



# glyph



# notes

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## Location, Location, Location: Book of Mormon Geography May Be More Important than You Think

*The* Editor's Note:  
*The article below is an adaptation of a letter written by Frank E. Frye in response to an inquiry he received concerning geography and The Book of Mormon. It has been edited for publication in glyph notes, while maintaining the informality of a letter to a friend. In a nutshell, the letter of inquiry stated that salvation doesn't depend on knowing the geography of the Bible or The Book of Mormon and "the argument about the geography seems to be a trick of the devil to divide and distract the Book of Mormon believers."*

Dear Friend,

Thank you for being so open regarding your feelings about The Book of Mormon. Where The Book of Mormon took place is not as complicated as many try to make it. And yes, I do believe it is important to study the text, as well as archaeology and geography, to discover where it took place.

I agree that one can be born again without even reading the Bible, The Book of Mormon or knowing about the geography of either. Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and many other prophets led the Lord's people to an eternal relationship with their Savior long before either book was fully written.

Some years ago, I heard a radio interview from Kansas City, Missouri, which was an attack against the LDS church. The interview was really an attack on Joseph Smith Jr. and the doctrines they erroneously believed Joseph allegedly taught. The interviewer asked his friend to tell what he had found out about The Book of Mormon. The only response was, "It has *no* geography. The Bible took place in real world locations. Egypt, Jerusalem, Greece, Rome, Babylon—everybody knows where they are. That gives the Bible credibility. But The Book of Mormon—it has no real geography." That was the only thing he said against The Book of Mormon. That simple statement probably led many people to have doubts or negative thoughts about The Book of Mormon.

I believe it would be a mistake to ignore the great testimonies brought about because of the archaeology of both the Bible and The Book of Mormon—especially when the information does exist. God told us that in the last days "knowledge would be increased." We have an enormous amount of new information about The Book of Mormon today compared to when it was first published in 1830. Should we ignore this new knowledge—or sit back and allow it to be distorted by liberal,

*Cont. on Page 2*

*The Book of  
 Mormon does  
 have certain  
 geographic  
 parameters that  
 must be met—  
 in particular,  
 about the Hill  
 Cumorah.*



Location (Cont. from Page 1)

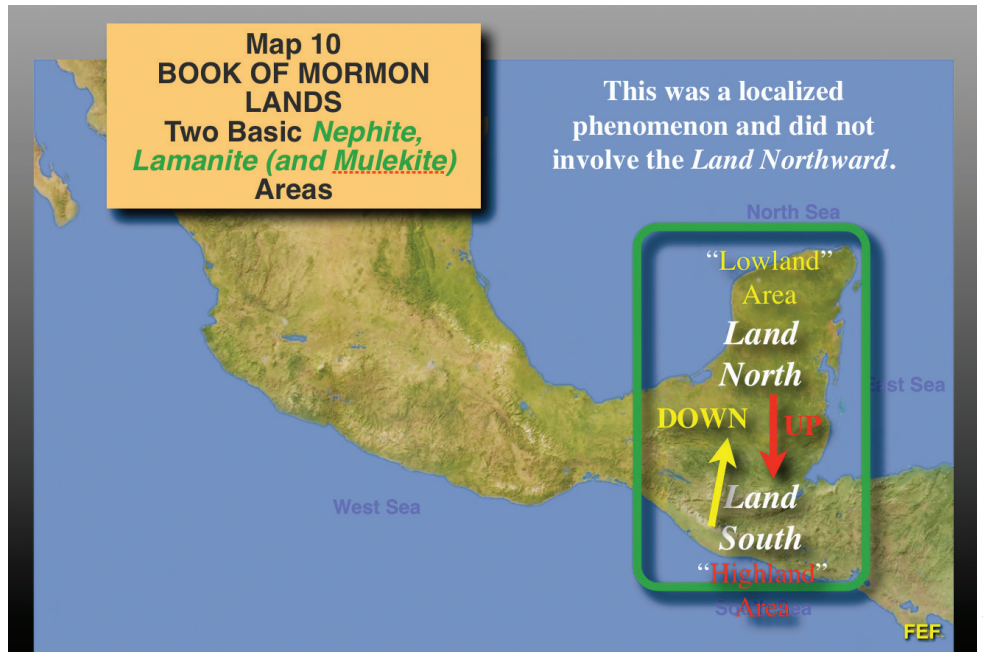
so-called scholars and/or atheists?

