

The Witness

The Book of Mormon Foundation
Number 105

Published Quarterly
September 2002

Breaking Ground and Planting Seeds

By Dale Godfrey

"And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God"

Mosiah 1:49

As we learned in Belize, when you are in the service of your God you are richly blessed.

The Book of Mormon Internship Program embarked on a new adventure this summer. We traveled to Belize and assisted a Catholic school in the small community of Caledonia in building a basketball court. In previous years, we have shared in ministry at retreats for Native American youth in Canada and helped the saints to build houses in Belize.

This year, we broke new ground and planted seeds where we had never gone before. We reached out to a small poor community miles from any city and helped them help their children in many ways. We were in awe as the Lord blessed our feeble efforts and as he wonderfully blessed each of us who participated.

As we shared together at the close of each day, we marveled as we recounted the manifold blessings we had received and the miracles we had wit-

nessed. The miracles were not of people being raised from the dead or walking on water, but they were just as real and from the same divine source. We experienced the promise of Alma 17:35-36 " . . . behold I say



unto you, that by small and simple things, are great things brought to pass; and small means in many instances, doth confound the wise.

And the Lord God doth work by means to bring about his great and eternal purposes; and by very small means the Lord doth confound the

wise, and bringeth about the salvation of many souls."

We were blessed with strength to labor all day in the hot tropical sun without any ill effects. We were blessed by the generosity and appreciation expressed by this small community as they donated the material to keep the project going on schedule. We were blessed each day by their selfless gifts as they donated the food for our breakfasts and lunches. We were blessed with delicious meals and gained a deeper appreciation for the culture and the love of these people.

When we were ill the Lord blessed us with healings through administration. When there was danger we were kept safe. Repeatedly, we thought our supplies of materials were exhausted, only to be blessed with additional materials in the very moment in which we had to have

~continued on Page 2~

Fall/Winter Classes

at the

BMF Learning Center

Evening Classes

What Joseph Didn't Know

Gaylord and Faye Shaw

September 5, 2002

Thursday, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Inaccuracies in Contemporary Anti-Book of Mormon Literature

Jim Daugherty

September 12 and 19, 2002

Thursday, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Historical Review of The Book of Mormon Editions

Jim Daugherty

September 26, 2002

Thursday, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

The Endowment

Ray Treat

October 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2002

Thursday, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Book of Mormon Archaeology

Pre-Columbian Studies Institute

November 7, 14, and 21, 2002

Thursday, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Restoration Apologetics

Robert Bobbitt and Jim Reeves, Jr.

November 5, 12 and 19, 2002

Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

(Preregistration is required)

Spanish I

Gary Metzger

September 9 to November 11, 2002

Mondays, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

(no prior Spanish required)

Spanish II

Gary Metzger

September 9 to November 11, 2002

Mondays, 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

(Spanish I required)

Gospel Spanish

Gary Metzger

September 13 to November 15, 2002

Fridays, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Spanish I & II required

Practice Makes Perfect

Annie Webb

September 13 to November 15, 2002

Fridays, 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Prior Spanish required

Willingness to learn new things

Daytime Classes

Women of the Bible

Linda Wilson

September 9, 16, and 23

Monday, 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

(please note time)

The Sabbath Day

Jean Robison

September 30 and October 7, 2002

Monday, 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Practical Helps with the Word of Wisdom

Peggy Feagins

October 14 and 21, 2002

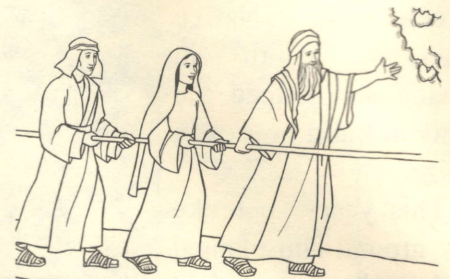
Monday, 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Spiritual Survival in the Last Days

Pat Chadwick

October 28, November 4 and 11,
2002

Monday, 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.



