

# What The Future Holds

By Neil Steede ©

*As always the following article is my opinion and my perspective on the present landscape of Meso-american Archaeology.*

The future is always poised on the edge of tomorrow waiting for us to arrive and claim its bounty. Sometimes our vision of tomorrow and what it holds is nothing more than a fog where it seems that we are staring into the hazy unknown. Other times we are so assured of our pathway that it seems that our vision of the future is clear and that there are events about to happen where we find ourselves prognosticating with certainty. But, there are pitfalls in setting expectations of the future. Our preconception of what is to come and how it will happen has plagued humanity for decades. Book of Mormon believers are con-

stantly looking to the future in anticipation, and more often than not we have formulated ideas of how that future will unfold. Likewise, more often than not we are disappointed. In fact, there are times when events mankind waited for

did finally arrive, but we did not recognize it as such and therefore rejected it; the birth of Christ is the perfect example of such an event. Thus, precious gifts have been discarded because they did not meet our

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*The Temple of Quetzalcoatl at Teotihuacán; what secrets lie beneath this sacred edifice?*



## Codex Developments By David B. Brown

In the Fall edition of the Cumorah Messenger it was reported that Mexican officials are interested in the uniqueness of the Covenant Codex and the possibility of its authenticity as a Pre-colonial artifact. Neil Steede has continued to stay in touch with the officials who are doing some preliminary testing to determine the age of this particular artifact. No official information concerning the Covenant Codex has been released to Neil as of yet, but there is now a new interest being developed concerning the Ixtapa Weight Set.

This artifact collection was brought to Neil's at-

tention several years ago after it was found in a farmer's field southwest of Mexico City. It is a collection of over 300 pieces of gemstones and pottery including anvils, pendants, celts and cross-arms. Neil has recently been commissioned by Mexican Museum officials to continue with testing the items in this collection to determine its specific make-up.

This process will take several months to complete and the reports generated will be provided to the Mexican officials along with research on the relational contents of the weight set; who was the probable creator and

keeper; the purpose that it served and the reason why it is important to us today.

In the meantime, Neil will continue to maintain contact with the Codex project and is looking forward to reporting those results as soon as he receives them.

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## What The Future Holds *continued*

expectation. There is a strong possibility this is about to happen again in Mesoamerican Archaeology.

Within a relatively short period of time an ancient tunnel is about to be opened. This tunnel is over 300 feet long and was originally dug by ancient Mesoamericans. It should be obvious that such a great project hollowed out of volcanic rock 20 feet below the ground was not done to make a “maintenance closet” to service the city where it is located; that city is Teotihuacán. Yet similar tunnels have been found and excavated at this site, and unexpected artifacts were found; they were not understood and subsequently lost, and in some cases they were destroyed.

What will be found in this new tunnel excavation? The imagination runs rampant and the speculations are many. But, one may rest assured that whatever is found must have been of great importance to the ancients. Just because the items are in a format that is not understood by those of us in the present day does not mean that it is not important. Quite the contrary; the fact that it is located beneath such a great edifice means that it was extremely important to the ancients, especially to the Mesoamericans who believed that the genesis of all life and purpose is held within the earth.

Fortunate for the ancients and the people anxiously waiting to discover the contents of this tunnel the archaeologist in charge is Sergio Gomez. This man has vision, imagination, and years of exceptional experience at the site. All of this combines to make him ideal for the project. He is the right person, in the right place, at the right time.

The question remains as to what will be found in this tunnel. Some speculate that the tombs of the first kings of Teotihuacán are located here. These remains have been sought after for years. Such tombs may date as early as 250 AD, though I personally believe that if such kingly remains are found that they will date at least two to three centuries earlier. But, I will not be disappointed if the royalty is not there.

I also suspect that even though the upper tunnel appears to have very rough walls there will be murals on the walls of the lower rooms of this same tunnel system. Because Teotihuacán has such a

large quantity of murals, then if there are murals in the lower rooms they will be some of the first painted at the city and will certainly establish and clarify some of the symbolism found on the later ones. These new symbolic classifications will befuddle most epigraphers because they will attempt to translate them by pulling from a knowledge base that mainstream archaeology has developed over the decades. Surely some of this knowledge is correct, but there is no doubt in my mind that this interpretation process will last for decades. As has been experienced over my years in archaeology the history contained in the Book of Mormon will provide an added reference for deciphering the larger meanings. More importantly there might be writing. Most experts do not believe that the people of Teotihuacán had writing; I believe they did. Reports exist as far back as the 1930's claiming to have found such writing. But, those artifacts have also disappeared. This lack of accountability need not happen again.