Yes, the devil will use distortions about The Book of Mormon to discourage people from reading it or accepting it. After all, it is one of the greatest witnesses about Jesus Christ and his eternal plan for mankind in print. Shouldn't we expect the adversary to try to deceive the public about it?

We are told in the Bible that we should always have a ready answer for the hope that lies within us (1 Peter 3:15). A lot of the hope that lies in my soul is about the real Jesus I know from the Bible and The Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon contains many plain and precious things about Jesus that may be nullified if we permit the skeptics of the world to gain the upper hand on us by someone failing to clearly explain something as simple as its geography.

Simply saying the geography is a distraction of the devil doesn't satisfy my inquisitive mind. I haven't spent the last 50 years of my life in the study of the text of The Book of Mormon, along with its geography and archaeology while traveling extensively through and living in many parts of the Western Hemisphere, without learning some pretty substantial facts that sustain where its history took place.

On one occasion years ago, I had the privilege of

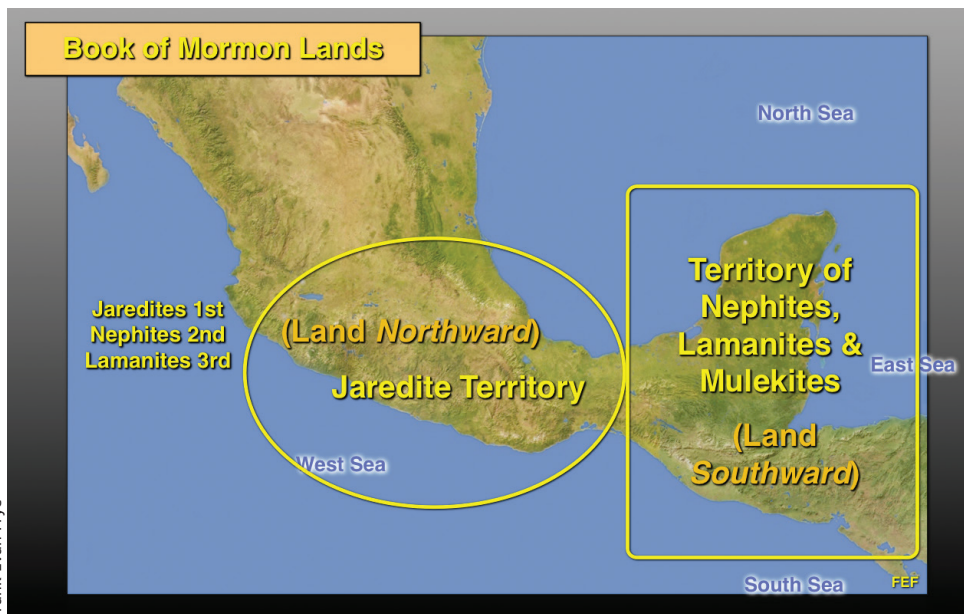


Frank Evan Frye

driving with a close friend over the terrain of Mexico from the Emerald Coast of the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Coast where Mexico meets Guatemala; and then driving the roads that follow the Guatemalan border all the way to Belize on the Caribbean Sea. Less than two weeks later, I had the opportunity to fly with another close friend in a small plane over the same exact terrain and over many archaeological ruins. That was an amazing opportunity and gave me new and fresh views of the geography of those places and how they relate to the geography of The Book of Mormon. Many other flights in small planes and commercial airlines have taken place in the intervening years over Mesoamerica and the United States—even viewing Niagara Falls and its

surrounding area near Palmyra, New York, from around 10,000 feet.

