

A Tribute to Roy Weldon



THE WITNESS

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"Out of the strong comes forth sweetness"

(Judges 14:14)

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The Foundation for Research on Ancient America is a nonprofit corporation composed of individuals who desire to promote the Book of Mormon and its witness of Jesus Christ.

Through research, publications, seminars and related projects, members of 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 is tax deductible.

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Cover . . .

"He carried a sweet spirit with him....He was a pleasure to be around (and) always had a good word for everyone."

Roy Lynn Weldon at the memorial service for his grandfather, Roy Weldon, March 14, 1995. Photo: courtesy of Clair Weldon

Message from FRAA

Few people in the Restoration have touched the lives of as many people as Roy Weldon. His was a lifelong commitment to gathering information and evidence in support of the Book of Mormon. This issue has been delayed several weeks and its contents changed to honor his life's purpose. In the next few pages, you will read about this remarkable person, as told by his son Clair Weldon to members of the staff.

Roy Weldon was a key leader in the Foundation for more than fifty years. Until the time of his death on March 7th, 1995, he was still participating in board meetings with a dedication instilled in him as a young man.

I remember riding to Warrensburg, Missouri, from Independence with Brother Weldon after a video taping several years ago. He told me how important the Book of Mormon had been in his life. Rarely have I seen such a love for the gospel as he expressed. He is gone now, but his books and writings remain, an endearing legacy to a man who loved Jesus Christ.

Michael Gatrost
President

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Words of Encouragement:

Recently a gentleman stopped by the Foundation office to offer words of encouragement. He said he had been away from the church for 18 years, but during that time, *The Witness* continued to come. "I can't tell you I read it every time it came," he said, "but having it there made it easier to come back because I knew somebody cared."

Friends, *The Witness* magazine's purpose is to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ as found in the Book of Mormon. In the coming months, however, due to the high cost of paper and postage, we will be able to send the magazine to subscribers only.

We invite you to subscribe, not just for yourself, but so that you can hand this magazine to a friend, knowing he or she will be blessed in reading it. We want you to have a missionary tool that will help you in your evangelistic efforts. If this interests you, please use the subscription form on page 15.

Through the efforts of F.R.A.A.,
the witness of Jesus Christ in the
Book of Mormon is being carried to thousands
of people. Help us accomplish this great work
by sending your contribution today.

Calendar:

June 19 - August 3	1995 Student Intern Program
August 5	Youth Book of Mormon Day 9:30 a.m. Waldo Avenue Restoration Branch, Independence, Missouri
August 13, 1995	Book of Mormon Day South Chrysler Restoration Branch, Independence, Missouri
September 15, 1995	SPIRITUAL FITNESS PLAN introduced
September 30	Helaman's Two Thousand Appreciation Banquet, RLDS Auditorium, Independence, Missouri

Foundation News

New Office Manager at FRAA

Linda Guin is the new office manager for FRAA. Her responsibilities are to coordinate the numerous activities of the Foundation and to oversee employees and volunteers at FRAA's headquarters.

Formerly employed by Sprint, Linda brings a wealth of office experience, but of most importance, she brings a desire to serve and a conviction that the work of the Lord must take priority in our lives.

Oak Grove Restoration Branch

Book of Mormon Day

Nearly 200 individuals attended an FRAA Book of Mormon Day at Oak Grove, Missouri, on February 12, 1995. New presenters included Craig Fountain, Skip Robison and Mark Westermeyer. Films on the Book of Mormon and classes such as "Testimonies of Christ by Book of Mormon Prophets," and "Living the Book of Mormon Principles" offered fresh and challenging insights.

Colbern Road Restoration Branch

Book of Mormon Day

February 19, 1995, FRAA board members Tom Mitchell and Ed Slauter ministered to an estimated 300 people gathered for a Book of Mormon Day at Colbern Road Restoration Branch, Lake Lotawana, Missouri. 1994 interns Angel McKee, Chad Ruoff, Laura Slauter and Shawn Noland shared testimonies and the latest information about the Book of Mormon.

Children's Magazine Debuts

FRAA is publishing a new magazine for children. The magazine, called *THE WITNESS KIDS*, is filled with entertaining stories and activities designed to teach your children about the Book of Mormon. The target audience is boys and girls, ages 5-12. Ed Slauter chairs the editorial committee. See page 16 for more news and a subscription form for your children.

Book of Mormon Day for Kids

FRAA will sponsor its first "Book of Mormon Day for Kids" on August 5, 1995. From 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and for ages 5-12, the day promises to be full of fun and fellowship. Registration cost is \$3.00 per child or \$10.00 per family. See page 7 for additional details and to preregister.

