



Book of Mormon Archaeology & Faith: New Perspective - Part 1

By Shirley R. Heater

Since The Book of Mormon was first published in 1830, believers have wondered about the great civilizations portrayed within its pages. Throughout the last 176 years this interest has grown, first as the remains of ancient civilizations came to light (e.g. Stephens and Catherwood travels published in the 1840s), and then the growth and development during the last century of organized study of these remains through Mesoamerican archaeology. It has only been in recent years that parallel patterns have grown clearer, as increasing archaeological evidences converged with and validated The Book of Mormon account. Now, in 2006, I would like to present a new perspective for your consideration as we move into the future—starting with the term Book of Mormon archaeology.

Book of Mormon Archaeology vs. Biblical Archaeology

In order to define Book of Mormon archaeology, let's look at Biblical archaeology for comparison. Biblical archaeology is well-known as a specific area of study and research. Belief in the historicity of the Bible is foundational, although there are varying degrees. You can attend a Bible college, university or seminary and obtain Bachelor's, Master's and Graduate Degrees in Biblical archaeology; several Christian schools also offer programs, including field experience. Specific research projects in the field explored evidences of the Bible, eventually presenting and publishing their results. *Biblical Archaeology Review* has

the largest subscriber base of any archaeological publication in the world. However, in spite of this rich background, a growing attitude that Biblical archaeology is no longer a valid

discipline is troubling. The trend is toward offering Ph.D. degrees in Near Eastern Studies, with a major in Palestinian archaeology which is broader than Biblical archaeology. The problem is that a lot of teaching is negative toward the Bible, questioning its historicity and theological implications.¹ (I was exposed to some of this teaching when I took graduate classes in Biblical archaeology at UMKC in the early '90s.) For purposes of this article, my comparison is based on the longstanding viewpoint of Biblical archaeology from the perspective of a believer.

Turning to The Book of Mormon, I would suggest to you that, in light of traditional Biblical archaeology, there is no such thing as "Book of Mormon archaeology"! I base this on the following observations:

- there is no Book of Mormon discipline in the study of archaeology
- there are no degree programs in Book

of Mormon archaeology²

- there are no research designs, field work or grants to explore specifically archaeology of The Book of Mormon
- there are no professional publications, either books or periodicals, of specific research results based on the previous point

So what is Book of Mormon archaeology? Before I suggest the answer to this question, let's briefly review the general outline of The Book of Mormon. It represents in its pages an account of three groups of people led by God to the New World—the earliest, the Jaredites, from the Great Tower at the time of the confusion of languages (c. 3000 BC), and two additional migrations several centuries later, about 600 BC, from the land of Jerusalem (Lehi's family, which became the Nephites and Lamanites, and a separate group known as the Mulekites, which later merged with the Nephites). Each group brought with them their culture, their religion and their records. They built buildings, temples and cities, grew crops, waged wars, migrated from place to place and generally left a mark in this new land. Most important is the central event the account leads up to—the visit of Jesus Christ to the Nephites after His resurrection. Then, after nearly two hundred years of peace and prosperity, a spiritual decline led to the ultimate destruction of the Nephite nation by the Lamanites. The record closes at AD 421 following an account of the bloody genocide. It is Mesoamerica that most Book of Mormon students and scholars believe to be the location of events chronicled in its

¹ The current state of Biblical archaeology is a larger topic than can be explored here.

² BYU has three Book of Mormon classes, two which are part of basic religion classes, and one general anthropology class—The Bible and The Book of Mormon compared with archaeological findings on early civilizations.

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pages. The study of the ancient civilizations we equate with The Book of Mormon is Mesoamerican archaeology.

Mesoamerican Archaeology

In relation to Biblical archaeology, and Old World archaeology in general, Mesoamerican archaeology is a very young discipline, only a little over one hundred years old. Mesoamerica is a cultural, geographic and archaeological term of an area that encompasses the southern two-thirds of Mexico, Guatemala and Belize, and also includes portions of the countries of El Salvador, Costa Rica and Nicaragua. Within this area, a variety of cultural traits were shared (such as building pyramids, hieroglyphic writing, and a calendar). Early archaeologists divided the time periods into Archaic, Pre-Classic (1800 BC - AD 250), Classic (AD 250 - AD 900) and Post-Classic (AD 900 - AD 1521). From the beginning most attention was on the later Classic period, primarily because these remains are on top of the earlier occupation. Actually, during the first fifty years of the last century, most archaeologists believed that civilization occurred *only* during the Classic period—after the end of The Book of Mormon account.

