



THE WITNESS

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“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.”



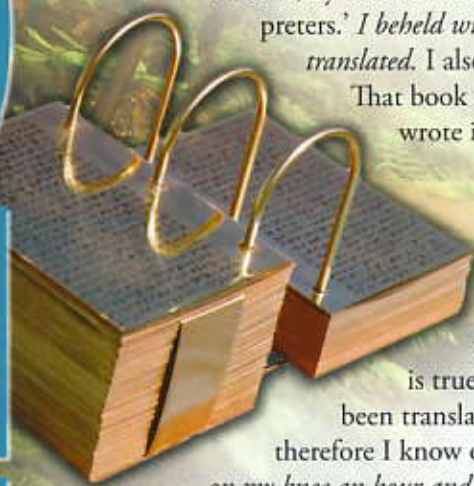
That Book is True

“Friends and brethren, my name is Cowdery—Oliver Cowdery. In the early history of this church I stood identified with her, and one in her councils. True it is that the gifts and callings of God are without repentance. Not because I was better than the rest of mankind was I called; but, to fulfill the purposes of God, he called me to a high and holy calling. I wrote, with my own pen, the entire Book of Mormon (save a few pages), as it fell from the lips of the Prophet Joseph Smith, as he translated it by the gift and power of God, by the means of the Urim and Thummin, or, as it is called by that book, ‘holy interpreters.’ *I beheld with my eyes and handled with my hands the gold plates from which it was translated.* I also saw with my eyes and handled with my hands the ‘holy interpreters.’ That book is true. Sidney Rigdon did not write it. Mr. Spalding did not write it. I wrote it myself as it fell from the lips of the Prophet.”

Oliver Cowdery
Council Bluffs, Iowa
October 21, 1848

“Mr. Harris replied: ‘I was the right hand man of Joseph Smith, and I know that he was a prophet of God. I know the Book of Mormon is true—and you know that I know that it is true. I know that the plates have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice declared it unto us; therefore I know of a surety that the work is true; *for did I not at one time hold the plates on my knee an hour and a half, while in conversation with Joseph, when we went to bury them in the woods, that the enemy might not obtain them? Yes, I did. And as many of the plates as Joseph Smith translated, I handled with my hands, plate after plate.*’ ”

Martin Harris
Kirtland, Lake County, Ohio
September 15, 1853



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Cover photo courtesy of Dale Godfrey
(Moroni 10:5 RLDS/LDS)

THE WITNESS

The Light of Christ

By Marlin Guin

And thus we see the great call of the diligence of men to labor in the vineyards of the Lord; and thus we see the great reason of sorrow, and also of rejoicing; sorrow because of death and destruction among men, and joy because of the light of Christ unto life. (Alma 15:51 RLDS) [Alma 28:14 LDS]

The signs of the times are coming so quickly and the fulfillment of God's word so fast, that I find it challenging to keep up with the current events that relate to the scriptures. In our lifetime, who would have ever thought the Supreme Court of the United States would declare the current definition of marriage, as only one man and one woman, to be unconstitutional and the Defense of Marriage Act to be a violation of basic human rights and dignity of citizens? A recent news segment on KMBC 9 News on March 27, 2013 summarized the process this way: "Politicians and people are evolving on same sex marriage."

I recently listened to Texas Senator Wendy Davis argue, in her filibuster remarks, that abortion is a basic human right for women. Who would have thought that over one million born and unborn babies would be murdered each year, especially within this Christian nation, and over 40 million children murdered each year in the world? In our lifetime, who would have thought that over \$500 million per year would be allocated from our tax dollars to fund organizations like Planned Parenthood, for the murder of our children? These are the same tax dollars which come from the honest wages of those who believe in Jesus Christ.

Who would have ever thought an immigration reform bill would be passed by the United States Senate to allow tens of millions of illegal immigrants to have eventual unrestricted access to all aspects of our society, including social services, government assistance, medical care, voting rights and citizenship. All of these things have happened in the last few weeks, with huge political fanfare and celebration.

Who would have thought these things possible in our lifetime? And yet, the Lord told us we would see all manner of whoredoms and murders in the last days, and we would also witness the remnant of Jacob, the Book of Mormon peoples, coming among us to tread down the unbelieving Gentiles.

And thus commandeth the Father that I should say unto you, At that day when the Gentiles shall sin against my gospel, and shall reject the fullness of my gospel, and shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations, and above all the people of the whole earth, and shall be filled with all manner of lyings, and of deceits, and of mischiefs, and all manner of hypocrisy, and murders, and priestcrafts, and whoredoms, and of secret abominations;

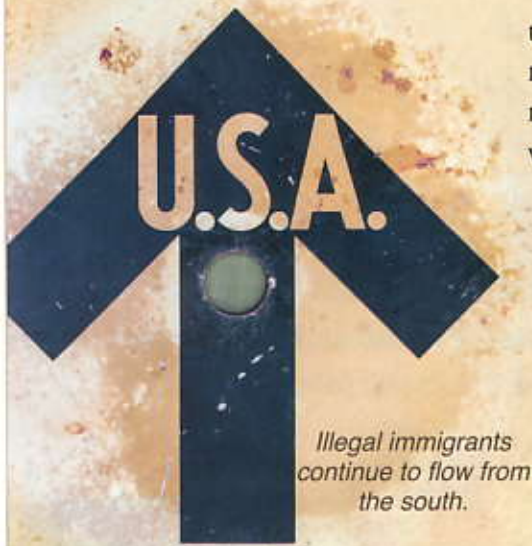
(3 Nephi 7:34 RLDS) [3 Nephi 16:10 LDS]



Definition of marriage, as only one man and one woman declared unconstitutional.



