



THE WITNESS

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION BY THE BOOK OF MORMON FOUNDATION

Number 122 ■ Spring 2007

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PHOTO: DALE GODFREY

THE BOOK OF MORMON FOUNDATION

Vision for 2007

Our vision for 2007 is to continue to promote The Book of Mormon and help the church remember its purpose. That is, to restore the House of Israel to a knowledge of Jesus Christ and prepare for the gathering of the saints to the New Jerusalem. We believe the greatest days of the Restoration are yet ahead, and The Book of Mormon is taking its rightful place in this great and marvelous work.

To assist in this purpose, The Book of Mormon Foundation is bringing ministry to the youth through the Internship program. Trips are being planned to Belize and Honduras to be among and bring ministry to the remnant people. We are also implementing English as a Second Language (ESL) to help those in the center place area with a need to learn English. Our quarterly magazine, *The Witness*, remains our instrument to communicate with the saints the exciting news of our day concerning The Book of Mormon. Teaching and preaching opportunities are numerous for various Book of Mormon Days and retreats. This year, we hope to include a visit to the saints in the pacific northwest for a Book of Mormon workshop.

We believe The Book of Mormon is key to the common vision of the church and encourage the saints to diligently study its message as we prepare for the opportunities unfolding before us. Our prayer is that the Lord will richly bless you.

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A contribution to The Book of Mormon Foundation is tax deductible. Financials are available upon request.

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Published quarterly by

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How The Book of Mormon Came Forth

by Mildred Smith



There can be no doubt The Book of Mormon was in the mind of God long before Joseph Smith, Jr. ever knew of it. Joseph was known to the Heavenly Father, as were others, like Martin Harris and Professor Anthon, whose actions were anticipated in the prophecy recorded in Isaiah 29.

In the King James Bible and more modern texts, such as the Revised Standard Version, Isaiah 29 speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem, identified as "Ariel, the city where David dwelt." (Isaiah 29:1) In prophecy, it promises that the testimony of that people shall be heard from the dust in the form of a sealed book. The words of the book shall be delivered to one learned, asking that he read them. He will respond that he cannot read it because it is sealed. (Isaiah 29:11) Then the book is delivered to one who is not learned with the same request. "Read this, I pray thee." And he will answer, "I am not learned." (Isaiah 29:12) Therefore, the Lord says, "I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder. . ." (Isaiah 29:14)

Nephi's description of the events prophesied in Isaiah 29 is found in (2 Nephi 11:116-160 RLDS) [2 Nephi 27:1-35 LDS]. Whether Nephi was speaking prophetically or quoting Isaiah's prophecy, which they had on the brass plates, is not clear. Isaiah's account in the Inspired Version is largely identical with Nephi's testimony in The Book of Mormon.

Ezekiel also prophesied of the book. (Ezekiel 37:15-20 IV) [Ezekiel 37:15-20 KJV] He said, "The word of the Lord came again unto me saying, 'Take one stick and write upon it for Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions; then take

another stick, and write upon it, for Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions; and join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.'" When God is asked to explain what is meant by the instruction, he explains that He will take the stick of Joseph and put it with the stick of Judah, and "they shall be one in mine hand." (Ezekiel 37:18-19 IV) [Ezekiel 37:18-19 KJV]

Books were written on writing materials that were then rolled onto sticks, forming scrolls. Ezekiel was to demonstrate that all of Israel would one day be reunited and that two records would be involved in bringing about that reunification. The record of Judah and his companions is, of course, the Bible. The record of Joseph and his companions is The Book of Mormon.

God also put it into the hearts of his servants in the Promised Land to keep the records for the sake of future generations. Jacob testified that he was instructed to record the things he considered most precious "of preaching which was sacred or revelation that was great or prophesying . . ." for the sake of his people. (Jacob 1:1-5 RLDS) [Jacob 1:1-5 LDS] Enos, after praying mightily for the Lamanites, obtained a promise from the Lord that, because of his faith, he could have whatever he desired. The thing he desired was that if the Nephites should fall into transgression and be destroyed and the Lamanites not be destroyed, that the Lord would preserve a record of his people, the Nephites, that might be brought forth by the power of God for the salvation of the Lamanites. Enos testified that the Lord covenanted with him to bring the words he and others

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were writing to the Lamanites in His own due time. (Enos 1:19-27 RLDS) [Enos 1:13-17 LDS]

When Alma gave the plates on which the records were kept to his son, Helaman, (Alma 17:31-51 RLDS) [Alma 37:1-20 LDS], he assured him that God promised he would preserve those records “for a wise purpose in him that He might show forth His power unto future generations.” Alma identified the Lamanites as a people to be brought to a knowledge of the truth by the records being written.

On the night of September 21, 1823, 17-year-old Joseph Smith, Jr. first learned of the records which were to become The Book of Mormon. He felt that he had failed his Lord by falling into foolish ways because of the persecution and his youth. Since his first vision of God and his Son, he had been taunted, shamed, maligned, and persecuted in every way by those who should have been his counselors and his friends. Because he said he had seen a vision and had been instructed by God, even the minister with whom he shared his testimony told him he had an experience with the devil. God’s actions with mankind are finished, it was said. Visions and revelations from God are confined to the Bible and are no longer experienced on the earth. Neither are there angels at work in the world.

