



THE WITNESS

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*“They had fought as if with the strength of God;
yea, never were men known to have fought
with such miraculous strength...”*



From the Board

Once again we find ourselves at the beginning of a new year. Perhaps we are wondering how last year passed so quickly and what lies before us this coming year. It's a time we all seem to evaluate what has been accomplished and what is yet to be done. Our conclusion often brings us to both a sense of fulfillment and a yearning to do much better.

This is certainly true for us at The Book of Mormon Foundation. As we look back on 2012, we are amazed at the generosity of the saints and their interest in the Book of Mormon. It inspires us with hope and assurance that the Lord is moving among His people and encourages us to consider the things we can do better this year. There is always much to accomplish.

One thing for sure, this great and marvelous work is His work alone. We are privileged to participate with our BMF brothers and sisters this year in that work. Our sincere thanks goes to each of you and our prayer remains for God to bless and keep you this year as we move forward together. As we do so, I'm reminded of the great calling for us today in 3 Nephi 10:

But if they will repent, and hearken unto my words, and harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them, and they shall come in unto the covenant, and be numbered among this the remnant of Jacob, unto whom I have given this land for their inheritance, and they shall assist my people, the remnant of Jacob; And also, as many of the house of Israel as shall come, that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem; And then shall they assist my people that they may be gathered in, who are scattered upon all the face of the land, in unto the New Jerusalem. And then shall the power of heaven come down among them;

(3 Nephi 10:1-4 RLDS) [3 Nephi 21:23-25 LDS]

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Cover photo, Helaman and the 2000 Stripling Warriors is used with permission.
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 [Alma 56:56 LDS] (Alma 26:66-67 RLDS)

a journal...

On this day, I watched my son march off to war, one of 2000 young men from our land. Before they left, all the people of Ammon, as we are now called, knelt and prayed unto our God for protection, guidance and courage to be upon our sons. In spite of the sadness in our voices and the tears in our eyes, our sons knew that we, their mothers and fathers, were proud of them for the choice they had made to help defend their country. This choice was not made hurriedly, nor without much thought and prayer. Have we, unknowingly, been preparing our sons all their lives for that moment of decision? I pray that we have prepared them well enough for the days ahead on the battlefield. Great comfort comes in knowing they are under the watchful eye of our Heavenly Father and under the leadership of Helaman, a servant of God. It was evident that Helaman had great love and respect for our young men as they stepped forth and voluntarily offered to help protect their land, their people, and their church. "My stripling soldiers," Helaman called them, "Even my sons. They are brave," he said. I wonder... will that bravery continue through the heavy battles?



My Stripling Warrior by Del Parson

On this day, as I think of my son, our sons, on the battlefield, my thoughts wander back to the days when we were called Lamanites. We were called after our father, Laman, son of Lehi, who led his people from the Land of Jerusalem to this promised land. Laman and his brother, Lemuel, were weak in faith and rebelled against their earthly father, Lehi, and also their Father in heaven. They did not bring up their children in the way of the Lord, but rather, taught them to hate their brethren, the Nephites. They told their children they had been robbed by their younger brother, Nephi, because he had become ruler of the people and had retained possession of the records which had been brought from the Land of Jerusalem. These should rightfully go to the elder sons, they said. They taught their children that they should rob and murder the Nephites and do all they could to destroy them. Thus, the Lamanites became children of darkness, with no knowledge of God or of their spiritual heritage in Him. This lack of knowledge led to many wars, much bloodshed, and extreme suffering among the Lamanites and the Nephites. Even now, our young sons are in battle because of the wickedness of the Lamanites. O Lord, will the hatred and the wars ever cease?

On this day, I awakened with a prayer on my lips for my son, and for all of our sons. I thanked God for the things that had happened in the lives of our people to bring us to a knowledge of Him. At a time when we were in bondage to Satan, a Nephite named Ammon and his brothers, all men of God, came into the Land of Nephi

and taught us about the great Creator. Many of our people in the land Ishmael, including King Lamoni, received this good news with joy and thanksgiving. Even the great king over all the Land of Nephi, except the land Ishmael, believed. God had not forgotten the blessings our father Lehi had prayed upon his sons and their seed; so, in our darkness, He gave us light, even the light of His Son, Jesus. Sadly, no Amulonites and only one Amalekite would listen to this wonderful message and, therefore, they remain unconverted. But all of the descendants of Laman and Lemuel, who humbled themselves, received the testimony of the truth of this message that was brought to our people. When our eyes were opened, we saw the depth of sin in which we had walked. We remembered all the years of hatred, dissension, wars, and the killings for which we were responsible. By His grace, our Heavenly Father offered forgiveness to all who repented of these acts. The men of our land, who were converted, wanted never again to be involved in the shedding of blood, especially that of their brethren. I remember the day that our men gathered all their swords and other weapons and buried them deep in the earth, making a covenant with God that they would never take up weapons of war again. After that, we were called Lamanites no more, but took upon us the name Anti-Nephi-Lehi. Oh God of Heaven, who remembereth your covenant with Abraham, please watch over our 2000 young sons who are of his seed. Grant them divine protection and spiritual guidance throughout this war, as well as throughout their lives.

On this day, men, women, and children of our land gathered to prepare provisions to send our sons and others who are a part of Helaman's army. For many months, we have been planting and gathering crops, storing much away. We have gathered a lot of fruit, which we dried in the sun, as well as plants and roots to treat illnesses and help heal wounds. From our flocks and herds, we have obtained meat which has been preserved by drying. Much grain has been collected, and many loaves of bread have been baked. Some have been busy weaving cloth and others sewing garments, while our men have fashioned strong cords from plant fibers. In a few days, our men will deliver these provisions to our precious sons and their fellow soldiers. While we worked together, we sang praises to our God and talked about the coming of His Son, Jesus. We offered prayers for all the Nephite armies who are fighting to preserve our freedom. We also prayed for our brethren, the Lamanites, that they might humble themselves and receive the gospel of Jesus the Christ. We have taught our sons that if they do not doubt, God will deliver them. We are comforted in knowing they are men of strong faith, just as their fathers are men of strong faith. Back in the land Ishmael, after we had the gospel preached to us and our men had buried their weapons of war, they were sorely tried. A Lamanite army, made up of some descendants of Laman and Lemuel, but also of many Amalekites and Amulonites, came to destroy us, the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi. Our men refused to break their vow never to use weapons again to shed man's blood. So, we lay on the ground calling upon God, while our enemies slew 1,005 of us. But, in the midst of the bloodshed, a wonderful thing happened. Many of the Lamanites, all descendants of Laman and Lemuel, repenting of the evil they had done, threw down their weapons and fell upon their knees, praising God along with our people. The number of Lamanites converted to the truth of God that day was greater than the number who were slain. So, even in our sorrow, we praised God for the conversion of so many of our Lamanite brethren. After that, from time to time, other Lamanites became weary of wars and bloodshed and joined with us, burying their weapons and becoming a righteous people. The Amalekites came upon us once more and, because our men again refused to fight, they killed more of our people. After this happened, Ammon led us to the Nephite lands and settled us in the Land of Jershon, which our Nephite brethren generously gave us for an inheritance. Jershon is bordered on the east by the sea, and on the other borders we are protected from our enemies by Nephite armies. For this protection, we gladly give a portion of our substance to help maintain the armies. Since coming to the Land of Jershon, we

are called the people of Ammon. Even though my joy and hope are in the Lord, I have a yearning in my heart to see my son and know he is safe. My prayer is for the Nephite armies to prevail so the freedom of the land and the church might be preserved. May the lives of all our young men be preserved, too.