~Continued from Page 1~

them. We were blessed by the love, concern and comradeship of this group of 22 hearty souls who worked, played and prayed together in support of a common goal. We truly experienced, for a time, what it means to be of one heart and mind.

The trip to Belize this year was about planting seeds. The promises to the remnant of the Book of Mormon peoples found in 3Nephi are great. There lies before us a tremendous work to be done in ministry and outreach to these covenant peoples. As we were saying our goodbyes and sharing songs of farewell with the principal and teachers

at the school, as well as members of this community, we were each touched by the Spirit of God and appreciated in that moment how great the love of God truly is for these people. We each returned home knowing that we had received more than we had given.

"... he doth require that ye should do as he hath commanded you, for which if ye do, he doth immediately bless you; and therefore, he hath paid you. And ye are still indebted unto him; and are, and will be, for ever and ever;"

Mosiah 1:58-59

Horses in the Book of Mormon

The Book of Mormon mentions horses, yet these animals seem not to have been known to native Americans who greeted the Spaniards upon their arrival in the New World in the sixteenth century. Moreover, archaeological evidence for the presence of the horse in the pre-Columbian Americas is presently scant and inconclusive. How can this be explained? Careful consideration of this question begins with an examination of what the Book of Mormon says and does not say about horses.

Horses are mentioned only once in the land northward during the Jaredite period—that is, during the prosperous reign of King Emer around 2500 B.C. and before the great drought sometime in the third millennium B.C. (see Ether 9:19, 30–35 LDS; Ether 4:21, 35–42 RLDS). Since horses are not mentioned again in the Jaredite record, it is possible that they became extinct in the region north of the narrow neck of land following that time.

Horses were known to some Nephites and Lamanites from about 600 B.C. to the time of the Savior. They were found in the "land of first inheritance" during the time of Nephi, son of Lehi (see 1 Nephi 18:25 LDS; 1 Nephi 5:216–217 RLSD), and in the land of Nephi during the days of Enos (see Enos 1:21 LDS; Enos 1: 34 RLDS). They were also utilized by at least some of the Lamanite elite during the days of King Lamoni in the same general region during the first century B.C. (see Alma 18:9–12 LDS; Alma 12:76–82 RLDS). The text does not mention horses in the land of Nephi after that time. The only other region associated with horses was the general land of Zarahemla at the time of the war with the Gadianton robbers, just prior to the birth of Jesus Christ (see 3 Nephi 3:22; 4:4; 6:1 LDS; 3 Nephi 2:29–31, 43–45, 3:1 RLDS). There is no indication in the text that horses were indigenous to that region. The Savior's reference to horses in 3 Nephi 21:14 (LDS; 3 Nephi 9:101 RLDS) is a prophecy of the latter days and need not be interpreted as referring to Nephite horses. In the Book of Mormon, horses are never mentioned after the time of Christ.

In short, the Book of Mormon claims only

that horses were known to some New World peoples before the time of Christ in certain limited regions of the New World. Thus we need not conclude from the text that horses were universally known in the Americas throughout pre-Columbian history. Moreover, the Book of Mormon never says that horses were ridden or used in battle, although some passages suggest that at times they may have been used by the elite as a draft animal (see, for example, Alma 18:9; 3 Nephi 3:22 LDS; Alma 12:76–78; 3 Nephi 2:29–31 RLDS).

Archaeological Considerations

Small herds of animals in a limited region sometimes leave no archaeological remains. We know that the Norsemen probably introduced horses, cows, sheep, goats, and pigs into Eastern North America during the eleventh century A.D., yet these animals did not spread throughout the continent and have left no archaeological remains.¹ "It is probable," writes Jacques Soustelle, an authority on the Olmec, "that the Olmecs kept dogs and turkeys, animals domesticated in very early times on the American continent, but the destruction of any sort of bone remains, both human and animal, by the dampness and the acidity of the soil keeps us from being certain of this."²

Even if horses had been abundantly used and had been a vital element in the culture of Book of Mormon people (a claim never made by Book of Mormon writers), one cannot assume that evidence for this would be plentiful or obvious from the current archaeological record.

