



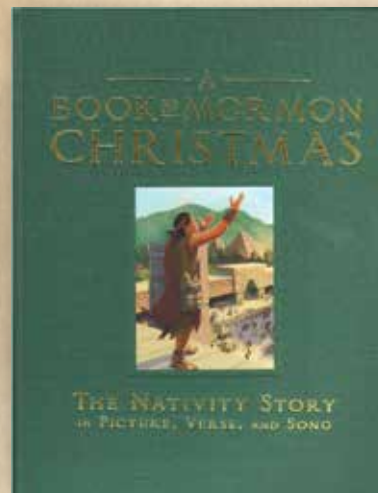
THE WITNESS

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION BY THE BOOK OF MORMON FOUNDATION
Number 147 ■ Fall 2013

*“Remember, remember that
it is upon the **rock** of our Redeemer,
who is **Christ**, the **Son of God**,
that ye must build your foundation.
. . . a foundation whereon if men build,
they **can not fall**.”*

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Zenos and the Parable of the Olive Tree

WHO WAS ZENOS By Verneil Simmons

When the Book of Mormon was published by Joseph Smith in 1830, it contained references as well as quotes of prophets known from the Old Testament of the Bible—men such as Moses, Isaiah and Jeremiah. There were also references and quotes from the writings of unknown prophets such as Zenos, Zenock, Neum, and Esaias. The Nephite prophets were quoting from the ancient Jewish record known as the Brass Plates. What record was this that Lehi's family brought with them from Jerusalem?

When Lehi received the commandment to take his family and flee the destruction that was coming upon Jerusalem, the Lord required him to obtain the original records of the Israelite nation:

For behold, Laban hath the record of the Jews, and also a genealogy of thy forefathers, and they are engraven upon plates of brass. (1Nephi 1:61 RLDS) [1 Nephi 3:3 LDS]

This record of the Jews, which was “engraven” upon metal plates in the Egyptian language, must have been the original account begun by Moses at the Lord's commandment.

Moses wrote his book of the law in the Egyptian language, and before his death ordered the book to be kept in the Ark of the Covenant (see Deuteronomy 31:24-27 IV/KJV). Apparently at some point in Israel's history, possibly in the time of King David and the priest Zadok, it was removed from the Ark and placed in the care of a descendant of Joseph. Since Joseph had received the birthright for the House of Israel, his descendants had the right to the tribal records. In the day of Lehi, a descendant of Joseph, Laban was the custodian. We are told by King Benjamin why Lehi had to have this particular record—to teach its truths to his children:

For it were not possible that our father Lehi could have remembered all these things, to have taught them to his children, except it were for the help of these plates: For he having been taught in the language of the Egyptians, therefore he could read these engravings, and teach them to his children, that thereby they could teach them to their children, and so fulfilling the commandments of God, even down to this present time. (Mosiah 1:5-6 RLDS) [Mosiah 1:4 LDS]

When Nephi and his brothers returned to the desert camp of their father with the Brass Plates, Lehi searched them and made this record of their contents:

... the five books of Moses, which gave an account of the creation of the world;

And also of Adam and Eve, who were our first parents; And also a record of the Jews from the beginning, even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah; And also the prophecies of the holy prophets, from the beginning, even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah; And also many prophecies ... by the mouth of Jeremiah. (1 Nephi 1:159-163 RLDS) [1 Nephi 5:11-13 LDS]

Lehi also found a genealogy of his fathers and learned that he, like Laban, was a descendant of Joseph. This was an important truth to be taught to his children. Lehi was a contemporary of Jeremiah, and must have been familiar with his activities and prophecies. Obviously someone, perhaps Jeremiah, was keeping the original record current.

The phrase “from the beginning” is applied both to the “record of the Jews” and “prophecies of the holy prophets.” Surely the record which dealt with the House of Israel had its beginning with Abraham, making it probable that the prophets referred to, could have lived between the day of Abraham and King Zedekiah.

This is confirmed by the words of Nephi, son of Helaman, when he recorded his witness concerning the coming of Christ:

And now I would that ye should know, that even since the days of Abraham, there have been many prophets that have testified these things; yea, behold, the prophet Zenos did testify boldly; ... And behold, also Zenock, and also Ezaias, and also Isaiah, and Jeremiah, (Helaman 3:53-54 RLDS) [Helaman 8:20 LDS]

The word, Ezaias, is the Greek form of the name Isaiah. Yet both the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants speak of both Ezaias and Isaiah as two separate prophets. (Ezaias has the variant spelling with either a z or s.) The Doctrine and Covenants tells of an Esaias “who lived in the days of Abraham and was blessed of him.” (D&C 83:2e RLDS) [D&C 84:13 LDS]

Zenock’s name is always mentioned in company with other prophets, usually with Zenos. Perhaps these two lived at the same time, as did Lehi and Jeremiah. Their prophecies, as quoted in the Book of Mormon, indicate that they came after Moses and before the day of Isaiah. Perhaps they lived during the reign of the Judges. We cannot prove when they lived, nor where, but we do have one clue that might help—they were both of the seed of Joseph.