As Joseph prayed for forgiveness of his sins and follies and asked to know of his standing with God, a light appeared in the room that increased in intensity until the room was lighter than noonday. Immediately, a personage appeared beside his bed. The personage introduced himself as Moroni, a heavenly messenger sent from God. He told Joseph that God had a special work for him to do that would cause his name to be known for good and for evil in all the world. Then he told him of a book, written on gold plates, which was hidden nearby. The plates carried the history of early inhabitants of the Americas, the place from which they came and the fullness of the gospel as delivered to them by the Savior.

Hidden with the plates, Moroni said, were two stones in silver bows fastened to a breastplate. He called it the Urim and Thummim. The possession and use of these stones was what constituted seers in ancient and former times. These stones were prepared for the translation of the book. With them, Joseph was to be the

instrument for bringing the book to the world. Moroni then quoted a number of prophecies from the scriptures that would be pertinent to Joseph’s ministry. Finally, he instructed him to show no one the plates or the Urim and Thummim with the Breastplate on peril of being destroyed. Not content with telling him once, Moroni returned again and again until the entire night was spent in the company of the angel. While Moroni was talking to him, a vision opened, and Joseph saw the place where the plates were buried so plainly that he would know it immediately when he saw it.

In the morning, Joseph was working in the fields with his father when he began to feel faint. His father noticed his exhaustion and sent him to the house to recuperate. At the boundary fence,

Joseph collapsed, unconscious. He became aware that Moroni was standing above him. Moroni repeated what he said during the night and told Joseph to tell his father all that happened, including his vision of the place in which the plates were deposited.

Joseph returned to the field and told his father about the all-night visit that had so sapped his strength. He told him of the message of the angel concerning the plates that were buried on the west side of the highest hill close to the village of Manchester. His father believed him, said the experience was of God and urged him to go to the place shown in his vision where the plates were to be found.

Joseph went to the hill, and when he saw the spot where the plates were buried, he eagerly pried up the large stone covering the stone box where they were stored. He started to lift them out, but the angel appeared at his side and forbade him taking them. He said that the time for the plates to be removed and translated would be after four years had passed. During those years, Joseph was to return to the depository at the same time each year for further instruction from Moroni.



PHOTO: MARLA KROESEN

Joseph said it was because his family was poor that Moroni warned him that Satan would tempt him to think of using the precious objects for financial gain. The angel said the purpose of the plates was the spiritual contribution they would make to the testimony of Jesus and the gathering of Israel. Moroni told Joseph if he tried to take them for any purpose other than to translate them as the Lord commanded, he would not be allowed to have them.

Each year, for four years, Joseph went to the hill near Manchester on September 22, the anniversary of his first sight of the depository. Each year, Moroni met him there and further instructed him concerning what the Lord was going to do and how His kingdom was to be conducted in the last days. Except for the scriptures he quoted, we have little record of what the angel told him. However, we learned from Joseph's mother's writings that Joseph shared surprising things about the people whose record he was given. It seems reasonable to assume he got the information from Moroni.

On the night of September 22, 1827, Joseph took Emma, his wife, with him to the hill in a borrowed buggy. Emma was not permitted to go with him to the site of the depository, but remained in the buggy awaiting his return. This time, Moroni gave Joseph the plates, the Breastplate and the Urim and Thummim. He was charged to guard them with his life. If he did all he could to preserve them, they would be protected. When he had finished with the translation of the book, he was told, Moroni would call for them again.

Of course, when Joseph was given the book, in the form of the plates, and told that he was to translate them, he knew that was impossible because he was not learned. But God said he would do a marvelous work and a wonder, and he provided the means by which the characters could be translated. As we have noted, the Urim and Thummim and the Breastplate to which they were attached were in the stone box with the plates.

When he first received the plates, Joseph copied some of the characters, translated some with the aid of the Urim and Thummim and sent them with Martin Harris to Professor Anthon, a professor of languages, to inquire about their authenticity. In so doing, the Isaiah prophecy was fulfilled that the words of the book would be taken to the learned man. Martin Harris testified repeatedly throughout his life that Professor Anthon certified in writing that the characters were genuine and the translation correct; but when he asked to see the book from which they were taken, Martin told him he could not bring it because it was sealed.