One of my favorite theories is that the sixteen stones from Cuiculco will be found somewhere in this tunnel. I do not expect them to be recognized for what they are; artifacts that symbolize the faith base of a nation. The point here is that no matter the expectation, the events will almost certainly not manifest in the manner that is anticipated. This tunnel has the appearance of not only being one of the oldest, but also one of the most sacred places at Teotihuacán, therefore what is found will most likely represent the very “soul” of Teotihuacán. These artifacts will be the items that the builders thought were most important, precious and sacred. Whatever the outcome, it will be an adventure.

The single greatest fear is the potential of repeating the past; overlooking the precious and losing integral understandings of an ancient culture, and because it comes in an unexpected format the great



*One of the many murals found at Teotihuacán. Will the tunnel beneath the Temple of Quetzalcoatl hold the key to understanding the context of these murals?*

and meaningful is overlooked. These misunderstood artifacts will be constructed of exceptionally common material and they will be exceptionally plain. Yet, if approached in a state of humility with a desire to learn from the facts that are presented; allowing eyes to see the truth; then great insights will be found. You see even someone as capable as Sergio and those who hold such important positions has had some of these clues left by the ancients for future generations slip through his fingers (oh, they are completely retrievable).

The fact that the ancients built this most hidden of places under what they probably viewed as the most sacred of places (the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl) is in itself extremely significant. Previous finds have made it clear that these ancients were not fools. They knew that these objects hidden deep within the very bowels of the Sacred City would one day come to light. And, I am convinced that the ancient Mesoamericans were counting on those of us who discovered it to understand that even the very order in the way these sacred relics were oriented, stacked horizontally and vertically is attempting to speak to us and unlock the deeper meanings of their faith and culture. Will we commit the same carelessness as our predecessors? Are we ready to meet the challenge of today and learn from our mistakes of the past? We must keep our eyes open and allow the truth to lead our understanding instead of letting our lack of understanding bury the truth. That is the challenge before us—how we meet that challenge will define our future.

# Answering the Call

By David B. Brown

In the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> chapters of Alma we read the story of Alma and Amulek who were sent back into the city of Ammonihah to declare words of repentance and hope to a people who are described as being stiff-necked, full of pride and unresponsive to the Word of God. But, having been confronted by a crafty lawyer named Zeezrom, Alma and Amulek provide a sort of “one—two punch” that causes Zeezrom to understand that his craftiness has been undone and his deceit revealed. Zeezrom then becomes a victim of his own conscience who is overcome with guilt. Alma then seizes the moment and expounds on the gospel, the fall of man, the redemption through Christ and the change that is required in the hearts of men in order to claim everlasting life. At the height of his dissertation Alma tells us:

Alma 10:17-31 *“Behold, the scriptures are before you; if ye will wrest them it shall be to your own destruction. And now it came to pass that when Alma had said these words unto them, he stretched forth his hand unto them and cried with a mighty voice, saying, Now is the time to repent, for the day of salvation draweth nigh; Yea, and the voice of the Lord, by the mouth of angels, doth declare it, unto all nations: yea, doth declare it, that they may have glad tidings of great joy; Yea, and he doth sound these glad tidings among all his people, yea, even to them that are scattered abroad upon the face of the earth; wherefore they have come unto us. And they are made known unto us in plain terms, that we may understand, that we can not err; and this because of our being wanderers in a strange land: Therefore we are thus highly favored, for we have these glad tidings declared unto us in all parts of our vineyard.”*

***“For behold, angels are declaring it unto many at this time in our land; and this is for the purpose of preparing the hearts of the children of men to receive his word, at the time of his coming in his glory. And now we only wait to hear the joyful news declared unto us by the mouth of angels, of his coming; for the time cometh we know not how soon. Would to God that it might be in my day; but let it be sooner or later, in it I will rejoice. And it shall be made known unto just and holy men, by the mouth of an-***

*gels, at the time of his coming, that the words of our fathers may be fulfilled, according to that which they have spoken concerning him, which was according to the spirit of prophecy which was in them.”*

