

Our Friends in Jalapa

By Carol Brown

Archaeology has always been important to the Hill Cumorah Team, but in 2005 our focus also began to include servant ministry. That year we visited the village named Jalapa de Diaz by the mountain we believe to be Hill Cumorah. In the course of the events that transpired we met a girl named Catalina who suffered from a snake bite. Our team had gone back to our hotel for the night an hour away in Tuxtepec. The local authorities knew our group had some people with medical training. We received a call from the assistant mayor of Jalapa asking if we would take a look at Catalina. She had already been given anti-venom, but was still very sick.

The entire team prepared for this meeting. When the family arrived an hour later, it was with a police escort which included the mayor's assistant. As Catalina got out of the car, it was apparent that she was very ill. She had a towel over her head and was walking slowly with great effort. A chair was placed in the turnaround outside the front of the

hotel for Catalina to sit while her condition was assessed. Our medical members spoke with her and gave her advice on what was happening in her body and what she could do to ease the symptoms.

We then asked if we could pray for her to which the family readily agreed. The team knelt around Catalina. Several members laid their hands on her and each prayed while someone translated so the family could understand. It was a spirit-filled experience. When Catalina stood to leave, her appearance was totally different. The towel was down and she was smiling. She stood straighter and walked as though she was much more comfortable. The family was very thankful for our care and they remain good friends with us to this day.

The next day, the mayor of Jalapa, Alvaro, and his wife, Filipa, came to our hotel to thank us. In the course of our conversation, we asked if there were needs in the community where we could assist. Filipa said there was a need for clothing, especially children's clothing.

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Mayan Technology: The Wheel

By Eric Scott

This article is a summary of "Maya on the Move" from THE LOST SECRETS OF MAYA TECHNOLOGY by James A. O'Kon PE, Career Press, New Page Books 2012.

Many have wondered if the Maya were aware of the wheel, and if they were why there is not more evidence of its use. Museums display Mayan toys with wheels and axels. In the book The Lost Secrets of Maya Technology (Career Press, New Page Books) author James A. O'Kon offers a rather simple explanation. O'Kon explains that without the availability of domesticated animals of burden the wheel was too inefficient a device for transportation.

Generally, archaeologists want to claim that there were no horses in the Americas at the same time as man. While the Book of Mormon lists a number of large animals including horses in the

Americas between the arrival of the Nephites and the appearance of Christ, there is no mention of horses thereafter. Without the availability of dray animals for hauling, the wheel was not an efficient means of transportation.

Let's examine why the wheel was not efficient. In order to make use of the wheel it is necessary to construct a wheeled wagon or cart. The wagon or cart would be constructed with a trace connected to the front of the wagon to accommodate the beasts of burden. Since there apparently were no dray animals

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Our Friends in Jalapa *continued*

Since then, the Cumorah team has endeavored to bring clothing to Jalapa every year. Filipa has always assisted us by accepting and distributing the clothing. In the years that followed, we began to branch out to other communities as well. We now assist the community at the foot of the mountain we call Cumorah and a couple of communities across the river where we have developed relationships.

This September, three members of the Cumorah team journeyed into this same region to deliver clothes: Tim and Carol Brown and Mike Brown. Our first stop was in Jalapa de Diaz. We went to the mayor's house where we had a nice visit with Filipa. We dropped off a portion of the clothing, and as we were unloading large bags of clothes, neighbors began to come out to watch and help.

We then walked up to the center of town then down the steep hill to Catalina's house. Catalina is now married and working in Mexico City, but her parents still live in Jalapa and are always happy to see us. After a nice visit, we walked back to our car and drove over the winding gravel road which crosses the river to a small community. We had previously made friends with a lady named Rocio in this small town. One year when we came through the village, Rocio had a little girl about one year old. A member of our team named Joey asked the baby's name and she replied that there was no name yet. So Joey suggested that she be named Esperanza which is Spanish for "hope." This year, we saw Esperanza and she is now seven years old. Her mom was very happy to see us and laughed as she reintroduced us to Esperanza. We had a great visit and, just as in Jalapa, the neighbors came out and merrily helped us unload clothes.

