- Mythical creature featured with wings, plumes or feathers (26:133)
- Three main dragons: lung, li, and chiao (4:38; 23:133); subterranean, aerial, and aquatic (6:87)
- Intermediary between the basic three levels: heaven, earth, and underworld (6:87-88)
- Round fiery object (2:37-39; 26:138)
- Represents forces of nature (4:37)
- Four kinds of dragon:  
 T'ien lung—celestial  
 Shen lung—spiritual, controls winds and rain  
 Ti lung—earth  
 Fu-ts'ang lung—hidden treasure (2:41; 12:50)
- Strong association with water (2:36)  
 sea, river, waves  
 rain-producing clouds
- Cloud and thunder pattern (22:30)
- Essence of strength and beauty (4:37)
- Gave gift of writing (26:136)
- Benevolent toward mankind (2:34)
- Yin and Yang—negative/positive life forces (2:38-39)
- Immortality, rebirth (2:37)
- Divine—dies of own accord (26:133)
- Healing (curative power of crushed dragon bones, fat, cast-off skins, etc.) (12:58-63)
- Sacred emblem of the East (20:58)
- Emblem of emperor (4:38)
- Spirit of change and life itself; enlightenment, self-realization (2:39)
- \*Numbers in parentheses refer to references listed on p. 2.



### Mesoamerica's Feathered Serpent

- Most powerful figure and dominant art motif (6:289)
- Evident in earliest civilizations (17:19)
- Mythical creature, combination of serpent and feathers (19:79-82)
- Triple symbolism—water, earth, and heaven (19:82)
- Quetzalcoatl comes down from heaven, lives on earth, descends to underworld to rise again (19:91; 21:138)
- Sun (2:59); Venus/Lord of Dawn (19:91)
- Lord of creative forces/Breath of Life (9:130)
- Four gods associated with Quetzalcoatl  
 Ometeotl—supreme, heavenly (19:114; Maya name Itzamna 17:470)  
 Ehecatl—wind (19:11)  
 Tlaloc—water (21:87)  
 Tezcatlipoca—underworld/matter (19:26)
- Association with water  
 seashells (21:138-139; 19:90)  
 Rain God Tlaloc (21:87)
- Double squared or stepped spirals (9:188)
- Strength and wisdom; all that is good (19:27)
- Invented arts, science, calendar, and writing (11:205)
- Constant benefactor of man (21:26)
- Dual forces in opposition (19:106)
- Rebirth/saves man from death (21:118)
- Divine/Redeemer—gives own life and blood (19:96; 21:69, 71; 24:205)
- Healing, performer of miracles (19:83)
- East—holy land whence Quetzalcoatl arose (19:95)
- Symbol and name of priest/kings (19:79, 88)
- Source and origin of movement; spirit must enter matter (19:89-91)
- Symbol of man's condition and possibilities (19:82)

Therefore if any man live in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away;  
 behold, all things are become new.—2 Corinthians 5:17



*delicate . . ."* (Berrin 1988:137). Connie Smith's line drawing depicts one of four feathered serpents from these wall murals. The paintings were originally looted and sold to private individuals. This particular serpent mural has now been returned to Mexico.

**China Dragon** from page 6 should not be unduly influenced by an accepted system of symbols.

The normal reaction of a Western mind to the dragon as "the essence of strength and beauty" (Carter 1977:37) is how could something evil like the dragon represent something good? Biblical teachings clearly pinpoint the serpent or dragon with the devil (Gen. 3:6-21; Rev. 12:4-17; and others).

Yet, 2 Nephi 8:9 says "And *all things* which have been given of God from the beginning of the world, unto man, are the typifying of him (emphasis added)." See also Genesis 6:6 and D&C 85:8-12. The serpent's association with new life in the shedding of its old skin may be the very reason Satan chose to speak through the serpent in an effort to discredit its role in "typifying" Christ.

Jesus Christ even identifies himself with a serpent. Why would Christ choose something evil to represent him? In John 3:14, Jesus tells "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." The Book of Mormon provides greater light.

**And as he [Moses] lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, even so shall he be lifted up who should come. And as many as should look upon that serpent should live, even so as many as should look upon the Son of God, with faith, having a contrite spirit, might live...**

—Helaman 3:47

The Book of Mormon also distinguishes the poisonous serpents sent to plague the wandering Israelites as "fiery-flying serpents" (1 Nephi 5:134). Perhaps the brazen serpent also had wings. Other references in the Bible and Book of Mormon speak of Christ arising with healing in his "wings" (Malachi 4:2; 2 Nephi 11:22; and 3 Nephi 11:23). Again,

the wing symbolism.

Adding wings to the serpent could symbolize Christ's triumph over sin. With his help, man too can rise above sin.

Through the ages, the dragon stood for good and evil. "This



*This beautiful caduceus adorns a new physician's building on R.D. Mize Road in Blue Springs, Missouri. The caduceus originated in Sumer some five thousand years ago.*

facility of the dragon for being identified with opposing sides is one of his most confusing attributes" (Allen 1979:24).

Christian art portrays the serpent as Satan, or sin. St. George slaying the dragon personifies triumph over evil. In the same culture, the caduceus, two intertwined serpents on a winged staff, appears as an emblem of physicians denoting healing.

The duality persists today.

China's dragon and Mesoamerica's feathered serpent exemplify goodness. "Serpent and dragon cults of china... as well as the feathered serpent of Mexico, have an implication of 'precious'..." (Covarrubias 1954:45).

**Quetzalcoatl is the lord of the creative forces, the sky and the wind, the Breath of Life. Quetzalcoatl stood for all that was good in this world, peace, art, wisdom, and prosperity.**

—Covarrubias 1957:130

China's dragon represents forces of nature, the gatherer of clouds, the rain god. As the sacred symbol of the East, he

brought new life. "It is common opinion that the dragon, being a divine animal, dies of its own accord" (Williams 133-134).

Who originated the Chinese civilization? Could some of the Jaredite group have remained behind to begin a new nation?

Jesus Christ led the Jaredites from their homeland in Sumer to the ocean shore in a cloud. The Chinese depict the dragon most often among the clouds.