Few people today take the two-continent theory of the geography of The Book of Mormon seriously. That means South America is supposedly the Land Southward and North America is supposedly the Land Northward. Several years ago, while ministering in Santiago, Chile, I asked a new friend where he believed the history of The Book of Mormon took place. His answer to me was short and surprising. “No one ever gets lost in Chile.” I was startled by



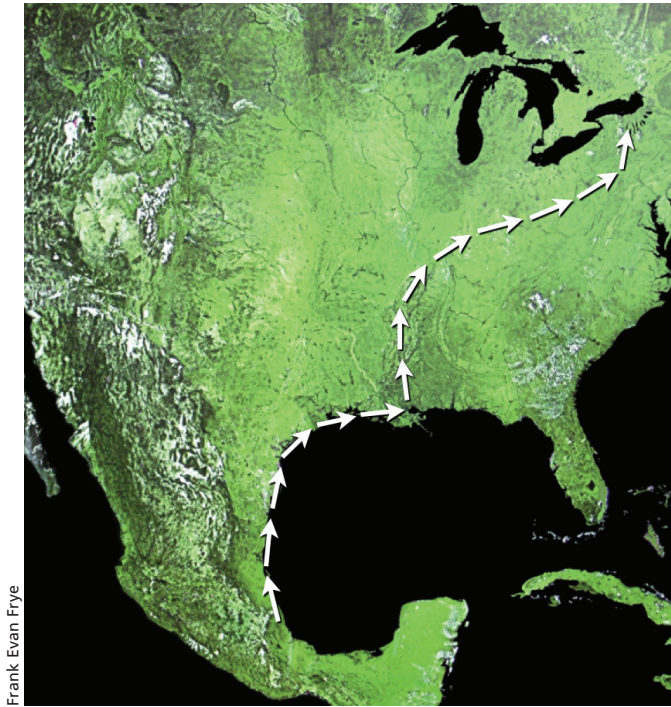
Frank Evan Frye

such a short answer and asked him what he meant. He then related to me the events recorded in Mosiah 5:60-61 [LDS-8:7-8] where a search party was sent from the Land of Lehi/Nephi (in the Land South) to find the Land of Zarahemla (in the Land North; see Helaman 2:129 [LDS 6:10]). The search party got lost and found the Narrow Neck of Land that led into the Land Northward and the area of the final battles of the Jaredites. They returned home, believing that they had been in the Land of Zarahemla.

A short time later, another search party from Zarahemla arrived in the Land South and rescued Limhi and his people. My new friend then explained that “Chile on the west coast of South America is so narrow that if anyone ever did get lost in a forest, all he had to do is climb a tree. The ocean is always on the west and the Andes Mountains are always on the east. Thus, no one could ever get lost.” Then he told me that he had concluded from the text that “the lands of the Book of Mormon had to be in Mesoamerica.”

Four to five years after the publication of The Book of Mormon, the hill in New York where Moroni buried the plates was mistakenly called “Cumorah” by Oliver Cowdery. This was most likely a result of the misinterpretation of the statement made by Mormon about where he had hidden up all their records with the sole exception of the plates that he gave to his son Moroni (Mormon 3:8 [LDS 6:6]). Those were the only plates NOT placed in the true Hill Cumorah where the final battle of the Nephites took place. The text of The Book of Mormon then tells us that Moroni had those plates in his possession for 36 more years before he finished the last chapter of his book (Moroni 10). The text of The Book of Mormon still doesn’t say how long Moroni had the plates after he finished writing and when he buried them in the hill in New York State. You can travel a long way in 36+ years.

The Book of Mormon does have certain geographic parameters that must be met—in



Frank Evan Frye

*Moroni’s probable route to the place where he buried the records in what is now New York State.*

particular, about the Hill Cumorah. When these details are ignored or distorted, the book can lose credibility by the serious Bible student—as well as by the atheist. Can you imagine a Bible map that places Babylon along the Nile River? How about a Bible map that places the Red Sea on the east side of the Italian peninsula between Italy and Greece? Who would accept such inaccuracies about the Bible? Such impossible combinations are found in many of the proposed geographies of The Book of Mormon.