The study of fossilized animal remains from archaeological sites is known today as "zoo-archaeology." Zoo-archaeologist Simon J. M. Davis notes that the majority of bones found in archaeological sites are those of animals that were killed for food or other slaughter products by ancient peoples. It is rare to find remains of other animals in such locations. "Animals exploited, say, for traction or riding [such as horses], may not necessarily have been consumed and may only be represented

by an occasional bone introduced by scavenging dogs." Thus "the problem of correlating between excavated bones and the economic importance of the animals in antiquity is far from being resolved."³ In fact, "One sometimes wonders whether there is any similarity between a published bone report and the animals exploited by ancient humans."⁴

The horse was the basis of the wealth and military power of the Huns of central Asia (fourth and fifth centuries A.D.). Nonetheless, according to S. Bokonyi, a leading authority on the zoological record for central Asia, "We know very little of the Huns' horses. It is interesting that not a single usable horse bone has been found in the territory of the whole empire of the Huns. This is all the more deplorable as contemporary sources mention these horses with high appreciation."⁵

The lack of archaeological evidence for the Hunnic horse is rather significant in terms of references to horses in the Book of Mormon. During the two centuries of their dominance, the Huns must have possessed hundreds of thousands of horses. If Hunnic horse bones are so rare, notwithstanding the abundance of horses during the Hunnic empire, how can we expect abundant archaeological evidence for pre-Columbian horses in the New World, especially given the scant and comparatively conservative references to horses by Book of Mormon writers?

A parallel example from the Bible is instructive. The biblical narrative mentions lions, yet it was not until very recently that the only other evidence for lions in Palestine was pictographic or literary. Before the announcement in a 1988 publication of two bone samples, there was no archaeological evidence to confirm the existence of lions in that region.⁶ Thus there is often a gap between what historical records such as the Book of Mormon claim existed and what the limited archaeological record may yield. In addition, archaeological excavations in Bible lands have been under way for decades longer and on a much larger scale than those in proposed Book of Mormon lands.

~continued on Page 4~

NOTES:

1. See Gwyn Jones, *The Norse Atlantic Saga: Being the Norse Voyages of Discovery and Settlement to Iceland, Greenland, America*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 119; see also Erik Wahlgren, *The Vikings in America* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 124.
2. Jaques Soustelle, *The Olmecs: The Oldest Civilization in Mexico* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1984), 23.
3. Simon J. M. Davis, *The Archaeology of Animals* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), 24.
4. *Ibid.*, 23.
5. S. Bokonyi, *History of Domestic Mammals in Central and Eastern Europe* (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1974), 267.
6. L. Martin, "The Faunal Remains from Tell es Saidiyeh," *Levant* 20 (1988): 83–84.
7. Hugh Thomas, *Conquest: Montezuma, Cortés, and the Fall of Old Mexico* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 178; see also Eugene R. Craine and Reginald C. Reindorp, eds. and trans., *The Chronicles of Michoacán* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970, 63–64).
8. Quoted in Hans Frädrich and Erich Thenius, "Tapirs," *Grzimek's Animal Life Encyclopedia*, ed. Bernhard Grzimek (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company), 13:19–20.
9. *Ibid.*, 20.
10. *Ibid.*, 28–30.