Could the dragon also represent Jesus Christ?



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(Continued on page 15)





# *The* **Junior Witness**

The Foundation For Research On Ancient America

FALL 1990

NUMBER 15

## **THE GREAT TOWER**



**“Oh, Father, I too have noticed a change within the hearts of the people,”  
Pagag exclaimed as he sat down next to his father.**

**J. Edward Slaughter**  
Illustrated by Rick Farley  
(A fictionalized account of  
Ether 1:7-21 and 3:29.)

"Father, what's going to happen?" questioned young Pagag\* as he ran up the cobblestone path to greet the Brother of Jared.

"My son, the Lord's wrath will soon fall upon the people of this city," the Brother of Jared declared in a saddened whisper as they entered their home. "They have gone too far! The Great Tower has become an idol to this people. It has become another god to them! How slow we are to remember the words of our fathers that man can serve only the Lord God and live." The Brother of Jared shook his head in despair.

"Oh, Father, I too have noticed a change within the hearts of the people," Pagag exclaimed as he sat down next to his father. "My friends are different. Everyday I see fights in the streets. Even my best friend, Joshua, has turned against me. Yesterday he called me names and made fun of me in front of the other children. They call me a coward because I refuse to steal dates and figs from the market. Many of my playmates are beginning to wear costly clothing. Their kindness and love I once knew has disappeared."

"Yes, my son, you have observed well," said his father with love in his eyes for young Pagag. "The Spirit of Almighty God has revealed these things unto you. Now I must pray as I have never prayed before that the judgment of God will not fall upon our families. The elders of the city no longer take time to pray over the affairs of our people. The Lord has withdrawn his Spirit from them."

"Father, I'm afraid!" Pagag cried. "Is the Lord going to punish us? I love my friends! I love my cousins, Aaron and Sarah! What will happen to them?"

"My son, the Lord will have mercy upon those who turn to him. Soon the language of those people who have strayed will be confounded by the Word of the Lord. They will be scattered to and fro upon the face of the land," the Brother of Jared proclaimed to his firstborn son. "Your Uncle Jared has asked me to pray to the Lord that the language of our families and friends will not be changed. Go now, my son, to your bed, while I enter the prayer chamber to call upon the Lord. Surely he will have mercy upon us. Pray for your young friends and cousins. The Lord will hear your prayers."

Pagag sat on his bed with tears flowing down his face as he removed his sandals. His heart

was heavy and his mind filled with many questions.

He thought of his playmates in the city. He thought of Aaron and Sarah. If their language is changed, how will I understand them? Will my friends no longer be able to talk to me? Will we still like one another? The very thought of not being able to play with my cousins is more than I can stand. Father said the change would happen soon, but how soon? What will happen to our family when the people of the city find out that our language has not changed? Is the Lord going to scatter our families to and fro upon the land? Where will he send us? The wilderness is very dangerous. The desert on the other side of the mountains is hot

**With renewed faith, Pagag knelt down beside his bed. He asked the Lord to spare their language.**



and dry.

Pagag thought about his father as he lay down on his bed. Many times they would go into the mountains to hunt and fish. Each year his father would climb the tallest mountain peak with him. As they looked out over the valley below, the Brother of Jared would tell Pagag about the story of Creation. As they shared together, they felt close to the Lord. His Spirit would encircle them with the power of his great love. His father taught him to pray with faith in the God who hears and answers prayers.

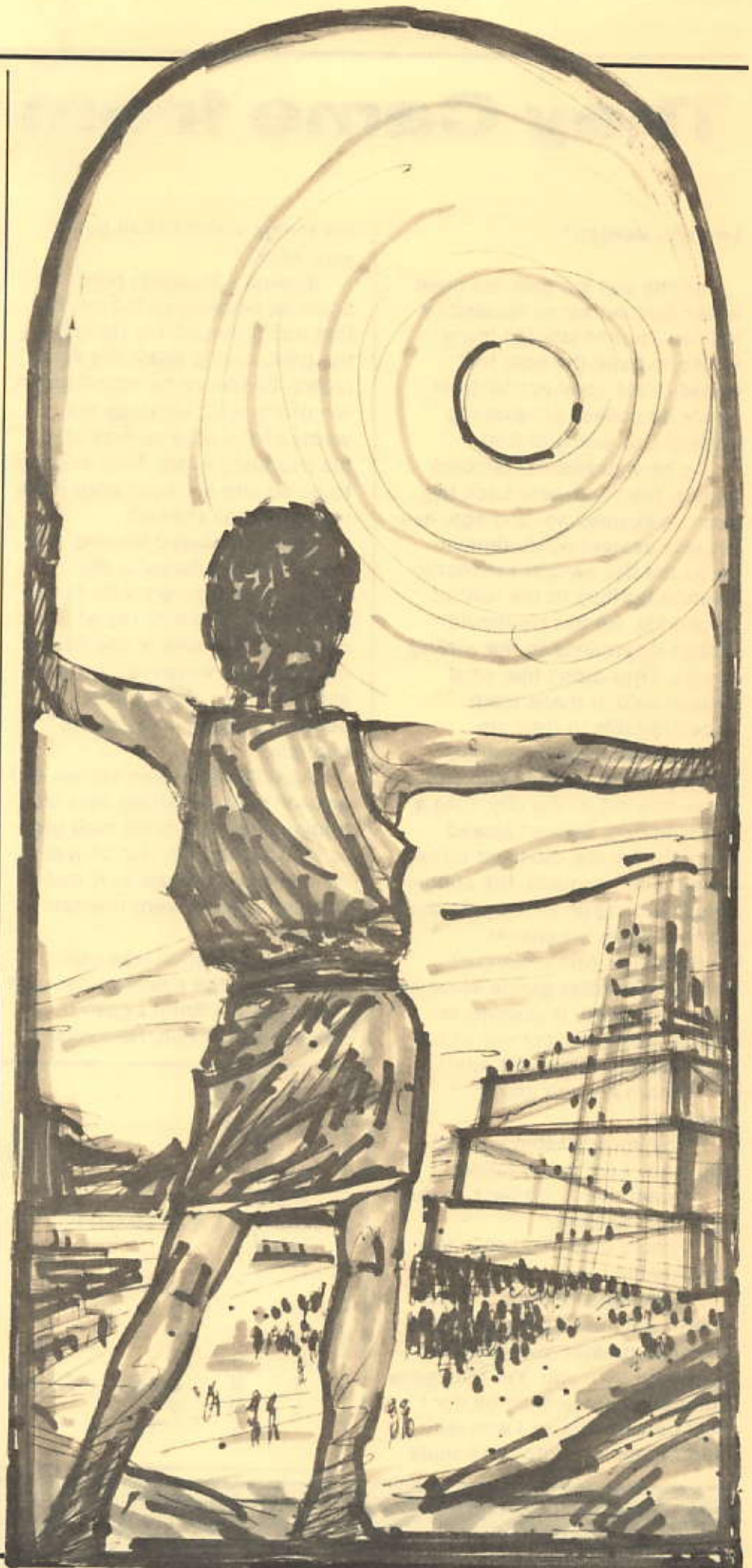
I remember when I was sick, Father laid his hands upon my head and prayed for me. It was as though the Lord reached down from heaven and touched me, for I was immediately healed by his great and marvelous power. I still remember the look on Father's face when I arose, well again. Tears came to his eyes as he knelt down beside me, praising the Lord for his great love for our family. The Spirit of the Lord was so strong that night. Yes! It was the same Spirit that I felt when Father shared with me tonight!

