

# Why We Do This Thing By Neil Steede

As the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team members know our standing in the archaeological community has changed drastically over the years. At this moment our team and I are involved in several archaeological explorations, and by being so involved we are recognized in the archaeological community as an institution of responsibility.

It is important to make it clear that the archaeological community sees us as a means to the end as opposed to the view of an equal partner in higher education or research. That is to say by the implication in our name they know that we are Book of Mormon believers; that is no secret. However, by experience they also know that we

calmly answer their questions and never preach, attempt to convert or push an agenda as they might expect. Moreover, we never attempt to use archaeology as a proof of the validity of the Book of Mormon as a spiritual record. Rather, we believe that we are enhancing the feasibility of the historical validity of this record, nothing more. Believing in the spiritual aspects of the Book of Mormon is a personal choice based on a relationship between each individual and his/her Creator.

This places the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team in the category of an enigma among many archaeological organizations and religious ones as well. Our organization is something that they have

not encountered before and is not easily categorized. "After all," they think, "why would people spend the time and money on projects that do not promise obvious results to help sustain their belief and promote their agenda?" This question is a good one. Why do we do this?

Examples abound, but there are two current projects that demonstrate why we choose to perform these tasks the way we do. The Hill Cumorah Expedition Team and in particular myself have been commissioned by the Director of the National Museum of Mexico to have certain artifacts lab tested. We know that their organization saves money by having our organization foot the bill. In

## Reaffirming Our Heritage

By Neil Steede

As the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team prepares to make its annual trip to what we believe is the region of the final battle at Hill Cumorah, I cannot help but notice the changing socio-political environment around me. This environment may seem bleak to the average Restoration Faith believer who has been relegated to the status of an *ultra-conservative* dinosaur. This labeling is the cause of dismay for those who have been pushed into this category by others. The average believer does not view himself as *ultra-conservative* or *fringe* in

anyway. Rather, he sees himself as one who accepts the gifts from the past for exactly the reason they were given; to increase knowledge and provide the inspiration to challenge us to adopt broader views of God's love for all humanity.

There are those who make very irresponsible statements about our history as a movement. Loose claims and close-minded opinions are stated as proven fact. In my opinion it is unfortunate that those making such statements do not take the time to examine and research the facts, but

instead lay the foundations of their belief system by taking the word of those who have agendas. Examples of this abound, but here I will touch upon three. Those three will be the Book of Mormon, the Inspired Version of the Bible and the Doctrine

### Inside this issue:

Reaffirming Our Heritage <i>Cont.</i>	2
Membership Now Available	2
Why We Do This Thing <i>Cont.</i>	3 & 4
How Can We Not Go?	4
Adventures in Archaeology	5 & 6
Prayer Warrior Testimony	7
Loose Ends	7
2009 Spring Expedition	8

## Reaffirming Our Heritage continued

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and Covenants.

All fields of study concerning the historical validity of the Book of Mormon have changed drastically in the last few years. I have been on the front lines of this research for over thirty years and I am overwhelmed by the abundance of evidences that has surfaced in recent years. Geneticists, linguists, archaeologists, and historians have all had to take a step back, regroup, and rethink previously held concepts of the ancient people of this land. As it turns out there is an abundance of evidence for the validity of the Book of Mormon. In fact, evidences that were originally thought to disprove the Book of Mormon have actually been evidences for it all along. That was because of erroneous misconceptions held by Book of Mormon believers, as well as misconceptions purported by detractors of the same. All of the information related to the above statements can be found in an eight volume publication titled Book of Mormon Archaeology: Artifact by Artifact.

As for the Inspired Version of the Bible, the same reexamination is in order. It has long been claimed that archaeological evidence such as the Dead Sea Scrolls has proven that Smith's inspirations are of no consequence; that his "insights" were born out of imagination. Again, these claims are based on preconceived notions from outdated information and not on more recent evidences. In this case two examples jump out, and a mention of each will suffice to make the point.