When Mormon recorded the terrible destruction which took place among the Nephites at the death of Christ, he declared that all these things had been prophesied in the Scriptures:

*Behold, I say unto you, Yea, many have testified of these things at the coming of Christ, and were slain because they testified of these things; Yea, the prophet Zenos did testify of these things (see 1 Nephi 5:254-257 RLDS) [1 Nephi 19:16-17 LDS], and also Zenock spake concerning these things, because they testified particular concerning us, **who are the remnant of their seed.** Behold our father Jacob also testified concerning a remnant of the seed of Joseph. And behold, are not we a remnant of the seed of Joseph? (see Alma 21:54-59 RLDS) [Alma 6:23-26 LDS] And these things which testify of us, are they not written upon the plates of brass which our father Lehi brought out of Jerusalem? (3 Nephi 4:70-73 RLDS) [3 Nephi 0:15-17 LDS]*

The seed of Joseph is only to be found in the descendants of his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Jacob, their grandfather, adopted them and made them equal with his own sons. In the blessing placed upon them by Jacob, Ephraim, the youngest, was set above his brother, putting him in the position of the firstborn (Genesis 48:19-26 IV/KJV). Joseph had been given the birthright in the place of Reuben; apparently Ephraim then inherited it. When the tribes of Israel were led out of Egypt to the Promised Land, Joseph’s sons received the largest land inheritance, as was the right of the firstborn.

They settled in the north central sections of the land promised to Israel by Abraham. Following the division of the Israelite nation into the southern and northern kingdoms, Ephraim became the dominant tribe. The southern kingdom was known as Judah, and the northern kingdom became known as Ephraim or Israel. The seed of Joseph largely dwelt in the northern kingdom.

Zenos and Zenock, being of the tribal heritage of Joseph, probably lived and ministered to their countrymen in the northern kingdom. They knew the House of Israel would be scattered, and prophesied, in particular, concerning a remnant of the House of Joseph. (That remnant could include both Ephraim and Manasseh.) They also foretold the coming of the Messiah; that He would be rejected of the Jews and die on the cross.

We are indebted to the Book of Mormon prophet Alma for the only personal glimpse we have into the life and times of Zenos, but this glimpse only tells us that he had enemies and lived in a turbulent period of Israel's history:

Thou art merciful O God, for thou hast heard my prayer, even when I was in the wilderness; yea, thou wast merciful when I prayed concerning those who were mine enemies, and thou didst turn them to me: Yea, O God, and thou wast merciful unto me when I did cry unto thee in my field; when I did cry unto thee in my prayer, and thou didst hear me. And again, O God, when I did turn to my house thou didst hear me in my prayer. And when I did turn unto my closet, O Lord, and prayed unto thee, thou didst hear me; yea, thou art merciful unto thy children when they cry unto thee to be heard of thee, and not of men, and thou wilt hear them; Yea, O God, thou hast been merciful unto me and heard my cries in the midst of thy congregations; yea, and thou hast also heard me when I have been cast out, and have been despised by mine enemies; Yea, thou didst hear my cries, and wast angry with mine enemies, and thou didst visit them in thine anger, with speedy destruction; and thou didst hear me because of mine afflictions and my sincerity; And it is because of thy Son that thou hast been thus merciful unto me; therefore I will cry unto thee in all mine afflictions; for in thee is my joy; for thou hast turned thy judgments away from me, because of thy Son. (Alma 16:178-184 RLDS) [Alma 3:4-11 LDS]

One other thing is known of these two men—they are among the prophets martyred for their witness. The record says of Zenock, “because the people would not understand his words, they stoned him to death” (Alma 16:189 RLDS) [Alma 33:17 LDS], and of Zenos, who “did testify boldly; for which he was slain.” (Helaman 3:53 RLDS) [Helaman 8:20 LDS]

It is possible that the teachings of this ancient prophet are contained in an apocryphal fragment known as the Vision of Zenez (Kenaz). It is included in a work known as the Pseudo-Philo which was published in The Biblical

Antiquities of Philo by Montague R. James (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1917), page 34.

In the Old Testament, the name of Kenaz, is associated with Caleb and Othniel and would fit into the period of the Judges. The fragment contains a prophecy left by Zenez (or Kenaz) to his son in which he speaks of the planting of a vineyard by the Lord and also of the corrupting of the fruit. Perhaps this small fragment will eventually be found to fit into the lengthy parable of Zenos, and inscribed on the Brass Plates (Hugh W. Nibley, Since Cumorah, second edition [Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Co., 1988], pp. 286-290).

The prophets of the Book of Mormon from Lehi to Moroni were of the seed of Joseph, through his son Manasseh. This may account why Lehi, Nephi, Jacob, Alma, Samuel the Lamanite prophet, and Mormon himself quoted so frequently from the words of Zenos. If the prophet, Zenos, second only to Isaiah in the Book of Mormon spoke in particular to the remnant of Joseph, then he spoke to the same remnant of our day also. Should we not honor these words out of the past?

THE PARABLE OF THE OLIVE TREE

The Book of Mormon contains a most important parable (Jacob 3:30-153 RLDS) [Jacob 5:1-77 LDS] which prophesies events which are now taking place in the world. It not only foretells these events, but explains the plans God has for the redemption of the tribes of Israel in the last days and the building of Zion.

The parable likens the House of Israel to an olive tree, which lives for centuries and has many branches. It then likens the different tribes of Israel to different branches of the olive tree. It explains that even though the branch of Joseph was broken off of the main tree, it will be grafted back in the latter days.

