

ANNUAL REPORT

2019

BYU
Neal A. Maxwell
Institute for
Religious
Scholarship



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The University and the Kingdom of God

J. SPENCER FLUHMAN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NEAL A. MAXWELL INSTITUTE

This devotional address was delivered at Brigham Young University on July 30, 2019.

Friends, this morning I offer a love story. It is not *the* love story, mind you, but it is in some ways like *the* love story. *The* love story would take three hours (if I did it right), and I am told we don't have time. If I were telling *the* love story, about the remarkable woman seated behind me, you might be struck by the story's influence on me. In fact, please inscribe this on my tombstone: "If he amounted to anything, it is because he loved her." I love Hollie more for the good she calls forth from me than for what she does for me. In a word, she inspires me. And therein lies my simile. This morning's love story centers on this university and the church that sponsors it. As with *the* love story, my love for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and for Brigham Young University has everything to do with the good they call forth from me, with what they insist I become.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSMISSION AND CREATION

First, a word or two about universities more generally. I love them. I have always felt at home on university campuses. I have had more than one opportunity to leave academic life, but I can never seem to pry myself away. I have lectured or researched at many of the great universities in the United States and Europe and hope to visit a few more. Something about the life of the mind has always resonated with me. I find it stretching and exhilarating. It feeds my avid curiosity. In fact, when other fourth graders were getting sports and achievement awards at our year-end ceremony, I got what seemed at the time to be the lamest award of the bunch: my citation noted my "thirst for knowledge." I must have looked devastated, because I was. That award earned me no new friends, but it at least predicted my future career.

When I was early in my graduate studies at a venerable Midwestern research institution, I passed a prominent inscription that stopped me in my tracks: "Whatever may be the limitations which trammel inquiry elsewhere, we believe that the great state University of Wisconsin should ever encourage that continual and fearless sifting and winnowing by which alone the truth can be found."¹ I knew the plaque was not intended as a religious message, but it resonated with my religious self. "Truth" named a quest that I had long invested in, and I came to feel quite at home in that secular university community.

For several centuries before I arrived for graduate training, colleges and universities had functioned as a critical mechanism for transmitting knowledge. The “modern” university was born in the late nineteenth century, however. It was oriented not merely around the transmission of knowledge; through focused research, it was to *create* knowledge. Such a thing has always seemed bold and exciting to me, and I have never tired of the process of knowledge creation. I suppose I love universities because I am unfinished, because I am perpetually “in process” myself.

That university ideal of knowledge transmission and creation has had an uneasy history with religious institutions in the United States, however. Many religious traditions feature revelation as a critical means of gaining or creating knowledge, and revelation and academic research sometimes have been seen as oppositional in the history of American universities. In fact, the questions of whether religious ideas or institutions or, more specifically, which religious ideas or institutions should set educational agendas became an almost overwhelming problem in this country. A kind of compromise developed in which a so-called secular ideal took root at many elite institutions, in which no preference for any particular religious identity or position reigned, at least explicitly, and in which a “marketplace” of ideas could wend as it may. Significantly, some minority faiths experienced this secular ideal as heaven-sent. Early Latter-day Saints, for instance, frequently found elite institutions to be places of belonging, since their talents were often valued in spite of their unpopular religious identities.²

There was a price to be paid for that secular ideal, however. Universities, fearful of favoring a single religious tradition or having religious institutions command special sway, gradually drew back from the idea of the university as an engine for moral, ethical, or spiritual development. Though early universities had sometimes seen themselves as critical partners in fostering public morality or human flourishing in a broad sense, modern universities have increasingly left these big questions to others. Partly as a result, academic disciplines increasingly have drawn narrow lines around intellectual inquiry, with methods and training designed for ever-increasing specialization. In extreme cases, universities have focused their efforts on preparing laborers for labor markets and little else.

WRESTLING WITH DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

Important for Latter-day Saints, the university looms larger than a mere historical accident in what we call “the Restoration.” When the early Saints scarcely had resources for food and shelter, they were organizing universities. Joseph Smith, who had plenty to do leading the Church in its infant years, seemed inspired by the university ideal, especially so for someone who lacked all but the meager beginnings of formal education himself. Joseph Smith was spiritually and intellectually voracious—if indeed it makes sense in his case to separate the two. He incessantly collected beauty and truth from the world around him with what one prominent scholar has described as a process of inspired, eclectic gathering from disparate sources.³ He gathered good and virtuous things where he found them and then repurposed them to enrich and propel the kingdom of God.

Important for Latter-day Saints, the university looms larger than a mere historical accident in what we call “the Restoration.” When the early Saints scarcely had resources for food and shelter, they were organizing universities.

The university surely counts as one of those inspired borrowings. Subsequent prophets and apostles have consistently elaborated on Joseph’s seedling ideas. It should not escape our attention that the Saints planned a University of the City of Nauvoo or that the seeds of a University of Deseret were in place by 1850 or that a Brigham Young Academy was a fledgling reality by 1875. Simply put, prioritizing something like a university

when so much else seemed so tenuous surely tells us something about the place of the life of the mind in God's kingdom. The plain fact of this university shouts quite a sermon, don't you think? In truth, with the full history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in view, we dare say that the world of ideas is indispensable for the Restoration. As the late Elder Neal A. Maxwell put it, most memorably: "For a disciple of Jesus Christ, academic scholarship is a form of worship. It is actually another dimension of consecration."⁴

As a result, Brigham Young University will not and cannot divorce itself from the big questions of human experience. Unlike other institutions, there is no secularizing retreat here that permits any discipline or field to imagine itself apart from questions of human flourishing or morality or even holiness. Put another way, where does God's light not seek to shine? What field of inquiry can stand apart from questions of ultimate reality? Of divine love? Of God's design in creation and redemption? To paraphrase a modern revelation, which powerfully echoes ancient ones, God's light proceeds from His presence to fill the immensity of space and is thereby in all things.⁵ Would we dare circumscribe that light? An eminent scholar and Christian believer wrote this of faith and scholarship: "Put most simply, for believers to be studying created things is to be studying the works of Christ."⁶ This insight hardly limits learning. It should set it free.

Nearly a century ago, Elsie Talmage Brandley urged the Latter-day Saints on: "To know the fundamental truths of the gospel is to leave one free to go far and wide, anchored by that knowledge, in search of all else that earth and sea and skies have to teach."⁷ Indeed, for us there are only hazy, probably illusory, boundaries

*"Your soul must be one—integrated,
intact, and whole."*

—ELDER JEFFREY R. HOLLAND

between the compartments modern people often draw within their lives and around their institutions. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, speaking last year to Maxwell Institute scholars on this campus wrestling with these very matters, put this powerfully and succinctly: "Your soul must be one—integrated, intact, and whole."⁸ The same holds true for

a university in Zion. Where do Christ's claims on us end? Where do charity and justice not demand a hearing? In medicine? In law? In the management of resources? In the deployment of technology? In politics? If we can imagine a field of knowledge here, at this university, about which the gospel of Jesus Christ has nothing to say, we may have traded our birthright in Zion for a mess of secular pottage. There can be no wholesale acquiescence to modern categories here. Religion pours out, hot and demanding, into every field at this university because it must.

Again, from Elder Maxwell: "The redeeming presence of our loving Father-God in the universe is the grand fact pertaining to the human condition. It is the supernal truth which, along with His plan of happiness, reigns preeminent and imperial over all other realities."⁹ So business as usual cannot be business as usual here. That redemptive presence, that "grand fact," must organize and prioritize every effort at this university.

These realities will make the disciplines more demanding, not less. A steady diet of religious or intellectual Twinkies—sugary sweet but without real nourishment—as one of my colleagues describes them, has no place in God's kingdom. The intersection of academic disciplines and the Restoration's grand facts should be electric and, in every sense, rigorous. This university, after all, must call forth our best selves to be worthy of its place. To be casual about our collective aspirations would be to trifle with sacred things. Expect your courses to be difficult. Expect your professors to wrestle mightily with their topics. Expect unfinished business all around. Expect theory and hypothesis to jostle alongside settled conviction. Expect now and again to fall short of our stated aspirations—those failures are crushing but necessary. And above all, expect to wrestle yourself. There is deep magic in the spiritual struggles demanded here. Joseph Smith hinted at this when he wrote of what it would take to make a difference in this world. Notice how he connects mind and redemption: "Thy mind, O Man! if thou wilt lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens, and search into and contemplate the lowest considerations of the darkest abyss, and expand upon the broad considerations of eternal expanse; he must commune with God."¹⁰



It will not be all sunshine and angels, in other words. Expect some abyss. One of our finest theological minds, Francine R. Bennion, reminded us why the way is so often clouded: “We have to [learn to] be real ourselves and not dependent on externals.”¹¹ We must labor, in other words, with a clear sense of the world and its deepest problems, or none of us will be ready to lead anyone to any kind of salvation. To commune with God, according to Joseph Smith, is to begin to comprehend reality as broadly and as viscerally as He does. Superficiality and slothfulness would thwart that kind of education as surely as sin or oppression.

Accordingly, we can’t simply steer around difficult questions here. We have to wrestle right through them, and we must do it together. My marching orders came years ago in BYU’s new faculty orientation. When asked about dealing with difficult questions as a featured visitor in that setting, the late Elder Richard G. Scott warned us that avoiding them might actually harm faith down the road because we would have missed an opportunity to engage them here, together, within the household of faith. I have never forgotten that apostolic warning.

In my many years of teaching, I have seen students and faculty meet that challenge in memorable ways. Last year, when a colleague and I team-taught a course on Latter-day Saint political engagement, we joked the first day that we would rather casually combine the two topics one should never discuss in polite company! Our students marveled throughout the course that we refused to maneuver around tough questions. Each class period featured some fresh, daunting challenge, from violence to race to immigration to gender and sexual orientation. And we marveled back as our students navigated these issues with rigor and faith and, especially, that they chose to do it together, as difficult as it was for Saints from such varied backgrounds and perspectives. I wept as I read their course evaluations. To a person, they left the course more committed to the things that matter most, not less.



A GATHERING OF GOD'S CHILDREN

Looking ahead at the challenges that await each of us, it might be helpful to remember that this university has both direction and magnitude. (That's right, *Despicable Me* fans, this university is a vector!) Its direction is unalterable. It is chiseled in Wasatch granite. It must build God's kingdom or wither away. Its magnitude, however, is variable. Its significance in the world depends on our collective intellectual and spiritual force as a gathering of God's children. If we reduce our time here to personal calculations about jobs and salaries and individual futures, we will have failed to recognize this place's embeddedness in the overarching project of the Almighty. If, on the other hand, we see ourselves firmly within that grand project, our time here will feel less like a breathless sprint toward a certificate and more like the gift that it is.

You might think of yourself as seeking God here, but, in truth, He has been seeking you. He is fitting you for a world that needs you. There are always problems afoot that will demand our very best and then some. From poverty to racism to ecological collapse to rampant inequality to sexual violence to poor healthcare to religious freedom to deficient education—this world groans under the weight of our collective failures. This world yearns for a people with a broad and compelling vision infused with the hope and compassion the gospel of Jesus Christ inspires in each of us. In short, this world needs you. Our numbers will always be miniscule, but where there is great need, Latter-day Saints must be there. We will be motivated by something beyond self-interest, I hope. We will stay a little longer, I hope. We will do the things that no one else wants to do. I trust that we will be out of the spotlight, helping the forgotten ones. Do you want to make a difference in your communities? You are at the right university. Do you want to change the world? You are in the right church. You will learn from both our successes and our failures, but, make no mistake, your time here will be a wide-ranging education if you will let it be.

Do you want to make a difference in your communities? You are at the right university. Do you want to change the world? You are in the right church.

At this point I offer a caution as one who has intermittently done it wrong in the past. Sometimes academic training can work to distance us from the body of Christ. Because we ask different questions, or ask them differently, we can come to believe that our perspectives are more important than those of others who may lack our training or our experience. We can grow impatient or condescending with our fellow Saints. We can become cynical. I have experienced some of this. I have bite marks on the insides of my lips from past Sunday School lessons to prove it! But I rarely experience those frustrations these days. What changed things for me was church service, actually.

As I have come to better comprehend the scale of human suffering around us, my questions have changed. Rather than being haunted by the fact that other Saints don't care about the same questions I do in every instance, I have been obliged to reframe the problem this way: "How can my academic training answer the problem of human suffering or contribute to the redemption of the human family?" This is, I suspect, what Elder Maxwell was getting at when he equated scholarship and worship for the disciple. Such a question challenges us to consecrate our minds and training to God's purposes. It moves us toward that primeval command to love God with all our minds.¹² In this pivot, my cynicism has faded—mostly. As God has brought me into closer proximity to suffering, I have had far less time for cynicism. Ultimately, reframing in this way has drawn me profoundly toward, rather than away from my fellow Saints.

In the final tally then, this university should help facilitate our spiritual renovation—that process of transformation at the heart of God's great plan of happiness. Indeed, it must function as an instrument of redemption, writ large. In what I consider Joseph Smith's mature, perhaps final sense of Christ's Atonement's net effect on the human family, he portrayed God's plan as one of unceasing expansion. Preaching his most famous sermon just two months before his death, he characterized true religious life as a process of "going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, [and] from

exaltation to exaltation.”¹³ Joseph Smith’s understanding of Jesus Christ’s Atonement as facilitating an ongoing renovation of our capacity for good seems to provide a direct link to the university experience. No wonder our institutional mission is so audacious! How could a university propose “to assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life”¹⁴ unless it understood itself in these terms?

So we should leave this place with expanded capacities, yes, but that word *capacity* deserves our careful attention. It certainly relates to what we can do. Our capacity for hard work, for critical thinking, for expression, for creativity, and for collaboration should expand during our time here. But the word *capacity* also relates to what we can hold. Think of Joseph Smith’s statement in that light. How much light can I hold? How much patience can I hold? How much compassion? How much love? When we begin to see our university time—

The word capacity also relates to what we can hold. How much light can I hold? How much patience can I hold? How much compassion? How much love?

and our lives, for that matter—as a renovation of our capacity for both good works and for holding beauty and truth and every other good thing, then we will be learning indeed. And if in the complexities and contradictions we must all face along the way we are driven to our knees before the beautiful, startling mystery of it all, then we will be Latter-day Saints indeed.

PURSUING ZION TOGETHER

This intellectual and spiritual work can be difficult. It can be exhausting. I know some of you are tired. You are not sure you can keep at it. You go ahead and find some stillness today. Gather your strength today. Rest up today, because tomorrow we ride for Zion. And it is not quite Zion if you are not there. Remember, you don’t ride alone. Step back and consider the thousands around you. Consider the thousands who preceded you. Consider the unnumbered hosts yet to come. You don’t ride alone.

This path takes courage and vision, yes. It takes faith, and faith will always be counterintuitive in this world. So is love. Why believe or hope or care when the data seem so often stubbornly trailing in other directions? Faith, hope, and charity are audacious in such a world as this. But make no mistake, we will find the place that God for us has prepared, even if it seems far away today. Just when your strength is flagging, you will catch the glint of some gleaming tower off in the distance, and you will sense that God is there.¹⁵ He is. Keep going. God is playing the long game, and we should too, if we understand the scale of the struggle. The ride will not end and the Restoration will not conclude until every daughter and son of God who will come has been safely gathered into the Lord’s extended, covenantal embrace.

As a result, the critical moment in Church history is now, because it is the one that falls to us. Each generation in the Church gifts to the next the faith that has lighted our way. In return, the rising generation reveals to us those facets of the gift that are most meaningful now. That is what you students gift to us. So I thank you, my students, numbered in the thousands now, for showing me what is both timely and timeless and durable about this faith that has won my devotion.

In the early history of the Church, holy temples of necessity functioned as classrooms too. Those Saints had no other choice. The first temples became sites of teaching and learning on a wide range of topics. As a result, those early believers understood well that teaching and learning in this Church operate in sacred space. Think about the classrooms of Brigham Young University. Think about those library carrels. Think about those late-night study sessions. Remember endlessly parsing those Hebrew verbs on the chalkboards of the empty Martin Building. Remember your time learning. Recall the steep price you and others paid for it. Now look back and behold what God has wrought in you. Are you not a marvelous work and a wonder? The teaching spaces of this university are “old-school” temples to me. They are spaces made holy by the teaching you have done, by the learning I have done, and by the glorious Zion we have been pursuing together. May God continue to illuminate our way in the bright light of His Son and fit us for the weighty moment that has fallen to each of us is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



The Clyde Engineering Building, where the Maxwell Institute has been temporarily housed for the past thirteen months.

NOTES

1. University of Wisconsin—Madison Board of Regents report, 1894; Wikipedia, s.v. “sifting and winnowing,” en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sifting_and_winnowing.
2. See George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Steven K. Green, *The Second Disestablishment: Church and State in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Thomas W. Simpson, *American Universities and the Birth of Modern Mormonism, 1867–1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016).
3. See Terryl L. Givens, *Wrestling the Angel: The Foundations of Mormon Thought: Cosmos, God, Humanity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 34–41. See also Philip L. Barlow, “To Mend a Fractured Reality: Joseph Smith’s Project,” *Journal of Mormon History* 38, no. 3 (Summer 2012): 28–50.
4. Neal A. Maxwell, “The Disciple-Scholar,” in *On Becoming a Disciple-Scholar*, ed. Henry B. Eyring (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995), 7.
5. See Doctrine and Covenants 88:12–13.
6. Mark A. Noll, *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 25.
7. Elsie Talmage Brandley, “The Religious Crisis of Today,” Mutual Improvement Association conference, Salt Lake City, June 9, 1934, in *At the Pulpit: 185 Years of Discourses by Latter-day Saint Women*, ed. Jennifer Reeder and Kate Holbrook (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2017), 139.
8. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Maxwell Legacy in the 21st Century,” Neal A. Maxwell Lecture, BYU Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, November 10, 2018, reprinted in the 2018 Maxwell Institute Annual Report, 18, mi.byu.edu/about.
9. Neal A. Maxwell, “From Whom All Blessings Flow,” *Ensign*, May 1997.
10. Joseph Smith, “Letter to the Church and Edward Partridge, 20 March 1839,” 12, josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-the-church-and-edward-partridge-20-march-1839/12. Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation modernized.
11. Francine R. Bennion, “A Latter-day Saint Theology of Suffering,” BYU Women’s Conference address, March 28, 1986, in Reeder and Holbrook, *At the Pulpit*, 229.
12. See, among many, Matthew 22:37.
13. Joseph Smith, *HC* 6:306, April 7, 1844; also “Classics in Mormon Thought: The King Follett Sermon,” *Ensign*, April 1971.
14. The Mission of Brigham Young University (November 4, 1981).
15. Doctrine and Covenants 97:19–20.

Significant Activities and Developments

- In accordance with our Maxwell Institute mission to gather and nurture disciple-scholars, we invited another cohort of exceptional scholars in 2019. No longer a visiting scholar, Dr. Philip L. Barlow has been named a Neal A. Maxwell Research Associate. Dr. Terryl L. Givens, formerly of the University of Richmond, joined the Institute permanently as Neal A. Maxwell Senior Research Fellow. Dr. Givens is a distinguished scholar of Latter-day Saint history and thought and is the author of twelve books and the editor of three more. Most recently he published—with former Institute visiting scholar Brian Hauglid—*The Pearl of Greatest Price: Mormonism's Most Controversial Scripture* (Oxford University Press). In November Dr. Givens presented the Institute's annual Maxwell Lecture (see the text of his address beginning on page 42).
- Others joined as visiting scholars, including Fiona Givens (visiting research staff), Laurie Maffly-Kipp (Washington University in St. Louis, visiting affiliate faculty), Adam Miller (Collin College, visiting affiliate faculty), and Steven Peck (Brigham Young University, visiting fellow). See reports of their work at the Institute, and that of other Institute scholars, on pages 68–95.
- Additional scholars spent time at the Institute as short-term research grant recipients: Rebecca Perkins Crawford (Ohio University), Claudia Jetter (Universität Heidelberg), Benjamin Keogh (University of Edinburgh), Rosalynde Welch (independent scholar), and Nathaniel Wiewora (Harding University).
- We welcomed a larger number of BYU students than in any previous year as research assistants, office staff, public communications interns, and editorial assistants. Seventy student employees worked with us during 2019. Our involvement of undergraduates in research makes us unique among prominent research institutes, as manifest in our first annual Inspiring Learning Seminar, where students and their mentors gave presentations on their recent work. For coverage of the seminar and a complete student roster, see pages 96–99.
- In 2019, the Maxwell Institute hosted one major conference, three symposia, two seminars, fourteen public lectures, and over forty brown bag presentations and cosponsored five scholarly seminars. Through these and other events, our campus community and the interested public interacted with some of the most prominent Latter-day Saint and non-Latter-day Saint scholars of religion. Several thousands more have watched event videos online or followed along via social media (details on pages 100–107). Individually, Institute scholars addressed nearly two dozen Latter-day Saint audiences on topics ranging from scripture to Church history to Latter-day Saint experience in higher education.
- The Maxwell Institute published three books in 2019, including George B. Handley's *If Truth Were a Child: Essays*, Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye's *Crossings: A Bald Asian American Latter-day*

Saint Woman Scholar's Ventures through Life, Death, Cancer & Motherhood (Not Necessarily in That Order), and David Charles Gore's *The Voice of the People: Political Rhetoric in the Book of Mormon*. In addition to these, a number of other publications by Institute scholars appeared from other academic or popular presses. See our scholars' reports on pages 68–95.

- Volume 28 of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* was produced in partnership with the University of Illinois Press and appeared in fall 2019. The *Journal* is supported by the Institute's Laura F. Willes Center for Book of Mormon Studies and edited by Dr. Joseph Spencer, assistant professor of ancient scripture at BYU.
- Announced in the summer of 2019, the Institute began preparations to publish a landmark series of books on Restoration scripture in 2020 called *The Book of Mormon: Brief Theological Introductions*. See page 111 for a preview.
- The Institute's future home is beginning to take structural shape where the Faculty Office Building once stood on the BYU campus. The foundation and superstructure of our dedicated wing of the future West View Building are now in place. The building is scheduled for completion in mid-2020.



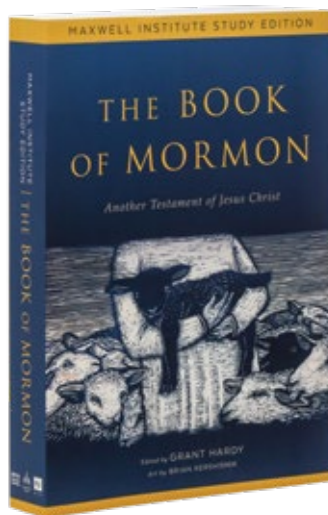


Illuminating the Book of Mormon: A New Edition for the Twenty-First Century

GRANT HARDY

PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT ASHEVILLE

2019 Laura F. Willes Book of Mormon Lecture delivered at the Gordon B. Hinckley Alumni and Visitors Center, Assembly Hall, Brigham Young University, on January 25, 2019.



It is a pleasure to be here. First, let me thank the Laura F. Willes Center for its sponsorship of this lecture and even more importantly for its support of the *Maxwell Institute Study Edition* itself. This evening I would like to talk for a few minutes about the publishing history of the Book of Mormon and what the *Study Edition* might add to that long line of previous versions. Each of the editions that I will mention was prepared with faith, devotion, and great care, and each edition tended to highlight different aspects of the text. The *Study Edition* is no different, and I owe a great deal to those editors and scholars who came before—and in particular to Royal Skousen, whose magisterial work on the textual history of the Book of Mormon has been invaluable to my own efforts. I also want to acknowledge the remarkable contributions made by people at the Maxwell Institute, including Spencer Fluhman, Morgan Davis, Blair Hodges, Andrew Heiss, and Don Brugger.

My ambitions for the new *Study Edition* have been rather modest. Indeed, it is a bit embarrassing to see one's name on the cover as the “editor” of the Book of Mormon when the book already has an extraordinarily capable, prophetic

editor—that is, Mormon. So my goal has always been to point out features of the text that were there from the beginning rather than impose a lot of my own interpretations and applications. I've taken the metaphor of “illumination” as the theme for my remarks tonight, in the sense that I have tried to notice and bring to light things that may not have been obvious to the casual reader, or that were obscured in previous editions.

Take, for example, this before-and-after image of the Sistine Chapel in 1994, at the conclusion of a ten-year restoration project (fig. 1). I should note that the project attracted some controversy, but it was done according to the highest scientific and curatorial standards. You can see what a difference it makes, not just to art historians, but to ordinary viewers. As Carlo Pietrangeli, former director general of the Vatican Museums, is said to have observed, “It is like opening a window in a dark room and seeing it flooded with light.”¹ Michelangelo's frescoes were masterpieces before the project, but they are even more striking afterwards. These restorations allow us to get much closer to the artist himself—to get a better sense of what he was trying to do, and how his skill, materials, methods, and even inspiration, came together to communicate his artistic vision.