Possible Late Survival of Prehistoric Horses

Some native Mexican traditions suggest memory of the late survival of some species of horse in the New World. When Mexican peoples first encountered Spanish horses they compared them to deer. American Historian Hugh Thomas, in his seminal study of the conquest of Mexico, suggests that this association may have been partly based on native ancestral traditions that mentioned deer with tails and manes of hair. According to Thomas, "The Mexicans may have continued to think of these animals as deer. But perhaps some folk memory may have reminded them that there had once been horses in the Americas."⁷

Naming by Analogy

It is also possible that some Book of Mormon peoples coming from the Old World may have decided to call some New World animal species a "horse" or an "ass." This practice, known as "loanshift" or "loan-extension," is well known to historians and anthropologists who study cross-cultural contact. For example, when the Greeks first visited the Nile in Egypt, they encountered a large animal they had never seen before and gave it the name hippopotamus, meaning "horse of the river." When the Roman armies first encountered the elephant, they called it *Lucca bos*, a "Lucanian cow." In the New World the Spanish called Mesoamerican jaguars *leones*, "lions," or *tigres*, "tigers."

Similarly, members of Lehi's family may have applied loan-words to certain animal species that they encountered for the first time in the New World, such as the Mesoamerican tapir. While some species of tapir are rather small, the Mesoamerican variety (*tapiris bairdii*) can grow to be nearly six and a half feet in length and can weigh more than six hundred pounds. Many zoologists and anthropologists have compared the tapir's features to those of a horse or a donkey. "Whenever I saw a tapir," notes zoologist Hans Krieg, "it reminded me of an animal similar to a horse or a donkey. The movements as well as the shape of the animal, especially the high neck with the small brush mane, even the expression on the face, are much more like a horse's than a pig's [to which some have compared the

smaller species]. When watching a tapir on the alert . . . as he picks himself up when recognizing danger, taking off in a gallop, almost nothing remains of the similarity to a pig."⁸

Other zoologists have made similar observations. "At first glance," note Hans Frädriich and Erich Thenius, "the tapirs' movements also are not similar to those of their relatives, the rhinoceros and the horses. In a slow walk, they usually keep the head lowered." However, when a tapir runs, its movement becomes quite horselike: "In a trot, they lift their heads and move their legs in an elastic manner. The amazingly fast gallop is seen only when the animals are in flight, playing, or when they are extremely excited." In addition, tapirs can "climb quite well, even though one would not expect this because of their bulky figure. Even steep slopes do not present obstacles. They jump vertical fences or walls, rising on their hind legs and leaping up."⁹ Tapirs can be domesticated quite easily if they are captured when young. Young tapirs who have lost their mothers are easily tamed and will eat from a bowl, and they like to be petted and will often allow children to ride on their backs.¹⁰

One could hardly fault Old World visitors to the New World for choosing to classify the Mesoamerican tapir as a horse or an ass, if that is what happened. Given the limitations of zoo-archaeology, and also those of other potentially helpful disciplines when probing many centuries into the forgotten past, it is unwise to dismiss the references in the Book of Mormon to horses as erroneous.

Report last updated August 2000

Recommended Readings

Hamblin, William J. "Animals." In Hamblin, "Basic Methodological Problems with the Anti-Mormon Approach to the Geography and Archaeology of the Book of Mormon." *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2/1 (1993): 193-95.

Sorenson, John L. "Animals in the Book of Mormon." In Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*.

Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1985, 288-99.

———. "Plants and Animals." In "Viva Zapato! Hurray for the Shoe!" Review of "Does the Shoe Fit? A Critique of the Limited Tehuantepec Geography," by Deanne G. Matheny. *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/1 (1994): 342-48.

———. "Once More: The Horse." In *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, edited by John W. Welch, 98-100. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992.

Horses Before the Spaniards?

The Book of Mormon refers to horses 14 times, although not all archeologists agree with its claim. While in Belize, the 2002 internship visited Lamanai, an ancient Mayan ruin. They began the tour in a small, one-room museum. The Mayan guide went around the room telling about the different objects, where they were found and the approximate time period they were from.

Attention was drawn to one particular pot. The guide said the front legs of the pot represented horse hooves and the back human legs. He then dated the pot between 1000-1200 AD. He moved on around the room with information on other artifacts. During questions, he was asked about this pot again. "Did you say those are horses" hooves on the front of this pot?" "Yes," came his answer. Another asked, "What did you say was the date of this pot?" Again he answered, "Between 1000-1200 AD." Then someone said, "How is that possible? That was before the Spaniards arrived with horses." The guide paused awkwardly and then said that maybe the legs were some other animal.

