

WHERE THE BOOK OF MORMON GOT ITS NAME

by Robert E. Giertz, Jr.

Ever wonder how the Book of Mormon got its name? "And now I, Mormon, make a record of the things which I have both seen and heard, and call it the book of Mormon." (Mormon 1:1). This is significant because the Book of Mormon, as translated by the power of God, contains only about 1% of the information contained on the plates which were used by Mormon and Moroni to compile the abridgments. {See Words of Mormon 1:8; Helaman 2:13; 3 Nephi 2:91-93; 3 Nephi 12:1,2; Jacob 2:67; Ether 6:108} If the Book of Mormon contains no filler, as Ray Treat is so fond of saying, then the inclusion of this fact is relevant. Mormon's name holds a key to why it was important that this record be called the book of Mormon.

In 3 Nephi 2:96, we find our next clue. "And behold, I am called Mormon, being called after the land of Mormon, the land in the which Alma did establish the church among this people; yea, the first church which was established among them after their transgression." Mormon was named after the place where the Church, priesthood authority, and the holy ordinances were restored by the power of God.

The events that occurred in the land of Mormon, near the waters of Mormon, also enforce the importance of the covenants that the Lord has made with all His people. This

account is recorded in the ninth chapter of Mosiah. The people entered into a covenant with the Lord that day to **Serve Him, and Keep His Commandments.** That covenant was sealed in the waters of baptism. Baptism is a witness that you have entered into a covenant with God. {See Alma 5:24-27 and Mosiah 3:6-11.} Priests were appointed to teach the people, and stir them up in remembrance of the oath which had been made by the waters of baptism {Mosiah 4:4}.

"And now when the people had heard these words, they clapped their hands for joy, and exclaimed, This is the desire of our hearts. And now it came to pass that Alma took Helam, he being one of the first, and went and stood forth in the water, and cried, saying, O Lord, pour out thy Spirit upon thy servant, that he may do this work with holiness of heart. And when he had said these words, the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and he said, Helam, I baptize thee, having authority from the Almighty God, as a testimony that ye have entered into a covenant to serve him until you are dead, as to the mortal body; and may the Spirit of the Lord be poured out upon you; and may he grant unto you eternal life, through the redemption of Christ, whom he has prepared from the foundation of the world." Mosiah

The Restoration Letter

9:42-44.

Another reference to what happened in the land of Mormon is found in Alma 3:3-5. "I, Alma, having been consecrated by my father Alma, to be a high priest over the church of God, he having power and authority from God to do these things, behold, I say unto you, that he began to establish a church in the land which was in the borders of Nephi; Yea, the land which was called the land of Mormon; yea, and he did baptize his brethren in the waters of Mormon. And behold, I say unto you, They were delivered out of the hands of the people of King Noah, by the mercy and power of God."

The land of Mormon became known as the place where the Lord made a covenant with a remnant of the house of Israel. The Book of Mormon, like the Bible, contains a record of the many covenants made with Israel and their importance to the reclamation of the house of Israel in the last days.

The title page to the Book of Mormon says its purpose is to show to the "remnant of the house of Israel what great things the Lord has done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off for ever;" This purpose statement is every bit as important to remember as the next line which states the record is to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ.

Jacob spoke of this record in 2 Nephi 6:1. "And now, my beloved brethren, I have read these things that ye might know concerning the covenants of the Lord; that he has covenanted with the house of Israel;" He continues in verse 2 as he speaks concerning the restoration that will occur in the

last days. "That he has spoken unto the Jews, by the mouth of his holy prophets, even from the beginning down, from generation to generation, until the time comes that they shall be restored to the true church and fold of God;" The Lord has promised that all of Israel will be restored to the knowledge of his covenants with them. The record of the Book of Mormon shares a similar message that is found in the Bible and the Restoration.

From 2 Nephi 12:42-43, "But behold, there shall be many at that day, when I shall proceed to do a marvelous work among them, that I may remember my covenants which I have made unto the children of men, that I may set my hand again the second time to recover my people, which are the house of Israel; And also, that I may remember the promises which I have made unto thee, Nephi, and also unto thy father, that I would remember your seed; and that the words of your seed should proceed forth out of my mouth unto your seed."