We will always be looking at the Book of Mormon through the lens of Joseph Smith and the miraculous translation that he produced. But I hope that with the *Study Edition* we can get a better glimpse at the ancient prophets on the other side of our English translation—who they were, why they wrote what they did, and how they utilized earlier sources to craft a coherent, compelling witness of the Savior and his gospel. We can begin by tracing a single passage, the beginning of 2 Nephi 6, through 190 years of history.

In the beginning were words—words that came to Joseph Smith in the spring of 1829 as he looked at a seer stone in his hat and dictated to his scribes, who then wrote those words down as quickly and as accurately as they could without taking time to add punctuation or paragraphing. God revealed the Book of Mormon to Joseph Smith but then allowed human beings to decide how best to present that text to the world. Unfortunately, only 28 percent of the original manuscript is extant, and while we have some fragments before and after the beginning of 2 Nephi 6, the chapter break itself has not survived. So our earliest version is from the printer's manuscript (fig. 2).



Figure 1. The Sistine Chapel's frescoed ceiling, by Michelangelo

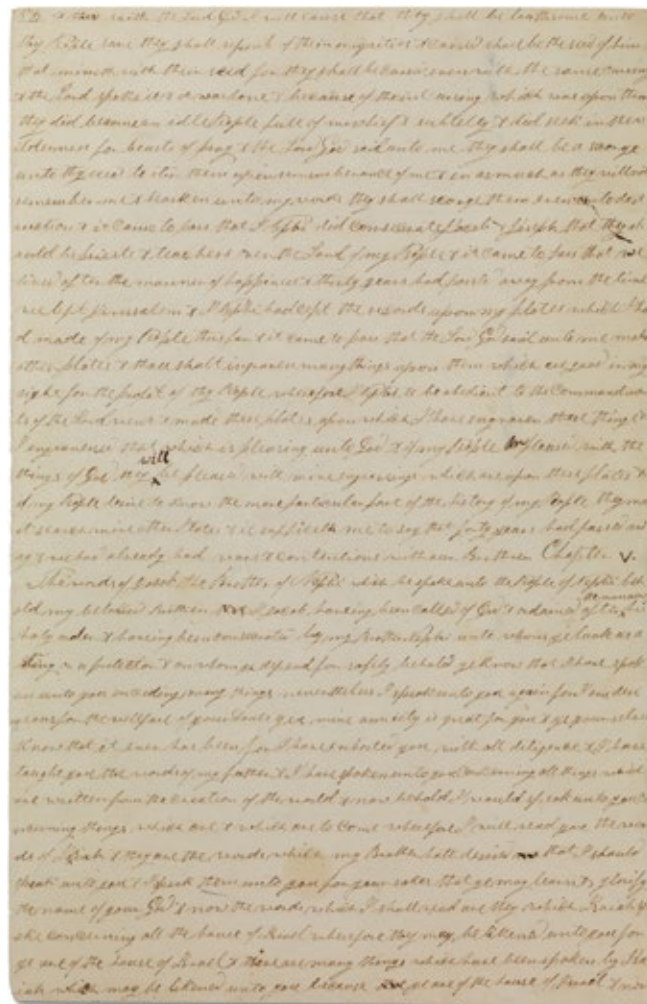


Figure 2. Printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon

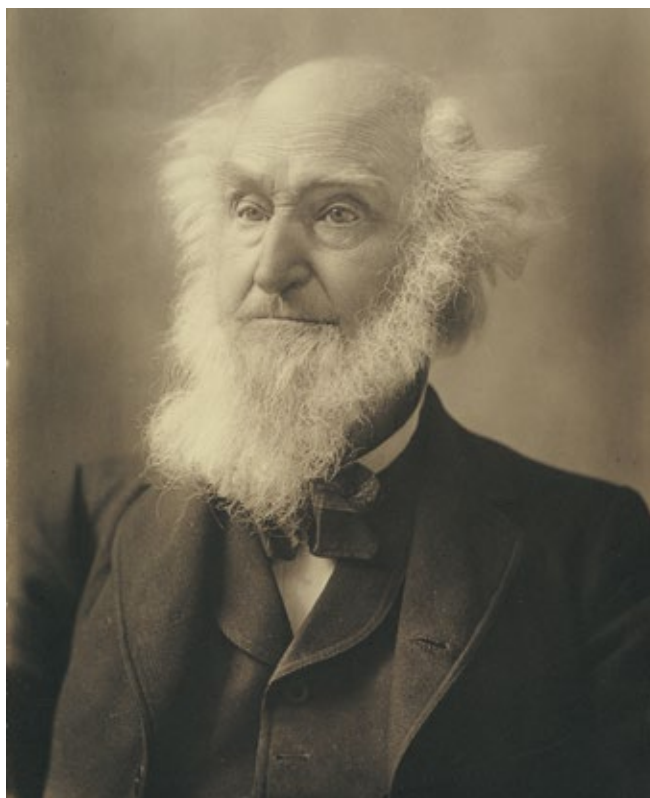


Figure 3. John Gilbert (1802–1895)

This printer's manuscript is what the non-Latter-day Saint printer John Gilbert was looking at as he set the type for the first edition of the Book of Mormon. (The darker cross-outs were done by Joseph Smith for the 1837 edition.) Gilbert is one of my heroes (fig. 3). He knew that he was working on a strange, controversial religious text, but he was a consummate professional. As he read through the dense mass of words, he added punctuation and did a pretty good job, especially since some of the sentences are rather convoluted and he was reading the text cold, without a grasp of the overall narrative. He probably used more commas than you or I would, but the punctuation that he inserted into the text is, for the most part, the punctuation that we still use today. (Also, in keeping with the conventions of the King James Bible, he did not use any quotation marks.) To get a sense of his accomplishment, you might try to punctuate some of the text yourself, from scratch (fig. 4). Here is a typescript of the previous image. Where would you put capital letters, commas,

lived after the manner of happiness & thirty years had passed away from the time we left Jerusalem & I Nephi had cept the records upon my plates which I had made of my People thus far & it came to pass that the Lord God said unto me make other plates & thou shalt ingraven many things upon them which are good in my sight for the profit of thy People wherefore I Nephi to be obedient to the commandments of the Lord went & made these plates upon which I have engraven these things & I engravened that which is pleasing unto God & if my People be pleased with the things of God they be pleased with mine engraveings which are upon these plates & if my People desire to know the more particular part of the history of my People they must search mine other Plates & it sufficeth me to say that forty years had passed away & we had already had wars & contentions with our Brethren Chapter The words of Jacob the Brother of Nephi which he spake unto the People of Nephi behold my beloved Brethren that I Jacob haveing been called of God & ordained after the manner of his holy order & haveing been consecrated by my Brother Nephi unto whom ye look as a King or a protector & on whom ye depend for safety behold ye know that I have spoken unto you exceding many things nevertheless I speak unto you again for I am desirous for the welfare of your Souls yea mine anxiety is great for you & ye yourselves know that it ever has been for I have exhorted you with all diligence & I have taught you the words of my father & I have spoken unto you concerning all things which are written from the creation of the world & now behold

Figure 4. Typescript of the printer's manuscript

semicolons, colons, and periods? It's a great practical exercise in careful reading. Gilbert did a huge amount of work for readers, and yes, he also fixed the spelling.

Consider these words: “[mu]st search mine other Plates & it sufficeth me to say that forty years had passed away & we had already had wars & contentions with our Brethren Chapter V. The words of Jacob the Brother of Nephi which he spake unto the People of Nephi behold my beloved Brethren that I Jacob having been called of God & ordained after the manner of his [holy order].” Clearly there is a shift from some sort of heading to direct speech. The interlinear superscripted “the manner of” was a correction made by Oliver Cowdery as he was checking his copywork against the original manuscript. The Roman number “V” is in darker ink and was added later. This is important because the earliest chapter breaks were part of the original dictation, corresponding to some sort of mark on the gold plates, and thus they represented the way the ancient writers wanted readers to think about how various stories and sermons fit together.

When the first edition was published in 1830, this is what the passage looked like (fig. 5). You can see that there are now paragraphs, which also were determined by Gilbert. Not being familiar with the narrative, he tended to treat the phrases “it came to pass” or “and now” as a signal to start a new paragraph, and these do not work quite as well as his punctuation. (Note that he runs the heading and beginning of the sermon together.)

We will always be looking at the Book of Mormon through the lens of Joseph Smith and the miraculous translation that he produced. But I hope that with the Study Edition we can get a better glimpse at the ancient prophets on the other side of our English translation.

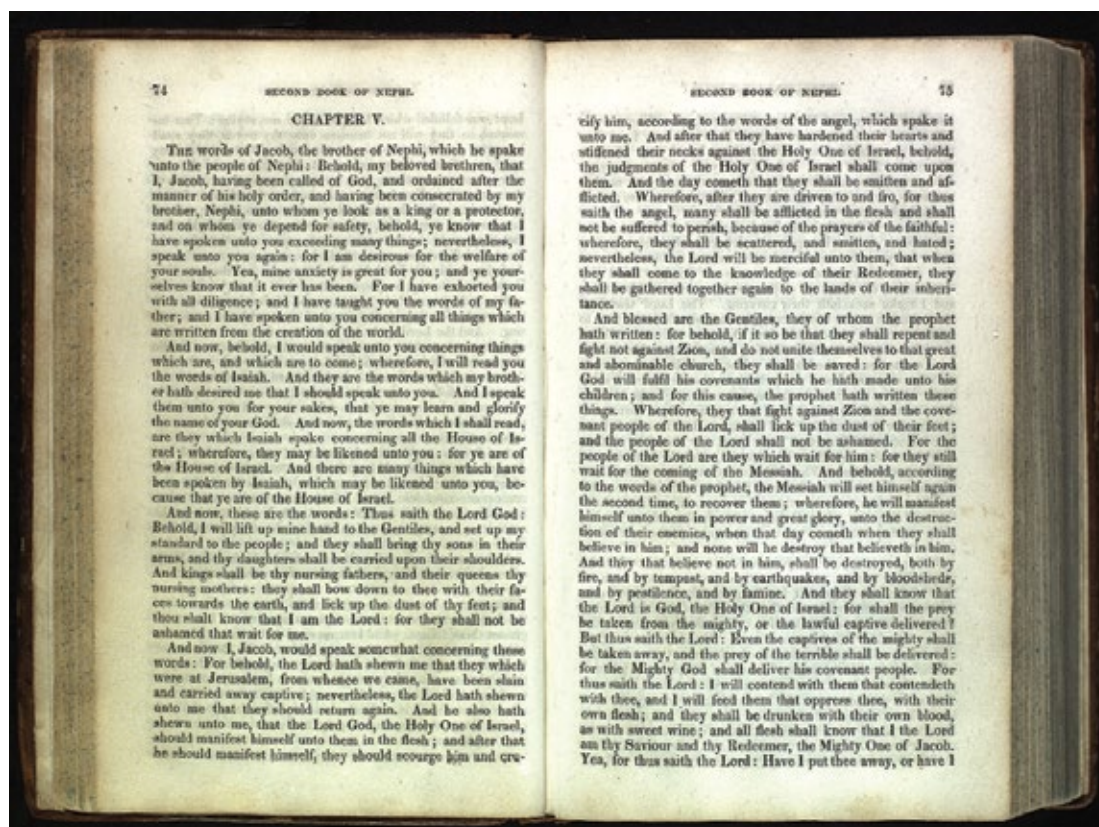


Figure 5. First edition of the Book of Mormon, 1830

His paragraphs tend toward the long side and sometimes go on for two or even three pages. Nevertheless, the Book of Mormon was readable enough, and many early converts felt the Spirit and gained a testimony as they encountered the new scripture in this format. The same basic layout continued through three more editions that were published during Joseph Smith's lifetime.

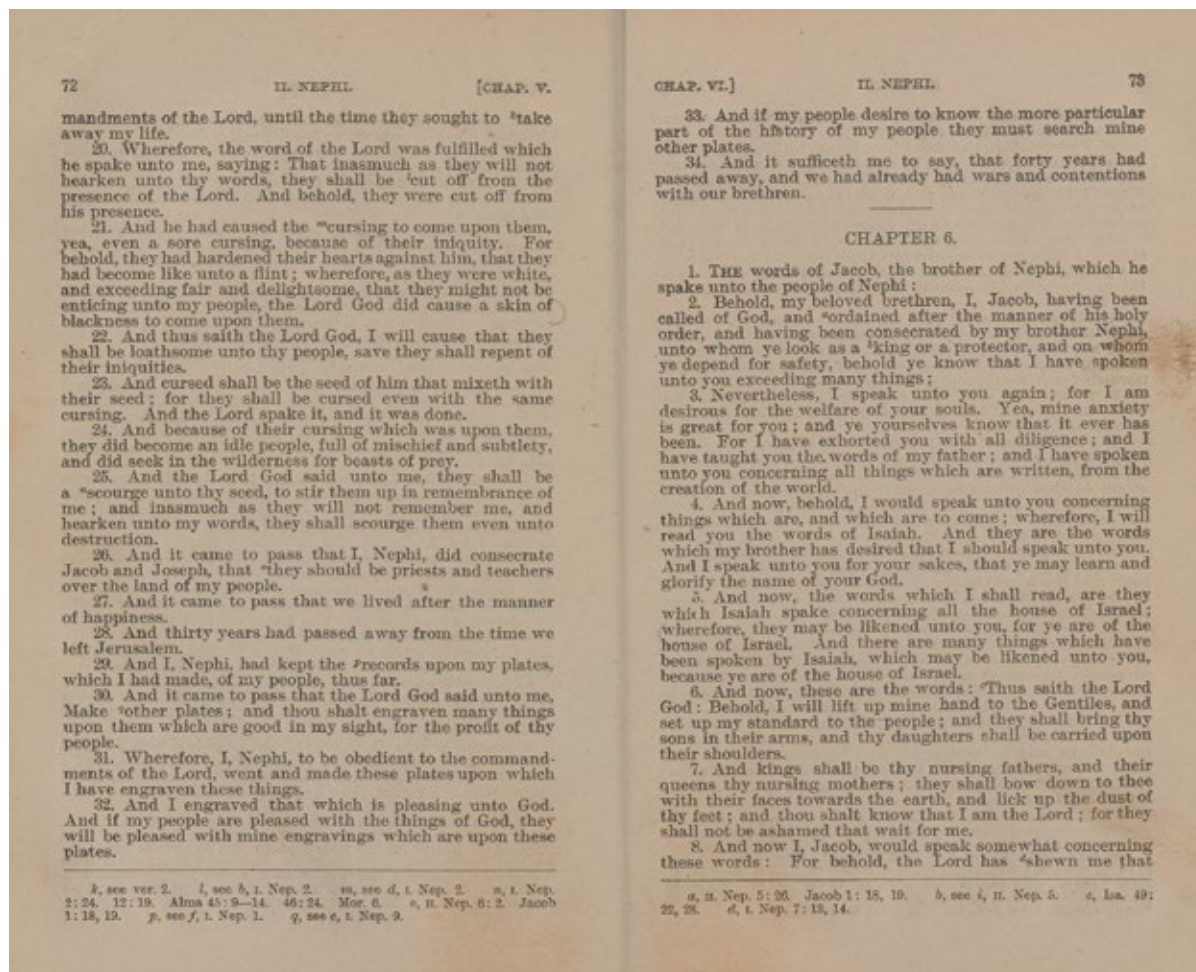


Figure 6. Orson Pratt's versification, 1879 edition

In 1852 a European edition numbered Gilbert's paragraphs and so made it easier to find specific passages. Then in 1879 Orson Pratt rearranged the text into shorter chapters and numbered verses, much like the Bible (fig. 6). (This is when the original chapter V becomes the current 2 Nephi chapter 6.) Nearly every sentence gets its own verse, and we finally have a break between verses 1 and 2. Pratt also added a few references at the bottom of pages.

The next major change came in 1920, under the guidance of James E. Talmage, when the text was put into double columns with chapter summaries and more footnotes (fig. 7). (Some of you may remember using this version in your youth.) This type of presentation breaks up the narrative, but it makes it easy to find individual sentences, which can then be referenced in missionary work and gospel discussions. It also made the Book of Mormon look more like "scripture"—that is to say, like the King James Bible, which generally featured double



Figure 7. James Talmage's changes, 1920 edition



Figure 8. 1981 edition of the Book of Mormon

columns, chapter summaries, and cross-references (though in the 1914 edition they were placed between columns rather than at the bottom of the page). Talmage summarizes what is going on in this chapter ("Jacob's exhortation to the people—He cites the prophecies of Isaiah"), but it can be hard for readers to follow, as Isaiah quotations begin in verses 6 and 7.

The Church prepared its last major edition in 1981 with new chapter summaries, a few corrections from the original and printer's manuscripts, chapter-and-verse headers at the top of each page, chronological markers at the bottom, and many more footnotes (fig. 8). For the first time, the Book of Mormon is thoroughly correlated with the Bible and other scriptures of the Restoration, as well as with a topical guide that makes it easy to study key doctrines and themes. Yet in highlighting gospel principles, other things get lost. Note that the chapter summary no longer mentions Jacob's use of Isaiah, and while the Isaiah references are there, they are buried in the mass of footnotes.

There is another problem as well, though in this case perhaps more for investigators than for Church members. In 1920 the Book of Mormon looked like the Bible, but by 1981 most Christians had started using modern translations that were formatted differently, with paragraphs, superscripted verse numbers, section headings, quotation marks, and poetic lines where appropriate, all of which made for much smoother reading. In other words, the layout of our current Book of Mormon no longer looks like "scripture" and is rather difficult in comparison. The New International Version—one of the most popular contemporary translations—still

¹⁴"Do not listen to Hezekiah. This is what the king of Assyria says: Make peace with me and come out to me. Then every one of you will eat from his own vine and fig tree and drink water from his own cistern. ¹⁵Until I come and take you to a land like your own—a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards.

¹⁶"Do not let Hezekiah mislead you when he says, 'The Lord will deliver us.' Has the god of any nation ever delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? ¹⁷Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they rescued Samaria from my hand? ¹⁸Who of all the gods of these countries has been able to save his land from me? How then can the Lord deliver Jerusalem from my hand?"

¹⁹But the people remained silent and said nothing in reply, because the king had commanded. ²⁰Do not answer him."

²¹Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary, and Joash son of Asaph the recorder went to Hezekiah, with their clothes torn, and told him what the field commander had said.

Jerusalem's Deliverance Foretold

37 When King Hezekiah heard this, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and went into the temple of the Lord. ²He sent Eliakim the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary, and the leading priests, all wearing sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. ³They told him, "This is what Hezekiah says: This day is a day of distress and rebuke and disgrace, as when children come to the point of birth and there is no strength to deliver them. ⁴It may be that the Lord your God will hear the words of the field commander, whom his master, the king of Assyria, has sent to ridicule the living God, and that he will rebuke him for the words the Lord your God has heard. Therefore pray for the remnant that still survives."

⁵When King Hezekiah's officials came to Isaiah, ⁶Isaiah said to them, "Tell your master. ⁷This is what the Lord says: Do not be afraid of what you have heard—those words with which the underlings of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. ⁸Listen! I am going to put a spirit in him so that when he hears a certain report, he will return to his own country, and there I will have him cut down with the sword."

⁹When the field commander heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish, he withdrew and found the king fighting against Libnah.

¹⁰Now Sennacherib received a report that Tirhakah, the Cushite king of Egypt, was marching out to fight against him. When he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah with this word: ¹¹"Say to Hezekiah king of Judah: Do not let the god you depend on deceive you

when he says, 'Jerusalem will not be handed over to the king of Assyria.' ¹²Surely you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the countries, destroying them completely. And will you be delivered? ¹³Did the gods of the nations that were destroyed by my forefathers deliver them—the gods of Gozan, Haran, Rezeph and the people of Eden who were in Tel Assar? ¹⁴Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim, or of Hena or Ivvah?"

Hezekiah's Prayer

¹⁵Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord. ¹⁶And Hezekiah prayed to the Lord: ¹⁷"O Lord Almighty, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. ¹⁸Give ear, O Lord, and hear: open your eyes, O Lord, and see: listen to all the words Sennacherib has sent to insult the living God.

¹⁹"It is true, O Lord, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste all these peoples and their lands. ²⁰They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by human hands. ²¹Now, O Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O Lord, are God."

Sennacherib's Fall

²²Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent a message to Hezekiah: "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Because you have prayed to me concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria, ²³this is the word the Lord has spoken against him:

"The Virgin Daughter of Zion despises and mocks you. The Daughter of Jerusalem tosses her head as you flee.

²⁴Who is it you have insulted and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised your voice

and lifted your eyes in pride? Against the Holy One of Israel!

²⁵By your messengers you have heaped insults on the Lord. And you have said,

"With my many chariots I have ascended the heights of the mountains,

the utmost heights of Lebanon. I have cut down its tallest cedars,

the choicest of its pines. I have reached its remotest heights, the finest of its forests.

²⁶I have dug wells in foreign lands"

¹⁹ That is, from the upper Nile region. ²⁰ Dead Sea Scrolls (see also 2 Kings 19:19); Masoretic Text alone are the Lord. ²¹ Dead Sea Scrolls (see also 2 Kings 19:24); Masoretic Text does not have in foreign lands.

features double columns, which is a bit awkward, but it incorporates the other formatting elements listed above, as well as footnotes indicating when alternative readings have been taken from other ancient sources such as the Dead Sea Scrolls (fig. 9).

In the early 1980s I was studying ancient Greek at BYU and encountering modern translations for the first time. My positive experience in reading them made me wonder if something similar could be done for the Book of Mormon without changing the words themselves. Later, as a professor in New York and North Carolina, I discovered that several of my nonmember colleagues had copies of the Book of Mormon in their offices, usually given to them by Latter-day Saint students, but when I asked if they had read it, they admitted that they had given up after several dozen pages. It was hard to follow the narrative and keep track of all the new names, and there did not seem to be enough there to sustain their interest. Those observations were the basis for the *Reader's Edition*, which I published in 2003 with the University of Illinois Press.

Notice how I adjusted the formatting for 2 Nephi, chapter 6, in the *Reader's Edition* (fig. 10). There are paragraphs, a section heading before 5:29, a quotation at 5:30, a multichapter heading before 6:1 demarcating a major narrative unit within 2 Nephi, and a smaller heading informing readers what Jacob is about to do. A footnote indicates that there was an original chapter break at

Figure 9. New International Version, published by Zondervan in 1984

this point, and on the right-hand page is the quotation from Isaiah, set off in poetic lines (which highlight the parallelism of the Hebrew). There is a lot going on, but I hoped that most readers could breeze through it easily enough, saying, "Yeah, I can see what's happening here." Again my objective was to bring to light what was already in the text—that is, the contours of the book's narrative and structure.

There are a number of ways I found to do this, including adaptations to the table of contents (fig. 11), which I am embarrassed to admit was not my idea but rather that of my non-Latter-day Saint editor at Illinois. Most Church members who have attended seminary or institute are familiar with the major plates and records of the Book of Mormon, but all that background information is mostly opaque to outsiders, and I love the way this table of contents lays things out so clearly. (By the way, even some Latter-day Saints get confused by the fact that Moroni finished his father's book.) The University of Illinois Press did a fine job with the *Reader's Edition*, and I think that it was fairly successful with its target audience—that is, non-Latter-day Saint scholars who wanted to understand the Book of Mormon better as a significant work of American religious history. A few members of the Church discovered it as well, but not so many since most Latter-day Saints do not look to secular university presses for their scripture studies.