ROY WELDON



Photo credit: Clair Weldon

In 1921, Roy Weldon was in peak physical condition at age 22.

On October 27, 1990, Roy Weldon stood to address the audience in the R.L.D.S. Auditorium at the Foundation for Research on Ancient America's sixth annual "Spend A Day with the Book of Mormon" conference. White bearded and fragile at 90, he spoke in a resonant voice. "The Book of Mormon has a date with destiny," he said. "It has potentials no other book has or even remotely approaches as it moves into the future.... The grand finale of the Restoration is now beckoning us on. What a day to be alive!"

Roy Eugene Weldon, minister for Jesus Christ for more than 60 years, advocate of the Book of Mormon and vice president of FRAA, died March 7, 1995, in Independence, Missouri, USA.

While still a young man, Roy developed a lifelong pursuit of knowledge in support of the authenticity and value of the Book of Mormon. Some years later, in 1941, he made the first of many trips to ancient American archaeological sites and museums. "With seven others, including me," says his son Clair Weldon, "crammed into one of the earliest Ford station wagons with varnished wood sides, we spent six weeks in Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras."

His travel experiences in Mexico and Central and South America were among the highlights of his life. "He accumulated bookshelves of books, file cabinets jammed with handwritten notes and tens of thousands of color slides and photographs related to the ancient western hemisphere and the Book of Mormon," says Weldon.

In the mid '40s, Roy joined such men as Paul M. Hanson, Charles R. Hield and Harold I. Velt in developing a church committee to study and promote the Book of Mormon. He worked in the organization, called Society for Archaeological Research, for many years. When the committee completed its work, he joined others in founding the Foundation for Research on Ancient America and served on its board as vice president from the late '60s until his death.

Roy wrote dozens of *Herald* articles, many about the Book of Mormon and ancient America. In 1950 he began publishing, at his own expense, the first of his seventeen books and booklets (mostly about the Book of Mormon).

-Book of Mormon Advocate

An interview with
Clair Weldon

"Without him I can do nothing."

Roy Weldon

Roy was born on December 3, 1899, in Lafayette, California, where he lived for more than 40 years. In 1942 he moved to Pisgah, Iowa. A year later, he moved to Warrensburg, Missouri, where he lived for 46 years, until 1990. His last five years were spent at Resthaven, in Independence, Missouri.

While a tenth grader, Roy became seriously ill. He dropped out of high school, lost weight steadily and became bedfast. He was examined by leading physicians but given little hope of surviving. The medical advice to his parents: "Prepare for Roy's death." In this condition when he was 19, he learned that the patriarch of the church, Frederick A. Smith, would be giving patriarchal blessings. He asked his father to take him to Irvington, some 70 miles away, where the blessings would be given.

"He was so weak," Weldon says, "he had to be carried into the home." The patriarch told him to put his trust totally in the Lord and to begin exercising his body, and that if he would, his strength would return and all that had beset him would be removed. "He took this encouragement and wise spiritual counsel deeply to heart,"

says Weldon. He began programs of exercise and nutrition. He started

walking and then hiking into the hills behind the ranch as he searched for bee trees. He then took up beekeeping

as a healthy out-of-door activity which offered strenuous labor. From a 100-pound, 6-foot skeleton, he became a lean and muscular 200-pound man, with outstanding physical endurance and intense mental energy.

Although Roy never finished high school, he attended a special religious education course at Graceland College, Lamoni, Iowa, from 1925 to 1926, when he was about 25 years old. There he met Lillian Pottorff, from Paonia, western Colorado. They were married the following spring in May, 1927. She passed away in 1989 at the age of 87, after 62 years of marriage. At his memorial service, Roy's grandson Roy Lynn Weldon said his grandfather had had a hope and a dream to live through until the Second Coming of Christ, but one day when he visited him, his grandfather said, "You know, I'm really ready to go home, and the first



Roy preached and taught in congregations, at camps, retreats, wherever the Lord led.

things I'm going to do when I get over to the other side is give Lillian a hug." Roy raised bees and sold honey products for more than 60 years from his homes in California, Iowa and Missouri. He was in his late eighties, in the 1980s, when he finally "eased back from his beloved activities with the 'zinging, stinging' bees," Weldon

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Photo credit: Clair Weldon

Shown here in their fifties, Roy and Lillian raised three boys.

says. His lifelong work provided support for his family and permitted him to give extensive periods of time to church ministries, to research in

scriptures and ancient American cultures, to travels in Mexico, Central and South America and to scores of opportunities for preaching, teaching and slide presentations around the U.S. and Canadian church.