On this day, the men returned from carrying provisions to the soldiers. They had seen our young sons and reported to us that not one of the 2000 had been slain. Even though some had been wounded, they continued bravely in the fight. We know our sons are righteous young men and, even if any did lose their lives, they would go to their Heavenly Father to enjoy eternal life with Him. The wars of our lands have claimed many lives, both righteous and unrighteous. When Ammon led our people to the Land of Jershon, the Lamanite armies followed us into the wilderness, and there occurred a tremendous battle between the Lamanite and Nephite armies. The dead on both sides were too numerous to number. During the period of mourning that followed, we engaged in much prayer and fasting; afterward, there was peace for a time. Our children grew up having known both war and peace. Many preachers went through the land teaching us the ways of the Lord and of the coming to earth of God's Son, Jesus. This was a glorious, peaceful time for our people, but it was not to continue. During this time, we received into our land the poor of the Zoramites, who were converted to Jesus the Christ. They were persecuted and cast out of their land by the religious leaders who were not believers in Christ. Those Zoramite leaders in the land of Antionum stirred the Lamanites up to anger against the Zoramite believers and the people of Ammon for accepting them into our land. They joined together to come to battle against us in the Land of Jershon. However, the Nephite armies moved us to safety to the Land of Melek and then fought against the invading armies. Even though there were two times as many Lamanite soldiers as there were Nephite soldiers, the Nephites prevailed. This was because the chief captain over all the Nephite armies is Moroni, a strong and mighty man who is a servant of God. He does not delight in bloodshed, but is willing to give up his life for his religion and his country so that his people might be free.

On this day, we said goodbye to 60 more of our young sons who are going to join the 2000 of their brethren who are under the command of Helaman. As they march out of sight, we kneel, thanking God for their faith and their courage and asking for His divine protection upon them. It seems only yesterday that they were playing around our feet as we did our chores. We taught our children about God through songs, stories and holy scripture. We told them about how we became converted to the Lord, how we came to live in the Land of Jershon and why we are called "the people of Ammon." They know of the covenant God made with our forefather, Abraham, and the blessing pronounced upon Joseph and his descendants. They also know of God leading our father Lehi and his family from Jerusalem just before it was destroyed, and bringing them to this land of promise. The fathers of our children have taught them of the importance of obedience to God, and what happened to a nation of people because of the disobedience of Laman and Lemuel. We reminded them often of the loving kindness of our Heavenly Father, who sent His servants to us that we might repent and receive salvation through His Son, Jesus. They understood about their fathers burying their weapons of war and making a covenant never to shed man's blood again. Our sons did not want them to break that covenant, but chose to fight in their stead. We have no doubts that our sons are strong in their faith and will rely upon God's mercy in this perilous time.

On this day, many Lamanites came into our land who had been taken as prisoners by the Nephite armies in the city Nephiah. These Lamanites, who are our brethren, expressed a desire to be a free people and asked to join with us, the people of Ammon, in the Land of Jershon. When they took an oath that they would never again take up weapons of war against the Nephites, they were allowed to come live with us. We welcomed them, even as we recently welcomed about 4,000 other Lamanites who had been prisoners of the Nephites. They, too, made a covenant

never to go to war against the Nephites again. We rejoice and thank God for all these our brethren who have joined us in peace. We remember many of them from our days in the Land of Ishmael, which is a part of the Land of Nephi. Some were our neighbors, and some are even our kindred. They have already begun to till the ground, and they plan to plant grain and seeds of many kinds and raise flocks and herds. They often express how blessed they are for their new life of freedom with us, but their greatest blessing will be when they fully learn of the ways of God and of the gospel of Christ. Thank you, Father, for bringing so many of our people from darkness into light and peace. My prayer for our sons, who are still in battle, is for them to return home safely, but more especially, that they always remain faithful unto Thee.

On this glorious day, our sons came home. The war is over, and all 2060 of our young men returned safely to us. Not one was lost in battle! This, I know, is because our sons have strong faith in the Lord, and He was merciful to them. Being led by Helaman, they came marching home, singing praises and offering thanks to the Holy One above. All of the people of Ammon joined in, and what rejoicing we had! Not only had God preserved the lives of all our young men, but He had also preserved our freedom to worship Him through the victory of the Nephites over our enemies. During the celebration, Helaman was asked to speak to the people, and he said, "Your sons, my little sons as I call them, showed more courage than I have ever before seen." He told us how our sons had fought in some of the fiercest battles, and not one of them ever retreated. They fought without fear because they had put their complete trust in God. Helaman stated that our sons told him they had been taught by their mothers that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them. They fought with such miraculous strength that it surely must have come from God, he told us. He concluded by saying, "They were obedient and followed every order exactly. Even though many of them were wounded and, after one heavy battle, 200 fainted from loss of blood, not one soul of them perished. Because of God's mercy and protection upon them, I have brought every one of them back to you." This day, I offer my song of praise to the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all Israel:

*Blessed is the One who parts the sea for His people to walk through.
Holy is the Being who watches over every sparrow.
Praise to the Creator who makes Himself known to all His creation.
Precious is His Son who gives His life that wanderers may return to the Father.
Holy! Holy! Holy is His name.*

*Wonderful is His glory that bathes the heavens above.
Magnificent is the splendor of His Majesty's eternal love.
Ruler of the universe, Master of Earth, Tender parent of His children.
Holy! Holy! Holy is His name.*

... a mother

A SOLDIER'S THOUGHTS ON THE STRIPLING WARRIORS

BY DOUGLAS J. BELL

This is one of the greatest stories of youthful courage ever recorded. The stage was set when the Lamanite Christian converts of the Sons of Mosiah took an oath of peace and buried their weapons. A short time later, they were attacked by their own people and 1,005 of their men willingly lay before the swords of the advancing Lamanites. It is impossible to imagine the terrible carnage as these peaceful saints honored their oath and were slain by the sword. [Alma 23 and 24 LDS] (Alma 14 RLDS) About ten years later, the Nephites were in a terrible war with the Lamanites and the Ammonites could not break their oath. However, they had sons who had not taken the oath—they came forward with a desire to join the fight for liberty if they could have Helaman as their commander. [Alma 53:16-18; 56:6-8 LDS] (Alma 24:70-74, 26:6-8 RLDS)