At one time in early church history the Inspired Version of the Bible was the only scripture in the world that told a story of Christ and Satan each making a bid to save the world. Now, murals have been found in northern Guatemala depicting this very concept and readily demonstrating that this fundamental Christian belief was considered scripture in BC times. See the San Bartolo Murals (opinion cited).

*We attempt to further scientific studies that strengthen the faith of a people who realize that God loves all of His creation.*

Even more impressive is the story of Enoch. For many years the Inspired Version of the Bible exclusively told a story of a promise made to Enoch and that he built a city, spoke with God, and was taken or translated. Now that the ruins of that necropolis have been found the evidence for this story is growing daily. See The Great Pyramid, The Sphinx, and Enoch (now in publication).

The same is true of the Doctrine and Covenants. The once scriptural statement concerning Adam-oni-Ahmen has been relegated to the historical section of the Doctrine and Covenants. Yet, at this very moment studies are underway to demonstrate

that not only is this story completely feasible, but science is quickly approaching historical fact that the most ancient modern man lived on the American continent (see Valsequillo).

I realize that there are those who will immediately attempt to debunk the very statements made here. They will do so without taking the time to do the required research, ask the appropriate questions, or approach the subject by addressing all of the evidences. Instead they will ignore the more recent findings, rely on antiquated interpretations, and continue to push their agenda. And because of that stance I question their motives.

As the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team makes its yearly trek it does so with good cheer. We attempt to further scientific studies that strengthen the faith of a people who realize that God loves all of His creation. The Book of Mormon is not a book for a privileged people, or to provide the means for a foundation of a religious sect that practices exclusivity. These scriptures belong to the native peoples of the Americas. It is a scripture that has set the stage for the discovery of the historical past of an American culture who up to this point has been an enigma. The ancient peoples of this land will soon understand their spiritual heritage to a degree that was never possible without this ancient spiritual record that has provided the key to unlock the mysteries. We go to help find the evidences that fill in those gaps and to lay the foundations for further changes.

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## Membership Now Available

The Hill Cumorah Expedition Team, Inc in a Missouri Not-for-Profit corporation dedicated to the research and distribution of information that relate to the Book of Mormon. If you are interested and feel so led to support our efforts through a membership fee then you can send the membership fee in check or money order made out to:

**Hill Cumorah Expedition Team, Inc.**

The annual fee for membership is \$100, and \$50 for seniors and students. This helps us to maintain our ongoing efforts to research and distribute the information such the this newsletter which is published quarterly.

Please send your payment to:

**Hill Cumorah Expedition Team, Inc.**  
c/o David B. Brown  
311 N Lee Street  
Buckner, MO 64016

If you prefer to purchase your membership with a credit card, then you can access our website and send your funds through PayPal. Donations are always welcome.

The success of our effort is greatly enhanced when there is sufficient funding. All of this can only happen with God's blessing, but we feel that we must prepare ourselves to be ready when God says, "It's time!"  
**www.hceti.org**

## Why We Do This Thing continued



*Our codex project as first photographed by Don Beebe.*

many cases we have paid for such studies and by our participation we have advanced a particular study that would not have otherwise been accomplished. This also affords us the opportunity to demonstrate our responsibility to the powers involved and in so doing develop important professional relationships. We have chosen to participate in these events because we believe that the discovery of historical truth is directly related to the Book of Mormon. And, though the Book of Mormon relationship of a particular study may appear very slight at the onset we feel that all truth will eventually be brought together to complete the historical setting therefore it merits our time and attention.

Another project in which we are involved is in establishing the context of an ancient American Codex through testing and glyph interpretation. A codex is an ancient Native American book and to date we have been deeply involved in the recognition of its historical validity and translation. Such projects go forward slowly. This codex project has been ongoing for over five years now. But, this is exactly the stance that we take; patience. Not everything is a quick fix. There are projects that I have been involved in for almost thirty-five years. Now is not the time to give up; faith and tenacity are necessary virtues on this path.