One million abortions performed each year in the United States.



The ultimate response of God to these choices will be based on a very simple truth found in the scriptures. That is, if the Gentiles do not repent and come unto me I will... It's easy to conclude from our daily observations, the Gentiles today are refusing to repent and come unto Christ. Therefore, the word of God is sure and will come to pass in His own time and place:

And if they shall do all these things, and shall reject the fullness of my gospel, behold, saith the Father, I will bring the fullness of my gospel from among them; And then will I remember my covenant which I have made unto my people, O house of Israel, and I will bring my gospel unto them; And I will shew unto thee, O house of Israel, that the Gentiles shall not have power over you, but I will remember my covenant unto you, O house of Israel, and ye shall come unto the knowledge of the fullness of my gospel.

But if the Gentiles will repent, and return unto me, saith the Father, behold, they shall be numbered among my people, O house of Israel; And I will not suffer my people, who are of the house of Israel, to go through among them, and tread them down, saith the Father.

But if they will not turn unto me, and hearken unto my voice, I will suffer them, yea, I will suffer my people, O house of Israel, that they shall go through among them, and shall tread them down,

And they shall be as salt that hath lost its savor, which is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of my people, O house of Israel.

(3 Nephi 7:35-41 RLDS)[3 Nephi 16:10-15 LDS]

I have never seen such a need for the light of Christ to be poured out upon our nation and among our people, who are called to be a light unto this generation. The significance of the "great calling" or "the great and marvelous work" has never been clearer for those who believe these things. In our lesser moments, we are tempted to be like Ether (Ether 6:14 RLDS) [Ether 13:13 LDS] and hide in the cavity of a rock to watch the remaining events unfold. However, in our better moments, we know we are called of God to sanctify our lives for active preparation and participation in the establishment of Zion and the building up of the New Jerusalem for the gathering of the Saints.

I have been thinking about some of the common experiences we share together every day. One that quickly comes to mind is based on easy observations coming from driving on Truman Road or Noland Road in Independence, Missouri. I've made this trip, from downtown Kansas City to Independence, hundreds of times over the years. Every time, one thought always comes to mind during the journey: *Zion will have to be redeemed by the power of God.* I'm sure all the Saints have shared this experience at one time or another.

There are other common experiences we have shared together, based on our Restoration heritage and history:

- ◆ Perhaps we have prayed in the grove in Palmyra, New York and thought about the revelation of God which began the latter day work and the later visitations of a heavenly messenger.
- ◆ Perhaps we have stood on the hill in New York where the Book of Mormon plates rested for 14 centuries and thought about the great excitement and anticipation of a young boy as he opened the lid of a stone box to behold the plates for the first time.
- ◆ Perhaps we have worshiped in the House of the Lord at Kirtland and imagined the fire and zeal of the Saints singing "The Spirit of God like a fire is burning."
- ◆ Perhaps we have stood on the temple lot in the center place of Zion and wondered how long before the temple will be built on that spot. In so doing, perhaps we have also looked around in several directions and observed the many groups/churches rooted in the Restoration, but having different views of the church and its calling.
- ◆ Perhaps we have visited the graves of some of the Book of Mormon witnesses at Richmond, Missouri, and thought of their unwavering testimony of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

- ◆ Perhaps we have stood at the Square in Independence and thought of the printing press being destroyed and the Saints fleeing across the river to eventually settle in Far West.
- ◆ Perhaps we have grieved together concerning the extermination order given by a Missouri governor to eliminate the Mormons, culminating in the massacre at Haun's Mill and the eventual migration to Nauvoo, Illinois.
- ◆ Perhaps we have walked the empty, quiet streets of Nauvoo thinking upon the early Saints who sought religious freedom only to experience death, division and scattering.
- ◆ Perhaps we have visited the jails in which the Saints were persecuted and killed and wondered what would inspire people to make such sacrifices for the Lord.
- ◆ Perhaps we think of the dark and cloudy days of disunity after Nauvoo and the eventual reorganization of the church.
- ◆ Perhaps we think of the church moving back to Independence after many decades absent from the center place of Zion.
- ◆ Perhaps we think of the many families, past and present, who have given their farms, land, homes, temporal wealth and lives of service for the establishment of Zion in this land designated by the Lord as the land of our inheritance, the New Jerusalem.
- ◆ Even in the midst of our grief for the current condition of the people, perhaps we have also noticed the recent gathering of Saints to the New Jerusalem, the Book of Mormon peoples coming among us and the gathering of the tribes of Israel to the Holy Land. Each are gathering to the land of their inheritance, as prophesied.