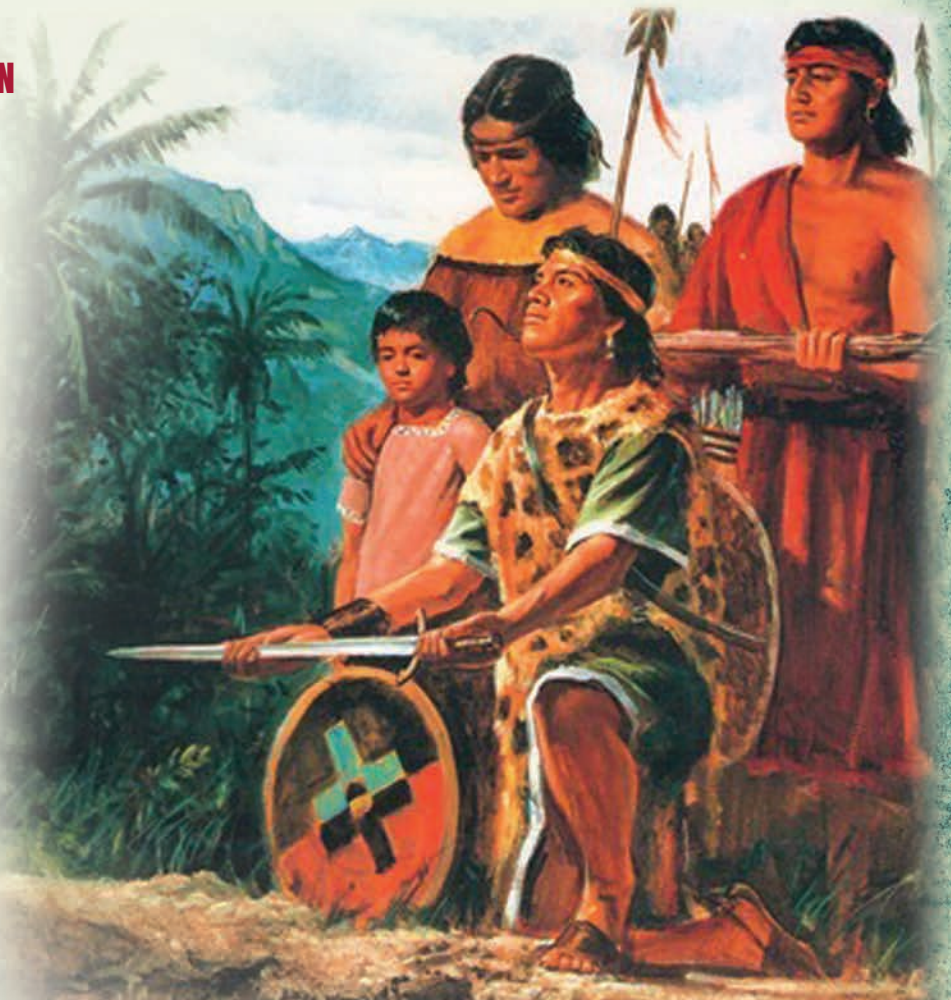
These young men had not been old enough to make the oath against war and were not under the obligation of that covenant. As they came forward, they made a new covenant of their own “that they never would give up their liberty, but they would fight in all cases to protect the Nephites and themselves from bondage.” [Alma 53:17 LDS] (Alma 24:72-73 RLDS)

THE STRIPLING WARRIORS: AN IMPRESSIVE GROUP OF YOUNG MEN

These 2,000 men of faith and commitment were very young—most between the ages of 12 and 15. Accordingly, they were called the “Stripling Warriors.” Moreover, they were raised by the Ammonites, who were against the shedding of blood. Consequently, they would have little knowledge or skill with the weapons of hand-to-hand combat. Knowing this background makes it very clear that Chief Captain Helaman took charge of some awfully inexperienced adolescents.

It is likely that many of their fathers were among the 1,005 Ammonites who willingly gave their lives, rather than break an oath not to fight. With the same strength and dedication as their fathers, these young men took an oath to obey every order of Helaman and fight for the freedom of their people.

The unfolding of this heartwarming story of youthful courage was told in a letter from Chief Captain Helaman to the higher-ranking Chief Captain Moroni. [Alma chapter 56 LDS] (Alma chapter 26 RLDS)



*The Anti-Nephi Lehes Bury Their Swords by Del Parson
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Helaman explained to Moroni that the war in that region had been difficult until the addition of the 2,000 young Ammonites.

Helaman also showed his love for the stripling warriors by calling them his sons. [Alma 56:9-12 LDS] (Alma 26:9-14 RLDS)

The enormous danger these young soldiers faced is illustrated in verse 12.

Helaman explained that the Lamanites were killing all the prisoners taken in battle except the chief captains. As a soldier, this small piece of information gives me insight into the horrid nature of this war. Only the prisoners of high rank were kept alive by the Lamanites, because they would have strategic intelligence (information) and were of more value to be exchanged for other prisoners. Moreover, prisoners are a battlefield problem, because an army must use part of their fighters to imprison captives. While it is not stated specifically, it is evident that these 2,000 young soldiers were in even greater danger if they were used in combat. Not only were they inexperienced, the young soldiers would most certainly be killed if captured because of the Lamanite hatred for the Ammonites.

From a military standpoint, the Lamanite decision not to take prisoners is very vengeful and unproductive. First, the army could not collect battlefield intelligence or information from a large number of frightened prisoners. Second, the knowledge that surrender meant certain death would make every Nephite fight with increased intensity. When there is no chance of survival as a prisoner, every soldier fights to the death. Just imagine the terror and violence of the battlefield under these conditions.

THE SUCCESSFUL STRATEGY OF ANTIPUS AND HELAMAN

The status of the war in the southern part of the Nephite lands was very serious. Helaman explained that the Lamanites had captured four major Nephite cities that were very well fortified. [Alma 56:14-16 LDS] (Alma 26:15-17 RLDS) Consequently, the Nephite captains—Antipus and Helaman—were

in search of a “*stratagem*” to lure the Lamanites out of the strongholds. The plan was set up to lure a large army of Lamanites out into the open by using the stripling warriors as a decoy that moved past the city of Antiparah. [Alma 56:28-38 LDS] (Alma 26:31-46 RLDS) If the Lamanites took the bait, the army of the Nephite captain Antipus was to catch the Lamanites in the open. The plan worked, and the Lamanites chased the young warriors for several days, but suddenly turned on the exhausted army of Antipus and was close to victory. When the problem became evident, Helaman spoke with his sons.

