

THE WITNESS

A Quarterly Publication of



The Book of Mormon Foundation

HATUZI NGOMBE HAPA

*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.***

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*Cover Photo Courtesy of Tom Mitchell
(1 Nephi 1:65 RLDS) [1 Nephi 3:7 LDS]*

THE Book OF Mormon
FOUNDATION

The Book of Mormon Foundation is a non-profit corporation composed of individuals who desire to promote The Book of Mormon and its witness of Jesus Christ.

Through research, publications, seminars and related projects, members of The Book of Mormon Foundation seek to assist in bringing forth the light contained in the Book of Mormon.

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Published quarterly by The Book of Mormon Foundation

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FROM THE BOARD

We are saddened to announce Don Newman has resigned from the Book of Mormon Foundation Board of Directors. Don joined the board in October, 2007. Over the past eight years, Don has faithfully attended the monthly meetings, researched issues and came prepared to make decisions important to the Foundation. We could always depend on him to enliven our meetings with his wit and humor. Don was always willing to share his expertise with physical projects around the building and was a driving force behind the creation of our online store.

New doors of opportunity opened for Don and he resigned from the board in December, 2015. He has moved to California to pursue a new avenue in his career. The board and staff of the Book of Mormon Foundation wish him well and God's blessings in his future. We extend our deepest appreciation to Don for many years of service and pray for his continued journey in service to God.



Don Newman

DELICIOUS

MY AFRICAN JOURNEY

by Karen Bates

Wherefore, I said unto you, Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.

(2 Nephi 14:4 RLDS) [2 Nephi 32:3 LDS]

The invitation came on Sunday, February 7, 2016, just before 10 pm. “Karen, do you want to go to Kenya for the women’s retreat in April? It’s the first weekend and you would leave March 28...” My sister-in-law, Judi, and I would be companions on this trip. I had been praying about this for a long time and now the moment had come.

As of 2015, I had been working in a job that prohibited any long absence. It was an excellent job, hard to get, great pay and difficult yet challenging work. I thanked the Lord each morning for the job and prayed that I would do an excellent job for my employer and be able to share the gospel. *And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;* (Colossians 3:23 IV/KJV)

Over the past ten years, I had opportunities to travel to Eastern Africa and work among the women and youth. The people had become family. However, my most recent job would not allow me that kind of time. I had asked the Lord to place me where He needed me, for His Kingdom’s sake. I knew there was a task for me beyond my work assignments and decided my mission field was right there at work.

Early in my employment, I asked my work group if we could have a prayer over the potluck luncheon we had prepared. They all agreed and asked me to say the prayer. The spirit of God fell upon us and the Lord gave me the words of the prayer. Further conversations and requests followed. First it was Sandy, who had been a victim of the Joplin, Missouri tornado and was just now putting things back together with a move to this area. Her husband was gone, she lived by herself and her dog died. She wanted a new dog that would be a good companion and asked if I would pray for her. Then Chris pulled me aside. His sister’s husband had suddenly died, leaving young children behind. Would I please pray that his sister would not despair and she would find the Lord. Others came asking to talk or pray with me. Every time we shared food, they asked me to say a blessing. I even had a chance to enter into an extended conversation about what I believed. One colleague had noticed that I did not drink anything with alcohol or caffeine. She seemed genuinely happy about it and sensed there might be religious or health reasons. She asked me why I didn’t drink those things, giving me further opportunity to witness.

One morning, on my way to work, as I was thanking the Lord and petitioning His help for the day, the Lord spoke to my being. He put on my heart that I had gifts and skills that He had been helping me develop and it was time for me to use them in the place He had prepared. I thought, I must have reached the person or persons, at this job, that the Lord wanted touched. It was now time to move in the new direction He was now leading me.

At home, I listed my education, training, and things with which I felt competent. I could not think of any job that would incorporate all those things, so I just prayed it



into the Lord's hands. You see, I know the Kingdom of God is so important to God that He will direct you when you are willing to place your service in His hands. Sometimes there will be years of preparing, but I trust what the scripture says: *Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.* (2 Chronicles 20:20 IV/KJV)

I was led, in what I consider to be a miraculous way, to the position I have now. At my interview, I felt the Spirit rest upon us. It was so strong that I had the assurance that God was in charge and would place me where He needed me. That interview led to the job at The Book of Mormon Foundation. At the right moment in time, God had placed things in order that I might be where He intended me to be. My work included research that I had undertaken for most of my life, in preparation for classes that the Lord led me to teach. I am an educator and as Nephi often stated, I delight in:

- The scriptures. (2 Nephi 3:29 RLDS) [2 Nephi 4:15 LDS]
- The things of the Lord. (2 Nephi 3:30 RLDS) [2 Nephi 4:16 LDS]; (The Lord – Psalms 22:8 IV/KJV; Psalms 37:23 IV/KJV); (Covenants - 2 Nephi 8:10 RLDS) [2 Nephi 11:15 LDS]
- Righteousness. (2 Nephi 6:98 RLDS) [2 Nephi 9:49 LDS] (Jeremiah 9:24 IV/KJV) (D&C 76:2a RLDS) [D&C 76:5 LDS]; (The Kingdom of God - 2 Nephi 6:42 RLDS) [2 Nephi 9:18 LDS]
- The words of Isaiah. (2 Nephi 8:2, 11:8 RLDS) [2 Nephi 11:2, 25:5 LDS]
- Proving the truth of the coming of Christ. (2 Nephi 8:7, 12; 2 Nephi 11:23 RLDS) [2 Nephi 11:4, 11:6; 2 Nephi 25:13 LDS]
- The covenants of the Lord. (2 Nephi 8:10 RLDS) [2 Nephi 11:5 LDS] (Messenger - Malachi 3:1 IV/KJV) (3 Nephi 11:4 RLDS) [3 Nephi 24:1 LDS]