What do you think?



This Research Report reprinted with permission was prepared by the FARMS Research Department and is based on the latest available scholarly research (as of August 2000). It is subject to revision as more information on the subject becomes available. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the position of FARMS, Brigham Young University, or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Copyright--Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies.

2002 Book of Mormon Foundation Internship Program

...learn wisdom in thy youth; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God; yea, and cry unto God for all thy support; Yea, let all thy doings be unto the Lord, and whithersoever thou goest, let it be in the Lord; yea, let thy thoughts be directed unto the Lord; yea, let the affections of thy heart be placed upon the Lord forever; counsel the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; Yea, when thou liest down at night, lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep and when thou risest in the morning, let thy heart be full of thanks unto God; and if ye do these things, ye shall be lifted up at the last day. Alma 17: 68-70



Chappelow, Mandi Jumet, Jami Schultz, Jeff Stilwell and Michelle White. They were involved in a six-week program that included classes three days a week, service projects once a week, worship services at local branches and camps and the trip to Belize. The second-year interns were selected from applications received from former interns. Those selected were Deborah Bird (2001 intern), Renee Bailey (2000 intern), Jeff Ballantyne (2000 intern), Will Ballantyne (1998 intern), Bethany Larson (1998 intern), Nathan Sherer (2001 intern) and Isaac Stayton (1999

intern). The second-year program included the ten-day trip to Belize, pre-trip preparation and post-trip ministry to branches and camps. Two staff members are selected each year from former interns. Stacy Anderson (1995 intern) was the Assistant Director and her husband, Jared (1992-93 intern) provided priesthood support.

Each internship has its unique challenges and blessings, but one thing remains the same. Every year we see what can happen when a group of God's children choose to become a team and work together. When we ask God for His direction and are willing to give up our own way, He leads us. When we have done all that we can do but face what seems an impossible task, He opens a door. When we open our hearts to love and appreciate even those who are different from us, He gives us a glimpse of charity and how much He loves us. When we place our thoughts and the affections of our heart on the Lord, He shows us how empty the world is and what great joy is in His presence. We are truly able to rise up each morning with our hearts full of thanks unto God!

The Book of Mormon Foundation Internship Program provides a unique environment for spiritual growth. Not only do interns take the time to consider the words of Alma to his son and act upon them, but they also have friends to help and encourage them every day for six weeks. Six hours a day, four days a week, the young adults in this program study, pray, fast, worship and give service to others together. The yearly trip is always a challenge in which we try to humbly prepare to be used by the Lord and then trust Him to show us the way. It is an amazing adventure in faith and a realization that God cares about every small detail of our lives. Often, lifetime friendships develop.

Ten years have passed since the first summer internship in 1992, and 104 young adults have participated in the program. The 2002 internship included six first-year and seven second-year interns. The first-year interns were selected through an application and interview process. They were Katrina Campbell, Mike

Worshipping with the Saints in Belize

During the last weekend in June, 22 interns and BMF staff were in Belize and had the opportunity to worship and fellowship with the saints. On Friday night, we had a youth campfire on the land just north of Corozal owned by the church. Nathan Sherer and Bethany Larson led the campfire with the help of two Belize youth, Nathan and Jamie. For those of us who had been to Belize last year, it was good to see the house we built with a roof on it, an outdoor kitchen added and Victor, his wife and nine children living there.

On Saturday, nine interns and staff held a retreat for all the church youth. The other 13 interns and staff continued to work on the ball court in Caledonia. The class for ages 12 and older youth was taught by Will Ballantyne and Michelle White. The class for ages 11 and younger was taught by Jeff Ballantyne and Deborah Bird. Rita Godfrey's enthusiasm made recreation a hit with new games the children had never played. That revved up everyone's appetite for lunch prepared by the church women. After lunch, Renee Bailey and Jami Schultz taught a music class singing songs in both English and Spanish. Four songs were pre-

pared for the worship service planned for Sunday morning. We took a little time to cool off with a swim in the lagoon and closed the day with prayer.