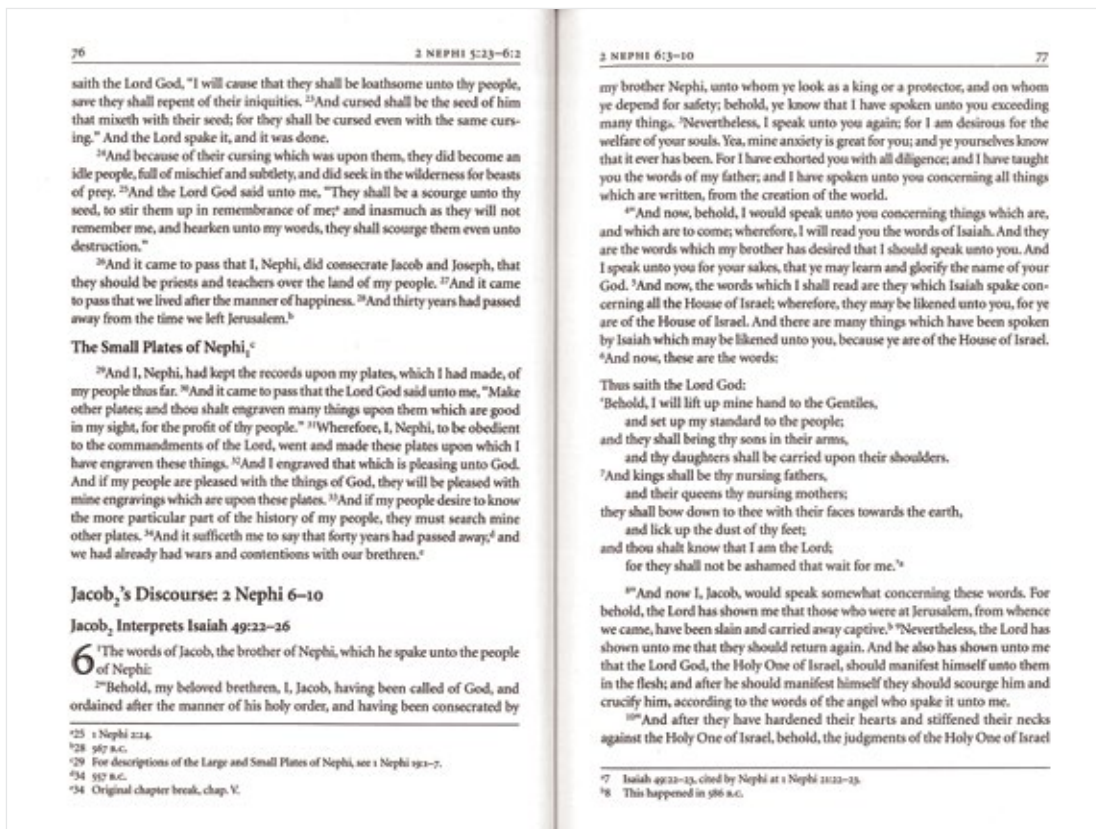


Figure 10. 2 Nephi 6 from Grant Hardy's *Reader's Edition*, 2003

Fast forward now from 2003 to 2015 when there was an announcement that Church universities would move from a two-semester required Book of Mormon course to a one-semester course. I was invited by the blog *Times & Seasons* to put together a sample syllabus for how I would teach such a class, and then the Maxwell Institute invited me to come to Provo and actually teach that course as a summer workshop. In doing so, I realized that it would be very helpful if students could use a college edition of the Book of Mormon, so I developed a draft version that adopted the same basic formatting as the *Reader's Edition* but with lots of revisions. I felt like I had a better grasp of the Book of Mormon than I did in the 1990s, and Royal Skousen's Critical Text Project had increased our understanding of the book's textual history exponentially.

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Figure 11. Contents page from Grant Hardy's *Reader's Edition*, 2003

- 27 And it came to pass that we lived after the manner of happiness.
 28 And thirty years had passed away from the time we left Jerusalem.
 29 And I Nephi had kept the records
 upon my plates which I had made
 of my people thus far.
- 30 And it came to pass that the Lord God said unto me:
 Make other plates;
 and thou shalt engraven many things upon them
 which are good in my sight for the profit of thy people.
- 31 Wherefore I Nephi, to be obedient to the commandments of the Lord,
 went and made these plates upon which I have engraven these things.
- 32 And I engravened that which is pleasing unto God.
 And if my people be pleased with the things of God,
 they be pleased with mine engravings which are upon these plates.
- 33 And if my people desire to know the more particular part
 of the history of my people,
 they must search mine other plates.
- 34 And it sufficeth me to say that forty years had passed away,
 and we had already had wars and contentions with our brethren.

- 6 | 1 The words of Jacob the brother of Nephi
 which he spake unto the people of Nephi:
- 2 Behold, my beloved brethren,
 that I Jacob having been called of God
 and ordained after the manner of his holy order
 and having been consecrated by my brother Nephi,
 unto whom ye look as a king or a protector
 and on whom ye depend for safety,
 behold, ye know that I have spoken unto you exceeding many things.
- 3 Nevertheless I speak unto you again,
 for I am desirous for the welfare of your souls.
 Yea, mine anxiety is great for you.
 And ye yourselves know that it ever has been,
 for I have exhorted you with all diligence.
 And I have taught you the words of my father,
 and I have spoken unto you concerning all things
 which are written from the creation of the world.
- 4 And now behold, I would speak unto you
 concerning things which are and which are to come.

Figure 12. Royal Skousen's *The Earliest Text*, 2009

Royal had published the six volumes of his *Analysis of Textual Variants*, which meticulously accounted for the discrepancies among the earliest manuscripts and twenty significant editions. I went through each of those volumes and identified the textual variants, emendations, and alternative punctuation that I thought would make the most difference in our current text, and put those into about 600 footnotes, with a focus on readings from O and P—that is, the original and printer’s manuscripts—that had been accidentally lost. Restoring these earlier readings, at least in the footnotes, is somewhat akin to scraping off the candle soot and other accretions that had accumulated on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel ceiling for hundreds of years, obscuring the frescoes beneath.

Basically, I read Royal’s 4,100 pages of detailed philological analysis so that you wouldn’t have to (but you really should—his work is phenomenal). I should also mention that he produced an outstanding edition of the Book of Mormon in 2009, published by Yale University Press, in which he presented his scholarly reconstruction of the earliest text (fig. 12). Here again is the beginning of 2 Nephi 6 from his edition. Royal repunctuated and reparagraphed the text from scratch and then put the whole thing into sense lines, which re-create the feel of how Joseph must have dictated. (You can see a squiggle as well, which indicates an original chapter break.) In my opinion, this edition takes us as close as possible to the moment of revelation when Joseph was speaking the words aloud for the first time, with Oliver writing them out in longhand, correcting as he read the phrases back, dipping and sharpening his quill as needed. It is almost as if you are there in the room with them—on sacred ground, so to speak. And yet my interest is in pushing back even farther to the intentions, sensibilities, and literary techniques of the book’s ancient authors and editors.

The Maxwell Institute expressed interest in publishing the new version I had created for the workshop, and as the project developed over the next couple of years, I continued to make revisions and add more footnotes pointing out literary features of the text and internal allusions. I also included the sorts of appendices, maps, and charts that I thought college students might find useful in their overall understanding of how the text came to be, how it is structured, and how to respond to common criticisms.

It was something of a breakthrough when the Church gave us permission to use the official 2013 edition of the text (which is basically the 1981 edition with a few spelling and punctuation adjustments), and another milestone when BYU’s Religious Studies Center and Deseret Book agreed to become joint publishers with the Maxwell Institute. The *Reader’s Edition* had used the 1920 version of the text (because of copyright issues) and had adopted the religiously neutral stance appropriate for a publication from a secular university press. By contrast, the new *Study Edition* is produced from an explicit position of faith and is aimed at Latter-day Saints who want to read the Book of Mormon as sacred scripture.

Also, I had spent more time with modern translations of the Bible, and I was particularly taken with the HarperCollins edition of the New Revised Standard Version (fig. 13), which served as a model for the *Study Edition* with its small woodcuts at the beginning of each book, the full-page lines, the ragged right



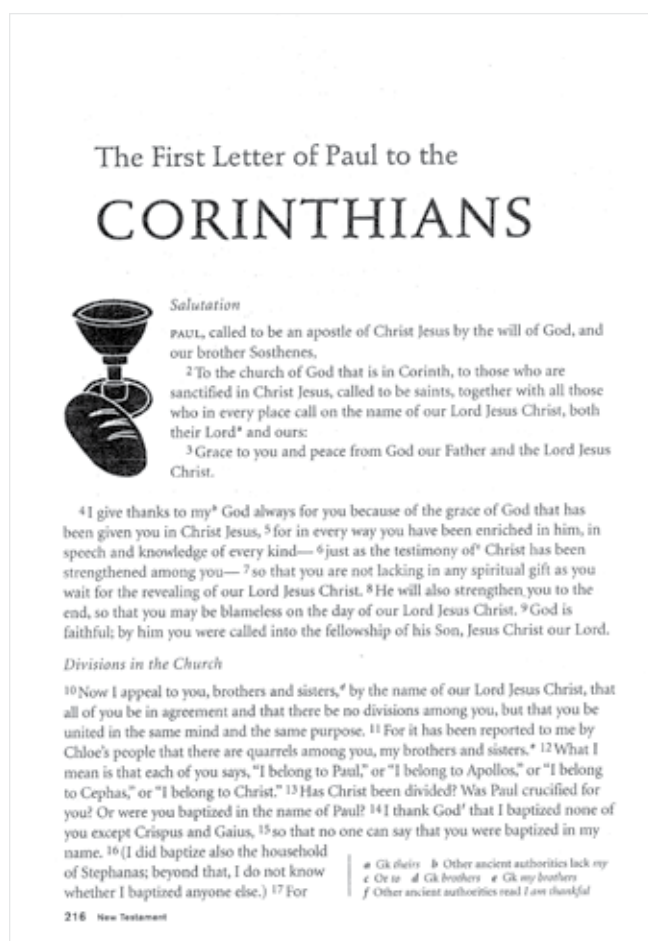


Figure 13. New Revised Standard Version published by HarperCollins, 2009

margins, and the inclusion of textual notes. It is a beautifully produced volume, with the dignity and precision that befits the word of God.

So finally, here is the beginning of 2 Nephi 6 in the *Study Edition* (fig. 14). The 2013 text has been reproduced exactly, with no changes in wording and only the minor adjustments in punctuation necessary to introduce quotation marks and poetry. There are a few more footnotes than in the *Reader's Edition*, but they are printed linearly in smaller type at the bottom of the page, so I hope they are not overwhelming. For instance, at 2 Nephi 6.7 there is a possible variant (see fig. 15). And it is easy to keep track of the original chapter numbers in the headers at the top of each page. Let me focus, however, on what I have done with the chapter break. Compare this same passage in the *Study Edition* to the passage from the *Reader's Edition* shown above.

The original chapter number is right there in the text, and there are now three levels of headings rather than two. (Did you remember that Jacob's discourse took place over two days? It is significant because an angel came in the intervening night to give Jacob additional information.) I also added a brief reference to the theme of Jacob's interpretation of Isaiah 49. The most dramatic difference, however, is that chapter 6 no longer has a first verse—which I have moved into the position of an introductory preface. This is not a decision I made lightly. Later in the Book of Mormon, there

are fifteen instances where John Gilbert, the original typesetter, chose to typeset words from the printer's manuscript as italicized prefaces, as at Mosiah 6 (our current chapter 9). He could have gone back and done the same thing for Jacob 6 to be consistent, but he did not. So I did it for him. By the way, in 2013 all of these prefaces were reset in regular roman type, to indicate that they are part of the canonized text. I have adopted that same convention in the *Study Edition*—anything that I have added, that is not actually scripture, is in italics.

There's a footnote at verse 4 with a reading from the printer's manuscript that was accidentally lost in the 1837 edition ("I speak *them* unto you"; see fig. 15). It is easy to see where Jacob is quoting Isaiah 49, in two different places, and then in verses 13 and 15 I have bolded the phrases Jacob is repeating from the Isaiah passage he has just cited so that you can see how he is adapting and interpreting those phrases in his own prophecy—a technique that Nephi had used extensively in 1 Nephi 22. (I have added some color underlining to point out this feature; see figs. 15–16.)

I have also added more bolding on the page (which is new to the *Study Edition*), and this indicates places in which Jacob's rendition of Isaiah changes or adds to the King James Bible (see fig. 16). For whatever reason, the English translation of the Book of Mormon interacts regularly with the KJV—some of this may be a function of the translation, though in some instances it appears that Jacob himself may be adapting or adding

(continued on page 28)

²⁴ And because of their cursing which was upon them they did become an idle people, full of mischief and subtlety, and did seek in the wilderness for beasts of prey.

²⁵ And the Lord God said unto me, “They shall be a scourge unto thy seed, to stir them up in remembrance of me;^a and inasmuch as they will not remember me, and hearken unto my words, they shall scourge them even unto destruction.”

²⁶ And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did consecrate Jacob and Joseph, that they should be priests and teachers over the land of my people. ²⁷ And it came to pass that we lived after the manner of happiness. ²⁸ And thirty years had passed away from the time we left Jerusalem.^b

The Small Plates of Nephi₁^c

²⁹ And I, Nephi, had kept the records upon my plates, which I had made, of my people thus far. ³⁰ And it came to pass that the Lord God said unto me, “Make other plates; and thou shalt engraven many things upon them which are good in my sight, for the profit of thy people.” ³¹ Wherefore, I, Nephi, to be obedient to the commandments of the Lord, went and made these plates upon which I have engraven these things. ³² And I engraved that which is pleasing unto God. And if my people are pleased with the things of God they will be pleased with mine engravings which are upon these plates. ³³ And if my people desire to know the more particular part of the history of my people they must search mine other plates. ³⁴ And it sufficeth me to say that forty years had passed away,^d and we had already had wars and contentions with our brethren.

JACOB₂'S DISCOURSE: 2 NEPHI 6–10

[V] **6** [*Nephi₁'s heading*] The words of Jacob, the brother of Nephi, which he spake unto the people of Nephi.^e

Day One: Jacob₂ Interprets Isaiah: 2 Nephi 6–9

Promises to the Gentiles and to God's Covenant People:

An Explanation of Isaiah 49:22–26

² “Behold, my beloved brethren, I, Jacob, having been called of God, and ordained after the manner of his holy order, and having been consecrated by my brother Nephi, unto whom ye look as a king or a protector, and on whom ye depend for safety, behold ye know that I have spoken unto you exceedingly many things. ³ Nevertheless, I speak unto you again; for I am desirous for the welfare of your souls. Yea, mine anxiety is great for you; and ye yourselves know that it ever has been. For I have exhorted you with all diligence; and I have taught you the words of my father; and I have spoken unto you concerning all things which are written, from the creation of the world.

^a25 1 Ne 2:24 ^b28 567 BC ^c29 For more on the large and small plates of Nephi, see 1 Ne 9:1–6; 19:1–7.

^d34 557 BC ^e1 In this edition, v. 1 has been made into a heading, just as the 1830 typesetter did with the introductory words at Mos 9; 23; Alma 5; 7; 9; 17; 21; 36; 38; 39; 45; Hel 7; 13; 3 Ne 11; and Moro 9.

Figure 14. Maxwell Institute Study Edition, 2018, p. 71

⁴“And now, behold, I would speak unto you concerning things which are, and which are to come; wherefore, I will read you the words of Isaiah. And they are the words which my brother has desired that I should speak unto you. And I speak unto you^a for your sakes, that ye may learn and glorify the name of your God. ⁵ And now, the words which I shall read are they which Isaiah spake concerning all the house of Israel; wherefore, they may be likened unto you, for ye are of the house of Israel. And there are many things which have been spoken by Isaiah which may be likened unto you, because ye are of the house of Israel.

⁶“And now, these are the words:

Thus saith the Lord God:

‘Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles,
and set up my standard to the people;
and they shall bring thy sons in their arms,
and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.

⁷ And kings shall be thy nursing fathers,
and their queens thy nursing mothers;
they shall bow down to thee with their faces^b towards the earth,
and lick up the dust of thy feet.

And thou shalt know that I am the Lord;
for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.^c

⁸“And now I, Jacob, would speak somewhat concerning these words. For behold, the Lord has shown me that those who were at Jerusalem, from whence we came, have been slain and carried away captive.^d ⁹ Nevertheless, the Lord has shown unto me that they should return again. And he also has shown unto me that the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, should manifest himself unto them in the flesh; and after he should manifest himself they should scourge him and crucify him, according to the words of the angel who spake it unto me.

¹⁰“And after they have hardened their hearts and stiffened their necks against the Holy One of Israel, behold, the judgments of the Holy One of Israel shall come upon them. And the day cometh that they shall be smitten and afflicted. ¹¹ Wherefore, after they are driven to and fro (for thus saith the angel, ‘Many shall be afflicted in the flesh, and shall not be suffered to perish, because of the prayers of the faithful’), they shall be scattered, and smitten, and hated; nevertheless, the Lord will be merciful unto them, that when they shall come to the knowledge of their Redeemer, they shall be gathered together again to the lands of their inheritance.

¹²“And blessed are the Gentiles, they of whom the prophet has written; for behold, if it so be that they shall repent and fight not against Zion, and do not unite themselves to that great and abominable church, they shall be saved; for the Lord God will fulfil

^a 4 P speak them unto you ^b 7 Poss face (= Isa 49.23; 1 Ne 21.23) ^c 7 Isa 49.22–23; cited by Nephi at 1 Ne 21.22–23. Quotations from these verses are in bold below (vv. 13, 15). ^d 8 This happened in 586 BC.

Figure 15. Maxwell Institute Study Edition, 2018, p. 72

his covenants which he has made unto his children; and for this cause the prophet has written these things. ¹³ Wherefore, they that fight against Zion and the covenant people of the Lord shall **lick up the dust of their feet**; and the people of the Lord **shall not be ashamed**. For the people of the Lord are they **who wait for him**; for they still wait for the coming of the Messiah.

¹⁴ “And behold, according to the words of the prophet, the Messiah will ‘set himself again the second time to recover them’;^a wherefore, he will manifest himself unto them in power and great glory, unto the destruction of their enemies, when that day cometh when they shall believe in him; and none will he destroy that believe in him. ¹⁵ And they that believe not in him shall be destroyed, both by fire, and by tempest, and by earthquakes, and by bloodsheds, and by pestilence, and by famine. And they **shall know that the Lord is God**, the Holy One of Israel.

¹⁶ For shall the prey be taken from the mighty,
or the lawful captive delivered?
¹⁷ But thus saith the Lord:
‘Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away,
and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered;
for the Mighty God shall deliver his covenant people.
For thus saith the Lord:
I will contend with **them**^b that contendeth with thee^c—
¹⁸ And I will feed them that oppress thee, with their own flesh;
and they shall be drunken with their own blood as with sweet wine;
and all flesh shall know that I, the Lord, am thy Savior and thy Redeemer,
the Mighty One of Jacob.’”^d

Jacob₂'s Quotation of Isaiah 50.1–52.2: 2 Nephi 7–8

(with significant changes and additions to the King James Bible in bold)

Israel's Iniquities and God's Power (Isaiah 50.1–3)

7 Yea, for thus saith the Lord:
“Have I put thee away,
or have I cast thee off forever?”

For thus saith the Lord:
“Where is the bill of your mother’s divorcement?
To whom **have I put thee away**?
Or to which of my creditors **have I sold you**?
Yea, to whom **have I sold you**?

^{a14} Poss set his hand again (= Isa 11.11) ^{b17} Poss him (= Isa 49.25; 1 Ne 21.25) ^{c17} Jacob₂ here omits “and I will save thy children” from Isa 49.25 and 1 Ne 21.25. ^{d18} Verses 16–18 quote Isa 49.24–26, with a few variations from 1 Ne 21.24–26. Differences from the King James Bible are in bold.

Figure 16. Maxwell Institute Study Edition, 2018, p. 73

explanatory glosses to the words of Isaiah. A footnote in the current, official edition at 2 Nephi 12:2 states, “Comparison with the King James Bible in English shows that there are differences in more than half of the 433 verses of Isaiah quoted in the Book of Mormon.” That is good to know, but not as useful as enabling readers to see for themselves, at a glance, exactly where this is happening.

The rest of Jacob’s discourse unfolds in a similar manner, as section headings and footnotes guide readers through the text, illuminating its themes, narrative, and structure. Why does all this matter? It is hard to explain the difference that paragraphs, section headings, quotation marks, and poetic stanzas make until you actually try it. Most people will find that this version of Book of Mormon reads much more smoothly than what they have heretofore experienced. The chapters flow, the narrative is clearly marked out, sermons become more coherent, episodes of dialogue are easy to follow, and the poetry (even Isaiah’s!) is more readily comprehensible. There is tremendous benefit in sitting down and reading twenty or thirty pages at a time, and this edition makes that much more possible—even enjoyable. There is also the advantage of seeing everything in context, something that the section headings in particular facilitate. It is easy to keep track of not just the immediate context of favorite verses, but also the big picture that Nephi or Mormon or Moroni themselves had in mind, and in this case, of what Jacob was trying to do in his sermon.

One more clue comes from a footnote at the beginning of 2 Nephi 9: “In this chapter, six expressions of praise for God beginning with ‘O’ (vv. 8–24) are followed by ten woes (vv. 27–38), and then by six exhortations to remember that start with ‘O, my beloved brethren’ (vv. 39–52; though the last exhortation omits the O).” In other words, there is a deliberate, balanced organization to this part of Jacob’s sermon.

The footnotes in the *Study Edition* are minimal, at least compared with our standard Latter-day Saint edition. Aside from the textual comments, they mostly identify sources of direct quotations, allusions to earlier events, fulfillment of prophecies, chronological and geographical references, and narrative strands (for example, “this story is picked up later at . . .” or “for another account of this same event, see . . .”). Every so often, I make observations about literary features, textual connections, or larger contexts. Here are some quick examples.

2 NEPHI 5.19, HEADING

The Lamanites Are Cursed^d

^d19 Whatever the nature of this curse, it does not prevent the Lamanites from becoming more righteous than the Nephites at Hel 6; cf. Hel 13.1.

[The Book of Mormon includes attitudes towards ethnic differences that can, and should, make us uncomfortable today, but that is not the end of the story. Skin color is not a barrier to spirituality, as the Nephites learn over time. Indeed, one of the lessons of the Book of Mormon, taken in its entirety, is that the gospel can overcome prejudice.]

JACOB 6.6

⁶ Yea, “today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts”;^f for why will ye die?

^f6 Ps 95.7–8; this is the first part of the passage that was alluded to at Jacob 1.7, which means that Jacob₂ begins and ends his book with the same psalm.

ALMA 14.14—AT AMMONIHAH, IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF HORRIFIC MASSACRE BY BURNING

¹⁴ Now it came to pass that when the bodies of those who had been cast into the fire were consumed, and also the records which were cast in with them, the chief judge of the land came and stood before

Alma and Amulek, as they were bound; and he smote them with his hand upon their cheeks, and said unto them, “After what ye have seen, will ye preach again unto this people, that they shall be cast into a lake of fire and brimstone?”^e

^c14 The answer is apparently “No.” Alma₂ used this image of fire and brimstone at Alma 12.17, and it appeared earlier at 2 Ne 9.16, 19, 26; 28.23; Jacob 3.11; 6.10; and Mos 3.27; but after this verse the metaphor is never used again in the Book of Mormon.

[Alma was apparently traumatized when he saw his metaphor made literal. This observation was first made by Kylie Turley.]

ALMA 29.9

⁹ I know that which the Lord hath commanded me, and I glory in it. I do not glory of myself, but I glory in that which the Lord hath commanded me; yea, and this is my glory, that perhaps I may be an instrument in the hands of God to bring some soul to repentance; and this is my joy.^a

^a9 Alma₂’s words here echo those of his father at Mos 23.10–11.

Compare Mosiah 23:10–11 (with the words in common italicized):

¹⁰ nevertheless, after much tribulation, the Lord did hear my cries, and did answer my prayers, and has made me *an instrument in his hands in bringing so many of you to a knowledge of his truth.*

¹¹ Nevertheless, in this *I do not glory*, for I am unworthy to glory *of myself.*

[The verse in Alma seems to be the moment when Alma the Younger becomes his own father—an important occurrence in the life of most young men. I only wish that the Book of Mormon had more to say about mother-daughter relationships.]

ALMA 37.2

¹ And now, my son Helaman, I command you that ye take the records which have been entrusted with me; ² and I also command you that ye keep a record of this people, according as I have done, upon the plates of Nephi, and keep all these things sacred which I have kept, even as I have kept them; for it is for a wise purpose that they are kept.^d

^d2 Helaman₂ was apparently not Alma₂’s first choice as designated record keeper; see Alma 50.37–38.

Compare Alma 50:37–38:

³⁷ And it came to pass that in the same year that the people of Nephi had peace restored unto them, that Nephiah, the second chief judge, died, having filled the judgment-seat with perfect uprightness before God. ³⁸ Nevertheless, he had refused Alma to take possession of those records and those things which were esteemed by Alma and his fathers to be most sacred; therefore Alma had conferred them upon his son, Helaman.

[It is a puzzling admission; there must be a story there.]

ALMA 45.22

²² Therefore, Helaman and his brethren went forth to establish the church again in all the land, yea, in every city throughout all the land which was possessed by the people of Nephi. And it came to pass that they did appoint priests and teachers^e throughout all the land, over all the churches.