- His grace, justice, power, mercy, the great & eternal plan of deliverance from death. (2 Nephi 8:11 RLDS) [2 Nephi 11:5 LDS]; (Just - Proverbs 11:1 IV/KJV); (Mercy - Micah 7:18 IV/KJV)
- Plainness. (2 Nephi 11:7, 13:4 RLDS) [2 Nephi 25:4 LDS]
- Prophecy concerning Christ. (2 Nephi 11:23 RLDS) [2 Nephi 25:13 LDS]

And now, with the invitation to East Africa, I could once again assist in bringing the joy of the gospel to our loved ones in that area. I had to double up work hours to have the time to go. However, that was just more joy. I prayed for direction on which classes would be of the most worth.

The Book of Mormon Foundation contributed 100 Overviews of The Book of Mormon and 100 matching postcards of Lehi and Sariah, from paintings done by Robert Farley. There were enough for all the women and participants in the retreat. I received permission to copy color pages of a Book of Mormon story. I would be using them to illustrate the power of God, walking in covenant with Him, how we could discover our own testimony of God's love in our lives and share it with others. I used the color book because the women could take it home to their families and talk about the lessons. They could then share their testimonies with their children and others, from their home places, as they color the pages. It made it possible for everyone to share whether they are able to read or even speak a different language other than those available for the scriptures. A timely donation from Saints Haven paid for the copying of the color book. God even helped me get 100 boxes of crayons for under \$1.00 a box and inexpensive pens. It was such a blessing! Judi was able to get 100 pocket folders with brads so the information could be nicely presented. Then, through the Missionary Coordinating Committee and tithing of the saints, money was provided for our sisters coming from Rwanda, Uganda and The Democratic Republic of the Congo. Another donation provided travel money for the women in Kenya. Another donation was provided for every woman to have an orange at one of the meals, as well as help with their food costs. God is so good!

The Lord placed everything together in a comparatively short time. Then, the text came from Africa on Saturday, March 12: "Looking for French Book





of Mormon and D&C, got any ideas?” I phoned and told Judi that, a few years back, I had already sent all the copies of the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants I could find. I started hunting again. “No, we do not have any copies of the Doctrine and Covenants or the Book of Mormon in French,” was the reply from everyone contacted. The Doctrine and Covenants were not going to be available for this trip. I walked over to the Latter Day Saints Stake Office to see what scriptures were available. Five copies of the Book of Mormon were on their shelf (the exact amount a later text asked for) and they gave them to me. No, they would not take money for them.

I packed the Livre de Mormon in the bags, along with the 100 assembled color books, crayons, postcards and Overviews of the Book of Mormon. I was also able to include Priesthood Manuals that a member of the Saint’s Haven Restoration Branch had donated (those would be used at the priesthood retreat later) and packets of Sunday school scripture pictures from the RLDS church in the 1950’s and 60’s. The Old Book Man had donated them for use by the branches in Africa. I tucked in pens and nametags that one of our sisters, from the Lexington Restoration Branch, had so beautifully prepared. Judi’s bags would include simple backpacks for each woman, handmade canvas bags for gifts and new Three-in-One scriptures the African Restoration Ministries Board (ARM) had provided for an upcoming priesthood retreat. Our travel bags weighed exactly fifty pounds each (the maximum weight required by the airline). That is always a blessing. We had already taken, on a previous trip, a number of English copies of the Book of Mormon, so we knew we had all we needed. God is good!

As I considered the trip, a vision, somewhat like a painting, opened up to me. I saw Judi and me with an army of saints who had paid their tithing; donated materials and money; devoted time, talents and resources to develop materials that could be used. All of them praying for the Kingdom of God to go into all the world. The army was beautiful!

There were so many testimonies of the Lord’s hand in gathering the women to the retreat. As the Lord ordered things, the Rwandan women arrived a day early. Every one of our Kenyan hosts was busy, as the date and venue of the retreat had suddenly changed. This meant that Judi and I had the day with the Rwandan women.

And here is the rest of the story. I was raised in Canada where French is the second language. I had studied French in my Canadian High School. I had gone on a bursary (scholarship) to a French university in Quebec and worked as a nanny in a French home before completing my final year of undergrad in France. In my younger years, I had translated both written and oral French. It had been years, yet here the Lord had placed me with women who spoke Rwandan and French, not Swahili or English, as a second language. Judi and I realized at the women’s retreat, our classes would be translated into Luo (the tribal language of many of the Kenyan women) and Swahili (a language used across tribal lines). God had provided a time that could be dedicated just to these women, when they could hear the good news of the gospel in French and English and translate it into Rwandan. Odette and Genevieve helped with the translation into Rwandan. We began with what they knew, the Bible.