With renewed faith, Pagag knelt down beside his bed. He prayed for his family. He prayed for his friends. He prayed for all his cousins, aunts, and uncles. He asked the Lord to spare their language.

As he fell asleep, he felt God's love fill his heart. He knew that the Lord had heard his prayers. The tender words of a shepherd's song of praise which his mother always sang to his little brothers and sisters flowed through his mind and into his heart:

Great God above, within, below,

**As Pagag watched, he saw hundreds upon hundreds of weary workers returning to their homes after a long day of hard work on the Great Tower.**



Hear us as we pray.  
Bless our flocks, our homes,  
our land.  
Praise be unto you this day.  
Watch over us, Great God.  
Guide us. Protect us.  
Pour your Spirit upon us,  
And lead us to your promised  
land.

A loud and piercing crow of a rooster awakened Pagag as the sun rose over the city. Quickly he dressed and ran to the center of the house.

"Where's Father?" Pagag excitedly asked his mother who was baking bread.

"Your father left very early to go to Uncle Jared's house," his mother said softly.

"I'll go find him!" Pagag anxiously declared.

"No, my son!" Mother spoke quietly but firmly. "Your father asked me to keep the family inside the house until he returned. We must be patient and place our trust in God."

It seemed to young Pagag that the morning hours passed slowly. What are Father and Uncle Jared doing? thought Pagag. Why hasn't Father returned? Is something wrong?

All afternoon he thought about what his father had told him the night before. As he became discouraged and afraid, he remembered his father's words, "The Lord will hear your prayers." Mother's words also came to his mind, "We must place our trust in God."

Pagag had darted back and forth from the window to the door in watch all day for his father.

"It is so hard to be patient," he said.

The brilliant, hot afternoon sun was about to disappear into the western horizon. As Pagag watched, he saw hundreds upon hundreds of weary workers returning to their homes after a long day of hard labor on the Great Tower.

"Here comes father now!" shouted Pagag to his mother, as

she prepared the evening meal. "Uncle Jared and his family are following Father!"

Slowly but thoughtfully, the Brother of Jared walked up the dark cobblestone street. He was a large and mighty man. Pagag noticed his father looking upward. There was a glow about him as he pushed open the heavy wooden door.

As they entered the house, Pagag tightly gripped the hands of his cousins, Aaron and Sarah. The Brother of Jared raised his hands. Total silence fell over the families as they waited for him to speak the words of the Lord.

"This morning Jared asked me to inquire of the Lord whether he will drive us out of the land, and if so, whither we shall go," spoke the Brother of Jared. He said, "Who knoweth but the Lord will carry us forth into a land which is choice above all the earth?"

"My people, I did cry unto the Lord," the Brother of Jared declared by the power of the Spirit. "I have heard the voice of the Lord. The language of our families and friends has been preserved. The Lord has chosen to lead us into a land which is choice above all other lands. He has promised to go before us. We must begin to make preparations for a great journey. Let us all kneel together in mighty prayer to thank the Lord for his mercy upon us!"

As everyone joined in prayer, young Pagag knelt close beside his father as he continued to grasp the hands of Aaron and Sarah. The power of the Spirit of



**"Do you have a testimony of how God helped you overcome your fears in order to accomplish something he wanted you to do?"**

I am now 17 years old. Ten years ago, when I was in second grade, I was selected as the angel/narrator for the school Christmas play.

Because of illness, I had been unable to go to school, but I was well enough, however, to go to play practice the day of the performance. My mother brought me to the school and dropped me off. On her way home, a car hit her, severely damaging the car and her. I didn't find out about it until practice was over.

When I found out, I didn't want to go on stage that night because I was afraid for my mother, but I knew I should. I asked the Lord to give me strength to get the job done I needed to do. The Lord answered my prayers and didn't let my thoughts wander that night. I didn't forget a single line—and the play was a success.

—Aaron Smith

God touched each one.

"Where is this choice land?" Pagag wondered, as they lifted their hearts in prayers of repentance and praise to a God who hears and answers prayers.

### About the Illustrator—Rick Farley

Rick is a free lance illustrator in New York. He has had illustrations in several national magazines, like *The National Sports Daily* and *American Health*.

He was eighteen when he entered Parsons School of Design in New York City where he graduated with a BFA in Illustration degree in 1989.

At thirteen he started his art training by taking portrait lessons. A portrait he painted at age fifteen won the Grand Prize in the congressional art competition, "An Artistic Discovery", and was on display for a year in Washington, D.C. He won many awards for his art during his high school years. Rick is twenty-three.



# Chinese Character for Tower

VI Presler, Marilyn Sauter, and Sherrie Smith

Once a long, long time ago, about 2300 B.C., the people who lived in a city, later called Babylon, decided to build a tower so high it would reach the sky. God was not pleased with this tower. The people, instead of "calling upon the name of the Lord," were only trying to "make a name for themselves." So God confounded their language, which means they could no longer understand each other's words.