^c22 In the original manuscript, the previous twenty-eight words (“yea, in every . . . priests and teachers”) are written in Joseph Smith’s handwriting. For some reason, he had momentarily taken over for his regular scribe, Oliver Cowdery, mid-sentence. This is the only such occurrence in the surviving portion of the manuscript.

[No other edition provides this information, which is important evidence for how the Book of Mormon was translated. I have wondered what might have temporarily incapacitated Oliver—perhaps a coughing fit? or a bee sting? Actually, Royal Skousen thinks that Oliver dozed off for a moment since on the previous page he started to make an unusual number of mistakes as he got drowsy, taking dictation on a warm spring day.]

ALMA 63.16–17, THE LAST VERSES IN THE BOOK OF ALMA

¹⁶ And thus ended the thirty and ninth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi.^e ¹⁷ And thus ended the account of Alma, and Helaman his son, and also Shiblon, who was his son.

^e16–53 years; see v. 10 above. Note that despite its length, the book of Alma covers only thirty-nine years; by contrast, the book of Helaman will cover fifty years in sixteen chapters.

[Someone was making decisions about which incidents received more attention and which were skipped over.]

ETHER 13.13

¹³ And I was about to write more, but I am forbidden;^h but great and marvelous were the prophecies of Ether; but they esteemed him as naught, and cast him out; and he hid himself in the cavity of a rock by day, and by night he went forth viewing the things which should come upon the people.

^h13 For additional instances of the Lord exercising editorial control over the contents of the Book of Mormon, see 1 Ne 14.28; 3 Ne 26.11–12; 28.25.

MORONI 8.3

² My beloved son, Moroni, I rejoice exceedingly that your Lord Jesus Christ hath been mindful of you, and hath called you to his ministry, and to his holy work. ³ I am mindful of you always in my prayers, continually praying unto God the Father in the name of his Holy Child, Jesus, that he, through his infinite goodness and grace, will keep you through the endurance of faith on his name to the end.^d

^d3 In speaking of Moroni’s call to the ministry, Mormon₂ quotes the phrase “endurance of faith on his name to the end” from the ordination prayer at Moro 3.3.

Compare Moroni 3:1–3:

¹ The manner which the disciples, who were called the elders of the church, ordained priests and teachers—

² After they had prayed unto the Father in the name of Christ, they laid their hands upon them, and said, ³ “In the name of Jesus Christ I ordain you to be a priest (or if he be a teacher, “I ordain you to be a teacher”) to preach repentance and remission of sins through Jesus Christ, by the endurance of faith on his name to the end. Amen.”

[Mormon was using a familiar phrase that he was sure his son would recognize, to remind him of his priesthood responsibilities. These are the only two occurrences of “endurance of faith on his name to the end” in the entire Book of Mormon.]

There are several dozen of these sorts of observations in the *Study Edition*, but as I said, I was trying to keep the footnotes to a minimum. So I included just a few representative examples of the kinds of things

we could be seeing in the Book of Mormon if we were reading more carefully. Here is one last example, which provides context for 2 Nephi 6.

2 NEPHI 1.15

¹⁵ But behold, the Lord hath redeemed my soul from hell;^a
 I have beheld his glory,
 and I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love.

^a15 The book of 2 Nephi is framed at the beginning and end by two matching assertions of personal redemption—by Lehi₁ in this verse, and then by Nephi₁ at 33.6.

Compare 2 Nephi 33.6:

⁶ I glory in plainness;
 I glory in truth;
 I glory in my Jesus,
 for he hath redeemed my soul from hell.

This is an example of an *inclusio*, where a literary unit that may be shorter or longer than a single chapter is marked off by repeated phrases. The situation, however, is complicated by 2 Nephi 4.31, in which Nephi seems unsure of his status with God and is explicitly seeking salvation:

³¹ O Lord, wilt thou redeem my soul?
 Wilt thou deliver me out of the hands of mine enemies?
 Wilt thou make me that I may shake at the appearance of sin?

Let's put this in the broader context. Second Nephi can sometimes be a difficult book to get through. After all the action of 1 Nephi, there are no dramatic stories, apart from chapter 5, when Nephi and his followers flee from his brothers and establish a separate settlement. Here's the basic outline, taken from my major headings with a bit of refinement to get all the chapters in.

STRUCTURE OF 2 NEPHI

Lehi's Last Words: 1.1–4.12	Lehi: "The Lord hath redeemed my soul from hell" (1.15) Lehi to Jacob: "I know that thou art redeemed" (2.3)
Nephi's Psalm: 4.13–35	Nephi: "O Lord, wilt thou redeem my soul?" (4.31)
Historical Events: ch. 5	"Thirty years had passed away from the time we left Jerusalem" (5.28) "Forty years had passed away . . . wars and contentions" (5.34)
Jacob's Discourse: ch. 6–10 Introduction to Isaiah: ch. 11	
Nephi's Quotation of Isaiah 2–14: ch. 12–24	
Nephi's Prophecies and Interpretations of Jacob and Isaiah: ch. 25–30	
Nephi's Conclusion—The Doctrine of Christ: ch. 31–33	Nephi: "[Jesus] hath redeemed my soul from hell" (33.6)

Now we can track the theme of personal redemption signaled by the inclusio.

“Thirty years had passed away”—Nephi is writing the small plates in his late forties. He is told to record spiritual things, but after recounting the memorable events from his teenage years, he does not seem to have much left to say. Just six verses later “forty years had passed away.” Ten years have gone by, which is a long dry spell; Nephi is now in his late fifties. There are hints of trouble and disappointments. For instance, in his three decades as king, there is not a single story of a success or a miracle. At some point, he feels like he has to write something, so he writes down Jacob’s speech (at least Jacob has seen an angel!). Nephi copies several chapters of Isaiah from the brass plates. And then, in chapter 25, it seems like the spirit of prophecy and revelation returns. Only at the very end of his book can he bear witness that his soul has been redeemed.

If I am reading this correctly, Nephi may be a model for us. He does not have a crisis of faith (he always believes), but rather a crisis of expectations. Life in the promised land has not turned out as he had anticipated. The promised blessings do not materialize, despite his obedience and faithfulness. So he turns to his younger brother, who shows him the way forward, and then to the scriptures. And finally, apparently after years or even decades, answers and blessings come, though perhaps not in the ways he had expected. Stepping back for a moment, it appears that 1 Nephi is about physical deliverance, while 2 Nephi is about spiritual deliverance, in several ways, but perhaps even with respect to Nephi himself.

Why does all this matter? Let me give you three reasons:

1. In the *Maxwell Institute Study Edition*, I wanted to present the Book of Mormon in the most inviting, accurate, reader-friendly form possible. I wanted to bring to light the intricate narrative and structure inherent in this text—which I think are among its greatest strengths—so that people can read with greater understanding.

2. Study and scholarship can be an act of devotion. I believe the Book of Mormon is a gift from God, so naturally I want to learn all I can about how it works and how was it put together, in as much detail as possible.

Study and scholarship can be an act of devotion. I believe the Book of Mormon is a gift from God, so naturally I want to learn all I can about how it works and how was it put together, in as much detail as possible.

I want to encourage others to pay attention to the exact words, to look for patterns, to keep broader contexts in mind. For me, it is as if your parents gave you a car, a nice one, say, a Porsche, and you said, “I love it. I keep it in my garage 24/7.” Or “I take it out every day for a ride around the block.” Or “I drive it two miles to church every Sunday, without fail.” Sure, it will do that, but don’t you want to look under the hood? Don’t you want to take it out on the open road and see what it will do or where it will take you? It is an amazing gift! We

show our respect and love for the Giver by making the most of His gifts.

3. Reading the text closely makes it possible to hear the voices of the original authors and editors more clearly, to understand their intentions, their talents, and their testimonies. We can learn to recognize their distinctive voices, speaking from different times and circumstances, much as we might appreciate the characteristic cadences and themes of particular apostles in general conference. Narratives don’t just happen. Someone took the time to figure how best to tell these stories—where to put in direct discourse or insert primary source documents, how much space to give to various people and events, and where to reuse phrases that had figured significantly in earlier contexts. Because the Book of Mormon was written primarily for latter-day readers, it invites us into a relationship with the narrators, an ongoing conversation that, we are told, will be continued at the judgment day (see 2 Nephi 33:11; Moroni 10:34).

We can come to know the narrators better through a detailed analysis of their writing. Brigham Young once asked the Saints, “Do you read the Scriptures, my brethren and sisters, as though you were writing them a thousand, two thousand, or five thousand years ago? Do you read them as though you stood in the place of

the men who wrote them? If you do not feel thus, it is your privilege to do so” (*Journal of Discourses* 7:333). Notice that he is not asking us to imagine ourselves as if we had been present for those miraculous events (as if we were watching videos), but rather, to think about what it would have been like to write about those sacred experiences, to try to convey their meaning through literature.

As my wife Heather once observed in an article on Mormon’s poetics, the Book of Mormon has two functions.² The first is as a “primer for judgment”—that is to say, an introductory textbook to help us prepare for the most important final exam ever: it is a call to repent and come to Christ. The basic teachings of the book are quite clear in any version, as is its testimony of the Savior. This is a book that was intended to convert the world, and millions have felt the Spirit as they have read and heeded its call.

But the question remains, once someone has joined the Church and is familiar with basic gospel principles, what is the use of continuing to read the Book of Mormon? We can return to its pages to feel the Spirit, of course, but do the contents really matter? Or is devotional reading pretty much all there is? According to Heather, its second function is as a handbook for sanctification; in other words, it is a guidebook to becoming saints. I believe that such guidance can come through getting to know its writers and editors better. I hope the new *Study Edition* will bring additional light to their work and illuminate it. To my mind, the most spiritually mature, compelling voices in our religious tradition belong to Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni. (Okay, maybe Jacob and Alma as well.) Perhaps these woodcuts are a good way to envision them (fig. 17). (I am not sure which of Lehi’s sons he is blessing here; if it is Nephi that would be particularly poignant, since Nephi does not include his own blessing in 2 Nephi 1–4. We also see Mormon at age ten with Ammaron, and Moroni all alone. I love the way that so many of Brian Kershnik’s woodcut images focus on the acts of reading and writing.) As we learn to read between the lines, to be attuned to literary form and nuance, we can begin to follow their examples of patience and faithfulness in the face of disappointment, weaknesses, and grief. (Someone once said that you should never trust anyone to be your spiritual guide who has not suffered; these men know all about that.) We can learn what it means to seek for revelation, to recognize our sins and weaknesses, to love our enemies, and to reach out to the poor and vulnerable. More careful, detailed readings of the Book of Mormon can take us closer to the authors, and through them to Christ. It may well be that changes in the formatting can help unlock the power of this text to nurture faith in the twenty-first century.

NOTES

1. Arthur C. Danto, *What Art Is* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 54.
2. Heather Hardy, “Another Testament of Jesus Christ: Mormon’s Poetics,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 16, no. 2 (2007): 16–27, 93–95.

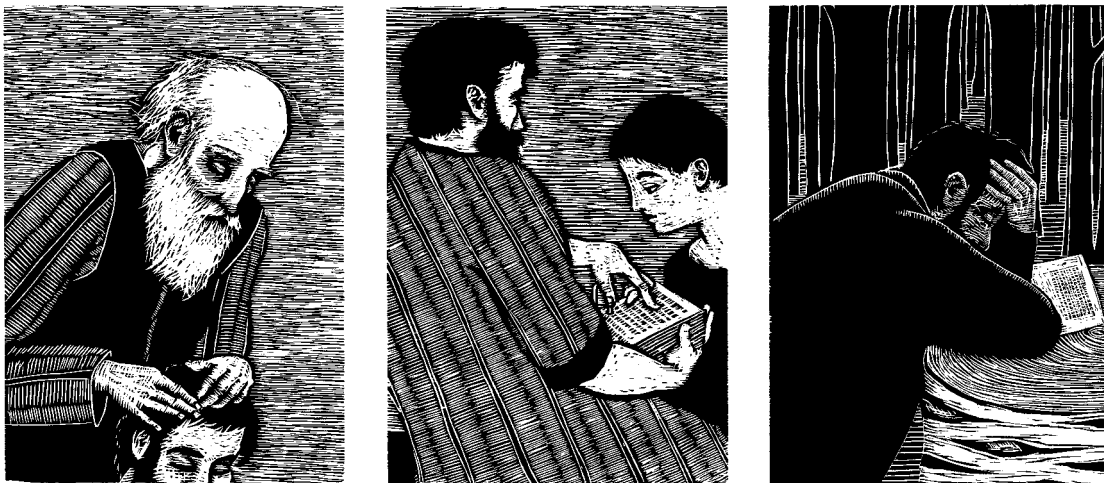


Figure 17. Woodcuts by Brian Kershnik from 2 Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni



Illuminating the Book of Mormon: A New Edition for the Twenty-First Century (continued)

BRIAN KERSHNIK
ARTIST

It has been an honor to be involved in the Book of Mormon study edition project with the Neal A. Maxwell Institute. My love for this book of scripture and my respect and affection for the people involved has been a great motivator for me. The frankness and completeness of Grant Hardy's scholarship has deepened my regard for the text and for all the souls—living and dead—who have brought and continue to bring it forth. I feel humbled and honored to be involved in this great work.

I've been a student of the Book of Mormon since my early teenage years, and notwithstanding my being a very reluctant illustrator, this project made me feel it would be worthwhile to overcome that resistance.

Illustrating scripture is problematic. People love pictures and often want artists to do the visualizing for them. I believe that for any text—and especially scripture—the decoration should draw the reader further into the words rather than replace or distract from them. Focusing closely on a detail of a subject such as the hands allows the reader to fill in other details. Deep reading must engage the imagination; it invites us to see things newly, to read them again, to read them differently. I would like my pictures to function in that way, to go with you and your imagination into the words.

The Institute's original design proposal envisioned the creation of small iconic images at the beginning of each book about the size of an illuminated letter—say, 1x2 inches, indented into the text, similar to what you'll see in the HarperCollins New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (see fig. 13 on p. 24). Because of this, my wife, Faith, recommended hands as the main theme of each image early in the project. As things developed, that decision was not ultimately followed all the way through, although many of those hand compositions informed images used in the finally realized publication. It was a fairly late decision to print the woodcuts at almost the actual size of the blocks, nearly filling a page, rather than reducing them to a tiny size.

I loved the time I spent wrestling with the ideas, contemplating the book's narrative, and trying to distill essential imagery. As I worked I had some excellent help from my son, Noah, who assisted with a lot of carving, and from Rob Buchert on aesthetic and practical printing issues. I had conversations with Grant Hardy, Morgan Davis, Blair Hodges, and others who were vital to reworking and fine-tuning the imagery. I especially worked with Faith, an artist whose critiques, suggestions, and hands-on involvement played a significant role in bringing this project to fruition.

What follows is a visual tour through the process of illuminating the Book of Mormon. We can loosely break the project down into four basic stages.

STAGE 1: STUDIES

Stage 1 involved the creation of “studies,” countless preliminary sketches, allowing the imagination to run a bit wild. I began creating simple sketches on 8.5×11 sheets of paper, basically scratch paper, as I once again read through the Book of Mormon. I’ve read it often, but you never know what might stick out the next time you pick it up. At this stage it was important to keep in mind a principle I often discuss with new art students: *Most ideas are bad*. Therefore, being an artist means being willing to process a lot of ideas, because most ideas, no matter who you are, need a little work.





These are title page studies featuring Jesus. I was thinking of his words about "other sheep" in 3 Nephi. As you'll see below, this idea developed in a surprising way.



Laban getting his head cut off. I loved some of this—the Book of Mormon, as you know, contains quite a bit of violence. Grant was kind of anxious, asking me to ease off on emphasizing that because it gets plenty of airtime. But I had to push against him a little bit.



The death of Lehi, one of many mournful moments in this scripture.



I tried a variety of positions to capture Enos's wrestle in the wilderness. You'll see a circle in the corner of the image selected to move to the next design round.

STAGE 2: DEVELOPED DRAWINGS

As we narrowed the desired images down to what would become the final selections, I next created a set of images, using charcoal, acrylic, oil paint, and pencil.

Sadly, I managed to lose virtually the entire original set of these drawings on an airplane, along with my iPad. The iPad was returned, but alas the drawings remain at large. If they turn up, please give me a call! Fortunately, I had already scanned them, so I had what I needed to proceed with the woodcuts. But I admit I do miss those drawings.



We return to the sheep—a concept I was working through for the cover since the beginning.



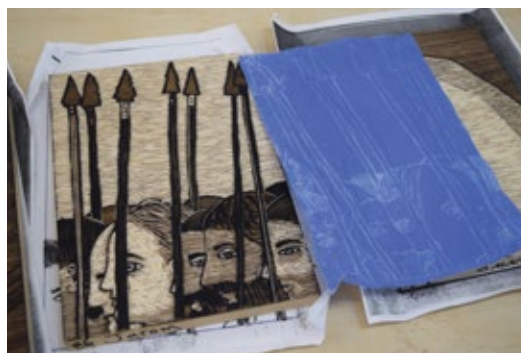
Here is a draft of the Liahona for 1 Nephi—a difficult decision for that book when you have stories of the tree of life, the iron rod, sea voyages, and more to choose from.



This is one of the only women clearly depicted in the images, although many of the other hands can be interpreted as belonging to women. Alma is baptizing her at the waters of Mormon. This medium allows for a bit more detail on the face and hair than the wooden medium.

STAGE 3: WOOD BLOCKS

Blair Hodges visited me sometimes in my Provo studio to capture some photos of the process, which is a bit trickier at this stage.



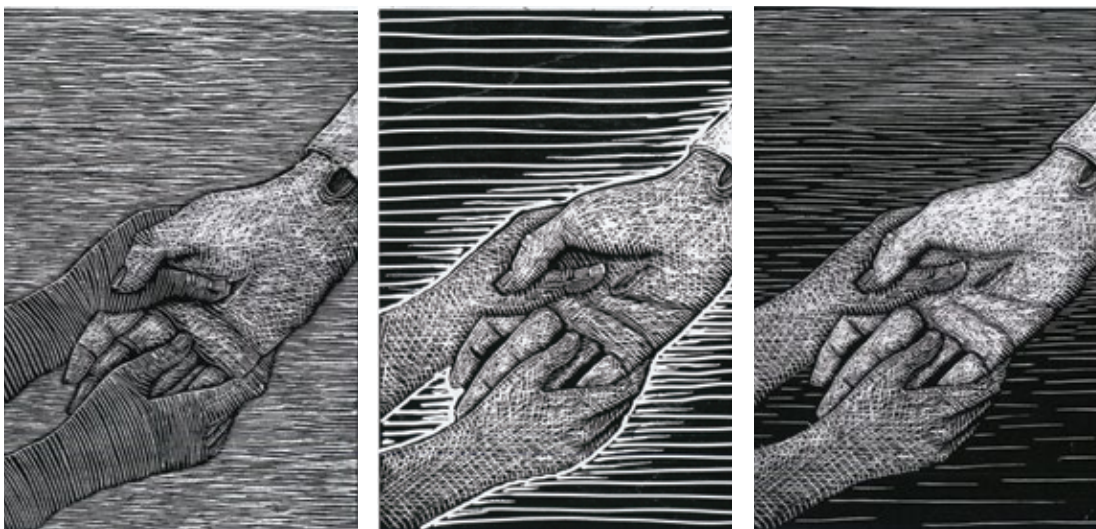
First, I drew the images on transfer paper—a blue onion skin-like paper that allowed me to trace the image in reverse onto individual sanded and toned blocks of Baltic birch wood. Next I drew over the traced lines with a Sharpie marker.



I'm an artist. I'm supposed to be very observant. But things can go wrong at any stage. I carved multiple versions of the cover block, but felt like the sheep kept looking too much like kittens. It was fairly late in the game when Faith pointed out my sheep's pupils were wrong. Pupils of sheep's eyes are unusual—long and horizontal, not round or vertical. No more kittens. Another problem solved, thanks to Faith.



Next, I took up the knife, breathed in through the nose and out through the mouth, and began cutting away wood. The first cuts are always the trickiest, but then you get in the zone and cut away. As I already mentioned, my son Noah helped with some of what I call the "delegatable carving"—the horizontals in the background, the intricate glyphs on metallic plates.



In this stage I had to recut some blocks based on how they looked after being stamped. This block for 3 Nephi, for example, took multiple tries to get the balance correct. Too busy. Too stark. Getting closer.

STAGE 4: WOODCUT IMAGES

I worked on this project off and on over the span of about two years. I'm grateful I had a lot of time to incubate these ideas as I moved between other projects. Once the nineteen blocks were finalized, they were taken to a printer who inked them like a stamp and pressed each image onto paper.

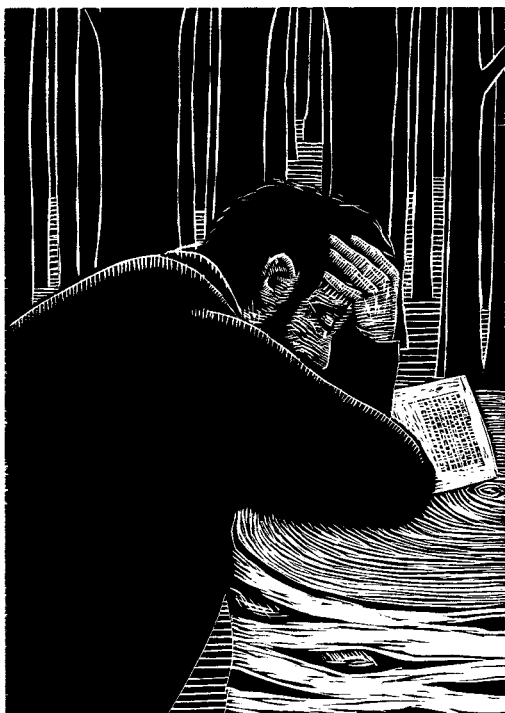
Finally, each woodcut image was photographed. These reproductions are what you see in the *Study Edition*. The images printed from the blocks, by contrast, are much more tactile. One of the beautiful things about woodcut images is that you can feel the indentations from the wood block. There are a limited number of firsthand prints because the quality of the wood blocks diminishes the more they are pressed.



Here I am, pulling a progress proof in my studio. The motor on this old machine burned out long ago, so I get to manually turn the wheel. Once things looked ready, editions of each woodcut were created by Rob Buchert at Tryst Press in Provo, Utah.



This cover image originally depicted a flock of uniformly white sheep. As the project was winding down, I received a phone call from Blair Hodges. At the prompting of Dr. LaShawn Williams, a Latter-day Saint and assistant professor of social work at Utah Valley University, he wondered if I would consider a black sheep instead. Truth be told, I felt foolish that I hadn't already considered that. Not only is it graphically much stronger, but it also offers so much more for readers to think about.



TESTIMONY OF AN ARTIST

By way of conclusion, I want to bear testimony of this book of scripture—a book that I have known and loved and read for many, many, many decades. And then when I work on a Book of Mormon project with Grant Hardy, I begin to think I don't know anything about it! One of the beautiful things I enjoyed while working on the *Maxwell Institute Study Edition* was how I continued to find peculiar hints and details of personality, of weaknesses, the quirks of Nephi, Mormon, Moroni, and all of these individuals that I've loved for a long time. I feel like I'm getting to know them even more deeply.

The twelfth chapter of Ether—chapter V if we're looking at the original edition's chapter breaks (thanks, Grant)—contains a beautiful section I remember reading as a missionary. We often quote this passage to suggest how our weaknesses can become strengths. But there is more to it. Moroni has been proofreading his work and it's a problem. Within the overarching story, Moroni, this prophet of God, is very insecure

about what he's reading. He's thinking, "Oh, no! The Gentiles are going to make a mess of this; they're going to mock this." And beautifully, God doesn't say, "No, Moroni, it's really good!" He doesn't take issue with Moroni's feelings. Instead, God kind of says, "Yeah, Moroni. Ouch. Fools mock, but they'll mourn. Don't worry. That's not your problem. If they'll acknowledge their weakness and have faith in me, then weak things"—and I maintain he's including the idea of weak *things*—"this book you are making will become strong unto them."

That is such a beautiful testimony to all of us. As we try to acknowledge *our* weaknesses, then the weak people and the weak things around us—including this precious Book of Mormon—can become strong to us, engage us, connect with us, and call us to a better way.

We see strengths and weaknesses in every scriptural word and in every little footnote Grant Hardy, Royal Skousen, and others have identified, marking alternate punctuation and changes in wording between manuscripts and editions, and seeing not only the hands of the beautiful producers of the book, but the hands of all of the people that have brought it to this state and those who continue to bring it forward to us. I'm grateful for the work of these great scholars, great readers, great prophets—these great humans. I am filled with gratitude that I was invited to participate in my own way in producing the *Maxwell Institute Study Edition* of the Book of Mormon.