The branch of Joseph includes Ephraim (some of the English-American peoples) and Manasseh (modern Indians who are descendants of the Nephites and Lamanites).

Those who are of the lineage of Ephraim and Manasseh have the responsibility to study the parable and apply it to the concept of building Zion.

*Zenos and the Parable of the Olive Tree
Who was Zeno?*

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BRICK OF MORMON STORIES CONTEST

Winners!



Erik Swanson
Lehi's Vision - Tree of Life
First Place
Age 11-16



Kaetlyn Parker
Abinadi's Death
Second Place
Age 11-16



Justin Hood
Alma's Conversion
Third Place
Age 11-16



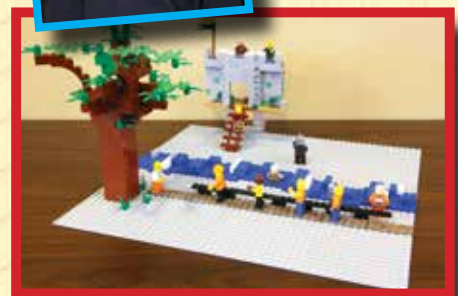
Naomi & Noah Alaniz
Lehi's Vision - Tree of Life
First Place
Age 5-10



Nathaniel Parker
Nephi Building the Boat
Second Place
Age 5-10



Evan Damron
Lehi's Vision - Tree of Life
Third Place
Age 5-10



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Remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation. . . . a foundation whereon if men build, they can not fall.
— Helaman 2:74-75

THE BOOK OF MORMON FOUNDATION

The Northwest Reunion

by Marlin Guin



Melissa Clark

The 2013 Northwest Reunion was held at the Vancouver Restoration Branch August 12-18. It was directed by Brian Herren, from the Salem Restoration Branch. There were about 100 saints attending the reunion from branches and groups of the Northwest region. The theme was, “Blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion.” The BMF board was excited to receive an invitation and to send two of our board members for ministry. Dale Godfrey and I traveled to Portland, Oregon, on Saturday, August 10.

Our first night at Brian and Melissa Herren’s home was exceptional! We’ll never forget the love of our three young friends, Benjamin, Daniel and Caleb, and how Melissa took such good care to make us feel at home. We especially enjoyed hearing about Melissa’s testimony of meeting Brian and joining the church. The first Sunday was a time to worship with the Saints at the Salem Restoration Branch, followed by a potluck dinner at the Herren home.

The reason we arrived a couple days early was to take advantage of Dale’s professional photography skills and the beautiful landscape of the Northwest. Our intent was to capture some high-quality, vertical pictures for use on The Witness magazine cover. Jim Clark, from the Salem Restoration Branch, was gracious in taking time to transport us to some of the best places at the ocean and mountains. Our fellowship with Jim was wonderful, and we extend our special thanks to him for being our personal tour guide.

Dale and I presented classes at the reunion on the Red Sky series, which included three classes on what the signs of the times are and why they are given, the signs of the

times today, and our response to them. Dale incorporated some material on Zion to support the Reunion theme. Also presented were Book of Mormon Archaeological Evidences and a video called “Against All Odds,” which shows some of the real miracles in the establishment and protection of the nation of Israel. We enjoyed the open discussion about preparing for the gathering of the Saints from the perspective of those preparing to come to the land of Zion.

The Northwest youth are some of the most active and deeply committed to the Lord that I have seen. I remember presiding at a prayer service and watching each one of them in the front two rows stand to pray or share a testimony without hesitation. It was common to hear them testify of their love for each other and God and their spiritual experiences from camp and other activities. They are truly a blessed generation!

Some highlights at the Reunion were the worship experiences, the closeness of the people, hearing about the many activities outside of church they participated in together, their great desire to serve the Lord, and the faithful and powerful ministry of the local priesthood. I also have to mention our unique experience of walking down the road next to the church and picking all the wild blackberries and plums we would want to eat.

I yearn for the day when all the Saints will come to Zion singing songs of everlasting joy. It will be a great day to see our brothers and sisters from the Northwest among them. Our prayers continue for them until we meet again.

Ocean Photo by Jim Clark

INTERNSHIP VISION



The theme of Zion has surrounded the Internship this summer. The interns of 2013 have been open-hearted with wonderful desires and expectations, but what has really allowed this group to be blessed is our desire to do what the Lord would have us do. Early in the Internship, a priesthood member came and shared with us. He stated that he was surprised by the size of our group and had taken that to the Lord in prayer. The Lord allowed him to know that we would be significant in the building of the kingdom. Each of us felt the desire to live up to that expectation but,

shortly thereafter, we found we weren't headed in a specified direction. We gathered one day after our service project and talked about our expectations for the group and ourselves personally. We captured our similar desires in a group vision and goals.

The accomplishment of these ideals will take longer than the six-week Internship, but each of us realize better than before the need for personal sacrifice and responsibility.

Vision: *To become unified in Christ by His standards as a witness to the world*

Goals: *To put on the armor of God, keep his commandments, and find our place in Zion*

JORDAN BRENNAN

The Book of Mormon Internship is a marvelous opportunity for growth, even for the staff members. There are so many lessons I learned and experiences God blessed me with. It is tremendously hard to narrow it down, but I would like to share one small example.