In our story, we read of Pagag and his family and friends at the time of this great tower. This story can be found in Ether in the Book of Mormon.

When Pagag, his father, Uncle Jared and their families and friends left the city of the great tower, they took with them written records of the Creation of the world, the story of Adam and Eve, and all other happenings since the Creation until the time of the tower.

Interestingly, another place we find these stories, besides Genesis in the Bible, is hidden in the Chinese language.

Chinese writing doesn't have ABCs like we do. It has thousands of characters. The characters are signs called radicals. Combining radicals forms other words.

For instance, the radical for eight 八 combined with the radical for knife 刀 makes "to divide" or separate. 分\*

Let's look at the word for create. It combines the radicals for man, life, dust, and mouth. This fits perfectly with the Scripture in Genesis 2:8 explaining the creation of Adam.

"And I, the Lord God, formed *man* from the *dust* of the ground, and *breathed* into his nostrils the breath of *life*."

土 + 口 + 丿 = 告 + 辶 = 造\*  
dust breathe of mouth alive to talk walking to create

Another example is tower. It tells us the same situation described in our story of Pagag and the great tower. People who were of one language united in rebellion to build a tower with bricks.

人 + 一 + 口 = 合 + 艹 = 荅 + 土 = 塔\*  
mankind one mouth united grass undertake clay tower

When we look closely at the Chinese characters we discover the Chinese once had firsthand knowledge of the story of Creation and events up to the time of the great tower. How do you think the Chinese knew about these events? Do you think maybe some of Pagag's friends stayed in China to begin the Chinese nation instead of sailing with Pagag and his family to the promised land?

\*C. H. Kang and Ethel R. Nelson, *The Discovery of Genesis* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 105, 101, 106, 41.



## THE GREAT TOWER

P I M H B B M Q C Q P F K O H L N Q Q J I H E A L L I L S G Q P  
 C K J M F R A K G U I D E M G J L A B F F O F P L P H C O H K T  
 Q A P E F O B H J E B H N O C P P C R E A T I O N R I B N B M O  
 I C Q F A T C M I M J A M G A N L I N M L J Q D H A F Q G B H W  
 D G K O P H M M N Q G A A B J M S C O Q M B I O P Y L B G P D E  
 I K K G Q E G F C A H L F F C J H E J L N L K O A E P E L P I R  
 G O M B I R D G M O J B K O H A E M K F D O F C B R P A D L P E  
 H C C G J H B N I C E I F B E R P I G B H Q D G O M E I O F D S  
 I P B A J I H H A G J M A F K E H K H Q F N A H E I A D I R G A  
 P R A I S E O N C B H Q H K G D E C J M J U D G M E N T C I R R  
 L F F N A G C E M K C H P F C E R F K A M N E I N P E P L E E A  
 G D P O I E A P M O D O P H L P D F N Q A E L F Q L B E H N A H  
 B A A R O N C N E E E K A G D B N M E R C Y E O D Q C J D D T G  
 C N L C O N F O U N D M A D J B Q L Q D F N D E A B O G J S N E  
 P O P I F A M I L I E S P E B O E M F L H A O C C A F M D O M N  
 F P F A O K L L A N G U A G E L E A O E O I B C O O I D O L Q N

JUDGMENT • TOWER • CONFOUND • AARON • SHEPHERD • BROTHER • FRIENDS • PRAYER • FAMILIES • CREATION • PRAISE  
GUIDE • GREAT • JARED • IDOL • HEAL • SARAH • SONG • MERCY • LANGUAGE

(See page 6 for key to puzzle.)



# Chinese Translation of the Book of Mormon

Helen Brotherton

Our family was safe-havened in Taiwan from 1970 to 1974 while my husband, Wallace, was stationed in Vietnam as a government advisor in public health.

The first two years my sons and I taught English classes trying to get well enough acquainted with the people to tell them the gospel story. One class of Chinese young adults we enjoyed very much. When classes ended at the English Language Institute, we decided to invite them to our home to continue the sessions because they wanted to learn about American culture.

"Come to our home every Sunday evening and we will have a Bible class," I told them. "This will give you some background for our culture."

When time came for home leave in 1972, a year and a half later, I was thoroughly discouraged because none of the students expressed any interest in baptism. I thought, "We're wasting our time. We might just as well go home."

Before we left though, we had a visitor—Wang Chun-Chang. He brought with him a leather-bound edition of the Book of Mormon which Anna McLennan Rieske had given him during his stay in the United States. He also brought a third of the Book of Mormon he had already translated into Chinese.

Wang's visit changed our plans. His translation efforts impressed us so much there was no longer any question about returning to Taiwan.

In the three weeks before leaving, I showed him all of my husband's missionary slides and explained them to him. I left them with him to show his family.

When we returned from leave two months later, Joseph McLennan performed the first baptism in the Republic of China in the South China Sea. He baptized Wang and all his family, including his married daughter's family. What a momentous occasion!



Brother Wang Chun-Chang presents a Chinese Book of Mormon to Anna Rieske who first gave Wang an English Book of Mormon during his stay in the United States.

Wang worked long and hard translating the Book of Mormon. Many times when he didn't understand something, he would come to our home and ask questions. Miracles happened during this time, most of which he did not share with us until several years later. So many miracles occurred he became almost frightened. He feared people would say he was a visionary man or a little bit too imaginary.

When the Book of Mormon was ready for publication, Wang was planning, as they say in China, to move his house (move to another house). I would have taken the transcript except we also had to move, and I didn't want to lose it.

In moving, Wang lost two-thirds of the translated manuscript and never found it again. What a tremendous blow for him! He said if we hadn't lived there and encouraged him, he wouldn't have had the heart to get busy and translate it all over again. But Wang is a very dedicated person, and he did it.

Finally it went to press. The beautiful blue book has Chinese characters on the front, which to us is the back. The Chinese read from back to front instead of front to back, from top to bottom, and from right to left.