Shortly there after, we headed back



Mike Brown, Carol Brown, our interpreter Sergio and Catalina's family.

across the river and up the mountain to see Isabel and her family. Her nephew, Moises, has been our good friend and guide since our first visit to the mountain. We were delighted to see that Moises was here since he had been living in Mexico City for a while. What a joy to see them all again! We carried bags of clothes down the hill to their home and sat and enjoyed

the fellowship that transcends the language barrier.

The journey was not without its challenges...and its blessings. On our way to Tuxtepec, the road was closed, and we had to take the back way through the winding mountain road. It added an additional seven hours to that leg of the journey. Then we had a flat tire on the trailer. The next day, the box portion of the trailer separated from the tongue and needed welding, but there was not an adversity that was not followed by a blessing. The tire issue on the trailer could have occurred on the curving mountain road, but instead it



Our good friend Moises.

was on the straight, flat road. The trailer came apart just as we were unloading the last load of clothes. It could have happened in the mountains or many other dangerous places, but with the Lord's help all of the clothes were delivered without mishap and the trailer was saved from disaster; a neighbor just up the mountain was a welder and so he fixed our trailer in short time.



The new government building at the center of Jalapa de Diaz.

By getting into Tuxtepec late, we spoke to the night manager and asked if she knew someone who might be willing to go with us the next day to assist us in translation. Through that connection, we met Sergio who teaches English in Tuxtepec. Sergio readily agreed to help us. He really enjoyed traveling with us to Jalapa and meeting our friends; he commented on how deep and meaningful the relationships seemed to be with our Jalapa friends. Also, he expressed his desire for us to meet his wife and son, Anna and Joshua. The next day, we were privileged to share breakfast with them. Joshua is learning English. Although he was a little nervous to practice his English on us at first, Joshua began to feel more confident when he saw that we could understand him. Sergio has become a wonderful friend and team member. What a blessing!

This was a wonderful trip. At every stop people said, "We missed you." "How is the rest of your group?" We feel blessed after making the sacrifices necessary to make the journey. We wish you all could meet our friends and experience the joy they have at seeing us again and that we have when seeing them, too. God is great!

Mayan Technology: The Wheel *continued*

available after the appearance of Christ human power would have supplement animal power.

O'Kon provides the following illustration by applying the same energy to weight formula that was used on the large freight wagons pulled by horses or mules in the 19th century. "To calculate the number of animals required to pull a heavily loaded freight wagon the number of animals was calculated using the loaded weight of the wagon divided by the weight of the animals. Each dray animal was considered capable of pulling a load equal to its own weight."

Assume, for this example, that the wagon weighed 1,000 pounds and could transport a payload equal to 1,000 pounds. The sum of the load and the wagon would be equal to a total weight of 2,000 pounds. If a Maya man weighed 125 pounds the number of 125 pound men that it would take to haul 2,000 pounds would be equal to 2,000 divided by 125. That calculation identifies a required Maya work force of 16 men to haul the load. That would be an average of 62.5 pounds of net payload carried by each of the 16-man team. Not a very good efficiency rating when



An illustration of the Maya tumpline demonstrating how the strap forms around the forehead and carries the load on the back.

Maya technology had developed man-powered transport devices that enabled a porter to transport a load of 125 pounds each. That was twice as much. So, in the evolution of Maya transportation technology the use of the wheel was a dead end.

The man-powered transport device was known as the tumpline, *mecapal* in Maya. "The following wide range of materials, and agricultural products were transported by the tumpline:

- Construction materials: cement, timber, worked stone, sascab, stone rubble, tools, rope, henequen, latex.
- Vegetable products: sweet potato, tomato, pumpkin, Jerusalem artichoke, chili pepper, cassava, melon, cacao, arrowroot, yucca, guava, strawberry, peanut, numerous squash varieties, maize and corn, honey, pineapple, cherry, prickly pear, tomatillo, manioc, jocote.
- Animal products: turkey, duck, deer, caiman, rabbit, turtle, fish, possum, quail, pheasant, dove, dog, iguana.
- Trade goods: chicle, rubber, copal."

"The tumpline consisted of a leather head strap that was positioned on the top of the head to direct loads from the skull and directly into the spinal column. The ends of the head strap were attached to a 3 foot long tail strap. The strap was connected to the frame or load container supporting the load. The tumpline was a simplistic tension-based mechanism that distributed loading the mass of the burden directly onto the load paths that frame the human body. To position the tumpline, after placing the tumpline on top of the head, the bearer then leaned forward to balance and align the load and started his march."