The interns always participate in various Book of Mormon related classes. I enjoyed these classes very much, and several of them really got me thinking. Driving home from an activity with the interns one night, I was thinking about some of the classes and began praying. One thought hit me very hard. I suppose I've always known it, but it was different when I really felt it. The thought was simply—What more could God do to prove His love to you? What more could He do to show you that you can put your trust in Him? He freely gave the life of His Only Begotten Son, in order that we might live. All other testimonies and answered prayers pale in comparison to this supreme demonstration of God's love and righteousness. If you truly believe in what Jesus Christ did for you, you won't have reservations in how you live your life for Him. You will realize that He loves you more than you can understand, and He will not hold back anything that will bring you true joy, even the life of His Son. You will realize that His plans for your life are what you want. You will put your trust firmly in Him.

I am still working on fully trusting, but this idea is something of which we can all be reminded. The Lord has already proven His great love for us and, because of this, we ought to trust and follow Him.

RYAN DILLON

While in Belize, we traveled to two Mayan ruins, one of which was Altun Ha. Once at Altun Ha, we began to climb the pyramids that had been unearthed. As I began my journey up one of these pyramids, my foot slipped, so I knew I needed to be careful while climbing. I then started the trek down the steep stairs. As I did, my right knee began aching and hurting with every movement. I knew at that moment that an old injury was acting up. Without prayer, I would never be able to continue to climb these amazing pieces of history the Book of Mormon brought to life. That night, I asked all of the interns and staff members to pray for me. Our trip to the second Mayan ruins site, Lamanai, was the next day. The terrain was very rough and the traversing difficult; however, I never once had either of my knees hurt that day, and it was a fantastic blessing.

We began our second day of service projects at Calcutta Adventist College. Our main task was to level the foundation for a building that was to be erected. The earth was hard as concrete



these facts came to my mind, I realized how much God put into place just so I could have one conversation with this man.

CALEB ETTER

In 2011, my sister traveled to Belize with the Internship to minister to the Saints there. When she came back, I immediately noticed a change in her. No longer was she a shy 19-year-old, but rather the opposite. At the banquet a few weeks later, I felt God's spirit telling me that if I wanted to be a part of missionary work to bring others to Christ, I needed to apply for the Internship. Two years went by, and the deadline was approaching for the application to the 2013 Internship. I began to examine my life to see if I could qualify to do the Lord's work and give up those things which have held me back from doing the Lord's work. I felt an impression to pray for direction in which decision to make. Halfway through my prayers, I felt a burning in my bosom to do the Internship. Further prayer caused the burning in my bosom to get stronger and stronger. I worried that I wouldn't be accepted but, as each prayer was offered to the Lord, each answer was given stronger than before. The answer was, "Do the Internship as the Lord hath commanded you." I then prayed what it would be like if I chose not to apply, and almost instantaneous, I felt a terrible longing and sadness on my heart, I knew that if I chose this path, I would fall away from the church and walk among dark paths and be forever lost in the mazes of the world. One of my biggest fears is to be left behind when the Saints are caught up in the spirit in the last days. This answer from God certainly strengthened my choice to apply. I am so much happier than I would have been if I had ignored the Lord's promptings. God bless each of you as you seek further development in your lives to help bring about the Kingdom of Zion.

AMY FRIEND

During this year's internship, the Lord gave me the huge blessing of a second chance to witness. You see, two years ago our trip to Belize was unforgettable; but despite all of the blessings he provided us, I had one big regret. When we went to the Mayan ruins of Lamanai, I had wandered into one of the gift shops and received a prompting to speak to a shopkeeper about the Book of Mormon. I began to talk to him casually to open a conversation, but couldn't think of a way to bring up the Book of Mormon. I tried to linger in the store but people came in and told me we needed to get back in the boat now. As I started to walk away, the man said to me, "Everything happens for a reason." When he said that, I knew it was the Lord confirming that I needed to talk to him, but I struggled with the words to say. So I walked away. It was very hard to forgive myself for not responding to the Lord's prompting. I prayed for the Lord to forgive me and to provide that man another opportunity to hear about the Book of Mormon, or even for me to have a second chance to speak to him. I believe I was forgiven, but I carried that experience in the back of my mind and remembered it every time I looked at my Mayan Calendar.

When I was asked to staff the internship this year, the thought entered my mind that perhaps I would have a second

from being baked in the strong sunlight, so we knew picks and shovels would be needed. As most of the interns and staff began to level out the earth, it was quite quickly apparent that although the time was only 8:30 in the morning, the sunshine was as strong as mid-day sun in the United States, and we would not last very long working in it. Several of us stopped and said a prayer that we would be given relief and, within twenty minutes, the entire sky was covered with thick clouds. A nice breeze had picked up as well. The Lord was most certainly watching out for us.