Because we handle and work with artifacts on a regular basis some of our readers may have heard the unfounded accusations that the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team and I are involved with illegal artifacts. We have also heard the accusations of our institutions being illegal or not registered at all. As you can see from the documentation posted on our website the Hill Cumorah Expe-

dition Team is a legal Missouri not-for-profit corporation. The artifacts in our possession all have some form of documentation verifying our legitimacy to possess them. We would ask anyone who hears such rumors to do everyone a great service and ask the accuser of such if he/she has investigated these issues by going to the source. It will help to squelch any further spreading of unfounded information.

The ultimate goal of the efforts of

*Thus, we view this body of evidence as dynamic and constantly under scrutiny for this corpus of information must always yield to the discovery of greater truths.*

the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team is to establish a foundation of evidence that demonstrates uncanny parallels between Mesoamerican archaeology and Book of Mormon history. But, we do not intend for this foundation to be the end-all of information concerning this history, or to be established as immovable and unchangeable fact. Rather we expect that much of the initial information will only be true in part and we further expect that continued research and development will refine the body of information gathered. Thus, we view this body of evidence as dynamic and constantly under scrutiny for this corpus of information must always yield to the discovery of greater truths.

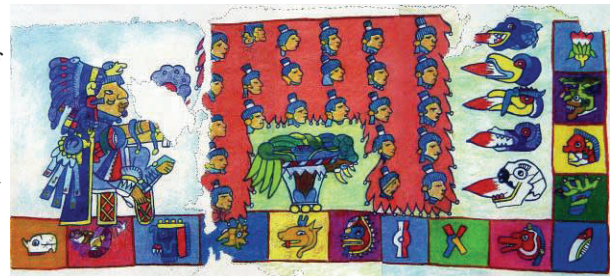
To accomplish this continued research and refinement we encourage anyone with an interest to

perform quality research and develop solid viewpoints to become involved. Later this summer I will have a publication available that presents the bulk of evidences I have collected that parallel Book of Mormon history. This book is titled [Book of Mormon Archaeology: Artifact by Artifact](#). This publication will provide a wealth of information for the novice to begin studying and there are so many in-depth studies that can be developed from this that an entire school of researchers could spend a lifetime being engaged.

Areas of development and continued research include linguistics, historic mDNA development, introduction of domesticated grains in ancient cultures, the correlation of the Maya Calendar to the Julian Calendar, the cultural shifts in Mesoamerica as a result of the collapse of the Maya culture, introduction and development of writing in ancient Mesoamerica, the Southeast Asia and China influence in Mesoamerica, and the list goes on and on.

You may look at these subjects and assume that most of them are already established, but I submit to you that most are founded on old information that was gathered with a biased view. I firmly believe that there is so much new information available that most all of these fields must be revisited with new eyes and redefined with updated information. You can provide that unique new understanding that can change how the past is understood.

Why is this important? Because there are modern-day Native American cultures who are longing for a greater



*The final glyph scene of the codex project depicting the judgment altar surrounded by twenty-four elders with five levels of glory to follow. Sound familiar?  
Drawing by Glenn Scott.*

## Why We Do This Thing Continued

understanding of their heritage. They feel that they have something unique and special in their historic past that is yet undefined. You can be a part of assisting them in claiming that heritage. The Hill Cumorah Expedition Team has come to understand that the Book of Mormon is the key to unlocking the mysterious historical past of the people of Mesoamerica. And, once the cultural values and established perspectives of that great root culture of the Maya is understood, then many if not all of the Native American cultures that have risen and fallen since can also be understood as they are directly descended from or affected by the demise of the Maya. You too can be a part of this calling to help establish the historical portrait of a people by using your talents to assist in putting together the pieces of the puzzle.

