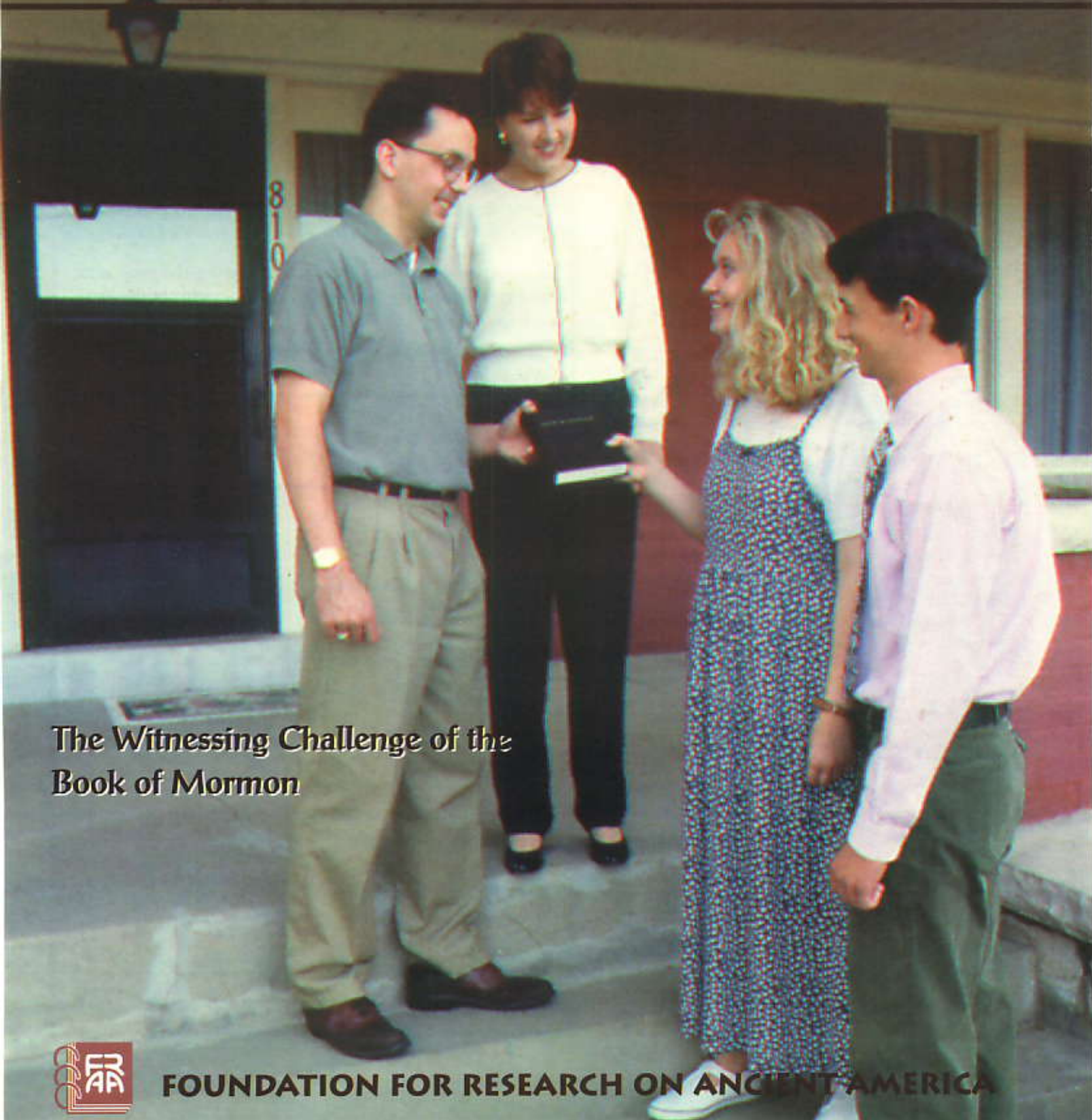


# The Witness

FALL 1996

NUMBER 92



*The Witnessing Challenge of the  
Book of Mormon*



FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH ON ANCIENT AMERICA

# The Witness

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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:  
1996 summer internship participants, Susan French and Jim Marsh handing out a Book of Mormon to Rob and Shellie James.  
Photo by Ralph Nunn

## Message from FRAA



## Season's Greetings



*In appreciation of our association during the past year, we extend our very best wishes as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.*

From the board, staff and volunteers of FRAA.

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The Book of Mormon is the best tool anyone can use to convert a person to Jesus Christ. It clearly and emphatically witnesses that he is the Savior and that it is only by and through him that we can obtain a remission of our sins. Through him we will win the ultimate prize: Celestial glory. This sacred book speaks to Christians and non-Christians alike, bearing witness that Jesus truly is the Christ. It not only confirms our faith in him, but also fills our hearts with happiness and joy as we read its words of encouragement and hope.

In the beginning of the restoration movement, thousands of people were converted to Christ as a result of reading the Book of Mormon. The Holy Spirit bore witness to them that the book was true, that Jesus was the Christ, and that he had restored his church to earth once again. Upon accepting these blessings of knowledge and faith, a great responsibility was laid on the saints. It wasn't enough for the

**condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written.**

(D & C 83:8a-b RLDS, D & C 84:54-57 LDS)

The Book of Mormon must be taken seriously. It is a privilege from God that we have this second witness, and we have the responsibility to share it with the world. Its message is of utmost importance, and people everywhere should know it.

