

Book of Mormon Geography

By David B. Brown

An interesting bit of knowledge has developed as a result of the research being done by Neil Steede as he works to correlate Book of Mormon Archaeology with Mesoamerican Archaeology by identifying parallels in historical people, places, and events. Because of historical evidences found including pottery styles, cultural patterns, architectural styles, geographic descriptions, stela inscriptions, etc., it is now possible to create a map of the Book of Mormon lands where Book of Mormon names can be placed over the names of modern-day ruin sites.

Neil's approach to Book of Mormon Archaeology is truly unique in that he refuses to be bound by theories that are "best guesses."

Neil has found through the years the School of Mesoamerican Archaeology has "shackled" itself by holding fast to dating theories as if they are fact. While the Goodman, Martinez, Thompson Maya Calendar Correlation (GMT) is the standard used by almost every Mesoamerican school, Neil maintains that this correlation is in fact only a theory and until information is provided that solidly binds the two calendars together then this correlation dating theory must be understood as a variable; it is therefore one facet that can and should be ignored if there are other evidences that are more compelling and beyond the realm of coincidence.

Armed with this perspective, Neil has "freed" him-

self from being bound by a dating theory and investigates the evidences provided by the artifacts found at various sites. By removing the restraint of dating, Neil has discovered a remarkable interconnectedness throughout many of the Lowland Maya cities ranging from Palenque and Tonina in the west to Rio Bec and Lamanai in the east, with a host of cities in between. These connections are determined by studying shared cultural influences such as pottery style introduction and development in local cultures; writing style introduction and development; political connections and military interactions between cities; high-profile personality influence from city-to-city; funerary style introductions

Codex Developments

By David B. Brown

Some interesting developments are currently in process concerning the Covenant Codex that was reported in the Spring Edition of the Cumorah Messenger. Over the summer months Neil Steede provided samples from the Covenant Codex and life-size scale photographs and artistic renderings of the

codex to Mexican archaeological officials. In recent weeks Neil has learned that there is a growing interest in this artifact as it does not seem to fit into any known category for codices, either authentic or counterfeit. The use of construction materials, the type of folding, and the artistic style seems to be completely

unique. Needless-to-say, the officials are very curious and this document is now undergoing further testing as the archaeological community attempts to determine the age and origin of this artifact. There will certainly be more news to report in the Winter newsletter.



Glenn Scott's artistic rendering of the "Final Judgment" scene from the Covenant Codex.

Inside this issue:

Book of Mormon Geography <i>Cont.</i>	2 & 3
Sharing the Cumorah Message	4
Adventures in Archaeology	5 & 6
Curse or Blessing; A Personal Testimony	7
Sharing the Cumorah Message <i>Cont.</i>	8

Book of Mormon Geography *continued*

and declines; farming style introduction and alterations due to political/military influence, and so on.

Historically, these items are usually studied in isolation by the archaeologists working the site. For example, there is a lead archaeologist assigned to a site, but he/she only oversees the projects being performed by others working on various dig projects within a site to ensure that archaeological integrity is maintained and that the proper reporting to the Department of Antiquity is being performed. One group may be working and reporting on pottery styles while another is working on stela inscriptions. Once a report on the pottery style is produced the thermoluminescent tests may accurately date the item as much older than the interpreted date on the inscription that was reported by another group, but typically the reported date of the site is determined by the inscription dates, therefore inaccurately representing all the historical evidences that may be gleaned from such a ruin.

For decades archaeologists have been digging, cataloguing and reporting their findings, but the dating issue has prevented archaeologists from being able to develop a comprehensive explanation of the rise and fall of the Maya civilization or any number of the other cultures found in the Mesoamerican area. The artifacts only provide proof of the existence of a culture and the level of living they achieved, but without longer narratives on the stela and a better understanding of the inscriptions found it is very difficult to comprehend the motivations that knit together the threads of information

provided from the artifacts.