Yes, there were evidences of an ancient civilization found, but nothing even remotely matched The Book of Mormon time periods. That began to change in the 1950s with the application of radiocarbon dating discovered in 1947. Until 1955 most scholars believed that the Olmec were contemporaries with the Classic Maya (AD 300). In that year radiocarbon dating shocked the archaeology community when

results determined that the Olmec site of La Venta was “a thriving community by 800 BC and was abandoned in the fifth century BC, 700 years before the Classic period even began.” (Diehl 2004:15)³

This discovery clearly moved the Olmec back in time to the Pre-Classic period. Previously, no archaeological correlation came close to matching The Book of Mormon timeline. Scholars now fix the Olmec culture as early as 1800 BC (Early Pre-Classic), with the Pre-Olmec extending back into the third millennium BC. The earliest appearance of pottery is now confirmed at 2950 BC in the Acapulco area on the Pacific coast. Although this is outside the designated Olmec heartland, the area is a good candidate for the original landing site of the Jaredites. In fact, major Olmec & Pre-Olmec patterns parallel The Book of Mormon account in relation to the Jaredites—archaeological patterns that were totally unknown when The Book of Mormon came forth.

We see a similar story relating to the Maya. The Classic period received the most time and attention until recently. New Late and Middle Pre-Classic discoveries have changed the focus, as hieroglyphs have been deciphered and excavations of earlier layers revealed evidence of Classic-type elements. Origins of the complex Maya civilization have been pushed back into Pre-Classic times, the primary period of The Book of Mormon.⁴ These discoveries and others in the past decades have overturned many traditional views of Mesoamerican archaeology. This has led to the identification of some major patterns that parallel beautifully with The Book of Mormon account of the Nephites, Lamanites and Mulekites over nearly 1,000 years of history.

Book of Mormon Archaeology Defined

The preceding brief overview should remind us that since The Book of Mormon was published in 1830, the intricate history of the peoples and events has not changed and still stands today. Physical remains are indelibly imbedded in the archaeological record as well, leaving patterns corresponding to their cultural and spiritual rise and fall. Accumulating evidences from Mesoamerican archaeology, particularly in the past thirty years and more, have grown stronger and stronger, building a case for the authenticity of The Book of Mormon. As parallel archaeological discoveries compounded, the basic position was clearly one

of archaeology converging and validating with The Book of Mormon record.

Until recently, this has been my understanding of the validation/authentication process. A couple years ago as an audience member at a Q&A session during a series of Book of Mormon presentations, I sat considering a question asked about geography. I was moved to stand and contribute my thoughts on this subject. At the conclusion, I added a new idea that was a complete turn in the opposite direction from the basic position stated above about archaeology validating The Book of Mormon. At that moment I recognized this as a new insight and was excited at the possibilities. Since the time I first uttered this new thought, the truth of the idea has continued to resonate as I have pondered and explored the ramifications. As a result, it is with awe that I would suggest to you as an archaeologist and as one who believes The Book of Mormon is an authentic, historical record, that it is The Book of Mormon which is validating the archaeology! This may seem like a subtle shift in perspective, but it is actually a 180° turn. From this new position, it is The Book of Mormon which becomes the standard for interpreting archaeological evidences and must be the basis for understanding new discoveries. Thus from the perspective of The Book of Mormon, Mesoamerican archaeology is the temporal revelation of The Book of Mormon. We should EXPECT to find evidences with the advantage of a written account and the long timeline.

With this new insight, we are now ready to define what Book of Mormon archaeology is. Earlier I made the statement that there is no such scientific discipline as Book of Mormon archaeology. At least

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³ Dr. Diehl was my professor and advisor while working on my archaeology degree at the University of Missouri-Columbia. He is now at the University of Alabama, serving as Department Chairman. The Olmec civilization has been of special interest for over 40 years.

⁴ In The Book of Mormon, the greatest amount of detail is recorded from about 250 BC, after Mosiah and his people migrated to the lowlands, through the time of Christ's visitation. The books of Mosiah, Alma, Helaman and Third Nephi comprise over 60% of its pages and 10% of the entire timeline (including Jaredites). This time period correlates with the Late Pre-Classic period (300 BC — AD 250), rapidly becoming the central focus of current archaeology research.