The book points our hearts toward Christ and shows his plan for us. It tells us that, from the beginning, God created a plan to redeem fallen man. This plan wasn't a secret. The prophets, from Adam until John the Baptist and from the Brother of Jared to Samuel the Lamanite, testified of the coming of Christ and his ultimate sacrifice on the cross. Their message

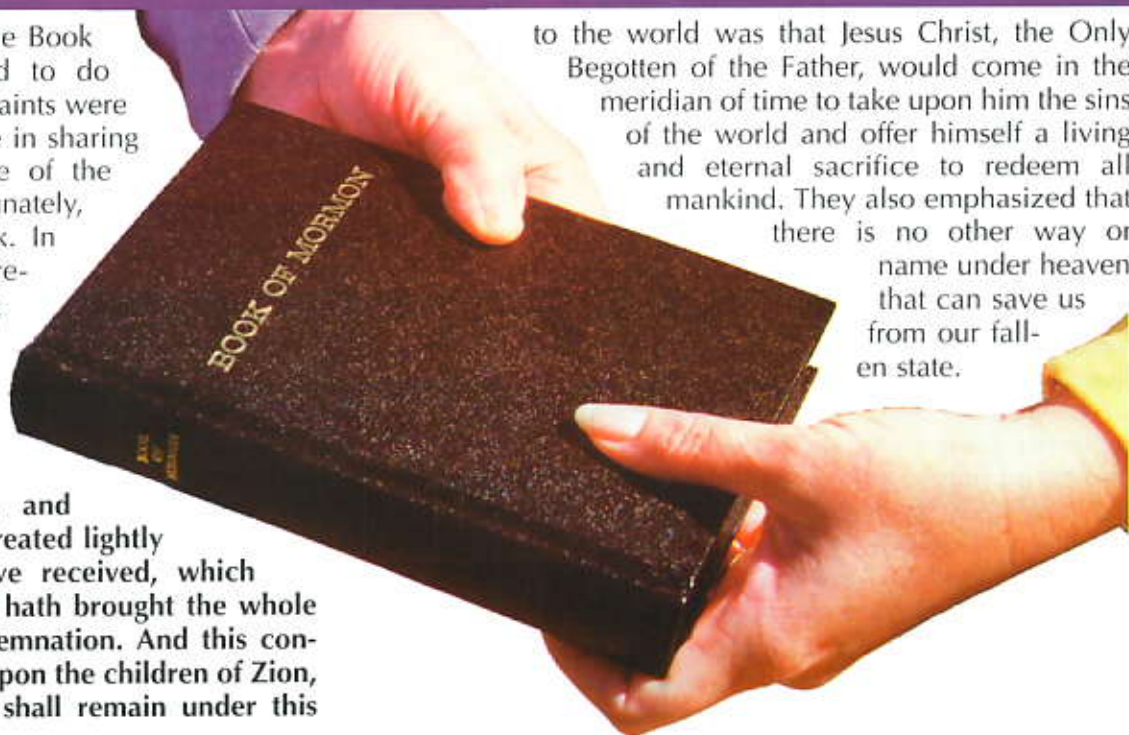
# A Witness for Jesus Christ

by Michael Hansen

early saints to accept the Book of Mormon. They had to do something with it! The saints were encouraged to be active in sharing and living the message of the sacred scripture. Unfortunately, many failed at this task. In 1832, Joseph Smith received the following revelation and presented it to the Church:

**And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received, which vanity and unbelief hath brought the whole church under condemnation. And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all; and they shall remain under this**

to the world was that Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten of the Father, would come in the meridian of time to take upon him the sins of the world and offer himself a living and eternal sacrifice to redeem all mankind. They also emphasized that there is no other way or name under heaven that can save us from our fallen state.





(photos by Kathy Vogt)

Cherie Finley—Independence, Missouri

The Book of Mormon tells us that Jesus wants us to be in his presence and longs for us to know him. In the first chapter of Ether, for example, we are told the Brother of Jared saw the finger of the Lord (Ether 1:69 RLDS, Ether 3:6 LDS). He fell before the Lord with fear that he would die because of what he had seen. The Lord told the Brother of Jared that he would take upon himself flesh and blood and appear to his people at an appointed time. The Lord then asked the Brother of Jared if he believed his words. When the Brother of Jared said yes, the Lord showed himself to him and said, "Because thou knowest these things, ye are redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I shew myself unto you" (Ether 1:76 RLDS, Ether 3:13 LDS). The Lord further instructed, "In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters" (Ether 1:78 RLDS, Ether 3:14 LDS). Jesus wants us to know him personally. The Book of Mormon helps us to know him and brings us closer into his presence.

The Book of Mormon urges us to believe in Jesus, but to some that may seem too simple. The book of Numbers in the Old Testament records an event that happened while the children of Israel were wandering in the wilderness. Because of the hardness of their hearts, God sent poisonous serpents among them. The people repented of their sins and begged Moses to pray and ask God to take the serpents away. The Lord then instructed Moses to make a "fiery" serpent and place it on a pole. He was then to lift up the serpent so that all who looked at the serpent would live and not die. Alma tells us that there were many who would not look because they simply did not believe. As a result, many people perished (Alma 16:191-195 RLDS, Alma 33:19-21 LDS). This serpent being raised on a pole was a type and shadow of Christ being raised on the cross at Calvary. His sacrifice was made to save us from spiritual death. We must not be like the children of ancient Israel who would not look; we must look to Christ to be saved. Throughout the Book of Mormon, in plain and simple language, we are urged to come to Christ and look to him for our salvation. We should share this good news with the world!

There are many ways to share the Book of Mormon with others. You can be aggressive and knock on doors or pass the book out on the street. You can be more passive and simply read it in the park or while commuting to work. A wonderful experience I had in sharing the Book of Mormon came about through reading the book in public. One day while I was commuting to work (I used to take a train to downtown Chicago), I was reading the Book of Mormon. A woman sitting next to me told me, "it is nice to see a young man reading the Bible." I explained to her that it was indeed scripture but not the Bible. She didn't know much about the Book of Mormon, so I took the next half hour to explain it to her. I never saw the woman again, but I hope and pray that a seed was planted that morning that will someday grow and flourish. There are so many ways we can witness of Jesus Christ by using the Book of Mormon. It is our responsibility to flood the world with the knowledge that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Light. With a steadfast faith, let us search the Book of Mormon and discover its message for ourselves. Then we must share its unique message with others—strangers, friends and family—for no other book has its power to witness that Jesus is the Christ.