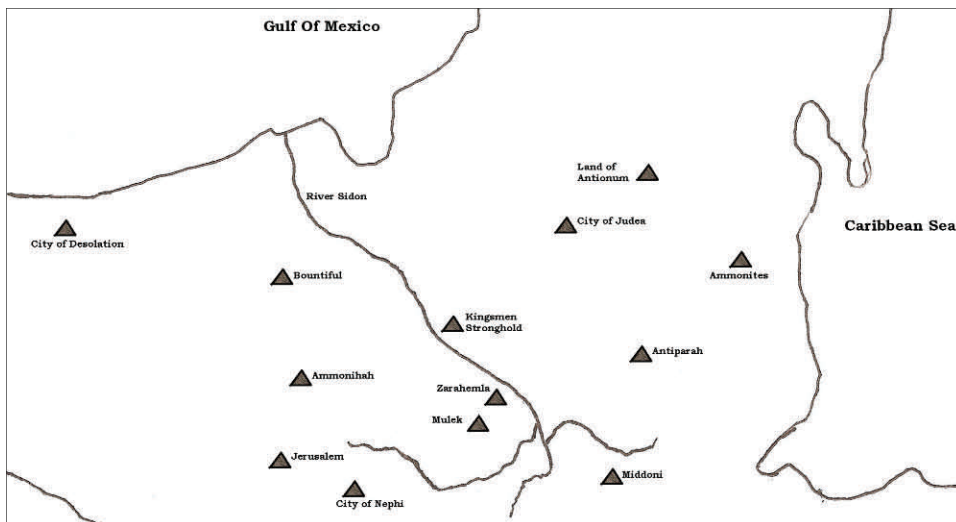
Now enters the unique function of the history that can be gleaned from the Book of Mormon. This abridged spiritual record was developed with a focus to report how a people came to these western continents under divine influence and direction, and how they witnessed the fulfillment of Middle Eastern religious prophecy that most of the world has come to know through the influence of Judeo-Christian faiths. And, they recorded more prophecies yet to come for later generations. In order to set the context for this spiritual record these writers recorded a brief history of their cultural developments and interactions that provide us with a skeleton of historical events and relationships that should be able to be identified as one studies ancient cultures. Most importantly because it is a spiritual record it is filled with a rich understanding of the motivations that drove differing social movements within that culture. Therefore, the history reported in the Book of Mormon should be able to act as a “template” to identify the ancient culture where this record originated.

And, in fact, it does. Neil digs deep into different reports from archaeological sites and by overlooking the inscription dating he is able to gather information regarding social and cultural influences from site-to-site; when the site began to flourish and improve its standard of living due to increased commerce and industry, or when a site was affected by war with a decline in living standards. Dating aside, the Book of Mormon culture appears to be totally parallel to the Maya Culture with the Nephites being the

Lowland Maya located in the northern portions of eastern Mexico including the Yucatan, the Peten of Guatemala, and the country of Belize; while the Lamanites are the Highland Maya located in extreme southern Mexico, Guatemala, and northern El Salvador. With the knowledge of cultural interactions and motivations as provided through the Book of Mormon it is now possible to trace Maya cultural influences and movements throughout the Mesoamerican region. And, now viewing the archaeological reports of artifacts, inscriptions, battles and technology through the lens of motivations provided by the Book of Mormon it is absolutely remarkable how the Maya culture is “fleshed out” and very understandable as all of the threads become knitted together through the spiritual understanding provided by these ancient Book of Mormon writers.

Neil is presently working out the details of this map and preparing it for public presentation, but having gained his permission I will include here a listing of the Book of Mormon names and the present-day archaeological ruin site or feature names to which they correlate.

- Zarahemla**—Yaxchilan
- City of Nephi**—Chinkultic
- City of Judea**—Calakmul
- Bountiful**—Palenque
- City of Jerusalem**—Tenam Puente
- Ammonihah**—Tonina
- City of Desolation**—La Venta
- City of Lehi-Nephi**—Kaminaljuyu (renamed City of Nephi during the period when King Lamoni’s father was converted, returned to the name of Lehi-Nephi soon after the death of King Anti-Lehi-Nephi)
- City of Ishmael**—Chalchuapa (Tazumal)
- Land of Antionum**—Early Period Rio Bec Culture consisting of eight cities with similar architecture
- River Sidon**—Usumacinta River
- City of Mulek**—Bonampak
- Middoni**—Cancuen
- Antiparah**—Tikal
- City of Boaz**—San Lorenzo
- Narrow neck of land**—Isthmus of Tehuantepec
- Land Northward**—all geography west of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec
- Land Southward**—all geography east of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec
- Kingsmen Stronghold**—Piedras Negras
- Land of Zarahemla**—at the point of its



Book of Mormon Geography *continued*

clearest definition the Land of Zarahemla ran from the Caribbean Sea on the east to the Pacific Ocean on the west and bordered roughly at the latitude of 16°N on the south and approximately 17°15'N on the north.