RACHEL EGGERT

The day we were heading home from Belize, I was thinking about the pocket Book of Mormon and Christ in America pamphlet (3rd Nephi) we were given before we left. We were each given one to hand out to someone we met on the trip. It seemed that everyone had already given theirs away, and I still had mine. I started to think that maybe I should give mine away, but I hadn't felt lead to. We boarded our plane to Dallas. I fell asleep almost instantly, so I didn't talk to anyone on the flight. We landed in Dallas and boarded our flight to Kansas City. When all the interns were in their seats, the one next to me was still empty. A middle-age man sat in the seat next to me. I introduced myself to him, and we started having friendly conversation. He asked me why a lot of us were wearing the same shirt. I shared with him about the Internship and what we had been doing in Belize. It was at this point that I felt the need to pray, so I asked that God would give me the words to answer any questions he had. I asked him if he'd ever heard of the Book of Mormon. Since he hadn't, I was able to share with him. We talked the whole time about the Book of Mormon and our lives and our beliefs. Before we landed, I gave him my pocket Book of Mormon and the Christ in America pamphlet. He was grateful and said he would read it. A few days after, I was thinking about this experience. It was shown to me all the small things that went into place just so I could meet this man. During our talk, he told me that he used to work for an airline in Atlanta, but lives in New Jersey. For some reason, he got laid off and spent a few years looking for a job. Finally, he found one in Dallas working for American Airlines, which was the airline we used. He was on his way to Kansas City to see his in-laws. As all of

chance. It so happened that I was asked to lead devotions on the morning we went to Lamanai. I felt the Lord leading me to share my previous experience to encourage the interns to follow the Lord's promptings and not waste witnessing opportunities. When we arrived at Lamanai, I passed by that same gift shop and peeked inside. My heart sank when I only saw a woman inside. I thought, I guess he no longer runs this shop. After our tour I had time to enter the shop, and there he was! I didn't know how to open the conversation, so I prayed and the thought entered my mind to ask him if he was Mayan. He told me that he was indeed 100% Mayan and began to tell me about his heritage. That was my segue into the Book of Mormon and I began to ask him if he had heard about it. When he told me he had read it, I had a twinge of disappointment. I assumed he already believed it and didn't need me to talk to him. As we continued to talk, several interns joined the conversation. He had some questions in his mind, and wondered who the descendants of the Book of Mormon were? I began to search the store for souvenirs and approached him again at the cash register. I was one of the last customers, so I asked him if he believed the Book of Mormon was true. I was almost surprised when he told me he wasn't sure. I found out he did not own a Book of Mormon. When I asked if I could give him one, he was very receptive and appreciative. I gave him a pocket Book of Mormon and a Christ in America booklet. Once again people came in the store and told me we had to leave. I wanted to keep talking to the man, but I had to go. I was overjoyed that I was finally able to give him my Book of Mormon that I had wanted to give him two years ago.

Back in the boat, I began to think about the experience and how little I actually did. I didn't even tell him my experience of how I felt led to share with him. I began to pray that even though my efforts were small that the Lord would bless and multiply them to bring this man to a realization of the truth. Then I asked God if he would show me a rainbow soon if my small encounter made an impact on the man. That day I didn't see a rainbow. The next day on the plane back to the States, I was assigned a window seat. I sat there gazing out and a shot of color caught my eye. It was a little piece of a rainbow, but it disappeared very quickly. Then I remembered I had prayed for God to show me a rainbow! I wanted to be sure it was the Lord's answer since it was not directly after my prayer, so I prayed for a bigger rainbow. I looked out again and there it was a bright line of color in the midst of the clouds. The Lord was answering my prayers and confirming my efforts. The Lord is good. He is merciful and He can use each one of us as His vessel if we only follow the voice of the Good Shepherd. Each one of us is made to bear witness of him and share the gospel with those who need it.

JARED GOULD

It never ceases to amaze me when I see how the Lord can plan events in our lives in such a way as to be the greatest blessing for us and those people whose lives cross our paths often times completely unbeknownst to us. Several months before the internship began a preacher related this story. There was a woman

who visiting a psychiatrist said to him "I have a problem, I can't stop making pancakes." Well he replied pancakes are good, there is nothing wrong with liking pancakes. "You don't understand"

said the woman "I can't stop thinking about pancakes, I filled all my closets with pancakes, my attic is full of pancakes I have even rented a storage unit to keep all my pancakes in, but still I want to make more pancakes!" The preacher then said, "pancakes are possessions that don't last, have no permanent value and in the scheme of things the importance we place on them seems quite silly." Before leaving for Belize we were told if we wanted to buy anything there we should bring some one-dollar bills. So I brought a little stack of ones. At the ruins there were a lot of gift shops with some pretty neat things; also there was a talented woodcarver who came to show us his carvings one day. But when I looked at all the things I could buy I just kept thinking 'pancakes.' I couldn't convince myself to buy a thing. On our last day in Belize we were at a gift shop. Ryan Miller and I decided to walk around and talk with the locals. We came across an older fellow sitting on a bench and started to talk with him; and we shared what the Book of Mormon was about and gave him a copy. In the course of our conversation we found out that he was having some health issues which were preventing him from working. Then I knew why everything I wanted to buy had looked like 'pancakes.' I still had all the money I had brought and was able to pass on a small blessing to this gentleman. I think the Lord loved that man so much he kept me thinking about pancakes all week.

JESSICA GOULD

In preparation for our trip to Belize, we did a lot of praying, including asking God to protect us on our trip. After landing in Belize, we rented a 15-passenger van and a pickup truck. The roads were very rough, with lots of speed bumps blending in with the road.