And now, whether they were overtaken by Antipus we knew not, but I said unto my men: Behold, we know not but they have halted for the purpose that we should come against them, that they might catch us in their snare; therefore what say ye, my sons, will ye go against them to battle? And now I say unto you, my beloved brother Moroni, that never had I seen so great courage, nay, not amongst all the Nephites... For as I had ever called them my sons (for they were all of them very young) even so they said unto me: Father, behold our God is with us, and he will not suffer that we should fall... Now they never had fought, yet they did not fear death; and they did think more upon the liberty of their fathers than they did upon their lives; yea, they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them. And they rehearsed unto me the words of their mothers, saying: We do not doubt our mothers knew it.

[Alma 56:43-49 LDS] (Alma 26:43-59 RLDS)

This brief dialogue between Helaman and his “sons” is remarkable. We should all take note that critical moments come upon us quickly and test our commitment to principle. Captain Helaman spoke to his young men: “*What say ye my sons, will you go against them to battle?*” Our challenge may not come in war, but it will come. Will we be up to the challenge when we are asked, “*What say ye?*” Will our leader reflect on our character as Helaman reflected

on his warriors? “And now I say unto you Moroni, that never had I seen so great courage, nay, not amongst all the Nephites.”

Why did they speak of their mothers at this critical moment? Remember the thousand Lamanite Christian men who lay down and were slaughtered by the Lamanites because they would not take up the sword? It is very likely that many of these young stripling warriors were sons of those men. They had been raised by faithful single mothers who loved their new faith and knew how to teach their sons to be faithful to their oaths, just like their fathers who had given up their lives rather than break an oath. This is perhaps the greatest tribute in all of scripture to motherhood and the impact that righteous mothers have on the lives of young children. If many of these young Lamanites were raised without fathers, it also explains why they revered Helaman and desired to call him father. [Alma 56:49-54LDS] (Alma 26:58-64 RLDS)

The stripling warriors changed the tide of a tremendous battle and caused the Lamanites to surrender. After the battle, Helaman took a moment to reflect on the character of his wonderful young warriors and the role they had played in winning the battle. [Alma 56:49-54 LDS] (Alma 26:58-64 RLDS)

And now it came to pass that when they had surrendered themselves up unto us, behold, I numbered those young men who had fought with me, fearing lest there were many of them slain.

But behold, to my great joy, there had not one soul of them fallen to the earth; yea, and they had fought as if with the strength of God; yea, never were men known to have fought with such miraculous strength; and with such mighty power did they fall upon the



Lamanites, that they did frighten them; and for this cause did the Lamanites deliver themselves up as prisoners of war.

[Alma 56:55-56 LDS]

(Alma 26:65-67 RLDS) (*emphasis added*)

The numbers increased to 2,060 when they fought in more battles. Helaman described the performance with a glowing report to Captain Moroni.

But behold, my little band of two thousand and sixty fought most desperately; yea, they were firm before the Lamanites, and did administer death unto all those who opposed them. **And as the remainder of our army were about to give way before the Lamanites, behold, those two thousand and sixty were firm and undaunted. Yea, and they did obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness; yea, and even according to their faith it was done unto them; and I did remember the words which they said unto me that their mothers had taught them.**

[Alma 57:19-21 LDS]

(Alma 26:94-96 RLDS) (*emphasis added*)

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My observation as a former military officer is that this description of the young soldiers is exactly what any military commander would want in his unit: (1) Men of commitment, “undaunted,” (2) men that would obey without question, “perform every word of command with exactness,” and (3) men of great faith, “according to their faith.” I have no doubt that other officers would agree—commanding young soldiers is a challenge. Having young men in your command who are obedient, dedicated, and love God is a commander’s blessing.

Following the battle of Cumeni, Helaman was very fearful that many of his young warriors were slain in the terrible battle where many were injured or killed.

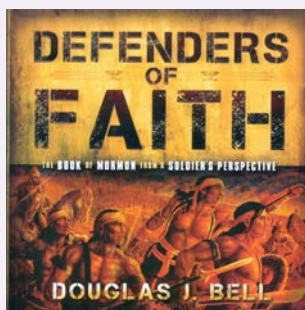
And it came to pass that after the Lamanites had fled, I immediately gave orders that my men who had been wounded should be taken from among the dead, and caused that their wounds should be dressed. And it came to pass that there were two hundred, out of my two thousand and sixty, who had fainted because of the loss of blood; nevertheless, according to the goodness of God, and to our great astonishment, and also the joy of our whole army, there was not one soul of them who did perish; yea, and neither was there one soul among them who had not received many wounds. **And now, their preservation was astonishing to our whole army, yea, that they should be spared while there was a thousand of our brethren who were slain.** And we **do justly ascribe it to the miraculous power of God**, because of their exceeding faith in that which they had been taught to believe—that there was a just God, and whosoever did not doubt, that they should be preserved by his marvelous power.

[Alma 57:24-26 LDS] (Alma 26:99-103 RLDS) (*emphasis added*)

It is important to make a final comment on the remarkable nature of the battles of the stripling warriors. These very young men, probably 12 to 15 years old, were inexperienced and had never fought before. They went into fierce close combat with experienced battle-hardened Lamanites who were filled with hatred for these young Lamanite Christians who had turned away from their Lamanite traditions. The performance by this youthful unit of soldiers without a single death was more than remarkable—it was a military miracle. Helaman’s comments are certainly fitting: “they had fought as if with the strength of God; yea, never were men known to have fought with such miraculous strength...” [Alma 56:56 LDS]

(Alma 26:66-67 RLDS)

Note how this miraculous story is also a metaphor for life. All of us will be wounded by the trappings of Satan and the difficulties of earthly life. However, if we are faithful—all will be blessed and the scars of life will be healed by the atonement of Jesus Christ. Helaman’s final tribute in his letter to Moroni describes the greatness of the sons of Helaman, “**they are young, and their minds are firm, and they do put their trust in God continually.**” [Alma 57:27 LDS] (Alma 26:104 RLDS) God help us to do the same.



A Soldier's Thoughts on the Stripling Warriors and Captain Moroni and the Title of Liberty—A Soldier's Commentary are composed from excerpts from the book **Defenders of Faith: The Book of Mormon from a Soldier's Perspective** by Douglas J. Bell. It is published by Cedar Fort Publishing of Springville, Utah. To order **Defenders of Faith: The Book of Mormon from a Soldier's Perspective** please contact The Book of Mormon Foundation.

CAPTAIN MORONI AND THE TITLE OF LIBERTY

— A SOLDIER'S COMMENTARY

by Douglas J. Bell

Captain Moroni is perhaps the greatest example of an authentic patriot in all of scripture. He loved his country and liberty with all his being. The depth of the great captain's feeling is demonstrated by his reaction to Amalickiah when he attempted to destroy the fledgling Nephite democracy and become King. This well-known scripture describes how Moroni ripped apart his coat and created the "Title of Liberty" to take among the people and motivate them to action. The details are in the following verses.