The young women read scriptures from their Bibles, which they each carried, as we led them through Adam and the gospel being taught from the beginning. They read how, within a few generations, many of his progenitors had rebelled against God. However, Enos, Adams grandson, and those that would walk in covenant with the Lord were taken to a “land of promise” (Genesis 6:15 IV) [Genesis 5:9 KJV]. We related how, over the generations that followed, as people chose darkness instead of light, the Lord would preserve His covenant people in miraculous ways. Then we talked of the great tower and how wicked the people had become, yet how the Lord once again preserved His covenant people, by taking them to a “land of promise” (Ether 1:31 RLDS) [Ether 2:9 LDS]. That’s how we placed the Book of Mormon in the history of God’s work and His dealing with the children of men. We then turned to the scriptures, where the destruction of Jerusalem is prophesied circa 600 BC. We read the prophecies of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 14:11-12 IV/KJV) (1 Nephi 1:3 RLDS) [1 Nephi 1:4 LDS] and were able to place the prophet Lehi among these prophets. We related once again how the Lord, in preserving His covenant people and preserving a record of His work among His people, took Lehi and his family to “a land of promise” (1 Nephi 1:54 RLDS) [1 Nephi 2:20 LDS]. We



then went through the lesson that would be used at the women's retreat, concerning the journey to the Promised Land and the essential role of the women from the scriptures who were part of that testimony. I encouraged the women to ask questions. One of the young women, who had looked up every Bible scripture and followed along intently, asked me "Why should I believe what you told me?" I told her she did not have to believe me but that God had a promise for her. I explained who Moroni was and we turned to read the promise in Moroni:



And if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost; and by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye may know the truth of all things. (Moroni 10:5 RLDS) [Moroni 10:4 LDS]

The Spirit rested on us as we read the words. Odette asked if she could have a Book of Mormon, and as the Lord had already set in place, we had a French Book of Mormon that I could share with Odette. She was fluent in reading and writing French. By the way, I am no longer fluent in French, however, as necessary, the Spirit of the Lord loosed my thoughts and my tongue that I was able to understand and communicate in French when needed. Every day we sat at the meal table and talked about the application of God's word in their lives. Thus, the symphony of gifts and talents came together in this moment, as the Lord worked His marvelous work in the lives of these young women.

The second day of the retreat, during the early morning song and prayer service, I sat next to the women from Rwanda. Odette came in and she was just glowing with joy and excitement. The first words out of her mouth were, "I have been reading the Book of Mormon, and *it is delicious!*" We hugged, as the joy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ filled our hearts together. I knew she probably had not gotten to Alma 16:154 yet, where she would find the very promise:

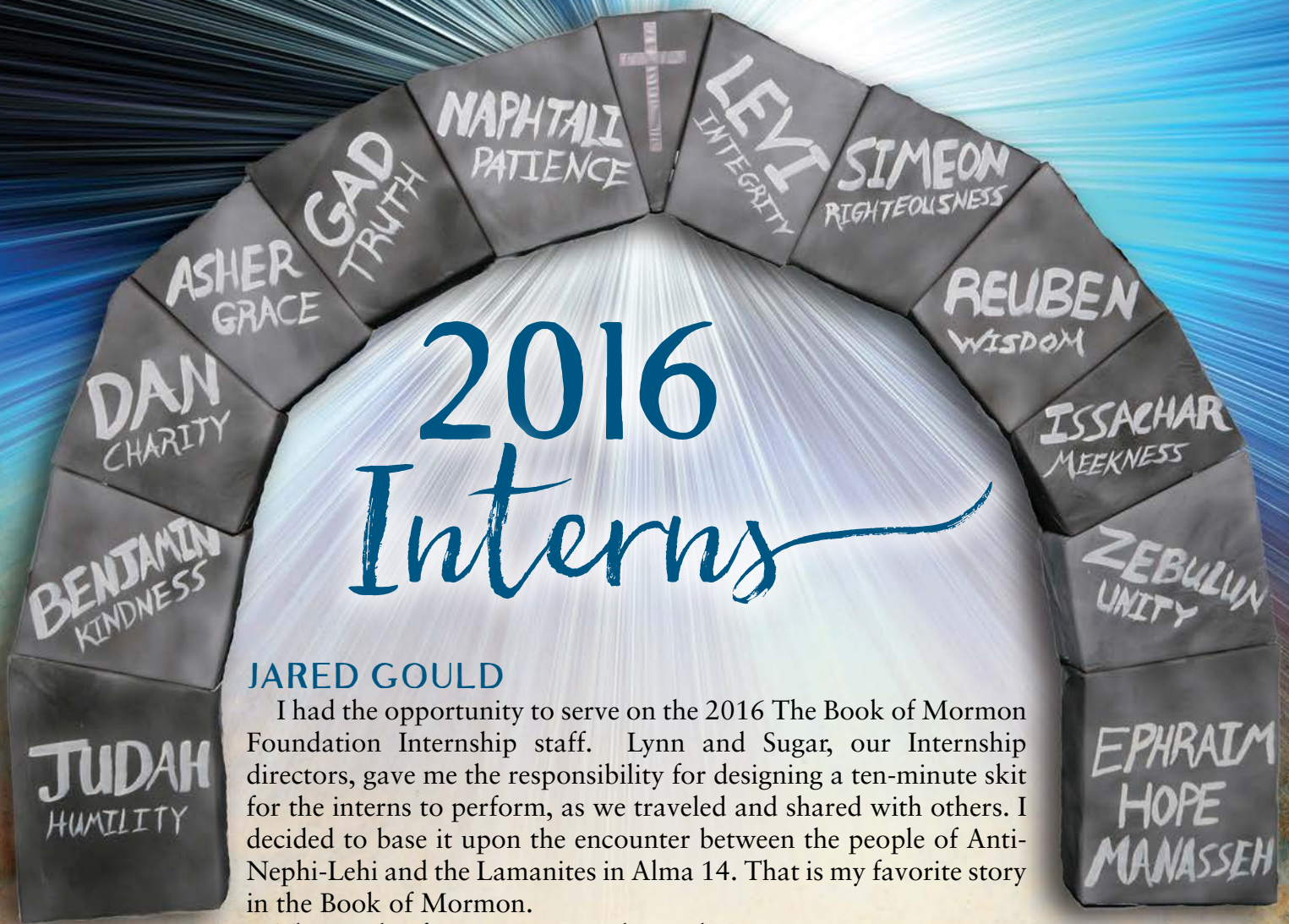
And when you feel those swelling motions, ye will begin to say within yourselves, It must needs be that this is a good seed, or that the word is good, for it beginneth to enlarge my soul; yea, it beginneth to enlighten my understanding; yea, and it beginneth to be **delicious** to me," (Alma 16:154 RLDS) [Alma 32:28 LDS].