We asked him what the last characters on the last page meant. We thought it must read "the end." "No," he replied. "I started to write 'the end' but changed my mind. It says, 'That's all for now.'"

I told him Joseph Smith also indicated essentially the same thing about his portion of the English translation—that there is more to come later.

The impact of this translation cannot be measured. Over one-third of the world's population can read Chinese including many Asian cultures. Although their spoken languages differ, those educated in Korea, Japan, Vietnam, and other countries all can read Chinese.

Who knows the far-reaching effects of Wang's dedication in translating the Book of Mormon into Chinese, especially when the Lord opens the way for the gospel to go to mainland China?

*(Condensed by permission from The Zarahemla Record, Spring 1981)*

## The Miracle Baptism in Taiwan

Wang Chun-Chang

The first baptismal service I conducted as the first national minister in Taiwan was celebrated on the 4th of July 1976. I will always be cheered when I recall the marvelous story of the water.

Around the school where I teach was a shallow stream because little rain had fallen that month. In preparation for the service, I rode a bike to seek a place with deep water. I just could not find one; the deepest part couldn't immerse my knees.

I stayed on the bank and prayed for a heavy rain in time for the baptism. I felt the answer was affirmative, so I decided to hold the service according to the original plan.

Oh, Hallelujah! The wonderful rain came just in time and heavy enough to fill the whole stream with water. The baptism could have taken place almost anywhere, but I chose the beautiful place where I had prayed for the rain.

I was nervous for my first baptismal service, but after a prayer, the Holy Spirit comforted me and moved my hands in the right way.

When I tell this wonderful witnessing testimony, I still feel a little scared for He stands so close to me. It seems He always keeps an eye on me and keeps His ears listening to me.

# Laotian Ministry

## An Opportunity to share

Sue Petentler

The Doctrine and Covenants says of Zion:

**And there shall be gathered unto it out of every nation under heaven. . . . And it shall come to pass that the righteous shall be gathered out from among all nations. . . . —45:13-14**

I believe I was blessed with the opportunity to share somewhat in helping fulfill this prophecy.

For ten years I worked with the Laotian refugee program in Independence, Missouri. Names such as Pianc, Khene, Prasith, Noudam, Khanpone, Somlith, Anonith, and Thene now sound familiar to my typical Midwestern mind. They bring to remembrance good memories of lovely light brown faces reflecting appreciation and untold gratitude for tasks and services done for them.

Many times I felt Christ and his ministering angels beside me as I worked among these people: teaching English to adults; securing employment for untrained, non-English speaking men and women; teaching new food substitutes; enrolling children in school; being present at the delivery of our first Lao-American—named Sue; and babysitting for 20 preschoolers with only one English speaking four-year-old present.

The church actually only sponsored seven families, but more than 100 Laotians live in Independence. How did this come about? Because of the climate of



Phovong Khongmaly, age four, attended the preschool with other Laotian children.

love and caring in this place families have sent for their people in other states. It has been said that more Southeast Asian lives were lost from 1962-1982 than Jews in the Nazi Holocaust. Given the same set of circumstances, I would have done exactly the same thing—get my brothers, sisters, parents, and countless cousins to a land of refuge.

Lehi prophesies concerning a land of liberty.

**Yea, the Lord hath covenanted this land unto me, and to my children for ever;**

**And also all those who should be led out of other countries, by the hand of the Lord.**

**Wherefore . . . there shall none come into this land, save they shall be brought by the hand of the Lord.**

**And . . . it shall be a land of liberty unto them.**

—2 Nephi 1:8-12

It is not an accident the Laotians were brought to this place at this time. One day our Laotian friends will know of a surety why they chose this particular place to settle. Some of them shared, "On the map it looked safe. No water for enemy boats; no mountains for the enemy to hide."

These families have known nothing but war all of their lives. Before coming here, they farmed on the banks of the Mekong River, the very river every man,

woman, and child swam to freedom. Now, most of the men support their families by doing maintenance work and their wives and families produce their food in wonderfully productive gardens.

We can learn much from these people God sent to his place. But, what more can we do for these people after their immediate needs have been met? How can they be taught or shown the dignity God intended for a more abundant life? We can share, demonstrate, and strive to bring about the cause of Zion.

Once the Lao Association asked me to obtain a place for teaching Lao as a written language in order to ensure their youngsters would not forget their culture and history. After securing the place, the Laotians ceremoniously rewarded us with the opportunity to share our Christian stories and culture with these same children the hour following the language lesson.

Refugee ministry opened up for me a vast new concept of God's caring for his Creation. I used to feel so fortunate to be one of God's chosen. Now I know the absolute truth: *chosen to share—chosen to teach—chosen to demonstrate the Zion concept and make it a reality.*

My Laotian brothers and sisters express overwhelming gratitude for services performed for them. Many, many times my new friends asked me, "Why do you do this for my family?"

"Because I love you and because Jesus Christ loves you." I told them some day they would understand.

One man asked me, "Have I met this Jesus Christ yet?"

I reassured him. One day he would.

Editor's Note: Surely this man met Jesus Christ in Sue and the others who did the works of Jesus among the Laotians.





# ZENOS

## One of the Major Prophets

Rae Simmons

What Book of Mormon reader does not recognize the name Zenos? It appears frequently throughout the book. Yet little is known of this prophet. When did he live? Why do so many Book of Mormon writers quote his words and teach his prophecies?

Judging from the scope of his teachings, Zenos seems to have been a prophet of major proportions. He tells of the Jews becoming a hiss and a byword and being hated among all nations. He speaks of the redemption of the House of Israel, the gathering, and the salvation of the Lord in much the same manner as the prophet Isaiah.

What little is known of Zenos one gleans from Book of Mormon writers. Many of these personalities call on the writings of Zenos to support their teachings, including Nephi, Jacob, Alma, Amulek, Samuel the Lamanite, and Nephi, son of Helaman.

Nephi introduces the prophet Zenos. He quotes extensively from his prophecies concerning conditions that would exist at the time of Christ's death (1 Nephi 5:242-257). Zenos prophesied that at that time the Lord God would visit all the House of Israel. In this instance he speaks of visiting them in both judgment and in mercy (1 Nephi 5:245). This was fulfilled on this land when the more righteous were spared, but the wicked were destroyed in divers manners.