Land Bountiful—all geography north of the latitude of 17°15'N including the Yucatan Peninsula, but bordered on the west by a north/south line running along the swamplands just east of La Venta.

Land of Desolation—the geography immediately surrounding the ruin of La Venta then westward to the entrance to the narrow pass

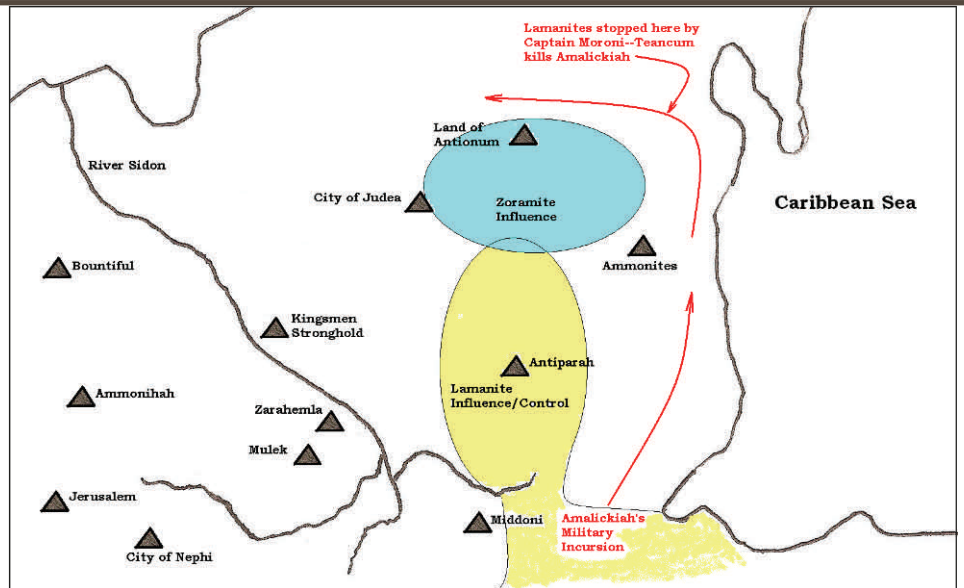
Narrow pass to land northward—a raised ancient sand bar running parallel to the Gulf of Mexico coast through the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. This land feature acted as a natural highway as the elevated path kept its travelers above the swampland on either side.

Lamanite Territory—all geography south of the latitude of 16°N with a couple of exceptions during Lamanite incursions

These are just a few of the more certain identifications that have been placed. What is amazing is how once these cities and features are placed on a map one can truly begin to understand the geo-political implications that are insinuated but never clearly defined.

For example, why did Amalickiah choose to first attack the Nephites on the eastern shores of the Land of Zarahemla? The map shows us that this maneuver was relatively unseen as the Lamanite/Zoramite union was acting as a visual shield between Zarahemla and the newly established cities along the coast. For Zarahemla to send a sizable force they would have to first travel northward through Bountiful, going past the Zoramite lands to the pass by Chetumal that leads southward along the coast. The map allows us to realize that Amalickiah was truly a military strategist who was attempting to overthrow the Nephites by performing a swift flanking move using the Lamanite-friendly Zoramites as a blind to conceal all that was happening. It was only an inspired Captain Moroni who literally “headed them off at the pass” and prevented the fall of Bountiful and the flanking of the capital of the Nephite nation at Zarahemla.