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from the viewpoint of secular studies that is true—secular archaeologists⁵ are in the field making discoveries and applying their interpretations without any consideration of the authenticity of The Book of Mormon. Without The Book of Mormon, the theories and interpretations by archaeologists are subject to change and in fact are ever-changing as new evidence contradicts previously held ideas. But archaeologists are the ones doing the field work. In that respect, they are doing God's work and don't even realize it! And perhaps that makes the evidence speak even more loudly. I can say without a doubt that Book of Mormon archaeology means using The Book of Mormon to interpret Mesoamerican archaeological discoveries. Mesoamerican archaeology *must* be interpreted by The Book of Mormon. Without The Book of Mormon, interpretation from the secular viewpoint will be without a firm foundation. The best thing going for archaeology is The Book of Mormon. This unique record adds substance to mere speculation and theories, validating the archae-

ology, i.e., bringing true understanding of meaning and historicity to the remains left by the peoples of The Book of Mormon.

Most Book of Mormon Archaeology Still Hidden

This leads me to my next point about archaeology which I call the "2% factor." In archaeology, it is generally viewed that only about 2% of ancient civilizations or sites have been preserved. Of that 2% only about 2% has been explored. Of course, the percentage varies from place to place, but this is a general rule of thumb that remains fairly constant as new discoveries add to the overall total number of sites. So keep this in mind as we talk about archaeology relating to The Book of Mormon: We can state unequivocally that most Book of Mormon archaeology is still hidden. In Part Two of this article we will explore what we might anticipate in the future and the role of all Book of Mormon believers.

Summary points:

There is no such scientific discipline as

Book of Mormon archaeology
The study of the ancient civilization we equate with The Book of Mormon is Mesoamerican archaeology
Mesoamerican archaeology is the temporal revelation of The Book of Mormon
The Book of Mormon validates or brings true understanding to the archaeological record
Book of Mormon archaeology means using The Book of Mormon to interpret Mesoamerican archaeological discoveries
Most Book of Mormon evidences are still hidden

Sources

Diehl, Richard A
2004. *The Olmecs: America's First Civilization*, Thames & Hudson, London

⁵ I use the term secular archaeologist to mean non-belief in the authenticity of The Book of Mormon record.

Miraculous Printing of The Book of Mormon

Meridian Magazine.com

By John H. Pratt, January 6, 2006

Review by Glenn A. Scott

Pratt states that Latter Day Saints have always believed the coming forth of The Book of Mormon was a miraculous event. But, to his knowledge, no one has considered there was anything miraculous about its printing. Now an "old time printer" named Gordon Weight has called attention to the fact that printing 5,000 copies of the book under the conditions then available in only seven months is, indeed, a miracle. Weight lists numerous reasons in his book, *Miracle on Palmyra's Main Street*.

Because Weight was a printer himself, he was able to calculate the normal time required to perform the many technical steps involved in printing such a book of almost 600 pages from a hand-written manuscript. And because Pratt was also a printer, he was able to supply additional information as to why the book was required on such a tight seven month deadline.

The contract with E. B. Grandin's print

shop in Palmyra was signed on August 25, 1829 (after his first refusal to have anything to do with Smith's "Gold Bible") and the completed books went on sale on March 26, 1830. A modern print shop would think seven months a generous deadline. But in 1829 there were numerous hurdles not required today.

First, the type was set by hand (instead of by linotype or computer as it would today) by John H. Gilbert from the printer's manuscript written in longhand by Oliver Cowdery. However, it was not straightforward typesetting because Cowdery's manuscript contained no punctuation, nor was it broken into sentences or paragraphs. Its only breaks were into books and chapters; so, Gilbert had to guess at where to end sentences and paragraphs before starting his typesetting.

Second, there was no way Grandin could have had enough type on hand to set up two 16-page forms called *signatures*; one side to be printed and the other to be set up while the first was being printed. Joseph Smith had specified that the book was to be printed with new type, and that was not easy to obtain quickly at that time.

The hand setting of the type was a slow, tedious procedure. Each letter had to be selected one at a time and placed (upside down) in a hand-held composing holder called a stick. But, the real problem was in making all the lines of type exactly the same length. After the individual letters were placed in the stick, little spacers had to be inserted between certain words until each line was exactly the same length. This process was not done just as a matter of appearance—if the lines were not exactly the same length the short lines would fall out when the form was turned upside down in the printing procedure. After a 16-page form was locked into place, inked by hand and printed, it had to be broken down and each letter returned to its proper box in the type case in order to be available to set up the next 16-page form.