*“And now my brethren, I wish from the inmost part of my heart, yea, with great anxiety, even unto pain, that ye would hearken unto my words, and cast off your sins, and not procrastinate the day of your repentance; But that ye would humble yourselves before the Lord, and call on his holy name, and watch and pray continually that ye may not be tempted above that which ye can bear, and thus be led by the Holy Spirit, becoming humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love and all long suffering; having faith on the Lord; Having a hope*

***“For behold, angels are declaring it unto many at this time in our land; and this is for the purpose of preparing the hearts of the children of men to receive his word, at the time of his coming in his glory.”***

*that ye shall receive eternal life; having the love of God always in your hearts, that ye may be lifted up at the last day, and enter into his rest; And may the Lord grant unto you repentance, that ye may not bring down his wrath upon you, that ye may not be bound down by the chains of hell, that ye may not suffer the second death. And Alma spake many more words unto the people which are not written in this book.”*

We know that Alma is prophetically speaking of the coming of Christ in the flesh and the coming visit that he will make to the Americas upon his resurrection. Isn't it a joy to realize that God not only sent prophets such as John the Baptist to prepare the way for Christ in Israel, but according to Alma God sent angels and prophets to prepare the way for Christ's visit in America and all parts of the world; our God is epic, just, and loving. He is no respecter of persons, but loves each member of His creation individually and personally.

What is so moving to me at this time is the remarkable parallel this scripture has for us in the latter day. In 1824 angels began declaring that it was time to prepare for Christ's return. It was time for a work to commence, yea a marvelous work and a wonder. So came the angel message and with it a book of God's dealing through dispersed children of Israel—an account verifying God's promise that through Abraham's seed the nations of the world would be blessed. And so, that work commenced and we find ourselves nearly 180 years into the venture. Just and holy men and women of the Restoration movement have begun to sense an even greater anxiety about the times in which we live; a greater need to share and influence a world that is searching for spiritual direction and assurances. Angels are being dispatched through the mighty prayers of the faithful, prophets are sharing messages of warning and hope, and still the world slumbers. What will cause this message to be shouted upon the housetops? What event will infuse a new and vibrant energy into this great and marvelous work?

I do not know all that God has in mind, but like Alma I am aware of the small portion of the vineyard where I reside. I know that God is working out His purposes in a remarkable way. Seven years ago a group of men and women felt moved to begin this work of answering the call of faith set forth in the scriptures. From III Nephi 12:2-5 *“And these things have I written, which are a lesser part of the things which he taught the people; and I have written them to the intent that they may be brought again unto this people, from the Gentiles, according to the words which Jesus hath spoken. And when they shall have received this, which is expedient that they should have first, to try their faith, and if it shall so be that they shall believe these things, then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them. And if it so be that they will not believe these things, then shall the greater things be withheld from them, unto their condemnation. Behold I was about to write them all which were engraven upon the plates of Nephi, but the Lord forbid it, saying, I will try the faith of my people; therefore I, Mormon, do write the things which have been commanded me of the Lord.”*

## Answering the Call *Continued*

The members of the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team accepted the challenge of this passage concerning the contents of the Book of Mormon being provided as a test of our faith, and that should we prove faithful in our belief that we should receive greater things. So, what could we do to express our faith and endeavor to increase the faith of others concerning the validity of this spiritual gift? What could we do differently from what has been attempted for the last 180 years?

One member of our group is an archaeologist who has spent a lifetime dedicated to studying Mesoamerican Archaeology and its relationship to the Book of Mormon story. That man is Neil Steede. His unique view of Mesoamerican Archaeology became the foundation of our group who felt that Neil had something important to offer and we determined to support his efforts. One of Neil's theories centered on a scripture in Mormon where he states that all of the records from which he gathered the information for the

*Catalina and her father prior to our leaving Jalapa de Diaz in 2005. Catalina is displaying her wound that led her to a whole new set of "gringo" friends.*



abridgement were buried in the Hill Cumorah—the land of the final battle. Mormon 3:8 *“Therefore I made this record out of the plates of Nephi, and hid up in the hill Cumorah, all the records which had been entrusted to me by the hand of the Lord, save it were these few plates which I gave unto my son Moroni.”* The scriptures clearly state that this larger library of records are hidden inside the hill of the final battle. Thus, in support of Neil we began surveying the land that had been identified as the place of this final battle.

