

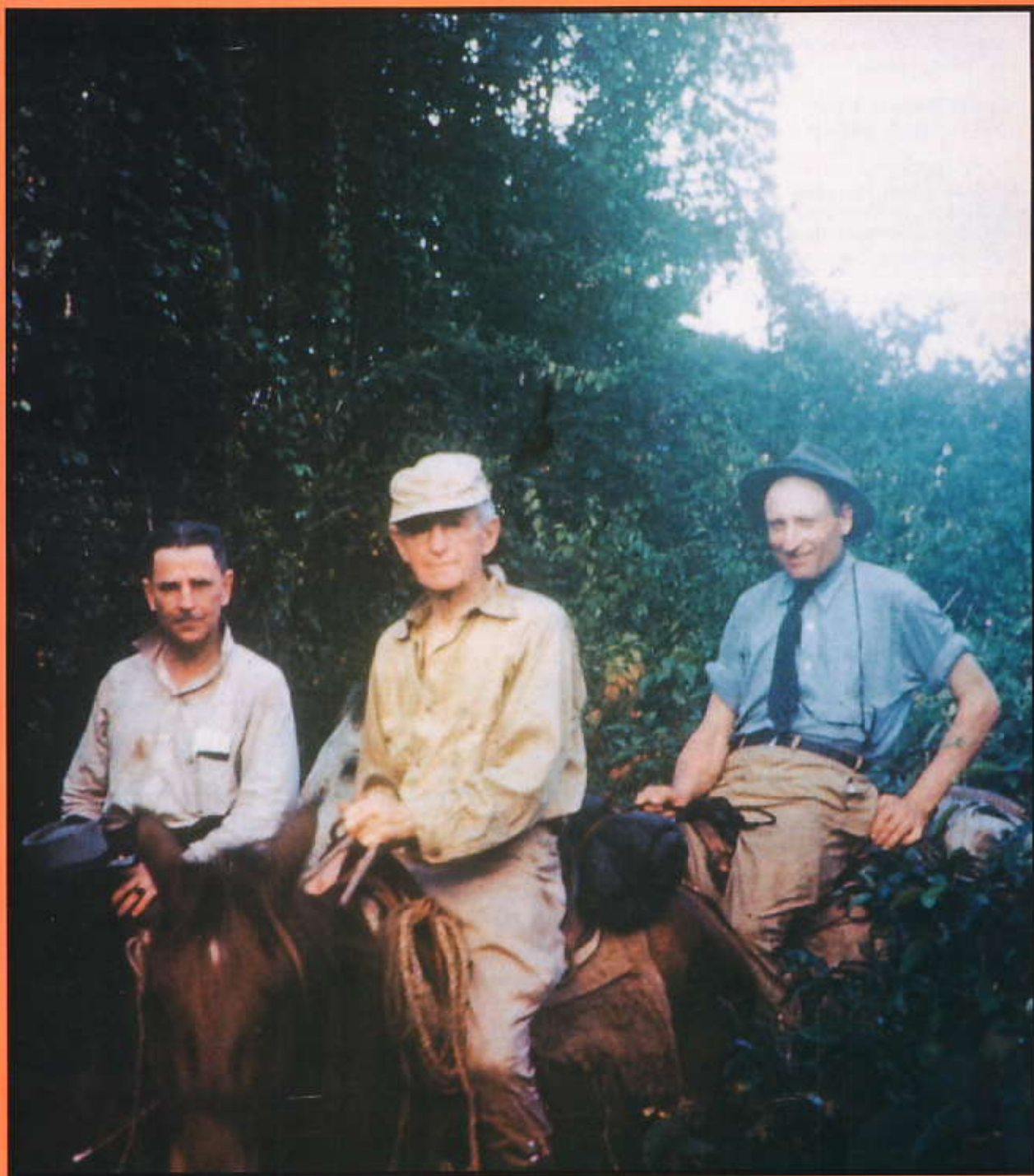


The Witness

FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH ON ANCIENT AMERICA

SPRING 1994

NUMBER 84



FRAA Roots

The Witness

SPRING 1994

NUMBER 84

Editor
Sherric Kline Smith

Copy Editor
Patricia Elliott Heady

Editorial Committee
Michael Gatrost
Venna Stevens Johnson
Lyle Smith

Junior Witness Editor
Venna Stevens Johnson

Officers
Michael Gatrost, President
Roy E. Weldon, 1st Vice President
Dale Godfrey, 2nd Vice President
Carol Sue Martin, Treasurer

The Witness is published quarterly by the Foundation for Research on Ancient America, 210 W. White Oak, Independence, Missouri, 64050. 816-461-FRAA (3722) FAX 816-461-5850.

The Foundation for Research on Ancient America is a nonprofit corporation comprised of individuals who desire to advance knowledge about The Book of Mormon and its witness of Jesus Christ. Through research, publications, seminars, and related projects, members of FRAA seek to assist in bringing forth the light contained in the ancient scriptures of The Book of Mormon. A contribution to the Foundation for Research on Ancient America results in membership and is tax-deductible.

Articles and the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent the view of the Editorial Committee. Unsigned articles are attributable to the editor.

© 1994 by the Foundation for Research on Ancient America.

Cover . . .

The roots of FRAA go back to the 1940s. Apostle Charles Hield (left) and Roy Weldon (right) both were officers in the Society for Archaeological Research. Later Weldon became one of the first committee members of FRAA in the 1950s. Hield also later became an officer of FRAA. In 1986 both donated their collections of books, manuscripts, and slides dealing with research in Mesoamerica to FRAA. C. Ed Miller (middle) accompanied Hield and Weldon on this trip to the ruins in Mexico, pictured here at Palenque. Read about the history of FRAA beginning on page 9.

Photo from the FRAA Hield Collection.

Enhance your Scripture study!