Apologetics and Disciples of the Second Sort

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The Greek word for apologetics, *apologia*, appears a few times in the New Testament, perhaps most pertinently in Peter's first epistle. The King James Version (KJV) renders the fifteenth verse of the third chapter this way: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." The phrase "give an answer" is the translators' rendering of *apologia*. For "meekness and fear" (*prauteis* and *phobos*), I prefer Kenneth Wuest's translation, "meekness and *serious caution*."¹ The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) renders those same words "gentleness and reverence." So according to Peter, we should be ready to represent our faith, but with important caveats.

First, we do so with love of the Savior in our hearts (sanctifying the Lord God).

Second, we do so in meekness, mildness, gentleness, and humility.

And third, we do so with serious caution.

It strikes me that these two Greek words—*prauteis* and *phobos*, "meekness" and "fear"—may be parallel and reinforcing, rather than semiotically distinct. We should make our best case for our faith, but our words should be marked by a particular kind of carefulness, a particular quality of mind as well as of heart. It is that quality that I want to explore today, and start by tracing its roots in the practice of apologetics as it was pioneered by our earliest Christian forebears.

The early church father Origen is one of the early authorities Latter-day Saints should study most appreciatively. David Bentley Hart writes that "after Paul, there is no single Christian figure to whom the whole

[Christian] tradition is more indebted.”² Origen wrote at a time before the worst depredations were made against the gospel as delivered by Christ and the apostles.

One of his teachings that we recognize as a crucial Restoration truth is of our premortal lives in the heavens above. He was the principal authority for that doctrine’s survival in the first four Christian centuries. He clearly taught that God and Jesus Christ were two separate and distinct beings. (They exist as “two persons,” he wrote, “one in unity of thought, in harmony . . . of will.”)³ He believed in the same capacious heaven as Joseph Smith, convinced that God would find a way to redeem and exalt all his spirit children. (In his words, “gradually, and by degrees, during the lapse of infinite and immeasurable ages, . . . improvement and correction will be realized.”)⁴ He was reputed to teach that spirit is a higher form of matter;⁵ and he taught that “the Father, too, himself, the God of the universe, ‘patient and abounding in mercy’ and compassionate, does He not in some way suffer? Or do you not know that when He directs human affairs, He suffers human suffering?”⁶ No God devoid of body parts and passions for Origen. Finally, this church father agreed that the fall was necessary and educative, not tragic and misguided: “You could not have reached the palm-groves unless you had experienced the harsh trials; you could not have reached the gentle springs without first having to overcome sadness and difficulties. . . . The education of the soul is an age-long spiritual adventure, beginning in this life and continuing after death.”⁷ Tragically, over the centuries, each and every one of these inspired teachings of Origen was explicitly anathematized or exiled from the orthodox faith.

It is my view that the Christian church’s repudiation of Origenism in the fifth and sixth centuries and the simultaneous elevation to privileged authority of the teachings of Augustine signaled the death knell of the everlasting covenant. The beauty of God’s nature and designs, our shared childhood in a divine presence, and a hopeful future for us all evaporated in the face of preoccupation with sin, judgment, and God’s mysterious and unquestionable sovereignty. One wonders how Christianity might have developed if Origen had maintained his influence beyond the first few Christian centuries, but he did not.

That history is not my subject today, but I hope it suffices to establish the inspired credentials of an early saint whose name is now seldom heard outside of early Christian studies.

More to my purposes today, David Bentley Hart notes that not only did Origen lay “the foundation of the whole edifice of developed Christian thought,” but he also “majestically set the standard for Christian apologetics,”⁸ writing one of the first surviving responses to critics of that new faith.

Origen was reluctant to respond to the critics for the following reason. He insisted that “the doctrine [itself is] a better answer than any writing” he could make by way of response.⁹ More to the point, he added, the strongest defense of Christianity “rests on . . . that power of Jesus which is manifest to those who are not altogether devoid of perception.” And then he adds this note of frustration: “I do not know in what rank to place



Rembrandt, *St Peter, Apostle Peter* (1632), oil on canvas

him who has need of arguments . . . in order to prevent him from being shaken in his faith.”¹⁰ Undoubtedly some *do* need arguments. Reasonableness can fertilize the soil of faith, and misrepresentations require corrections. But I want to explore where Origen’s preference may lead us. I do so in the spirit of President Henry B. Eyring’s words to Latter-day Saint scholars more than a decade ago when he said, “The value of your work lies less in convincing and more in inviting.”¹¹

Origen’s views are seconded by another figure of the early church whom we should hold in particularly high regard—Irenaeus. A great many of his writings also resonate powerfully, and familiarly, with Latter-day Saints. “Jesus Christ . . . did, through his transcendent love, become what we are, that he might bring us to be what he is himself.”¹² Though some corruptions to the gospel had already crept into his teaching, he still understood the fall in terms that would not be known so well again until Joseph Smith’s work. Of the story of Eden, he wrote, “Wherefore also [God] drove [Adam] out of Paradise, and removed him far from the tree of life, not because he envied him the tree of life, as some venture to assert, but because he pitied him, [and did not desire] that . . . the sin which surrounded him should be immortal, and evil interminable and irremediable. But he set a bound to his [state of] sin, by interposing death, and thus causing sin to cease . . . so that man, ceasing at length to live to sin, and dying to it, might begin to live in God.”¹³ (Notice the perfect congruence of his unusual insight with both Lehi and Alma; nowhere else between Irenaeus and Restoration scripture do we find this remarkable version of the fall so articulated).¹⁴

Irenaeus also understood the necessity for our sojourn into the crucible of mortal education, writing in words that also foreshadow the Book of Moses, “Man has received the knowledge of good and evil. . . . Wherefore he has also had a two-fold experience, possessing knowledge of both kinds, that with discipline he may make choice of the better things. But how, if he had had no knowledge of the contrary, could he have had instruction in that which is good? . . . How, then, shall he be a God, who has not as yet been made a man?”¹⁵ And also like Origen, Irenaeus also wrote a major work of apologetics, *Against Heresies*. Origen had written that “doctrine is a better answer than any writing.” Irenaeus wrote something similar, but emphasized the



practical *effects* of that doctrine as the most powerful witness. Toward the end of his monumental work, he bears this testimony and provides this model for his most compelling defense of the faith. It is the very model that I want to elaborate today: “Since the Lord has thus redeemed us through his own blood, giving his soul for our souls, and his flesh for our flesh, and has also poured out the Spirit of the Father for the union and communion of God and man, imparting indeed God to men by means of the spirit, . . . and bestowing upon us at his coming immortality durably and truly, by means of communion with God—all the doctrines of the heretics [unbelievers] fall to ruin.”¹⁶

It may take a few readings to become aware of the unexpected logic of his stand. We live here and now, he testifies, as redeemed women and men. Christ’s purpose was to effect an atonement—that is—a reconciliation, a union, of humans and God. And that union, that at-one-ing, is already unfolding under the transformative reality of the Spirit that brings us into communion with God. It is in the face of this reality—a lived transformation one can see at work in the life of his disciples—that the gospel of Jesus Christ finds its irrefutable witness. In the face of these lived, experienced, discernible truths, “all the doctrines” of the doubters fall to ruin.

When Adam and Eve “knew” each other, they experienced each other in the most complete, total, immersive intimacy of which humans are capable (Genesis 4:1). When the angel asked Nephi if he “knew” the condescension of God, he was clearly referring to more than an intellectual apprehension (1 Nephi 11:16). He wanted to know if Nephi had been remade by the experience of Christ’s absolute compassion, the stunning realization of Christ’s shared suffering in our pain. Had he lived through what Alma referred to as a “mighty change” that impels one to “sing the song of redeeming love”? (Alma 5:15, 26). Declarations at the pulpit, dutifully reciting the familiar pattern of “I know,” are but shallow imitations of such intimate encounters that remake us and bring us face to face with a world, a life, endowed with their true identity. To profess belief in an acquired set of propositions that happen to be true, noted John Stuart Mill, without having been quickened by them, is to hold to superstitions whose value was never more than a coincidental surface alignment with the truth.¹⁷

Our language as Latter-day Saints reveals the temptation to veer from the course Irenaeus charted. Our emphasis on propositional claims has gradually come to displace—in our rhetoric and performance—the lived experience of our faith. In 1829, Oliver Cowdery prepared the Articles of the Church of Christ at Smith’s behest (later supplanted by Smith’s own version). Those articles stipulated that “the church shall meet together oft for prayer & supplication casting out none from your places of worship but rather invite them to come And each member shall speak & tell the church of *their progress in the way to Eternal life*.”¹⁸ This model involves no propositional claim here but rather relates the lived evidence of the gospel’s transforming power.

This sort of “testimony bearing” was practiced in Puritan churches, which required candidates for membership to narrate a conversion experience attesting to God’s healing grace. Saints today bear testimony as they feel moved by the Spirit and share what are at times deeply moving personal accounts of God’s tender mercies. But the unscripted expressions can range from miraculous healings to professions of love for one’s spouse (or roommate) to summer travelogues. At the same time, a virtually universal feature is the formulation “I know” in reference to core Latter-day Saint claims—which have been culturally codified as certain propositional statements: (1) that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of the world; (2) that Joseph Smith is the Prophet

Immersion in the lived reality of Latter-day Saint teachings remaps our universe, and by so doing it turns us from wandering trekkers into purposeful pilgrims. It rescripts the narrative and transforms us from characters in someone else’s play . . . into living, breathing selves with a deep history and a real family.

of God through whom the gospel was restored in this dispensation; and (3) that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth.”

Now I happen to agree with those propositional statements. But they are that: propositional statements of objective truth. We may have lost, along the way to this state of affairs, the crucial grounds that underlie the certainty with which we presume to make such universal claims. Origen said he intended to make belief rational, but that rationality is nowhere more evident than in its lived efficacy.

I am struck by the particularism, the experiential dimension of my two favorite scriptural testimonies. The man healed by Christ, pressed on what he knows or does not know, responds with a form of the caution I referred to in my introduction. One thing I know, the man affirms. I was blind and now I see (see John 9:25). Or Nephi, when queried about the meaning of the tree of life, frankly confesses, with comparable humility and caution: I don’t know the meaning of all things. Then, perhaps remembering what he has already told us in an earlier, intimate avowal (the Lord has filled me with his love, even to the consuming of my flesh), he can confidently affirm, “I know that he loveth his children” (1 Nephi 11:17).

Immersion in the lived reality of Latter-day Saint teachings remaps our universe, and by so doing it turns us from wandering trekkers into purposeful pilgrims. It rescripts the narrative and transforms us from char-

acters in someone else’s play (Freud’s? Darwin’s? Nietzsche’s?) into living, breathing selves with a deep history and a real family. The scriptural record is replete with allusions to these moments of splendid irony, when one awakens *into*, rather than *from*, the world’s deep reality. For instance, it was *after* his vision that Joseph “came to [him] self,” *after* Saul’s vision that “there fell from his eyes as it had been scales,” *after* their conversion that Alma’s converts “awoke unto God,” and so forth¹⁹—“a shock of awful consciousness,” in the poet Wordsworth’s language.²⁰ There is enormous

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bread with him, and were personally
tutored by him were stupefied, amazed,
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I must expect to be filled with even
more wonderment.*

distance between assent to propositional claims and a truth fully lived, doors of faith newly opened, through which we have passed.

This is the defense of the gospel Peter invites us to construct. At this point I want to explain why I emphasized the reading of apologetics in Peter’s epistle as involving a particular kind of reverence and “serious caution.” I will illustrate what Peter might have meant by turning to the Gospel of Mark.

If Matthew presents Christ as the great Hero, the expected Messiah, the miracle worker thronged by multitudes, the one whose birth is heralded by kings and his death lamented by Nature; Luke is the great storyteller, weaving beauty from the nativity and teaching parables of lost sons and healing Samaritans; and John is the insider, sharing intimate details of Christ’s private encounters and final hours. But then Mark wants us to know the cost of discipleship. He emphasizes the loneliness of the way, the absolute love demanded, and most particularly, the repeated failures we will face in our attempts to fully know Christ. From his very first appearance in the synagogue to his final days, incomprehension and bewilderment follow him. The crowds “were astounded,” Mark says at one point; “Never before have we seen the like” (Mark 2:12 New English Bible). On another occasion, an audience was “astonished,” asking, “Where does he get these things?” (6:2 Wuest).

Strangers, of course, are entirely clueless. We expect that. Is he John the Baptist? Elias? Another prophet? It is easy to find the humor, the hint of smug superiority, in our own reaction. Poor, blind contemporaries, ignorant of who it was that walked among them. Mark’s point is that his true disciples are almost equally clueless. Neither his family, his confidants, nor his disciples get him. “He is beside himself,” they say in embarrassment at one point (Mark 3:21).²¹ At another, they say to one another incredulously, “What manner of man is this?” (Mark 4:41).



Briton Rivière, *The Temptation in the Wilderness* (1898), oil on canvas

Two chapters later, his disciples “were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered” (Mark 6:51). Translators struggle to convey their utter incomprehension. These, his closest followers, were “utterly astounded” (6:51 NRSV) and “exceedingly beyond measure amazed” (6:51 Wuest). They were, in short, stupefied.

If those who walked with him, broke bread with him, and were personally tutored by him were stupefied, amazed, dumbfounded, and perplexed, then I must expect to be filled with even more wonderment. If I am not, it is not because I comprehend more than they; it is because the story has been dulled in its retelling. Christ’s effigy is worn by millions, his face omnipresent in art, his very title a label assumed by over a billion. He has become, in a word, deceptively familiar. Mark is trying to humble me. He says, in effect, “You need to wonder more and assume less. You need to break through all the familiar ways of seeing and hearing him and begin again.” If I am likening the scriptures to myself, then it is *I* who am rebuked along with his disciples: “Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive?” (Mark 7:18).

My belief is that *this* is the fear, *this* is the reverence, the caution, and the humility that Peter had in mind when he admonished us to testify to the truth with meekness and fear—with *serious caution*. We must live and work and write in the recognition that our best efforts to uphold, defend, and explicate Jesus Christ and his gospel will be an ongoing project, never representing the definitive response.

What should we now perceive, in the midst of the work of restoration, that was missing before? How might we better marvel and wonder—but in grateful amazement rather than incomprehension?

I own a telescope that has multiple lenses, which make possible differing powers of magnification. But the interesting thing is that no matter how much closer it brings me to the moons of Jupiter or the Great Nebula of Orion, I am never close enough. That is the joy and frustration of amateur astronomy: it enables us to penetrate beyond the field of vision that constrains us, but the advantage turns out to be largely illusory. Even Sirius, the brightest star in the night sky, when magnified 250 times is still just a dot of light. Neither a telescope nor a great poem allows us to fully escape the sphere of our own experience. Neither one gives us mastery over a new discovery or insight. But both serve to tempt us, or to entice us, with the knowledge that other worlds, grander and more marvelous than our own, are out there. Such is the case, and such might be our response in the face of a restoration whose implications we have only begun to digest. I want to believe that the serious caution Peter had in mind is a stopping up short, a moment of reflective prudence, a recognition of the paltry

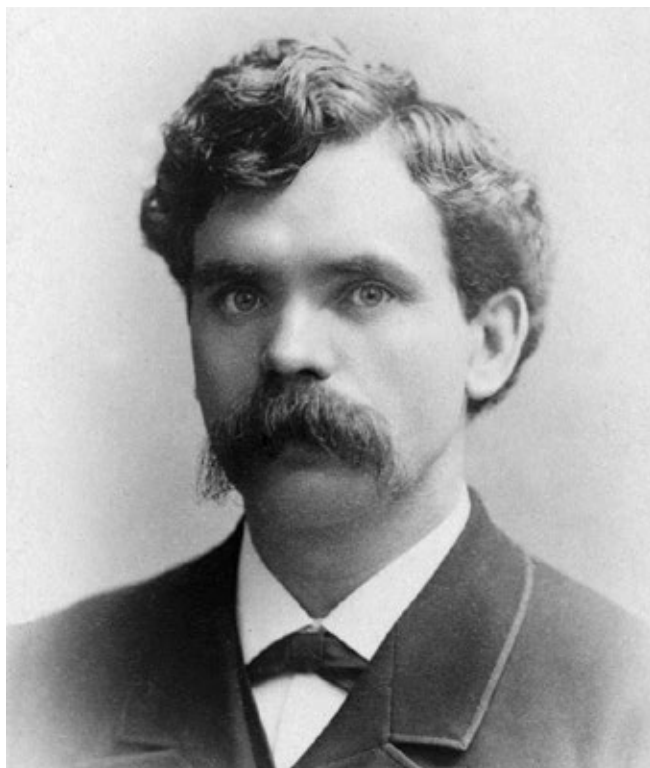


The taller the peak we aspire to summit, the more likely we are to be grave, sober, and cautious in our approach. Not because we are timid in the face of an ordinary task, but because we are self-aware in the face of a great one.





Josiah Royce (1855–1916)



B. H. Roberts (1857–1933)

talents and qualifications we bring to a sacred task, bearing as we do the vessels of the Lord.

It may sound at this point that this call to a serious caution—in our discipleship and in our apologetics—may put the brakes on our enthusiasm, the vigor with which we pursue our respective projects. I am suggesting the very opposite. “The taller the peak we aspire to summit, the more likely we are to be grave, sober, and cautious in our approach. Not because we are timid in the face of an ordinary task, but because we are self-aware in the face of a great one,” as Nathaniel Givens has written.²² The apologetic vision I am calling us to embrace is one that entails a condition of perpetual dissatisfaction with the incompleteness of the task we are called to perform. This is the attitude appropriate to a particular kind of disciple.

“Disciples,” said the eminent American philosopher Josiah Royce, “are of two sorts. There are, first, the disciples pure and simple. . . . They expound, and defend, and ward off foes, and live and die faithful to one formula. . . . On the other hand, there are disciples of a second sort. . . . The seed that the sower strews upon [his] fields springs up in [his] soil, and bears fruit—thirty, sixty, an hundredfold. . . . Disciples of the second sort cooperate in the works of the Spirit . . . [and] help lead it to a *truer expression*.” B. H. Roberts read these words and built a prophecy and a call to action from them. I take his words to be the task—or least a principal task—of Restorationist apologetics: “Mormonism,” he said, “calls for [these disciples of the second sort,] disciples who will not be content with merely repeating some of its truths, but will develop its truths; and enlarge it by that development. . . . The disciples of ‘Mormonism,’ growing discontented with the necessarily primitive methods which have hitherto prevailed in sustaining the doctrine, . . . will cast them in new formulas; cooperating in the works of the Spirit, until they help to give to the truths received a more forceful expression.”²³

Restoration theology is far more ambitious, presumptuous, gloriously aspirational than we recognize, for it goes beyond the Christian hope of personal redemption. That would be unlikely—and miraculous—enough. But our faith tradition

aspires to make us into God's own likeness and then unite us in a vast chain of belonging. Our sin, as Saints, is in thinking that such an endeavor could be anything other than wrenching, costly, inconceivably difficult, and unimaginably painful. We do not become, in C. S. Lewis's phrase, "little Christs"²⁴ by a couple of well-spent hours ministering to our assigned families and abstaining from tea and coffee. Like the telescope, the lenses of our religion—its scriptural promises, its temple rituals, its discipline of prayer, and its priesthood piercings of the veil—bring us into closer contact with the divine. But that participation in that divine nature is still unfathomably remote. We are still very much in the morning of an eternity of striving, and our theology must be commensurately ambitious, open-ended, dauntingly generative of unexplored ramifications.

Let me be more specific. As I have worked over the years to explicate Restoration theology for a broader audience and put it into historical context and dialogue with other faith traditions, I have come back again and again to the same urgent concern: the Restoration represents a dispensation in which all things are made new. But in too many ways we Latter-day Saints are still painfully, misleadingly, and damagingly reliant upon a vocabulary, paradigms, assumptions, and debates that are part of the "traditions of [the fathers], which were not correct" (Alma 17:9). We need a new vocabulary in which *all* things are made new. What David Bentley Hart said in reference to the Incarnation, is doubly true of the Restoration: "History has been invaded by God in Christ in such a way that nothing can stay as it was. All terms of human community and conduct have been altered at the deepest levels."²⁵ We, I dare say, have failed to enact that implicit challenge. The great work that I see remaining ahead is to more fully elaborate the Restoration as a new creation, with doctrines and theological profundities that are radically unique and radically resonant.

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For too long we have entered into conversations that are predicated on these erroneous paradigms, fallacious suppositions, and unreflective assumptions. Hart, considered among the most eminent theologians today, recently published an indictment of virtually the entirety of the theology of the Western Christian tradition. Those who think the Lord's reference to creedal abominations was harsh need to read Hart. He condemns the West for its centuries-old depiction of a God "polluted by arbitrariness," an entire conception of inherited sin traceable to the most tragic misreading of Greek (which misreading was Augustine's) in religious history, a Reformation that invented a psychopathic God who, again in Hart's words, "created [the damned] to be objects of his hatred," and in general "the most decadent theology imaginable and certainly blasphemous through and through."²⁶ Too many good seekers after truth have had to struggle against the riptides of such official dogmas.

Remarkably absent from his condemnation—with which I am in sympathy—is any teaching that an observer would identify as a Restoration doctrine revealed by Joseph Smith. Not enough people appreciate this fact, in part because we have not, I would suggest, sufficiently appreciated—and communicated—how radically Restoration teachings depart from the Christian consensus of the creeds. We have yet to fully limn the capacity of Restoration thought to address human woundedness, explicate the scope of God's redemptive designs, and celebrate the variety of inspired scriptural production outside the Christian canon. Let me give just a few examples of where I think this discipleship of the second sort either has begun or may yet unfold.

I will begin with a reading of Acts, chapters 3 and 4. Peter and John encounter a man who couldn't walk from birth. "In the name of Jesus Christ," says Peter, "rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6). The man does that and more—"leaping and praising God." The crowd marvels, commotion ensues, and Peter and John are arrested and jailed. The next day, arraigned before a council, they have a ready-made audience for a full exposition of the gospel message. And now, as Peter delivers his sermon, we find what I would locate as a critical juncture in the history of Christian exposition. Numerous scholars now acknowledge that the whole doctrine of original

sin originates in a misinterpretation of Romans by Augustine, who knew no Greek and consequently exhibited, according to Hart, “the single most tragically consequential case of linguistic incompetence in Christian history.”²⁷ May I suggest a tragic decision of comparable magnitude is reflected in the history of translation of chapter 4 in Acts. Let me read three critical verses, which establish the heart and soul of the gospel of Jesus Christ as preached by Peter. These three simple verses read as follows: Verse 9: “If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is *made whole*” (Greek *sodzo*). Verse 10: “by the name of Jesus Christ . . . , even by him doth this man stand here before you *whole*” (Greek *sodzo*). And now the concluding moral, verse 12: “Neither is there *salvation* in any other” (Greek *soteria*, also a variant of *sodzo*). Wait—what has happened here? How have we moved from healed or made whole to salvation? And what connotations have we suddenly imported?

Let me read how these three verses were first translated into English in the fourteenth century. John Wycliffe renders these verses as follows: Verse 9. “This [sick] man is made *saaf*.” Verse 10: “In the name of Jhesu Crist . . . this man stondith *hool* bifer you.” And verse 12: There is no other name “in which it bihoveth us to be maad *saaf*” (my emphasis). The Middle English word *saaf*, like a principal meaning of *sodzo*, means “free from injury or wounding,” that is, “healed.”²⁸

I would draw your attention to the fact that one finds in Mark, Matthew, and Luke—in three similar stories—the *identical* Greek phrase (Mark 10:52; Matthew 9:22; and Luke 7:50). The phrase is translated in

the King James Version, respectively: “thy faith hath made thee whole,” “thy faith hath made thee whole,” “thy faith hath SAVED [!?] thee.” Why *saved* in the last instance? Because in this case, the woman had *sinned*. And instead of seeing the clear import of Luke’s point—that sinning needs healing just as much as other forms of spiritual and emotional harm; that we can see sin as a form of spiritual wound—the translators jump to the Calvinist default, that sin is an evil leading to a hell from which we must be SAVED. What an insight we have lost into the act of divine forgiveness as a gesture of holy healing conducive of at-one-ment.