The list goes on and on... So many things are brought to our remembrance by the light of Christ. These are just a few of the common experiences which unite us as we share in our history. However, one must ask, what are the common experiences we share today? We might quickly mention reunions, camps, retreats, worship services, etc., but what common vision do we actively share and participate in together as a people? A vision that's larger than ourselves! The events of today

that have captured our attention cause us to honestly ask: *What is the larger purpose of God to which we diligently labor together in the vineyard of the Lord?*

Some time ago, I heard Elder Rich Rowland teach a class at my home branch where he emphasized our need to answer this question – *what are you willing to do?* Our current fruits suggest this question has not yet been answered in a meaningful way for the church.

Today, and in years gone by, we've heard some of the Presidents of our country talk about their legacy. They speak of what they have personally accomplished and left for future generations to admire and praise. They often do so with a great sense of pride placed upon the monuments they build to themselves for all to see. These monuments take on many forms (buildings, libraries, political victories, programs, etc). I noticed, just recently, this subject was a topic of conversation on some of the political talk shows and news discussions.

God's people look at legacy from a different perspective, as found in the light of Christ. The legacy of God's people is not one of personal power, gain, accomplishment or praise from the world. Those who truly believe in Christ never pursue a legacy for themselves,

Lynn Baumgart Hill
Cumorah



but rather leave an enduring witness of the Lord Jesus found in the response of their lives to the call of God for present and future generations. Such is the testimony of the prophets and the Saints who have gone before us. We should ask ourselves, What legacy, for the cause of the kingdom of God, are we cultivating today that will be left for others in future generations?" Is it a legacy that will give all praise and honor to the Lord and not point to ourselves? What will be said by those who have observed our life when they compare the things we have done to the things we have said and so aggressively declared to be true? Will they say we were those who "said what we believed and believed what we said?" Will they say we carried a true conviction that bore good fruit for the Lord in His vineyard? A modern song says it well: "May all who come behind us find us faithful."

Maybe it's simply because this is the dispensation in which I live, but there seems to me to be no other dispensation of time in greater need of the light of Christ among God's people than the one in which we now dwell. This is especially true among the scattered Saints and the covenant people of the Lord found in every nation. I believe we need to quickly understand this truth: it's the illumination of the light of Christ which lights the way for a transformation from someone who lives by the "logic of men" to someone who experiences the parting of the veil to "see the things of God." (Ether 1 RLDS) [Ether 1-4 LDS] Prophetically speaking, in relation to the current events around us, the light of Christ helps transform us from those who say, "We will believe it when we see it," to those who know, believe and expect the signs of the times, simply because God has spoken it. In so doing, we come to know, with real conviction, the truthfulness of His word as it's perfectly connected by the light of Christ to the things we see and experience every day. The Lord makes clear the counsel He has given describing both perspectives.

O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men!

When they are learned, they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves; Wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness, and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish.

(2 Nephi 6:58-60 RLDS)
[2 Nephi 9:28 LDS]

And unto you it shall be given to know the signs of the times, and the signs of the coming of the Son of man; and of as many as the Father shall bear record, to you shall be given power to seal them up unto eternal life. Amen.

(D&C 68:1h RLDS)
[D&C 68:11-12 LDS]

Behold, my brethren, he that prophesieth, let him prophesy to the understanding of men; for the Spirit speaketh the truth, and lieth not.

Wherefore, it speaketh of things as they really are, and of things as they really will be; wherefore, these things are manifested unto us plainly, for the salvation of our souls.

But behold, we are not witnesses alone in these things; for God also spake them unto prophets of old.

(Jacob 3:19-21 RLDS)
[Jacob 4:13 LDS]

I love the familiar words of the hymn, "As once he spoke in Zion so now he speaks again." The hastening time in which we now live, called the last days or the dispensation of the fullness of times, must be seen, understood and responded to in the light of Christ. It's the only light that brings clarity of thought, true identity and unified purpose for each of us and the church. The light of Christ, as a living revelation of God to His people, provides a spiritual difference which helps us become active participants in the "great and marvelous work," rather than participants in the gradual evolution of our beliefs into lesser things. This "great and marvelous work" is also described as the "great calling" mentioned in Alma 15:51 and can only be rightfully discerned in the light of Christ.

And thus we see the great call of the diligence of men to labor in the vineyards of the Lord; and thus we see the great reason of sorrow, and also of rejoicing; sorrow because of death and destruction among men, and joy because of the light of Christ unto life.

(Alma 15:51 RLDS) [Alma 28:14 LDS]

Behold, a great and marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men.

(D&C 4:1a RLDS) [D&C 4:1 LDS]

Forasmuch as this people draw near unto me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their hearts far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precepts of men, therefore I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people; yea, a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise and learned shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent shall be hid.

(Isaiah 29:26 IV) [Isaiah 29:13-14 KJV]

How beautiful and descriptive are the words of a song shared by Elead (a singing group at my home branch): “there is no shadow in His presence.” This is the light of Christ! There is no darkness anywhere! It’s the light of Christ that illuminates our lives for even greater service than we now experience.