The Book of Mormon contains the promises of renewal and restoration. The very same essential elements that were restored upon the earth in 1830 to a young man who would begin a labor to bring the knowledge of the covenants of the Lord Jesus to the house of Israel. Joseph would be the instrument of the Lord in translating the records that would be published as the Book of Mormon. The publishing of the Inspired Version would restore the plain and precious parts of the gospel of the lamb that were taken from the holy scriptures. Part of that which had been taken were the covenants of the Lord to His people Israel.

From 1 Nephi 3:161,163,169, "And he said unto me, The book (Bible) which

May/June, Volume 4, Number 3

thou beholdest is a record of the Jews, which contains the covenants of the Lord which he hath made unto the house of Israel; And it is a record like unto the engravings which are upon the plates of brass (Genesis through Jeremiah), save there are not so many; nevertheless, they contain the covenants of the Lord which he hath made unto the house of Israel; And also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away;"

Joseph discovered in the translation of the plates that the keepers of the record, who were direct descendants of those who had fled Jerusalem, were keenly aware of the covenants the Lord had made with the house of Israel and how important it was to bear testimony of those covenants. "And thou also knowest concerning the covenants of the Lord unto the house of Israel;" (1 Nephi 3:211).

Joseph of old knew that Israel would become separated from God and his covenants and that God would provide the means for their restoration in the last days. "And it shall come to pass that they shall be scattered again; and a branch shall be broken off, and shall be carried into a far country; nevertheless they shall be remembered in the covenants of the Lord, when the Messiah cometh, for he shall be made manifest unto them in the latter days, in the Spirit of power; and shall bring them out of darkness into light; out of hidden darkness, and out of captivity unto freedom." (Genesis 50:25 I.V.).

The record of the Book of Mormon contains the same promise. "And great were the covenants of the Lord, which he made unto Joseph; wherefore, Joseph truly saw our day." (2 Nephi 2:6). The writers of the record contained in the Book of

Mormon labored to provide the means that Israel could be restored to the covenants and the promises of God.

The Book of Mormon is a part of God's plan to restore the house of Israel. The purpose for the Book of Mormon is bring Israel into a knowledge of the covenants, that they may know and understand that Jesus is their Messiah.

The word Mormon should stand out to everyone who has read and appreciated the message of the Book of Mormon. Mormon symbolizes restoration in a single word. It represents the place where God restored His Church and His covenants. It also gives hope that God will once again move to restore His Church today as He did in the time of Alma.

The record translated by the hand of God is correctly named. The Book of Mormon, like the Bible and the Doctrine & Covenants are books containing the covenants the Lord God has made with His people. The exciting fact concerning the significance of Mormon is that all the scriptures of the Restoration share the same name. The Bible could be called the book of the Old and New Covenants. The Doctrine & Covenants is the book of Restoration Covenants, and the Book of Mormon is a book of Restored Covenants for Israel.

The purpose of the Restoration is to use this fullness to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers that Israel and the world may know that Jesus is the Son of God, and that the covenants of the Lord are unto them as in the days of their fathers.

The Restoration Letter

A TESTIMONY

by Elder Conrad G. Friend

I believe a vast majority of the membership of the Lord's Restored Church would agree that the church is in much disorder. Most would also agree that the church's one goal in all ages is to bring mankind into the full presence of our God and Creator. It is not my intention to write about doctrinal disputes, but to write about an experience I had during a vision and dream. I believe this came as a result of praying and desiring to know how I should react to the growing crisis which is so evident within the church. Not only in our own congregation, at Webb Road in Wichita, but throughout the whole church.

I will attempt to set forth the various opinions members have expressed concerning World Church policy. Some of the issues discussed most were the ordaining of women to the priesthood (Doctrine and Covenants 156) and open communion, which was practiced throughout the church although not officially sanctioned by the church.

The majority of the congregation felt with deep conviction that these practices, and the trend of thinking which they promoted, were not in accord with the Holy Scriptures contained in the Bible, Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants prior to Section 156.

As I recall the heated discussions and anger sometimes displayed by those of us who held opposing views on these and other issues, a feeling of despair and a sense of loss comes over me. Some seemed to be fairly well content with the situation. Others were somewhat disturbed, but felt they should not or could not for various reasons, take any course of action

that would put them in disfavor with World Church leaders. Some family members held very strong opposite views concerning D&C 156.