"The two great loves of his life," says his son, "were Jesus Christ, the Gospel and the church; and family, friends and the persons around him." He served as an ordained minister of the church in the priesthood functions of priest, elder and high priest, and, since 1966, as an evangelist-patriarch. He leaves behind his brothers Walter and Chester; his sons Clair, Lynn and Ward; nine grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

When Roy finished his speech at the "Spend a Day with the Book of Mormon" conference, he was given a standing ovation. "I appreciate your response," he said. "Before I went to church this morning, I asked the Lord to give me a special blessing; that I would give him all the honor and credit. This goes for this morning and for all my life of seventy years of working in the Lord's vineyard.... Without him I can do nothing!" (*The Witness*, No. 72, p. 15)



BORN OF THE SPIRIT

by Marlin Guin

"For, said he, I have repented of my sins, and have been redeemed of the Lord; behold, I am born of the Spirit."

(Mosiah 11:186)



First Lieutenant Marlin Guin

In the fall of 1974, I stood on a pier at Long Beach Naval Base. I looked up at the large troop ship I would soon board and reflected on the many responsibilities that pressed upon me as a first lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps. We were on the eve of a seven-day joint exercise at sea, and I had the direct responsibility for fifty men and a convoy of equipment.

I knew that every minute would be consumed, but for some reason I had packed the old, worn paperback copy of the Book of Mormon Mom had given me in my youth. She had marked it over the years, and tape had to be fastened to the cover to keep it together. Mom had passed it on to me with the admonition to study and prepare for the times ahead. I did not realize the impact of this simple act.

We boarded and found our living quarters. The ship soon launched for the open sea as we settled into a dark and dreary troop compartment, deep in the bowels of the ship. Bunks were stacked seven high and close together. Dim lighting made reading barely possible. It seemed that seven days under these conditions would be an eternity.

Sometime during the first day, a miraculous course of events unfolded. Most of the assignments I had prepared six months to accomplish were suddenly delegated to Navy personnel. The result was that large amounts of time were freed for me to do as I wished. I was amazed, yet sensed that God was preparing the way for something to occur in my life.

I unpacked my bags and came across the Book of Mormon. Immediately the Holy Spirit came to me and prompted me to read it from cover to cover. A sudden sense of excitement came to my soul, causing me to reflect

*"I knew that every minute would be consumed,
but for some reason I had packed the old,
worn paperback copy of the Book of
Mormon Mom had given me..."*

on the blessings that had recently been bestowed on my family. My wife, Linda, and I had become active in church and were attending a small branch just outside of Camp Pendleton. She had been baptized a few months before. I had also been called to serve as a priest in the Aaronic priesthood. We both recognized the stewardship the Lord had given us for the spiritual welfare of our two small children. All these blessings increased my joy and desire to obey the Holy Spirit and read the Book of Mormon. There came an assurance that the Lord had a purpose for this time we would spend together. I set out that day determined to accomplish this goal in the seven days before me.

The ship rocked back and forth as I sat in the faint light reading each

page carefully. The pages came to life for the first time in my life. Every person, place and event became real. The truths that illuminated my mind all bore witness of Jesus Christ. Suddenly I realized that this book was close and personal to me. I knew it had been preserved for all those who would believe, but for the next seven days it had been preserved for me, Marlin Guin, to come to a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ and God's purpose for me. It had been preserved and prepared by my spiritual ancestors for the day in which I now lived. What an exciting thought! A hunger and thirst began to swell within me for the discoveries that would surely come to pass.

I continued reading expectantly. Many scriptural passages came with such power I could not restrain the tears from flowing freely. The Spirit of God was touching me with the power and authority that comes only from the Lord. One of the beautiful testimonies that caused these deep feelings was the conversion experience of Alma the Younger in the eleventh chapter of Mosiah. I could relate somewhat to the rejection of his father's counsel and the concern that flowed from his parents on his behalf. I remembered the countless testimonies shared with me by my mother and recalled the many times I heard her in mighty prayer on

(Continued on page 8)

Testify to the Lord

There is still time to let us know that you've read the Book of Mormon.