Again, this is a remarkable development of knowledge that causes me to



reflect on the scriptural references of how the process of knowledge of these ancient people would be brought to our understanding in these latter days. The 7th Chapter of Genesis in the Inspired Version records Enoch’s conversation with God where Enoch is told in verses 68-70, “And the day shall come that the earth shall rest. But before that day the heavens shall be darkened, and a veil of darkness shall cover the earth; and the heavens shall shake, and also the earth. And great tribulations shall be among the children of men, but my people will I preserve; and righteousness will I send down out of heaven, and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection of the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men. And righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine own elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare; an holy city, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion; a New Jerusalem.” Surely the “righteousness out of heaven” is the angelic deliverance of the Book of Mormon, but the “truth out of the earth” is still being revealed with every artifact that further validates this precious record.

To close, I want to share with you a recent revelation of scripture that I found. It comes from the 45th Chapter of Genesis and regards Joseph’s forgiveness to his brothers for selling him into slavery. In verses 5-7 Joseph says this, “Now there-

fore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land; and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity **in** the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.” From the record in the Book of Mormon we know that Joseph’s seed was sent to the Americas and became the Maya. We also know that Joseph’s seed took with them the Brass Plates that record all of the history of the children of Israel up to the first destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem. Therefore, they were sent away from Jerusalem with the Israelite record of posterity. We also understand that these Plates of Brass were buried in the Hill Cumorah with all the rest of the library including the Plates of Nephi. Is it not strange that the Bible records Joseph as saying that he will “preserve you a posterity **in** the earth,” when the proper article for the context of this statement would be “**on**” the earth? Again, scripture is helping us to understand that God’s plan is indeed revealing a “marvelous work and a wonder.” Joseph’s posterity **in** the earth *is* the truth that is coming forth out of the earth through artifacts—not to mention that one day the Brass Plates will be revealed that will be a great deliverance for the children of Israel; an event that will bring the scattered tribes an understanding of their heritage and will herald the complete gathering of Israel.

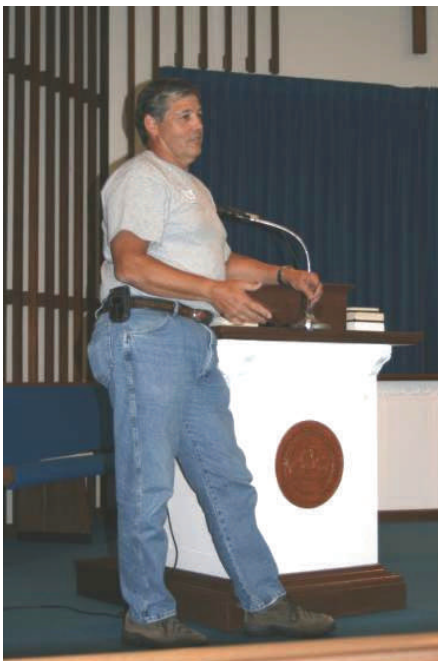
A Testimony on Sharing the Cumorah Message by Randall Lawrence

I could tell that this was going to be a special weekend from the moment we met at Mike Brown's to pick up the SUV that we would be driving to and from Galesburg, Illinois. There were four of us: Tim Brown, Jerry Stoner, David Brown, and myself. We gathered together for prayer, and I knew that it was meant to be since the four of us had gathered together for a sweat lodge ceremony/prayer meeting prior to the 2008 Hill Cumorah Expedition Team spring trip in March of this year. Once again, it would be the four of us. What a wonderful God-incidence (coincidence) to begin the trip!

We arrived at the Galesburg, IL Community of Christ congregation on Saturday July 12th without difficulty. No one was there at first, but Joan Westrom, our hostess, and Carol & Leroy Carpenter (pastor and husband) soon arrived to let us in to set-up, go over the weekend schedule and explain that we would be lodging at Joan's while she went to stay with her daughter. Thank you, Joan and Carol and the Galesburg congregation, for your gracious hospitality!

The Saturday night program had one and half hours slotted for the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team; this was to fol-

Tim Brown making the presentation of Hill Cumorah Team experiences in Galesburg, IL on Saturday evening.



low a cookout and a short hymn sing. We proceeded to set up the equipment for the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team slideshow and set out the artifacts and books on the tables in the church foyer. We were blessed with wonderful food and better fellowship with the Galesburg Saints and many homecoming visitors for

The Spirit was strong throughout the service and it seemed to give us a glimpse of Zion's living in having two HCET members, a World Church appointee, and a Restoration supporter all up on the rostrum together and sharing their testimony of God moving in these latter days.

the weekend. We even got to witness and speak with a couple of young LDS elders who happened to be walking in the neighborhood and invited them to the program later that evening; they did attend our meeting and hear our testimonies. For the welcome, persons got to say where they were from—east and west Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin, Mississippi, Kentucky, and other places in the Midwest and beyond.