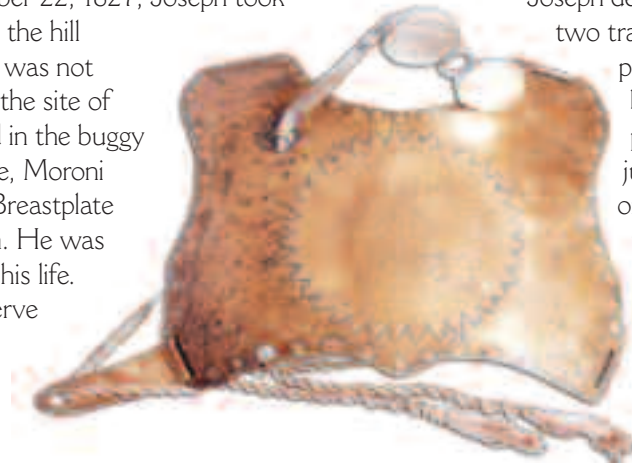
In fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, Martin said the professor responded, "I cannot (read it) for it is sealed." Martin says the Professor then asked for the letter of confirmation back and tore it up. Many years later, Professor Anthon wrote two letters telling of a man who appeared to be a common farmer coming to him with such a request, but he denied he had ever verified the authenticity of the characters or the translation. (RLDS Church History, Vol. 1, pages 21-22)

Together, Urim and Thummim, define tangible objects whose purpose is to make luminous or give light to things that are hidden. They are to make available to us truths we could not otherwise know. We know that The Book of Mormon is a Hebrew book. We can understand why Moroni called the "interpreters," which he delivered to Joseph Smith, Jr. for purpose of translation, "Urim and Thummim." Moroni was using the language of his people to describe the "interpreters" as instruments by which light would be shed upon the hidden language of the plates that it might be translated in complete truth—perfection.

Joseph described the Urim and Thummim as two transparent stones set in a bow like a pair of large spectacles fastened to a breastplate. Biblical description of the priest's attire includes a breastplate of judgment with 12 stones secured in it, one for each of the tribes of Israel, with the Urim and Thummim placed in it "over Aaron's heart." (Exodus 28:15-30) The stones were placed according to the birth of the person whose tribe it represented. The 11th stone, an onyx, represented the tribe of Joseph. If indeed Joseph did at times use this "seer" stone instead of the spectacle-like ones, he was still using Urim and Thummim for the process.

Among the instructions Moroni gave Joseph was the strict edict not to let anyone see the plates, the Urim and Thummim or the Breastplate except those to whom the Lord told him to show them. We are told that he even shielded them from his translators, although we are not told exactly how he did it. We do know that Emma, who translated for him at first, Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris all testified that they were not permitted to see them while they wrote for him. Oliver and Martin were later shown them by an angel, but to her dying day, Emma said she only felt them through the pillow case in which they were kept.

From the time people learned Joseph had the plates, there were strenuous efforts to steal them. Gold was very precious, and a piece of gold six inches square and eight inches long could make a person very wealthy. Those who tried to get them for the gold did not know the plates only had the appearance of gold. A piece of gold the size of the



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plates would have weighed approximately 200 pounds. Even Joseph, with his exceptional strength, would have had difficulty carrying them from place to place, and Emma could not have easily moved them as she did her household duties.

The ancient scribes who kept the records and those who handled the plates testified that they “had the appearance of gold.” Nephi said they found all manner of ore, gold, and silver and copper from which he did make plates on which to engrave the record of his people. (1 Nephi 5:217-218 RLDS) [1 Nephi 18:25,19:1 LDS] Joseph, in his letter to Mr. John Wentworth in 1938, described them as having “the appearance of gold.” The eight witnesses whose testimony has had its place in The Book of Mormon since its first printing described them as having “the appearance of gold.” The plates of the Book of Mormon were like the artifacts found in Mesoamerica by the Spaniards, as well as archaeologists of our day. They are a mixture of copper, silver and gold, with gold mainly on the surface.

Gold has a specific gravity of 19.3. This means it weighs 19.3 times as much as water. But silver has a specific gravity of only 10.5 and copper’s specific gravity is 8.92. By using the harder copper and silver as a base and covering it with a thin layer of the softer gold (on which carving would be much easier) it is apparent the plates should be much lighter than if they were pure gold. In fact, from calculations made from the mixtures of known artifacts, it is easily shown that the weight would have been around 60 pounds at the most. It is interesting to note that is the weight Joseph’s brother, William, estimated them to be. Although he was never permitted to see them, he said he “hefted” them and guessed them to weigh about 60 pounds.

Joseph had little time for translating the plates for the

first year and a half because of the harassment he received from some who did not believe his story and those who attempted to steal the plates. It was also necessary for him to provide for his family. It was even necessary for them to move from place to place to escape the mobs that pursued them.

On April 12, 1828, Martin Harris came to act as a scribe. Martin had invested \$50 in Joseph’s efforts and wished to promote them in any way possible. In this, he was not supported by his wife. In an effort to prove that the work he was doing was valuable, he enticed Joseph to let him take the first 116 pages of foolscap text, equal to about 200 ordinary pages, home to show her. Joseph acquiesced in spite of the Lord telling him repeatedly not to do it. He said the Lord finally gave him permission on condition that Martin give his solemn oath that no one but his wife and a few family members would see it, and he would bring them back within just a few days.

Martin broke his oath. The 116 pages were lost, never to be found. Joseph lost the plates, the Urim and Thummim and his ability to translate for a time. He even lost possession of the plates and Urim and Thummim for a time because he had “feared man more than God”. (Doctrine and Covenants 2:3c) The manuscript was lost June 14, 1828, and the power to translate was not returned until August of that year.