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*Michael Hansen is an independent Restorationist. Michael has designed a web site which makes the 1908 RLDS version of the Book of Mormon available on the Internet. (<http://members.aol.com/rlds/bofm.htm>) He currently attends Columbia College in Chicago, Illinois.*

# We Can Become Informed

by Pat Elliott Heady

When Heinrich Schliemann began his search for the ancient city of Troy more than 100 years ago, archaeology was "hemmed in by ignorance and prejudice." Some scholars argued that Troy existed only in Homer's imagination. Others thought the city existed but not in Hissarlik, Asia Minor, which was the location of ancient Greek tradition. Schliemann was successful in his excavations at Hissarlik, and today, the "many-layered city of Troy is an archaeologist's paradise."

Why do scholars demean oral traditions, which is what *The Odyssey* originally was? They are usually considered fiction, "...at best, an echo of some past event distorted over time...into unrecognizable shapes." In his article "Myth of the Meteor," Frank Joseph in *The Ancient American* (No. 12, p.37) says this mind-set has "dominated scientific thinking for most of the 20th Century."

He believes a new breed of historians, exemplified by Joseph Campbell, is changing things. He says Campbell has shown that "...any myth which continues to be retold over the course of centuries or millennia must be saying something of continuing importance."

Mr. Joseph says that myths are neither "fable nor false-

hood" but "reliable time-capsules of major events." He notes, for example, the story of the Feathered Serpent, Quetzalcoatl. He says even though this evidence for European contact in pre-Columbian times is still "pilloried for political incorrectness," the story is known to hundreds of American tribes from Canada to Tierra del Fuego.

What does this have to do with the Book of Mormon? Just this: we know the Book of Mormon has escaped the overlays and distortions that might have occurred in an oral tradition. It is the real thing, and as new technologies have evolved, it is becoming more and more accurately identified with specific historical persons and places.

We are on the edge of an exciting time, and as laymen, we can become informed. Many resources are available through FRAA. For example, the magazine *The Ancient American*, a bi-monthly magazine, goes beyond traditional archaeology. It widens the discussion, presents it in laymen's terms and leaves the conclusions more open ended. It is an adventure of the amateur archaeologist. Let's be aware of the "tantalizing glimpses and faint whispers" as we enthusiastically, wholeheartedly and joyfully share the Book of Mormon with others.

## Tantalizing Glimpses

Chinese accounts of overseas expeditions date from the third millennium B.C. A geographical encyclopedia from that era describes a worldwide survey of mountains, seas and continents. Subsequent chronicles report expeditions across the Pacific to the "Isle of the Blest" and "Fu Sang." These were common Asian names for America (*Ancient American*, No. 4, p. 28).

By the 5th Century B.C., popular Chinese legends told of a wondrous land across the eastern sea known as the Isle of the Blest. It was a magic land of exotic plants and precious stones. One of these was jade, a mineral the Chinese called the "Stone of Heaven." Indeed, the Chinese valued jade more highly than gold. Jade and a similar mineral, nephrite, were used to make jewelry, talismans and emblems of rank for the nobility. (*Ancient American*, No. 4, p. 28 ).

Over the past 16 years, Chinese archeologists have dug up more than 100 Caucasian mummies. The mummies were found in four major burial sites scattered between the arid foothills of the Tian Shan ("Celestial Mountains") in northwest China and the fringes of the Takli Makan Desert, some 150 miles due south. The bodies date from about 2000 B.C. to 300 B.C. It is unknown where these apparent Caucasians came from (*Discover*, April 1994, p. 68).

Mesoamerican astrology and Chinese astrology have many profound similarities. The only comparable system in the West is the planetary week. Both Mesoamerican and Chinese astrology date from about the same period, use a combination of two cycles applied to various time periods, and use blocks of time for symbols. The common use of a 13-day period is particularly interesting (*Ancient American*, No 10, p. 34).



# The “Main Thing!”

by Dan Elliott

The witnessing challenge of the Book of Mormon is to make the “main thing” the main thing. The Book of Mormon is the single most important record of God’s dealing with the ancient American people. The glory of its timeless message has shone into some of the darkest corners in the world today. Wherever its message is embraced, a liberating freedom follows and is expressed in joy, peace and righteousness. Its archeological findings are convincing, its internal evidences persuasive, its historic discoveries revealing, and its literary style compelling. However, the single most important factor in winning the human heart to God, is the Book of Mormon’s uncompromising and dynamic testimony of Jesus Christ. The challenge today, passed on to us by the sacrifices of its inspired authors, is to ensure that this specific and timeless truth of the Book of Mormon echoes into our generation—that Jesus Christ is the good news and the “main thing” for all of humanity.

Consider for a moment the prominence of Jesus in the testimonies of the Book of Mormon authors. Each writer was captivated by the personal experience with the savior Jesus Christ. Their focus was so intense and so clearly defined that readers easily overlooked the obvious message, in favor of more mysterious and buried doctrines. However, the message is plain and simple to the reader who is earnestly in search of God. Let’s look at a few of these teachings to see how the message of Jesus is really the “main thing.”