On Sunday morning, we rented the Civic Center and invited the Belize saints from both Restoration groups, to come and worship with us. As the saints gathered and sat together in family groups, the interns sang praise and worship songs for meditation. Jared Anderson presided with the assistance of priesthood from both groups. The interns and Belize youth sang the songs learned at the retreat, the interns shared testimonies, and Nathan Sherer brought the final remarks. We thank the Lord for this opportunity to worship with our brothers and sisters in Belize.



Heroes of the Book of Mormon

By Barb Capps

Our children attended their first Book of Mormon Day for Kids in 1997, with the theme being Soldiers in the Army of the Lord. The Lord's Spirit was present in great abundance during the day as the children sang, made a pennant, and witnessed dramas of Nephi, the brother of Jared, Coriantumr, Moroni, Samuel on the wall, King Benjamin in the tower, Abinadi in prison, and Helaman on a horse preparing to lead his 2,000 sons. What a wonderful way for our youth to learn of The Book of Mormon! It was a special day for our children and for me.

The following year I was asked to serve on the committee for The Book of Mormon Day for Kids and have had the opportunity to assist every year since, except for 2000, when our family was on vacation. Each year, I have witnessed the love and dedication the staff has shared and the enthusiasm of the youth in attendance. It has been our hope that each one will walk away with a greater knowledge of The Book of Mormon and a desire to share this second witness of Christ with others.

As I went before the Lord earlier this year in preparation for this year's Book of

Mormon Day for Kids, I did not receive direction as before. No scriptures, stories or ideas came. This greatly troubled me, and I sought the Lord again, asking if perhaps there was another direction I should take. Through His Holy Spirit, I was led to plan a weekly story hour at the BMF Learning Center. Themes, videos to coordinate with the themes and storytellers were all given, so vivid and clear. The Lord had a plan! At our next board meeting, I presented this information and was given unanimous support.

Story Hours were held on Friday mornings in June and July. Each week one or more of the children graciously offered a prayer, the theme of the day was given, we watched a Book of Mormon video and our storytellers shared with us. We enjoyed flannelgraph

scripture stories, readings, object lessons and a puppet play. At the closing of the Story Hour, each child received a momento reminding them of the day's theme.

Our overall theme was Heroes of The Book of Mormon. We learned of Christ coming to America, Helaman's stripling warriors having great faith, repentance in the life of Ammon and how through his ministry others came unto repentance, the obedience of Nephi, the effect that prayer had on Alma the younger's life, holding fast to the rod of iron and the promise of receiving God's love, Abinadi's witness, and the importance of the records which were written and preserved so that we could have this precious testimony, The Book of Mormon, in the latter days. Our storytellers were Kim Augenstein, Donita Cochran, Suzanne Bendorf, Betsy Trahern, Cindy Kelso, Cheri Tandy, and Pam and Brian Lair.

I am truly looking forward to this year's Book of Mormon Day for Kids, and I am very grateful for the opportunity to share with the youth through the summer weekly Story Hour. Be looking for another Story Hour next summer!



Book of Mormon Story Hour

2nd Thursday of every month
10:30-11:30 a.m.

Pre-school thru fourth grade

Starting September 12
at

The Book of Mormon Foundation
Learning Center

This year's theme:
"Be Diligent...Win the Prize"