Zenos gives unique information concerning this time.

**And because of the groanings of the earth, many of the kings of the isles of the sea shall be wrought upon by the Spirit of God, to exclaim, The God of nature suffers.**

—1 Nephi 5:250

Nowhere else is it written that the Spirit of God brought knowledge to man that these calamities occurred because the "God of nature" suffered.

Mormon, in his narrative, also writes that Zenos testified of

things to come at the time of Christ's crucifixion (3 Nephi 4:71-72). He gives added information that Zenos spoke particularly concerning the remnant of the seed of Joseph, which the Nephites were.

Mormon makes a most important observation about Zenos. He says the prophet's words are written upon the brass plates and Zenos too was of the tribe of Joseph.

**Yea, the prophet Zenos did testify of these things, and also Zenock spake concerning these things, because they testified particular concerning us, who are the remnant of their seed.**

**Behold our father Jacob also testified concerning a remnant of the seed of Joseph. And behold, are not we a remnant of the seed of Joseph?**

**And these things which testify of us, are they not written upon the plates of brass which our father Lehi brought out of Jerusalem?**

—3 Nephi 4:71-73

Through Nephi, the son of Helaman and one of the twelve disciples chosen by Christ, comes the knowledge that Zenos lived after Abraham.

**And now I would that ye should know, that even since the days of Abraham, there have been many prophets that have testified these things;**

### Teachings of Zenos

Parable of the Olive Tree (Jacob 3:30-153)  
Guidelines for prayer and worship (Alma 16:178-184)

Mercy and redemption come through the Son of God (Alma 16:184, 205)

God's covenant with the House of Israel (1 Nephi 5:253)

The salvation of the Lord (1 Nephi 5:256)

### Prophecies

Conditions in this land at Christ's crucifixion (1 Nephi 5:242-250)

Judgment on the House of Israel (1 Nephi 5:245-248)

Persecution of the Jews (1 Nephi 5:252)

The gathering (1 Nephi 5:255)

Redemption of the House of Israel (1 Nephi 5:253-256)

Lamanites restored to a knowledge of the truth (Helaman 5:101)

**yea, behold, the prophet Zenos did testify boldly.**

—Helaman 3:53

Jacob gives the longest example of Zenos's words. He quotes in its entirety the marvelous "Parable of the Olive Tree" (Jacob 3:30-153). The Apostle Paul gives evidence that he knew this parable in his sermon to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13-25), and Isaiah uses the parable of the vineyard in referring to Judah (Isaiah 5:1-7). Zenos addresses this parable to the House of Israel and describes himself in the opening verse as "a prophet of the Lord."

Alma 11 calls Zenos "the prophet of old." The very use of "the" indicates Zenos was a well-known and revered prophet.

In his speech to the Zoramites (Alma 16:178-184), Alma quotes Zenos on prayer and worship. This is truly a psalm equal in beauty to those of David and gives an intriguing glimpse into Zenos's life. In this psalm of praise, Zenos testifies it is because of God's Son we receive mercy. Amulek, also speaking to the Zoramites, quotes Zenos as saying "redemption cometh through the Son of God" (Alma 16:178-205).

Interestingly, Samuel the Lamanite, while prophesying from the wall in Zarahemla mentions Zenos. He says Zenos was one of the many prophets who spoke of the Lamanite remnant being restored "again, to the knowledge of the truth" in the last days (Helaman 5:101).

Samuel's reference to Zenos implies that the Lamanites, converted through the effort of Ammon and others, were made familiar with the teachings on the brass plates.

Samuel prophesied that at the time of Christ's death darkness would cover the face of this land for three days (Helaman 5:76). Zenos, too, bore witness of three days of darkness (1 Nephi 5:242).

Zenos, a martyr for Christ, sealed his testimony with his blood. He "did testify boldly; for the which he was slain" (Helaman 3:53). Yet, because of the many Book of Mormon writers who diligently recorded his prophecies, his words and testimony live on.



# Maya Language and the Book of Mormon

Lyle Smith

The more I dig into Mesoamerican archaeology, the more convinced I become that Mesoamerica is the setting of the Book of Mormon. My study has helped me recognize certain similarities between Maya hieroglyphs and themes or ideas in the Book of Mormon.

Ninety-five percent of Maya hieroglyphs existing today were carved after A.D. 300. This means Lamanites engraved them at the end of or after the Book of Mormon era. We should not expect Lamanites to make heroes of Nephite leaders. Instead the glyphs would chronicle Lamanite history.

What then can be compared between the Book of Mormon story and Maya hieroglyphs? Language concepts, for one. The following partial list of parallels presents supporting evidence that Book of Mormon events did take place in Mesoamerica. Taken as a whole, the list offers impressive evidence of Book of Mormon themes in the Maya area.

## Book of Mormon

### A. Real History

Since its printing in 1829, the Book of Mormon has claimed to be true history, about real events, kings, and wars.

### B. Origins of Mulekite Writing

1. The Book of Mormon story of Mosiah leaving the land of Nephi, going down (northward) to the land of Zarahemla, corresponds almost exactly with current archaeological understanding of the time and place. Mosiah and his people brought to the lowlands religious beliefs and a system of writing.
2. After the golden age, "ites" once again began as early as A.D. 231. By A.D. 300, war prevailed among the Nephites and Lamanites. Maya stone monuments engraved to honor kings emerged about the same time. This is consistent with Book of Mormon history.



Stela 29

Don Beebe

## Maya Language

### A. Real History

Up to about 1960, prevailing opinion of Maya archaeologists held that Maya hieroglyphs did not tell about people and places, but rather about ritual, astronomy, and calendrical calculations. Now authorities recognize the glyphs relate to the births, accessions, and life events of Maya kings (Coe 1987:184; Hanks 1989:165; Morley 1983:513; and Schele 1990:58).