*Sinfulness is real enough, but for the
production of plentiful fruit, a gardener
knows there is more to the art of
husbandry than eliminating the weeds.
We have not sufficiently exploited
our potential to manifest all that
Christianity might have become.*

I note parenthetically the view of British theologian Frances Young that the critique of *sodzo* I have outlined is “basically right.”²⁹

I hope you recognize the significance of this language in light of Joseph Smith’s translation of 1 Nephi where the prophet is told by an angel that the entire world labors in a “state of awful woundedness” and the perfect symmetry of that condition with Christ’s role as the only one who can heal us.³⁰

What was so fateful about these discrepancies in the translations? They symbolize two divergent paths of Christian possibilities. Is the gospel about rescuing, saving (a select few) men and women from sin and depravity, as became Christianity’s focus after Augustine? Or is Christ the great Healer of the world, coming into the world “with healing in his wings,” as Malachi prophesied (Malachi 4:2); “to bind up the brokenhearted,” according to Isaiah (61:1); “to release those broken by calamity,” in Luke’s language (Luke 4:18 Wuest); and “to succor his people,” in Alma’s (Alma 7:12).

Certainly there is a sense in which Christ is our Savior, but I am suggesting there is a disproportion in emphasis between his two roles. How different the general perception of Christianity would have been—and our experience as striving disciples—if Christianity’s central emphasis had been, as it clearly was here for Paul, to come unto Christ and be healed of your woundedness, rather than to come and be saved from your lost and sinful condition. Krister Stendahl has recognized that Paul’s concern was “pain [more than] guilt,”³¹ and N. T. Wright has agreed that “the story is less about sinful individuals being rescued from judgment . . . and



more about God's fulfillment of his promises."³² Can we look upon the pandemic of emotional and spiritual illness engulfing the society we live in and doubt that the promise of healing from woundedness represents a more appealing and appropriate response to our plight than rescue from bondage to a sinful human condition? Might the course of Christianity have developed differently? Listen to the opinion of one scholar of early Christianity. The twin condemnation of Pelagius and Origen, Elizabeth Clark writes, ensured the supremacy "of a Christian theology whose central concerns were human sinfulness, not human potentiality; divine determination, not human freedom and responsibility. . . . Christendom was perhaps poorer for their suppression."³³

To this we should all say a hearty amen, with the proviso that Restoration doctrine does, in fact, reflect the fullness of that alternative development. Sinfulness is real enough, but for the production of plentiful fruit, a gardener knows there is more to the art of husbandry than eliminating the weeds. We have not sufficiently exploited our potential to manifest all that Christianity might have become. The challenge remains to continue the work of refashioning an entire theological vocabulary stripped of the traces of inherited paradigms shaped by errant translations and creedal innovations.

Let me sketch in this regard a few suggestions for further work and development; employing the tools of scriptural exegesis, Restoration scripture, early Christian teachings, and extracanonical sources, as well as prophetic declarations, we might revisit the following:

Salvation: Not a reward either earned or bestowed, but a particular kind of relationality that we develop with God and the human family.

Grace: Latter-day Saints seldom recognize that in religious discourse today, this term has been pervasively co-opted by Protestant notions of imputed righteousness, that is, the doctrine that we can never become

righteous, so Christ will be judged in our place. James Talmage wrote that this version of justification through imputed grace was not just wrong but “a pernicious doctrine”³⁴ because it makes God an arbitrary sovereign, consigns man to irremediable sinfulness, and denies the inherent divinity of a mankind “whole from the foundation of the world.” In its place, we might substitute the irruption of a different kind of grace in those premortal councils, when Jesus offered to rectify the collateral damage that accompanies the danger-fraught sojourn into mortality and our necessary exposure to good and evil, sweet and bitter. This principle entails as well an ever-ready, inexhaustible capacity of Christ to assist and empower us along the journey.

Judgment: Not an imposed assessment accompanying punishment or reward, but a form of inspired and assisted self-recognition that is a prelude to further progress.

Heaven: For Latter-day Saints, heaven is not a place, nor strictly speaking, is it an existential condition. It is a state of interrelatedness of a very particular kind. Only such a definition makes sense of one of Joseph’s most terrifying statements: “If you do not accuse each other God will not accuse you. If you have no accuser you will enter heaven.”³⁵ This is scarcely logical, unless someone’s refusal to forgive me impedes our relationship and in that way constrains my heaven as well as hers; worthiness is not—or not the only—criterion.

Sin: Not a rebellion against arbitrary decrees of a sovereign God, but actions contrary to the nature of happiness (and therefore to the nature of God) that wound and alienate and fracture unity. Forgiveness in this model is the reparative healing of such brokenness, as we saw in Luke 7.

Atonement: Not an event of penal substitution and not a simple act of infinite suffering, but a two-stage process of reconciling, or as Julian of Norwich called it, “one-ing.” Christ’s sacrifice itself is only one-half of the story, and it brings about no reconciliation unless it is a catalyst to our own efforts in that direction. In its original usage, atonement was meant to encompass the totality of the process *and* its result, not the mechanism only. We see this if we combine the words used by both the translator John Wycliffe and the prophet Nephi. Wycliffe translated the Greek word as “reconciling.” “We have received reconciling,” he translated Romans 5, “by Jesus Christ.” Tyndale changed that word to atonement. Notice here that we must “receive” the reconciling or at-one-ment. This is why Nephi urges us repeatedly to “be reconciled.” He is inviting us to bring to completion the process of at-one-ment.

These are just a few possibilities sketched in brief. Might such projects exemplify the “truer expression,” the “more forceful expression” to which Roberts challenged disciples of the second sort? And might such a direction emulate the work of Origen and Irenaeus in unfolding the full power and scope and beauty of Christ’s ongoing ministry?

All such work could proceed hand in hand with other projects of elaboration and excavation of gospel fullness. Latter-day Saints may not realize two overwhelmingly powerful reasons why we are uniquely qualified—and uniquely invested—in early Christian studies. The first reason is made clear by Roger Olson in a popular, standard account of Christian theology. He makes this *astonishingly condescending* claim: noting that early Christian thinkers saw God and Christ as distinct beings, he says, “To expect the later doctrine . . . of the Trinity to be . . . understood so early is probably expecting far too much from a second century church father.”³⁶ So what does such an attitude suggest about Irenaeus, for example, who sat at the feet of Polycarp, who was himself a student of John the Beloved? That he lived too close to the time of Christ to be a reliable witness? Now you see why it has been easy for Western theology to disregard many of his inspired teachings in favor of Augustine’s, even though, as Anthony Zimmerman points out, “No apostolic tradition would affirm the views of Augustine.”³⁷ Latter-day Saints thus appear to be idiosyncratic in their view that Christ’s disciples and their followers are *more reliable* authorities for recapturing and elaborating the fullness of the gospel than those figures generations removed. How curious! That is why we have the most powerful of incentives to be engaged in early Christian investigations as one crucial element of our apologetic work.

Second, the Protestant doctrine of sola scriptura (that the Bible is sufficient and alone trustworthy as a guide to faith) can only *confine* and *limit* our embrace of an eternal and inexhaustible gospel. If the Bible is alone sufficient, as other Christians believe, why indeed expend such devotion in bringing to light other voices

from the past? On the other hand, believing those nearest Christ would know him and his gospel best and believing in a God who gives his word liberally across time and culture, we have extraordinary motivation to be at the forefront of early Christian studies. No wonder, as the Maxwell Institute's Kristian Heal has noted, "Our scriptures (especially the Book of Mormon) teach us to care deeply about the transmission of ancient records and to be attentive to voices from the dust."³⁸ Professor Heal's recuperation of inspired Syriac texts, like Carl Griffin's Institute work with Origen and Syriac writers, has opened marvelous windows into neglected corners of the first Christian centuries that illuminate and increase the totality of Restoration truths we so gladly welcome and celebrate. In a similar way, Morgan Davis works to put the Book of Mormon into conversation with other sacred scriptures of the ancient world, such as the Qur'an, to the illumination of both. The composite mosaic of such work becomes a powerful witness of Restoration scripture's indispensable centrality in deciphering God's manifold revelations as a Rosetta stone of God's voice.

We who labor to build Zion have many constituencies, many audiences. Each communicates in a different register, and each has the promise, according to a modern revelation, that they will "hear the fulness of the gospel in his own tongue, and in his own language" (Doctrine and Covenants 90:11). Each constituency deserves to have the gospel both expounded and defended in that language. We have a variety of institutions and organizations employing different approaches and grammars to do just that. Today I have outlined one thread in the long history of apologetics. What I have traced is, I believe, a promising avenue first suggested by Irenaeus: to expound the gospel in such a way that "the [efforts of the unbelievers] fall to ruin." I conclude with my threefold hope. First, that as Peter commended us, we will engage in our work with serious caution and that as disciples of the second sort we will labor with the knowledge that our work of exposition will never be fully adequate to an inexhaustible gospel. Second, that our exposition of the gospel will attest to its transformative and healing power so compellingly that the gospel will be irresistibly inviting as well as convincing. And finally, that the souls of those who embrace the Restoration will be so fortified as to find that they are never separable from the love of Christ.

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ESSAY

Making Zion: Insights on Living with Contradictions from a Latter-day Saint Scholar

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This lecture, part of the Maxwell Institute's Living Faith lecture series, was delivered at Brigham Young University on June 11, 2019.

Several months ago, I realized with shock that I had reached the age that my mother was when she sent me off to my university studies. At first I couldn't believe it, but I double- and triple-checked the math. I always thought my mother was so old! But she was just me!

I can't believe I'm her now, because I feel like I'm the same person now as when I was an undergraduate. I seek out free food, I sleep in public places, and I am always having to run to class because I'm late. In a way this makes sense: Ever since I returned from my mission to Taiwan, I've basically been studying or working on a university campus. So it's like never having to leave one's childhood playground. But now I realize that I am actually not as young and cool as I thought I was. I can't just assume I understand how university students are feeling. I have to work hard and listen to find out what they're saying.

About a year ago I had a chat with a young woman who was deciding where to go to college. She had been accepted by a number of outstanding universities and academic programs around the country. She had a bright future ahead of her, but she wasn't sure whether that future included ongoing practice in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She laid out all of her pressing questions.



I took notes. I'm going to share an excerpt from what she said with regard to women's issues and LGBTQ issues within the Church. Whatever your own position on these sensitive topics, can I ask you to listen gently, with an open mind, accepting that these are her sincere, heartfelt questions? Don't worry about responding. Just see if you can hear her.

How can I be a member of a church that doesn't treat women equally compared to men, and that asks LGBTQ people to never date, seek loving companionship, or marry and have children? Didn't Christ command us to treat others the way we would want to be treated?

I've studied history. I understand how structural inequality works and what it looks like. Currently, the church looks like just another of the many conservative religious institutions that are part of the long human history of patriarchy and discrimination. Sure, I like the idea of "eternal families." But when the promise of "eternal families" comes with treating men and women differently and denying LGBTQ people love and the opportunity to start their own families, people like many of my friends and me are inclined to say, "No thanks." The gender and sexuality issues are deal breakers.

She expressed these concerns with eloquence and passion. In addition to concerns about women's and LGBTQ issues, she also cited well-documented instances of racism and abuse within a Church context. As I listened, I could feel that these questions came from a place of integrity, a belief in the worth of each individual soul, and a desire to follow the Savior's fearless example. She wasn't looking for excuses to be a slacker or lead a

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dissipated life. She wanted to love others as Jesus loved, to stand for truth and righteousness, to bring as many people as possible into the gospel fold. If you or someone you love and respect has ever expressed any of these concerns she raised, can you please raise your hand?

I've been thinking about her questions for some time. Many of them have long dwelt in my heart. But I was struck by the way she asked them—as a seventeen year-old, with fire in her eyes, with a clear understanding of the tensions that they generated in her life and worldview and personal relationships. These concerns are pressing to many within the rising generations of Latter-day Saints—if not to you yourself, then perhaps to a loved one or a friend.

What is also pressing is a desire for action. Today it is common for people to boycott restaurants or corporations because of political views or social policies associated with them, or to hold a “walkout” as a form of protest. In such an environment, it can seem inexcusable to many to remain within an organization that excludes women from the chain of organizational leadership, or that compels LGBTQ people to make excruciating choices to remain in full fellowship, or that has a history that includes racist teachings and policies, or that has a track record of cases of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

So now some of you are looking at me and wondering, “Is she going to excuse this and say, ‘Just focus on the positive, read your scriptures, and pray?’ If she sees the contradictions I see, how can she stay?” Or others are looking at me and wondering, “Why is she so critical? If she sees contradictions in the Church’s structure or policies or history, why doesn’t she just go somewhere else?”

I want you to notice that both of these positions are closely related. They’re based on the same premise that some things are deal breakers. Either the Church is supposed to be true and good, and falling short of truth or

goodness breaks this deal; or faithful members are supposed to believe that the Church is true and good, and pointing out ways in which we fall short breaks this deal. I have many friends and family members who have left the Church because they felt they couldn’t reconcile their moral values with our policies and culture. I have many friends and family members who will never leave the Church because their past experiences have given them a

The worst thing is to live life in a way that requires no transformative struggle from ourselves and that makes no difference for good in the lives of others.

sense of certainty that wherever the Church and its leaders are at any given time is where they want to be (and where others should be).

How we come to our worldviews depends heavily on our own personal experiences and the environments in which we live. My own position—the basic set of assumptions that shape my faith and worldview—is different from the two deal-breaking positions I just described. My position is that life is full of messy contradictions and that sometimes embracing them is the most productive way forward. This worldview is based on my experience as a scholar, returned missionary, athlete, mother, and cancer patient. It is based on my family background and my relationships with people in places like Orange County, California; Taiwan; Auckland, New Zealand; and Gunnison, Utah.

If you don’t mind, in the remainder of the talk I’ll share this position with you, with an understanding that even within the body of committed Latter-day Saints there are diverse experiences, values, and concerns. In today’s audience, there are also a number of people who are not Latter-day Saints, but who are people of strong faith, intellect, and heart. All of us live in a world of bewildering contradictions. Even if our worldviews don’t completely align, I hope that one or two of my perspectives may be useful to you in some way.

I first drafted this talk on an early morning train from Bordeaux to Paris in March, on my way back home from a scholarly conference. As I watched the sun come up over the barren fields and warm the cold earth, three sentences popped into my head that seemed to usefully triangulate my life philosophy at this point in time. Here they are:

*Death is not the worst thing.
Patriarchy is not the worst thing.
Baldness is not the worst thing.*

By “baldness,” I don’t mean just having no hair, but I mean imperfections, losses, scars, damage, and other conditions that we acquire as life takes its toll. I don’t just mean things that are easily visible, like wrinkles, but things that come to us in life that make us feel less secure, less confident, less buoyant or hopeful.

Death, patriarchy, baldness—these three are symbols of the suffering, imbalance, and indignity of the fallen world in which, Latter-day Saints believe, we chose to dwell. They are features of human experience in every place and time. Our Heavenly Parents do not rejoice in untimely death, or revel in unfairness, or gleefully inflict damage on their beloved children. But they have prepared for us a world in which the laws of nature take their course, in which imperfect individuals make assumptions and exercise agency, in which accidents happen. The whole point of life is to encounter opposition, to learn to discern good and evil, and to exercise the divine nature within us by following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, from this perspective, what is the worst thing?

The worst thing is to live life in a way that requires no transformative struggle from ourselves and that makes no difference for good in the lives of others.

DEATH

Let’s talk about death. All of us are dying. Some of us will finish dying sooner. Others will finish dying later. I was diagnosed with colon cancer in 2017, did a round of treatments, went into remission, and last week was told by my doctors that the cancer was likely recurring. Therefore, I will be thrilled if I live to see my credit card expire in March 2023. The reason I’m here at Brigham Young University today is because I wrote a book about my life, titled *Crossings* (with a very long subtitle). I began to write *Crossings* shortly after my diagnosis because I was not sure whether I would live long enough to talk to my young children about my faith. At the time they were eleven, nine, seven, and five. This is not exactly the age for complex, nuanced discussions about the meaning of life. The weeks between my diagnosis and my surgery were the darkest period of my life, as I contemplated the possibility that my time for influencing my children and being with my husband was coming to an end.

During this time, the thought of death accompanied my every action. As I dropped a batch of library books about robots into the return slot, or watched as my stir-fried green beans and onions with lemon and soy sauce disappeared at the dinner table, I thought about the fleetingness of the many acts that constitute parenthood. In themselves, they are so completely unmonumental. Sure, you create the kid’s body out of a single cell, so that’s something that proves you were there. But so many things—the new diapers, the milk from the breast, the words of stories, the trips to the museum—simply go in and out, in and out, delivered and erased on the daily tide. And then they are gone, leaving no visible marker that says, “Your mother was here. She loved you.”

I wondered whether I would live long enough for my youngest child, nicknamed “the Shoot” and



sometimes “the Hamburger,” to have one or two strong memories of me. Would he know “What Mama would say” or “What Mama would do”?

In addition to worrying about my kids, I also worried about myself. I knew what cancer could do because of my mother’s experience. My mother was a gracious and lively woman whose small stature concealed fierce determination. In 2008, she passed away due to a rare cancer of the bile duct. She had been in terrible pain for several months, pain so terrible that the strongest opioids could only take off the edge, but never take it away. The pain had made her unable to eat or sleep. Her frame became skeletal and her face acquired a permanent pinched, grim expression. I wondered: Will I suffer like that too? Will I have to be brave, like that? Morbid thoughts flickered in and out of my daily conversations. A couple of colleagues asked me if I could advise a doctoral student coming next year. I responded, CC:ing everyone, “No problem, as long as I’m still alive then!” Radio silence. I now realize that was an awkward and unprofessional thing to say. Cancer: there’s a learning curve!

PATRIARCHY

Let’s talk about patriarchy, by which I mean a system in which men are officially in charge, men at the forefront, men as the primary subjects, symbols, actors, and authorities. Patriarchy has been the dominant *modus operandi* for most of humanity for thousands of years. It is everywhere—in government, in scholarship, in art, in gourmet cooking, in the great cathedral of Notre Dame. It is in the Buddhist Vimalakirti Sutra, the Hebrew Pentateuch, the Koran, the Hindu Ramayana, the Pauline Epistles, the Book of Mormon. It’s a feature of religious organization at the top levels of the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, Tibetan Buddhism, East Asian Buddhism, and our Church. It’s an element of my family history on both my mother’s and my father’s sides—my beloved family that I love, that bands together with such fierce loyalty, that is, in my eyes, the most awesome family in the world.

We have a famous story in the Inouye family. My grandparents, Charles and Bessie Inouye, were farmers in Gunnison, Utah, and their children spent all their time working on the farm. One day Grandpa and his high-



Charles Inouye surveys his field in Gunnison, Utah

school-aged sons were out digging in a ditch. My father remembers standing up to his knees in thick, oozy mud. Clouds of mosquitos were swarming around, biting every exposed surface. Grandpa’s timing was perfect. He said, “Boys, if you don’t get an education, you can look forward to this for the rest of your lives.” It made a deep impression. All of Grandma and Grandpa’s children went on to college, most of them here at BYU, and on to graduate or professional school. Two decided to go to school indefinitely, that is, become university professors. One, Charles Shirō Inouye, is a professor of Japanese literature at Tufts University in Boston. Another, Dillon Kazuyuki Inouye, was a professor of instructional learning technology here at BYU until he passed away in 2008.

That day in the ditch, Grandpa, himself a graduate of Stanford University, wasn’t saying that if you get an education, you’ll never have to work, or get dirty, or that one should always avoid digging ditches. I think he was saying that education gives people more power to choose which ditches they want to dig.

Today, in my work as a professional scholar I dig particular sorts of ditches. In my research on Chinese history and global religious movements, I plow through texts, line by line. I delve into historical sources like newspapers, organizational records, and religious teachings, seeking to uncover the lives of ordinary people

in another place and time. I also step back to look for the big picture. When one looks at the big picture of all human experience, everywhere, one finds that just as most people's eyes are brown and most people's hair is black, most people's experience within familial and other social structures is shaped by patriarchy.

I know there are some spaces in the world, such as indigenous cultures, that are traditionally matriarchal, or perhaps some corners of the internet that are "patriarchy-free," by which I mean that in these spaces, patriarchal assumptions, actions, or organization are entirely absent. However, the spaces where I live my life—such as all the universities I've ever taught at, New Zealand society, American society, Chinese society, Christian religious traditions, social media networks, my beloved church, and my beloved family's history—are not patriarchy-free. Though some spots are better than others, I would not escape patriarchy by quitting my job, moving to other countries, or leaving the Church.

To clarify, by using the term "patriarchy-free," I am not seeking to trivialize the negative experiences of women and men who have been harmed by patriarchal practices and assumptions—both women who have been ignored, abused, or dominated and men whose assumptions that they were inherently more important led them to ignore, abuse, or dominate women have harmed their families and stunted their spiritual growth.

I am saying that patriarchal systems are rooted throughout the worlds in which I live, and since I see no feasible way to opt out, I have decided instead to dig in—to sharpen my shovel and get to work. The challenge of bringing to pass, in my worlds, the Book of Mormon teaching that "all are alike unto God" is one of the ditches I have chosen to dig.

BALDNESS

Regarding baldness: You're probably wondering why I don't have hair. No, it's not because of chemotherapy. The major effect of chemo for me was that I felt the overwhelming urge to watch *all* the British-history-related shows on Netflix, from all seasons of *Downton Abbey* to documentaries on Henry the VIII's residence, including his velvet-covered toilet seat (which sounds so inadvisable). Anyway, until the age of twenty-nine I had long, thick black hair—until, inexplicably, it just fell out. At first it was really hard. I felt like everybody was looking at me. Employees in stores or flight attendants on airplanes frequently called me "sir." It was very humbling. I began to realize that I had no right to be prideful or to judge people based on their appearance. I was, after all, the bald woman in the room.

I would definitely love to have hair again, but losing it taught me a lesson. I learned that loss makes us both vulnerable and strong. We lose things that are dear to us, that make us beautiful or happy or whole. Sometimes this loss is readily apparent, but sometimes it isn't. Losing my hair was the first time in my adult life I really remember feeling dependent on the kindness and graciousness of others. I had always been a competitive person: a Harvard graduate, a marathoner. But now, I felt vulnerable—dependent on others to be kind to me. This vulnerability helped me better understand and accept the vulnerability in others. In this way, as it says near the end of the Book of Mormon in Ether 12:27, our weakness becomes a strength.

So I've come to a sort of understanding with death, patriarchy, and baldness, which is to say that I've come to accept and even appreciate the imperfection of human existence. We in the twenty-first century live in an age of extraordinary contradictions. Sometimes, even when we clearly see the problem and the answer, we still can't get it together. For example, we clearly see that the planet's fragile living systems are groaning under the load of the pollutants we have released into our little lifeboat in space and that these problems are harmful now and catastrophic in the future, but we are very far away from doing what it takes to clean things up. We see that, through accidents of birth and locality, a very privileged global few have access to health, wealth, power,

I've come to accept and even appreciate the imperfection of human existence. We in the twenty-first century live in an age of extraordinary contradictions.



learning, equity, respect, and elaborate standards of beauty, while the majority of God's children must struggle just to eat, drink, sleep, and rise for another day.

This is the world on my radar screen. Its systems are deeply flawed and inequitable. It can be a place of crushing despair. And yet it is also a place of beauty, love, and hope. It is a place worth seeing clearly, in all its terrible and lovely contradictions.

Similarly, the more I learn about our Church history and our governing structures, the more clearly I see that the Church as it's currently constituted has never been the best of all possible worlds. As Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf has said, "The Restoration is an ongoing process."¹ At the same time, the more I think about the Church today, the more clearly I see that it has something to offer me and that the Latter-day Saints have something to offer the world.

What I see the Church offering me is the opportunity to learn to follow Christ and participate in the redeeming processes of error, repentance, and growth, by engaging with my sisters and brothers in the gospel. It is the opportunity to think globally and act locally, to think locally and act globally. These networks of human bonds and collective action are as close at hand as my own home and neighborhood, and as far-flung as the entire world. That is cool. We, the Latter-day Saints, are weird and small enough to really try to be sisters and brothers to each other in our diverse and often contradictory circumstances around the world.

Now I know that many of you are about to leave on missions or have recently returned from missions. You might be thinking: "We are weird and small! Yay!" doesn't sound like a very exciting missionary message. You wouldn't exactly put that on a bumper sticker. Yet when I study the life of Christ and the lives of the prophets and prophetesses like Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Miriam, Deborah, and Anna, what they all have in common is that they lived at the margins. In the scriptural narrative, the conditions of risk, injustice, or loss that shaped



their lives and actions contrasted with the lives of revered and powerful religious councils, kings, wealthy citizens, pharaohs, military men, and people who had not time to truly serve God because their full, comfortable lives kept them busy.