The Hill Cumorah Team presentation began with Tim Brown giving introductions and testimonies regarding the early beginnings of the HCET. Jerry Stoner followed with experiences and testimonies of 2004 and 2005 trips including being detained by the local police and the administration to a snake-bitten young lady named Catalina. David Brown gave itineraries and testimonies of last three years with an emphasis on the 2008 trip. As each person finished their portion of the program I did not think the next person could do better than the last, but each testimony and experience seemed to build on one another. The program ended as we had hoped with enough time to allow questions and answers. During this Q & A session, I was able to testify to the healing found on this trip with the losses of Dorene Steede and Jerry Hedenberg. At the suggestion of the pastor the Galesburg congregation graciously took up a freewill offering for the HCET group following the presentation.

Afterwards, we were privileged to share with the persons in small groups and to answer questions. Many newsletters were picked up and shared with the congregation and visitors.

Our hostess Joan guided us to her lovely home and then left to stay with her daughter. Tim, Jerry and I got to share important moments of the evening with each other and David spent some time with a brother who had some questions. David shared PowerPoint presentations on the San Bartolo murals and the Covenant Codex with our inquisitive visitor. We were very excited about the way God opened the doors to share with the Galesburg folks and their former members and families. The plan for the next day for Sunday morning service included two testimonies by HCET members and by former members Rich Kohlman and Larry Harlacher; both former members of the Galesburg Congregation. Before bed on Saturday evening we prayed that the Spirit would work on the hearts of two of us and that it would be clear who should speak and testify during the Sunday morning service.

We awoke Sunday morning and it was very clear from the look on David's face in the morning that the Spirit had

Randall Lawrence sharing his personal experience of the spiritual healing that took place during the 2008 Expedition.