Weight estimates that at the best type setting rate it should have taken seven months just to set and break down the type, which they obviously did not have. It was this point that caused him to realize there had to have been some "outside help." An additional concern was that Gilbert could not

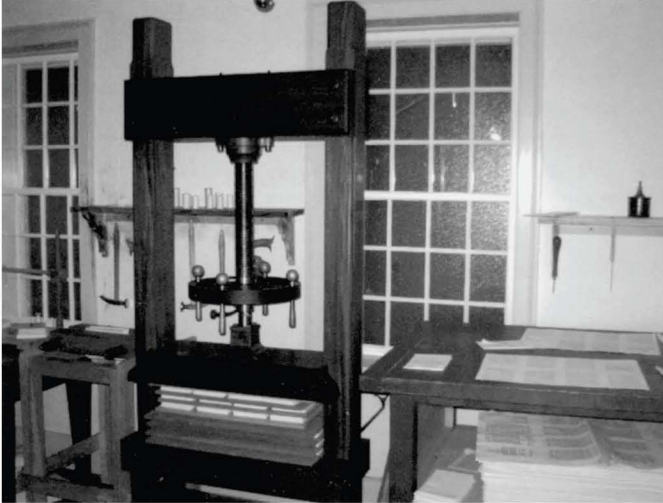
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Miraculous Printing

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spend full time setting type because he was also one of the pressmen for the first three months of the project and could not do both



Egbert Grandin Press housed in the print shop in Palmyra, New York. Credit: Vance Snively.

jobs at the same time. So, the typesetting time had to be added to the press time.

The printing process was very slow in 1829. Even though Grandin had recently bought a Smith Press (see illustration) and printing was done 16 pages at a time. Once the 16-page form was locked into place, it had to be inked by hand using a leather-covered ball filled with sand (there were no rubber rollers in 1829). After each sheet of paper was laid on the inked type, the type and the paper were cranked under a "platin" and a lever pulled to transfer the ink to the sheet of paper. Printing was first done on one side of 2,500 sheets of paper, then the second 16-page form was locked into place and from it the matching pages were printed on the other side of the same 2,500 sheets of paper with all of the pages in the proper order. This had to be repeated 2,500 times for each of the 37 signatures. Then the printed stack of paper was trimmed in half which made 5,000 complete 16-page signatures. Each book required 37 signatures. That much paper would have added up to a stack about 40 feet high.

Weight calculated that at one hour for 100 impressions on each side of a sheet, it would require a total of 25 hours for each of the 2,500 impressions. Gilbert stated that it took "nearly three days to print each form," which Weight estimated would have required *eight and a half months*, or *fifteen and a half months* for the total printing job,

which they did not have! Further, time for binding was not included in that timeframe.

So, you should now begin to understand why these experienced old printers call it a miracle. The binding, also done by hand, required all printing be completed before the printed sheets could be folded three times and clamped in a special device which Grandin had invented. Only after all 37 signatures were completed could they be sewn together for binding. Finally the books were trimmed, taken out of the clamps, and wrapped in the leather-covered cardboard covers. Weight estimated a requirement of two months to bind all books for a total of *seventeen and a half months—but all this was*

done in almost exactly seven months!

Weight asks several questions relating to this miraculous performance:

1. Why did Grandin change his mind and decide to print Smith's Gold Bible?
2. Where did all the new type come from? Weight says that the 760 pounds of type would have to have come from Germany or China. And who paid for it?
3. Where did all the special paper come from? It had to be special in order for the printing not to show through the other side. Why did Grandin agree to such a request? The paper was apparently delivered in the middle of the night. And who paid for it? Martin Harris had not sold his farm before the work began.
4. And finally, why wasn't the printing stopped by the mobs?

Pratt has added his explanation of the reason for the very tight deadline. He believes that the deadline was set by the Lord. Of course it was necessary to be completed before Christ's church was restored. But he believes that there were other perhaps even more important reasons. The completion date was Resurrection day on two ancient American calendars—one the day when Venus reappeared in the morning sky, and the other in the Mercury calendar. It was also a sacred day in the Hebrew calendar

being their New Year's Day. Only once in 500 years do all of these dates occur simultaneously.

Pratt concludes, "the Lord will provide the minimum miracle or revelation that will fulfill his purposes," which may be why no one has even been aware of the miraculous events that accompanied the printing of The Book of Mormon in only seven months.