In the very beginning of the Book of Mormon we find an account of Lehi’s vision of the Tree of Life. Quite often the main thing remembered about Lehi’s vision is the Rod of Iron, which symbolizes the word of God. In fact, many have said “we must cling to the Rod of Iron lest we be deceived and be lost on forbidden paths.” However, the instruction given in the vision is to press on toward the tree that is filled with the white fruit. Getting to the tree was not nearly as important as partaking of the fruit on the tree. The fruit had the power to fill one’s soul with exceeding great joy. As important as pressing hand over hand on the Rod of Iron was, somehow it did not have the significance equal to the tree and its fruit. Knowing this, Nephi asked God for an interpretation of the repre-

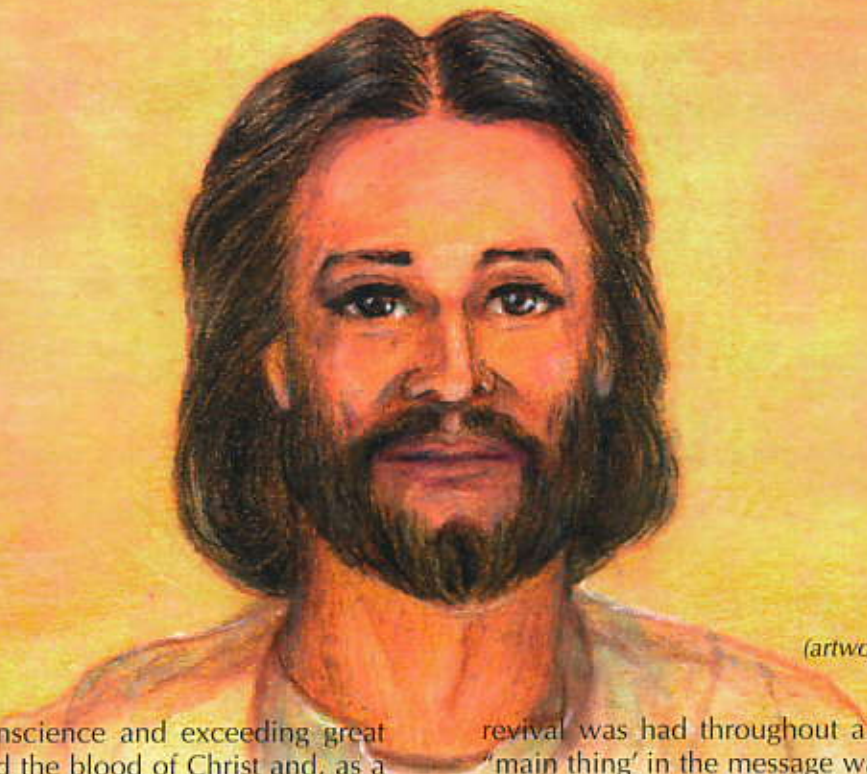
sentation of the tree. The Spirit of God responds with, “Look!” and there in full view of Nephi’s spiritual eyes was the life, ministry, sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. He saw the pure love of God revealed in the life and ministry of Jesus. Nephi’s life was never again the same. His heart ignited with the flames of a personal knowledge of God’s redeeming love through his son, Jesus Christ. In this experience Nephi discovered the “main thing” and from that point forward his life would be different.

Later, in Mosiah, we find recorded the ministry of King Benjamin. The king decided to call his people together to give them a final blessing and to announce his son as his successor, prior to his death. While this was an important event, it certainly wasn’t the main thing in calling his people together. In fact, the record tells us that he wanted to give the people a name that would distinguish them from all others. He spoke of the angel message delivered to him the night before they gathered and that the message was about Jesus:

*And shall go forth amongst men, working mighty miracles, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, causing the lame to walk, the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear, and curing all manner of diseases; And he shall cast out devils, or the evil spirits which dwell in the hearts of the children of men. And lo, he shall suffer temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; For behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people. And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things, from the beginning; ... And even after all this, they shall consider him a man, and say that he hath a devil, and shall scourge him, and shall crucify him.*

*(Mosiah 1:98-104 RLDS, Mosiah 3:5-9 LDS).*

As a result of this message King Benjamin’s people humbled themselves and a great revival spread across the land. These people experienced a change



*(artwork by Bonnie Loeding)*

of heart, peace of conscience and exceeding great joy. They had accepted the blood of Christ and, as a result, entered into a life-long covenant to keep his commandments. Gladly they took upon them the name of Jesus Christ!

Such power does not come because of a certain messenger—it comes to validate the message. Jesus was clearly the message and Jesus was the “main thing” in this event.

We next look to a time when Alma encountered a people who had been thrown out of their churches. He rejoiced because their hearts had been humbled! He and Amulek preached that if they desired to believe in God, they should try an experiment. Alma challenged them to plant the seed of God’s word in their hearts. He further expounded, that if they would diligently nourish the planted seed, they would then experience the fruit of God in their lives. The people were excited with this parable and the prospect of a good seed growing within their hearts. So much so, that after Alma and Amulek finished teaching, the people then wanted to know more specific details about how to plant the seed, and how to begin to exercise their faith (Alma 16:174 RLDS, Alma 33:1 LDS).

Up to this point no testimony had been given of Jesus, and when the people were eager to learn more of planting the seed, Alma began teaching them about the mercy of God and the plan of salvation. He explained to them about the brazen serpent Moses had lifted up in the wilderness, and how it represented the grace of God revealed through Jesus. He explained that this was the very seed they were to plant in their hearts which would sprout unto eternal life. As a result of the people receiving this inspired message, they were converted to Christ, and a great

revival was had throughout all the land. Again, the ‘main thing’ in the message was Jesus Christ.

It is impossible for us to explore all the depths of God’s love, revealed in the records of the Book of Mormon, in a single article. Its authors were compelled by the power of the kingdom, and they knew Jesus as the Christ. They wanted to tell people about the nature of his sacrifice and the power of his resurrection. They also wanted this message to be spread throughout the land, both then and now.