I think it is important to state here that we do not hold ourselves up as wanting to tell God when this event will take place, or that we believe that we should be the ones to participate in it. However, we do believe that miracles happen to those who profess a belief in them, and that if you want to be involved you must first place yourself in a situation to be involved. Thus, we place ourselves in this valley for two weeks once each year so that if it is time then perhaps we can be made instruments of His design. To be present and prepared to answer the call is 90% of the task.

In 2005 we received a new calling that was beyond our vision at the time. We had always attempted to make our way quietly into the valley with as little attention as possible. We felt that the less attention we attracted then the less opportunity for misunderstandings and mishaps. We gathered on a Sunday morning April 3<sup>rd</sup> to walk up the skirts of Cerro Rabon and spend a day in prayer and preparation for our expedition. We had our preaching service and a very powerful opening prayer asking for the protection of angels around the mountain and to receive light and direction as to what God wanted for us. As we were beginning to return and gather from a season of individual meditation and prayer, the group was met with several of the local policeman with machine guns in hand. They took Neil and other members of our group while the rest of us stayed on the hill and spent the rest of our time in prayer. Before the day was through the policeman had returned the four members of our group they had detained, and they brought a girl who needed medical attention as she was suffering from a poisonous snake bite. She had already received

anti-venom, but she was checked by medical people on our team and then we had the opportunity to administer the sacrament of laying-on-of-hands for heal-

***“And when they shall have received this, which is expedient that they should have first, to try their faith, and if it shall so be that they shall believe these things, then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them.”***

ing. The presence and power of the Spirit was awesome. This young lady and her family felt that Spirit. They returned to their town and claimed that their daughter Catalina was healed. From that moment on the dynamics of our presence in the region changed, and our outlook of the scope of our purpose has changed. We understood that God is interested in us preparing the hearts of His children to receive the Word when he is ready to provide it, the same way that Alma and Amulek were called to prepare the hearts of the Nephites for His coming in glory. We are a part of the latter day scripture being written before our eyes.

We know that we are not alone. God is moving in individuals and groups throughout the world the same way that He is moving through us. We are focused on one small piece of the puzzle, but we know that it is an important one as we have witnessed His hand moving in so many marvelous ways. I sense that many wonderful events lie ahead. The world may not view them as such, as very often the refining of the soul comes through trials and sufferings. But, the harvest of souls and the realization of eternal life is the ultimate achievement for any life spent on this earth.

The Restoration Movement has experienced a fractured history. Since its inception in 1830 there has been one splinter group formed after another. What happened to the concept of the gathering? I sense that is about to be realized. One of the by-products of the research work in which we are engaged is that God has



The Quetzal bird was sacred to the ancient Maya.

How do you like my new hat? A hat like this would have been worn by a Leader or king. These green tail feathers come from the Quetzal bird can be 24 inches long.



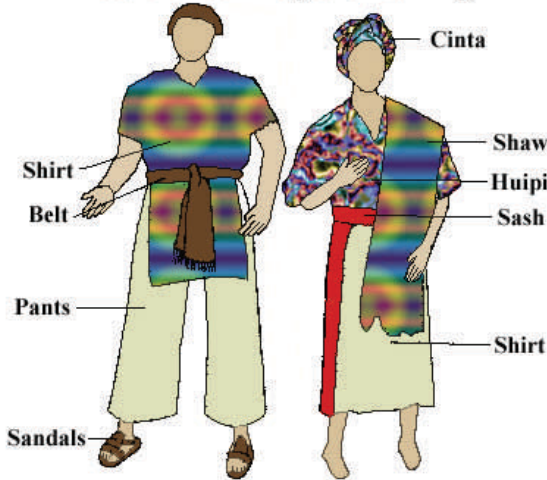
The Mayan's loved bright colors. They wove and embroidered colorful shirts, belts, shawls and huipil. The *huipil* was a blouse worn by Mayan women. Colorful cloth was cut in the shape of a cross, a hole was made for the head, then it was folded in half & stitching on each side. The color & design of embroidery on the *huipil* often identified the village they were from. Men's shirts were decorated differently than women's huipils.



A typical Mayan Belt Loom, still in use today.