FRAA's challenge to the people of the church to read the Book of Mormon in six months has reached its conclusion. If you've accomplished the goal and read it in the time allotted, please send us a note telling us. In the Summer/Fall issue of *The Witness*, we will print every name we receive as a testimony to the Lord and to all who see the magazine that we have read the words of his prophets, and they have found place in our hearts. Even if you don't want to have your name printed, please tell us you completed the reading, so we can count you in the total number of people who participated. We appreciate your commitment and thank you for your effort. Now, join with us and hundreds of others to "Testify to the Lord."

Send your letters to: *FRAA/Testify*

210 W. White Oak, Independence, Missouri 64050

Youth

Book of Mormon Day

For the first time, FRAA will sponsor a Book of Mormon Day just for children. Scheduled for Saturday, August 5, 1995, activities will begin at 9:30 a.m. with a "Walk Through Time" with Book of Mormon people. Games, crafts, music, drama and a special "Archaeology Dig" will all be part of the fun and fellowship.

Plan now for your child or grandchild to be there. For ages 5 - 12.

Date: *Saturday, August 5, 1995*

Where: *Center Place Restoration School
819 West Waldo
Independence, Missouri 64050*

Time: *9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.*

Cost: *\$3.00 per child
(\$10.00 maximum per family)*

Lunch Provided

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(Born of the Spirit...continued from page 6)

behalf of her children. It was not surprising to me that the scriptures describing this experience pierced my heart with conviction. More tears flowed as I read Alma describe what it means to be "born of the Spirit": to be transformed in a way that changes your life forever, to come to the realization of the truth, to be truly converted to the Lord, to come from darkness into his marvelous light and to be redeemed of God through his son Jesus Christ. Reading these inspired words with a soft heart and an open mind was a new experience for me. There I was, a Marine trained in warfare and fearlessness, publicly displaying my emotion as the love and mercy of God touched me.

Since that time the words and admonitions of Alma have frequently reminded me of the conviction necessary to make the journey of faith. There is in each of our lives a need for this conversion experience. It is easy to rely on the spiritual testimonies of others and almost adopt them as our own. But when times become hard, we realize our personal commitment is planted in shallow ground and has been left without nurture because we did not seek the Lord through diligent prayer, study and fasting. Many times the result is a falling away from the work because there are no deep roots of faith.

Some believe that being born of the Spirit means to be baptized and confirmed with authority. In one sense this is true because the gift of the Holy Ghost is bestowed upon us at baptism. However, it is easy to see by our fruits that baptism sometimes occurs without true conversion. The Lord keeps his promise and bestows the gift of the Holy Ghost, but perhaps it is not received as the divine power that changes our lives and makes all things possible. I think this is what Alma was talking about. He was undoubtedly a member of Christ's church and probably was baptized in his youth like most of us, yet he rebelled and sought to destroy the church. He was not truly converted to the Lord at the time of his baptism.

This was a message Alma wanted to make clear: He wanted his people to know the importance of the spiritual leavening that quickens the inner man. He wanted them to know that transforming power that

"It is a spiritual rebirth that makes setting priorities simple because it is done with an eye single to the glory of God."

removes our preconceived thought and replaces it with the eternal truths of God. He wanted people to know that "enduring to the end" is considered a joy and privilege by those who have received this change in their lives. He wanted them to know that it is these spiritual insights that leave us without argument as to our sinful nature and slothful response to the call of God. He wanted them to know it is

these spiritual insights that cause us to quake with unworthiness before God and to be brought down into the depths of humility.

What a message our brother Alma brings to us in these last days! To be born of the Spirit places within us a desire to serve with all our might, mind and strength until the end. It is a spiritual rebirth that makes setting priorities simple because it is done with an eye single to the glory of God.

A study of Alma's life, after being born of the Spirit, brings some additional spiritual lessons as we see the fruits of his conversion. These same fruits can be found in people of our time who have been truly converted.



Marlin and Linda Guin, 1994

Let's examine just a few. Alma first repented of his sins and sought forgiveness from those he had hurt. He went even further and sought to bring restitution for his actions. Alma set some priorities that seem difficult today. Once the church had fallen into iniquity, he laid aside the judgment seat and went forth, full time, to declare repentance and bring the people back to a remembrance of their duty. The road was not easy and rejection was common, but his determination to "endure to the end" could be traced directly back to his conversion experience. It was a driving force in his life to the point that he made reference to it as he sought to bring sinful people back to God. In

(Continued on page 12)

THE BEE KEEPER -A Tribute to Roy Weldon

by Pat Elliott Heady



In Hebrew schools, a touch of honey is placed on the page a child is studying. When he

learns that page, he may lick off the honey. Roy Weldon's life and writings are just that--a touch of honey in the history of the Restoration. His family's memoir, *Never Alone*, reaffirms the sweetness we have known in the Gospel. Each of the Weldon brothers--Roy, Walter, L.D., Chester--and other members of the family share testimonies of the Lord's nearness to them individually. As a tribute to Roy, we would like to share several of his experiences.