September's theme:
Keep the Commandments
of the Lord

Congregational Book of Mormon Days

| | |
|---|---------------------------|
| Northeast Des Moines Restoration Branch <i>Des Moines, Iowa</i> | September 8, 2002 |
| Israel's Gathering Restoration Branch <i>Buckner, Missouri</i> | September 22, 2002 |
| Grain Valley RLDS at Crowder State Park <i>Grain Valley, Missouri</i> | September 28, 2002 |
| Restoration Church of Jesus Christ of LDS <i>Richmond, Missouri</i> | September 29, 2002 |
| Waldo Restoration Branch <i>Independence, Missouri</i> | October 13, 2002 |
| Missionary Restoration Branch <i>Sibley, Missouri</i> | October 20, 2002 |
| Remnant Church of Jesus Christ <i>Lake Elsinore, California</i> | October 27, 2002 |
| Belton Restoration Branch <i>Belton, Missouri</i> | November 10, 2002 |
| Lexington Restoration Branch <i>Lexington, Missouri</i> | November 24, 2002 |

The Essence of the Book of Mormon

By Kathy Vogt

My fascination with the Book of Mormon began about six years ago when I finally read it cover-to-cover for the first time. My faith and understanding in Christ increased, and I found peace flooding my soul every time I read and studied the simple and wonderful gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. One of my favorite activities is indeed feasting on the word of our Redeemer as recorded and preserved so accurately on metal plates by His prophets and faithful servants of ancient times. Every year now, I read the Book of Mormon cover-to-cover, and my knowledge and understanding continues to grow although not to the extent that I would like. One of my frustrations has been stopping in the middle of a sermon discourse or story narrative only to try to pick it back up the next time I study.

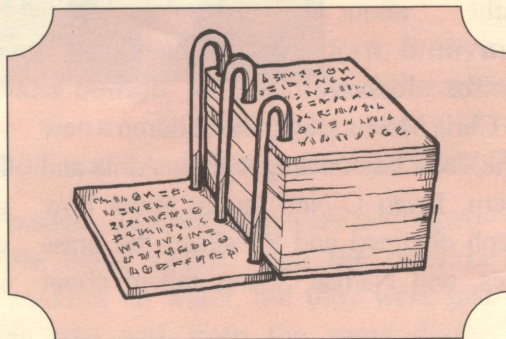
Last December, after helping at the Book of Mormon Foundation with a mailing, I brought home some past issues of *The Witness*. I eagerly perused the articles on geography, theology, and the latest findings and news pertaining to the Book of Mormon. In the Fall 1993 issue, a particular article caught my eye. It told about a group of students at Graceland who did a cover-to-cover continuous reading of the Book of Mormon in about 25 hours. The idea of doing something like this burned on my heart. I thought it was imperative to furthering my (and others) study and understanding of the Book of Mormon, so I prayed and left it in the Lord's hands.

Several weeks later, I was visiting with Bonnie Anderson following a Book of Mormon Day at Hill Cumorah. As soon as I started talking about wanting to do a continuous reading, her eyes filled with tears. She had been thinking about doing it as an activity for the BMF interns, but was unsure if she should pursue it. My asking was a confirmation that she needed to go ahead and plan it. We pulled out our calendars right then and set the date for June 7, over five months away.

I was so excited as the days grew closer, and I prayed and fasted in preparation. I asked the Lord to give me insights and

another testimony of the Book of Mormon. I also prayed that we might have visitations from angels, the Three Nephites and Christ and, if it were His will, that we might see and bear record of them as well.

The reading was to start at 8 a.m. Friday at Bonnie's house, and I had planned to get some extra sleep so that I would be fresh and alert for this special event. I'm not sure if it was the excitement or the thought of knowing that I needed to sleep but, at any rate, I was only able to procure a few hours of sleep on the two previous nights. On top of that, several roadblocks were placed in



my path. Since the adversary was working so hard to keep me from getting there, I knew that it was important for me to attend. I had encountered a similar experience in preparation for my patriarchal blessing, so I was extremely determined to make it.

I arrived that Friday morning extremely tired and with a headache. The first hour into the reading I was already struggling to stay awake, so I prayed for strength for the next 24 hours. I was a bit discouraged and disheartened to see the somewhat lackadaisical approach by some of the interns toward fasting and the reading in general.