On our way to Altun Ha, the low tire pressure light suddenly lit up on the dash. It just so happened that we were passing a tire shop at that moment! We pulled into the shop. The tire was hissing air, and the workers said it was very dangerous. They couldn't believe we had been driving on it all week and hadn't gotten in a wreck! While the tire was being changed, we talked with the manager. We learned his name is Tim, and he's a Mennonite from Seymour, Missouri. My family is from Seymour, so I was surprised and delighted to meet him! Since he was Mennonite, I thought he might know about Shetler's Discount Grocery, a small Mennonite store in Seymour, where I had recently begun working. He told us his niece works there, which amazed me! I'd been looking and praying for a new job for awhile, and I felt God led me to work at Shetler's. I got a call for an interview, scheduled the same day as my interview with the Book of Mormon Foundation. I went to my interview at the store and was offered the job! During my interview with the Foundation, I was asked if I could take six weeks off from work. I had just been hired for my new job, so I wasn't sure, but I was hopeful that everything would work out. I started my new job in February. I prayed about it and decided the Internship was a high priority, even if it meant losing my new job. I got the time off and kept my job! I second-guess things a lot, including wondering if I was really supposed to be in the Internship this year. I believe God had us stop at that tire store for a reason. When I met Tim and found out I work with his niece, I knew it was not a coincidence. It was a testimony to me that God wanted me in the Internship this year for a reason. I may not fully understand the reason yet, but God sees the big picture and He can do amazing things through us if we allow Him. Here is a scripture I believe applies to my situation.

And it came to pass that I, Nephi, said unto my father, I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them. (1 Nephi 1:65 RLDS) [1 Nephi 3:7 LDS]

God knew what He wanted of me. He was aware of my conflict with my job and the Internship, and he prepared the way for me.

Before we left the tire shop, we sang some songs to the employees. The first song was "Santuario," the Spanish version of "Sanctuary." As we began to sing, the room was filled with God's presence. Then we sang, "We Are One in the Spirit." God's spirit was there with us the entire time we were singing, and it just filled my heart with joy and thankfulness. The amazing thing is that after we left the tire shop, there wasn't a single gas station or tire place the entire way to Altun Ha. God answered our prayers for safety.

TIFFANI OHMER

Days before we left the States, we prayed for safety and protection as we traveled. Upon arrival, our group rented a 15-passenger van and a truck. Throughout the week, our van endured countless speed bumps, occasionally at high speed, and numerous rocky roads. Particularly on Sunday, we drove on a road comprised of pot holes. On Monday, we drove to Altun Ha, driving down a mostly deserted road in the middle of Belize, with nothing around except fruit stands. As we made our way down the road, the tire light popped on in the 15-passenger van. At that moment, God planned it perfectly, and there was a tire store.

After returning from the trip, I told my family about our experiences and testimonies from Belize. I was sitting at the kitchen table as I began to describe the numerous blessings we encountered as we went to Altun Ha and how we were kept safe through our tire troubles. My mom was cleaning on the other side of the kitchen, when she stopped and came over from the opposite side of the counter. She stood there and looked at me with a shocked look on her face. I asked her what was going through her mind. She proceeded to ask what day the tire incident occurred and approximately what time it happened. As I told her, I could see something significant had happened. She told me of her experience on Monday.





My mom was going about her day when she suddenly felt prompted to pray. She didn't have any idea what events were transpiring that day on our trip, but she was led to pray for our safety. She began to pray for all the interns and specifically for me that I would be kept safe. During this prayer time, she was impressed of the extreme danger that was happening, and she felt I might be lost. She prayed I would be protected. As she prayed, God told her she needed to give me up. She wasn't excited about giving up her only daughter, but she decided that we were glorifying God and trying to serve Him. She knew our trip was beneficial for others and that I was God's child anyway, so she gave me to the Lord. She was given a peace, knowing that God would do the best thing, and I was in his hands. Thankfully, God heard her prayers and protected us. In addition, it was not the time for any of us to go to our heavenly home! Many times we have a plan for what we'd like God to accomplish in our lives. However, our desires don't coincide with God's complete and perfect plan. Just as my mom experienced, it will likely require sacrifice and discomfort, but God never said becoming like his Son and building Zion would be easy. We must resign our will for the greater good, so he can use us for His work.

JORDAN GOWAN

At the beginning of the Internship, I was really excited to grow closer to God and to the whole group. I had been a part of similar groups before through Zion's league and RCM and had always had great experiences. After we had our first few weeks of classes, I already felt like the group had grown close and each of our spiritual lives had been strengthened. Our trip to Belize came and went. We continued to grow as a group, as well as individually. I began to wonder how long our spiritual high would last when the Internship was over. I have seen so many groups say they are going to make a difference in the world and start out strong, but then get back into their old ways. I didn't want that to happen to us. What I didn't realize was how much I would have to change in order for that not to happen. During one of our classes, the teacher was talking about how he had prayed all night. He said he fell asleep many times, but would always wake up and begin praying again. That really pricked my heart, because I often have fallen asleep while praying and decided I need my rest, so I usually quickly finish praying and go to bed. His story made me realize that if I truly wanted to have a relationship with the Lord, I have to be willing to sacrifice and never give up my efforts, even when it doesn't feel like I'm getting results. I realized that my priorities had been in the wrong place and that serving the Lord is really what this life is about. Many times, we think of building the Kingdom as a group thing, which makes us think we don't have to put all our individual effort into

the work. What I learned was that we have to have a personal relationship with God and be one with Him before we can expect to become of one heart and one mind. Unity and building the Kingdom will never happen if we aren't willing to make personal sacrifices and change the way we have been living our lives. God has to be our number one priority, for He is all that truly matters anyway.