How do you start? Find a subject that captures your imagination and interest. Then, study all you can concerning that particular subject, includ-

ing researching the data that was used to establish the popular viewpoints being espoused. Reexamine their accuracy and weigh it against new information. Be prayerful as to the truth of the information you have before you and then develop a position based on scien-

*Why is this important? Because there are modern-day Native American cultures who are longing for a greater understanding of their heritage.*

tific evidences and processes. Now you are ready to write a paper to explain your viewpoint complete with bibliography and all the necessary evidences; you might even be ready to present to a conference if your position is researched thoroughly enough.

Getting into the circuit of conference presentation is not easy if you are

not backed by an institution of higher learning. I understand that heartache full well, but you are not completely out of luck. I encourage you to move ahead, provide our team with a synopsis of your work and we may be able to find a forum for your viewpoint to be heard. That is why we are here. This is one of the goals of our team and it is so very important that all good thought is placed into the mix of ideas if we are to arrive at that complete understanding that will be the Gentile gift to the children of Israel.

I Nephi 3:191 *“And after it had come forth unto them, I beheld other books which came forth by the power of the Lamb, from the Gentiles unto them, unto the convincing of the Gentiles, and the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the Jews, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth, that the records of the prophets and of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are true.”*

## How Can We Not Go? By Tim Brown

As I have prepared for this year’s trip to Mexico my thoughts keep going back to our early beginnings and some of the challenges that we have faced, particularly the 2003 trip. After the first trip in 2002 we came home slightly humbled, but very excited about making plans for returning in 2003. We had learned a great deal about the hill and the cliff face where we felt the cave was located. In preparation for our next trip we met several times at Edd DeTray’s home to discuss the situation on how to gain access to the entrance of the cave that was approximately 40 feet from the jungle floor.

After some consultation and brainstorming, we decided to erect a scaffold and attach it to the side of the cliff face with anchors and cables. We identified the equipment we needed to accomplish the tasks and went to work to secure those items. Edd drew up plans for the scaffold and we spent several

weekends making the required pieces at Edd’s manufacturing plant. When all the parts and equipment were gathered we found a rock wall to practice drilling holes and assembling the parts. We were now prepared and excited about the upcoming trip.

To make a long story short, because of the hardness of the cliff rock we spent the majority of our time erecting the ladder and were never able to use the scaffold. We had started with such high hopes that we were disheartened because all of our plans seemed for naught. The day we were packing up and leaving the hill we all gathered at the base where we had been working. Neil Steede asked everyone a question. “Will you come back again?” I remember thinking, “Well, of course. Why wouldn’t we?” I answered his question and said, “I’ll come back for as long as it takes.”

What if we had let our discouraged moment rule the day? What if we

had never returned? It was the very next year in 2004 that the Proclamation Tablet was discovered. It was the year after that in 2005 that we were given the opportunity to administer to Catalina who had been bitten by a poisonous snake. It was the year after that in 2006 that we were asked to administer to Moises’ grandfather; and the next year (2007) to Catalina’s mother and Moises’ friend, Anna. It was in 2008 that we administered to Moises’ family and one of his uncles. And that same year we were introduced to the family at Piedra Ancha.

Marvelous opportunities have opened up to us because we chose to return in spite of our apparent failure. We have learned to go in faith knowing that the Holy Spirit will guide us. I am in awe of the blessings we have received by His hand. How can we not go when we know there is so much more yet to be revealed?

# Adventures In Scriptures

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## THE BRASS PLATES

What would it be like if we did not know who our parents or grandparents were? What would it be like to not know where our ancestors came from? What would it be like if we could not read the words on this page?

These questions were answered for the Nephites by the writings or engravings (carved) on the plates of brass. This is why God gave a commandment to Lehi to bring the brass plates from Jerusalem to the Promised Land.

The brass plates talked about the goodness and mysteries of God and how God worked with the ancestors of Lehi. Prophecy about the coming of Jesus Christ and the promises of God were also written here.

Messages contained in these plates were to guide all generations of peoples, past, present and future to Jesus Christ and receive his gift of salvation.

The Nephites prospered and were at peace as long as they followed the messages and teachings contained in the brass plates.