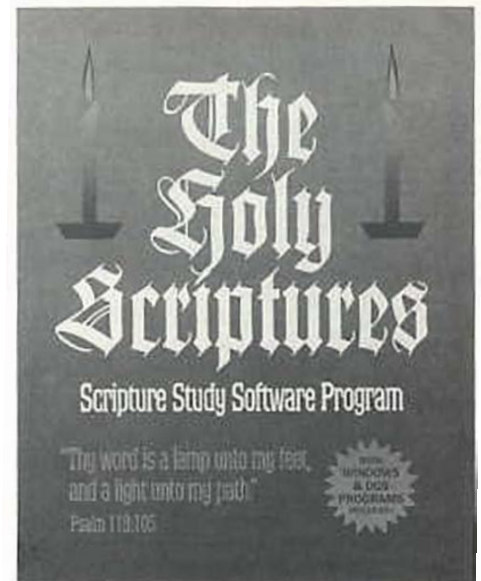
The Holy Scriptures software program
contains: **Inspired Version
1908 Book of Mormon
Doctrine and Covenants**

**Only
\$150**
plus 15%
shipping and handling

Features:

- Study and compare several translations or texts at the same time.
- Enter personalized footnotes for each user. Chain-link notes for subject study.
- Copy text or footnotes to word processor, file or printer.
- Create and save topical indexes. Find the original meanings with the Greek and Hebrew transliteration and definitions option (\$30.).
- Other versions of the Bible available (optional cost).
- Mouse driven with pull down menus.

Produced by Christian Technologies, Inc. (CTI)



ORDER TODAY!

Call FRAA 816 461-FRAA (3722) or FAX 816 461-5850

Contents . . .

Foundation News	3
God Opened the Door <i>Phillip Tandy</i>	5
Charity: The Pure Love of Christ <i>Vim Horn</i>	6
Advancing the Knowledge of The Book of Mormon: The History of FRAA <i>Sherrie Kline Smith</i>	9
The Christ of God <i>Testimony of Eric Odida</i> <i>prepared by Viola Presler</i>	15

Foundation News

Over the last seven years I have rejoiced in being able to serve the Lord in setting up and establishing the information center/library, a place where anyone could seek information regarding The Book of Mormon. And, in the last five years, the opportunity to touch thousands of lives with not only encouragement but knowledge endowed with the Spirit of the Lord, through the editorship of *The Witness*, has been a real blessing in my life. Therefore, I leave FRAA with a great deal of sadness but look with joy to the future. My commitment to Book of Mormon research and study remains strong, and I look forward to sharing with you the new and exciting discoveries coming forth about The Book of Mormon.

I wish to express my thanks to all who have worked with me in producing *The Witness*. Venna Johnson's perceptive understanding, skillful proofreading, and constant words of encouragement deserve a heartfelt thank you. In the last two years, the readability of the magazine improved greatly with the excellent editorial help of Patricia Heady. Bob Farley is to be thanked for professionally designing the layout, and Lynda Friend's skill at desktop publishing, and her willingness to revise and revise until we got it right has been most appreciated. Pat Beebe's help with the computerization and maintenance of the mailing list and dealing with the post office has been invaluable!

Most all, thanks to all who have contributed and written articles and testimonies which have provided the essence of the magazine. And for my husband, Lyle, whose loving support and constant words of encouragement helped me see the broader perspective, I am eternally grateful.

Several years ago I penned the following prayer. I would like to leave you with that prayer, changing "me" to "us."

*God grant us the integrity of Job,
the faith of Abraham,
the intelligence of Nephi,
the humility of King Benjamin,
the wisdom of Mosiah,
the perfect understanding of Moroni,
the courage and boldness of Paul,
the commitment of Peter,
and the meekness of Jesus Christ.
In Jesus' name, Amen.*



Calendar

April 24, 1994

Book of Mormon Day -- Miami, Oklahoma

June 13-August 5, 1994

Summer Book of Mormon Internship Program



Tim Raffey

This is the "significant Book of Mormon discovery recently excavated from the Temple of the Feathered Serpent (Quetzalcoatl)" mentioned by Tandy on page 5. Found during the 1988-89 excavation, this wooden scepter carved as a feathered serpent (58 cm long and 2.5 to 6.5 cm wide) dates between 50 B.C. and A.D. 140. Archaeologists speculate it may have belonged to an important religious leader. It reminds one of the brazen serpent put on a pole by Moses (1 Nephi 5:134; 2 Nephi 11:38-39; Alma 16:191-197; 17:78-81; Helaman 3:47-48; Exodus 4:2-4, 17; and John 3:13-16). See the article "Teotihuacan: A City of Our God?" in *The Witness*, Fall 1992, pp. 10-14, and see also the footnote on page 9 of this issue.

The carved wooden scepter above was found by archaeologists in a tunnel dug previously by looters under the Temple of the Feathered Serpent at the site of Teotihuacan just north of Mexico City. The preliminary report of the work done during this season appears in the journal *Ancient Mesoamerica* 2 (1911), 77-92.



Don Beebe

God Opened the Door

A Testimony from the 1993 FRAA Tour

Phillip Tandy

About the first of November, my wife and I learned it had been made possible for us to go on the FRAA tour to Mexico. Not only was this to be a celebration of our 25th wedding anniversary but also an opportunity to practice our Spanish. I had taught high school Spanish but had never been so far south in Mexico, nor seen the ruins. The trip promised to be even more special for my wife, Cheri. She had a minor in Spanish but never had much opportunity to practice and develop confidence using the language. Thinking about all the sights and sounds there would be, knowing I would get to practice my Spanish, and maybe see our good friends the Guillermo Castillo family in Mexico City, heightened my anticipation.