The tumpline enabled the bearer with a load of approximately his weight to travel along level roadways at a pace that covered 15.5 miles per day. The ability to carry loads equal to the porter's body weight was dependent on taking

rest stops to regulate his energy expenditure. He would rest by sitting his tumpline loads on load-resting platforms called *lab*. The pace in rough, rugged terrain would be slower, but a sure-footed porter would travel faster than a beast of burden. In addition to the poor load-carrying capacity of wheeled transport, its travel over the rough terrain and muddy jungle tracks made the wagon an overall poor alternate."

The tumpline was also used as a vertical lifter for construction and the Maya engineers coordinated the weight of the construction materials with the weight capacity of the tumpline. For example the standard size of worked stone in Maya structures was based on a weight of approximately 125 pounds. The coordination between stone size and weight/carrying capacity simplified the type of transport used for the construction process."

There was another advantage to using man power rather than animal power and that was the elimination of the need to grow the food necessary to feed a beast of burden and the need to care for them. The man porter could care for himself and required only two pounds of corn a day for subsistence while a horse or mule required 15 to 20 pounds of grain per day as well as care takers. This was very important in the natural environment of the Yucatan



A tumpline illustration from Calakmul.

which was a difficult place for producing high crop yields.

There is a mural at Calakmul depicting a Maya bearer supporting a large pot filled with goods supported by a tumpline. This device was also utilized in Nepal, India and Africa. The Maya were aware of the wheel, but logically recognized the disadvantage of a wheeled vehicle when compared to the efficiency of man power and the tumpline.

The Book of Mormon “Curse” *By David B. Brown*

Since the first publication of the Book of Mormon in 1830, there has been some consternation concerning the concept of the “curse.” This is first introduced to the reader where Jacob is making the observation concerning the spiritual condition of the Lamanites and implies a connection with the darkness of their skin.

Jacob 2:54 “Behold, the Lamanites, your brethren, whom ye hate, because of their filthiness and the cursings which hath come upon their **skins**, are more righteous than you; [55] For they have not forgotten the commandments of the Lord, which were given unto our fathers, that they should have, save it were one wife: and concubines they should have none; and there should not be whoredoms committed among them. [56] And now this commandment they observe to keep; wherefore because of this observance in keeping this commandment, the Lord God will not destroy them, but will be merciful unto them; and one day they shall become a blessed people. [57] Behold, their husbands love their wives, and their wives love their husbands, and their husbands and their wives love their children; [58] And their unbelief and their hatred towards you, is because of the iniquity of their fathers; wherefore, how much better are you than they, in the sight of your great Creator? [59] O my brethren, I fear, that unless ye shall repent of your sins, that their **skins** will be whiter than yours, when ye shall be brought with them before the throne of God. [60] Wherefore, a commandment I give unto you, which is the word of God, that ye revile no more against them, because of the **darkness of their skins**; neither shall ye revile against them because of their filthiness;”

This passage has a very clear message; the spiritual darkness of the people translates to a darkness of the skin. Somehow, these two aspects are interrelated. This implies that a spiritual darkness leads to a literal manifestation of darkness on the skin. This belief seems to find further support by the passage of scripture found in III Nephi where the darkness is removed.

III Nephi 1:52 “And it came to pass that those Lamanites who had united with the Nephites, were numbered among the Nephites: and their curse was taken from

them, and their **skin** became white like unto the Nephites;”

It does appear to be very clear that this consistent theme is what the authors intended. Conscientious Christians have struggled with this concept for almost two centuries. The idea implied here is that God treats people differently based upon the dark color of skin that is a result of spiritual unbelief. This kind of religious practice seems antithetical to what the New Testament tells us about spiritual life after death. We are told that all are children of God and all may enter into the kingdom if they believe. So why, if the Book of Mormon contains the fullness of the gospel, does there seem to be an apparent contradiction in belief systems? Why should someone with skin that is not white find hope in a belief system that encourages racism?

These same questions have been a part of the ongoing concern for Neil Steede, who in the course of his life has encountered two marriages with wives of darker skin: one Latino and the other African. Both women lamented the fact that they were “cursed” even though they loved and served God. Why would they be subjected to wear dark skin that tells the world that they were not fully accepted in God’s eyes?