For further details on this fascinating subject go to <http://www.meridian-magazine.com>

glyph clips

◆ Stone Box

In the last issue's column "glyph clips," we reported on the theft of a stone box that hieroglyphic expert Federico Fahsen believes once held a codex or book.

Fortunately, the exquisitely carved volcanic stone box was anonymously returned to the Guatemalan Ministry of Culture in June. Carved on all four sides and the lid, the box dates to around AD 480-550 and is about the size of a large toaster. It was originally found in a cave near the city of Cancuén in Guatemala. Reported in the July 19, 2006, issue of the Institute of Maya Studies Newsletter.

◆ New Royal Tomb Discovered

On April 29 of this year, at the site of El Peru/Waká, about 37 miles northwest of Tikal in Guatemala, a royal tomb dating to AD 378 was discovered. David Friedel, co-director of the investigations, believes this could be the founding king and says, "If this is indeed the founder, then it is a discovery of a lifetime." It is also important for believers in The Book of Mormon because it dates to the end times which involved constant warfare. The investigations began at Waká in 2002; a couple years ago, another important tomb was discovered, one of a queen, but it dates much later. Read more about the work there at this 2004 Web page <http://smu.edu/newsinfo/releases/03186.html>. The newly discovered tomb was reported in the June 21, 2006, issue of the Institute of Maya Studies Newsletter.

North of the Narrow Neck: Land of the Feathered Serpent

22nd Annual Book of Mormon Archaeological Tour
Feb. 8 - 18, 2007

Sponsored By

Pre-Columbian Studies Institute

Tour Leaders: Lyle and Sherrie Smith and Don and Pat Beebe of PSI Tours, LLC

Proposed Itinerary (Subject to Change)

Day 1 - Thur., Feb. 8 — Travel

Leave Kansas City early morning via Houston for Mexico City. Transfer to our hotel, but on the way stop and see the round pyramid at Cuicuilco, an Olmec site before the time of Christ. Mexico City will be our base for the next three days. D

Day 2 - Fri., Feb. 9 — National Palace, National Cathedral and Aztec Ruins, and shopping.

Begin with a visit to the National Palace where we see the famous murals painted by Diego Rivera depicting the history of Mexico. On the same plaza is the National Cathedral which is connected with five additional cathedrals. Note the etched glass doors and the effigy of the Black Christ. Next to the cathedrals are Aztec ruins and museum. Shopping is a must in the area. B&D

Day 3 - Sat., Feb. 10 - Bazar Sábado (Saturday Market) and the National Museum of Anthropology

Leave after breakfast for a visit to the Saturday Market. Yes, wonderful shopping. Late morning we will go to the National Museum with its splendid collection of artifacts from many of the Mexican ruins including the places we will visit. The Museum is "world class," a real treasure. The Museum has a good restaurant where you may choose to buy lunch. B&D

Day 4 - Sun., Feb. 11 — Teotihuacan

Today explore the magnificent ruins of Teotihuacan, including the pyramids of the Sun, Moon, and Quetzalcoatl. Teotihuacan was a city from around 100 B.C. to A.D. 700. All three entrances to this site have many shops selling crafts. We will be here most of the day and it has several places to buy lunch. B&D

Day 5 - Mon., Feb. 12 — Cuernavaca and Xochicalco

For an exciting adventure, today we drive south to Cuernavaca to visit the Palace of Cortez which houses the stained glass window of Quetzalcoatl. Then we go further south to explore the ruins of Xochicalco. It shows both hieroglyphic writing and symbols that relate to the Oaxaca and Maya cultures. Spend the night at Puebla. B&D

Day 6 — Tue., Feb. 13 — Cacaxtla and Cholula

Sitting high on a mountain, Cacaxtla is famous for its brilliant murals; one scene a battle between the Jaguar and Serpent people. Also next to Puebla is the largest pyramid in the world, Cholula. The conquistadores built a cathedral on top of the pyramid as it was a sacred place to the Indians. We will explore the tunnels showing seven construction phases. B&D

Day 7 - Wed., Feb. 14 — Travel to Oaxaca

Leaving the high plateau area of Mexico City and Puebla we travel through large valleys and mountains to the State of Oaxaca where we will spend the next four nights. B&D