References to the “Land Southward” and the “Land Northward”

can cause some perplexity, especially if it is not noticed that there is a “Land South” and a “Land North” which are very different places. The Land South and the Land North are both part of the Land Southward. The Land South is consistently spoken of as being higher in elevation than the Land North. This is contrary to the way any modern map would be made. Wow—did Joseph Smith mess that up! Everyone knows that “up” is at the top of a map and is always north. That is, unless Joseph didn’t write The Book of Mormon. However, Joseph said that he translated The Book of Mormon from an ancient record by the power of God. The writers of The Book of Mormon didn’t know about the conventions that we use in map making—saying “up for north and down for south”—they were just describing the lay of their lands.

If we really believe that The Book of Mormon is the history of two great civilizations that lived over 2,000 years and 1,000 years respectively in the Western Hemisphere, we ought to take it seriously enough to try to find where they were. The clues are in the text and in the archaeological remains that those two civilizations left behind. The very rocks cry out and are not silent even in our day. Many things can be learned from the writings and legends of the numerous tribes that live in the Americas. Geography is a serious matter and should

*Cont. on Page 4*



## Location (Cont. from Page 3)

not be treated lightly or ignored. I would be glad to share the evidence that I've put together about this fascinating topic. There is a set of DVDs and a booklet in the works about the geography of The Book of Mormon.

By the way, my first love is also the Lord, but I also love the Word of God as found both in the Bible and The Book of Mormon—and I believe you do too. However, I don't like it when either book is placed in a position, whether by believers or unbelievers, that

would cause confusion and cause others to reject them. While there will always be people like the Richard Dawkinses and the Carl Sagans of the world who will attack and mislead others about any part of the Word of God—we, as believers in The Book of Mormon, should do all we can to keep those kinds of things from happening. I'd love to share more, but time and space do not permit.

May the Lord bless all of us as we prayerfully study God's Word.

~ Frank Evan Frye 



## Twenty-Five Years!

**W** By the editor, Sherrie Kline Smith  
 With this issue, Oct/Nov/Dec 2019, we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the publication of the first *glyph notes* in Nov/Dec 1994; and the establishment of Pre-Columbian Studies Institute (PSI), a 501©3 nonprofit research education organization. From its inception, PSI's mission has been to help turn faith into knowledge; more recently, to turn faith into knowledge and knowledge into action.

Those who believe The Book of Mormon to be holy scripture believe because of faith. This precious

ancient record speaks to the heart with convincing power of its authenticity and its witness of the life and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Yet—we live “in the world.” Many voices cry out against this book. In addition, sometimes “facts” from archaeology and other scientific fields do not always appear to agree with what is recorded in The Book of Mormon. These voices whisper to our minds and cause some believers to begin to doubt their belief in The Book of Mormon. Sooner or later, some of these people will turn completely away from The Book of Mormon because their mind tells them it is not true.

Unfortunately, some of this rejection comes from



During PSI's first years, *glyph notes*, was a four-six page newsletter. In January 2001, our design was slightly changed and pages increased to eight. In May-June 2007, *glyph notes* was completely redesigned by Aaron Presler, who continues to design the publication. All three designs have continued to use of the “calendar” glyphs on the first page. Those glyphs usually equate to the 15th of the second month indicated on the issue.



a lack of understanding and the knowledge (see Hosea 4:6) to combat these negative ideas.

PSI wants and strives to bring knowledge to build up faith; to give faith a strong foundation; and to bring evidences from intellectual facts gleaned from archaeology, anthropology, and epigraphy. In other words—convert the mind as well as the heart.

In these past 25 years, many discoveries have opened new understandings in the field of archaeology that have brought the archaeological record closer, or to even exactly matching, the information found in The Book of Mormon, verifying, unbeknownst to the scholars, the truth of the record. The article in the last issue by Lyle L. Smith, “Jaredites: Where and When: My Testimony,” provides a good example of how new advances bring to light confirming evidences.

One of the most recent and revolutionary developments in archaeology is the use of Lidar, which is transforming understanding of ancient civilizations all over the world. Lidar in Mesoamerica has already provided exciting confirmations of details in The Book of Mormon such as intensive agriculture needed for high population and massive fortifications indicative of extensive, intense warfare. (See page 6 for more on Lidar.)