With the crush of church, school, family and seasonal activities, the departure date approached and we weren't ready. Lingering sinus infections caused us to wonder whether we were wise in going. So we both requested administration. In the power of the Holy Spirit, we marveled at the

"I would like to testify that The Book of Mormon is true. I knew in my heart before I went on the FRAA 1993 tour that the ruins I would see would add to and strengthen my testimony. It is hard to put into words how the majesty and glory of God shouted from the ruins. I know these people knew God and Jesus Christ. They were able to create intricate designs and decorations on everything they built. They were not simple peasants but learned people. We need to share with others that The Book of Mormon is true and that it is another witness and testimony of Jesus Christ." (Tim Raffety)

words which were spoken: that God would give us sufficient health and strength for the trip; that we would enjoy the experience; that we would be given a strengthened testimony of the truthfulness of The Book of Mormon; and that there would be opportunity to share.

All these came true. It wasn't until almost the end of the trip, though, that the opportunity to share happened. Our bus driver invited a friend of his, Carlos, to accompany us and guide us out of the city the day we went to the massive Teotihuacan ruins. When we arrived, the hardier souls climbed the pyramids of the Sun and Moon. Lyle Smith, Don Beebe, and Tim Raffety photographed a significant Book of Mormon discovery recently excavated from the Temple of Quetzalcoatl and came back to the bus quite excited.

On the freeway headed back to Mexico City, I was sitting in a front seat chatting with Carlos. He asked me why the group had come to Mexico. I told him that the members of the group shared a belief that Jesus Christ had visited the early inhabitants of this land after his death and resurrection. And that the witness of this in The Book of Mormon was definitive proof of his divinity.

Just then, traffic on the freeway snarled to a stop. Obviously trouble lay ahead, but we could not see the cause for the traffic jam. We supposed it was a wreck. As we slowly inched forward, Carlos continued asking questions. He was quite knowledgeable about pre-Columbian civilizations as he was a director of a tour agency. He had also studied Christianity but had never been able to correlate the two.

While traffic alternately stopped




Cheri and Phil arrive in Mexico City and wait for the group to clear customs in the new addition of the Mexico City airport.

and crept forward, I shared with him, grateful for the extra time. Carlos's intelligent questions, though, soon went beyond my limited archaeological knowledge, and I prevailed upon Lyle, our tour leader, to take my place. Lyle's command of Spanish was every bit up to the challenge, and he continued sharing with Carlos for an hour or so.

About that time, we finally passed the accident scene. A dump truck full of gravel and a pickup had collided. Both were turned on their sides, and twenty or thirty people with shovels and wheelbarrows were trying to help clean up the mess on the freeway. But not a sign of injury! A trip to Mexico City from the ruins that ordinarily took 1/2 hour had extended to almost 2 because of the accident. The consensus of our group on the bus was that the Lord had arranged the timing of the accident to give us time to witness.

The words spoken under the influence of the Spirit in our administration came to pass. God opened a door, brought a willing heart, and then provided the opportunity and time to witness to one of his special people.

 *The Mixtec excelled in decorating their buildings with geometric mosaic stone work shown here at Mitla.*



Charity: The Pure Love of Christ

Vim Horn

A number of years ago my work brought me into the home of an older Baptist minister. As I waited with him for his wife and daughter to join us, we struck up a conversation centering around the gospel of Christ. I don't recall how the conversation proceeded to allow me to read from my three-in-one Scriptures the last part of the seventh chapter of Moroni, but it did.

As I read the words of Mormon, I noticed a look of interest and puzzlement come over his face. After I finished reading, he said to me that what had been read was very true and insightful, but he didn't recall where it was in the Bible. I explained to him that what I had read was in The Book of Mormon. I sensed a change in our conversation then, and as his daughter and wife entered the room, he quickly excused himself.

My experience taught me that The Book of Mormon contains many insights into the gospel of Christ and that its words have the power to affect those who hear them. One of these precious insights has to do with part of what I was discussing with that Baptist minister, the concept of charity. The Book of Mormon reinforces the importance and centrality of charity as found in 1 Corinthians 13 and other New Testament scriptures, but it also brings the unique and precious perspective that the essence of charity is the pure love of Christ.

The concept of charity reflects the essence of Christ and his gospel. This means that charity is

such a fundamental aspect of Christ's gospel that without it, the gospel would be meaningless.

Let's explore its essentiality and discuss why it is crucial to us as followers of Christ. In fact, it is so critical that if we are not found with it at the end, all else will not matter. We will be nothing.

And if a man be meek and lowly in heart, and confesses by the power of the Holy Ghost, that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have charity; for if he have not charity, he is nothing.

—Moroni 7:50

It is so critical that if we desire to serve God, to participate in his work, we must have charity.

And faith, hope, charity, and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualifies him for the work.

—D&C 4:1e

It is so critical that if we desire to be part of the kingdom of God, we need to have charity.

Wherefore, there must be faith; and if there must be faith, there must also be hope; and if there must be hope, there must also be charity; and except ye have charity, ye can in no wise be saved in the kingdom of God.

—Moroni 10:15

Even though two of the above scriptures reveal an interrelation-

ship between faith, hope, and charity, this article will focus on the importance of charity. This is not to minimize the importance of the interrelationship, but rather reflects the significance and fundamental nature of charity itself.

As indicated earlier, The Book of Mormon defines charity as "the pure love of Christ," which love is perfect and everlasting. It is not an ordinary love. It transcends the kind of love with which we are most familiar.

Our language has only one word to express the different forms of love.* Greek, however, has three words: (1) *eros*, relating to the physical and sensual aspect of love, the root of our word "erotic"; (2) *philas*, which focuses on brotherly or social relations, the root of our word "philanthropic"; and (3) *agape*, denoting a spiritual connotation.

Eros and *philas* signifies the kind of love generally sought after or expressed, while *agape* love best denotes the kind of love embodied in the word charity. John writes that God *is* love and that love is of God (1 John 4:7-8, 16). If Christ and God are one in essence—and they are—then we can assume that Christ is love or that love is the essential ingredient of Christ's nature. This is important

**This limitation of the English language calls to mind Mormon's words in 3 Nephi 2:101 where he writes "nevertheless there are many things which, according to our language, we are not able to write."*

because it means that charity, or love, is not only something that Christ manifests but in a very basic sense is who Christ is.