Day 8 - Thur., Feb. 15 — Mitla, Dainzu, Yagul, Lambityeco

Drive to Mitla, stopping first to see the Tula tree, a cypress judged to be 2000 years old. Mitla is justly famous for its precisely carved stones. Shopping is good for textiles like tablecloths and clothing. At Dainzu, see clay pipe once used for the city water system. B&D

Day 9 - Fri., Feb. 16 — Monte Alban

Spend all day at the ruins of Monte Alban which sits on an artificially flattened mountain about 1200 feet above the city of Oaxaca. History began here at about 900 B.C. and shows occupation until A.D. 1521. The ruins include a small museum and cafeteria where you may choose to eat lunch. B&D

6 glyph notes

Day 10-Sat., Feb. 17— Regional Museum and San José Mogote

San José Mogote is an early site in Mexico correlating with Jaredite times. Visit the site museum. Then come back into the city to visit the regional museum. A highlight is seeing the display of gold from tomb 7 at Monte Alban. B, D

Day 11 — Sun., Feb. 18 — Worship, Reflection, and Travel

After a morning of worship and remembering, we leave Oaxaca for a direct flight to Houston and on to Kansas City. B

This tour has been arranged to be slightly less busy than those in the past. We will see at least ten magnificent ruins, experience new flora, fauna, and wildlife, take time for classes and worship so that we understand what we are experiencing, and have some moments to smell the roses.

Join us for an adventure you won't forget and let The Book of Mormon come alive for you! BUT, remember! We travel where the unpredictable happens. It's part of the adventure!

Costs

Tour cost per person \$2,395

Single Supplement (extra) \$400

Includes: All airfare from Kansas City; all ground transportation; hotel accommodations based on two persons in a double room; meals as indicated on itinerary: B - breakfast, L-lunch, D-dinner. Entrance fees, service charges, and tips.

Not Included: Country departure taxes; personal items such as a-la-carte orders, room service, laundry, and meals and other items not specifically mentioned as included.

Liquor or Tobacco: Please refrain from using either when our group is together.

Payment Schedule: \$400 deposit due NOW. Make check out to PSI Tours, LLC. Deposits refundable until December 1, 2006, when final payment due.

*****Passports Required*****

Responsibility

Pre-Columbian Studies Institute, PSI Tours, LLC and/or Lyle and Sherrie Smith or Don and Pat Beebe act only as agents for other tourist agencies, and accept no responsibility, or shall not become liable for delays, losses, damage or injury to persons or property, theft, mechanical defects or failure of any equipment, or substitution of hotel or carrier equipment beyond their control, and shall not be liable for any additional expenses incurred thereby.

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Telephone #: () _____ Email: _____

I will share a room with _____

Deposit of \$400 (each) is enclosed. Deposit total is \$ _____

Payment of tour costs described here-in, and signature below, signify acceptance on the part of the purchaser to the limits of liabilities.

Signature

Signature

Date



Memories from Mesoamerica




Taken at Xunantunich in Belize. Bottom Row, left to right: Reginald Rabidue, Edd and Kay DeTray, Barent Eliason, Doris Pugh. Second Row: Joyce Heide, Sherrie Smith, Beverly and Fred Rawlins, Pat Beebe, Dane Presler, Barbara Eliason, Lorri Bigley, Pat Hall, Lu and Herb Fillmore, WD Hall. Third Row: Charles Beck, Caleb Billings, Donna Kelso, Jillian Maas, Luke Melling, Ted and Elizabeth Combs, Simcha Mendelsohn, Sallie Presler, Ann Brown, Gus Ralston, Aaron Presler. Back Row: Lyle Smith. Not pictured: Gerry Bird, Cliff Herod, Herb Fillmore, Jr., and Don Beebe.

By Jillian Maas, Australia

My brother Luke's life-long dream and my passion for traveling led to our teaming together and joining the 2006 PSI Tour to Belize and Mexico. Prior to leaving home, I had decided to make spiritual preparation through fasting and prayer, hoping that Luke's expectations would be met, and that he would have many wonderful testimonies to share from what we were both hoping would be a memorable experience.

By the time we joined the tour in Kansas City, we had been traveling through various countries for five weeks. I was weary and my spiritual batteries were low and in need of recharging. I was very much looking forward to this next adventure and anticipating a good time.

God is so good! From the very beginning, my heart was touched by the welcome and friendship of fellow saints of whom we did not yet know.