There are many testimonies coming out of the retreat. God blessed us in abundance. Each of the young women from Rwanda asked for and received a Book of Mormon and I believe a strengthened testimony of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God.

That is not the end of the story though. When I returned to Independence, a sister from the Community of Christ, who continues to try to encourage fundamental beliefs among her people, came into The Book of Mormon Foundation. She asked me for some information that she might be able to share at their upcoming conference. I was able to share the marvelous work that the Lord is doing in taking His gospel into the entire world. She then told me that she had some copies of the French Doctrine and Covenants (Doctrine Et Alliances) that the RLDS Church had published before 1978, some copies of the Livre de Mormon, and Cantiques Des Saints (Hymns of the Saints in French). What joy we shared as she later brought the books to our office to be shared with our brothers and sisters overseas. "No," she said. She would not let me pay for them. At this year's Book of Mormon Symposium, on the last day held at the LDS ward, I asked a dear LDS brother if I could give him some money for the French Book of Mormons the stake office had given me. I told him Odette's testimony of the "delicious" book. He told me "no" that he would not take the money. I asked him whom I might give it to. He told me no one would take the money and within a few weeks brought a dozen more Livre de Mormon to go on the next trip to East Africa this summer. And so the testimony continues...

Praise the Lord for He is good, always! Always, God is good!





2016 Interns

JARED GOULD

I had the opportunity to serve on the 2016 The Book of Mormon Foundation Internship staff. Lynn and Sugar, our Internship directors, gave me the responsibility for designing a ten-minute skit for the interns to perform, as we traveled and shared with others. I decided to base it upon the encounter between the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi and the Lamanites in Alma 14. That is my favorite story in the Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon Foundation hosts a winter retreat every January. I was sitting in the last Sunday service, praying and thinking about the skit. A very clear image came to me of people carrying stones to build something. I understood they were laying the foundation of Zion, and that this should be the topic of the skit. I had never designed any sort of drama and felt unsure how to apply this experience to that assignment.

In my scripture study, I came across D&C 45:2d (RLDS) [D&C 45:7 LDS], which speaks of how the everlasting covenant is Zion. It presents how God will send it into the world through the Restoration, as he establishes His church and remembers the covenants to restore His ancient covenant people in the last days. Because the two events are so intricately woven together, we see how one is the means by which the other is accomplished.

When I read this verse, a tremendous feeling of privilege, coupled with the weight of responsibility, came over me. I now knew what the message in the skit would be. Sometime later, I read Ezekiel 37:19 (IV/KJV) in support of my experience. The unfulfilled prophesy in those verses was further evidence and guide.

I continued to receive new insights as the skit developed. There were times the Lord corrected my thinking and prompted me to change the skit.





JENNIFER BUCKLES

One of the many things I have learned this summer is the great power of prayer. Prayer is a huge part of the Internship.

On the second day of the Internship, Pat Chadwick taught a class on prayer. The next day, when I got to the Foundation, I realized my scriptures weren't there. I knew they weren't in my car or at home. I had no idea where they could be. Liz reminded me of Pat's class and said we should pray. Not even five minutes after we said amen, AnaMaría walked in carrying my scriptures!

On the trip, we were about to leave the hotel in Indiana, and I realized I didn't have my keys, debit card or driver's license. I looked through my scripture bag, and then went back to the trailer and looked through my suitcase. Liz came back to help me look, and again reminded me that we should say a quick prayer. She then went back to look through my scripture bag one more time and was able to find them!

This was the first of many experiences that made me realize God wants me to pray about even the little things.