When Roy was a teenager, he was asked to read to his grandfather, whose eyesight was failing. In the early evenings, they would sit under the trees in his father's orchard while Roy read from the scriptures. Grandfather Weldon especially loved the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. The time spent

together not only forged a bond between them but also inspired in Roy a respect and love for the scriptures. Alone one evening, lying on the straw under a pear tree, he said, "There came over me an intense, overwhelming awareness that the words I was reading were the words of my Lord and Savior. This assurance that came in my youth has remained with

me and convinces me that despite the errors of my way, I am 'never alone.'"

Roy said he took no credit for his interest in the evidences for

the Book of Mormon. "There were two Indian camping grounds on my father's ranches in California," he said.

"Whenever Dad plowed through these areas, I would follow and pick up artifacts including some excellent spear heads. I just naturally gravitated into Book of Mormon archaeology."

Roy was also interested in Zion. After spending a year at Graceland, he had gathered a collection of quotations on the subject with which



Photo credit: Clair Weldon

In bee gear, 1984. Roy liked to sell as much as raise honey.

"Out of the strong comes forth sweetness"

(Judges 14:14)

he hoped to confront his Uncle Bob, who had lapsed from Catholicism into atheism. At the end of a marathon discussion which lasted until 2:00 a.m., his uncle said, "Roy, ...there is only one thing wrong with your Zion--it is so high in the sky that it is totally out of reach of human nature and human possibilities."

Photo credit: Clair Weldon

Some time later, Roy was working in one of his bee-yards in a eucalyptus grove

on his father's ranch and wondering how Zion could ever be, given man's carnal nature. He said he left the grove and entered a live oak grove nearby.

He took off his bee veil and knelt down and prayed. On walking out of the grove he was enveloped by the power of the Spirit and for some two hours was under its influence until his soul cried out, "It is enough!" He realized he'd had a taste of the endowment. "I knew that under this spiritual and all

others could live together in a glorious Zion brotherhood. My Uncle Bob was right. Zion is a human impossibility, but under divine endowment, Zion is possible and most assuredly will be."

A question comes to mind about whether Roy ever had an opportunity to become wealthy. The answer is this: Roy and his brother Walter (also a patriarch-evangelist in the church), who later developed his own apiaries in South Dakota to 4,000 hives and became vice president of the Sioux Bee Association, the world's largest honey cooperative, were first in the bee and honey business in California. They dealt extensively with Norton Bee Farms at Fallon, Nevada, which had some of the best apiaries in the west.

Mr. Norton became ill with cancer and died. Mrs. Norton decided to carry on but needed someone to come and help her get things straightened out. She asked Roy to come. He took his family on a



Roy (far right) is shown with his brothers in 1962. From left: Chester, L.D. and Walter.

(Continued on page 10)

vacation to Nevada to help her. After two or three weeks, she offered to turn over all the apiaries, some 1,300, and all the equipment, to Roy, which he could pay for as he could. It was the chance of a lifetime. But he hesitated. To accept would mean his family would be semi-isolated from the church. He prayed.

One evening, he turned off the main road and wound through the sagebrush and sand following an unused old road. He said he came to a desert shack. Bees

were flying in and out of an open door, and a stream of honey was running out of the door onto the ground. He stopped the car and stepped inside to investigate. An early pioneer had lined the one-room shack with heavy black felt paper to insulate it. A swarm of bees had attached their combs to the black paper. When the weight of the honey reached 50 or 60 pounds, the whole mass fell to the floor. All the bees not out flying were trapped in the collapsed combs and honey.

"I walked over to the window ledge to contemplate the scene," he said. "Then and there I received an answer to my prayers. The Spirit spoke to me: 'If you and your wife accept the proposal being offered to you, the same thing will happen to you as you see here--you and your family will be drowned in honey.'"

Some 40 years later, Roy said, "...the state of Nevada could not have held enough honey to compensate

for the blessings that have come to me and my family as we later moved into Zionie regions and all became active in the work of the Lord."



Roy's sons, Clair, Lynn and Ward, have all participated with him in Book of Mormon archeological explorations in Latin America. Clair is shown with his father in 1965.