Upon visiting Xunantunich, the first site, it was evident to me, that

although I was amazed by the magnificence of the structure and history, I was not going to receive a special personal testimony at these sites. I found myself appreciating the passion and love that others within the group had for our Book of Mormon brothers and sisters, their service to God and their dedication in building cities and keeping records.

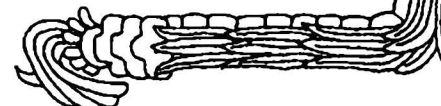
It was the evening classes that lit my fire. My soul soared as we learned of the numerous findings and evidences that undoubtedly prove the validity of The Book of Mormon. It was as though my joy was full to overflowing, and I wanted the whole world to know of everything that we were being taught. I had to consciously restrain myself from standing and applauding. It is sufficient to say that my excitement of the good news was barely constrained. Of an evening, even after some long days of driving and walking, I still looked forward to becoming more acquainted with the Lord's people, both past and present. I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know everyone and was ministered to by all who attended. My soul was revitalized and I was truly blessed.

By Luke Melling, Australia

G-day Saints, my name is Luke Melling and I made the trip from Australia to receive a greater learning experience with

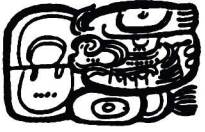
my church history. Many wonderful blessings happened along the eight weeks of our trip in America and prior to our journey beginning on January 21, 2006. My most favorite site was Lamanai, not only because the ruins were so high and still in good shape, but also because of the boat ride whizzing through the channels of foliage, spotting wild life like alligators and birds.

But, the most beautiful testimony of the trip was the kindness that came without effort from all that attended, with endless hugs and sharing of individual testimonies. I loved it. When I hadn't had interaction with fellow Saints for over six weeks, to have a union in spirit and belief with 31 others just put energy back in my joy. I made new friends with everyone and had opportunity to visit and share with a few after the trip—which was a heart breaker when we had to leave. To all my new-found brothers and sisters, I hope to see you in Zion soon.



glyph quotes

“...ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith.” — Ether 5:7



By Clyde W. Noren

FAITH is present in our lives whether we recognize such an influence or not!

FAITH is that God-given seed of belief that is planted into one's soul at birth awaiting release and growth. It is a natural trait

*“if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed
ye shall say unto this mountain, remove to yonder place,
and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.”*

or instinct that is shown by tiny babies when they exhibit trust in their parents and in their surroundings for their nurture. As children become adults this trait of faith becomes subdued and is called upon in a lesser degree.

This gift of FAITH from God is very necessary for enduring and overcoming the problems in life. Life may dole out many extraordinary situations wherein the Tenet of FAITH must be called upon to deal with such challenges. Thus the bidding to “move out in FAITH” comes to the forefront in our life. Jesus said, “if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed ye shall say unto this

mountain, remove to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.” (Mat. 17:20)

Strong FAITH is essential for producing miracles in a person's life. Moroni states in The Book of Mormon, “For if there be no FAITH among the children of men, God

can do no miracles” (Ether 5:23). Alma 10:76-83, the story of Alma and Amulek in prison, exemplifies the results of strong FAITH. Alma and Amulek called upon the Lord to give them strength according to their faith that the cords that bound them would be broken. Their cords were broken and an earthquake occurred which caused the walls to fall allowing them and the other prisoners to escape. This account parallels the story, in the Book of Acts, of Paul and Silas being freed from prison in a similar manner. Moroni's writing in the Book of Ether states, “for ye receive no witness until after the TRIAL OF YOUR FAITH”

(Ether 5:7). If we are sincere in our desire for a testimony, we can expect the testing of our proclaimed faith. This test or cost separates the sincere worshipping Christian from the “wann-a be” Christian.

FAITHFUL members of the Restoration, past and present, have received visits by heavenly messengers. Church history is replete with these spiritual manifestations. Such visits occurred in the Creston, Iowa Congregation at various times in 1962 and 1963. The members experienced visits from John the Beloved, Elijah, Lehi, Nephi, the sons of Helaman, and the three Nephites. The spiritual gifts of prophecies, healings, tongues and the interpretation of tongues were received by many members, but not all. This high degree of spirituality was achieved because of their deep faith and the desire to witness for the Lord. (From: “The Creston Experience”, as told to Elder Robert E. Ostrander.)

Today these historical spiritual blessings of miracles are available to all believers but are dependent upon their willingness to secure a *testimony of Jesus Christ*, by the TRIAL of FAITH, and bear that witness of HIM in their lives.

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