The exciting thing about this is that the Lord had made provision for this event during the writing of The Book of Mormon. Both Nephi and Mormon were involved in the preparation, under the guidance of God. Nephi said he had written the history of his people, their kings and wars, etc., on plates that were called the plates of Nephi, but the Lord commanded him that he should make a second set of plates, also to be called plates of Nephi. This set of plates was to cover the same period of time but tell more of their spiritual history and their testimony of Jesus. Nephi said, “Wherefore, the Lord hath commanded me to make these plates for a wise purpose in him; which purpose I know not.” (1 Nephi 2:99 RLDS) [1 Nephi 9:5 LDS]

Mormon was abridging the history from the large plates of Nephi when he found the small plates of Nephi, on which were engraven an account of the prophets down to the time of King Benjamin and also many of the words of Nephi. He said they pleased him so much that he decided to write his record on them and put those plates with the rest of his record. “And I do this for a wise purpose; for thus it whispereth me, according to the workings of the Spirit of the Lord which is in me. And now, I do not know all things; but the Lord knoweth all things which are to come; wherefore He worketh in me to do according to his will.” (Words of Mormon 1:10-11 RLDS) [Words of Mormon 1:7 LDS]

Thus it was that there was a fresh set of plates for Joseph to translate that had the more spiritual part of the record than the one that was lost. Because of the faith of Nephi and Mormon, who followed the instruction of the



PHOTO:
MARLA KROESEN

Lord centuries ago, even when they did not understand the reason, we did not lose any of the account of the Lord's doing with his people when Joseph and Martin failed to keep their vows.

Truly, "The works and the designs, and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated; neither can they come to naught, for God doth not walk in crooked paths. . . . Remember, remember, that it is not the work of God that is frustrated but the work of men; . . ." With these words, the revelation of God's reprimand for Joseph and Martin, recorded in Section 2 of the Doctrine and Covenants, begins. The reprimand continues in Section 3, and the reason that the 116 pages could not be translated again is explained.

After sincere repentance, the plates, the Urim and Thummim and the ability to translate were returned to Joseph; and the Lord explained to him that he was not to translate that part of the plates over again. Those who had the 116 pages had changed the words and, if he translated it as it was, they would show their copies as the original and say he was a false prophet because he could not translate the same again. (Doctrine and Covenants 2-3)

During the time they were living near Emma's parents in Harmony, Pennsylvania, a young school teacher named Oliver Cowdery came to inquire about the stories he had heard and stayed to serve as Joseph's scribe. He began to write as Joseph's scribe on April 17, 1829. David Whitmer learned of the work they were doing and brought them to his home to work. There they completed the translation. The title page was deposited in the office of the Clerk of Court June 11, 1829. Joseph said the title page "is a *literal translation*, taken from the very last leaf, on the left-hand side of the collection or book of plates. . . . the language of the whole running the same as *all Hebrew* writing in general. . ." (Times and Seasons, Vol. 3, pages 938-931 and 943, as recorded in Church History, page 74)

As the Lord promised, he performed the marvelous work and wonder. It was done by "the gift and power of God." The copyright was secured in Palmyra. The printer's contract was signed August 25, 1829. Mr. Egbert Grandin contracted to print 5,000 copies for \$3,000. The printing was completed, and the books went on sale March 26, 1830, just seven months from the date the contract was signed. The book was available when the church was organized April 6, 1830. The very fact that the printing was done

so quickly is miraculous in the eyes of those who know the art of printing in that era. In his book, *Miracle on Palmyra's Main Street*, an old-time printer named Gordon Weight is reported to have called attention to the many miraculous events that would be required for 5,000 books the size of The Book of Mormon to have been printed in seven months with the equipment available in 1829.

First of all, Mr. Grandin received the manuscript without punctuation or division into sentences and paragraphs. To accomplish this was his first task. Then he had to set the type by hand. Each letter had to be placed in the form upside down and spacers inserted to make each line precisely as long as the last. That was not for appearances. It was necessary, or the letters would fall out when the form was turned over for printing. Only one form could be printed at a time. After each printing, the type had to be broken down and placed in the appropriate boxes, ready to be used again.



PHOTO: MARLA KROESEN

According to report, Joseph had specified that the printing was to be done with new type. Mr. Weight is certain Grandin would not find that easy to obtain and certainly would not have enough on hand to set up two forms for printing, so one could be set up while the other was being printed.

A special paper had to be obtained so the print would not be seen through

the paper. Mr. Weight estimates the amount of paper required would make a stack 40 feet high and asks where in Palmyra that amount of special paper could be found. Among the miracles he notes are: Grandin first refused to have anything to do with Joseph's "Gold Bible," then changed his mind and took on the task. Why? Where did the new type and the special paper come from, and who paid for them? And why wasn't the printing stopped by the mobs?

Grandin also bound the books and covered them with leather-covered cardboard, a process that had to wait until the printing was finished. The printing had to be completed within seven months, using inadequate equipment, for the books to be available before the church was organized on April 6, 1830.

Once again, the Holy One of Israel demonstrated that he could do his own work. His marvelous work and wonder is yet to be completed, but the book he provided for its accomplishment is in our hands.