And now it came to pass that when Moroni, who was the chief commander of the armies of the Nephites, had heard of these dissensions, he was angry with Amalickiah. And it came to pass that he rent his coat; and he took a piece thereof, and wrote upon it—**In memory of our God, our religion, and freedom, and our peace, our wives, and our children**—and he fastened it upon the end of a pole. **And he fastened on his head-plate, and his breastplate, and his shields, and girded on his armor about his loins;** and he took the pole, which had on the end thereof his rent coat, (and he called it the title of liberty) and **he bowed himself to the earth, and he prayed mightily unto his God for the blessings of liberty to rest upon his brethren,** so long as there should a band of Christians remain to possess the land—For thus were all the true believers of Christ... And therefore, at this time, Moroni prayed that the cause of the Christians, and the freedom of the land might be favored. And it came to pass that when he had poured out his soul to God, **he named all the land which was south of the land Desolation, yea, and in fine, all the land, both on the north and on the south—A chosen land, and the land of liberty.**

[Alma 46:11-13] (Alma 21:40-43 RLDS)
(emphasis added)

This is one of the most delightful passages in the Book of Mormon. As a patriot, a soldier and a Christian, my heart is touched profoundly by this wonderful display of patriotic love. Wouldn't it be breathtaking to have modern-day leaders speak with such sincere clarity? Wouldn't it be astonishing to see latter-day leaders remind us of our Christian heritage and invoke the blessings of God on our nation? The cowardly ideology of political correctness has robbed us of the ability to speak with such honest transparency.



There are four key elements to focus on when studying this stirring event. The first is the wording on the *“Title of Liberty.”* Moroni tore his coat into pieces, allowing him to make a banner. On this standard he wrote, *“In memory of our God, our religion, and freedom, and our peace, our wives, and our children.”* As a soldier, I see this event as exceptionally insightful. Moroni needed people to take up arms. The country had probably disarmed after winning the battle of Manti and now faced an insurrection within the Nephite nation—a group under unscrupulous leadership who wanted to destroy their new democracy. The Nephites and the freedom-loving people of the world never fight war for selfish reasons. They fight for principle—freedom. Additionally, they fight to protect their homes, wives and children. Having been to war, I know where my heart was every single day—on my family. I saw strikingly beautiful children everywhere in Iraq. They seemed to materialize out of nowhere; no matter where we stopped. We were in full body armor and carrying weapons: yet, they came forward and just wanted to be near us. From this experience, I had an epiphany that has not gone away: *we do not fight wars for ourselves—we fight wars for the children.* It is their future that must be protected at any cost. Their freedom is the overriding motivation to be found in the minds and hearts of soldiers. Moroni’s *“Title of Liberty”* was absolutely right! I stand as his witness!

The second key element of this event was the action the chief captain took immediately after tearing his coat and writing on it. He put on his armor. This action in front of the people illustrated that he was ready for battle and that he was willing to give his life for the principles he had written on his garment. He was totally committed: tearing his garment and creating the *“Title of Liberty”* represented an oath. An ancient Jewish custom—the rending of clothing—was used here to establish an oath. Putting on his armor was an action to demonstrate his readiness to carry out the oath.

The third element of this great event was when Moroni knelt in prayer: *“he bowed himself to the earth, and he prayed mightily unto his God for the blessings of liberty to rest upon his brethren, so long as there should a band of Christians remain to possess the land—For thus were all the true believers of Christ, who belonged to the church of God called...”* Captain Moroni had read his scriptures, and he knew the founding charge that had been given by father Lehi when they first arrived in the Promised Land.

Wherefore, I, Lehi, have obtained a promise, that inasmuch as those whom the Lord God shall bring out of the land of Jerusalem shall keep his commandments, they shall prosper upon the face of this land; and they shall be kept from all other nations, that they may possess this land unto themselves...

[2 Nephi 1:9 LDS] (2 Nephi 1:18-21 RLDS)

Moroni knew the key to any Nephite victory was the righteousness of the people and the help of the Lord. The Lord had made a covenant to protect His people, and Moroni was refreshing the memory of the covenant among the people through his prayer. This is an admirable example of Moroni’s knowledge of history and his spiritual strength.

The fourth element of this event was to give the land a new name. This was a brilliant act of the master patriot. Moroni wanted the people to develop their patriotism. Renaming the land *“Liberty”* was his way of placing his founding principle for war in front of the people. They were now *“citizens of Liberty.”*

Moroni prayed that the cause of the Christians and the freedom of the land might be favored. And it came to pass that when he had poured out his soul to God, he named all the land which was south of the land Desolation, yea, and in fine, all the land, both on the north and on the south—A chosen land, and the land of liberty. [Alma 46:16-17 LSD] (Alma 21:45-46 RLDS)

Moroni finished this wonderful testament to Liberty by inviting the people to join him in a covenant. Note how they responded to him by rending their garments to show their conviction to the covenant. This ancient Jewish custom adds validity to this wonderful story.

And he said: Surely God shall not suffer that we, who are despised because we take upon us the name of Christ, shall be trodden down and destroyed, until we bring it upon us by our own transgressions. And when Moroni had said these words, he went forth among the people, waving the rent part of his garment in the air, that all might see the writing which he had written upon the rent part, and crying with a loud voice, saying: **Behold, whosoever will maintain this title upon the land, let them come forth in the strength of the Lord, and enter into a covenant** that they will maintain their rights, and their religion, that the Lord God may bless them. And it came to pass that when Moroni had proclaimed these words, behold, **the people came running together with their armor girded about their loins, rending their garments in token, or as a covenant, that they would not**

forsake the Lord their God; or, in other words, if they should transgress the commandments of God, or fall into transgression, and be ashamed to take upon them the name of Christ, the Lord should rend them even as they had rent their garments.

[Alma 46:18-21LDS] (Alma 21:47-51 RLDS)
(emphasis added)

Taking an oath to commit to the defense of liberty is also an American custom. The practice of taking an oath began in 1775 with George Washington and the Continental Army. Every person in the United States military of today takes an oath to defend the nation. The solemnity of these oaths illustrate that entering the United States military service is an honor that carries with it a very sacred obligation. Having been an American soldier and having taken an oath of military service, the oath that Moroni required of his army takes on added importance to me.

Captain Moroni subsequently went through the major Nephite cities with the “Title of Liberty” and brought many into the covenant. The army that he recruited was so formidable that Amalickiah and his insurrectionists fled the land of the Nephites.