Today we are challenged, as were they, to share the very same message of Jesus with our acquaintances and friends. We must allow the same ministering of God’s Spirit that touched them, to also touch, heal and hold us. It captured their hearts in service to God and it must capture us. If we haven’t felt that compelling witness lately, then it may be time for us to take a quiet time out and remember—to refresh our memory of the patience of the Father and his desire to help all people. To remember that all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purposes. Most of all, to consider the love of God as revealed on the cross at Calvary. To remember the power of his resurrection. To remember Jesus, the son of God.

Jesus is not only the main thing, he is the “real thing.” He is the king of Zion, the hope of glory, and the central theme of the gospel as revealed in the Book of Mormon. He is worth sharing, because people need the Lord!

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*Dan Elliott has been a member of the Lord’s church for sixteen years. He currently serves as Presiding Elder of the Belton Restoration Branch. Dan and his wife, Lana, live in Lee’s Summit, MO with their four children.*

# Physical Witnesses of the Book of Mormon

by Thomas D. Cottle

During the last six months, my wife Patty and I have teased each other that because there are so many physical witnesses of the Book of Mormon one does not have to accept it on faith any more. It does take faith, though, to believe Joseph Smith, Jr.'s statement that the Book of Mormon is "the Keystone of our Religion and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts than by any other book."<sup>1</sup>

The physical witnesses of the Book of Mormon have been continually accumulating over the past seventy-five years and are worthy of review. Whether dealing with archeology, anthropology, sociology, metallurgy, or language, numerous witnesses are coming forth to support the Book of Mormon.

While in Yucatan at the great, ancient Mayan acropolis of Tulum, my wife and I saw evidence of the three gods of the Book of Mormon. Setting on a cliff, overlooking the Caribbean Sea, is the largest temple of Tulum. At the top of this large temple are three panels: one panel has the torso of a man; the next panel has the same torso but it is upside down; the third panel is blank. The Mayans say the three panels depict their deity. They explain that the first panel represents the god in heaven; the second panel represents the god that came down to visit them; and the third, the blank panel represents the god of whom they know very little.

Also of interest at Tulum is a small temple in the middle of the compound. This temple has only one panel in the top level. The panel has the torso of the man upside down, again depicting the god that came down to visit them. Inside this temple, in the center room on the west wall is the remainder of a painting illustrating a new-born baby. The sun rises from the Caribbean over the large temple once each year. At this time, a ray of sun shines through a thin arch of the large temple, travels across the compound and into the small temple through a small, thin orifice, and illuminates the picture of the baby. The date of this beautiful event is April 6.<sup>2</sup>

*Temple at Tulum, Mexico  
(photo by Dale Godfrey)*

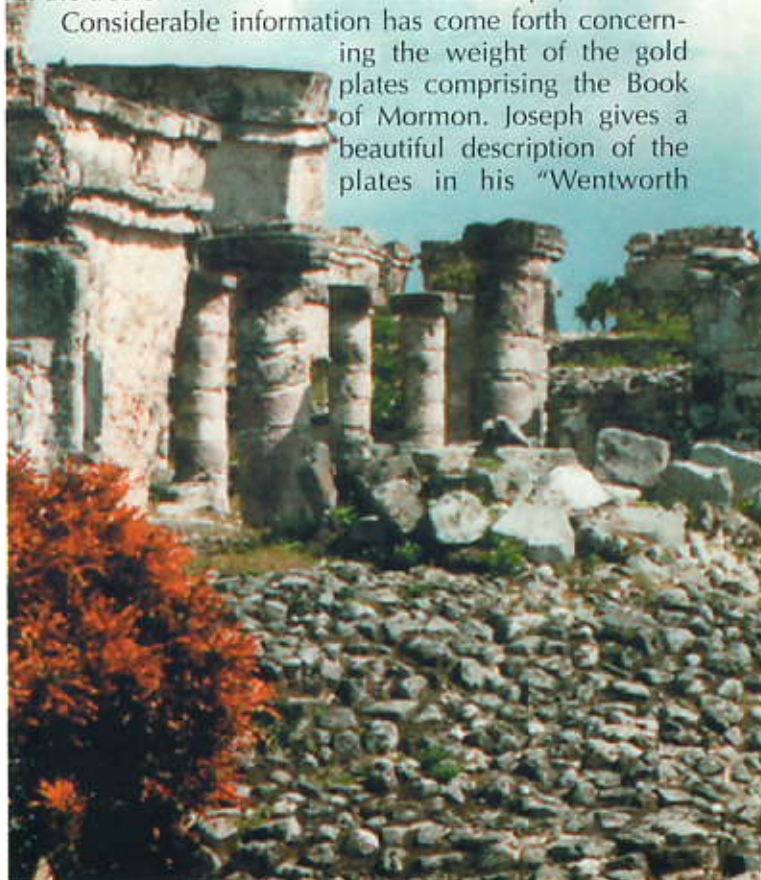


*Stela No. 5 found near Izapa, Mexico  
(drawing by Glenn A. Scott)*

There are many witnesses of the Book of Mormon found among native Americans. While working with the Ojibway Indians, we found the book "Kichi-Gami" in the Carnigae Library at Hayward, Wisconsin. This great volume tells of the Ojibway's birch-bark writing. These sacred writings on Mid-roll birch bark are fascinating. They portray drawings of genealogical records, temple wigwams, the tree of life, the three gods, etc. The book tells of the priesthood of the Midewiwins and their deity called "Mide Manido" (Grand Medicine Spirit).<sup>3</sup> The Kitchi-Gami also recounts other great parallels between the Ojibway people's belief and the Book of Mormon narrative.

While talking with a Chinese family in Kansas City about the Book of Mormon, the subject that interested them most was the tree of life because of their great tradition concerning this symbol. Presently there is considerable interest in the tree of life throughout the Orient. The sweetest evidence of father Lehi's and Nephi's visions of the tree of life is still Stele #5 close to Izapa, Mexico.