*(See *Glyph Notes*, August 2006, Pages 3-4 for Glen Scott's review of John H. Pratt's January 6, 2006 article, available at <http://www.meridian-magazine.com> concerning Weight's book,)

2007 Book



by Gabriel Anders

I first heard of the Book of Mormon retreat at one of the weekly meetings for Restoration Campus Ministries at Truman State University, where I attend. I knew I should go, but I was somewhat apprehensive. At that time, I was feeling overwhelmed with school and a little discouraged. I was looking forward to a weekend of sleeping and catching up on homework (not so much the homework, but the sleep).

In deciding whether or not to go to the retreat, I talked with a friend of mine, Kendal Geno, for some advice. I told him I was feeling overwhelmed, and I didn't know if I should go. He told me that if I stayed at Truman, I probably wouldn't get any of the work done I needed to (and he was right). He also told me that there is something about the fellowship of the saints that uplifts you. So I made the decision to go.

We arrived at the very icy Odessa Hills campground Friday evening. There were many friendly faces there, and we kicked off the retreat with some mixers, snacks and a campfire.

The weekend was filled with awesome classes, a scavenger hunt, skits, fellowship and worship services.

The part that really stood out to me was on Saturday night. I was helping clean up in the kitchen while everybody was gathering in the dining hall for a presentation about the Book of Mormon Foundation internship. They had already started when I got done in the kitchen, so I sat in the back of the room. We listened to the staff and former interns talk about the internship, but the part that really got to me was at the end. They had all the staff and former interns go up front to sing a song. They sang Ancient Words by Michael W. Smith. As they sang, the spirit just rested on me, and I knew that was where I was supposed to be, and the Lord was pleased with my decision to go to the retreat.

All during that retreat I felt a love that one can only feel by being with the saints. I was almost ashamed at myself that I initially didn't want to come. Whenever we are given the opportunity to worship or fellowship with the saints, we need to take advantage of it, whether it be a summer camp, retreat, reunion, or going out to a restaurant. It builds us up and encourages us (it can be pretty fun, too).



of Mormon



by Kelli Pedersen

It is a neat experience to participate in an uplifting weekend retreat, escaping the stress of everyday life. At times, it is difficult to commit to a whole weekend, but one needs to remember that God always has a plan for such a time. This is a concept that I constantly have to remind myself of, because I find it difficult to have three days seemingly taken up by these experiences. In truth, I have never left a Book of Mormon retreat wanting of the Lord's spirit. Considering this thought, I would like to share my experience from the retreat in January.

There are times in which I find myself moving along through life thinking that I am an okay person. I'm not great, but not bad either. Sometimes, I only evaluate certain areas of my life and ignore others. In reality, I put aside the things I am not willing to give up or change. My carnal nature tells me that if I do some things right, then I will be okay. I even convince myself that I have truly given my sins to Him, and that He has readily forgiven me. However, I have come to realize that I do not know what "truly" means.

The retreat had a specific theme of repentance and forgiveness, a theme I thought I knew all about. I was wrong. As I listened to the experience of one teacher, guilt swept over me. My life suddenly did not look clean, as I had once imagined. The class was told that sin is an abomination in the eyes of God—any sin. In another class, we were reminded that God does not forgive us if we have withheld forgiveness from another. Once again, I could think about an instance in which I have not offered forgiveness. I was ashamed of my arrogance and for taking the Lord's grace for granted.

My perception has changed. The Lord knew I am not sufficiently humble, and He gently reminded me of the things I am holding back. That is the great thing about our God. He bestows grace upon us even though we could never deserve it. Being a child of God comes with a price; that is to forgive others as we ourselves have been forgiven.

"Yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming His sons and daughters; and thus they became new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in no wise inherit the kingdom of God."

Mosiah 11:188



PHOTOS: CRYSTAL GUTHRIE

2007 INTERNS

MARK BENDORF

Warrensburg, MO

JACOB DEWITT

Independence, MO

MATTHEW FLEMING

Independence, MO

ELIZABETH KELLINGER

Oak Grove, MO

SARAH MCLEAN

Independence, MO

BRIANNE MUNDY

Independence, MO

GAYLE SHEPARD

Stonington, ME

JEREMY STEPHENSON

Harrisonville, MO

AMMON THOMAS

Madison, AL

PATRICIA WELCH

Blue Springs, MO

NANNETTE WISKUR

Butler, MO

STAFF MEMBERS:

JULIE MARSH

(2005 Intern)

BRETT SMITH

(2003 Intern / 2004 Staff)

Testimony of a Roman Catholic Priest Basil, Switzerland, 1739 A.D.

"The old time Gospel, and the gifts thereof are lost. False doctrines prevail in all the churches on the face of the Earth. All we can do is exhort the people to be just, fear God, shun evil, and pray. Prayer and purity may cause an angel to visit some deep depressed soul. But I tell you that within one hundred years, God will have spoken. He will restore the church again! I see a little band of people led by a Prophet and a faithful leader. Some will be persecuted and burned out and murdered. From every nation shall true believers be gathered by speedy messengers. And then shall the Almighty God speak to the disobedient nations with thunder and lightning, and destruction such as men have never known before."