Paul indicates that the love of Christ “passeth knowledge” (Ephesians 3:19). How, then, do we begin to understand this kind of love? How are we able to associate with it?

The primary means is through endowment. In this instance, endowment means the process of the Holy Ghost interacting in our lives to bring to us an understanding of things that are not understandable by the natural man. Paul describes this process as follows:

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. . . .

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

–1 Corinthians 2:9-10,12,13

As we accept Christ in faith, God, through the Holy Ghost, endows

us with a measure of perfect love, which love is the pure love of Christ.

And the first-fruits of repentance is baptism; and baptism cometh by faith, unto the fulfilling the commandments; and the fulfilling the commandments bringeth remission of sins; and the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart, cometh the visitation of the *Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer* (emphasis added).

–Moroni 8:29

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

–Romans 5:5

Being endowed with this love is so important that, as Mormon states, we are to “pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart” that we may be filled with it (Moroni 7:53).

A secondary way for understanding the pure love of Christ is to look at the attributes or characteristics of Christ as described in the Scriptures. For simplicity’s sake these characteristics are condensed into four basic attributes.

1. Charity is everlasting.

Since Christ is eternal, and a fundamental aspect of his nature is love, it follows that his love is eternal and something we can rely on with full confidence. It existed at the foundation of creation and will exist beyond it. This fundamental aspect of the nature of Christ, therefore, is an independent and everlasting element.

2. Charity is universal, not particular. The pure love of Christ extends itself indiscriminantly. The Lord is not a respecter of persons. He calls all people to come and follow him, regardless of race, creed, or sex.

This does not mean that the Lord does not choose certain individuals, or a people, to accomplish his purposes. It means that those chosen for a specific purpose and endowed with a greater measure of love and understanding receive it for the purpose of ministry, not personal gain. Endowed love claims no specialness, only power to fulfill responsibility.

Nor does the availability of Christ’s love mean that his promises are offered to everyone. They are only available to those who accept him as the risen Christ. What it does mean, however, is that he loves us regardless of who we are and/or whether we accept who he is.

3. Charity is unconditional and mature, not dependent on external relationships or situations. God’s love does not depend upon the actions of others. Christ demonstrated this characteristic with the adulterous woman (John 8); the woman at the well (John

4); in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10); his dealings with Peter (Matthew 17); and on the cross.

It is on the cross that Christ provides us with the ultimate demonstration of his love. He didn't love us because we loved him; he loved us because of who he is. We can rely on that with our lives. In fact, it is the only thing in this world that we can rely on to be eternal and unconditional. Christ, despite what we do, will always love us.

Again, this does not mean he doesn't require very specific things of us. Rather, he continually reaches out, beckoning us to come to him and partake of this love. He beckons us to be endowed with this love in such a way that our very nature becomes transformed, and we are filled with this love for him and one another. I know this to be true because I have experienced it in my life and in the lives of believers around me. We love him because he first loved us.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

—1 John 4:10-11

4. Charity is active. The pure love of Christ demands action. Christ demonstrated his love for us in tangible actions, the ultimate example being that he laid down his life for us. He says we should respond similarly.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

—John 15:13

This type of love compels us to act, not only in tangible ways, but, more importantly, in our attitudes towards people and situations.

To explain, the Lord has shown

that where our hearts are, generally our actions follow in sincerity. The characteristics of charity described in 1 Corinthians 13 and Moroni 7 represent not only actions but attitudes as well. Looking at such things as long-suffering, kindness, not being puffed up, and so on, we see attributes which challenge both our attitudes and actions.

Exercising charity, or unconditional love, brings an associated level of risk: the risk of having the love not returned and the risk of opening ourselves to being hurt. By its very nature, charity makes us vulnerable. But God shares this vulnerability with us. For example, he demonstrated his love for us by risking his son, and all creation groaned with pain as a result. What parent hasn't experienced the risk of unconditional love? Who hasn't experienced the risk we take with one another as a church family?

The joy that comes with exercising this type of love, however, far exceeds the risk of pain associated with it. We share the joy of eternal association with our Lord and each other.

And if it so be that you should labor all your days, in crying repentance unto this people, and bring save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!

And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy, if you should bring many souls unto me!

—D&C 16:3f, 4a

In summary, charity is one of the three principle graces: faith, hope, and charity, of which charity is chief. One commentator put it this

way.

Faith fixes on the divine revelation, and assents to that: hope fastens on future felicity, and waits for that. But love fastens on the divine perfections themselves. These will all shine forth in the most glorious splendors in another world, and there will love be made perfect; there we shall perfectly love God. And there we shall perfectly love one another. When faith and hope are at an end, true charity will burn for ever with the brightest flame. Where God is to be seen as he is, and face to face, there charity is in its greatest height — there, and there only, will it be perfected.

—Matthew Henry;
COMMENTARY On The Whole Bible; 1961:1820

As a principle, charity transcends the personal and puts our faith and hope in the context of the kingdom. It unifies the body of Christ because it is the essence of Christ, and it calls us to become selfless, to obtain unconditional love one towards another. Charity is the common denominator needed between Christians in order for us to become a people of one heart and one mind. When this happens, God will call us Zion.

Vim Horn holds the office of elder. He works as the associate director for the Institute for Human Development at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. He resides in Eastern Jackson County.





The Junior Witness

Spring 1994

Foundation for Research on Ancient America

Number 28

“Behold Your Little Ones”

(3 Nephi 8:24)

By J. Edward Slauter

Illustrated by Rick Farley

This is a might-have-been story based on 3 Nephi Chapter 8 during the time Jesus Christ visited his people in the New World. Jesus asked that the sick or afflicted in any manner be brought to him so that he could heal them. Then he blessed the little children and prayed to his Father for them.