Considerable information has come forth concerning the weight of the gold plates comprising the Book of Mormon. Joseph gives a beautiful description of the plates in his "Wentworth





Letter" but does not mention the weight. Others who "hefted" the plates do give estimates of their weight being between 40 to 60 pounds. Light is being shed on this matter by some very interesting work from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology<sup>4</sup> and others concerning an ore called Tumbaga.<sup>5</sup> The research efforts of these projects provide proof that the estimates of Joseph's colleagues are factual. Concerning the Nephite records, the Book of Mormon itself mentions only "ore" (1 Nephi 19:1 LDS, Nephi 2:18 RLDS), while pure gold is only mentioned in conjunction with the twenty-five Jaredite plates (Mosiah 8:9 LDS, Mosiah 5:64 RLDS).

Some of the most exciting evidences of the Book of Mormon are ancient American texts that give information about the great, white god that visited them. One example of the many in the author's possession states:

The three great Quiche nations... are descendants of the Ten Tribes of the Kingdom of Israel, whom Shalmaneser reduced to perpetual captivity and who, finding themselves on the border of Assyria, resolved to emigrate. ... These, then, were the three nations of Quiches, and they came from where the sun rises, descendants of Israel, of the same language and same customs. ... They were sons of Abraham and Jacob. ... Now on the twenty-eighth of September of 1554 we sign this attestation in which we have written that which by tradition our ancestors told us, who came from the other part of the sea, from Civan-Tutan, bordering on Babylonia. (*Title of the Lords of Totonicapan*, translated by Dionisio Jose Chonay and Delia Goetz, Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953, pp. 167-170, 194.)

Another witness of the Book of Mormon has been the work concerning the Mulekites. In addition to research concerning the Phoenicians is another very interesting research project in Ireland. This work suggests Mulek brought a party himself to Meso-america after Mulek married a princess of European descent. His sister Tamar had become queen of Ireland and so financial backing for the ocean voyage would have been no problem. A genealogy giving the royal lineage of Ireland, where Jeremiah took Mulek, has proven to be very interesting. Ollam Fodhla (Jeremiah's) Cairn, Lough Crew Hill, near Old Castle, Ireland and the genealogy of the royalty of Europe have become a focal point of this research.

There has been great interest shown in almost every aspect of the Book of Mormon. The next ten years should be fascinating. In the meantime, let us follow the admonition of King Benjamin who said, "O my sons, I would that ye should remember that these sayings are true, and also that these records are true. And behold, also the plates of Nephi, which contain the records and the sayings of our fathers from the time they left Jerusalem until now, and they are true; and we can know of their surety because we have them before our eyes. And now, my sons, I would that ye should remember to search them diligently, that ye may profit thereby; and I would that ye should keep the commandments of God, that ye may prosper in the land according to the promises which the Lord made unto our fathers" (Mosiah 1:6-7 LDS, Mosiah 1:9-12 RLDS).

*Dr. Thomas Cottle is a retired dentist from Lake Oswego, Oregon. He and his wife, Patty, are currently serving a full time mission for the LDS church at the Liberty Jail Visitors Center.*

1. *Documentary History of the Church*, vol. 4, p. 461.
2. Photographs in possession of the author.
3. Johann George Kohl, "Kitchi-Gami Life Among the Lake Superior Ojibway," Minnesota Historical Society Press, St. Paul, 1985.
4. Lechtman, Heather, "Pre-Columbian Surface Metallurgy," *Scientific American*, June 1984.
5. *Ensign*, December 1986, p. 65.

# The 1996 Internship Program

by Anita Brotherton



1996 Summer Interns

For six weeks, in the summer of 1996, I was privileged to serve as a staff member in the FRAA intern program. There were ten young people of varying ages from 16-25. What impressed me most was that in spite of all their differences, a close-knit bond was formed from the start; and the only important factor was that they were brothers and sisters in Christ.

The interns were involved in numerous and varied activities this summer. Classes were held at the FRAA building, Monday through Wednesday. Some classes explored the Book of Mormon through covenants and chiasims. Some were about interpersonal relationships and what is truly right and wrong according to God's law.

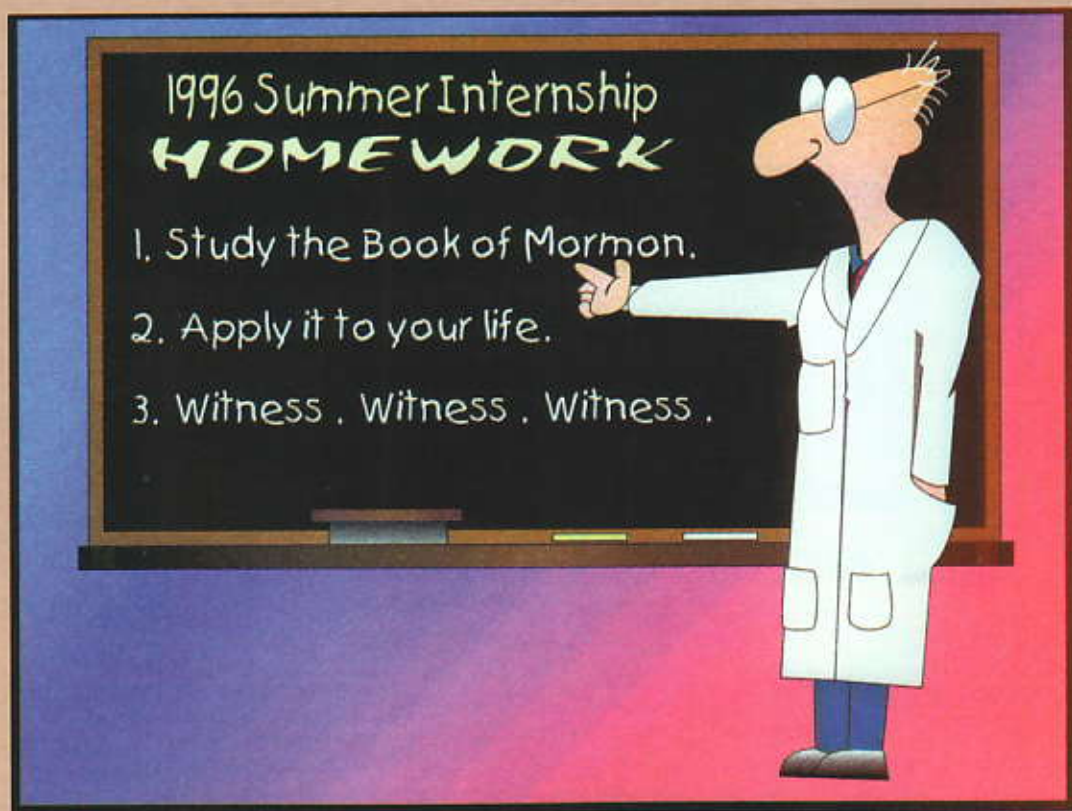
We shared in the tragedy of a holocaust survivor as she came and told of her life's experiences. I think each intern gained a better awareness of God's blessings as we listened to Brauna share her story of life in a concentration camp.