Adventures In Scriptures

Issue 4

2008



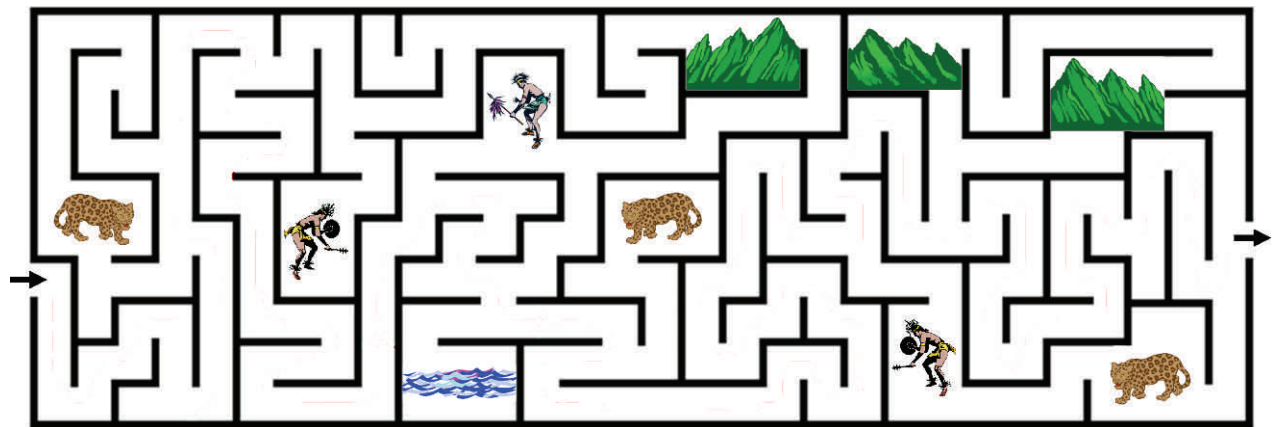
DIVISION IN THE PROMISED LAND

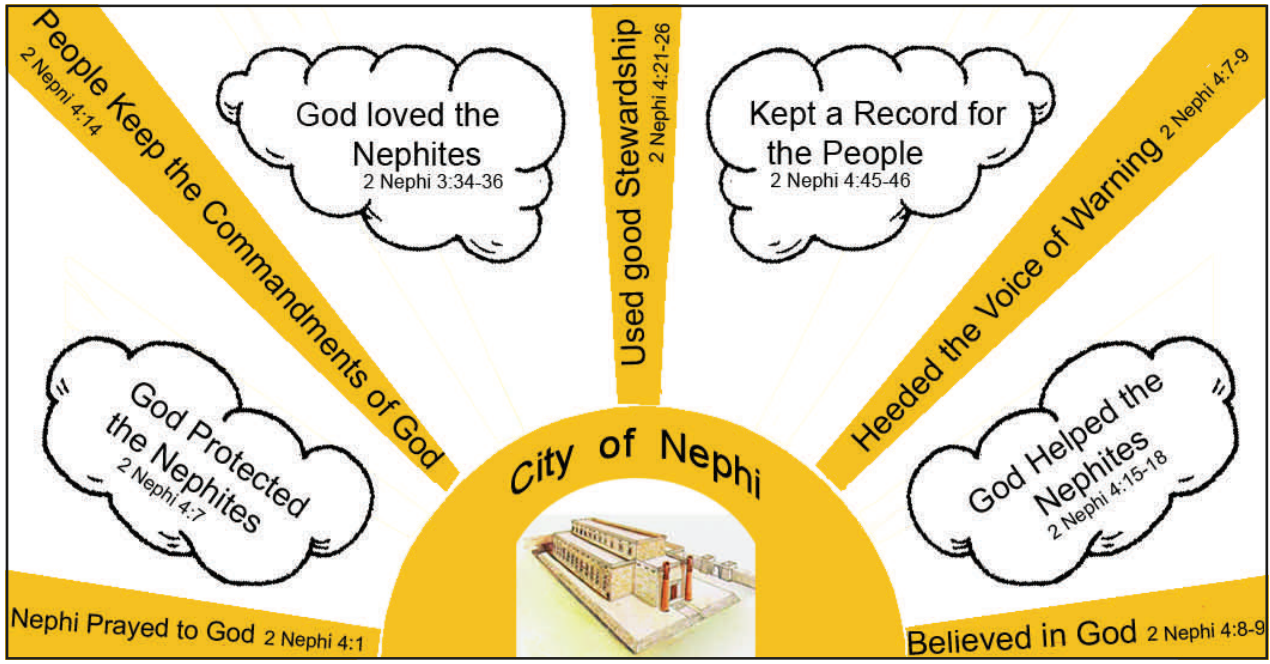


Nephi's brothers, Laman and Lemuel, continued to be angry with Nephi, therefore God warned Nephi to flee into the wilderness. All those who continued to believe in God and obey his commandments went with Nephi. They traveled for many days into the wilderness and found a place away from their brothers. The people were separated into two groups and were called the Nephites and the Lamanites. The Nephites began to build buildings and learned to work in all manner of wood, iron, copper, brass, steel, gold, silver and precious ores. They were an industrious people and labored with their hands. They built a temple to honor God.



God was unhappy with the Lamanites because they chose to rebel against him and not keep his commandments. He wanted to bless them as he blessed the Nephites. But the Lamanites chose to separate themselves from God and became a dark and savage people, full of mischief and idleness.

God wished to separate the Nephites from the Lamanites because they could no longer live together in peace. He wanted to keep them from the sins the Lamanites were committing. He protected the Nephites and they were a happy people and they became prosperous and did multiply through out the land. The seeds of a new civilization were nourished by the Nephites in this new land.





Look up the Scriptures shown in the Sunrises and Clouds to see find out the full story of how God blessed the Nephites.