### B. Origins of Maya Writing

1. Many archaeologists feel Maya writing developed in the Guatemala highlands and Pacific Coast areas from 600 to 50 B.C. Archaeology indicates a migration of people from the Guatemalan mountains going north, down to the Peten area, about 200 B.C. This migration brought religious concepts and hieroglyphic writing (Hanks 1989:165-166; Morley 1983:536; Schele 1990:1; and Willey 1985:175).
2. For many years, stela 29 of Tikal with a date of A.D. 293 has been considered the earliest undisputed Maya dated hieroglyph. Now, earlier stela have been found in the Salama Valley in Guatemala showing a date of 400 B.C. Both of these dates fit well with Book of Mormon chronology. The preponderance of the glyphs, however, appear after A.D. 300 (Coe 1987:178; Hanks 1989:165-168; and Morley 1983:536).

### C. It Came To Pass

Almost from the printing of the Book of Mormon, readers have recognized the repeated use of the phrase "and it came to pass."

### C. It Came To Pass

Only in the past three to four years have Maya hieroglyphs been translated to read "it came to pass." This phrase is now accepted as being frequently used in the Maya hieroglyphic texts (Schele 1990:26).



Don Beebe

Hieroglyphs carved on a throne (A.D. 785) from a palace in Piedras Negras, Guatemala, commemorate the king. The throne can be seen at the Museo Nacional in Guatemala City.

#### D. Power of Spoken and Written Language

The following passage from Alma confirms verbal communication was more than just words.

And now, as the preaching of the word had had a greater tendency to lead the people to do that which was just; yea, it had had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else, which had happened unto them; therefore Alma thought it was expedient that they should try the virtue of the word of God.

—Alma 16:82

The dramatic role the brass plates and plates of Nephi play in the existence of the Nephite nation also reinforces this idea. When Mosiah went down to Zarahemla, he took the records and the ability to write and translate. He became king over the Mulekites because he had the records even though the Mulekites far outnumbered the Nephites. Having the written records meant authority to those who possessed them, much like having a national symbol. In addition, Lehi and Nephi substantiated their genealogy with the plates. The records gave the Nephites their national identity; they allowed them to retain the language of their fathers for their children (1 Nephi 1:82) and a knowledge of the law in order to keep the commandments (1 Nephi 1:117-119). The records, or words, carried a far stronger impact than just a means of routine communication. The records were sacred, words about God.

Type Smith

#### D. Power of Spoken and Written Language

The recent text, *Word and Image In Maya Culture*, predominantly discusses one of five themes essential to Mesoamerican verbal and iconographic ideas: “the extraordinary power of spoken and written language as a symbolic entity in itself, beyond its neutral role as a medium for routine communication” (Hanks 1989:5). Maya hieroglyphs engraved on stone became more than just words; they became a royal prerogative and support, a mandate from heaven. They assumed a hallowed position and carried an aura of mystery. The stone hieroglyphs were sacred, words about the gods.



Three-dimensional, deeply engraved glyphs on the back of Stela M, which stands at the base of the Hieroglyphic Stairway in Copan, Honduras, record events in the life of the ruler carved

### E. Language Groups

The Book of Mormon tells of the Jaredites coming from the great tower to the promised land. They occupied the land 2000 years before the arrivals of Mulek and Lehi. In that time, the Jaredite language would have evolved into many languages probably covering North, Central, and South America. Lehi and Mulek had a common language when they left Jerusalem. Therefore, according to the Book of Mormon, two basic language families came to the promised land.

### F. Phonetic Hebrew and Egyptian

Both Hebrew and Egyptian were phonetic languages at 600 B.C. Therefore, any writing systems developed or reformed by the people of Lehi should show evidence of phonetic writing.



Stela 31

### G. Atonement

The predominant witness in the Book of Mormon proclaims God sent his Son to make an atonement for all mankind to provide life after this period of probation. Without Christ's sacrifice, life after death does not exist. This infinite shedding of blood could be accomplished only by the Son of God.

### H. Credence Through Lineage

The Book of Mormon, a religious history, is written from the perspective of Nephi's descendants. Many of the authors used their lineage from Nephi to establish their own authenticity. Mormon, a prime example, identified himself as a descendant of Nephi" (Mormon 1:6) "and a pure descendant of Lehi" (3 Nephi 2:102).

### E. Language Groups

Linguists believe the Maya family of languages had one common origin and is not related to other languages in the New World. The Maya language is relatively new and intrusive in Mesoamerica (Hanks 1989:28).



"Scattering glyph," carved on the side of Stela C, Quirigua. A.D. 775. represents letting or shedding of blood. This stela also shows the year from which the classic Maya calculated time, 3114 B.C.

### F. Maya Hieroglyphs Phonetic

Another milestone in the decipherment of the glyphs has been the recent understanding of their phoneticism. Originally, it was thought that the glyphs were only picture writing. It is now understood that the Maya could express any idea they wished phonetically (Morley 1983:532 and Schele 1990:22).

### G. Letting of Blood

The shedding of blood by Maya kings to recreate the cycle of time and the cosmos is a major theme of Maya hieroglyphics. If the kings did not sacrifice some of their own blood, the new era of time or life would not begin (Hanks 1989:5; Justeson 1984:307; Schele 1990:30; and Schele 1986:175). This concept directly corresponds, in corrupted form, to Book of Mormon teachings on the atonement.

### H. Credence Through Lineage

Maya kings in the third through seventh centuries A.D. would often recognize and glorify some earlier kings as being related to them. They did this to give legitimacy to their own right to rule in the eyes of their subjects. Stela 31 of Tikal is a good example. Engraved in A.D. 455, it refers to a king of Tikal who ruled in A.D. 317. The glyphs document that lineage figured prominently in the Maya kings' right to reign (Hanks 1989:5 and 125).



**Meet FRAA's New President—Michael Gatrost**  
(Continued from back cover)

*Was there any particular influence in your life that instilled in you a desire to serve?*

The dedication of my parents caused a strong sense of purpose for both of my sisters and myself. It was 40 miles to our nearest church, but we often drove it several times a week. At times, I resented the long and tiring journey. Yet, as I grew older I realized how deeply my parents believed in the gospel. For my father, he was keeping a promise he had made years ago.