Each morning two interns would present a short worship and then we would split up into prayer groups. I felt so blessed to stand with these young people as they poured out their hearts to the Lord on behalf of each other's needs and the needs of those on our prayer list.

Thursday was our day of service. Time was spent doing yard work and washing windows for some widows in the community. Baking cookies at the Ronald McDonald House was a great joy as we helped brighten the lives of those with critically ill children.

It was a summer that will always hold a special place in my heart as I grew to know and love these young people.

I encourage all of our youth to seriously consider participation in this program. The rewards it offers cannot be measured and the memories created will remain for a lifetime.



(artwork by Renee Wersching)

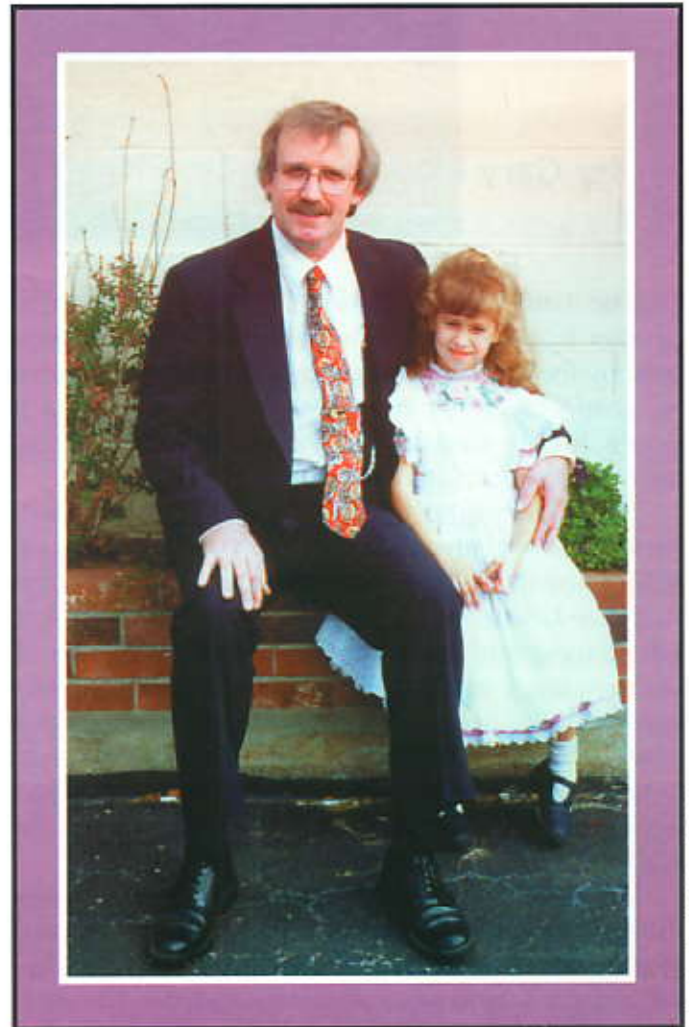
# Testimony

by Dennis Moe

Once a year, I read all three Scriptures from front to back (cover to cover). Why? Or better yet, why not? I had just finished reading the Book of Mormon and was preparing to read the Doctrine and Covenants when the Lord spoke to me. He asked me if I could tell him in a few short words what his message was in the Book of Mormon. As I thought upon this, my mind began to formulate an answer: the Nephites - the good people; the Lamanites - the bad people. The good go bad; the bad go good; then the good go bad again—Naw! This just didn't seem right. What really was the message that the Lord was trying to get us to understand? Feeling ashamed, I told the Lord that I did not really know. As the tears flowed down my cheeks and wet the cover of my Book of Mormon, the Lord spoke to me again and said, "Dry your tears, my son. For even though you have not received the full understanding of the Book of Mormon, you have had more desire than most of my people to read those words found within the books which I have commanded to be written by my prophets of long ago. I will place you upon the path, that you might find the true meaning of the Book of Mormon. I will show you the path, but you must do the walking. If you ask, I will instruct."

The Lord then showed me a book that he desired me to read. I read and read and read that book before I finally set it aside. WOW! How could one book, written in my time, have such an influence upon my understanding of an ancient holy book? I now had a fuller understanding of the Book of Mormon! But as I prayed to my heavenly Father and thanked him for his help and guidance, he told me that I still did not have the "fullness" of the understanding of the Book of Mormon.