Photo credit: Clair Weldon

Never Alone is full of experiences such as these. The book captures Restoration ideals: the sense of extended family with its focus on relationships--the zionic home, community and nation; the sense of expectancy, that the kingdom is at hand and we should be "anxiously engaged" in a good cause; the sense that God is ever present in human affairs in spite of our mistakes; and the sense that kingdom goals take precedence over all others.

We might ask ourselves why these ideals are so precious to us and how they influence our decisions. For Roy, the answer was clear. "I revel in the privilege of acquiring knowledge made available to us in the twentieth century," he said, "and rejoice beyond all measure in the experiences I have with my Savior and his Spirit. My knowledge that Jesus Christ is my Savior, that the Book of Mormon is true and that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God lies under my feet like the rock of Gibraltar without ever the slightest tremor."

His son Clair speaks for us at FRAA when he says, "With profound joy, we remember, honor and bless the life of Roy Eugene Weldon."



For copies of *Never Alone* and other titles by Roy Weldon, please see the partial list, on page 12, of publications available through FRAA or call to request FRAA's complete catalogue of publications.

"The Book of Mormon is Christ set to print."

Unknown

FRAA Bookstore FEATURES...

SCRIPTURES AND HYMNALS:

10568 Holy Scriptures 3 in 1, Hard Cover (BoM 1908; DC 1990)	71.00
10569 Holy Scriptures 3 in 1, Leather Bound (BoM Authorized Edition; DC 1990)	120.00
10282 Inspired Version, Hard Cover	35.00
10136 Inspired Version, Leather Bound	72.00
30019 Hymns of the Restoration, Enlarged Edition - Hard Cover	9.00
30020 Hymns of the Restoration, Enlarged Edition - 3 ring	13.00
30021 Hymns of the Restoration, Reunion /Campfire book	1.50

BOOKS BY ROY WELDON:

10154 Book of Mormon Deeps, Volume 1; Volume 2 - 10155; Volume 3 - 10156	4.00
10161 Never Alone	3.75
10163 Tantalizing Glimpses - Faint Whispers	3.50

BOOKS BY RESTORATION AUTHORS:

10595 The Master's Touch, Mildred Smith	15.00
10597 Where Is the Promise of His Coming, Jan Fountain	10.00

OTHER BOOKS:

10468 From Sea to Shining Sea, Marshall and Manuel	9.99
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(Born of the Spirit...continued from page 8)

the third chapter of Alma, he asked the people if they had been spiritually born of God. He asked them if they had received a change in their hearts and his image in their countenances. He asked them if they had so easily forgotten the God who had blessed them so abundantly. He spoke of that redemption through Jesus Christ that he had come to understand.

Recently I was engaged in a conversation at work with a friend who is a Christian. We were talking about the times in which we live and the people of the Lord. I asked her what she felt would be one of the distinguishing characteristics of God's people in the last days. She replied that they will be a people who live what they believe, whose convictions will be revealed in the fruits that they bear. Is this not what we learn from the conversion of Alma? Alma received his experience as a result of the faithful prayers of others. Since God is no respecter of persons, think what would happen if each of us would humble ourselves in study, prayer and fasting before the Lord. What an exciting promise to those who would make the journey. It is my prayer that we seek the Lord with the desire to know his will for us. I know that God stands ready and willing to answer those who sincerely seek him. I also know and testify that the Book of Mormon is the inspired word of God.



The editorial committee for ***I WITNESS KIDS***, FRAA's new children's magazine, has developed a high-quality, Book of Mormon-based publication. (See page 16 for more information.)



Photo credit: Tom Mitchell

Members of the committee from top left: Julie Galrost, Ed Stauler, chairman, and Beth Martens. From bottom left: Lana Elliott, Sue Nunn and Brenda Trimble. Not pictured: Joanie Glandon and Beth Spencer.

Spiritual Fitness Program Plan

With a kickoff date of September 15, 1995, FRAA committee members are hard at work on a Sunday school curriculum project. Our goal is to introduce a new curriculum for all age groups in the next three years. Chaired by Skip Robison, the committee has divided into several subcommittees and reviewed denominational curricula as well as books and materials from a number of publishing houses, looking for the best materials available.

"I believe this will be one of the most important projects the Foundation has ever developed," said one committee member. "It has the potential of intensifying the spiritual growth of young people and adults as never before."

The program, tentatively named the "Spiritual Fitness Plan," will offer weekly lessons. It is designed to last about 26 weeks with several classes scheduled for 12 - 13 weeks.