Honor God

1. Down
 2. Across
 3. Down
 4. Down
 5. Across
 6. Across
 7. Across
 8. Down
 9. Across
 10. Across
 11. Across

- Across**
- 2. to assist someone in need
 - 5. to donate or contribute
 - 6. show devotion towards God
 - 9. to talk to God
 - 10. being grateful
 - 11. admire
- Down**
- 1. the greatest commandment
 - 2. taking care of your things
 - 3. to give someone aid
 - 4. respect, love, awe
 - 7. giving part of something
 - 8. read and obtain knowledge

Find Words from Nephite Story

S R E P S O R P T C M B H
 E S E L P M E T O L U O R
 I D A W C A S P W I L I T
 H R U R S S P A L N T D W
 E W O T B E R D E R I E H
 A P E N R F I E P P P Y H
 S E O J A N O D V D L O G
 L R X C G L N S O L Y E C
 K Z C S D R E H E O I T H
 F S L A M I N A E T W S P
 S K C O L F X Y S S A R B
 I N D U S T R I O U S L E
 Y S E R O S U O I C E R P

- | | | |
|---------|----------|-----------------|
| ANIMALS | BRASS | BUILDINGS |
| COPPER | CROPS | FLOCKS |
| GOLD | HERDS | INDUSTRIOUS |
| IRON | MULTIPLY | PLATES OF BRASS |
| PROSPER | SILVER | PRECIOUS ORES |
| STEEL | TEMPLE | WOOD |

Hidden Puzzle Phrase
 Find and circle all the listed words. Then start at the top left and write down all the un-circled letters to find the hidden phrase.

T _ _ _ _ _



Curse or Blessing; A Personal Testimony By Chris Scott

As I began to contemplate the children's page for this newsletter, it was time to face a struggle that has been in the back of my mind for many years concerning the Lamanite curse that is recorded in the Book of Mormon. Particularly II Nephi 4:31-38. *"Wherefore, the word of the Lord was fulfilled which he spake unto me, saying: That inasmuch as they will not hearken unto thy words, they shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord. And behold they were cut off from his presence. And he had caused the cursing to come upon them, yea, even a sore cursing, because of their iniquity. For behold, they had hardened their hearts against him, that they had become like unto a flint; Wherefore, as they were white, and exceeding fair and delightful, that they might not be enticing unto my people, the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them. And thus saith the Lord God, I will cause that they shall be loathsome unto thy people, save they shall repent of their iniquities. And cursed shall be the seed of him that mixeth with their seed: for they shall be cursed even with the same cursing. And the Lord spake it, and it was done."* Realizing that there might be others who struggle with the same passage I decided to write this testimony with the intention of sharing my struggle of what is written in those verses and the fact that it seems to be contrary to my belief system. I could not word the introduction to this testimony any better than what is written in Roy Cheville's book [The Book of Mormon Speaks for Itself](#) Exploration 11 page 172, I have been taught from a very young age that skin color is not an issue in the eyes of God, but that he loves everyone equally and that we are all capable of loving each other and affirming each other as individuals regardless of race, nationalities, cultures etc.

We learned the song at a very young age; Jesus loves the little children, All the children of the world; Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight, Jesus loves the little children of the world. Because I live in a land that is a melting pot of diversity of culture, races, ethnic heritages, skin colors, languages, and people that love each other regardless of those differences, I have been richly blessed. Especially in my professional

life, my church life and my own neighborhood where I have encountered people who have added a rich variety to my life because they have come from different cultures and have different skin colors. By putting into practice what I have learned that we are all the same and God loves all of us, I have opened myself to what others have to offer and have a great appreciation for perhaps what God intended when we contemplate the kingdom.

We have a story in Genesis of a tower that was built out of pride of what man could accomplish. The story goes on to state how God confounds the languages and the people were scattered throughout the earth. God had a higher purpose in mind for man and that was for mankind to learn how to love each other and God. Was it necessary for God to

Just as I always struggle with the right words to say in testimonies because of the limitations of my vocabulary and the effort to find adequate words for my feelings, I believe that the authors of the Book of Mormon struggled in the same manner.

confound the language in order for mankind to receive a greater blessing? A scattering and then bringing together of all the best that mankind has to offer under the leadership of Christ. Because our heritage of democracy, freedom and Judaic-Christian tradition, conditions for a blending of cultures in our country, as well as other countries, enables us to see what the possibilities of God's kingdom is all about. May we look beyond skin color, stereotypes, fashion statements, handicaps, etc. and affirm each other with love and a willingness to see through God's eyes each other as God sees and loves us.