On the other hand, the decipherment of the Maya hieroglyphs, plus the more recent understanding of these writings and the literary devices employed, such as couplets, chiasmus, word pairs, and poetry again provides some marvelous evidences to build up the foundation of faith. In addition, even more exciting—to me at least—is what I believe to be the “blossoming of the Lamanites” as Maya school teachers and students are learning how to read and write the writing system created so long ago by their “fathers” (ancestors). Not only are they learning the



*Around 1987, Mayas from different areas, representing several different Mayan languages, began attending hieroglyphic workshops. As time progressed, and more and more of them could read and write the glyphs, they began also teaching children. The photograph is from the August 13, 2014, workshop. For me, this appears to be a beginning of the “blossoming” of the Lamanites (D&C 49:5a). I urge you to read the history of MAM: [Mayas Teaching Mayas at: discovermam.org/history/](http://discovermam.org/history/) and also look at the photos from the August 13, 2014, blog post on the same site.*

basics, they are crafting their own poetry with the glyphs in the fashion of the ancient ones.

PSI is basically an all-volunteer organization. Over the years, numerous people have helped to make *glyph notes* possible—authors, artists, designers, and proofreaders and those who, over the years, performed the tedious task of keeping the mailing list up to date, preparing labels, and ordering the labels in the official manner desired by the post office. We especially appreciate all those who used to gather to help label the publication for mailing. We enjoyed good fellowship during those times of labeling that we now miss since transferring to an automated mailing process.

When PSI began, I was the editor and writer of the first few issues of *glyph notes*, a bi-monthly, four-page newsletter. A year later, my husband’s employment took us to China for two

years. Living so far away, I found it difficult to continue editing. In May/June 1997, Patricia Beebe became chairman of an editorial committee. She faithfully continued serving in that capacity for almost 13 years until the end of 2010 when I again assumed editorship of *glyph notes*. Donald and Patricia Beebe have been totally committed and active with PSI since its inception, serving in many different capacities.

Last, but by no means least, are our faithful supporters. All of us involved with PSI are tremendously appreciative of the great support provided by our readers over the years. We could not have accomplished so much without you!

A lot more could be said about our past 25 years! What might the next 25 years bring?

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Now—circumstances compel us to come to you


*Cont. on Page 6*



## Twenty-Five Years! (Cont. from Page 5)

with a special request. Some of you may have noticed that *glyph notes* have been arriving at your door later than scheduled. It has become increasingly more challenging for me to be editor due to a chronic illness. The need is great for someone willing to step up and agree to taking over the editorship. **Would you please join me in prayer that the Lord will**

### provide PSI with a new editor?

These skills can be learned, and I believe I have the strength to train and work with someone willing to assume responsibility for *glyph notes*. Your prayers concerning our search for a new editor would be greatly appreciated. Interested individuals can contact me via the PSI email listed on the back cover of this issue or by telephone at 816.838.5191. 



# glyph Clips

By Sherrie Kline Smith

## Lidar Lecture: “Recovering a Lost World: The LiDAR\* Revolution and Ancient Maya Warfare.” [youtube.com/watch?v=Nxh3MjL9Y6Q](https://youtube.com/watch?v=Nxh3MjL9Y6Q)

Recently, a friend called my attention to this online video of a lecture given October 28, 2019, at Brigham Young University by Dr. Stephen D. Houston, the Dupee Family Professor of Social Sciences at Brown University. I truly thank my friend for doing so! It is a wonderful lecture that all *glyph notes* readers should watch.

Dr. Houston presents an excellent explanation of Lidar, comparing it with past archaeological methods of mapping ancient sites. Not only does he expound the topic in a clear and understandable way, but also employs beautiful photographs and graphics to illustrate his lecture. Dr. Houston states that the introduction of the use of Lidar in the field of archaeology is as revolutionary to archaeological advancement as radiocarbon dating was in the late 1950s and 1960s.