But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;

(Hebrews 10:32 IV/KJV)

Behold they were in the midst of darkness; nevertheless, their souls were illuminated by the light of the everlasting word;

(Alma 3:12 RLDS) [Alma 5:7 LDS]

The prophetic events of today may cause some to be discouraged and ask, “Is our hope lost? Will the outcasts of Israel ever be gathered from our scattered condition?” As we ponder on such spiritual needs, we should seriously remember and consider how the Lord spoke to this latter day condition in the familiar “dry bones” prophecy found in Ezekiel 37 and also in supporting verses from Isaiah 11.

Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts.

And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest.

Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.



The Sacred Grove

Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live;

(Ezekiel 37:11, 3-5 IV/KJV)

And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

(Isaiah 11:12 IV/KJV)

(2 Nephi 9:127 RLDS)[2 Nephi 21:12 LDS]

It’s interesting to note that Isaiah 11 was quoted by Moroni to Joseph Smith on September 21, 1823. Moroni said it was soon to be fulfilled. We now live in that time! When the light of Christ rests upon us, we easily see the latter day work of the Father has commenced as spoken by the words of Jesus Christ in the Americas.

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

And then shall the power of heaven come down among them; and I also will be in the midst, and then shall the work of the Father commence, at that day even when this gospel shall be preached among the remnant of this people.

Verily, I say unto you, At that day shall the work of the Father commence among all the dispersed of my people; yea, even the tribes which have been lost, which the Father hath led away out of Jerusalem.

Yea, the work shall commence among all the dispersed of my people, with the Father, to prepare the way whereby they may come unto me, that they may call on the Father in my name; Yea, and then shall the work commence,

with the Father, among all nations, in preparing the way whereby his people may be gathered home to the land of their inheritance.

(3 Nephi 10:1-7 RLDS)

[3 Nephi 21:22-28 LDS]

In our travels among the people, we have often observed how the presence of the light of Christ has caused a prophetic stirring among the Saints. They are asking many questions and making many observations and comments about what they see and experience every day. There seems to be a spiritual awareness where, for the first time in our lifetime, certain prophetic events have taken on a real and observable sense of fulfillment. The light of Christ found in the Restoration scriptures and other forms of revelation from God, allows this discernment to be clear to those who truly sanctify themselves and diligently seek it. Sanctify means to set apart for a sacred purpose, to free ourselves from sin and to make ourselves holy before God.

Therefore, sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, and the days will come that you shall see him: for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will.

(D&C 85:18b RLDS) [D&C 88:68 LDS]

I often think of the hymns of the Restoration written from the hopes and dreams of the early Saints and sung with passion over many generations.

The tokens already appear...*Redeemer of Israel*
The veil o'er the earth is beginning to burst...
The Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning

We sing them today, but do we truly believe the words? What would happen right now if we diligently seek the light of Christ in our lives and have an experience like Paul, where his life was changed from "I was blind but now I see," or like Alma, where "I was in the dark abyss, but saved by the everlasting light of Christ," or like the Brother of Jared, where "the veil was parted, and he saw the finger of the Lord," or like Joseph Smith, where "I went into the woods to make an attempt and immediately there appeared a light." I can only imagine! Brothers and sisters, what are you willing to do?

Russ Peterson
*The Spirit of God Like a
Fire is Burning*

THE TOKENS ALREADY APPEAR

By Marlin Guin

For generations, the Saints have been singing *Redeemer of Israel* and testifying of our belief that “the tokens already appear.” These tokens are visual symbols or signs pointing to the fulfillment of God’s word. They are things we see and know to be true when connected to the scriptures and validated by the revelation of God. As we enthusiastically sing these words, we are proclaiming our testimony of tokens coming forth in our generation. If we believe what we sing, we should be able to find many examples of tokens shared through latter day witnesses called by God for this purpose. The scriptures tell us tokens will come—“and in the mouth of two or three witnesses, shall every word be established.” (D&C 6:13b RLDS) [D&C 6:28 LDS]

Recently, this scripture came to mind while I was watching *Fox and Friends News* on June 28, 2013. Their special guest was Dr. Mary Neal, who is a medical doctor and author of the book entitled *To Heaven and Back*. She shared her testimony about drowning in a kayaking accident and seeing her spirit leave her body after death. As a medical doctor, death is a process she understands and clearly recognized in her experience. She also described being in the presence of angels and being sent back to earth for three reasons.

- 1) To prepare for the impending death of her son
- 2) To protect the health of her husband
- 3) To share these experiences with everyone who will listen

What a marvelous token of God’s love, mercy and power! In D&C 34, the Lord says:

And it shall come to pass, that there shall be a great work in the land, even among the Gentiles, for their folly and their abominations shall be made manifest, in the eyes of all people; for I am God, and mine arm is not shortened, and I will show miracles, signs and wonders, unto all those who believe on my name. And whoso shall ask it in my name, in faith, they shall cast out devils; they shall heal the sick; they shall cause the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk;