### Traditional Maya Clothing



English	Spanish
blouse	Huipil
Skirt	corte, falda
Sash	faja
hair ribbon	Cinta
Shawl	rebozo
Shirt	camisa
Pants	pantalón
Belt	cinturón
Sandals	sandalias
Headress	tocoyal



Mayans planted maize (corn), sunflower seeds, chili peppers, squash, beans, cacao (chocolate) for food. They used cotton for light cloth, and sisal for heavy cloth and rope. Agave (sisal) leaves were hung over a fire, scraped of the pulp, washed and dried, then spun into string. The string is used on a **belt loom** (shown on previous page) and woven into cloth.

**A typical Mayan home.**  
Shown above is a Mayan mother grinding maize (corn) into flour for food. Also shown is a typical home. The walls are built of wood sticks woven together and the roof is covered with thatch (grass).

Match the words on the left with the words on the right.

Write the number of the word on the left in the black space on the right that best matches it.

- |                 |                          |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Bright colors | _____ Bird               |
| 2 Cacao         | _____ Blouse             |
| 3 Cotton        | _____ Building & weapons |
| 4 Feathers      | _____ Chocolate          |
| 5 Gold          | _____ Clothes & Rope     |
| 6 Huipil        | _____ Clothing           |
| 7 Loom          | _____ Corn               |
| 8 Maize         | _____ Decoration         |
| 9 Obsidian      | _____ Grass              |
| 10 Quetzal      | _____ Headdress          |
| 11 Sisal        | _____ Light Clothes      |
| 12 Thatch       | _____ Weave cloth        |
| 13 Wood         | _____ Weapons            |

(hint: all words are taken from this issue. Read every paragraph)



**A typical Mayan warrior.**

His clothes are made of cloth, leather and feathers. His club is made of wood with sharp obsidian (stone) spikes. His headdress and club are decorated with gold.

[http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers/lesson\\_plans/science/archaeology/](http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers/lesson_plans/science/archaeology/)  
[http://research.history.org/Archaeological\\_Research/KidsPage.cfm](http://research.history.org/Archaeological_Research/KidsPage.cfm)  
<http://www.smm.org/sln/ma/index.html>  
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/pyramids/>  
<http://archaeology.la.asu.edu/teo/>  
<http://www.digonsite.com/drdig/mesoamerica/15.html>

## A Research Project at Teotihuacán By David B. Brown

During the summer of 2008 Neil Steede was able to visit with archaeologists at Teotihuacán and while there he discovered that some artifacts had been removed from the tunnel beneath the Pyramid of the Sun. Several years prior while demonstrating to archaeologists how luminal works and its ability to detect blood residue, Neil began to suspect that one of the walls at the end of the tunnel was actually a false wall. Unable to test his theory, Neil has waited for the day when such a discovery might be made. It has, and the items from behind that wall have been removed and stored in a warehouse at Teotihuacán. Once Neil got word of this he quickly began to inquire about viewing those items. As a result he was able to take a team to the site in September of this year to investigate these items and begin to develop a theory on their origin and purpose.

Neil took with him a team of five; Don Beebe, Barbra Clavey, Gary Woods, Margaret Kohl and Tim Brown. Based on a notion that the stone artifacts removed from behind the false wall might actually be stone chimes similar to those found in ancient temples in southern Asia the team spent three full days investigating the



*Team members who assisted in the stone chime project in September of 2008. From left to right, Tim Brown, Barbra Clavey, Gary Woods, Margaret Kohl, Neil Steede, and Don Beebe.*

stacks of stones. They assimilated, recorded, and measured what stones they could. And, they then tested and recorded the sounds made from the stones that were found intact. The team found that the stones resonate definite tones, but there were not enough of them found to determine if there is a musical scale represented. There is a preliminary report that was developed by Gary Woods concerning the recorded tones and that report

has subsequently been provided to the officials at Teotihuacán who have tentatively approved a return visit for further investigation.

Neil plans to return to Teotihuacán in February to continue this project as it has now been discovered that there are more stones in other warehouses that came from the same tunnel. This is exciting as it provides the opportunity to conduct more sound tests. Perhaps a tonal scale can be found, or with a larger collection of stones perhaps a different theory may come into focus as to the purpose of the stones and why they were important enough to be buried behind a false wall in a hidden tunnel—a hidden place within a hidden place. This indicates something of real importance.