When the skit was nearly complete, I had 13 stones and associated scriptures representing each one. It was a lot of verses to memorize, and I was a little anxious about the logistics. How many interns would be in the program, and how many verses would each intern have to memorize? I was so grateful to receive the letter containing the list of the interns and saw we had the perfect number of interns for the skit! I was really excited and thankful!

I am sure there are things that could have been designed better, but I believe the Lord used it to present the ideas He wanted the people to consider. We, as the Restoration, are called to raise an ensign to the world. That ensign is Zion!

MATT ANDERSON

My sister has been both an intern and a staff member for The Book of Mormon Internship, and I have wanted to be an intern ever since she started talking about it. However, each year, something prevented me from being a part of the Internship. This year, I was supposed to be working at Kawasaki, because I accepted a job in my final semester this past fall. However, I missed a test in one of my classes and received a C- in the class. The requirement was a C. So, I was not able to graduate that semester, which caused me to lose my job with Kawasaki. I was very distraught about losing my job until I remembered I could still apply for The Book of Mormon Internship. I applied and was accepted into the program, showing that even if things don't go the way you had planned, the Lord will prepare a way for you to go.

MELODY BURNS

On Tuesday of our trip, we visited the Sacred Grove. We had all entered the Grove, and Sugar told us to go off by ourselves and commune with God, pray, whatever, just be alone. We also were supposed to meet at the end of the trail sometime before 4 p.m. I didn't have my phone with me, so I didn't know when 4 p.m. was going to be, so I headed down the trail and decided to just keep going as fast and as far as I could. As I walked alone, I noticed there was a fly bothering me. I also noticed the clouds made the forest dark, and I felt lost and alone. I said, "Satan leave," and then repeated myself, then I quickly walked away from the portion of the forest I was in. As I was walking faster and faster, with this fly still buzzing around my head, a verse came to my mind, "Be still and

know that I am God,” from Psalms 46:10 (IV/KJV). Remembering this verse, I stopped and beheld God’s creation, and I felt at peace, the fly stopped buzzing around my head, and the clouds cleared up. I didn’t know the exact reference to that scripture until the next day, when Jennifer and I were preparing morning devotions. She was talking about a Psalm she wanted to use, and I found Psalm 46:10 highlighted in my scriptures, and I was just blown away at how God works in the simplest of means.

KIM DESELMAS

Ever since my brother, Ben, went through the Internship, I wanted to be in it as well. I wanted to wait until after I graduated from college, so I pinned up an Internship brochure to my wall as a reminder that I was going to do it later. Years passed and the winter break before my last semester began. I knew I needed to fill out the Internship application, but I kept dragging my feet.

I finally decided to stop being lazy and fill out the paperwork, but I didn’t mail it in yet. I knew the Internship would require me to step out of my comfort zone to such a degree that I wasn’t sure if I was willing to do that. So I held onto the application and prayed about it.

My last semester began, and I got an email from an employer with whom I had previously applied to do an internship. They told me there was a position that was unofficially open that I could apply for. I applied, knowing I couldn’t be in the BMF Internship and have this job. I prayed about it, and I asked others to pray as well. I knew that both opportunities were good ones, but I didn’t want to be the one to have to pick between them, so I asked God to pick for me. He blessed me that by the time I found out that I didn’t get the job, I didn’t even want it anymore.

I set a date for myself that I would either turn in the Internship application, or I would forget about it. When the day came, I prayed about it, then got ready to go drop the application off at the Foundation. As I was gathering my things, I got a text from one of the people I had asked for a reference letter from letting me know that she had just sent in my letter. This was confirmation to me that I was at least supposed to apply, so I did.

When the interview came around, I felt it went really poorly and I just knew that I hadn’t gotten in. I was surprised by how devastated I was by the thought that I wouldn’t get to participate in such an awesome program, and I was really disappointed at the thought of having to miss out on all the things we’d be learning. When Sugar called to tell me that I did get in, I was surprised, but so very thankful.

When the Internship started, we were given journals to write our testimonies in, and Sugar told us to write our testimony of the Internship in it. Even though little blessings allowed me to be here, at the time I really didn’t feel that I had a testimony worth sharing—one that said I was supposed to be in the Internship.

During our trip to Kirtland, Matt ran out of insulin and had to go to Walmart to get more. As we began the trip, I realized I needed a belt. That morning, I asked if I could tag along so I could get a belt, and they said that was fine. After paying for my belt, I walked over to the pharmacy and found out Matt was having trouble getting his prescription. Not knowing



they had prayed about the situation already, I offered to call my Dad, who is a doctor, to see if he would call in a prescription for him, and he did.

As we were waiting for the medicine to be filled, Lynn was reflecting on the situation and said it was no accident I was in the Internship and that God had put me there for a purpose. I don't know that I have ever felt that I was exactly where God wanted me to be, doing exactly what He wanted me to do before, so I thought it was really neat that I not only got a testimony that I was to be in the Internship, but also that God was using me as a tool to help others.