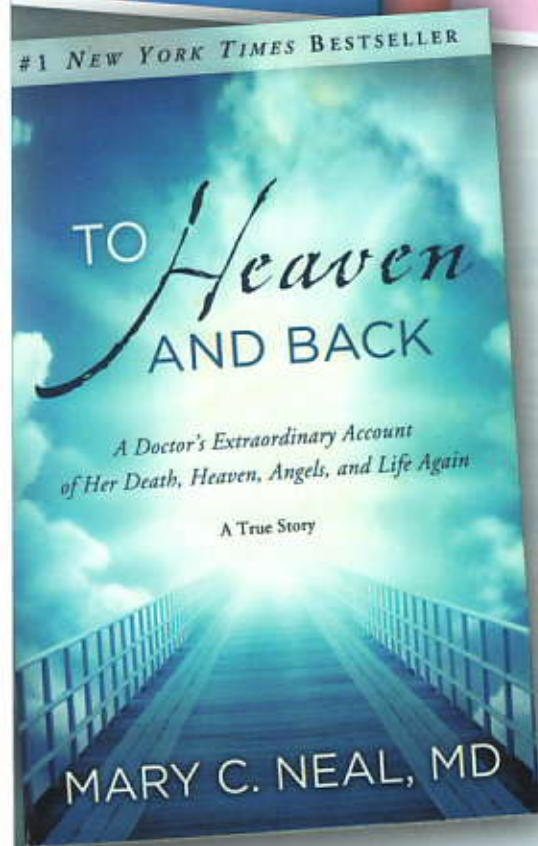
and the time speedily cometh that great things are to be shown forth unto the children of men;

(D&C 34:3a-d RLDS) [D&C 35:7-10 LDS]

There are those who probably automatically view this token experience with unbelief. Perhaps they are coming to quick conclusions without prayerful consideration and thought. What captured my attention is how this testimony passes one of the most critical tests of prophetic truth: That is, *all* of the reasons she was sent back to accomplish *have come to pass*. The book summarizes her convictions as follows:

To Heaven and Back is a book I wrote about my spiritual journey and the near-death experience I had in 1999 while kayaking in the Los Rios region of southern Chile. I wrote it because, more than anything, I want people to know that God’s unconditional love for each of us is intense, complete, and is reflected in all of Heaven. Before we return to Heaven, our real home, we have an incredible opportunity on Earth to face challenges that will help us learn, grow and to become more Christ-like in the fruits of our spirit. Our time is so short that we need to be about God’s business every day.

Another reason Dr. Neal’s interview caught my interest was because of its correlation to a familiar Book of Mormon account concerning a similar near-death experience of King Lamoni’s father. The parallels are interesting and noteworthy.



And that he breaketh the bands of death, that the grave shall have no victory, and that the sting of death should be swallowed up in the hopes of glory: and Aaron did expound all these things unto the king. And it came to pass that after Aaron had expounded these things unto him, the king said, What shall I do, that I may have this eternal life of which thou hast spoken? Yea, what shall I do that I may be born of God, having this wicked spirit rooted out of my breast, and receive his Spirit, that I may be filled with joy, that I may not be cast off at the last day? Behold, said he, I will give up all that I possess; yea, I will forsake my kingdom, that I may receive this great joy. But Aaron said unto him, If thou desirest this thing, if thou wilt bow down before God, yea, if thou wilt repent of all thy sins, and will bow down before God, and call on his name in faith, believing that ye shall receive, then shalt thou receive the hope which thou desirest. And it came to pass that when Aaron had said these words, the king did bow down before the Lord, upon his knees; yea, even he did prostrate himself upon the earth, and cried mightily, saying, O God, Aaron hath told me that there is a God; And if there is a God, and if thou art God, wilt thou make thyself known unto me, and I will give away all my sins to know thee, and that I may be raised from the dead, and be saved at the last day. And now when the king had said these words, he was struck as if he were dead. Therefore he put forth his hand and raised the king from the earth, and said unto him, Stand: and he stood upon his feet, receiving his strength. And the king stood forth and began to minister unto them. And he did minister unto them insomuch that his whole household were converted unto the Lord. And it came to pass that when the king saw that the people were pacified, he caused that Aaron and his brethren should stand forth in the midst of the multitude, and that they should preach the word unto them. And it came to pass that the king sent a proclamation throughout all the land, amongst all his people who were in all his land.

(Alma 13:47-54, 62, 63, 64, 67-68 RLDS)

[Alma 13:14-18, 22, 23, 26-27 LDS]

These scriptures tell us he “was struck as if he were dead.” I wonder if his spirit also left the body and stood in the presence of the Lord? Perhaps, like Dr. Neal, he also returned to this life, as Aaron put forth his hand and raised him from the earth. He also had reasons to return, described as standing up, receiving strength and ministering to the people. His experience also convicted him to send a proclamation throughout all the land for a testimony to all who would listen.

Today, Dr. Neal’s simple counsel is “for us to seek out God and know Him which allows our faith to become a total trust in Him.” In other words, we need to allow Jesus Christ to become the light of our lives. Like so many others, she has decisively answered the simple question: What am I willing to do?

Thus, we see how God sustains His children. Their testimonies are tokens for all generations. We recognize how these witnesses come from many walks of life and from many faiths. They come forth to bear a powerful witness of the love and mercy of God during a time when the world so desperately needs it. Yes, through their testimonies, and also the testimonies of the Saints, the tokens already appear! Praise be to God!