This project is being funded in part by the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team in association with other interested parties. It is exciting to work with contemporary high-profile archaeologists and to be a part of the revelation of history and the understanding of such an ancient and important culture. There will be more to report on this as information is collected and developed.

## Answering the Call *Continued*

revealed so much insight into Book of Mormon history and its parallels to Mesoamerican Archaeology that it boggles the mind. Neil Steede is now completing two years—88 chapters—of artifact evidences of the Book of Mormon. It will soon go into preparation for publishing and will be available by mid-year 2009. This publication will be seminal.

As with the Holy Bible, these archaeological evidences do not prove the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon is a spiritual record and while we can find definite Mesoamerican personalities, cities, cultures, and events that parallel the history provided from the book, that does not provide proof of its spirituality anymore than the Bible can prove the existence of Moses, Isaiah, David, Solomon or the original temple in Jerusalem. Even with all the evidences, the contents of the book are still a matter of faith. But,

for the ones who choose to believe there is now a remarkable collection of evidences to support and bolster your faith.

With the publication of this collection of evidences, I sense that opportunities will begin to develop for the walls to come down between the various factions of the Restoration. As we begin to focus more on developing the means for sharing this divine gift from our Lord, perhaps we can find ourselves overlooking the minor differences in our theology—trusting the Spirit of our Risen Lord to unify our hearts and minds as we focus on the larger aspects of His work that is yet to be completed. This is a lofty goal. Some may say that it is an unrealistic dream. But, my God is not a realist—my God operates in miracles. If He can manifest His Spirit to King Lamoni and convert entire kingdoms, then He can unify all of His children who will open their

hearts and minds to hear His voice. This calling translates to all of us today. We are all involved in writing latter-day scriptures. My prayer is that God will manifest in your life to a degree that He is your personal companion through all things; that you are involved in acts of faith where He can relay to you His desire and will to manifest His love and Spirit through your words and actions. Being present and prepared is 90% of the task.

Alma and Amulek witnessed some horrible events, they endured terrible treatment, Amulek lost his family and his fortune, but he and Alma bonded with God and established a legacy that helped prepare a nation to receive the Risen Lord—you and I are called to do no less than to prepare God's children for Christ's return and the establishment of Zion.

**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.*

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## 2009 Spring Expedition Planned

The Hill Cumorah Expedition Team has set the date for the 2009 Spring Expedition. The team will be leaving the Independence, Missouri area on Thursday March 26<sup>th</sup> to travel to the Jalapa de Diaz, Oaxaca region and return on Thursday April 9<sup>th</sup>. Thus far there is no particular focus for this trip, though very often in the past that focus has begun to develop in January prior to the expedition. There is always the anticipation of meeting with our local acquaintances consisting of local government officials and the Moises family. Last year our circle of friends expanded across the river and into the village of Piedras Ancha.

As always there is the on-going effort to continue exploring the valley in search of further evidences of a battlefield. To date we have recovered thousands of obsidian fragments found atop the ground. Those fragments are of two types, one is Orizaba green obsidian (Nephite) and the second is Guatemalan



*In the spring of 2008, after crawling through a cave with a mud floor, Neil Steede receiving a well-deserved "cleansing" from Paula, an elderly matron from the village of Piedras Ancha.*

black and smoky obsidian (Lamanite). Axe heads, sling stones, and mace stones have also been recovered throughout the slopes of the valley. In addition, the highest volume of pottery fragments discovered have been crude orange pottery that is consistent with a transient people as the

displaced Nephite population would have been while waiting to battle at Cumorah.

There is the prospect of continuing our survey of the small hill we have termed Cumorahcita. In past years we have concentrated on the hilltop, but there is a smaller knoll and long downward grade on the northern exposure that slopes down to the Santo Dominga River which runs between Cumorahcita and the much larger Cerro Rabon. This area holds the promise for further confirmation of man-made embattlements and weapons. Eventually, there is a need to visit the remote region on the top side of Cerro Rabon and also the tall Mixtec Lookout to the west. There is so much to do, and it seems that so often we find ourselves led by the Spirit with the blessings of heaven following in large part because of your effectual prayers. Your continued prayers for safety and success in all our efforts are very appreciated.