Some High Priests under appointment were critical of us for serving communion to members only. Almost all of the priesthood felt that many current articles written in the *Saint's Herald* were very inconsistent with the Gospel of Salvation as is contained in the three standard books of our church. This Gospel was restored to the earth by an angel (Revelation 14:6). To many of us, there seemed to be less importance attached to the ordinances and their intended functions as was done in the early days of the Restoration. D&C Section 83:3c, says that without the ordinances and the authority of priesthood, the power of Godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh. This is expressed in various ways in many other scriptures.

I do not intend to list all of the issues over which the Webb Road congregation was becoming divided, just some of the major ones. Many of us were concerned about what we believed was an erosion of faith in the principles of the doctrine of Christ which are set forth in Hebrews 6:1,2.

I realized I was seeing a literal fulfillment of Luke 12:60-62 where Christ speaks of strife among family members because of different views concerning his Gospel. Truly I knew of father and son who did not agree and mother-in-law versus daughter-in-law. The same situation occurred with husband and wife. My wife and I were not immune from this sad dilemma.

We need to be supporting each

May/June, Volume 4, Number 3

other in the unique calling forth of the church. We are losing our distinctiveness and becoming one more church among the other hundreds.

I believe there are many good people in other churches doing good works, but they do not have a full vision of the Kingdom of God here on earth to cause it to become a reality. I believe God restored that vision to his Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr., and others. Scriptures of the D&C tell us that if we were obedient to those commandments given in the first year of his church, Zion could even then have become a reality.

I must admit that I, as well as others, became somewhat angry and impatient at those who seemed content with the new ideas and overall status of the World Church. I knew that arguing in anger was not in keeping with the Spirit of Christ, yet I quite often engaged in this in my own home. We of the priesthood sought the Lord diligently for a true understanding of the Scriptures that related to these much discussed issues. I quite often prayed for forgiveness because of statements made in moments of great stress. As I prayed concerning the right and wrong of Section 156, open communion, church membership without baptism and other articles written in the *Saint's Herald*, it seemed to me I always received the same answer. I was not answered by an audible voice, but by a thought process that spoke to my mind these words: "I have already spoken on these issues before your time, study my Holy Scriptures." I, along with the majority of the other Priesthood, felt we could not practice or teach these principles which were in conflict with

scriptures given in former times. In consequence of this, we formed an independent congregation, teaching the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ that was again brought to earth by an Angel. I have no regrets for taking this course of action; however, I now wish I had discussed this in more detail with my wife.

These differing views on the issues in the church were causing great difficulty between my wife and I. A somewhat strained relationship between some members of the two Wichita branches was also in much evidence. I want to state very plainly that there have been times in my life when I know the Lord was very displeased with my lack of concern for my Priesthood responsibilities. In retrospect, I believe I felt fleeting moments of what I then thought of as happiness. Yet at times, I knew that my brothers and sisters in the faith and my own family were disillusioned by my seeming lack of concern for the Church. In my better moments of thinking or perhaps I should say, when I was listened just a little to what the Holy Spirit was trying to tell me, I became not at all happy in my situation. At times like this, I asked the Lord to not give up on me. D&C Section 22 contains the following words: "This is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." At times, I know that nothing we could achieve on this earth would cause us to have more everlasting joy than to work with the Lord in this labor of love. If the scripture was true that was brought forth in the formative years of the church, which said: "If my people called by my name would be obedient to those commandments already given, Zion

The Restoration Letter

would be even now." If this was true, then why were we being bombarded by so many ideas that had existed in other churches for many years. As I attempted to discuss these things with my wife, it only seemed to widen the gulf between us. Both of us were in great despair, as were other church member families.

One night, upon retiring to bed, these matters began to weigh very heavily on my mind. I knew that I should seek help from the Lord, yet I did not know just what to pray for. Believing that the Lord knew more about the situation than I did, I just prayed for forgiveness and help however he saw to send it. Eventually, as I went to sleep, I had the following dream or vision. I believe it was both.