I picked up a pen and pad of paper and wrote down what I had learned so far. I then laid my pen down and began to pray for more guidance. This is where *wonderment* happened! After I had finished praying, I slowly opened my eyes to see my pen going across the paper! I did not even know the pen was in my hand and even more of a surprise were the words that were written. They simply said, "This time read my words spiritually, not temporally." I don't



Dennis and Rebecca Moe

(photo by Kathy Vogt)

think you could have timed how quickly I reached for my Book of Mormon. It took a while for me to learn how to read spiritually, but when I finally did, a whole new world opened up to me. When I finished reading the Book of Mormon, I prayed to my heavenly Father and thanked him and told him that I now knew what the fullness of the understanding was. Jesus Christ is the Son of God and my Redeemer. Immediately I was flooded with the most intense feeling of the Holy Spirit I have ever felt. Isn't God wonderful (or should I say, a *wonderment*?)!

# The Lord's Witness to His Record

by Gary Metzger



The Lord Jesus promised the Book of Mormon peoples that their history would be delivered to their seed by the Gentiles. It would contain the fullness of the gospel taught by Jesus Christ to their ancestors. It would restore them to the promises God made to their fathers.

Since coming to Honduras in 1991, I have witnessed the Lord revealing the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon in fulfilling that covenant. The first person I baptized, when I came to Siguatepeque, was Tita Castellanos. She is now my wife and the mother of our twin boys. In the beginning, Tita had many problems with the Book of Mormon and our relationship nearly ended over the matter. Her initial reaction was to leave when she first saw it on the church pews. We decided to follow the admonition in James 1:5 (IV, KJV) and pray together for spiritual guidance.

About 10 days later, Tita had a dream. A North American man appeared in front of her as she was reading the Book of Mormon. She hid it behind her back so he would not call her a Mormon. He introduced himself as Dan and told her he was a member of the RLDS church. Tita said she also attended there. Then he told her, "But you don't believe in this book" [holding a Book of Mormon in his hand]. She said, "Oh, this book" as she pulled out the Book of Mormon from behind her back. Dan told her, "This is the truth, study it." She awoke and was immediately reminded of her previous prayer. God had revealed the answer.

Tita soon shared with me this testimony and I looked for a photo of Dan Elliott who had shared the restoration message with me. I could not find it at the time. About two weeks later, she was looking through all the photos in my wallet. As she was pulling them

out one at a time, she suddenly tapped my shoulder and with excitement said, "Gary, this is Dan!" She recognized him from the dream even though she had never met him or heard me describe my best friend. Tita began to vigorously testify of the dream and it became one of the early testimonies for the work in Honduras.

Arturo Gomez is an elder in Belize, Central America. In 1990 he received a series of three identical spiritual dreams. He saw a large black book descend from heaven with the title *The Mystery of the Treasures* inscribed in gold letters on the cover. In the last dream a lady identified herself as his grandmother whom he had never met. She revealed to him that this book was not one but three. The book was opened and he saw the Inspired Version of the Bible, Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants. She then asked Arturo to take the restored gospel to her family in Choluteca, Honduras where he was born. He obeyed this revelation and as of this date there are fifty-two baptized members there.

In April 1995, Moncho Leiva was a minister in another church where the group had been

"And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; And if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost; and by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye may know the truth of all things."

(Moroni 10:4-5 RLDS, LDS)

dissolved. He began attending an RLDS church where a man named Marino also attended. Moncho began teaching classes and holding services at Marino's house where he began to openly criticize the Book of Mormon. One day Marino's mother-in-law asked him how he could criticize a book that he had never read. This strong counsel must have been inspired because it undoubtedly caused him to humble himself before the Lord.

A few weeks later, Moncho had a dream where I appeared before him teaching the Book of Mormon. We had never met before and he had only previously seen me pass by in my car. He soon found out that I was holding services in the home of another elder named Elias. He went to visit and found him there with Chuck Sperry. They began a series of discussions which later came to my attention. I immediately went to the Lord in prayer as to what we should do.

Two weeks later, Moncho had a second dream. He and I were going up to a mountain to preach the gospel together. Elias and I felt that our prayers had been answered and decided to visit Moncho. Following many visits and discussions, Moncho completed reading the Book of Mormon. He had been convinced of every major principle of the gospel except for authority and the need to be rebaptized. He had previously baptized many people and it became hard for him to accept this particular truth. The Lord continued to bring him knowledge and assurance through one dream after another. He also witnessed the healing of a young girl that was near death. He had never before witnessed a miracle by the laying on of hands of the elders.

Thus, through the powerful witness the Lord, his heart was humbled and he chose to be baptized in September 1995. On this day the Holy Spirit spoke to me as I pondered over the confirmation and said "not only will you lay on hands to confer the gift of the Holy Spirit, but you will also ordain him to elder."

The ordination of Moncho was approved by a branch vote in Ocote and was set for November 20, 1995. At the same time Daniel, the father of the little girl who was healed, decided to be baptized. The baptism was set for the afternoon and the ordination for the evening service.

All the members of the branch plus a few visitors arrived for the baptism. I had previously been asked to perform the baptism but asked Daniel again who he wanted to baptize him. He replied, "I had a dream this week and Moncho baptized me." So it was agreed by all present that Moncho would be ordained on the bank of the river. After his ordination, he then baptized Daniel and his wife with power and author-



ity. The work began to grow in abundance through his testimony. Moncho is now in charge of a newly established work in Las Conchas.

The Lord is allowing the Lamanites to begin to blossom as a rose. If our testimony is valiant the Book of Mormon message will go forth. It will go, even as we have been commanded of the Lord, to Nicaragua and to the other neighboring nations, to the remnant of the Lamanites.

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Moroni protected it.  
God brought it forth.



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