NAOMI DESELMs

My three goals for this Internship were: (1) I wanted to be free from my past sins; (2) I wanted to become a better witness; and (3) I wanted my heart to be in the right condition for God to be able to speak through me. The first time I felt God speak through me while in the Internship was a few weeks ago. Kim and I were driving somewhere, and Kim was telling some of her concerns and frustrations to me. She asked a question (not directly to me) and, immediately, I felt the answer in my heart! I was so surprised by it that I immediately told Kim what God told me. Immediately after I told her that, I could feel God's Spirit in me! We had a prayer service the week before our trip, and I asked for prayers that I'd be free from my past, and that my heart would be in the right condition for God to speak through me. So, as I was being prayed for, a thought occurred to me that in order for me to be free from my past sins, I had

to confess what those things were to my fellow interns. As Kim and I went home that night, I kept getting this feeling that God wanted me to confess to the interns, and it had to be done before the trip. I told Kim about it, and she gave me some advice. I continued to pray about it, and then I decided to let Sugar know, the next day, what I needed to do. Then I realized that if I waited until tomorrow to let her know, I wouldn't actually tell her that day. So, that night, I quickly sent a text to her, and waited for a response, but I didn't get a response. Turns out, she was already asleep, but I didn't know that. You can imagine how I felt throughout the night. The next day, though, Sugar allowed me to confess to everyone. It was the hardest thing I had ever done in my life! As I was confessing, I felt like someone was trying to cover my mouth, but once I let it all out, I no longer felt it. After that, I felt this tremendous weight lifted off me, and I realized something truly amazing—I was finally free and forgiven!

RACHEL GAYDUSEK

I know God put me in the Internship this year with definite purposes. My parents and I had been going through some hard patches, and our relationship was strained because of it. A few months ago, I wanted to be independent and wanted no involvement from my parents. I have been changing, and I would be okay with them involved, but not too much. Talking with people in the Internship really showed me that family relationships are supposed to be healthy and good. On the second day of our trip to New York, we arrived at a church in Michigan where we would





do our first service the next morning. I was really uneasy and I talked with Kim. I realized I missed my parents and that what actually would make me feel better would be to connect with them about where I was and what I had been doing that day. This surprised me; as it was a change from how I used to feel. A few weeks later, we were back from the internship, and I was really overwhelmed. AnaMaría noticed I wasn't doing well. She talked with me and helped me see that I needed to accept how God planned for parents and children to have a place in each other's lives. I was fighting very hard to live without my parents. That night, she encouraged me to surrender to God. I prayed, and He righted my heart. More and more, I have been interacting with my parents with love, and they have done so as well. It is such an amazing blessing for God to have worked this out in our lives.

SAMUEL JORDISON

The week-long trip to New York, is without a doubt, the thing I looked forward to most coming into the Internship. Getting to see where the church was restored, praying in the Grove, and touring Niagara Falls were all things I have wanted to do at some point in my life. However, there was an activity on our agenda that had never crossed my mind as something to do before the Internship—talk to the protesters at the Mormon pageant.

Thankfully, the Foundation didn't just send us into the fray oblivious to questions and attacks the protesters would have. David Gilmore, Bob Bobbitt, and many others taught classes on

defending the faith and witnessing to those who deny the Book of Mormon.

The first point of Bob Bobbitt's class when witnessing to evangelicals was to establish that we have the same Jesus. This was backed up with a scripture, Mosiah 1:97 (RLDS) [Mosiah 3:5 LDS]. With the LDS church being much more widely known than other Restoration churches, we often get grouped in with the Mormons, and the evangelicals assume we have the same beliefs. This is why establishing that we have the same belief in Jesus is so important. Unfortunately, being the student that I am, I did not study the material as I should have.

On the night of the pageant, we said a prayer in the van before heading toward the signs and megaphones of the protesters. Jared and I approached a guy named Jim. Jim started off a little icy toward us, more ready for a debate than a conversation. He was also someone who didn't know anything about churches believing in the Book of Mormon that were not LDS. Questions were traded back and forth after his curiosity rose, as he heard about the RLDS branches of churches.

After moving onto the topic of salvation, just like Bob had said, Jim brought up the fact that we believed in a different Jesus. I got excited knowing that I had a scripture that could share our common Jesus with him... just one problem: I had no clue where the scripture was. Thinking and hoping it was in 2nd Nephi, I opened my Book of Mormon. It opened to Alma, and knowing that wasn't it, I grabbed a block of pages and turned. It opened to Mosiah and, after a quick glance down, I realized that it had the exact verse I was searching for.



I was able to share with Jim the verse and, after hearing that, he agreed with what it said. After realizing we had the same Christ and belief in Him as our savior, things went even smoother. A conversation that had started with Jim saying we were doomed, ended with him commenting that we were on the right path. I know that the scripture I shared with him helped open his mind, and I also know that the Lord helped guide me to the exact page I needed.

EDUARDO PADILLA

Everything started in the summer of 2003. I remember going to have my pictures taken for a thing called a passport and a visa. I was only seven at the time and didn't know what was happening, just my mom telling me to be ready for traveling to the most beautiful place on earth—paradise, she said.

Still, I didn't know what was happening. We didn't have any tickets or any money to start a trip anywhere, but there it was, the great excuse for coming to the United States for the first time. It was something called "Internship" that my aunt Eli was going to do. My mom and my grandma were really excited for it to happen, but I still didn't know why we had to go.