Christophilus Gratianus, (leader of the Swiss Pietism) Die Hoffnug Zions (Zion's Hope), [1756], Translated by Henry Schaefer. Original work in University Library in Basil, Switzerland.

Book of Mormon Foundation

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A Book Review by Dan Kroesen *Ancient America Rediscovered*

compiled by Donald W. Hemmingway

And after it had come forth unto them, I beheld other books which came forth by the power of the Lamb, from the Gentiles unto them, unto the convincing of the Gentiles, and the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the Jews, . . .” (1 Nephi 3:191 RLDS) [1 Nephi 13:39 LDS]

There are times when we come across someone or something that reaffirms our faith and offers witness to the very foundations of our beliefs. Ancient America Rediscovered offers a unique and insightful look at the early Americans as written by an eighteenth century Mexican historian. Ancient America Rediscovered was first written prior to 1778 by a Spanish gentleman and descendant of Spanish royalty Don Mariano Fernandez de Echevarria Y Veytia.

For the first time ever, a portion of Veytia’s works have been compiled and translated into English. Authors Donald and David Hemmingway, with the assistance of Ronda Cunningham, were able to restore a portion of Veytia’s work. Veytia relates the history, religious practices, calendars and astronomical calculations as he developed them from charts, diagrams and paintings of Native Americans.

Veytia tells of the fascinating history of the peoples who first came to the Americas, beginning with a group of seven families who left the Tower of Babel at the time of the confusion of tongues. Undoubtedly, those acquainted with The Book of Mormon will find numerous parallels.

“Which Jared came forth with his brother and their families, with some others and their families, from the great tower, at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, and swear in his wrath that they should be scattered upon all the face of the earth; and according to the word of the Lord the people were scattered. . . .” (Ether 1: 7-20 RLDS) [Ether 1:33-43 LDS]

In the forward of the book, Hemmingway makes a dozen or so citations identifying specific events which are found in both The Book of Mormon and Ancient America Rediscovered.

Hemmingway points out, “neither Veytia nor Joseph Smith, living in different centuries, was aware of the other as to the source, writing, historical back-

ground or final publication of their books.” While The Book of Mormon was published in 1830, Veytia’s History Antigua de Mexico was left unpublished until 1836 when Edward Kingsborough published a nine-volume collection titled Antiquities of Mexico, which contained a portion of Veytia’s writings.

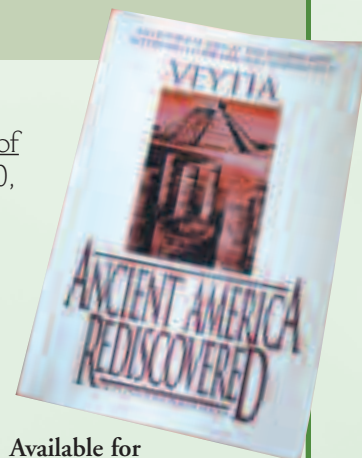
Many of the earliest Spanish priests in America considered the past of the Native Americans to be of the Devil and ordered the records of their history be destroyed. However, Veytia’s opinion of the Native Americans varied significantly from the Spanish priests in America. He declared that the early American records were valuable and detailed in revealing the information of their history.

In the first chapter of the book, Veytia tells of the arrival of the first inhabitants of the Americas and shares the history of these people as passed down through their illustrations going all the way back to the beginning of creation. “They likewise assert that this supreme Entity created a man and a woman in a pleasant garden, and that from these two single individuals the entire human race was propagated, and they paint them on their charts almost the same way we do.” (p. 41).

“And I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him; male and female created I them. And I, God, blessed them, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, . . .” (Genesis 1: 29-30 IV) [Genesis 1:27-28 KJV]

“I have seen there is one [map] that appears to be very old, made on very coarse maguey paper, showing a garden, and in it a single tree, from the foot of which a snake is twisting around.” (p. 41-2)

“And I, the Lord God, commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,



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thou shalt not eat of it; . . . And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which thou beholdest in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest you die.” (Genesis 2:19-20, 3:9 IV) [Genesis 2:16-17, 3:2-3 KJV]

There are passages in the book when the reader experiences a sense of dramatic irony as Veytia presents a portion of their history as he interprets it from their illustrations and maps, but yet he is not able to relay the whole story because he is only able to interpret a portion of the history from the artifacts. However, the reader familiar with The Book of Mormon is able to build upon Veytia’s findings. “None of the many maps I have seen do they show how they controlled them [boats], because no person is seen swimming to guide it, nor can an oar or paddle be seen with which to steer it . . . but it is not credible that they would throw themselves to the whim of the waters.” (p. 51) In the third chapter of Ether, Moroni gives the record of the Jaredites as they ventured to the promised land.