It was the heartache of this question that motivated Neil to research this very subject. Through the years, Neil has had success in understanding that the curse described in the Book of Mormon is in reference to a spiritual condition as opposed to a physical condition, but the use of the word “skin” made it a tenuous argument. How could he find proof that the skin-curse was not a physical reality?

The first major breakthrough came in the concepts displayed in the San Bartolo Murals. The work of Dr. David Kelly illustrated that there was clear Egyptian calendar references in the imagery and therefore, there was some form of ancient Egyptian cultural influence in the creation of this mural. Also, there is a display of a dark red Corn God (Christ) who is focused on the plea of the female kneeling in front of him.

Then, a darker form of the same woman is displayed rising from the lighter form. This is an artistic device to display that her darkness is being lifted from her. In other words, it is not referring to a literal darkness of skin, although they display a dark-skinned person as the sinful aspect being removed. She is made new by having the spiritual darkness removed from her. That spiritual darkness is absorbed by the Corn God who is the same color as her sinful image because He is the one who absorbs the sin for all humanity. The argument can be made that

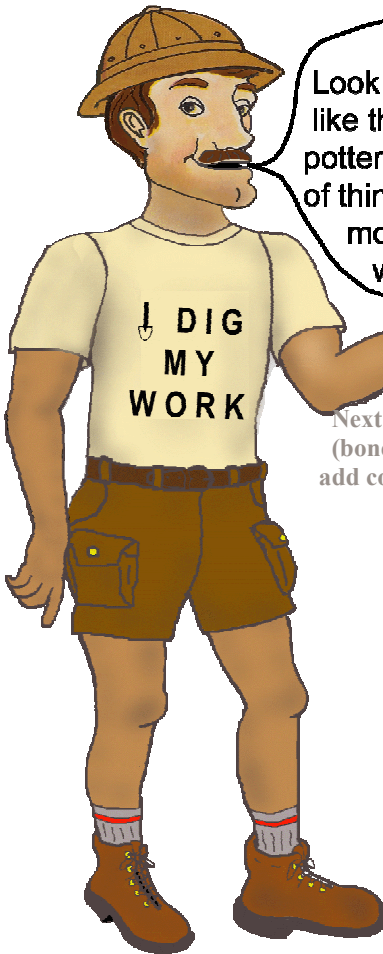


the color red is used to symbolize that our human sin is closely related with our passions; those aspects of our human experience that tend to be reactionary and often “half-baked” thoughts.

This imagery and connection with Egyptian cultural influences was foundational to the breakthroughs that were to follow. Neil’s next advance came while he was watching a History Channel program on Sex in the Ancient World. The Egyptian program provided information on an ancient document called the Turin Erotic Papyrus. The interpretation of the Egyptian hieroglyphs on this papyrus indicate that there is a homonym in the Egyptian language with one meaning referring to heart or intent and the other meaning referring to color.

The Ancient Egyptian word *iw*n refers to both literal and metaphorical

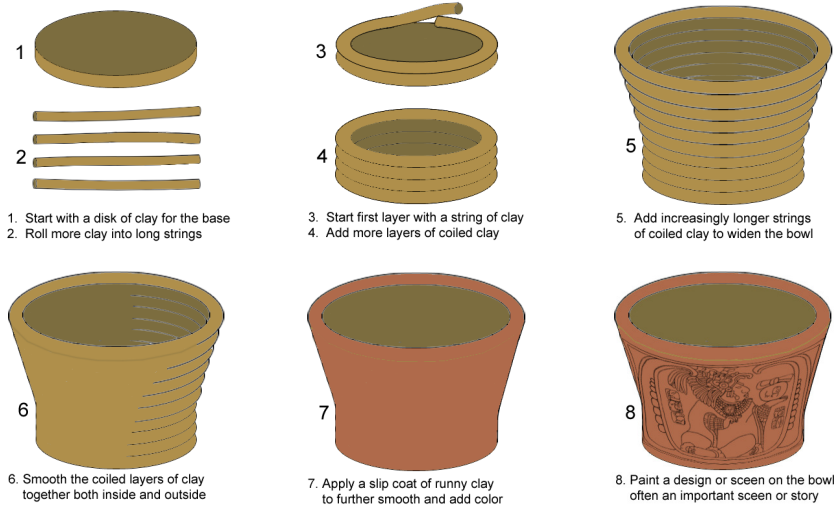
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Hello again, Arty here. Look at this neat bowl I make, just like the Maya. They were very good pottery makers. They made all kinds of things out of clay. They even made models of people and decorations.