The first part of this experience began as I found myself in a rowboat in the middle of a rather large, fast-flowing river of water. It was of utmost importance that I arrive at a certain place which was directly upstream. Even though I exerted much effort, my progress was very slow because of the great resistance created by the fast current of water. My arms became very tired, but if I tried to rest even for a few seconds, I was immediately swept downstream from my desired goal. Becoming distressed with my predicament, I decided I would turn out of the flow of opposition and head for the shore. I thought maybe I could find someone who could point out a much easier route to the place of my destination. Upon arriving at the shore, I paused to rest for a few moments and tried to get my bearings. I had no idea where I was. I felt completely lost. As I tried to look up and down the shoreline and into the dense jungle, I had great

difficulty as it seemed to be very foggy. It seemed to be a very gloomy place. I decided to pull the boat up on the shore, leave it and go in search of someone who might help me. As I dropped the rope which was attached to the boat, a very strong thought flashed in my mind: "You must take the boat with you and you must not lose or suffer any harm to come to the oars." I realized there would be much labor involved in pulling the boat across dry land, yet I knew it must be done. After going for what seemed a considerable distance under the circumstances, I saw through the mists what appeared to be about a dozen persons gathered into a scattered group. They appeared to me to be women because of their apparel. The best that I can describe their appearance is that they were dressed in Catholic nun's habits. Maybe not exactly, but similar. The view was not very clear. For the most part, they seemed to ignore me. Turning to the one nearest me, I began telling her of my problem and asking her about directions, however, she gave no indication that she understood me. I then asked her if she understood what I was saying. She nodded her head in the affirmative. I then repeated the question: "Can you help me?" She then looked directly at me, shook her head in the negative and said: "We cannot help you."

Then as best as I can relate it, my eyes seemed directed toward another personage who, to the best of my knowledge, was not present when I first saw this group. On a classroom wall of Webb Road Branch there is an artist's conception of Moroni as he was preparing to bury the gold plates with the record of his people inscribed on them. This

May/June, Volume 4, Number 3

is the most fitting description of how I saw him. I saw no stone box or plates, however. I began at once to rehearse the same questions I had asked one of the women. As I recall this incident, I'm not sure if I had finished with my inquiry or if, because of his rather stern penetrating look, he already knew of my situation.

I feel totally unable to describe my experience of the next few moments. Up until now, all of these events had not seemed out of the ordinary. This was soon to change. With his gaze still fixed intently upon me, he spoke these words: "You of the Melchisedec should never lose your way. You know what you must do and the direction you must take." I do not recall him speaking any other words. I have often wondered why he did not include the word "priesthood" after Melchisedec. If he did so, I do not remember him saying it that way. Although I'm unable to adequately describe the feelings and partial understanding of the situation at that time, I will attempt to do so.

I sensed there was not any need for more dialogue between us. I felt I had stood before the scrutiny of the Eternal. I knew I had been chastened for my many sins of omission, concerning my priesthood especially. I knew I must cultivate more compassion for the weakness of the flesh in others. The list went on and on. I knew I had to pick up that rope attached to the boat, return to the strong flow of opposition and strive to reach the appointed destination our God and Creator call us to.

As I was journeying back toward the shore, I began to realize more clearly that the forces of opposition that I allowed to operate from within me were just as

much a hinderance to my progress toward my designated place as those from other sources. As I was returning to the river, I awoke from my dream. I spent much of the remaining hours of the night seeking further understanding from this experience. Over the ensuing months, as I shared this with other church members, many of my questions were answered. I will share these impressions in the same sequence as they came to me.

The boat represented the Church. It was the vehicle that brings us from where we are to where we ought to be. We should never leave it unattended or allow it to become damaged because of our own neglect. The oars were the sacraments and ordinances of the Church. They furnish power and direction and move the Church toward its ultimate goal. We must realize that without them, we cannot possibly reach our goal. Also, they must be properly utilized or else we will be deterred from our course and become lost in our journey. The flow of resistance was the inevitable consequence of man's wisdom being implemented in the cause of Zion instead of the commandments of God.

Scriptures continually tell us that Zion must be built up in a manner designed of God. These Godly instructions have been known to man for many years. For a period of time, they were not to be found among mankind, yet are now restored again. Yes, it is indeed an old, old path and it must be followed if we are ever to achieve the place God so desires us to be.

The Scriptures are replete with instances when mankind thinks he is obeying God, yet interjects some of his own ideas in lieu of the Heavenly Father's. I will list just a few.

The Restoration Letter

In Genesis 5:6-8, the Lord specifies the sacrifice to be of the flocks, an animal without blemish as a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father. Abel was obedient in this. Cain substituted another object for sacrifice. Cain became angry because God accepted Abel's offering and rejected his and he slew his brother Abel.