KELVIN HENSON

In Belize we had the opportunity to visit a couple of the Mayan Ruin sights, Altun Ha and Lamanaï. Every time I saw one of these pyramids, I was amazed at how the ancient Americans were able to build such structures, and the fact that less than one percent has been uncovered left me in incredible wonder at the size of this empire. We were able to climb these pyramids and from the top of them I was blown away by the awesome view. I was on top of the world, looking out for miles and miles without any interference. The beauty of the vast rainforest was unlike anything I have ever seen before; a true greatness of God's workmanship. As I looked out before me, I erased the trees and plants, and added in multitudes of people to try and grasp the image of a thriving city in the Book of Mormon. I only wish I could see how it really was. As a group, we decided to sing a few songs from the top of a couple of the pyramids. As we sang out across the land, the Holy Spirit joined us and transformed our singing into a ministry for those listening. As a hush crept over the people, a rush of excitement filled me as I realized the seemingly impossible situation the God was allowing me to take part in with the other interns. It was one of the most fascinating events that I have ever experienced and I cannot thank God enough for adding it into my adventure in this life.

JESSICA JECKER

The interns' trip to Belize this year was absolutely wonderful. We had the perfect balance of service, fellowship and ministry. We also had the opportunity to explore the ancient ruins. The Lord prompted me to fast breakfast the morning before we traveled to the ruins at Lamanaï. Despite the beckoning aromas of fresh bacon, I chose to obey that prompting by spending time in prayer to receive a blessing or an experience at the ruins. I repented of my sins in order to receive the Holy Ghost and asked in sincerity that a blessing would be mine that day.



ANNA JOHNSON

In Belize, we had finished our days of service projects as well as our Saturday retreat. We were planning on having a Sunday service at the hotel, since we were going to someone's house later in the morning and couldn't attend the church there. On Saturday night, we decided to have a girls' devotion and, due to the way girls like to talk, it lasted rather late. I was a bit disappointed it went so late, because I had been trying to better myself in taking time to prepare for services. I was extremely tired and was not able to prepare as I wanted, so I decided to get up early to prepare. As sometimes happens when one is very tired and, having no clock, getting up early didn't work well. By the time I was up and ready, I only had about fifteen minutes to prepare. I opened my Book of Mormon to where I had left off reading, but I could not focus on what I was reading. I had a strong feeling that I should pray, so I began praying. Since I had been reading, I was lying on my side, but suddenly knew I needed to finish my prayer on my knees. Kneeling on my bed, I began to fervently pray and felt I should pray about forgiveness for sins I never felt were actually forgiven. Walking into the service, I was immediately touched by the singing of the song "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus." The verse where it says, "though none go with me, still I will follow," filled me with pain at the thought that even if none of my family went with me I'd still have to follow Jesus. We sang "As the Deer" next and, though I have sung that song many times, I never paid attention to the words until this moment. I truly realized that Jesus is the ONLY one I want to worship and the only one to whom I want to yield my spirit. Then Eldon Anderson, who was presiding, read his opening scripture of Doctrine and Covenants, Section 28:1a-b (RLDS) [D&C .29:1-3 LDS]

Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Redeemer, the great I AM, whose arm of mercy hath atoned for your sins, who will gather his people even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, even as many as will hearken to my voice, and humble themselves before me, and call upon me in mighty prayer. Behold, verily, verily I say unto you, that at this time your sins are forgiven you, therefore ye receive these things; but remember to sin no more, lest perils shall come upon you.

I sat there in complete amazement. God saw fit to speak directly to me through His scriptures, and I have never been so filled with hope, pain, love, and peace at the same time. It was a completely humbling experience, to know that although I am less than the dust of the earth, God still wanted me to be forgiven so I could be with Him, because He washed me clean. The process I had to go through, of realizing I could only follow Him and worship Him, happened before I was able to be forgiven. I am so blessed to have been able to experience God's unending love and His complete forgiveness!

RYAN MILLER

When I started the Internship, I knew there were problems in my life, and I wasn't where I wanted to be in my walk with the

When we arrived at the ruins, I wanted to take some time to sit and pray about receiving an experience, but we kept moving, and there was never an opportunity. The ruins were amazing, and climbing them and singing from the top was truly an incredible experience. As we looked at the people on the ground below, we united together in the powerful testimony of song and they hushed to hear the words. After we saw the ruins, we ended up in an area full of diverse gift shops. I looked around a couple of shops, but didn't see anything of interest. As I walked past a certain shop full of embroidered bags, a woman poked her head out and informed me that they were all handmade by a women's group. At this point, I noticed we could head back to the boat for our return home, and I walked off toward the dock. I saw an obliging bench on the way back, and I decided to sit and take the time to pray for my experience. I closed my eyes and imagined myself back home sharing the awesome experience I was sure to receive with a congregation at one of our intern services when the Lord spoke to my mind with the words, "That's not why you're here." It was so true! How could I have been so prideful? Why was I not seeking to serve those around me?