MORMON'S TESTAMENT TO THE MAGNITUDE OF CAPTAIN MORONI

Mormon, the editor and compiler of the Book of Mormon, chose to place the story of Captain Moroni in the Nephite record, and he included a healthy amount of detail. It was no mistake. He wanted us to see the magnitude of this great leader. Moreover, Mormon was so impressed that he named his son after this great patriot. As a soldier and military officer, I have found that a serious study of the faith, courage and strategies of Captain Moroni leads to the conclusion that this great captain was perhaps the greatest of all military generals—not just of the Nephites but of all recorded history. Without question, his story deserved to be highlighted in the Book of Mormon. Here is Mormon’s ultimate compliment to the greatest of Nephite captains—Moroni!

And Moroni was a strong and a mighty man; he was a man of a perfect understanding; yea, a man that did not delight in bloodshed; a man whose soul did joy in the liberty and the freedom of his country, and his brethren from bondage and slavery; Yea, a man whose heart did swell with thanksgiving to his God, for the many privileges and blessings which he bestowed upon his people; a man who did labor exceedingly for the welfare and safety of his people. Yea, and he was a man who was firm in the faith of Christ, and he had sworn with an



Captain Moroni • Used with permission
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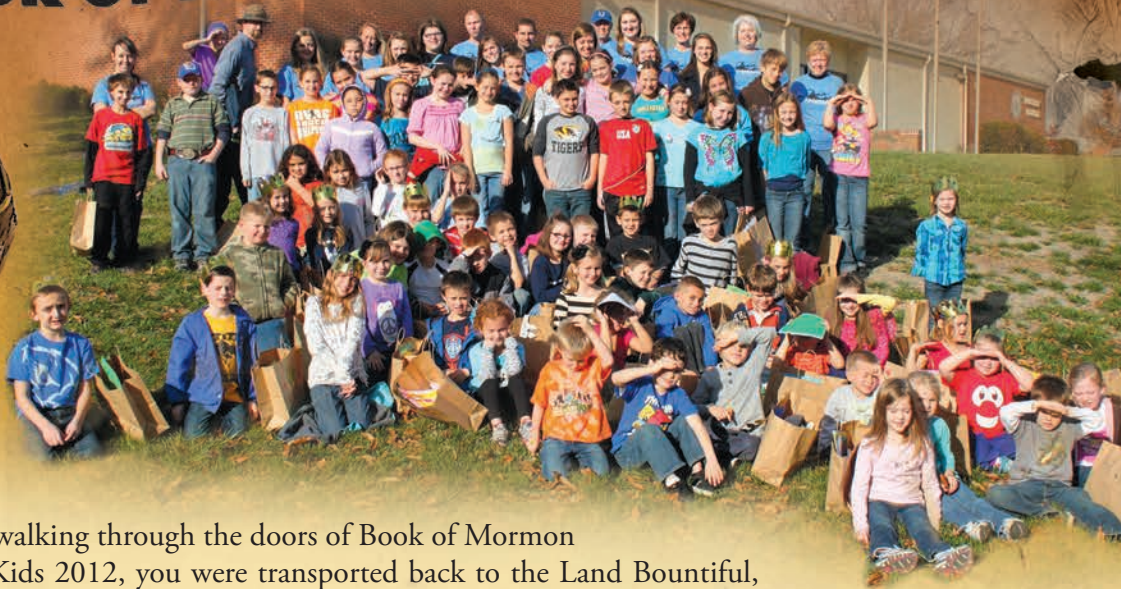
oath to defend his people, his rights, and his country, and his religion, even to the loss of his blood... And also, that God would make it known unto them whither they should go to defend themselves against their enemies, and by so doing, the Lord would deliver them; and this was the faith of Moroni, and his heart did glory in it; not in the shedding of blood but in doing good, in preserving his people, yea, in keeping the commandments of God, yea, and resisting iniquity. Yea, verily, verily I say unto you, if all men had been, and were, and ever would be, like unto Moroni, behold, the very powers of hell would have been shaken forever; yea, the devil would never have power over the hearts of the children of men.

[Alma 48:11-17.LDS]
(Alma 21:132-140 RLDS) (emphasis added)

May we emulate the imposing example of Captain Moroni in our lives and teach every generation the courageous and faith-building stories of this creative, honorable and merciful military leader. Indeed, he is truly one of history’s greatest patriots.

JOURNEY THROUGH THE BOOK OF MORMON

Book of Mormon Day for Kids 2012



While walking through the doors of Book of Mormon Day for Kids 2012, you were transported back to the Land Bountiful, the Waters of Mormon, Zarahemla and many other places. This year, we journeyed through the Book of Mormon, focusing on several stories. These included the Brother of Jared, Journey to the Promised Land, Alma Sees an Angel, Stripling Warriors, King Benjamin, Jesus Teaches in the Americas, The Waters of Mormon, King Lamoni, The Brass Plates, Lehi's Vison, Title of Liberty, and Samuel the Lamanite.

The 75 children attending were treated to popcorn as they began their full day by watching Abinadi on the big screen. They then moved through stations, where they saw short video clips and engaged in hands-on activities focusing on each station's story. Coins were collected at each station to spend at the marketplace. After the scrumptious lunch of kosher hotdogs and chips, the kids continued through the stations, shopped at the Zarahemla Marketplace, sang, and ran off lots of energy.

At the Journey to the Promised Land station, the children watched a short video on how Nephi was taught by God to make tools from metal and use them to build a ship. Fortunately for us, we already had the tools! Armed with glue guns, we used milk cartons and craft sticks to build our ships. Each child then had the opportunity to test just how seaworthy their vessels were in our makeshift ocean.

Crowns were decorated and worn at the King Lamoni station, where the kids learned about the king and queen's conversion. Lots of glitter flowed at the Waters of Mormon station onto pages of water-blue paper. Each child had the good fortune of making their own set of gold plates! Gold-colored vellum served as the top page of a book of scriptures and was held together with brass (colored) rings. The most popular station was the Zarahemla Marketplace, where each child could purchase rewards with their coins collected at each station. They had to be careful that the Gadiantons didn't steal their coins!

It was a wonderful day! Many volunteers helped with the day, and many hours were given to make the 2012 Book of Mormon Day for Kids a success. Thank you for sharing your children with us!