Mark 14:4-9, in this incident, a woman in her worship of Jesus, anointed his head with some expensive oil. Some of the disciples thought the oil should be sold and the money given to the poor. Jesus mildly chastised them. Other scriptures identify Judas Iscariot as the one who proposed this.

Another idea from man was to change the mode of baptism. The list of changes could go on and on. I do not mean to suggest that some of these changes were not well-intentioned. However, the Holy Scriptures frequently warn us of this coming to pass. Proverbs 16:25 says, "There is a way that seems right unto men, but the end thereof is death." First Corinthians 1:20-21 says, "Where is the wise? ... Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." From First Corinthians 1:26, "For ye see your calling, brethren how that not many noble, are chosen." We just seem to be so taken up with worldly aspirations that God's will cannot come to fruition in our lives. Section 77:1f tells us that if we are not equal in earthly things, we cannot be equal in heavenly things.

A few weeks ago I felt an urgent desire to share my dream with an Elder in our Branch. One who I felt

very close to as he ministered to me and strengthened me in my ministry to others. This was soon accomplished. At the conclusion of my telling him this experience he seemed very interested and was pleased that I had felt a desire to do this. A week or so later, while we were visiting after a Communion service, he suggested that I should write this experience. I responded that I would think upon it and if, after some prayer, I felt that I should write it, I certainly would. I thought about this for several days and sought the Lord's will. As a result I determined that I should write it as accurately as I could and convey the impressions as honestly as I remember them.

Sometime later, after the experience of this dream, I had another dream which had entirely different objects associated with it and a modern time setting. I soon began to understand that even though the situation was different, the same counsel and admonitions were present. I now feel very strongly that this second one confirmed the message and truthfulness of the first one. I pray that everyone who reads these words will be renewed in their efforts to help bring about God's Kingdom here on earth.

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with
God;
But only he who sees takes off his
shoes.
The rest sit round it and pluck
blackberries,
And daub their natural faces
unaware
More and more from the first
similitude.

-- Elizabeth Barrett Browning

The Restoration Letter

is published six times a year by Zion's Outpost Branch. Letters and comments may be addressed to Zion's Outpost Publications, 1733 Northeast Parkway, Wichita, KS 67208 (316) 686-3012.

We ask that if you like this letter and you want to help us publish it, that you send \$5.00 for a single year subscription. It will be mailed free of charge to all who ask.

Compiling Editor - Gary R. Whiting
Reviewed by Jim Crawford and Steve Anders

The Inspired Version

The need for a corrected edition of the Bible -

165 And the angel of the Lord said unto me, Thou hast beheld that the book proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew; and when it proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew it contained the fullness of the gospel of the Lord, of whom the twelve apostles bear record; and they bear record according to the truth which is in the Lamb of God:

166 Wherefore, these things go forth from the Jews in purity unto the Gentiles, according to the truth which is in God:

167 And after they go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles, thou seest the formation of a great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches;

168 For behold, they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious;

169 And also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away;

170 And all this have they done that they might pervert the right ways of the Lord; that they might blind the eyes and harden the hearts of the children of men: 1 Nephi 3:165-170

Upon my return from Amherst Conference, I resumed the translation of the Scriptures. From sundry revelations which had been received, it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of men, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled. - Joseph Smith Jr.¹

I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors. - Joseph Smith Jr.²

¹. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith, Deseret Book Co., 1938, pp 9-10.

². *Ibid*, p 327.

IMPORTANT NOTICE !!

Jul 7-9 - Fifth Annual Zion's Camp. This year the topic of study will be the *Lectures Of Faith*. This series of lectures were given by Joseph Smith Jr at Kirtland, OH before the great endowment that came in the Temple. They were first printed as the *Doctrine* part of the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. They are very useful for knowing how to live by faith and to see the important part faith plays in our lives. Plan to be with us for this weekend of worship and study.

We recommend that those who want to prepare early should purchase a copy of *Lectures of Faith* to read and study ahead of time. These may be purchased for \$5.00 per copy plus postage from:

Price Publishing Co.
915 E. 23rd Street
Independence, MO 64055
816-461-5659

ZION'S OUTPOST BRANCH
1733 Northeast Parkway
Wichita, KS 67208-2339
(316) 686 - 3012

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
WICHITA, KANSAS
PERMIT # 1538