*What promise was that?*

At the close of World War II, my father was stationed in Germany. He began wondering what his life would be like when he returned home. His wife was Catholic, he had three children, and he didn't attend church. One evening he went out from camp to pray. "Dear God," he prayed, "if you will help me, I'll try to take my family to church."

Later that evening, he was awakened by an angel at the foot of his bed. The angel didn't say anything, but motioned to a newspaper suspended in the air. It read, "To Sergeant Gatrost from

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God," followed by, "Sergeant Gatrost returns home July 23." Then the angel left.

The next day my father circled the date on his calendar, still several months away. As the date neared, my father's unit was called up, and he found himself standing on the pier waiting to board a troopship for home. As he counted the days it would take on the boat, he realized he would not get home by July 23.

At that moment, a surly officer whom he had not gotten along with, singled him out and ordered him to remain behind in Germany. This so disappointed my father that he struck the officer and landed himself in the stockade. Now he wouldn't be going home at all!

Good fortune prevailed after a few days, however, when a friendly colonel got the charges dismissed and new orders for him to be shipped home. On his way to Paris with a military escort, he asked what country's ship he would be sailing. The soldier replied, "You won't be going home on a ship. You fly home tomorrow on Pan American."

When my father stepped off the plane in New York it was July 23, the date the angel had shown him.

I watched my dad seek to serve the Lord all his life in response to the angel's visit; my mother and all of us children were baptized. I've never forgotten his dedication and his experience. I believe one reason I wanted to work in the Foundation was because a similar conviction and belief prevails among those who are a part of FRAA. I know the Lord is in this work.

*What do you see as primary goals for FRAA in the coming year and future?*

Our overall goal is simple—to promote the witness of the Book of Mormon in any way we can among all people. To do this, we

need to secure a headquarters building to house offices, the library, video production room, and storage. This is an urgent and immediate goal.

On the other hand, one of the most important goals of the Foundation is to continue reaching out to thousands of people with resources that strengthen faith in the validity of the Book of Mormon. We try to do this in several ways. *The Witness*, our quarterly publication, currently reaches approximately 40,000 individuals. Letters we receive express gratefulness for the instruction and insight found in *The Witness*.

Also, we plan to build and operate a first-rate library to support archaeological research, maintain our video production, continue publishing materials pertinent to the Book of Mormon, continue our annual conference, and increase the regional seminars.

*How can members help the Foundation accomplish its goals?*

Many ways present themselves to me. First, is prayer. Support by way of prayer cannot be measured. Then, different volunteer opportunities exist for those living in this area. For those further away, keeping alert for articles and books relating to all areas of research concerning the Book of Mormon and sending this information into the Foundation helps expand our research resources. And of course, a most tangible way is to become a member of Helaman's Two Thousand, a group of monthly contributors.

With God's grace and help, the efforts of our fifteen dedicated board members, FRAA's strong support committees, and hundreds of diligent volunteers, I see the Foundation growing, expanding, and ministering to the lives of many people. I am excited about the future and hope others will join us in our efforts.



# “I Know The Lord Is In This Work”

## Meet FRAA’s New President Michael Gatrost

*Editor: I know our readers are eager to know something about you. Will you tell us a little about your background?*

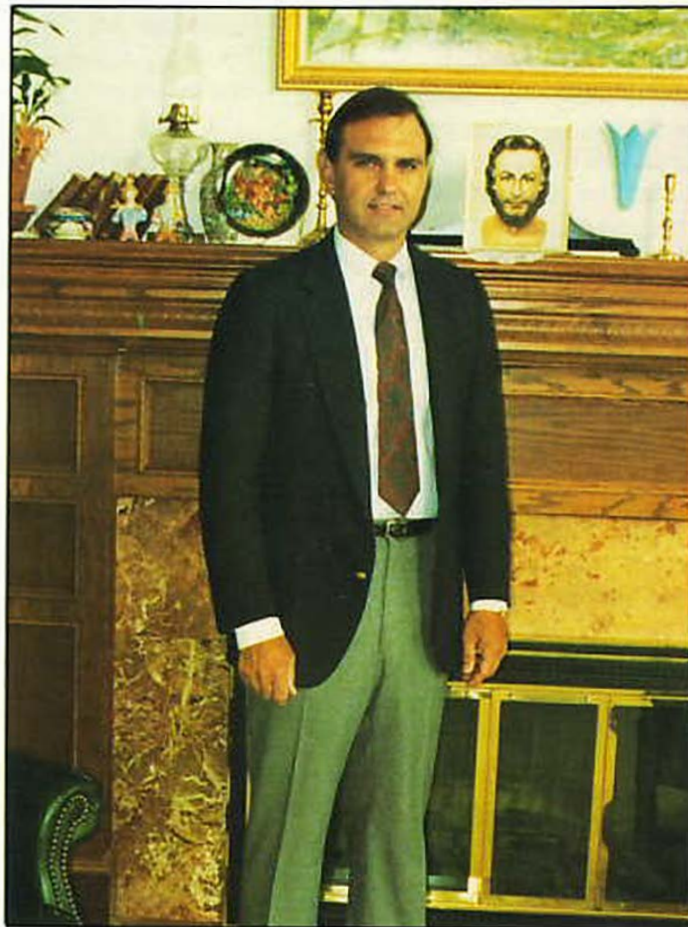
Gatrost: Originally my family lived in a small town in Kentucky. After graduating from high school there, I attended Graceland for two years and later completed a law degree at the University of Missouri in Kansas City in 1971. Since that time, I have practiced law in the Kansas City area. My wife Julie and I and our three children live in Lee’s Summit, Missouri.

*How did you become involved with the Foundation?*

A dear friend, Ella Coile of Kansas City, introduced Julie and me to Thelona Stevens and the Foundation. I had read some of Thelona’s books written several decades earlier, and I expected to meet a woman whose primary accomplishments and goals were behind her. She was 82 the first time we met. Yet, for two hours we sat enthralled as she spoke to us about the gospel and the Book of Mormon. Never had I met anyone as knowledgeable in all three books. Her conviction and enthusiasm for the gospel caused us to leave that night wanting to dedicate our lives in a similar manner.

Later, Thelona asked me to join the Foundation as a board member.

*(Continued inside on p. 15.)*



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