Eager to find her friend, Hannah searched the streets of the city. *I must find Jacob*, thought Hannah as she looked everywhere. *Where could he be? If only Jacob could see Jesus Christ, I know Jesus could help him.*

“Jacob!” shouted Hannah as she spotted her friend leaning against the side of an old, abandoned well. “Jacob, there you are! Come with me.”

“Where are we going?” asked Jacob with a puzzled frown on his face. He steadied his legs with his crutches. “Hannah, why are you so excited?”

“I have found him!” Hannah joyfully replied as she jumped up and down. “Oh, Jacob, I have found him!”

“Who have you found?” questioned Jacob. “Who, Hannah? Who?”

“I have found Jesus, Jesus Christ!” Hannah explained as she tried to catch her breath. “Jesus is here in the city. He is at the temple with many of our people.”

“You mean the Jesus Christ whom the prophets wrote about in our Scriptures?” asked Jacob, as a smile began to cover his face. “The Jesus Christ who would come into the world to save us from our sins?”

“Yes, Jacob, he is here!” Hannah proclaimed. “I felt the nailprints in his feet. I touched his robe. Oh, Jacob, he even called me by name!”

“What did he say to you?” Jacob asked as excitement began to stir within his heart. “Hannah, what did Jesus say?”

“He took my hand and looked into my eyes,” Hannah spoke softly as she stood beside her friend. “Jesus told me that he died on the cross for me.”

“What else did he say, Hannah?” Jacob questioned. “Tell me everything.”

“Jesus asked me to go and tell others that he lives,” Hannah joyfully replied. “Oh, Jacob, Jesus lives and he wants you to come to him.”

“But, Hannah, I am crippled!” Jacob declared with sorrow in his voice. “I have never been able to walk like you and all the other

children.”

“Oh, Jacob, only moments ago Jesus asked us to bring our sick unto him,” Hannah explained. “Jesus said to us, ‘Have ye any that are lame, or blind, or halt, or maimed, or leprous, or that are withered, or that are deaf, or that are afflicted in any manner, bring them hither [to this place], and I will heal them, for I have compassion [sympathy] upon you’ (3 Nephi 8:7). Jesus wants to heal them! Jacob, I know that Jesus can heal you. If you can only look into his eyes and hear his voice. He is filled with compassion and love.”

In deep thought, Jacob slowly limped around the old well with his wooden crutches. All of his life he had dreamed of running through the city and hiking into the hills. *What if Hannah is dreaming about Jesus*, thought Jacob. *I don't want another disappointment.* He had given up his dream of walking like other children several years ago.

Quietly Jacob stopped and closed his eyes. Hannah's words of encouragement flashed through his mind—he could hear them again.

“Jacob, I have found Jesus the Christ. Jesus is here! He lives. He wants to heal you!”

“Hannah, take me to Jesus,” Jacob cried out. “Take me to Jesus.”

With Hannah's help, Jacob made his way to the temple plaza

LITTLE ONES WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

QGBLFGQHMQROBEJESUSNFHANNAHI GODB
 LDAFMOFQFIDGJQCHJOCFONNMECAMFBOQ
 FMENLCCCPGCHPCEDPKHDGFDKFD OOBEOE
 NBJTHANKSSDIICQNFKNDDICABDFDDAKP
 KBOMMFFMFACLOHGLKOPDKRICDIHGLBTJ
 JMODOJQECVLPBFMFOJFENEMCGBCIMJED
 SPIRITJLNIHJNLQFECIMEJLFEETLGGAL
 CDGIINEHOODCCODELQFNLIHOAQQEOHRO
 GAMPOJGPPIRFBLESSEDPJTOAOLANOKMSD
 DPPHENKNAI LPRINTSBGHEAVENSQGIDLF
 BDGHHQPKGAJKEHMMMBHMEQDBNQPMFAAJ
 ENJHOLNLJEMFAITHJQPRAISEIQKPEOJN
 AEBOMNEFJACOBWHITEKJHJIIOANHAOIQ
 GPAPPHKGECBCRIPPLEDIHBIDDGPPJREEP
 PAMEPQAMOIBC CRUTCHESCENNLOVENMJQN
 JANGELSGNJMEEKDDWALKEDMMNKOAKHPQ

JACOB JESUS SAVIOR HANNAH CRUTCHES SPIRIT FIRE
 HEAVENS CRIPPLED ROBE WHITE FAITH LOVE FEAR HOPE
 THANKS WALKED PRAISE BLESSED NAILPRINTS KNELT
 ANGELS FEET TEARS

Advancing the Knowledge of The Book of Mormon: The History of FRAA



Fred Weidie

Sherrie Kline Smith

Last summer, in response to a request, I prepared an outline of the history of FRAA. At the time I was also impressed that sometime in the future it would be appropriate to publish in *The Witness*.

The recent appearance of an article in the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* seemed to indicate that now is the time. In the article, "The Radical Reformation of the Reorganization of the Restoration: Recent Changes in the RLDS Understanding of the Book of Mormon,"* Louis Midgley, of the political science department at Brigham Young University, reviews the changes in the RLDS approach to The Book of Mormon and pleads that such a shift not take place in the Mormon church. He mentions FRAA several times and believes FRAA organized because of this change.

In 1966, when the pressure to modify their understanding of the Book of Mormon first began, those within the Reorganization who were then zealous about that book chartered the Foundation for Research on Ancient America (FRAA).

—Midgley 1993:133

Deeper in the article, he addresses at some length the official statement regarding FRAA that appeared in the May 1991 *Saints' Herald*, page 182. This statement, signed by the RLDS First Presidency, stated FRAA was begun

in 1966 without church sponsorship. It has not been and is not now officially associated with the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

My research seems to indicate that both Midgley and the RLDS First Presidency misstated the case.