A BOOK REVIEW

By Sue Manning

TO HEAVEN AND BACK

By Mary C. Neal, MD

Years ago, I heard an old elder say he asked God what our purpose was on this earth. The answer he received was to help one another. I was sure that was not all of the answer. It just couldn't be that simple. But over the years, through study, I have found examples that our purpose on earth *is* to help each other. King Benjamin put it this way, "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 RLDS) [Mosiah 2:17 LDS]

Paul explains in the 13th chapter of I Corinthians that we can do all manner of outwardly signs, but if we do that without charity, then we are doing these things in vain. Moroni agrees with Paul and defines charity as the pure love of Christ. (Moroni 7:51-52 RLDS) [Moroni 7:46 LDS]

I have read several books and articles on life after death experiences and recently picked up the book, *To Heaven and Back*, by Mary C. Neal, MD. Mary has a fatal kayaking accident, and her spirit is escorted to a place where she finds out that it is not her time to return home. What piqued my interest was a series of discussions she had with an angel while she was recuperating in the hospital. That was the high point in the book for me and reminded me, again, that we are here to help one another.

In January 1999, Mary went on a kayaking trip to Chile. On the last day of her trip, she dropped down a waterfall and was pinned in her kayak under the rushing flow of water. The large volume of water was so strong, she couldn't move and drowned. While her friends were working feverishly to free her from the kayak, Mary's spirit left her body, and she had an amazing experience, but soon learned it was not her time to go home. She was not finished with her work. While recuperating in the hospital, an angel

visited several times. She felt like their conversations lasted for hours. One lesson learned during one of those conversations concerns the people around us. This lesson hit home with me. In her book, she says,

Sometimes uncomfortable situations or irritating people are placed in our lives to lead us in a direction more in line with God's will. One example I like to use is that of a beggar who may sit outside of a wealthy businessman's office in an attempt to help that person develop more tolerance and compassion for others.

I am able to see examples of this in my own life as well. Before my accident, the behavior of some of my colleagues deeply aggravated and irritated me. Afterward, while I still didn't like the behavior, I realized that I do not know their purpose on earth, nor why they are in my life. As difficult as it sometimes is to accept, I do know that God loves each of them every bit as much as He loves me. Rather than being irritated by the behavior, I now take joy in the knowledge that their behavior is teaching me patience and I give thanks for this. (p.101)

She learned that we are here to help one another. Sometimes we are the helper, and other times we are the "help-ee." Charity would certainly include helping each other, but with a loving and thankful attitude. I appreciate her efforts in writing this book. It was another testimony to me as to what our purpose is on this earth. More information can be found on her website at: <http://drmaryneal.com/> *To Heaven and Back* is available at The Book of Mormon Foundation.

FROM THE DUST

The Book of Mormon Foundation (BMF) is pleased to announce a cooperative project with Quetzal Archaeology Center for Mesoamerican Research. The decision has been a blessing for both organizations. Together, we extend an invitation to “come and see the works of God.” (Psalms 66:5 IV/KJV) We are excited to have completed the displays of Bob Farley’s well-known Book of Mormon paintings, along with Shirley Heater and Ray Treat’s collection of archaeological artifacts from Book of Mormon lands. Shirley and Ray have acquired them over many years of archaeological research and work in the field. These artifacts are now available for public viewing at the BMF building, and we hope everyone uses the opportunity to come for a visit.

Shirley recently gave an informal presentation of the paintings and artifacts to the 2013 BMF interns. She shared the importance of the Liahona as one of the great miracles in the Book of Mormon and gave some intimate testimony on how Bob Farley came to paint its physical appearance. One specific detail shared about the painting was why the background behind the spindles on the Liahona was blue/green in color.

She presented personal thoughts on how archeology does not “prove” the Book of Mormon, but instead provides some of the external evidence of its truth. Archaeology only fills in some of the details, with the Book of Mormon being the standard for discovery and

research. This helps us remember our personal testimony of its divinity only comes by revelation and the witness of the Holy Spirit. If, by faith, we receive and believe the Book of Mormon, then shall the greater things come forth among the people. This is the promise of God!

And when they shall have received this, which is expedient that they should have first, to try their faith, and if it shall so be that they shall believe these things, then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them.

(3 Nephi 12:3 RLDS) [3 Nephi 26:9 LDS]

Shirley emphasized that the message of the Book of Mormon is the most important consideration—that message being its witness of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, our Savior!

Both display cases contain artifacts relating to unique subjects. One case presents artifacts from the Olmec (Jaredite) and Maya (Nephite/Lamanite) geography and culture. The other case contains items surrounding the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. Also included are pictures of the original and printer Book of Mormon manuscripts.

Shirley’s presentation was an outstanding overview of the Book of Mormon and how the artifacts provide archaeological support for the Book of Mormon timeline, events and cultures. We feel this is important to the Saints, especially to our new generations, and we hope to make this presentation available at BMF in the future. Stay tuned for further information on the presentation, paintings and displays. Don’t wait! Come by to see us soon!



Tripod vessel with scroll-wing motifs, Teotihuacan-style, exact provenance unknown.

Two-hole clay candaleros (“candlesticks”) found predominately at Teotihuacan may have been used for burning incense or wax.





Mezcala-style greenstone figure, Middle and Preclassic time periods, from present-day state of Guerrero in southwestern Mexico.