I struggled through the reading all day with a severe headache due partially to the fasting but mainly from lack of sleep. Around 11 p.m. that evening, I prayed a desperate silent prayer begging the Lord to either lift the headache or the drowsiness, because it was too much for me to deal with both and try to concentrate on the words. A short while later, I realized that I no longer had a headache. Praise the Lord! I was able to deal with the drowsiness, and we finished the reading in 22 hours and 12 minutes.

On the drive home, I reflected back over

the events of the previous day. I was disappointed at first because I had not received any great insights, nor had I seen any heavenly visitors. As my mind began to wander over the reading, I was struck with two thoughts. The first was that I had never realized how much doctrine and preaching and prophesying of Christ there was throughout the entire book. I had always read it in broken segments and had not been able to grasp the flow of the narrative. I had always thought that the book consisted of history with some doctrine sprinkled in, but I now realized that the book was actually the doctrine of Christ with some history mixed with it. It was interesting to note that every major prophet preached and prophesied of the divinity and coming of Christ.

The second thought that struck me was that the theme of the Book of Mormon (or the Book of Mormon in a nutshell if you will) is: come unto Christ, repent, and be baptized. A few weeks ago, a close friend of mine said, "If you could tell me about the Book of Mormon in a few words, what would they be?" Before he could finish the last word, I replied, "Come unto Christ." He was surprised that I answered so quickly and confidently.

I am thankful for my experience in participating in the continuous reading of the Book of Mormon. I did not see any personages for whom I hoped and prayed, and I did not receive any earth shattering insights for which I also hoped and prayed. I instead came away with a much clearer overall understanding of the Book of Mormon. I can confidently relay to those who inquire with a certainty that comes from knowledge through an outpouring of the Spirit that the essence of the Book of Mormon is Come unto Christ.

BMF WISH LIST

| | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| LCD projector | \$3,500 |
| Laptop computer | \$2,000 |
| Desktop computer | \$2,000 |
| Doors for the library | \$400 |

Board of Directors

President Dale Godfrey
Vice President Marlin Guin
Secretary/Treasurer Gary Lair

Bonnie Anderson Linda Guin
Jason Anderson Linda Trimble
Barbara Capps

Office Manager Dennis Moe
Graphic Designer Monica Moreland

THE WITNESS is published quarterly by:

The Book of Mormon Foundation
210 West White Oak
Independence, MO 64050

Tel: 816-461-3722

Fax: 816-461-5850

E-mail: bmfoundation@aol.com

Web site: www.bomf.org

The Book of Mormon Foundation is a nonprofit 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 BMF seek to assist in bringing forth the light contained in The Book of Mormon.

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

Book of Mormon Day for Kids

By Carrie Givens

What could possibly be more fun to watch than 37 children having fun while they learn about the Book of Mormon?

On Saturday, August 24, I was given the opportunity to witness that very thing at the Book of Mormon Day for Children at South Crysler Restoration Branch.

Ben Gatrost taught about A m m o n , Jennifer Jecker and Chris Morris taught the children a new game, John Larson taught about Alma and Helem, Brian O'Neil taught about how Joseph obtained and translated the brass plates, and Nathan Sherer talked about

Lehi's vision of the Tree of Life.

At the end of the day, the sixth graders put on a wonderful play for the first through fifth graders. The play was written by David Howlett and was about the journey that Nephi and his brothers made to get the records back from Laban.

The theme for the day was "Trust and Obey," and the children were taught the importance of being obedient to the will of the Lord.

They were able to see that many times throughout the Book of Mormon God's people were greatly blessed when they were obedient to His commandments and trusted in His counsel.



Change of Address

Please help The Book of Mormon Foundation avoid expensive postal fees by emailing us at bmfoundation@aol.com and noting any changes in your name or address. You can also call us at (816) 461-3722 or write to us at 210 West White Oak, Independence, MO 64050.

Duplicate Mailings

Please use the enclosed envelope in *The Witness* to notify us of duplicate mailings. Attach the address label from the duplicate mailings and indicate which one(s) should be removed from our list.