Our personal perceptions of events and happenings always color our understanding, but it appears to me that the pieces were in place for the organization of FRAA before, as Midgley says, the "pressure to modify their understanding of the Book of Mormon" by Church officials began. On the other hand, while FRAA organized in 1966 as a private, not-for-profit organization and not an "official" church organization, its impetus came from the RLDS First Presidency, and when organized, had their approval as reported in the *Saints'*

Herald, April 1966.

The statement by the RLDS First Presidency printed in May 1991 has not affected the work of FRAA. Its commitment to advancing knowledge about The Book of Mormon through research, publications, and related projects has been its motivating force. It has provided an outlet for those who believe that The Book of Mormon is a true historical record of God's dealings with the people who once lived in the Americas and a testimony that Jesus is the Christ.

Presented here, in outline form, is a history of FRAA's beginnings and a listing of important dates and actions taken by FRAA until the present. Information came largely from FRAA official minutes and its archival records, as well as articles printed in the *Saints' Herald*.

**Foundation for Ancient Research & Mormon Studies (F.A.R.M.S.) Vol. 2, No. 2, Fall 1993:132-163*. Another article worth reading in this issue is "Moses' Brazen Serpent as It Relates to Serpent Worship in Mesoamerica" by Wallace E. Hunt, Jr. (pages 121-131). This issue of the *Journal* may be purchased in the FRAA bookstore for \$7.95 plus 15% shipping and handling.

The History of FRAA

◆ 1952 Beginnings

F. Henry Edwards of the First Presidency of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints contacts Roy Weldon and asks him to "lead a research group meeting as part of the church school or at some other convenient time to agree on the basic claims of The Book of Mormon, and then dig up the evidences which could be written up. . . ."

The First Presidency appoints a committee composed of Herbert M. Scott, chairman, Roy Weldon, Wayne Updike, and Charles Neff.

◆ April 1957

"A New Day Dawns for the Book of Mormon," an article written by Roy Weldon, appears in the *Saints' Herald*. It reports that at a college conference in Denver the previous September the "Project for Book of Mormon Research" was launched. "Over one hundred volunteers are now enrolled to do research on some of the 450 catalogued claims of the Book of Mormon." He makes an appeal for "research assistance from any and all who have a desire to help."

◆ 1966 Organization

The death of Herbert Scott leaves the committee at loose ends, but after consultation with the First Presidency, early in 1966, Chris B. Hartshorn is named chairman of the group that organizes as the **Foundation for Research on Ancient America**. Operating funds are to come from offerings and membership dues.

◆ April 1966

An entry appears in the *Saints' Herald* called "Book of Mormon Research Foundation Now Active."

The Foundation for Research on Ancient America has recently been organized in Independence. About 250 letters and manuscripts of the Research Committee [see above, April 1957], of which the late Herbert Scott was chairman, have been made available to the foundation group with the approval of the First Presidency. Two members of the former committee are in the newly organized group.

It lists members of the board, including Roy Weldon, F. Edward Butterworth, Glenn Scott, and others. It reports that "the foundation will work closely with the **Society for Archaeological Research**, but will avoid any intrusion on their assigned field."

In 1894, a Committee on American Archaeology was appointed by the General Conference of the

RLDS church. In the 1930s it became the **Society for Archaeological Research**. Anyone could become a member by paying dues.

In 1944, the committee approached the First Presidency and requested they nominate to the General Conference an executive committee of from 5-7 members. This was done and approved as General Conference Resolution 950. Five members were elected at that time to serve on the executive committee: Charles R. Hield, Louise Sheldon, Roy Weldon, Inez Kinney, H. I. Velt.

The society for Archaeological Research continued until 1978 when the First Presidency brought a resolution to the conference recommending "that Resolution 950 be rescinded and that all students and scholars in the field of scriptural archaeology be commended and encouraged to pursue their studies individually and in teams as it may suit their circumstances." This action dissolved the Society for Archaeological Research.

◆ 1968

Thelona Stevens becomes chairman of FRAA and serves until her death in 1989. In "An Open Letter to All Members and Friends of Foundation for Research on Ancient America," she lists the following **objectives** for the Foundation:

1. Correlation of manuscripts by a committee named for this particular work;
2. Centralization of manuscripts;
3. Provision of card file identification of manuscripts for the benefit of students;
4. Establishment of copies of these files in strategic locations;
5. Publicity in the *Saints' Herald* and elsewhere so that members may be adequately informed at all times.

◆ April 1968 Lectures

FRAA begins holding lecture meetings during the week of World Conference and continues these types of presentations until 1984.

◆ July 1968 Newsletter

Stevens begins sending a periodic newsletter to members of the organization.

◆ 1972 Objectives

A four-page insert by and about the Foundation appears in the RLDS conference reports. The insert includes a form for joining; tells of research needed, listing suggested topics; and gives five biennial objectives:

1. To place a copy of the Spanish edition of The Book of Mormon in every university and public library in Mexico, Central and South America;
2. To continue and expand the Foundation's newsletter;
3. To establish a library in the Independence area of appropriate books, manuscripts, documents for research and study relating to The Book of Mormon and ancient America;
4. To encourage reading and organized research in various areas of interest and study as they relate

◆ **1976 Library**

Action taken by the membership at the annual meeting in February makes the library a permanent committee, and funds of \$500 a year are allocated for the purchase of books. In addition, the membership votes to create a separate audiovisual library, but this is never carried out.

Foundation books, as recorded in the minutes of February 1975, are first part of the Zionics Research Institute library, but later in 1976, the books are placed in the "Church's History Library." There they remain until 1988 when they are returned to FRAA for their own library facility.

In June 1989, FRAA sponsored "Spend a Day with The Book of Mormon" for children. Nearly 100 children heard Indian legends told in a tepee; listened to stories from The Book of Mormon by actors and actresses; shot bows and arrows; played Indian games; and ate a "Nephite" lunch of pita bread and honey.