Based on Mosiah 1:1-13

Whoever follows the teachings of Jesus will be blessed.

### The Brass Plates

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

### Hidden Words

ANCESTERS	BRASSPLATES
COMMANDMENT	ENGRAVINGS
KNOWLEDGE	PROFIT
PROMISE	PROPHECY
RECORD	RESTORATION
SALVATION	



### Hidden Puzzle Phrase

Find and circle all the listed words. Then start at the top left and write down all the un-circled letters in spaces below to find the hidden phrase

A

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### Discover the Word of God

The Nephites had the plates of brass to help them to learn about God. Today, we too have scriptures that teach us about God. Studying the word of God helps us know what is right and wrong. We can learn truth, wisdom and knowledge to help us live lives that are pleasing to God.

14 5 17    16 10 12 2    6 13    1 7 1 8 11    15 9 14 10    8 17    4 3 3 14

PSALM 119:105

A 1	D 2	E 3	F 4	H 5	I 6	L 7	M 8	
N 9	O 10	P 11	R 12	S 13	T 14	U 15	W 16	Y 17

The maze contains the following elements:

- ENVY** (top left)
- RESENTMENT** (center)
- SELFISH** (top right)
- BOASTFUL** (bottom right)
- ANGER** (bottom center)
- WISDOM, KNOWLEDGE, TRUTH** (yellow starburst, bottom right)
- Scripture icons: **BOOK of MORMON**, **BIBLE**, **DOCTRINE & COVENANTS**
- Farmer Brown illustration (bottom left)

Help Farmer Brown find the right path with the help of the scriptures to keep out of trouble and find Wisdom, Knowledge and Truth.

## Prayer Warrior/Partner Testimony By Randall Lawrence

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I knew that I would not be able to go on the expedition in 2008. I ended up going to God in prayer and asking what I could do to support the team as they went on the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team spring trip. After some time had passed I felt inspired to offer to coordinate the prayer effort at home. It began with a devotional that focused on the sons of King Mosiah and their missionary efforts with their enemies and also focused on the “sons of Helaman” (his stripling warriors) who followed the faith of their mothers.

Alma 26:53-57 *“And now I say unto you my beloved brother, Moroni, that never had I seen so great courage, nay, not amongst all the Nephites. For as I had ever called them my sons, (for they were all of them very young,) even so they said unto me, Father, behold, our God is with us, and he will not suffer that we shall fall; then let us go forth; We would not slay our brethren, if they would let us alone; therefore let us go, lest they should overpower the army of Antipus. Now they never had fought, yet they did not fear death: and they did think more upon the liberty of their fathers, than they did upon their lives; yea, they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, that God would deliver them. And they rehearsed unto me the words of their mothers, saying, We do not doubt our mothers knew.”*

Alma 26:65-67 *“And now it came to pass that when they had surrendered themselves up unto us, behold, I numbered those young men who had fought with me, fearing lest there were many of them slain. But behold, to my great*

*joy, there had not one soul of them fallen to the earth; yea, and they had fought as if with the strength of God; yea, never were men known to have fought with such miraculous strength; And with such mighty power did they fall upon the Lamanites, that they did frighten them; and for this cause did the Lamanites deliver themselves up as prisoners of war.”*

*This proved to be a great boon with exploration in some caves and with interaction with persons at Piedra Ancha*

We originally decided to design Prayer Warrior/Partner cards that were more like sports collectable cards for each person going on the trip. We began with ten cards for each, but before the trip was over we ended up with a total of over one hundred and seventy plus cards distributed. Each member of the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team on the 2008 Expedition had no less than thirteen prayer partners and some had as many as thirty praying for their strength and protection.

I originally thought my job was over when the group left, but I found that we could continue to assist by coordinating the prayer effort through email and the internet. This proved to be a great boon with exploration in some caves and with interaction with persons at Piedra Ancha. I chose to participate by praying and fasting while the team was in Mexico. I do not have what I would call a strong testimony of the Book of Mormon. In the process of

coordinating this prayer effort I experienced a number of significant testimonies for the work of the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team.