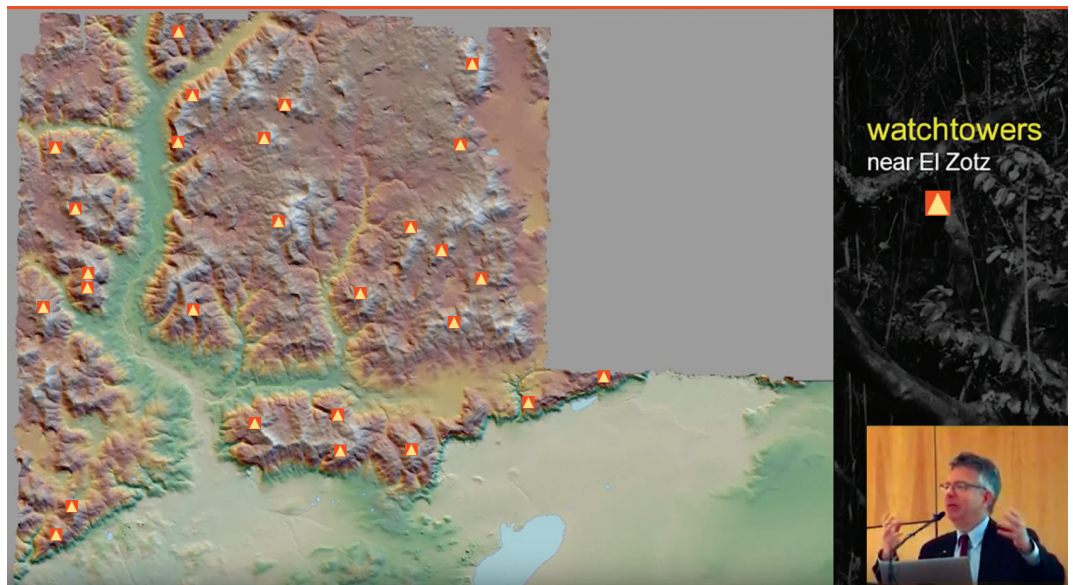
In addition to his discussion about Lidar, Dr. Houston covers some of the recent discoveries revealed by Lidar related to warfare that occurs in the Maya area during the very years of the exterminating battles at the end of The Book of Mormon. While the lecture reviews much of what was published in the Jan/Feb/Mar 2018 and, a year later, in the Jan/Feb/Mar 2019 issues of *glyph notes*, this visual lecture

energized my understanding of some of the topics such as dense population and extensive defensive fortifications with “many, many watchtowers.” (See the yellow dots in the image below.) Dr. Houston also explained that because of Lidar, archaeologists now can glean new understandings about Maya warfare: the infrastructures, the presence of large armies, the terrible desecrations, and warfare’s political consequences.

If you choose to watch it—and again I highly recommend doing so—pay attention near the end for the date A.D. 378, just seven years before the last battle in The Book of Mormon. If you don’t have a computer, ask a friend or grandchild to help you be able to view the video.

This absolutely galvanizing lecture about Lidar and the wealth of new information and concepts it reveals confirms the account in The Book of Mormon in a way that many prior discoveries have not. Please watch it.

\*Spelling conventions of Lidar vary. 





# glyph quotes

*And their eyes were towards the sound thereof...*

~ 3 Nephi 5:7 [LDS 11:5-6]

By Mindy Jane Mulheron Jennings

I, like Nephi, was born of goodly parents and brought up in the church. I grew up watching the *Animated Stories from the Book of Mormon* videos and watched my heroes save the day, time after time. There was Nephi—the most patient, strong, and kind person I’d ever seen (besides my dad, of course). Ammon gave up everything and went to enemy lands to preach the gospel. Alma the Younger saw the error of his worldly ways, returned to the straight and narrow path, and spent the remainder of this days reaching out to those who were like he had been. So many awesome witnesses for Christ were shown in those videos, and then came my favorite in the series: *The Savior in America*.

I watched the story again and again, marveling at the awesomeness and magnitude of the event. If I could pick any moment in history to experience, it would be the moment when

Their eyes were towards the sound thereof; and they did look steadfastly towards heaven, from whence the sound came; and behold, the third time they did understand the voice which they heard; And it said unto them, Behold, my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name, hear ye him.