◆ **1977 Scholarships/Grants**

Early in the organization an objective is to assist students in the field of archaeological research. From 1977 on, a number of grants are made giving financial assistance to students.

◆ **February 1978**

Just prior to the dissolving of the Society for Archaeological Research [see above], Weldon makes these remarks, as reported in the Board minutes:

I think we're going to go places. . . . I think the Book of Mormon in the future is going to gain more momentum. We are going to need to think about this organization in terms of expansion. . . . The Archaeology Committee [Society] appears to be deteriorating. . . . No meetings have been held for some time and it may be fading out of the picture. . . . We are free to move. I am looking for great things in this organization. We ought to be enthused. . . . We are going to need help. This is a research organization. We need people who are academic, who are scholars.

◆ **1978 Bylaws**

Board of directors approves bylaws.

◆ **1980 Articles of Incorporation**

Articles are filed with the State.



Michael Garrot



Don Beebe

Dale Godfrey, along with Jerry Brown, expanded the FRAA audiovisual department in 1984 to include video production.

to the message, the historical setting, and the internal evidences of The Book of Mormon;

5. To support field research wherever possible that contributes to an understanding of The Book of Mormon and its message.

◆ **February 1973 Incorporation**

FRAA incorporates as a private, not-for-profit corporation with governance by a 15-member board of directors elected from the membership.

◆ **1983 Comalcalco**

The Board approves the allocation of funds for Fred Weddle to work with the Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia (INAH) of Mexico to photograph the inscribed bricks at Comalcalco, Mexico. The negatives, some photos, and also a few replicas are now housed in the FRAA archives. A copy of the negatives were given to INAH and the Epigraphic Society.



Don Beebe

The longed-for library became a reality in 1987.

◆ **1984 Publishing/Media**

FRAA begins publishing materials in addition to the quarterly newsletter, materials such as calendars, children's books, and several books by Stevens.

FRAA establishes an audiovisual department which moves into the production of both audio and video-cassettes for retail purposes.

The newsletter, begun by Stevens, changes format to a quarterly magazine called *The Witness*. The purpose of the Foundation and its members stated in this issue (March 1984, Number 45) was to continue to seek to serve the Church by advancing the use of The Book of Mormon through archaeological research, testimonies, articles, and related projects.

◆ **June 1984 Advisory Committee is created.**

◆ **April 1985 Archaeology Committee**

A specific committee for archaeological research is established to "search out and be alert to new archaeological findings and publications of recent discoveries; a committee who has a keen interest in reading and searching." They are commissioned to regularly provide articles for *The Witness*.

◆ **October 1985 All-day Conferences**

FRAA holds its first all-day conference called "Spend a Day with The Book of Mormon" at the RLDS Auditorium. For the next six years, FRAA holds these annual conferences in the Auditorium.



Fred Weddle

Members of Helaman's Two Thousand enjoy a reception especially for them the afternoon of the fourth annual Spend a Day with The Book of Mormon conference, October 1, 1988.

◆ **January 1987**

The first issue of the *Junior Witness* appears in conjunction with *The Witness*.

◆ **April 1987 Library**

Donations of books, slides, and manuscripts from Charles Hield and Roy Weldon spur the establishment of the long-anticipated research library/information center [see above, 1972 objectives]. FRAA rents several rooms in a former school building to house the new library and video studio.

◆ **June 1988 Helaman's Two Thousand**

FRAA initiates Helaman's Two Thousand program to provide reliable/consistent funding. Members of this special group contribute monthly or annually at least \$50 to support the research, programs, and projects of FRAA. A quarterly report, called *MIGHTY SUMMONS*, is instituted for members of this group.

◆ **October 1988**

The establishment of the Helaman's Two Thousand program allows FRAA to contract with a part-time consultant to work as development/fund-raising coordinator, editor, and manager of the research library/information center.

The final activity for the third annual Spend a Day with The Book of Mormon conference, October 3, 1987, was the drama "Who Stands for God?" The presentation was adapted from the larger work, "Terra Nova," by Dr. Wallace Shute, and directed by Theo Boyd.

Speakers for the day's program included Norman Page, Henry Schaefer, Delbert Smith, Ray Treat, John Welch, and Princess Little Pigeon.

Fred Weddle





The first regional Book of Mormon day conference was held in the Boston area at Lexington, Massachusetts.

Dale Godfrey



Don Beebe

April 6, 1992 FRAA dedicated their new headquarters at 210 W. White Oak, Independence, Missouri. A reception for members of Helaman's Two Thousand followed the service. Pictured above, left to right, are Scottie Wilcox, Rae Simmons, and Richard and Joyce Wilson.

◆ December 1988 Tours

As a means for raising funds, FRAA inaugurates annual archaeological tours.

◆ 1989

The Witness magazine changes format to full color and is sent to 14,000 homes.

◆ June 1989 Regional Conferences

FRAA begins holding regional Book of Mormon Day conferences with the first one at Boston, Massachusetts. Since that time, others have been held in Oklahoma, Texas, Michigan, Utah, Illinois, California, Mexico, and Graceland College.

◆ April 1990

Following the death of Thelona Stevens, the board of directors elects Michael Gatrost as president.

◆ 1991 Headquarters Building

FRAA purchases the building at 210 West White Oak, Independence, Missouri. Renovation begins, and the offices (formerly maintained in several different homes), library, and video studio move into the new quarters in May.

◆ May 1991

Official letter from the First Presidency appears in *Saints' Herald* severing relationship with FRAA. It states:

We encourage the Saints to pursue their study of the Book of Mormon and all related subjects by using the resources provided by the church through Herald House and Temple School. Such materials currently represent the best understandings and most appropriate interpretations of the book itself, how it was revealed, its place in our history, and how it serves the church today as one of our three standard books of scripture.