At that moment, the woman's face who was working at the gift shop flashed back into my mind. I felt the strong impression to give her the pocket Book of Mormon I had in my backpack. I knew this was an impression of the Holy Spirit, as I had been thinking about receiving when I should have been thinking about giving. I walked back to the gift shop and, before I arrived, I asked the Lord to clear the shop of customers because I didn't want to disrupt her if she was working, and I wanted to speak to her alone. As I entered, a member of our group was making a purchase and then exited. She and I were alone. When I came up to talk to her, I realized there was a Bible on her table. The Lord blessed me with a way to bring up the Book of Mormon, and I was able to talk to her about her organization of women, as well as the Internship. After a couple of minutes of discussing Christ's visitation to the very place we were, I gave her a Book of Mormon, and she was excited to read it.

I realized later that the Lord had been preparing me all day by prompting me to fast breakfast and by leading me to a place where I could sit and listen to His direction. I didn't receive what I expected, but something far greater—the fulfillment and confidence that can only come from obeying the will of the Lord. 1 Nephi 4:13 (RLDS) [1 Nephi 15:11 LDS] says, "If ye will not harden your hearts, and ask me in faith, believing that ye shall receive, with diligence in keeping my commandments, surely, these things shall be made known unto you?"

Lord. So on the first day, I was praying to God that I would have a life-changing testimony about how God had done something awesome for me. In the following weeks, I kept that thought in the back of my mind and prayed that God would show me what he wanted me to do. Many testimonies happened, but I put them aside, and labeled them as “small blessings.” When we were in Belize, I had forgotten that prayer and focused on the task at hand, the service work. When we were done with the projects and the little vacation bible school we had set up for the children (which was awesome), we visited the ruins. I thought of the testimony I was hoping for and imagining the Nephite people and how they lived, knowing of Christ’s coming and what moral standards they had (when they were righteous). This made me think of all the things in my life that weren’t bad, but still got in the way of my relationship with Christ. I came up with a list and started to think of how I would change those things. When we got home, I had almost forgotten the list, until Sugar told us to be thinking of how the Internship changed our lives. I sat there and thought, “God where is my testimony?” and became upset that I hadn’t come out with anything substantial. I felt this way until the Wednesday after that. I sat down and thought really hard on what the Internship had done for me. I asked God to help me, and He did. As I sat there, I realized all of the blessings I witnessed in the Internship. I thought about how it affected me and the list I made. It gave me a better stewardship over my things, a stronger work ethic taught me to keep my mind on God, gave me better prayer and study habits, showed me how to be a better witness, and to keep in mind God’s promises. A wise woman once told me that a habit is formed in 21 days, sometimes without us even knowing it. I then realized I had already started living with those things that I wanted in my life. The Internship has not changed me, for I am still the same man with the same problems. It has given me something better, the tools to change my life, and how to keep it that way.

BEN NELSON

One of the things that has been continually brought up during the course of the internship is the need for repentance. This is something that I have also been thinking about in the past year or so. When Christ was on earth, his main message was repentance. He called for people to repent, and come to him. I feel like the church hasn’t been doing a very good job of reiterating that, especially in recent years.

On one of our days, we had a class from 2-9pm. Before the class started, someone suggested that after the class we go to the temple lot to pray. Everyone agreed that that was a good idea; so we did. We arrived at the temple lot, and just began, as a group, discussing various things. One of the main things we talked about was repentance, and how it was so important that we repent before trying to allow God to use us. Eventually, we thought that it would be a good idea to let everyone go off alone on the Temple Lot and spend some time in repentance with the Lord.

We spent about half an hour of individual time with God on the Temple Lot. It was so nice to take some time to renew my relationship with the Lord. There were others that also felt very blessed after having taken the time to go to God and set things straight again. There was certainly a good spirit there. It made me want to continue in repentance more often than I had been. I think if we (the church) spent more time in repentance, God would be working through us more in the building of Zion. This experience was a small, but memorable step in getting there.

ANAMARÍA THOMAS

While we were in Belize, one of the service projects we did was to paint some classrooms at a Catholic school. Apparently, the rule is that the interns provide the manpower, but the schools have to supply the materials. This particular school wanted us to paint eight classrooms, and they had eight gallons of paint. We were able to paint three of the rooms before we ran out of paint. The principal left to get more paint for us and returned with four gallons. We opened the first gallon, and instead of the pastel yellow we had been using all morning, this new paint was a lovely sherbet orange. Thankfully, we were starting a new room, so it wasn’t a problem. That gallon was quickly used, so we opened the second gallon. We were surprised to see that it was brown! We opened the third gallon only to discover it was tan. The Internship stresses the importance of prayer very strongly. So, before we opened the final can of paint, we gathered around and said a prayer. The fourth gallon was the original yellow color. We decided that if we dumped all three cans together, we would have a color similar to the orange we needed or at least it would give us enough of the same color to paint a room. Two other interns and I each grabbed a can and started pouring them into a five gallon bucket. When each of the cans was about half empty, the color turned from brown, tan and yellow to sherbet orange. Now, I had watched folks shake those cans and stir them, and there is no way they were orange. I firmly believe God changed the paint colors for us. And yes, there was the exact amount we needed to finish painting the room.



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