One of those testimonies involved the Spirit “telling” me that I would be going next year. Just recently, by God’s blessing I was able to turn in the full amount to pay for my 2009 Spring trip to Mexico. I have been blessed with a job in which I can take two weeks off even with going home for this past Christmas. I credit this blessing as a direct result of being willing to do what the Spirit called me to do in supporting the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team group last year.

I have many more testimonies that I could share, but space does not allow me to at this time. However, I would like to encourage all interested in a prayer card to contact a team member. My good friend, Peggy Johannes, has agreed to coordinate the Prayer Partner/Warrior effort this year. We cannot do this trip well and be Spirit-led without the support of our families and friends praying and fasting in support of the team. You can make a tremendous difference—just ask those who went last year!

In 2008 we had congregational prayer support from Buckner, Village Heights, Osage Hills, Beacon Heights, New Philadelphia, Celebration, HART Ministries, and others including CCM (Contemporary Christian Ministries). We would like to add even more congregations this year if willing by inviting you to be a part of this year’s trip. Thank you. God, peace, blessings, and endowment be with you!

## Loose Ends By David B. Brown

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The Hill Cumorah Expedition Team is involved in two projects that are still on hold. Last fall we reported that samples of the Covenant Codex had been taken for testing to determine that approximate age of the artifact and that we anticipated hearing something by the end of 2008. That expected date has come and gone without any word from the testing entity as to a result.

It is not known what this silence means. It could be a good thing in that it tested to be very ancient and the Mexican authorities do not know what to do about it, or that it tested very recent and amounts to no interest. I expect more the former than the latter.

The second project is the one of the stone chime investigation at Teotihuacán. It was hoped that this project

could be continued in late January or early February of 2009. As of this publication there has been no confirmation from the authorities as to our permission to continue.

There are many forces are at work in the Mexican government structure to cause this delay. We pray for a quick resolution so that the efforts to reveal historical truths can be continued.

**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***

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## 2009 Spring Expedition Planned By David B. Brown

The 2009 Spring Expedition is planned for March 26th through April 9th. This year's team includes Tim Brown, Jerry Stoner, Neil Steede and David Brown who will be leaving Buckner, Missouri to start the trek to Mexico early in the morning on Thursday March 26th. Then Mike Brown, Chris Scott, Carol Brown and Randall Lawrence will be flying into Mexico City on Friday March 27th to meet up with the driving team later Friday night in Puebla, Mexico.

The efforts in Jalapa de Diaz this year are to deliver some clothing to the community family assistance division. Then again visit our new friends in Piedra Ancha. We will inquire as to any new developments or local discoveries concerning the hill and then we plan to investigate the west end of the "bowl" that lies to the southwest of Cumorah. The west end has a peak that is referred to as the Mixtec Outlook

which promises to provide a never-before-seen view of the valley and probable battlefield. Each year we have found new perspectives and developed a larger understanding of this ancient battle site. We hope that this new perspective can again open our eyes to a more



*This view from the west end of the bowl illustrates the shorter peak that is called the Mixtec Outlook. Lost within the clouds behind that are even taller peaks that loom another 1,200 feet higher than the tallest part of Hill Cumorah .*

complete understanding of how this battle developed.

Another aspect of this trip involves travel to a museum at the ruin site of LaVenta. This location holds real promise for some artifacts that are hidden away from public viewing and Neil has developed a promising contact that may allow us access to these artifacts.

As always we are anxious to renew friendships with the people of Jalapa de Diaz. We have received word that Aunt Martha is not doing well and we want to stop to see the family of Moises to provide whatever uplift and support we can. It is always a pleasure to visit that small farm and it is equally sad to leave them every year.

Your prayers are an important aspect of our continued success in developing this understanding of the Book of Mormon lands. Please continue to hold us up for God's blessing and pray that His will be done.