◆ January 1992 Advisory Board

At the annual meeting, members approve a resolution creating an advisory board of up to twenty members. While an advisory committee had been established in June 1984, the action taken now provided that members of the board of directors must first serve on the advisory board.

◆ March 1992 Congregational Conferences

FRAA begins congregational Book of Mormon Days on Sundays in branches and congregations throughout the United States to replace the annual meetings held at the Auditorium.

◆ Summer 1992 Internship Program

A summer Book of Mormon internship program begins with eight students. The number increases to 13 in 1993. Strong financial support for this program comes from branches.

◆ Fall 1992

A second part-time consultant is contracted to manage the administrative, fiscal affairs of FRAA.

◆ June 1993 Bookstore

FRAA opens and operates a full-line bookstore with books, sheet music, audio and videocassettes, and specialty items.

◆ January 1994 Board of Directors

The board passes a resolution that the "election of board members by individuals at an annual meeting be done away with, and that future board members be selected by a board of directors' vote."



The Christ of God

Testimony of Eric Odida excerpted from letters written in 1993 to Viola Presler

Prepared by Viola Presler

Eric Odida saw a copy of The Book of Mormon left on a table in the home of my longtime friends Sam and Judith Agwanda, Book of Mormon believers. Eric, who read the book, eventually married their daughter Pamela and the couple now has two sons. Eric's testimony is so beautiful and so powerful—his own words are best.

Today I introduce myself. My name is Eric Awuondo Odida. On December 12, 1993, I will be 28 years old. I am a Luo by tribe.

I met Pamela Agwanda in 1988. I joined the University of Nairobi as a first-year student. The Faculty of Commerce where I was admitted is situated in Lower Kabete where Pam and her family were living.

At Lower Kabete it never took me long to identify Pam with the intrinsic qualities [of Christian character] I had always upheld. In fact, to me she was obviously a better person than myself and any of my friends.

Self preservation is self-denial, and Pam proved to me just in a short while that she was self-preserved. You see, she never even used to greet us college boys. From home, I saw her get into a bus for work and go [home] straight away in the evening.

At K.I.A. [Kenya Institute of Administration] where [Pam's father] Mr. Agwanda lectures, I had become friends with another lecturer, a Mr. Odongo. Through him, I got to be introduced to Pam.

Pamela was the first girl I ever took home to meet my parents. [When] my mother saw her walking by my side as we got home,



In October 1992, Marilyn Middleton and Donna Comfort visited Pamela, Dean, and Eric Odida in Kenya and took this photo. Little Frank was not yet in the picture.

she thanked God for being TRUE to her. [She knew her prayers for me finding a virtuous Christian girl had been answered.] She called Pam "her GIRL." My grandma, Ludia, claimed the credit, saying it was a result of her tutelage [that I chose such a marriage partner]. And to a great extent it was true. I cannot remember being so happy ever before or since.

One evening in Baba [Papa] Agwanda's house at Kabete, as Pam made tea (*chai* in Kiswahili) in the kitchen, I read from the open pages of a book that was on a low table. It was a book that I had never heard about. The writers—Nephi, Jacob, etc.—were all totally new to me.

Of importance to me was the fact that it was talking about the Christ of God. I cannot remember from where, exactly, I was reading. It interested me, and I wanted to read more.

When Pam brought tea, we discussed a little about it. I criticized the idea of new ideologies. I asked about [the book's] origin and how come I had never heard about it. I borrowed it for a night.

As I read it later in my campus room, the words from it invaded my heart. In my heart I could feel the strength of the words. By and



Viola Presler

Taken in the early 1970s, this photograph shows Pamela Agwanda, her parents, Sam and Judith Agwanda, whose testimony of The Book of Mormon converted Eric Odida, and Sam's mother, Mrs. Helena N. Ongor, a staunch Christian.

by, I [again] borrowed the restoration witness, the book itself. It was The Book of Mormon.

I read the biblical stories of David in Samuel I and Moses in Exodus and feel their spiritual touch. And I read The Book of Mormon, and from the first page I get the very [same] feeling inside me—the touch. As much as time allows, I desire to become a part of its teachings. It is good that they are the very teachings about Jesus and the people of God in the early days. Very soon I shall write to you how far I have gone with my studies of The Book of Mormon.

I read The Book of Mormon and feel the presence of the Lord my God in its words, in its sentences and happenings as they are presented in the book. It is there in my heart, and I have no doubt over its genuineness.

Editor's Note:

A copy of The Book of Mormon FRAA distributed at one of its annual conferences was sent to Eric Odida. He has asked for baptism. Friends are planning to furnish funds to help the Odidas attend a reunion in the United States this summer to provide this opportunity for Eric.

Do you have a testimony about sharing a copy of The Book of Mormon with others? Write and tell us about it.



Over the holiday break, I had the opportunity to travel with 22 other people on the 1993 FRAA trip to Mexico. While there it became apparent that I had a lot to learn about Zionitic living. Mexico has basically two types of people: the very rich and the poor. Despite the fact that a large majority of the people are poor, the people I met were cheerful and happy. They enjoyed what little they had and did not seem to have the I wants like many in our society. I think we need to learn from them "For where your treasure is, there will our heart be also" (3 Nephi 5:112). A result from this trip is a desire to be more in control of the things I allow myself to see and do, so that my treasure is in GOD (Tim Raffety).

Travel among these ancient sites arouses sympathy for the people who are living there today. I wish every member could make a trip to the ruins left by the writers of the Book of Mormon. It would do something to their ministry. We must learn to love the country and the people for their benefit, not for our profit (Apostle Charles Hield, Bulletin of Society for Archaeology Research No. 1, October 1943.)



Linda Trimble

FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH ON ANCIENT AMERICA

210 White Oak, Independence, MO 64050

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage

PAID

Independence, MO 64050
Permit No. 123