Sometimes, we Latter-day Saints forget about our weirdness and smallness, to our detriment. The more stadiums we fill, the more wealthy and politically influential we become, the more time we spend at the center and the apex, instead of the margins and the lowly places, of our worlds, the greater the temptation for us to feel that life is a competition and that we are rising stars. To all of us who may sometimes find ourselves forgetting our weirdness and smallness, please remember:

The worst thing is to live life in a way that requires no transformative struggle from ourselves and that makes no difference for good in the lives of others.

If we surround ourselves with only those who agree with us and admire us, creating an insular Latter-day-Saint-land, and forget that we are a tiny .02 percent minority of God's children, we risk creating an artificial environment in which contradiction, tension, and discomfort are seen as foreign. This is like digging in a sandbox, where there are just uniform grains of sand. It's easy and it's clean, and children like to do it. But it is not fertile soil, and it does not hold water. By contrast, the native ecosystem that our Heavenly Mother and Father created for their children was meant to be muddy, full of diverse elements and microorganisms, and frequently a bit wretched.

The native ecosystem that our Heavenly Mother and Father created for their children was meant to be muddy, full of diverse elements and microorganisms, and frequently a bit wretched.

This reminds me of something Uncle Charles said to me in college. Uncle Charles (Gunnison farm boy, professor, poet, and Latter-day Saint) told me, “Mormons are like manure. If you heap them all up in a pile together, they just stink. But if you spread them around, they can do a lot of good.”

In the scriptures, Jesus didn’t exactly say his disciples were manure, but he similarly used metaphors that described things that are horrible in concentration, indispensable in dissolution. He said in Matthew 5:13, “You are the salt of the earth.” He said in Matthew 13:33, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven [yeast], which a woman took, and [mixed] in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.”



Sharon Eubank, first counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

As Relief Society General Presidency first counselor Sharon Eubank taught in the April 2019 general conference, Jesus made great efforts to reach out to people outside the circle of social privilege and religious orthodoxy: “lepers, tax collectors, children, Galileans, harlots, women, Pharisees, sinners, Samaritans, widows, Roman soldiers, adulterers, the ritually unclean.”² These associations made him vulnerable to criticism from the community of those who considered themselves righteous, proper, and mainstream, and eventually contributed to his death.

Christ’s pattern of deliberate marginality can also be seen in Matthew 18:12: “If a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?” Note that the shepherd doesn’t stand at the edge of the big flock in the pasture or meadow, shouting for the stray to get back into the fold NOW, or else. The shepherd leaves the meadow and goes into the mountains.

Christ’s deliberate marginality, confidence that real people were more important to God than ritual purity, and emphasis on the sufficiency of loving God and loving others come together to form a pattern. In this pattern, Christ frequently teaches us to take the path of greatest resistance.

Therefore:

Death

Patriarchy

Baldness

These are not the worst things. They are features of where I live, but they do not define me or my work as I dig the ditches of life.

In a similar manner, my faith as a Latter-day Saint is not defined entirely by our mistakes, our imbalance, and our weakness. These surely exist, however, because we are a living community of people seeking God together. My faith as a Latter-day Saint encompasses *both* the deep flaws and the deep beauty of such a collective endeavor.

Sometimes in life, whether we be Latter-day Saints or Catholics or Buddhists or Muslims, the earth shakes and splits open and throws us into the bottom of deep, dark trenches that we would never choose to dig. We wonder how we will ever climb out. This is how I currently feel. It was just last week when my doctors told me



my cancer was back, and it had metastasized. It feels very heavy. Sometimes we wish we didn't have to be so darn strong. Sometimes we wish we didn't have to be so terribly inspiring.

For those of you who grow weary in the ditches and the trenches—be they sickness, or depression, or discrimination, or abuse—it's true that life can be so hard. Together we will share these burdens so that they may be light, in keeping with the sacred covenant we made when we chose to follow Jesus Christ. I know from my own experience that God is mindful of us in our weakness and that the power of the sacred can break forth into our everyday experience and transform us.

And, to my young fellow Latter-day Saints who are troubled by the ways in which our church institutions or culture sometimes fall short of our highest ideals, I say: Please consider your tremendous power to lead us where we need to go. You are the future of our Church. You are who we may become. You may find that God will consecrate these struggles for your good, and for ours. As a people, where would we be without fearless questions and a fierce will to press on toward Zion over bogs and rivers and mountains?

There are real hazards to undertaking a messy spiritual journey in the company of so many others, as Latter-day Saints do. But for me it is a rich life, a consequential life—a life worth living.

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Are You Sleeping through the Restoration?" *Ensign*, May 2014, 59.
2. Sharon Eubank, "Christ: The Light That Shines in Darkness," *Ensign*, May 2019, 74.

2019 Institute Scholars

PHILIP L. BARLOW

NEAL A. MAXWELL RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

The book of Job features three friends who initially come to mourn silently with Job amidst his calamities. However, during the bulk of the story—which often remains unread—these friends argue with Job, censuring him for the passionate questions he puts to them and to God concerning his undeserved agonies. These friends see that Job suffers, they know God is just, so they conclude, among other things, that Job’s sufferings must be the consequence of sin. So eager to defend God are they, and so sure they know how, that they offend God in the process. God ultimately calls Job to account for protesting too zealously in his pain and ignorance, but the Lord is far more displeased with Job’s smug friends, who presume to know his mind and proceed to judge their suffering comrade.



I’m new at the Maxwell Institute, but after only a few of months I’m amazed at the impact it has had on my thinking and my faith. Not only has Dr. Barlow had me work on interesting and complex projects, but he’s also been repeatedly and constantly available to mentor me in my own pursuit of thoughtful and faithful scholarship. I’m excited to continue reading through and commenting on the Institute’s forthcoming Brief Theological Introductions to the Book of Mormon volumes, which have already offered deep new insights into how I think about the book.

—ALEXANDER CHRISTENSEN, RESEARCH ASSISTANT

This aspect of the account of Job reminds me that it is not always obvious how best to live, share, and defend the Lord, his gospel, and his kingdom. I have attempted to do so during all of my adult life, but I have made mistakes and have witnessed others doing so—attempting to defend some position but instead stirring up contention, for example. Or feeling at liberty to judge the hearts and minds of others. Or breeding defensiveness. Or failing to hear, understand, and love those who question or differ from us before pronouncing our too-confident remedies—a process that can erode rather than enhance trust.

All this provides backdrop for why I love coming to work each morning at the Neal A. Maxwell Institute. Here I am surrounded by diverse, bright, faithful, and generous scholars, with whom I pray and ponder and research in the cause of nurturing a vibrant, informed, resilient, gospel-centered knowledge and life. A life whose undergirding faith holds up well under scrutiny. One that works through, rather than avoids, problems and challenges—and therefore tends to nourish trust even amidst our contemporary national and global cultures of weakening trust of authority and religion. I work at a place where spirit, mind, and heart work in concert, where faithful scholarship is a form of worship, as our namesake, Elder Maxwell, encouraged.



My time working at the Maxwell Institute under the tutelage of Dr. Philip Barlow was inspiring. In settings both public and private, Dr. Barlow and other Institute scholars encouraged me to pursue knowledge fearlessly and faithfully and have been models of disciple-scholarship. As I now begin graduate work in the study of religion, I am grateful to the scholars at the Institute who have given me a strong foundation not only in scholarship but in the things that matter more.

—STEPHEN BETTS, RESEARCH ASSISTANT

My personal efforts in 2019 have touched several arenas. As associate director, I advise the Maxwell Institute's director, Spencer Fluhman, on the affairs of the Institute as a whole. With him, I serve as general editor of our pathbreaking and forthcoming series of Brief Theological Introductions to the Book of Mormon, which I believe is destined to elevate the quality and frequency of people's engagement with that inspired book.

Some of my work involves public presentations or consultation. This year I partnered with Institute colleagues Deidre Green and Carl Griffin to recruit other colleagues inside and outside of BYU to participate in a private seminar and a resulting public conference exploring agency as a theological, philosophical, psychological, and practical phenomenon. I spoke on the concept of human perfection at a conference called Faith in a Secular Age, cosponsored by BYU's Wheatley Institution. I also delivered a paper entitled "Custodians of Doctrine and the Work of Empathy" at a conference called A Spiritual Home: Building Bridges for Sexual and Gender Minorities in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which was inspired by a BYU devotional delivered by Elder M. Russell Ballard in November 2017. In other instances I helped facilitate the appearance on campus of distinguished and sympathetic scholars—notably Duke University's Dr. Xi Lian, who came to lecture on the Christian martyr Lin Zhao, the subject of his recent book *Blood Letters*.

Written expressions of this year's labors include the foreword to Leonard J. Arrington's new *Faith and Intellect: The Lives and Contributions of Latter-day Saint Thinkers* (edited by Gary Bergera, 2019); an online essay for FaithMatters's "Big Questions" series called "The Theological Challenge of Doctrine and Covenants 1:3: 'The Only True and Living Church with Which I the Lord Am Well Pleased'"; and chapters in two soon-to-be published book collections: "Shards of Combat: How Satan Sought to Destroy the Agency of Man" (to appear in *Open Questions in Latter-day Saint Thought*, edited by Terryl Givens and Eric Eliason), and "The Place of the Bible and Biblical Scholarship in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Church of Jesus Christ



Working at the Maxwell Institute for Dr. Barlow has been one of the greatest joys of my time at BYU. This year I've experienced meaningful spiritual growth in the pursuit of academic knowledge. Questions that once confused me don't anymore; not because I have all the answers but because the Maxwell Institute has taught me both how to think more critically and to operate in faith and patience. I'm so grateful for Dr. Barlow's mentorship and love and for teaching me to live in awe of things greater than myself.

—RYDER SEAMONS, RESEARCH ASSISTANT

of Latter-day Saints" (to appear in *The Bible in Mormonism: A Guidebook to the LDS Scriptural Tradition*, edited by Cory Crawford, Eric Eliason, and Taylor G. Petrey).

In all of these endeavors I have learned from and mentored four remarkably talented and resourceful student research assistants this year, including Msrs. Stephen Betts, Ryder Seamons, Muhammad Hassan, and Alexander Christensen. Together, aided by the gifted minds and hearts of the Institute's staff and resident and visiting scholars, we have refined our sense and extended our efforts in pursuit of "disciple scholarship."

CHRISTOPHER JAMES BLYTHE

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

This past year at the Maxwell Institute I have been blessed with a nurturing environment, generous colleagues, diligent and curious student researchers, and precious time to write. It is difficult not to have wonderful days when working here. My primary goal as a visiting scholar is to complete my research and writing on *Book of Mormon Geography: A Cultural History*, a book that I hope to finish in 2021.

Last year I had the opportunity to research discussions surrounding Book of Mormon geography at the Community of Christ Library and Archives. In 2020 I hope to visit the final Hill Cumorah Pageant in New York. Discussing the significance of the setting of the Book of Mormon with Latter-day Saints of numerous perspectives has increased my appreciation for the diversity of thought among what some might imagine is a homogenous group. I had the opportunity to present this research at a variety of venues in the past year, including the annual meeting of the Book of Mormon Studies Association.

In 2019 two of my articles appeared in academic journals. The first, published in *Religion Compass*, was entitled "From the Book of Mormon to the Circle Seven Koran: Scriptures of American New Religions." The second piece, "Brigham Young's Newly Located February 1874 Revelation," was published in *BYU Studies Quarterly*. It focuses on a never-before-published revelation dictated by Brigham Young on the importance of the Saints abiding by the United Order. In addition, I wrote an essay that appeared on the Maxwell Institute blog, historicizing the Church's statement on Book of Mormon geography. The year 2019 also saw the publication of the ninth volume of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, which I coedited with Alex Smith and Christian Heimburger. This volume covers correspondence, sermons, and other items relating to Joseph Smith from December 1841 to April 1842.



I also completed two books during 2019 that will appear in 2020. My first monograph, *Terrible Revolution: Latter-day Saints and the American Apocalypse*, is scheduled to be published by Oxford University Press in the summer of 2020. The second is called *Open Canon: Scriptures of the Latter Day Saint Diaspora*, a collection coedited by myself, Christine Elyse Blythe, and Jay Burton on scriptural production and reception among divergent Latter Day Saint churches. Publisher pending for publication in 2020.

It has been a wonderfully productive year in which I presented my research at the Mormon History Association, the Book of Mormon Studies Association, the Joseph Smith Papers conference and was featured as the keynote presenter at the Folklore Society of Utah. The Institute's Wednesday brown bag gatherings gave me the opportunity to workshop my research before presenting—a true boon for the scholars who gather here.

Finally, in the fall of 2019 I completed my term as the associate editor and book review editor for the *Journal of Mormon History*. At the same time I began my tenure as the journal's coeditor with Jessie Embry.



This year I was able to assist Dr. Blythe in preparing the manuscript for his upcoming book with Oxford Press—Terrible Revolution: Latter-day Saints and the American Apocalypse—for publication. My small contribution included double-checking the quotations, citations, and references. This was such a tremendous learning experience as I read the rich collection of primary sources cited in his work. I came across many intriguing things in Latter-day Saint history that I had not known or even heard of before. Sometimes I have to pause to wonder how Dr. Blythe could have found these amazing quotations and sources. I am excited to learn more as I work with him and his amazing projects in the coming year.

—LIEL MAALA, RESEARCH ASSISTANT

D. MORGAN DAVIS

RESEARCH FELLOW

My work this year continued to focus on comparative readings of the Qur'an and the Book of Mormon, the founding scriptures of Islam and the Latter-day Saint faith. In July I presented a paper entitled "Punishment Stories in the Bible, the Qur'an, and the Book of Mormon" at the biennial gathering of the International Qur'anic Studies Association in Tangier, Morocco. The conference was a truly international event, with scholars from all over Europe, the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, North Africa, and the United States and with papers given in English, French, and Arabic.

I noted in my presentation that both the Qur'an and the Book of Mormon are self-aware postbiblical scriptures that intend to extend, modify, or reinterpret the Bible, and both feature "accounts of God's destruction of people who have rejected the prophets and 'ripened in iniquity.'" Both recount such stories from the Bible, but they also each contain extrabiblical stories as well. In fact, I argued, the Book of Mormon



is a punishment story (a genre that is formally studied by scholars of the Qur'an) that frames yet other punishment stories at scales both large and small. In October I presented a follow-up paper exploring these and related questions further at the Book of Mormon Studies conference in Logan, Utah.



Participants in the 2019 International Qur'anic Studies Association conference in Tangier, Morocco

I prepared two articles for publication this year. The first has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*. In this article I lay out a case for reading the Qur'an and the Book of Mormon comparatively and survey the topics and questions that a comparative investigation of prophecy in both scriptures would entail. In the other, I consider more broadly the relationship between scripture and the spirit of prophecy or revelation.

My research for these and other projects has been greatly enriched by feedback I received when presenting at one of the Institute's brown bag sessions and from conversations I have had with many colleagues in both the Latter-day Saint and qur'anic studies worlds. I am especially indebted to a wonderful cadre of research assistants, who again this year helped me locate resources, organize materials, and think through ideas. One of the greatest experiences of the year was to spend time with these researchers doing close readings of the Qur'an on topics relevant to my projects. We gathered each week having done our own reading beforehand; we compared what we had noticed and then burrowed deeper into those topics and passages that seemed most promising. We consulted the Arabic, read many different translations and commentaries, and for two precious months had the invaluable expertise of Muhammad Hassan among us as a visiting scholar from Brandeis University. Muhammad was raised in Islam and trained as a youth in the traditional interpretation and recitation of the Qur'an (which he can still do to beautiful effect). Now as a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, his ability to provide insight into how the Qur'an's themes and ideas interact with those of the Restoration scriptures was invaluable. It was an unforgettable experience to read with him. Thanks also to

Ammon Burdge, Nick Hainsworth, Jessica Mitton, Emily Peck, Jon Rosenbalm, and Liz Walker for their rich contributions to our conversations and to my thinking about many passages in the Qur'an and the scriptures of the Restoration.

Other highlights this year involved my work as coeditor of the Living Faith series. I have been joined in this endeavor by Miranda Wilcox of BYU's English Department. Her incisive and generous editorial approach and the enthusiasm she brings to this series have been transformative. This year we released two new titles:

George Handley's *If Truth Were a Child* is a gathering of insightful essays reflecting on scholarship, discipleship, and faith. Handley, a professor of comparative literature at BYU, writes with humility, candor, and deep insight. His testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ shines on each page.



I've been working with Dr. Davis for several years now, mainly on his comparison between the Qur'an and the Book of Mormon. We've asked many questions of the text, including how war is approached, what constitutes a prophet, what the "plan of salvation" looks like therein, and a number of other topics. Working with Morgan and the Institute as a whole has given me a greater appreciation for and understanding of religious scholarship, as well as of other religions and differing ideas. Although we believe in the truth and authority of our Church, we also believe other religions possess truths from God and that we can all benefit by gathering truth together.

—JESSICA MITTON, RESEARCH ASSISTANT



The most rewarding part of my time at the Maxwell Institute was getting to work with incredible scholars such as Philip Barlow, Fiona Givens, and Morgan Davis. For Dr. Barlow, I conducted research on comparative religion, particularly on The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Islam. Specifically I examined the theology surrounding salvation exclusivity and "The One True Church." For Fiona Givens, I was able to do research on women in religion, with a focus on Islam and women's roles in Islamic theology and scriptures. For Dr. Davis, I compiled research on the sociological aspects of prophecy and revelation. Overall, it was the most rewarding academic summer I have ever had. Getting to work with such incredible and driven scholars increased my desire to be a scholar of religion myself.

—MUHAMMAD HASSAN, RESEARCH ASSISTANT

The subtitle of Melissa Inouye's offering is irresistible, just like her prose. Her title is *Crossings: A Bald Asian American Latter-day Saint Woman Scholar's Ventures through Life, Death, Cancer & Motherhood (Not Necessarily in That Order)*. Copublished with Deseret Book, it is a unique mix of personal and family stories, scholarship, theology, and pencil sketches. Its themes are as wide in their compass as the remarkable heart who penned this keepsake of a book.

Both books have received multiple positive reviews, and the online response has also been wonderful. I love what the Living Faith series represents, as disciple-scholars consecrate their best thinking to young adult Latter-day Saint readers and show what living with faith in Christ looks like in practice. Exciting further offerings are in the works for the coming year.

I have also been involved this year on the editorial side of the Maxwell Institute's Brief Theological Introductions to the Book of Mormon series. This project has been a labor of love for all involved. It is remarkable what careful, thoughtful reading can uncover in a text that has already borne so much scrutiny. This series arises out of our collective conviction that there is still much more to be seen and much more to be celebrated in this foundational text than we have yet imagined. It has been breathtaking to watch our faith bear fruit in unforeseen and better-than-expected ways. The gathering and nurturing of disciple-scholars is underway at the Maxwell Institute as never before, and the results of disciplined scholarship quickened by faith in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ are wonderful to see.

FIONA BULBECK GIVENS

RESEARCH STAFF

My introduction to the Maxwell Institute occurred in May 2019 when I joined several Institute scholars principally for a tour of the Vatican Library, which among its many precious volumes also houses a treasure trove of ancient Syriac manuscripts. Until recently these manuscripts have not been available to scholars except through access at the Vatican Library itself. Under the guidance of Maxwell Institute Research Fellow Kristian S. Heal, BYU students have traveled to the Vatican over the course of ten years to assist with the digitization of the manuscripts, thus facilitating further research and study opportunities for a growing number of scholars from around the globe. I knew then that the Maxwell Institute was an institution whose influence and ambitions far transcended merely local initiatives.

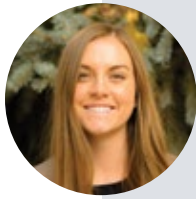


As a research assistant for Fiona Givens, I have been studying feminine imagery and the manifold roles of the Holy Spirit in the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and early Christian writings. This experience has not only heightened my ability to engage intellectually with religious texts, but it has also enabled me to connect with God in unprecedented ways. I am grateful for the opportunity to work alongside such brilliant, welcoming, and faithful disciple-scholars. I look forward to using the skills I am currently cultivating to engage in religious scholarship throughout my life.

—EMILY OSTLER, RESEARCH ASSISTANT



I feel it a great honour to have been invited to join the Maxwell Institute as a scholar in residence for the next three years. I am currently completing work on a chapter entitled “Feminism and Heavenly Mother” that will be published in 2020 in a Routledge volume entitled *Mormonism and Gender*. I am also engaged in writing



Since reading many of the books in the Living Faith Series, it has always been a goal of mine to work for the Maxwell Institute. I am inspired by its mission and the work it achieves. Researching with Fiona has been incredible and transforming in many ways. She approaches the gospel with both grace and curiosity. She encourages us to explore our faith in a thoughtful and creative way that has greatly enriched my life. I am thrilled to see all that she and the Maxwell Institute do to help shape our communities to be more loving and educated.

—MALLORY JONES ONIKI, RESEARCH ASSISTANT

an article on the topic of Christ's Atonement, wherein I am exploring avenues in which we have been invited into collaboration with the Godhead. I feel it a great honor to engage in promoting the beautiful aspects of the gospel of Jesus Christ with such exceptional scholars who are generous with both their time and scholarship.

TERRYL L. GIVENS

NEAL A. MAXWELL SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW

In October, Andrew Teal, the Anglican priest and theologian from Pembroke College, Oxford, visited the Maxwell Institute again (he was here in April, and we hope to see him back soon). Over dinner, he referred to an ideal and harmonious union between pastoral care and academic work. It struck me that he was using slightly different language for what we call “disciple-scholarship” and that this synthesis he had earlier observed being practiced at the Maxwell Institute was what drew him toward our orbit. Sometimes it takes an outsider perspective to appreciate the unique environment in which we work. In my case, summer exposures to the synergy at play at the Institute between mind and spirit, among exceedingly bright, faith-filled colleagues, was what persuaded me to relinquish an endowed chair at the University of Richmond for a position as a research fellow. I officially became an Institute scholar this summer.



Working for Dr. Givens at the Maxwell Institute has been a wonderful experience. More than anything, the opportunity to work directly with someone whom I have admired for over seven years is a treasure. His writings have had a huge influence on my beliefs and understanding of the gospel. It has been marvelous to get to know the writer personally and see firsthand the dedication, hard work, and passion that he puts into his writing. To be a small part of what will eventually become one of his works is an opportunity that I am incredibly grateful for.

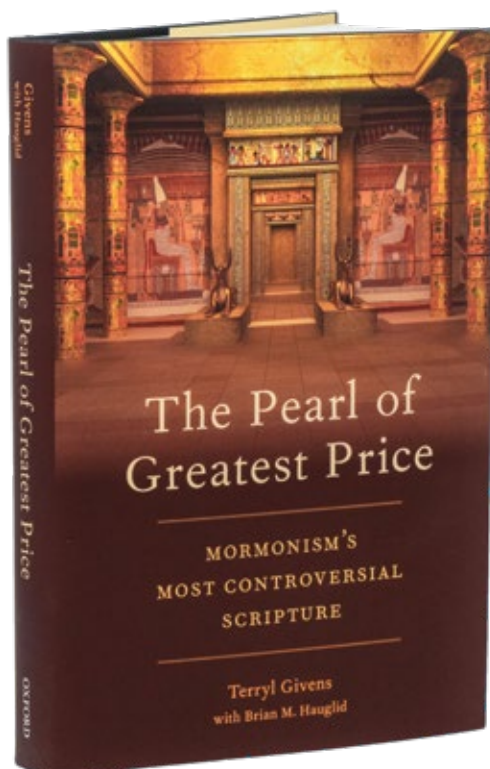
—JOSH DAVIS, RESEARCH ASSISTANT



Being able to learn, love, and live the restored gospel while working under the direction of the dedicated disciple-scholars at the Maxwell Institute has been an experience as transformational and beautiful as it has been instructive and challenging. My faith has become ever more bright as I've had the opportunity to bask in the rich history and abundant theology of the restored gospel—a gospel Elder Maxwell himself described as “inexhaustible.” From my time here at the Institute, in my own limited way, I feel I may add my own voice to the chorus of Latter-day Saints echoing Elder Maxwell’s own moving testimony of the reality of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Working at the Maxwell Institute has been a privilege I will cherish forever.

—CALVIN BURKE, RESEARCH ASSISTANT

During my six months here, my work on a Book of Mormon volume, an Oxford introduction to the Church of Jesus Christ, and a series on inspired “voices from the wilderness,” have all been enriched and aided by colleagues in conversational settings both formal and informal. I was also able to complete work on *The Pearl of Greatest Price* (with Brian Hauglid), which Oxford released in October. Research institutes are often just institutional homes for any number of independently operating scholars. At the Maxwell Institute, collaboration and cross-pollination are formally implemented via brown bag lunches, faculty meetings complete with progress reports, and weekly informal get-togethers and are informally fostered in scattered settings throughout the year. I have found that not just a shared faith but a shared commitment to strengthening the kingdom through our scholarship creates a unity of purpose and generosity of spirit without parallel in the academic world.