Ceramic items are made from clay. Clay is a special kind of earth that can be molded into any shape. First you dig up raw clay, then you purify it (remove any rocks or leaves). Then you wedge it. (knead the clay to remove air and evenly distribute moisture). Next you temper it. (add sand or volcanic ash for strength). Then it can be formed into a bowl or any other shape (greenware) and left to air dry (leather-hard). Next it is decorated (painted or etched with a design). When it is completely dry (bone-dry) the Maya often added a slip coat (a runny clay mixture to smooth it and add color). Lastly it is biscuit fired (placed in a hot oven to dry and harden).

The below illustrations show the steps used to make a bowl from clay.



Ancient Kiln (oven)
A fire was built, then the clay pottery was placed on the large stones above the fire and the heat from the fire changed the clay into ceramic.



Maya Ceramic Plate



Maya Ceramic Jar



Maya Ceramic Figure from Tikal



Maya Ceramic Turtle and Owl



Maya Ceramic "World Tree"



Maya Ceramic Covered Bowl

Shown here are some examples of Maya ceramics.

WORD SEARCH

Find and circle
the Mayan Pottery
words listed below:

- Biscuit fired
- Bone dry
- Ceramic
- Clay
- Color
- Decorate
- Earth
- Greenware
- Leatherhard
- Mine
- Moisture
- Pottery
- Purify
- Sand
- Slip coat
- Temper
- Volcanic ash
- Wedge

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

Arrange the pottery step in order by placing a '1' for the first step
a '2' for the second step and so on through '10'.

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biscuit-fired | <input type="checkbox"/> Bone-dry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decorating | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenware |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leather-hard | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Purifying | <input type="checkbox"/> Slip coat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tempering | <input type="checkbox"/> Wedging |

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 - <http://www.smm.org/sln/ma/index.html>
 - <http://archaeology.la.asu.edu/teo/>
- For questions e-mail me at tscott75@sbcglobal.net

The Book of Mormon “Curse” *continued*

aspects of color, character and nature. The word *inn* is literally skin and color. The phonetic closeness of these two words and the related meaning of the two provide a very strong indication that the Ancient Egyptian cultural perspective often related the nature or character of the person with some assignment of color. Couple this concept with the spiritual schema of enlightenment where greater spiritual understanding is light and darkness is the absence of spiritual awareness, you are then provided with a unique expression or a fingerprint of thought from people with Egyptian influence. Those who are dim in their spiritual understanding have a spiritual nature/character that is dark; the outward expression of their nature is their “skin” and it is dark. By contrast, those whose spiritual nature has changed have that darkness removed from their skin; or in other words, their outward expression now demonstrates a character that is enlightened.

If we now visit the observation of Jacob with this Ancient Egyptian perspective we can clearly note that Jacob is not expressing a racial bias. Jacob 2:54 “Behold, the Lamanites, your brethren, whom ye hate, because of their filthiness and the cursings which hath come upon their *skins*, are more righteous than you; [55] For they have not forgotten the commandments of the Lord, which were given unto our fathers, that they should have, save it were one wife: and concubines they should have none; and there should not be whoredoms committed among them.”

Jacob 2:59 “O my brethren, I fear, that unless ye shall repent of your sins, that their *skins* will be whiter than yours, when ye shall be brought with them before the throne of God. [60] Wherefore, a commandment I give unto you, which is the word of God, that ye revile no more against them, because of the **darkness of their skins** [the dimness of their outward expressions]; neither shall ye revile against them because of their filthiness;”

In this context we can clearly see that the reference of skin and color is to a quality that is transient. It is not something that is physically fixed such as genetic codes determining melanin

levels in skin tissue. This perspective of transient quality is accentuated by the scriptural verse in III Nephi. III Nephi 1:52 “And it came to pass that those Lamanites who had united with the Nephites, were numbered among the Nephites: and their curse was taken from them, and their *skin* [outward expression of their nature] became white like unto the Nephites;” This is not a literal change of skin color. The outward expression of their inward nature (their skin) changed to reflect the enlightenment they had received.