Prismatic blade struck from obsidian core. Obsidian blades are sharper than steel but more brittle. Hand knapped arrowhead in center. Obsidian sources (volcanic glass) can be determined by analyzing trace elements.

Olmec-period tecomate, a neckless bowl with thick walls shaped by hand, c. 1000 BC.



Discovering God's Will in My Life

by J. Robert Farley

I've had a great interest in art as long as I can remember. I also received a strong spiritual heritage in the church from my family. I decided to become a commercial artist when I was in high school. As I look back, I realize I didn't ask God about this decision. After graduating from high school in 1948, I enrolled in the Kansas City Art Institute. In 1951, I married Lawana Barger and was drafted into the Marine Corps.

When I got out of the service, I spent a year at Graceland and then moved to Los Angeles to attend Art Center School, where I majored in industrial design. After graduating in 1958, we returned to Independence because of our strong desire to live in the Center Place.

My Aunt Bessie, who had run an art studio in California and now lived in Independence, often encouraged me to develop my oil painting skills. I wanted to do this and tried a couple of paintings on my own, but since I had not learned how to use oils, I wasn't satisfied with the quality of my work and realized I needed training in order to master it.

I was so busy with my commercial art work I didn't have time to take classes, but the desire to develop this skill was there. From time to time, I was prompted by the Spirit to develop this skill, but each time I would say to myself, "I'll do it later when I have the time."

The promptings from the Spirit to do this became stronger and more frequent. I had seen a portrait painting class advertised, and the method of technique interested me. Even though I felt I still didn't have the time to take the class, I talked to the instructor, and he told me what was required for the class. So I put it off once again.

Still the Spirit kept prompting me. One day after being prompted in this way, I told the Lord I didn't have the time but if I had the time I'd surely take the class. I thought that would put an end to it. A week or two later my work load dropped off unexpectedly, allowing me the necessary time. So what else could I do but enroll? It was just what I had been looking for, and I was able to progress very rapidly. I thought perhaps the reason the Lord had been prompting me to do this was to move me out of the commercial art field, which I love but which is very demanding, and move me into a new area of art which would provide me a living and also enable me to give ministry to others. I remember a comment made by Arthur Oakman in the endowment lectures:

Most young people survey all the gifts and talents God has given them and say to themselves,

"How can I develop these talents so they will benefit me the most, or make me the most money?"

He went on to comment that we should ask God how he wants us to develop the talents he has given us for the purpose of building the kingdom. Our talents are not ours; they are gifts from God. If we utilize them for the kingdom he will provide for us as he has promised. I wish I had known and understood this principle when I was first working out my career plans.

The Overview

After the first ten weeks of classes, which I spent learning to draw and render the head in graphite, I was ready to start oil painting. It was at this point that Ray Treat approached me to illustrate and lay out an overview of the Book of Mormon. As we talked about what he wanted to accomplish with this booklet, I thought how great it would be to illustrate this in full color and include portraits of some Book of Mormon prophets. It was agreed, and so I did a color layout of the booklet for fund-raising purposes. The *Overview of the Book of Mormon* was to be ready for the World Conference of 1980, which meant I only had about two months to have everything camera-ready for the printer.

I told my instructor about this project and asked if he would critique my work. He told me to work on the paintings in class instead of doing a portrait, which was the customary thing to do. Because the class met only one day a week for three hours, most of the work was done at home in my studio. Since these were my first oil paintings, many of the things I was painting I had never done before. Often I would get promptings from the Spirit to use a brighter color or to use a certain method to get an effect I needed.

One of the paintings I did for the *Overview* was of Mormon sitting in the opening of his library in the hill Cumorah. In this painting he is reviewing for the last time his record abridged upon the metal plates just before he entrusted these records to his son, Moroni, to tell of the final destruction of the Nephite nation.

The picture on the cover of the *Overview* shows Moroni saying farewell to Cumorah where all the records were hidden and where his people were destroyed. He had the abridgement with him and probably took it to the hill in New York where it was found by Joseph Smith. The hill in this painting was taken from a slide of the actual hill in Mexico of which Verneil Simmons speaks of in her testimony. (*Recent Book of Mormon Developments*, vol. 1, 1984:107-108).

In the picture of the sacred library I was prompted to have a light, as if from another room, shine on Moroni as he engraved on the plates. This light source could have been one of the 16 stones the Jaredites used to light their ships. Without this kind of help I would not have been able to complete all these paintings in the time available.

I began to realize after this project that the Lord had a greater purpose in wanting me to develop this talent than I had first imagined. Although I have done several portrait commissions, I have had the strong feeling I should reserve this talent mostly for projects he wants me to do. As Brother Oakman said, I believe the Lord is teaching me to make more use of this gift for kingdom purposes.

The Prophets

After the completion of the *Overview* paintings, Zarahemla Research Foundation commissioned me to do a series of paintings of the prophets of the Book of Mormon. I was to depict each prophet in a setting of what I considered to be one of his most significant contributions.