Years passed, and that trip one day became the basis of my spiritual education. It was three years of leaving everything behind us, as a family, just to follow the desire of my mother of having her daughter and sons learn about the gospel, and to be prepared for a plan God had for us. One of

those desires that had been waiting for 13 years was the same that my aunt Eli had, The Book of Mormon Internship.

In September 2015, we were on our way to one of the Christmas celebrations in Mexico City. My mom had a question for me that had popped into her mind in that very moment, "Are you applying for the Internship this year?"

All my plans changed in that very second. It wasn't that I didn't want to do it, but I was so insecure, I didn't want to lose any time of college, and I wanted to be done with my career as soon as possible. There was only one thing I could do at that moment, pray.

I might have prayed about it twice. I really wasn't interested in losing time from school, but still, I knew that the application deadline was very soon if I was going to change my mind. I was running out of time to decide.

One day in January, I was sitting at the school cafe, and a voice came into my mind and said that I had to call The Book of Mormon Foundation in that very moment. I took out my phone and looked for the Foundation's number, and I called. A woman answered my question on how to apply, and after having the information, I started to gather everything I needed to apply. I wrote my testimony, called people I knew to get my recommendation letters, and everything was ready.

One day, Eldon Anderson, called me and scheduled an appointment to have my interview on a Saturday morning, via Skype. I was nervous because I hadn't spoken any English for a little over a year and a half but I remained faithful. As I was answering all the questions the board asked





me, I realized I had good fluency, and the words I needed to say just came into my mouth. After it ended, I felt so confident of the result, and all that was left for me was to wait for them to tell me if I had been accepted or not.

The next day, I was having coffee with my best friend, and as we were talking about my interview, my phone started ringing. It was a call from Independence, Missouri. I answered, and it was Eldon telling me that I was going to be a part of the 2016 generation of interns!

ELIZABETH SMITH

Each morning, on our trip, two interns were in charge of leading morning devotions. I was paired with XXXXX, and we were supposed to share Tuesday. This was the day we were to witness to the protestors. It was the second day of the trip, and, as everyone was sleeping in their bed, I was lying down praying to God. After I had said my prayers, I laid in silence for a few minutes, until the Lord brought a scripture to my mind.

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer with meekness and fear to every man that asketh of you a reason for the hope that is in you: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conduct in Christ.

(1 Peter 3:15-16 IV/KJV)

After I picked up my scriptures and read these verses, I knew the Lord wanted me to share this

with the interns for our morning devotions on Tuesday. I sat in silence pondering the scripture and, after a few minutes, looked to my left at the wall in our hotel room. As I looked at the wall, I saw a cross. Light from the curtains had created this perfect cross, and where the two boards met was a perfect square brighter than the rest. As I looked at the curtains, I didn't suppose they could have cast this shadow, but I knew that what I was seeing was real. I proceeded to stare at it for several minutes, not really understanding why I was seeing it, but knowing there was some reason for it. As the next two days went on, I pondered this experience, wondering why I had seen this cross, and the Lord brought to me my answer. I had remembered a movie we interns had watched shortly before our trip. It was called, "Do You Believe?" In the beginning of this movie, there is a man carrying a large cross on wheels down the street. He makes his way to a car and asks the man inside if he believes in the cross of Christ. The man in the car explains that he is a preacher, to which the man with the cross says, "You did not answer my question." He then repeats himself again and asks him, "Do you believe in the cross of Christ?" When this dialog came to my mind, I knew what that cross I had seen on the wall meant. I knew the Lord was asking me, do you really believe in the cross of Christ? Is it more than an Easter Sunday remembrance for you? Would these protestors be ashamed about the evil they say of you because the hope of Christ is real in your life and your conduct reflects His? These were hard questions I had to answer, and I felt convicted. I knew, in that moment, that the Lord wanted my life to be a



witness—not just externally, but internally. I could speak truth, deal gently with these people, explain my points, lay out my agenda, but unless the hope of Christ was real in my heart, it would mean nothing. My testimony is that Jesus Christ must be real to you and, if He is not, then you must pray that He is. For if we desire to share the testimony of Christ in the Book of Mormon with others, then we must be able to share something we have already received.

MICHAEL WARD

This spring, I finished my freshman year of college at MS&T in Rolla, Missouri. I live in the Christian Campus House, a house with 64 great guys. I'm very blessed to be in it; however, I haven't exactly been open with my faith in the Book of Mormon. This is mainly because I wasn't nearly strong enough in my knowledge to defend my beliefs. So, the main reason I wanted to join the Internship was so I could learn how to do that. I really enjoyed the apologetics classes, and then we witnessed to the evangelicals protesting the Book of Mormon pageant. Afterwards, I was kind of stressed because I was thinking of going back to school and sharing. I felt more ready than I had before the Internship started, but I was still unsure. I talked to God about it, just telling Him that I really was going to need His help. He calmed me down enough that I was able to enjoy the remainder of the night. The next day, we toured the print shop, where the Book of Mormon was first printed. At the end of the tour, there was a plaque that read:

And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true;

(Moroni 10:4 RLDS/LDS)

When I read those words, a tingling filled my body, and it lasted around 20 seconds. As this was going on, I felt God speak to me, saying that this was what I had asked for and was the answer to my prayers. I am very thankful that he provided such a powerful testimony for me during the internship.