I would like to quote from Roy Cheville's book [The Book of Mormon Speaks for Itself](#), "Jesus Christ charged his disciples with a universal commission. He came to the Nephites that he might minister to those more ready for

his coming. He instructed them, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature' (Mormon 4:86). There were to be no barriers, no restrictions. The result was that 'The people were all converted unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites, and there were no contentions and disputations among them' (IV Nephi 1:3). There were 'no Lamanites, nor any manner of ites, but they were one, the children of Christ' (IV Nephi 1:20). In this account is the glorious sentence, 'And surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God' (verse 19)."

Just as I always struggle with the right words to say in testimonies because of the limitations of my vocabulary and the effort to find adequate words for my feelings, I believe that the authors of the Book of Mormon struggled in the same manner. Moroni states in Ether 5:23 *"Lord, the Gentiles will mock at these things because of our weakness in writing; for Lord thou hast made us mighty in word by faith, but thou hast not made us mighty in writing."* Jesus used parables, and examples such as mustard seeds, mountains, and the eye of a camel to describe spiritual conditions. We use analogies, stories for children, and many other methods to describe spiritual conditions. In my opinion, Nephi was doing his best to describe the spiritual condition of the people. Nephi used very concrete terms, such as black or white, industrious or idle, delightful or loathsome to describe conditions of the spirit. The Lamanites had become dark in spirit and Nephi desired to keep his people separate from that so they wouldn't fall into temptation. Likewise we are drawn to people who wish to live their lives in like manner to ours.

My relationships with people of different skin colors, cultures, etc have been a blessing to me because of their relationship with God and the Savior, Jesus Christ. It is a pleasure to be around people whose spirits are white and delightful with a light that radiates from within. As stated in scripture all are able to repent and come to the Lord. The cursing of our dark and bleak nature can be turned to blessing though the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

**We're on the web at
www.hceti.org**

The Hill Cumorah Expedition Team, Inc is a Missouri not-for-profit corporation dedicated to the study, research and dissemination of information as it pertains to the Book of Mormon. Our primary focus is to research and assemble archaeological and other related information to help establish the historical feasibility of the Book of Mormon.

HILL CUMORAH EXPEDITION TEAM, INC

Searching for Truth

c/o David B. Brown
311 N Lee Street
Buckner, Mo 64016

Phone: 816-650-3904
E-mail: davidbrown@hillcumorahexpeditionteam.com

Contributors and Editors

Tim Brown
Chris Scott
David Brown
Randall Lawrence
Neil Steede

Children's Page by Terry and Chris Scott

Photographs provided by:
Bill Crisman and Leroy Carpenter.

A Testimony on Sharing the Cumorah Message continued

placed a message on his heart for the congregation. As we shared before going to the church, Tim also stated that God had given him something to share. Personally, I felt "blank" and felt that it was important to support my brothers as they shared.

Tim shared first in what seemed almost like a mini-sermon; setting the tone for the sharing of experiences. Whereas the night before we had shared testimonies directly related to the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team trips Tim, with David following, shared more of their personal testimonies and how the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team experiences had affected and enriched their lives. These testimonies were followed by Rich Kohlman and Larry Harlacher who shared about their personal struggles and their time in the Galesburg congregation and what it meant for spiritual development in their lives. The Spirit was strong



Team members partaking of the plentiful delicious food that was served up all weekend by the hard-working members of the Galesburg Congregation.

throughout the service and it seemed to give us a glimpse of Zion living in having two HCET members, a World Church appointee, and a Restoration supporter all up on the rostrum together and sharing their testimony of God moving in these

latter days. I have to share a little God-incidence in meeting Lloyd Tripp of Galesburg and getting the opportunity to make the connection that he was the author of an article on endowment (outpouring of the Spirit) that was published in the Saint's Herald thirty-four years before.

The four of us returned to the Independence area having been blessed with wonderful food and hospitality; blessed by support and fellowship with the Galesburg Saints; and blessed in knowing the Spirit had provided the inspiration and blessing in our weekend visit to Galesburg. A special thanks to "Wild" Bill Crisman and Leroy Carpenter for the photos taken since we forgot our cameras. Thank you to Joan and Carol for the gracious hospitality and invitation. Thank you Galesburg Saints for all your support and love! We felt at home and were blessed in visiting and sharing.