If your congregation would be interested in FRAA's Spiritual Fitness Curriculum Plan, write us in the coming months for a detailed list of materials and recommended resources for this exciting project.



The Book of Mormon and North American Sites

Is there a connection?

by Dale Godfrey

And Teancum, by the orders of Moroni, caused that they should commence laboring in digging a ditch round about the land, or the city Bountiful; And he caused that they should build a breastwork of timbers upon the inner bank of the ditch; and they cast up dirt out of the ditch against the breastwork of timbers; And thus they did cause the Lamanites to labor, until they had encircled the city of Bountiful round about with a strong wall of timbers and earth, to an exceeding height. And this city became an exceeding stronghold ever after; Alma 24: 54-57

It's strange to get excited about a ditch, but I did when I visited the Etowah Indian mounds in Georgia last summer. I was excited because the ditch at this site looked familiar. It looked like the ditches found at

Tikal and Becan in Mesoamerica. The people at all three sites used ditches and palisades as a means of defense. In Alma chapters 21 and 24, the Book of Mormon recounts the Nephites' use of this defensive technique. As I looked at the ditch at the Etowah site, I had to wonder, were there ditches and palisades in both North

America and Mesoamerica simply because it was an effective means of defense that had developed independently in both areas, or was the concept transferred between the regions? Certainly if it was transferred information, we should expect that other beneficial information was also transferred. So I set out to see if there is evidence of other information transfers between these two areas. This article reflects some of what I found.

Based on the Book of Mormon account, it's reasonable to expect that information may have been transferred. We don't know exactly where Hagoth traveled in his journey northward, but we do know that more than five decades before the birth of Christ many Nephites left the land Bountiful and set sail on the west sea for the land northward. "[T]here were many people who went forth into the land northward." (Alma 30: 13) We also know that Hagoth's first ship made a

successful passage and returned for a second load of passengers. The record indicates that the second group of passengers in the first ship, as well as passengers in a second ship, departed and were never heard from again.

(Alma 30:10-11)

Five to ten years after Hagoth's ships set forth, another group of people migrated to the land northward. This group, made up of both Nephites

and Lamanites, traveled "an exceeding great distance, insomuch that they came to large bodies of water, and many rivers." (Helaman 2: 4) This group apparently flourished in the land northward for

they are reported to have multiplied "and spread, and did go forth from the land southward to the land northward, and did spread insomuch that they began to cover the face of the whole earth, from the sea south, to the sea north, from the sea west, to the sea east." (Helaman 2:8) There

were extensive records kept regarding this people. Trade flourished, especially in building materials. This group is also reported to have built

cement houses as well as cities, temples, synagogues, sanctuaries and all manner of buildings.

Archaeologists have identified the people in the southeastern United States during the period of Nephite recorded history as Woodland Indians. The era of the Woodland Indians is roughly broken into three parts, Early Woodland 1000 B.C.- A.D. 300, Middle Woodland A.D. 300 - 600 and Late Woodland A.D. 600-900. The Late Woodland era was followed by the Mississippian period, which is classified as A.D. 900 - 1650.¹ The Archaic era preceded the Woodland era. Most evidence suggests that it was during the Woodland and Mississippian periods when extensive trade and communication took place between the peoples of Mesoamerica and eastern North America.

The Woodland Indians appear to have obtained knowledge of the cultivation of maize, a tropical plant, about 200 B.C. Such knowledge had become diffused in eastern North

America by about A.D. 200. Of interest to Book of Mormon students is that after A.D. 400 little evidence of maize cultivation appears in the archaeological record of eastern North America.² It did not re-emerge as a major crop until a new, improved variety

came from Mexico about A.D. 900.

Archaeologists have recovered ear spools from Woodland Indian sites, and ear spools appear



Remnants of the defensive ditch at the Etowah Mounds.

Photo credit: Dale Godfrey



Remnants of a defensive ditch at a site in Mesoamerica.

Photo credit: Frank Frye

frequently on carved figures in Mesoamerica. They are circular, ornamental objects and were made of stone, copper or wood. They were attached by slitting the lower portion of the ear lobe and stretching it until it fit around the ear spool.

While we do not know when it first arrived, the tobacco smoked by the Southeastern Indians was native to the central Andes.³

Chief Captain Moroni's soldiers wore armor which protected the vital areas of their bodies from Lamanite arrows, "but they were shielded by their shields, and their breastplates, and their head-plates insomuch that their wounds were upon their legs." (Alma 21:179) Although of a later era, when DeSoto entered the village of Talamico, believed to have been located in either Georgia or South Carolina, he found a very impressive temple which measured 100 feet by 40 feet, located on a mound. Inside the temple, he found six pairs of lifelike wooden statues, each pair carrying different weapons of warfare. "The room also contained 'breastplates like corselets and head pieces made of rawhide.'"⁴ Round and oval-shaped shields were also found in the room.