PROPHECY WATCH

Nephi speaks of a prophecy being fulfilled after The Book of Mormon comes forth. Close examination of this prophecy suggests it's more of a process than a single event. It's a process spanning across our dispensation and escalating with intensity towards the end. It's a time, described by Nephi, where the church of the Lamb of God has small dominion upon the earth and the great and abominable church has dominion over all the earth. Wickedness and abominations abound.

And it came to pass that I looked and beheld the whore of all the earth, and she sat upon many waters;

And she had dominion over all the earth, among all nations, kindreds, tongues and people.

And it came to pass that I beheld the church of the Lamb of God, and its numbers were few, because of the wickedness and abominations of the whore who sat upon many waters;

Nevertheless, I beheld that the church of the Lamb, who were the saints of God, were also upon all the face of the earth;

And their dominions upon the face of the earth were small, because of the wickedness of the great whore whom I saw.

(1 Nephi 3:224-228 RLDS)

[1 Nephi 14:11-12 LDS]

We quickly notice the scriptural references to “the church of the Lamb” and the church described as “the whore of all the earth.” Many people have firm convictions about the earthly identity of those churches. However, it's not the intent of this article to discuss the identity of either, but rather observe how the fulfillment of this prophecy helps explain what we are seeing now. That is, an observable and measureable decline of Christianity in both presence and practice, as it relates to growth in world population. In other words, the unbelievers are rapidly outgrowing the believers!

There is an evil war raging against the name of Christ, wherever and with whomever the name of Christ is found. For now, this war against all that is good and all that believe in Christ, doesn't seem focused only on one specific church, but within Christianity as a whole. We will have to wait and see how that focus evolves over time, to more fully fulfill the words of Nephi.

Since this sign is a process, when numerical descriptions are used, such as “numbers were few,” “dominions upon the face of the earth were small,” “multitudes upon the face of all the earth” and “dominion over all the earth,” we should be able to statistically support those descriptions somewhere along the way. For America, there are recent statistics pointing to trends supporting the truth of this prophecy, in the larger context. In the Prophecy News Watch newsletter we find this quote:

Though the vast majority (78%) of Americans identify themselves as Christians, they have largely stopped attending church. LESS THAN 20% of the population now makes it to church in a typical week. Some 4000 churches are closing every year and half of all churches in the US did not add any new members to their ranks in the last two years... it's a major and unprecedented social upheaval.¹

We also find references to Great Britain and Europe with similar observations. We should remember these areas of the world were once foundations of Christian belief and practice. They greatly influenced American life during the early years of our history. We find this quote from an article entitled *Britain Is Losing Its Religion, or at Least Its Official One*:

The latest statistics, according to The Spectator, a weekly magazine, show that “a landmark in national life has just been passed.”

¹ http://www.prophecynewswatch.com/product.cfm?product_id=33

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With the nation consumed by the debate over Britain's future in Europe, the milestone seemed to pass with little fanfare. And yet, The Spectator said in an editorial, "the decline of Christianity is perhaps the biggest single change in Britain over the past century."

The result is that "we can more accurately be described now as a secular nation with fading Christian institutions."

The assessment will hardly surprise clerics peering out from their pulpits over pews that fill at Easter and Christmas but are half-empty in the intervening weeks and months.

That, of course, evokes the central contest of faith in a material age.²

From Christianity Today comes this quote from an article entitled *European Christianity's "Failure to Thrive"*:

We're not going to stop any presses by declaring that Christianity has suffered serious decline in Europe—the place where apostles preached, and where Aquinas, Calvin, Luther, Barth, and countless other spiritual luminaries called home.³

This sign is also seen in other parts of the world, especially the Middle East. We see how this prophecy continues to unfold more fully, even as many missionaries work diligently in the field and good fruit is being seen in many places. This prophecy does not diminish those missionary successes nor does it diminish God's call to continue going forth. It's simply a sign working in parallel with them. We know the ultimate victory belongs to God, regardless of the numbers!

Today, this prophecy greatly influences our personal and collective lives! We mourn for those persecuted or killed because of their belief in Christ. We weep for many who reject Christ. And yet, this prophecy also brings us hope, faith and assurance, as we witness a sign pointing to the time where God is moving to restore and gather His people in the last days. In that sense, we lift up our head and rejoice, as the coming of the Lord draws nigh!

As always, the most important consideration for any fulfillment of prophecy is: What is God's will for me and what is my response? What can I do now? What can I do with others now? The voice of Christ speaks to the earth with this simple declaration: ... and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd! The signs of the times are among us! Watch, therefore, and pray always!

The purpose of Prophecy Watch is to assist in looking for and knowing the signs of the times and the signs of the coming of the Son of Man. The perspectives it contains are not presented as the "only, best or final answer" to their meaning, but rather "to the intent that ye might believe on his name" and more fully participate in their fulfillment. We hope Prophecy Watch will provide a brief glimpse into specific prophetic subjects that will encourage each person to diligently pray, study, fast and seek the will of God concerning them.

² http://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/03/world/europe/britain-christianity-anglican-church.html?_r=0

³ <http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/2008/august/european-christianitys-failure-to-thrive.html>