My favorite part about Book of Mormon Day for Kids was painting the glow in the dark rocks and learning the story of how God touched the rocks. --Brennan Anderson

My favorite part was getting to buy things at the store. We got money during the day that we could spend on small toys. I also liked the movie Abinadi. --Emma Gilmore

I enjoyed all of it! I liked making the boats that were like the one's Nephi sailed on to the Promised Land. It was fun making The Tree of Life. I learned that the fruit was sweet and if we follow God the spirit will be sweet also. I like making the swords as we learned about the 2,000 stripling warriors. --Westin Barrett

The part I liked best about Book of Mormon Day for Kids was the station about Lehi and his family traveling to the promised land and then making the boats out of orange juice containers and floating them in the water. --Peyton Anderson

The Book of Mormon Day for Kids was a lot of fun. My favorite story was the Title of Liberty and it was really fun to spend our coins at the Market. --Brendan Smith

This is the second year I've helped out at Book of Mormon Day for Kids. I love helping out. Being around these kids taught me how loving and caring one can be. At this year's Book of Mormon Day for Kids I was able to work at a station. I was so impressed with how much the kids know and how eager they are to learn. I feel that when we get older we sometimes tend to lose our eagerness to learn and serve the Lord but these kids remind me we should always be ready to learn about the Lord and serve Him. --Mandee McElwain

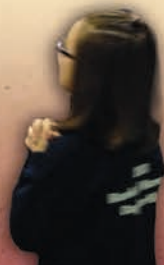
THANK YOU!

It takes many hours and volunteers to present the Book of Mormon Day for Kids. After prayers and meetings, a theme is chosen, posters and registration forms are printed and distributed, the location is selected, tables and chairs are set up, visual aids are brought in, supplies are bought, food is prepared, and everything is moved to the site and set up for the day's activities. When the day is over and the last child is gone, the long day ends with cleaning up and moving everything back from whence it came.

Lorrie Look has directed the Book of Mormon Day for Kids the last three years. She has done an excellent job and put in countless hours and late nights making a dream a reality. Thank you, Lorrie, for a job well done. We can't wait to see what's up your sleeve for next year!

We would also like to thank the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, especially Brother Kevin Romer, for allowing us to use their facilities and the beautiful Book of Mormon sets painted by Sister Romer. It was a perfect setting, and the sets really made the day special.

It takes many willing and able servants to make the Book of Mormon Day for Kids a success. The board and staff at the Foundation would like to thank the many volunteers who helped with set-up, preparing food, leading stations, running errands and, of course, the clean-up crew! It was a wonderful journey!



GREAT EXPERIENCES AT THE BOOK OF MORMON BOOTH

by Stephen Henson

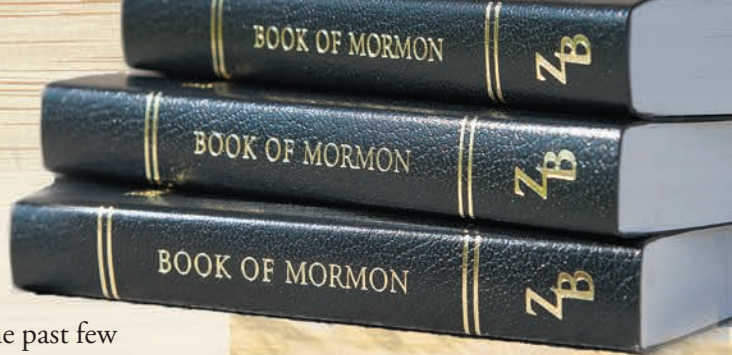
It was a great blessing to be able to volunteer this year at the Book of Mormon booth during Santa-Cali-Gon Days. I have volunteered for the past few summers, having a great time each year. It was wonderful to renew many old friendships as we joined together in service to the Lord. It reminds me of the experience in the Book of Mormon where Alma and the sons of Mosiah met on the road to Manti. They shared joy in seeing each other again and knowing that each was still active in service to God.

Our first challenge was setting up the booth on Thursday night. I can testify that setting up the booth is not as easy as it sounds. However, we found joy in our fellowship, regardless of the hard work, as we relied on the Lord to accomplish the many tasks. Each challenge was always met with success.

I volunteered for two shifts on Saturday and Monday afternoon. We were blessed to be able to share full sized Books of Mormon, pocket-sized Books of Mormon, and Spanish Books of Mormon. We also had tracts containing valuable information on the Book of Mormon and our belief in Jesus Christ, our Savior. During these very hot days, we were able to give cold water to thirsty souls in need which provided time for us to share about Jesus Christ, the living water.

Over the past few years I have had several good conversations with people asking questions about the Book of Mormon and the beliefs we have in Christ's church. Many of those receiving the Book of Mormon were interested in reading them for the first time. Our prayers continue for those who are searching and studying the things we shared. It's always a great missionary experience volunteering at the booth!

God has always blessed us in our booth when we start the weekend activity with prayer. We did so believing God will deliver to us the desires of our hearts. It brings joy to me to be able to do a small part in witnessing for Christ as He has given everything for us. It's a blessing to be able to serve Christ and others by handing out each Book of Mormon and each cup of water. I want to say great job to Aaron Brown for directing this year and Kelli Pedersen for years past. I especially want to thank my Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ, for calling me into this part of the vineyard to witness. I encourage everyone, especially the youth, to feast upon the words of Christ and to volunteer at the Book of Mormon booth next year!



Come to the Water by John Larson

On Saturday, September 29, 2012, nearly 40 saints gathered at Lexington Restoration Branch to witness the baptism and confirmation of Sister Jane Eyerly. As the former-day saints met at the Waters of Mormon to make their covenant with God, we gathered to witness Jane's determination to serve Him to the end.

Jane spent this past summer participating in The Book of Mormon Foundation Internship and, by the end of the summer; she had decided to make her covenant with her Lord Jesus Christ. As I watched Jane enter the baptismal font with Elder Kendall Geno, I reflected on a testimony given to a woman named Viviane Awaot, who lives in Kumba, Cameroon.

One night, as the local pastor and I were resting from the day's activities, two women arrived at the church in need of specific ministry. One was Viviane. She wanted to know why she must be baptized again if she had already been baptized into another church. While the pastor visited with the other woman, I visited with Viviane for about an hour. At the close of our conversation, I asked her to tell her husband what we had discussed and to pray together to God about whether or not they should be baptized. The next day, Viviane called out to us from her fish stand in the marketplace. She told us of a dream she had been given the night before. As she began to recount the dream, I asked the Lord for an interpretation, if one was necessary.

In the dream, she was standing in a stream, while people on either side of the stream scoffed at her and told her that she was foolish for standing in the stream because there is no such thing as clean water. Then two men, both dressed in white, came walking downstream toward her. They bade her to follow them, and they led her to the headwaters of the stream where it sprang out of the earth. As she looked at the stones lying on the streambed, a voice told her to be baptized. As she spoke, I knew that the stream represented God's authority and that the men were the Aaronic and Melchisedec priesthood. While the crowd declared that all authority has been spoiled, the visitors in white showed Viviane that the point of origin of God's authority is still on the earth. The testimony of Christ continues to spring in the hearts of those who will sincerely seek God, and I have seen that testimony in the life of my new sister, Jane Eyerly.