Some authorities believe that during the Mississippian era, the

turmoil in Mesoamerica that led to the abandonment of Teotihuacan caused colonists to come to southeast North America. The colonists apparently brought with them the habit of building truncated pyramids. Just as in Mesoamerica, the tops of these

As archaeologists continue their work, the truth of the Book of Mormon becomes more and more obvious.

pyramids in southeastern North America held temples and administrative structures.⁵ These pyramids are easily distinguished from the mounds built by other southeastern Indians. The pyramid at the Cahokia site, across the river from St. Louis, rose to a height exceeding all pyramids, save two, found to date in Mesoamerica.⁶

The southeastern Indians believed in a creature known as the Uktena. The Uktena was believed to have been a man who was "transformed and given the task of killing the Sun, the most sacred southeastern deity, who had sent down a plague to destroy man. But the Uktena failed miserably in this task and was subsequently full of jealousy and resentment for men."⁷ Authorities note: "The similarity between Uktena and Quetzalcoatl of the Valley of Mexico is obvious. Uktena is also similar in form, and to some degree in meaning, to the dragon in Asian mythology. While the

similarity between Uktena and Quetzalcoatl might be an actual historical connection, there is no evidence of such a connection in late prehistoric times between Uktena and the Asian dragon. It is, of course, possible that there is a remote historical connection. That is, it is possible that both Uktena and the Asian dragon are historical outgrowths of a world view held by Asian people before the migration of some of them to the New World."⁸ (For further information on the Asian dragon, see "China's Dragon and Mesoamerica's Feathered Serpent," *The Witness*, Fall 1990)

The evidence seems abundant and clear that there was trade and communication between the inhabitants of Mesoamerica and southeastern North America. As archaeologists continue their work, the truth of the Book of Mormon becomes more and more obvious.

1. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Ocumulgee National Monument, Macon, Georgia, "The People of the Macon Plateau"
2. Francis Jennings, *The Founders of America* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1993) 56.
3. Charles Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1976) 54.
4. Hudson, (quoting from Bourne, *Hernando de Soto*, Vol. II, 101).
5. Jennings, 56.
6. *Ibid.*, 62.
7. Hudson, 145.
8. *Ibid.*, 514.



An Open Invitation:

When Roy Weldon says, "The Book of Mormon has a date with destiny, (and) potentials no other book has...as it moves into the future," we think he is right, and we need to be telling people about it. If the book has meant something to you, share the story with us. You may say the exact thing someone needs to hear. Let's talk about what God has given us in the Book of Mormon. We invite your response in testimonies and articles.

FRAA to Host Banquet for *Helaman's Two Thousand Members*

September 30th, 1995, the Foundation will host an appreciation banquet for Helaman's Two Thousand members at the RLDS Auditorium. FRAA is making great strides in promoting Jesus Christ through the Book of Mormon, largely because of the faith, dedication and ongoing financial support of Helaman's Two Thousand members.

We have long wanted to thank them. A banquet will meet this desire and express our appreciation for the unity of spirit that has made these programs possible.

The banquet, served by the Laurel Club, will be followed by a program of music and film planned by FRAA. There will be no cost for admission. The only price will be for each member to bring another person (or couple) who is not a member. In this way, others can enjoy the evening and consider joining with us.

Write FRAA today to reserve a place for you and your guest(s). Our evening together will be memorable.

RESERVATION FORM

Please reserve my place for the banquet. Along with my guest(s), I will need _____ dinner seats.

Name: _____

Address: _____

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I wish to become a member of Helaman's Two Thousand. Enclosed is my contribution of \$_____. (Contributions of any amount are a "big deal" to us. We thank you and will send you more information.)

Tickets will be forwarded to you. Please advise of cancellations. (No children under 12, please.)

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New Book of Mormon Magazine

(Just for Kids)

FRAA is publishing a new, kid-tested magazine to teach children about the Book of Mormon. Entitled *I Witness Kids*, the quarterly magazine is filled with engaging stories and activities, whose lessons and values come from the Book of Mormon, and testimonies from young people.

For your children or grandchildren, friends or relatives, order now to make the Book of Mormon come alive in their lives.

Designed for ages 5 - 12.



Subscription/Contribution Form

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