In the first painting I depicted Jacob preaching in the temple in the New World. He was a preacher of righteousness and longed to share with the Nephite people the lofty insights he had received through the Spirit. However, more often his lot was to chastise them for their sinfulness which caused him great sorrow. (Jacob 2:2-11 RLDS) [Jacob 2:2-10 LDS] He was a man of great spiritual power and could command the trees and waves of the seas, and they would obey him.

Lehi

The second painting was of Lehi. In thinking of the composition for this painting, I felt I should include Sariah, because she was a great source of strength and support to Lehi as well as to the other members of her family. In order to get to know Lehi well enough to depict his contribution, I decided to go through the Book of Mormon and transfer into a notebook all his words and anything else written about him. This gave me an understanding of him I had never had before. He was truly a great prophet. He had an experience much like Moses' burning bush experience and was shown all things. I came to the conclusion; this was how he was able to take his family into uncharted wilderness and later across an unknown sea. He had seen his posterity grow into a great nation in vision, and he knew that whatever the Lord asked him to do he would provide a way for it to be accomplished.

I decided to depict Lehi as one with sufficient vision and faith to lead a remnant of the house of Israel to the land of promise. I reasoned that even though he had a great deal of experience in traveling through the desert; it was a new experience for him to travel through an uncharted wilderness with its many dangers. After the plates of brass had been secured and Ishmael's family had joined them, Lehi must have petitioned the Lord to show him the way he should go. At this point the Lord provided him with the compass (Liahona) to guide him. I wanted to show the wonderment on his face as he realized the Lord had provided him this means to accomplish his mission. I composed the painting to show Lehi outside his tent door holding the Liahona and Sariah rushing



to see what had caused her husband such great excitement. I wanted to depict these two figures as accurately as possible, so I dressed models and posed them so I would have accurate references for both the figures and the costumes.

The Liahona

At this point I had not given much consideration to the design of the Liahona. It was described as a round ball in the Book of Mormon, so I used a styrofoam ball of the size I judged it to be and decided to worry about the details later. I painted the two figures and then came the realization that I couldn't paint the Liahona. There was just not enough detail in the Book of Mormon to know exactly what the Liahona looked like. So I prayed and pondered about this for nearly a year.

During this time I came to many conclusions about the Liahona. It had to be usable to Lehi while he traveled, probably on camel, for many days and nights. The Book of Mormon implied a hole in the top of it so the hands inside the ball could be seen. I reasoned that many of the sacred symbols used by the Nephites came from sacred objects such as the Liahona, so I wanted to use some of these symbols as part of the design. However, even with these considerations I still did not have sufficient detail to paint the Liahona. So the painting sat unfinished. Then one day Ray Treat called

and asked if I could have this painting finished for the dedication of the Foundation office which would be in four or five weeks. I agreed, although I still didn't have sufficient inspiration to formulate any reasonable idea of what the Liahona looked like. However, it soon came to the point where I had to design something in order to finish the painting on time.

About eleven o'clock one night, after everything had quieted down, I took my tracing pad and started my design process. Normally with a design problem such as this, I make a rough design on tracing paper and perhaps come up with one or possibly two elements which are usable. Then I'll take the first sketch, place it under another piece of tracing paper, retrace the one or two elements which I like and proceed with the designing. Usually, after fifteen or twenty tracings, I'll end up with something satisfactory.

This night, however, as I started to design, thoughts and ideas seemed to flow through my mind, and within an hour I had the design of the Liahona completed, and I was still on my first tracing!

I was given many insights such as the dial face being of cut stone, blue-green in color, marbled with a lighter shade of that color. A line was cut into the dial face from the center out to each section. This groove was filled with a white substance. Inside the ball, on the hands, which were quite ornate, appeared writing which changed from time to time (1 Nephi 5:34-35 RLDS) [1 Nephi 16:28-29 LDS]

The ball itself was made of fine brass workmanship and was divided into 14 sections, much like an orange is sectioned. The sacred stepped fret design of the ancient Maya, which is symbolic of Christ, was around the opening on the top of the Liahona.

Around the outside of the ball, just below the center, was a series of circular panels that contained writings. (1 Nephi 5:31-32 RLDS) [1 Nephi 16:25-26 LDS] I chose not to show any writing on the outside of the ball even though messages appeared here also. Just above this was a series of openings which formed a design around the ball. These openings permitted light to enter so that the dial face could be clearly seen through the opening on the top.

At last I was ready to paint the Liahona. I was given great freedom as I painted, allowing me to depict the reflections in the brass and the coloring without the usual reference from which to work.

After sharing this testimony at the dedication of the office I found out from a church member who had worked in a sapphire mine in Montana that sapphire is the most perfect bearing surface known to man and was used as a bearing surface for bomb sight needles during World War II. For this reason I believe the two Liahona needles rotated on sapphire bearings, and that is why I was impressed to make the color of the dial face bluegreen, which is a common sapphire color.

I believe the Lord has brought me to this point in my life. If I had asked for his direction when I was first making my career plans I believe I would have reached this point sooner. However, the skills and abilities learned in other areas of art can also be dedicated to his use.

I feel the Lord has extended my life that I might have a part in his work of establishing Zion. I must keep my priorities where they should be. My desire is that I can spend full time painting so the stories of the Book of Mormon might come alive visually. I'm sure that in God's timing this desire will be granted.