Fierce Honesty by Jane Eyerly

I was baptized at the Lexington Restoration Branch by Kendal Geno. For months prior, I had been praying that those I love would be able to come to my baptism and be touched by the Holy Ghost. I hoped and prayed that all those who came or were there in spirit were blessed that morning with a gentle and uplifting Spirit, as I was. One of the first things John Larson mentioned that morning was that, as one of God's children comes to Him, the angels in heaven are rejoicing that day, even more than they were at our world's creation. As the congregation sang the first note of Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing, my eyes welled up, and I nearly burst into tears. Their voices were so powerful and beautiful, and I became filled with such joy that people I love were all around me, supporting me this glorious day. John spoke again about the seal on Jesus' tomb and the representation of death in baptism. A new person is born, and the old one is washed away.

I stepped into the font while everyone sang Higher Ground. Now, I've been dunked under water several times before, but this time, as I was brought under, held for a second, and brought up, it was different. As I came up, it was if my breath was taken away for a moment. I remember coughing after I emerged. The life and death scenario became more literal than I had expected. Afterward, as I stood in the back room, I offered my first prayer as a child of God while the congregation sang Look for the Beautiful in the sanctuary. I prayed once again that my loved ones would be blessed by this event, and I thanked Him for bringing me to this moment and giving me this life. As I walked back out, many people were offering prayers. Then we sang I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go, and I thought about the new life I was about to start as a flight attendant. God will be taking me to many heights, and I felt this was the perfect preparation for me to be a strong servant and witness for Him and to all the people I will meet.

Next was my confirmation and, as Kendal and Doug Smith stood over me in prayer, I was praying also. I was welcoming the Spirit into my soul as well as trying to send it to those around me. Also, I remember singing the camp song, "I've Been Redeemed" in my head. John then opened the floor to testimonies and more prayers. Everyone had beautiful things to say about how they've been proud to watch me grow, how they've enjoyed my company, questions and my "fierce honesty." I felt so blessed and moved by their comments that I will never be able to accurately express how touched and uplifted I felt in that moment. John said a few more words about baptism and gifts of the Holy Ghost. We then gathered in a circle holding hands and sang God Be With Us Til We Meet Again.

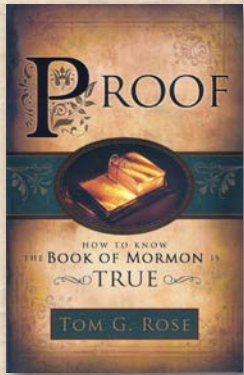
My older brother asked after we got home if I felt any different. My answer, surprisingly, was yes. I do feel different! Those sins that weighed so heavily on me weren't there. It's as if there's strength somewhere from within. I feel clean, pure and simple, and how I should be.

I requested sacrament the next Sunday. Doug Smith and Rob Bird administered it to me and my mother at the Lexington Restoration Branch after the morning service. Beforehand, Doug spoke about what it means to be worthy of the sacrament and the purpose behind it. It's not the absence of sin that makes you worthy, but rather the willingness to take upon you the name of Jesus Christ in your life and follow His commandments. You must recognize that you are representing the Son in your thoughts, your words, and your actions. I knew this would be a good reminder to be a better witness of God to those around me. I'm so thankful Doug prepared us with these words, because afterward my mom told me she needed to have that understanding that he gave us. Following the sacrament, I felt so clean and still so powerful with God's Spirit. My smile seemed brighter, and my steps seemed lighter. All in all, it was the perfect beginning to this new life. In a few days, I head to Cleveland, Ohio, to start my new job as a flight attendant. Again, I want to thank all the people who have supported me and said so many prayers on my behalf. I'm so blessed to have this foundation and so thankful to have this opportunity to be His faithful servant!

Jane Eyerly was a member of the 2012 Book of Mormon Foundation Internship Program. See The Witness, Fall 2012 Issue, #143 for her original testimony.



AT THE BOOKSTORE



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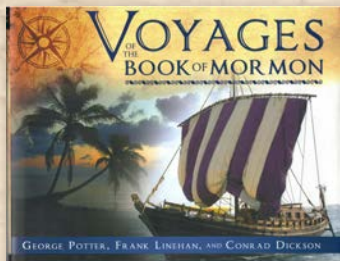


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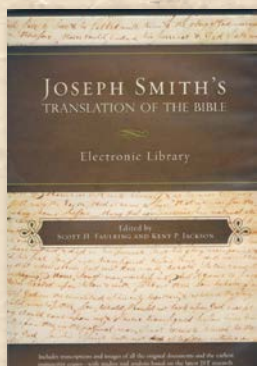
Voyages of the Book of Mormon

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by Gerard Helferich

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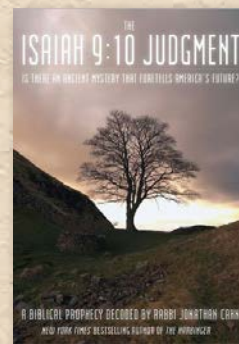


Youth | Can't Hang Out... Gotta Build a Ship: Unleashing Your

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Internship Program 2013



*In 1992, the first summer internship program was established. The goal of the Internship is to provide an environment for older youth to gain a greater understanding of *The Book of Mormon*, their responsibility to the remnant people, and the central focus that Jesus Christ should have in their lives. They also have an opportunity to develop leadership and witnessing skills.*

The Internship is a rigorous six-week program which includes daily class study and homework, worship, prayer and fasting, service, and witnessing to both young and old. Add to this commitment—daily laughter and concern for one another, and what develops is a lifelong bond of friendship.

June 10–July 19, 2013

APPLICATIONS

Deadline: **February 9, 2013**
Available online at www.bmfinternship.org
or call the Foundation 816-461-3722

INTERVIEWS

February 23, 2013
at the Book of Mormon Foundation

WHO'S ELIGIBLE

19-24 years old
(and at least one year out of high school)

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BOOK OF MORMON RETREAT

January 25-27, 2013 *Odessa Hills Campground*

Arrive 6:30pm Friday / Leave noon on Sunday

The Retreat is for those with the desire to learn more about The Book of Mormon. Bring scriptures, bedding for twin size bunk, personal hygiene items, flash light, casual clothing, coat, hat and gloves, and an interest in finding out more about The Book of Mormon. Please leave iPods, cell phones and other similar items at home.

Retreat Directors: Mike and Julie Fleming (816) 461-3722

Sponsored by The Book of Mormon Foundation

PAYMENT

This retreat is for ages 18-24. The cost is **\$35 if registration is completed online or postmarked by January 18th** – \$40 after the 18th.

REGISTRATION

Registration Form available online at bmfinternship.org

***Important* Online registration is available only until January 23rd.**



The Book of Mormon Foundation would like to thank Remnant Art Studios • Legends From the Dust for allowing us to use their artwork. They have created “all new imagery from the Book of Mormon” in an amazing poster collection.

Remnant Art Studios is determined to assist in the spiritual betterment of individuals and families through the medium of art. They are a partnership from New Zealand that started in early 2009 consisting of two couples who have a passion for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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