“And it came to pass that when they had done all these things, they got aboard of their vessels or barges, and set forth into the sea, commending themselves unto the Lord their God. And it came to pass that the Lord God caused that there should a furious wind blow upon the face of the waters, towards the promised land: . . .” (Ether 3: 5-10 RLDS [Ether 6:4-8 LDS])

Another exciting parallel found between Ancient America Rediscovered and The Book of Mormon is the account of the events and happenings here in the Americas at the time of Christ’s death. “These natives indicate another singular event in their histories with great exactness, which later served them as a fixed era for their chronological calculations. The earth became darkened so much that the stars appeared and it became like night, and at the same time an earthquake was felt as horrible as they had ever experienced, because the stones crashing against one another were broken into pieces, and the earth opened up in many parts.” (p. 148)

“And thus the face of the whole earth became deformed, because of the tempests, and the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the quaking of the earth. And behold, the rocks were rent in twain; yea, they were broken up upon the face of the whole earth,

insomuch that they were found in broken fragments, and in seams, and in cracks, upon all the face of the land. And it came to pass that when the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the storm, and the tempest, and the quakings of the earth did cease—for behold, they did last for about the space of three hours; and it was said by some that the time was greater; Nevertheless, all these great and terrible things were done in about the space of three hours; and then behold, there was darkness upon the face of the land.” (3 Nephi 4: 14-17 RLDS) [3 Nephi 8:17-19 LDS]

Veytia acknowledges that these series of events as outlined in the chronology of the Native Americans and based upon their calendar? “it was impossible for it to be any other than that which was observed at the death of Jesus Christ Our Lord.”

One final parallel of interest is of the coming to Central America of a great teacher of religion whom the natives called Quetzalcoatl. Veytia transcribed many of the teachings of Quetzalcoatl recognizing similarities to his own Christian doctrines and practices.

“ . . . Behold, my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name, hear ye him. And it came to pass as they understood, they cast their eyes up again towards heaven; and behold, they saw a man descending out of heaven; And he was clothed in a white robe, and he came down and stood in the midst of them, and the eyes of the whole multitude were turned upon him. . . . And it came to pass that he stretched forth his hand, and spake unto the people, saying, Behold I am Jesus Christ, of whom the prophets testified should come into the world; . . . And it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words, the whole multitude fell to the earth, for they remembered that it had been prophesied among them that Christ should shew himself unto them after his ascension into heaven.” (3 Nephi 5: 8-13 RLDS) [3 Nephi 11:7-12]

Only a few examples of the events discussed in Ancient America Rediscovered have been shared here. If given the opportunity, consider reading a copy of this work. Take the time to read about the findings and research of a man who wrote about the first people to this continent as he studied and interpreted their artifacts. Research that was done by a man who died 50 years prior to the publication of The Book of Mormon and yet whose work was essentially left unpublished for nearly 230 years. Undoubtedly, the connections and parallels found in this book to The Book of Mormon will provide confirmation to your faith.



TEACHING ENGLISH *to the* *House of Jacob*

by Lynn Baumgart

*And as he hath covenanted with all the house of Jacob, even so shall the covenant wherewith he hath covenanted with the house of Jacob, be fulfilled in his own due time, unto the restoring all the house of Jacob unto the knowledge of the covenant that he hath covenanted with them; (3 Nephi 2:108 RLDS)
[3 Nephi 5:42 LDS]*

The newly launched ESL (English as a Second Language) program, now in its seventh week, continues to grow with the demand to learn English. The class began with four or five students recruited by flyers passed out in the surrounding community. Since the beginning in February, it has doubled in size, primarily due to present students recruiting others. Our newest student, Leslie, a strong English student, established the need for providing an advanced class. We now will provide beginner, intermediate and advanced classes.

Our students seek a better grasp of English so they can communicate better in the workplace and at school with their children's teachers, to obtain a drivers license and to prepare to become a citizen. They are very intent in their efforts to succeed and are very appreciative of all the effort made in their behalf.

Our teaching staff feels greatly motivated to work with these students, due to their strong desire to learn English. "If only our students at school were as eager to learn," commented one teacher. "You don't mind providing this labor of love for students who work so hard to achieve," said another. The staff has blended and molded together nicely to meet the needs of their students.

The working atmosphere is best described as "warm and family-like" as relationships have developed over the past seven weeks. It is apparent that the students really enjoy coming to class and feel comfortable in this caring environment. One student, Diana, suggested we have a fiesta and bring in Latin American food to share. It was fun trying everyone's culinary talents. With desire, dedication and commitment from teachers and students alike, we have achieved some of the program's most important objectives. We share in laughter, serious intent and a caring relationship with everyone involved. It's just not teaching English, but sharing in fellowship together that makes this experience so rewarding.



PHOTOS: DALE GODFREY

STONES THAT SPEAK

by Robert Rolfe

I can honestly say I have never doubted The Book of Mormon is exactly what it claims to be. When I read it from cover to cover as a youth, I claimed the promise in Moroni 10:3-5 RLDS [Moroni 10:3-4 LDS] and asked God if the book was true. God was true to His Word and gave me the testimony I sought by the Holy Ghost.