And it came to pass as they understood, they cast their eyes up again towards heaven; and behold, they saw a man descending out of heaven; And he was clothed in a white robe, and he came down and stood in the midst of them, and the eyes of the whole multitude were turned upon him, and they durst not open their mouths, even one to another, and wist not what it meant, for they thought it was an angel that had appeared unto them.

And it came to pass that he stretched forth his hand, and spake unto the people, saying, Behold I am Jesus Christ, of whom the prophets testified

should come into the world (3 Nephi 5:7-12 [LDS 11:5-11]).

What a moment—to hear the voice of God and see the Savior descend from above. All my life I have longed to be in that place—to have an experience like that.

While attending Graceland University, I had the opportunity to visit Mesoamerica with Lyle Smith and Don Beebe. I was finally going to see those places and walk where my heroes had walked!

On the second day of the trip, while at the site Dzibanche, I wandered from the group in search of shade. I found a small wall on the edge of the site and sat down to take it all in. As I gazed on the

ruins of the city, it came alive before me. It was as if I was watching one of those videos I loved as a child. The city was magnificent! Its grounds were lush and vibrant, and the colors were beautiful. There were people everywhere: adults buying and selling at places of business, children running and playing, horses and carts pulling goods, and all kinds of animals.


It was only the briefest moment, but it was the most breath-taking moment of my life. I’ve never doubted The Book of Mormon. I’ve

believed it was true from the time I was a little girl. I went on the trip just to see the sites, but the Lord, in his infinite mercy, blessed me with a tremendous experience, and I am so grateful.

And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophecy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins (2 Nephi 1:48 [LDS 1:26]).

The Book of Mormon is true. It is the word of God.

*Animated Stories from the Book of Mormon*. The Living Scriptures. Ogden, Utah (12 videos), 1987-1992.

*Editor’s note: This “glyph quotes” article first appeared in the January/February 2010 issue, page 7, under the name Mindy Jane Mulheron.* 



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*Location, Location,  
Location*

*Twenty-Five Years!*

*glyph clips*

*glyph quotes*

*Joy of the Season*

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## Joy of the Season

*A* By Patricia J Beebe

ll over the world, millions of people celebrated Christmas season 2019 in a myriad of ways. As Christians, we celebrate Christ's birth, as the name implies. Non-Christians celebrate the season as well. Traditions and customs dictate how the holiday is observed. Some celebrate Jesus's birth and acknowledge him as the greatest gift ever given.

However, the larger part of the world does not even know who Christ is. In other words, as the saying goes, they know not the "reason for the season." There is a common element among the many, many different customs and traditions of celebration—that is the giving and receiving of gifts. Birthdays are traditionally celebrated with gifts, and our young ones sing "Happy Birthday, Jesus." Wisemen from afar brought gifts of gold, myrrh, and frankincense for the newborn savior.

Our Heavenly Father and his Son have given to mankind throughout the ages a multitude of gifts and blessings. Some received their gift and responded in return with like-love; some received their gift but chose to put it on a shelf; some do not acknowledge that a gift has been

given (didn't ask for it, don't want it, don't need it), or so they think. And, sadly, most have not had the opportunity to know about a gift. But one thing is for certain, our Heavenly Father and his Son have given you a gift. Each gift is unique as you are unique in God's creation. It is part of his plan. He needs everyone. Unlike the world, Christ would not be offended if you regift—he encourages us to do so. And, yes, like our society today, Christ desires that you remember the source of the original gift.

Going forth in the New Year, how will you share the blessings of gifts received? Unlike God and Christ who gave their all, we CAN give of our best. May the excitement of Christmas and the beginning of a New Year carry forward in your countenance and may you share the "joy of the season" throughout 2020.

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Your gift of a contribution to Pre-Columbian Studies Institute is greatly needed and always appreciated. Won't you please join with PSI in helping to expand knowledge of and faith in The Book of Mormon and its message to the world? A self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience. 