What does this new understanding mean for us today? It means that anyone of dark complexion can now shed the guilt for an implication of spiritual darkness based on skin color—that is a false perception. Anyone of any color can be

What does this new understanding mean for us today? It means that anyone of dark complexion can now shed the guilt for an implication of spiritual darkness based on skin color—that is a false perception.

enlightened and a full participant in God’s kingdom of light. It also means that conscientious Christians can breathe easier knowing that the Book of Mormon is not racist in its expression of God’s love for His creation. It means that any religious practice that is based on race differences will have to revisit these practices because the traditional interpretations of the scriptures have not been accurate. The scriptures have not changed; our research and logical understanding of how they were written has become enlightened. So, why did Joseph Smith Jr. write these passages as he did? Why was he not inspired to make the “correction” so that we would avoid these many years of misunderstandings?

There is one more critical implication to this discovery. It accentuates the validity of the statement made by Nephi in the first book of his record. I Nephi 1:1 “I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father; and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days -- nevertheless, having been highly

favored of the Lord in all my days; yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God, therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days; yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the **learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians**. [2] And I know that the record which I make is true; and I make it with mine own hand; and I make it according to my knowledge.”

Nephi states that they write in the language of the Egyptians, which further implicates that they held Egyptian cultural perspectives. Nephi records this information at about 575 BC, but almost 1,000 years later the man who finished abridging the record confirmed that they still maintained this Egyptian influence. Moroni writes this at about 400 AD: Mormon 4:98 “And now behold, we have written this record according to our knowledge in the characters, which are called among us the **reformed Egyptian**, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech. [99] And if our plates had been sufficiently large, we should have written in the Hebrew; but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also; and if we could have written in the Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfection in our record. [100] But the Lord knoweth the things which we have written, and also that none other people knoweth our language, and because that none other people knoweth our language, therefore he hath prepared means for the interpretation thereof.”

It is miraculous how God supplies truth to those who seek it. Neil was seeking a salve to heal the wounds of the women he loved, and in so doing, he discovered not only a linguistic explanation for why the curse is described as it is, but that very linguistic characteristic validates the statements made by the Book of Mormon authors; they were writing in Egyptian. Their word usage validates that their views concerning spiritual expression were from the same culture that influenced their written language. By the grace of God, a discovery that breaks the chains of perceived racism also becomes a testimony to the truth of the record. Praise be to God!

**We're on the web at
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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

Carol Brown
David Brown
Eric Scott
Children's Page by Terry and Chris Scott

Photos and Illustrations by:

Mike Brown
Glenn Scott
Terry Scott

Presentation on the Evidences of the Book of Mormon

The Hill Cumorah Expedition Team has compiled a large collection of presentations on the parallels of Book of Mormon history with Mesoamerican archaeology. This body of information provides compelling evidence that the Maya culture centered in southern Mexico and Guatemala is indeed the very historical record of the people found in the Book of Mormon.

Can we find the locations for the City of Nephi? Zarahemla? Bountiful? Can we find the historical figures such as Mosiah the Elder, Benjamin, Mosiah the Younger, Alma, Amalickiah, Captain Moroni? Yes, to all of these.

Is there evidence for the King Lamoni move from the City of Ishmael into the Land of Jerushon? For the move from Jerushon to the City of Melek? Can we find King Anti-Nephi-Lehi and his city? Yes.

Is there any evidence that the Three Wisemen whose visit to the Christ is

chronicled in the 3rd Chapter of Matthew are somehow linked to people in the Book of Mormon? Incredibly, there is a preponderance of evidence for this very thing.

The abridger Mormon gave us this promise from the Lord: III Nephi 12:3 *“And when they [Gentiles] 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. [4] And if it so be that they will not believe these things, then shall the greater things be withheld from them, unto their condemnation.”*

We have already received information in the “greater things” category as much of the archaeological evidences have filled-in blanks of information that were not included in the Book of Mormon. However, if we are to re-

ceive even *greater* things, then we must learn and assimilate the things we have been given already—that is the expression of our faith in this incredible record that our Savior has allowed us to hold in our hands in these latter days. It is to our eternal benefit to investigate, expound, and enlarge the body of knowledge concerning the ancient people of this continent.

We want to make our services available to anyone who is interested in hearing about these evidences. We have very detailed information on the identification of cities, persons, and even large scale cultural shifts. All of these are based on archaeological evidences.

For information on how to arrange a presentation for your congregation please contact David Brown by email dbb92558@yahoo.com or by phone at 816-651-6974.