A few years later, I was given the privilege to spend an entire weekend with Charles Hield and Roy Weldon as they shared their numerous testimonies of Jesus Christ and also their experiences while visiting many of the archeological sites in Central America. I regretted we had only a few hours to hear a lifetime

of experiences from these good men. From that time on, I wanted to see the Maya ruins for myself.

While I was convinced of the truth of The Book of Mormon, I often wondered how some of the things I read about could be possible. For example, in Mosiah 1, King Benjamin wanted to give a message to his people before he died. According to the text, all the people were directed to gather at the temple to hear the words that the King was to speak. The people gathered and “pitched their tents round the temple, every man having his tent with the door thereof toward the temple, that thereby they might remain in their tents, and hear the words which King Benjamin should speak unto them; . . .” I wondered at the time, how could they hear the King from inside their tents, when they didn’t have any sound equipment like we use for big crowds? After all, how far could a human voice carry?

A couple of months ago, my desire to see some of these ruins was realized. The answer, in part, to my question of, “how could they hear the words” was also provided. As I stepped through the Dovecote at Uxmal into the Nunnery Quadrangle, I noticed that across the open space, (about 50 yards away) a guide was talking to his group in an ordinary voice, and I could clearly hear every word. Our guide asked us to be silent for a few seconds so we could hear the other guide’s presentation. He commented on the acoustics in this temple complex (Temple of the Magician), but was not able to explain how it worked, or whether the Maya had intentionally created the effect. The acoustics were so good that despite being in a space the size of a small stadium, one could hear very well. Immediately the scripture about King Benjamin came to mind, and I deduced the reason for the people gathering at the temple to hear his words.

The next day, at Chichen Itza, our guide demon-



strated in front of the Temple of Kulkulkan, (another name for Quetzalcoatl) that the echo from a hand clap came back as a “chirping” sound. He didn’t explain the significance of the sound, but it was apparent that all of the guides knew about the interesting “effect,” as they were doing the same thing. Was the

effect designed in the building by the Maya, created by reconstruction, or just a coincidence?

I remembered on a previous day at Dzibilchaltun (a Classic ruin of 18 square miles and 21,000 sites) a name that means “a place where there is writing on the stones,” that the Maya constructed a certain temple in such a precise manner, that on the equinox, March 21 and September 21, the sun shines directly through both doorways. On the same day, at sunset, the shadow of a serpent goes down the Temple of Kulkulkan toward the sacred cenote. If the Maya could construct buildings with that kind of accuracy, could they construct a building with stones that could “speak?”

People have told me about the difficulty of climbing the Maya pyramids, particularly in walking down the stairs. Some have speculated that the reason for the short treads was the small stature of

the Maya. If that is the reason, why are the risers higher than normal? Our standard riser is about 8 inches. Some of the Maya risers are 2 feet. Reason would dictate that small people would build small risers, rather than the opposite. Another interesting detail about the “stairs” is that the treads and risers are not the same dimensions all the way up. Is this just sloppy construction, or is there another reason?

If size of the people is not the reason for the unusual construction, and we eliminate inconsistent construction or reconstruction, what could be another possibility? David Lubman, an acoustical consultant, hypothesizes that the stairs of the pyramid at Chichen Itza (Temple of Kulkulcan) were built in their current design to “tune” the echo of a sound hitting the stairs to the pitch of the quetzal bird. After all, the name of the pyramid has the prefix “K’uk”, which has its roots in the Mayan name for the quetzal bird.

Until the last decade, scientists have not considered sound when analyzing ancient civilizations. Studies of reflected sound are currently being done at different sites around the world. Many of these studies have achieved fascinating results. But all of the guides, and many of the tourists at Chichen Itza are aware of the “chirping sound” (a “chir-roop”) produced by clapping your hands. I doubt that most are aware of the close similarity of that sound, and the actual recordings of the quetzal bird. (For a sound recording of a quetzal bird, see “The Mayan Pyramid—David Lubman” on the Internet.) Some think the Temple echo sounds like the K’uk bird. Whether this effect is coincidence, conjecture, a sound defect or wishful thinking,

I leave to the reader. However, Mr. Lubman has noted the same effect at the Pyramid of the Magician at Uxmal. The ruins at Teotihuacan are also being studied. (National Geographic Today, 12/6/02)

Isaiah 29:4 has an interesting prophesy about someone speaking out of the ground . . . and her “speech shall whisper out of the dust.” Luke 19:39 IV [Luke 19:40 KJV] talks about the “stones crying out.” It is interesting to me that the very stones of the Mayan temples “speak” to us today of their creator.



PHOTOS: DALE GODFREY

The Temple of Kulkulcan, or the Feathered Serpent God is also known as Quetzalcoatl to the Aztecs.

The website for David Lubman is dlubman@ix.netcom

For possible reasons why a Feathered Serpent God is connected with Mayan Temples, see Numbers 21:5-9; Isaiah 14:29; I Nephi 5:133-137 RLDS [I Nephi 17:40-42 LDS]; II Nephi 11:38 RLDS [2 Nephi 25:20 LDS]; Alma 16:190-195 RLDS [Alma 33:18-21 LDS] and Helaman 3:46-48 RLDS [Helaman 8:13-15 LDS].



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