DEIDRE NICOLE GREEN

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

This was a busy and productive year for me in terms of writing and publishing. Since the Institute's last annual report, I have published two pieces. One, entitled "Engendering Atonement: Kierkegaard on the Cross," appeared in an anthology published by Routledge, *The Kierkegaardian Mind*. I also published "The Freedom to Love: On the Unclaimability of (Maternal) Love," an article in the peer-reviewed journal *Analize*. I also completed the entry on "Feminism and Gender" for the *Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Religion*, edited by Charles Taliaferro and Stewart Goetz, which has received final acceptance by the editors and is in press. The volume will be published in November 2020.

Another piece was accepted by the peer-reviewed *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook*. This piece is entitled "To Be(come) Love Itself: Charity as Acquired Originality." The yearbook is published by De Gruyter, and the 2019 edition, in which my piece will appear, should already have appeared by the time this report is in your hands.



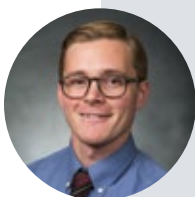
Before beginning my work for Dr. Deidre Green, my experience with philosophy was minimal. But throughout the last year as I've researched at the Maxwell Institute, I have been able to expand my knowledge and explore my interests in ways that have changed my personal philosophy and spirituality. My research at the Maxwell Institute—which has ranged from reading periodicals on the history of midrashic Hebrew texts, to reading books exploring the maternal themes in Toni Morrison's works, to reading books on abstract spiritual themes and the possibility of creatio ex profundis, and more—has both enriched my academic life and expanded my capacity for spiritual thinking. I believe my experiences at the Institute will stay with me throughout the rest of my life and my faith journey.

—AMELIA CAMPBELL, RESEARCH ASSISTANT



In 2019 I was invited to be an author for the Maxwell Institute's forthcoming series of Brief Theological Introductions to the Book of Mormon. I authored the complete manuscript of the book on Jacob over the summer. This required sacrificing my normal summer activities of researching at the Kierkegaard special collections library at St. Olaf College and traveling to Copenhagen for the annual Kierkegaard conference held there. Through the process, I came to appreciate more than ever before Jacob's unique contribution to the Book of Mormon, as well as the prophetic import of the book itself. Further, I had the sacred experience of feeling inspired and enabled to see things in the text I had never seen before and to make new connections that had never occurred to me prior to the writing of the book. I definitely felt this was a project of great import and that I was given capacities beyond my own to complete it well and in such a short time (and while recovering from major surgery, to boot!). I believe this series can help Latter-day Saints see their own scriptures anew and appreciate their relevance for what they teach us about God and humanity and how we should live our lives.

I am currently working to finish my monograph *Transforming Love: Kierkegaardian Visions for Christian Life* and plan to submit it to publishers for review before the end of 2019. I am also finishing up work as coeditor



This year I had a great time working with Dr. Green on a number of projects. Most of the work was focused on the subjects of atonement, embodied epistemology, and agency—especially in the works of the nineteenth-century Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, who investigated the meaning of love, faith, and fear. Working with Dr. Green gave me access to both resources and ideas that have helped me in my own research and broadened my horizons for how I engage in philosophy and theology.

—ROBERT TENSMEYER, RESEARCH ASSISTANT

with Eric D. Huntsman on an anthology of Latter-day Saint perspectives on atonement, which is intended for an academic press. Finally, I just completed the first successful meeting of the Book of Mormon and Ethics seminar, a group of international scholars who are approaching the Book of Mormon for the purposes of doing normative work. I am leading the seminar, which will meet for three years, culminating in a symposium and an anthology for an academic press. In addition to these activities, I have also written multiple invited book reviews, including for the *Journal of Religion*, which issue is accepted and in press. I was also asked to serve as a referee for multiple peer-reviewed journals.

I gave a number of invited public presentations in 2019. In March, I gave a paper at the conference Faith in a Secular Age, which was jointly sponsored by the Maxwell Institute and the Wheatley Institution and held on BYU campus. My paper was entitled “Knowledge Enfleshed: A Latter-day Saint Epistemology of Embodiment.” I also helped to organize an interdisciplinary seminar and symposium on agency that was sponsored by the Maxwell Institute. My paper was entitled “Humble Courage: Hope, Love, and Agency in Kierkegaard.” Finally, I delivered a paper in Clermont-Ferrand, France, at a conference on Kierkegaard and Issues in Contemporary Ethics in May. That paper was entitled “(Divine) Love at a Distance: Kierkegaard’s Maternal Metaphors and Feminist Ethics.”

In addition to these activities, I finished another round of graduate school in 2019, receiving a second master of arts degree, this one in philosophy, as well as a certificate in Africana studies, both from Claremont Graduate University.

My research assistants were wonderful to work with and mentor once again in 2019. This year, I worked with Amelia Campbell, who is now in graduate school at UCSD, and Bob Tensmeyer, who graduates in December 2019.

CARL GRIFFIN

SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW

With everyone at the Maxwell Institute, over the past year I have deeply considered Elder Jeffrey R. Holland’s address “The Maxwell Legacy in the 21st Century,” presented last year as the annual Neal A. Maxwell lecture.¹ In it he instructs our faculty on both our institutional mission and professional priorities. As a Latter-day Saint I have often pondered how the teachings of the prophets and apostles apply directly to me, but before last November, never had apostolic words been addressed to me directly. That fact has motivated careful and



urgent rereading but also a new openness to the Spirit in considering how our work as faculty can best embody the values Elder Holland set forth.

The Maxwell Institute has long worked to enact the commission that “the believers . . . see you as a source for some of the answers to their questions.”² In addition, we must consistently interrogate even our work directed toward the academy to ensure it has “covenantal consequence.”³ My academic field is early Christian studies. Both my institutional assignments and personal research have been oriented to the publication and academic study of ancient Christian texts. But for disciple-scholars who study religious history, fundamental to such work is a concern to reclaim and communicate to Latter-day Saints the religious light and knowledge of past dispensations.

It was with this in mind that I turned my lens of research this year on the topic of agency in early Christianity. I co-organized and participated in a faculty workshop and campus conference titled *Beyond Choice: Agency in Interdisciplinary Perspective*. In January and February a group of six faculty regularly met to consider agency from a variety of disciplinary and gospel perspectives. We explored such questions as the relationship between agency, consciousness, action, and culture; unique teachings about agency and the war in heaven found only in Restoration scripture; and the relationship of agency to love in the teachings of Mormon and Paul, as well as in the work of Christian philosopher Søren Kierkegaard. My paper “Free Will and Scripture in Origen of Alexandria” examined unique ways this important early Christian writer anticipated Restoration teaching. Origen believed that agency was an inherent quality of preexistent souls, that it explained the entire material and spiritual cosmic order, and that it was central to God’s plan of salvation. Papers prepared for the workshop were presented at a public conference in March, keynoted by Dr. Mark Wrathall of the University of Oxford.

As I’ve considered what it means to do work of “covenantal consequence,” I’ve found the curriculum in *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families* to provide an unexpected source of inspiration. I’ve studied, taught, published, and even edited a journal on the Bible, so I tend to feel like I’ve “been there.” But *Come, Follow Me* has promoted a more serious reading of the Bible by our family and other Church members, both at church and home, than I have ever before experienced or seen. It’s encouraged us all to read and work to understand an admittedly difficult book of scripture. Our Bible is encoded in an archaic English that can make it seem like nothing but the “Isaiah chapters,” as one committed Book of Mormon reader quipped in disappointment. Sincere struggles to understand even the Bible’s basic meaning can occupy a large part of our Sunday School discussions. Occasionally, as when discussing Romans, someone has even dared ask out loud whether we can safely assume the text actually makes any sense in the first place. Seeing these frequent frustrations has shown me that we as disciple-scholars are not adequately meeting many Latter-day Saints with our work where they actually are.

One resource that *does* meet us where we are collectively is a recent translation of the New Testament by Brigham Young University’s Thomas Wayment. Several members in my ward, their King James Version (cell phone edition) in one hand and his book in the other, come ready to supply a “Wayment” rendition whenever the class gets stuck in the text. We know Church leaders at times use alternative Bible translations to clarify or pull fresh meaning out of scripture in general conference and other venues, and now Deseret Book has published a translation to help us to do the same.

Many are discovering for the first time what scholars have long known. The basic work done by a good translation is to make the Bible clear. At the same time different translations can reveal different aspects of the Bible’s message. That’s all for the good, but there are dozens to choose from. How do these different translations relate to one another and to the KJV? To the original Greek and Hebrew texts? Which ones are reliable? What does *reliable* even mean? How do we use translations effectively in our study and teaching and in a doctrinally responsible way? This year I’ve been writing a book to answer precisely these kinds of questions for Latter-day Saints. I also completed and had accepted for publication two articles to appear in the *Brill Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*.

Finally, one of my most rewarding Institute assignments has been to schedule speakers for our weekly brown bag lectures. In the past year more than forty scholars have taught and engaged us in conversations about their research on the restored Church and other religious subjects. I'm very grateful to the presenters and attendees who have given so generously of their time to make this modest forum a week-on-week success. It's become a signature Institute activity where disciple-scholars can be gathered, nurtured, and prepared to share their research and faith with broader audiences in fulfillment of our mandated mission.

NOTES

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, "The Maxwell Legacy in the 21st Century," in Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, *2018 Annual Report*, 9–21.
2. Holland, "Maxwell Legacy," 18.
3. Holland, "Maxwell Legacy," 15.

BRIAN M. HAUGLID

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, VISITING FELLOW

It has been an honor and a privilege to be a visiting fellow at the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship these past few years. Although, as of September 1, 2019, I have moved back to Religious Education, there are two publications I would like to mention that have been made possible by my time at the Maxwell Institute. Notably, fall 2019 saw the appearance of *The Pearl of Greatest Price: Mormonism's Most Controversial Scripture* (Oxford University Press), coauthored with Terryl Givens. Inspired by Terryl Givens's earlier *By The Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New Religion* (Oxford University Press, 2002), *The Pearl of Greatest Price* provides a history of the text and its component parts, its canonization, its theological contributions, and its reception. It also explores the controversies surrounding the most contested part of the Pearl of Great Price—the Book of Abraham.

In February 2020 *Producing Ancient Scripture: Joseph Smith's Translation Projects in the Development of Mormon Christianity* (University of Utah Press) will also be published. Coedited with Michael Hubbard MacKay and Mark Ashurst-McGee, this book compiles the writings of a diverse group of scholars who examine the translation activities of Joseph Smith, including the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith's Bible translation, and the Book of Abraham. The volume is inspired by a gathering of scholars on BYU campus in August 2014 under the auspices of the Maxwell Institute's Laura F. Willes Center for Book of Mormon Studies.

I am very grateful to the Maxwell Institute for assisting me in these projects, as well as in all my research and publication undertakings. Most of all, my deepest respect and heartfelt thanks go to the wonderful colleagues at the Maxwell Institute with whom I have had the opportunity to work over these past years.



KRISTIAN S. HEAL

RESEARCH FELLOW

Why religious scholarship at Brigham Young University? Hugh Nibley famously quipped that “we don’t question things at the BYU.”¹ This seems so obviously wrong that Brother Nibley must have meant something other than that we don’t ask questions. Students are constantly asking questions. They ask the practical *how*. How do things work? How do I change my classes? How do I get a good grade in this class? They ask the selective *which*. Which classes do I have to take? Which classes should I avoid? Which teachers are the best, the easiest, or the most popular on Rate my Professors? They ask the prescriptive *what*. What is required? What is the honor code? So many questions! What Nibley was suggesting, and this is especially ironic at BYU, was that the least asked question may well be *why*.

The vital importance of learning to ask why things are the way they are, and then acquiring the skills to discover good answers, is one of the key outcomes of a university education. This is also why BYU places such a premium on faculty research and why President Kevin Worthen said, “The primary aim for research at BYU is student development.”² In my own research, I think “why?” is the most potent interrogative. “How?” can produce compelling narratives. How do ancient Christians retell the story of the Old Testament patriarch Joseph? How does the Book of Mormon read other ancient texts? How did BYU end up working with the Vatican Library to preserve Syriac texts? I have asked (or been asked) these questions throughout this year, and the answers became a fireside, an article, and a book.



The goal of my research has been to identify the methods that the Book of Mormon prescribes for the reading of ancient texts. As a result of working on this project, I learned that the aphorism that you cannot write anything until you’ve read everything is false because that is predicated on an impossibility. We can’t read everything. Although it’s essential to read all you can on the discourse you intend to join, you will likely never reach a point where you’ve read enough to feel qualified to actually join that discourse. Surprisingly, this is one of the ways that my work with Dr. Kristian Heal has informed my faith: it has reinforced in me the principle that discipleship is always about attempting to do what we’re not entirely capable of doing and always looks like enacting convictions that feel too inchoate and tenuous to be concretized in the real world.

—ZACHARY STEVENSON, RESEARCH ASSISTANT

What makes each of these outcomes interesting and valuable, however, was not the answer to the question “how?” but the answer to the question “why?”

To illustrate what I have been working on this year, I want to ask and answer three *why* questions relating to my research: Why was the story of Joseph in Genesis so important for early Syriac Christians? Why did BYU spend two decades supporting a Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts? Why does the Book of Mormon talk about ancient texts?



I am a neuroscience student, but I have also been working as a research assistant to Dr. Kristian Heal at the Maxwell Institute. We've been working on a history of the Institute's recently closed Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts (CPART). This project has exposed me to an area of academia that I never expected to investigate so thoroughly. This work has greatly improved my research and writing skills in ways that will aid my primary studies and future career. I'm also quite thankful for the enhanced appreciation I now have for the interdisciplinary scholarship that made BYU and the Maxwell Institute what they are today.

—SPENCER MOFFAT, RESEARCH ASSISTANT

The story of the Old Testament patriarch Joseph (Genesis 37, 39–50) is arguably the most compelling story in the Hebrew Bible. It is beautiful, terrible, and triumphant. God's promise and presence are clearly felt. Joseph is a model of faithfulness. God's promises are sure, even though the means of their fulfillment is unexpected and seemingly frustrated. The story survives and flourishes in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic texts and traditions for all of these reasons. But this is not the main reason why the story of Joseph was so important to Syriac Christians. What made it so compelling for them is the fact that the story of Joseph was a type of the story of Jesus.

It is remarkable to see the faithfulness with which this story was read typologically and how thoroughly the early Syriac Christians believed that Jesus is found hidden throughout the Old Testament. This was the subject of my first published article,³ and I have spent part of this year revising and augmenting that article to make it a chapter in my forthcoming book on Genesis 37 and 39 in the Syriac tradition.

When I was hired by BYU in 2000 it was to work in the Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts. Not long afterward I was appointed director of the Center and served in that capacity until the Center was closed in 2017. During its twenty-one years, this center put BYU in the forefront of the digital humanities projects with ancient texts. The Dead Sea Scrolls database published by Brill (Leiden) provided hitherto unimagined electronic access to texts, images, and translations of both the nonbiblical and the biblical scrolls. Specialist digital imaging revealed texts invisible to the naked eye on scrolls found in Petra and Herculaneum. Vatican Syriac manuscripts became available to scholars around the world in new full-color digital images. The first-ever digital corpus of Syriac texts was created and published for the use of scholars and Syriac Christians around the world.

This year I have been working with a brilliant BYU undergraduate student, Spencer Moffat, to write a history of these remarkable years. That history will answer the *what* of the Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts, but it will also gesture toward the *why*. Our story as Latter-day Saints began with visions and ancient religious texts. The Book of Mormon, the Book of Abraham, and the Book of Moses all impress upon the minds and souls of the Latter-day Saints the importance of ancient religious texts in the work of the Restoration. With the Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts, BYU enacted that belief in the world. We did more than say we believed in the importance of ancient texts—we engaged, we preserved, we disseminated, and we studied. The lifespan of the Center, though brief, is a reminder to us and to the world of our values and the continued belief that there are many “great and important things” yet to be revealed.⁴

I explore this theme further in an article that I worked on this year with another brilliant BYU undergraduate student, Zakary Stevenson. We set out to tackle several questions: What does the Book of Mormon teach Latter-day Saints about reading ancient religious texts? Why are there frequent references to discovering, reading, translating, and searching ancient religious texts in the Book of Mormon? We answer these questions

under four headings: We first consider why the Book of Mormon asks that we attend to the production history of an ancient text and recognize the contribution of those who wrote, preserved, and transmitted it. Second, we observe how the Book of Mormon models the mining of ancient texts for their historical significance before reading them theologically, being willing in that process to allow an ancient text to be read with empathy, which may induce sorrow, as well as reading them to gain knowledge and induce joy (Mosiah 28:18). Third, we consider how the Book of Mormon teaches us to respect gaps in the scriptural record while at the same time recognizing that those gaps will be filled (2 Nephi 29:14). Finally, we engage with the Book of Mormon as it encourages us to not lose sight of the eschatological gathering of all texts into one great whole.

This has been an exciting year of asking interesting questions of and about ancient religious texts. It has been thrilling to work with capable students and to see just how much they are able to contribute. And it has been wonderful to do all of this at the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship in conversation with brilliant colleagues and the many bright minds who are gathered through the Institute's events and activities.

NOTES

1. Hugh Nibley, "Leaders to Managers," in *Brother Brigham Challenges the Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, UT: FARMS, 1994), 491.
2. Kevin J Worthen, "BYU: A Unique Kind of Education" (BYU University Conference, August 28, 2017), 5.
3. Kristian S. Heal, "Joseph as a Type of Christ in the Syriac Tradition," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (2002): 29–49.
4. Articles of Faith 1:9.

JANIECE JOHNSON

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

As I begin my third and final year at the Maxwell Institute as a Laura F. Willes faculty research associate, I am particularly attuned to the blessings and opportunities that have centered my experience in this unicorn-like place. The luxury of time has enabled me to make significant progress on my book project on early Book of Mormon reception as well as a number of other projects both for Latter-day Saints and for academic audiences. The Willes endowment is a great support to my work to better understand how the early Saints used the Book of Mormon in their daily practice. I am thankful to be a part of this unique fellowship of disciple-scholars at the Maxwell Institute who are united in our goals to contribute to the Saints as well as to the larger field of religious scholarship. Our shared sense of



Working with Dr. Janiece Johnson as a research assistant at the Maxwell Institute has increased the curiosity I have for knowledge outside my scope of study at Brigham Young University. As I have worked with Dr. Johnson, her influence has inspired me to be a contributing member to the academic world. Not only have my skills as a researcher increased over the last year, but so have my faith and confidence in the Book of Mormon.

—KELLI MATTSON, RESEARCH ASSISTANT



Working at the Maxwell Institute with Dr. Janiece Johnson has helped increase my understanding of the Book of Mormon and the Restoration. I have learned and enjoyed reading Restoration texts closely and identifying how the Book of Mormon impacted the lives of the early Saints. Besides gaining valuable research skills, I have developed a deeper appreciation of the testimonies and lives of the early members of the Church. Because of this opportunity to study their lives and the scriptures, I have also gained a stronger personal testimony of modern revelation and the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

—RACHEL HENDRICKSON, RESEARCH ASSISTANT



This being my first time working as a research assistant, I did not know what to expect. But my experience thus far with Dr. Johnson has exceeded whatever those expectations could have been. From the start, I could sense her total engagement in the project at hand—fleshing out early Latter-day Saint involvement with our central scriptural text, the Book of Mormon. Dr. Johnson makes certain that we understand her methodology, approach, and intended audience. As a person, she is warm and inviting. She understands the value of mixing humor with scholarly stoicism. She is a strong woman's voice for women, which is much needed today, and I feel honored to work with her at the Maxwell Institute.

—GARRETT MAXWELL, RESEARCH ASSISTANT

discipleship and willingness to wrestle with difficult questions leads to a depth of knowledge and continues to expand my own commitment to the Restoration.

My small army of research assistants has extended my abilities to consider a more substantial number of sources and broadened my view of my work. Though I miss teaching, I appreciate developing mentoring relationships with these students. With careful discussions of methodology and research approaches, we have had the opportunity to creatively consider how the early Saints demonstrate their developing relationships with the Book of Mormon. Different students are able to use their interests and unique skills to guide their research. I meet with them on a weekly basis to review their work and give them an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the project and Church history as a whole. I fully subscribe to Elder Marlin Jensen's quip that reading Church history is not the problem—*not* reading enough Church history is the problem. As we read as many of the words of the early Saints as we can get our hands on, our faith strengthens and we begin to ask different questions to more completely understand their lives as legacies to our faith. My research assistants' work has directly contributed to all of my projects this year.

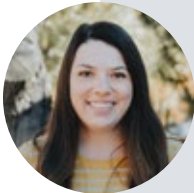
In the last year I presented papers at the Global Mormon Studies Conference in France, as well as at a number of local conferences including the Mormon History Association, the Book of Mormon Studies Association, and the Joseph Smith Papers Conference. All of these papers help my book project progress as

they contribute to different elements of the final manuscript. At my presentation in Bordeaux, I considered the intersection of religious tolerance, hierarchical support, and personally compelled individuals that enabled the earliest translations of the Book of Mormon into Danish, French, Italian, Welsh, and Hawaiian. Other papers considered how the Saints left a material record of their early Book of Mormon usage on the pages of their nineteenth-century books, how the personal writings of the early Saints demonstrate their immersion in the text, Orson Pratt's 1879 overhaul of the Book of Mormon format and chapters, and Joseph Smith's own early Book of Mormon usage. I also finished an anthology chapter that considers Lucy Mack Smith's calling as a mother in Israel, her history of her son, and its role as a sacred text.



Working for Dr. Johnson over the second half of 2019 has been an important educational, spiritual, and professional experience for me. This is my first time as a research assistant, and I have been so impressed by Dr. Johnson's mentorship. As a nursing student, I did not understand much about religious scholarship, but Dr. Johnson has been a patient and enthusiastic teacher. Her passion for research is contagious, and I feel a keen interest in the testimonies of early Latter-day Saints and their involvement in the Book of Mormon, especially in the testimonies and ministries of the women of the early church.

—BRONTË REAY, RESEARCH ASSISTANT



I am a senior student in the family history and genealogy program. My research assignment with Dr. Janiece Johnson has primarily been to conduct genealogical research on owners of nineteenth-century copies of the Book of Mormon. On a personal level, I feel deeply connected to this project. I am a convert to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and I have loved seeing how other converts reacted to the Book of Mormon. It is clear to me that they loved the scripture and tried to apply its teachings to their lives. I am thankful for the time I have had to work with Dr. Johnson at the Maxwell Institute to grow both as a student and as a Latter-day Saint.

—HAZEL SCULLIN, RESEARCH ASSISTANT

In Paris after the Bordeaux conference, I researched at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, which enabled me to better understand the earliest French editions of the Book of Mormon and their reception. I also continued my Book of Mormon research at the Huntington Library in California and the Community of Christ Archives in Missouri as I examined hundreds of nineteenth-century copies of the Book of Mormon.

This summer I also attended Rare Book School at the University of Virginia that specialized in the history of the antebellum book. The Book of Mormon was printed in the middle of the most pivotal transition period in American book history. In an intensive week, I was able to learn from the foremost scholars of American book and publishing history. This immersive experience offered me better grounding to write a reception

history focusing in part on practice and in part on the book history of the Book of Mormon. I was likewise able to establish important relationships with scholars in literary disciplines with overlapping interests that helped me to cultivate my scholarship and that will prove fruitful in the future.

My academic work contributed to presentations and writings in a number of devotional venues for the Saints. I prepared a forthcoming *Ensign* article on the wide range of different ways that early readers of the Book of Mormon were converted, wrote a personal essay for a Deseret Book compilation, and gave several local firesides and talks. In October I was invited to present the fall Women's Leadership Lecture at BYU titled "I Never Planned to Go to Divinity School: Understanding the Possibility of Your Life Mission."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell's teachings changed my life and my sense of discipleship. To be given the opportunity to further develop myself as a disciple-scholar at the Institute that bears his name has been a privilege. I will continue to build upon the foundation and relationships I've gained while at the Institute to further contribute to the academy and build the kingdom.

LAURIE MAFFLY-KIPP

NEAL A. MAXWELL AFFILIATE FACULTY

I arrived at the Maxwell Institute in January after researching and teaching about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for over twenty years. It was my first extended and full immersion in the intellectual and cultural life of Utah, and it far exceeded my expectations. I knew that the library resources in Utah would be a treasure trove for exploration, and my hours in both the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University and the Church History Library in Salt Lake City only left me hungry for more time to explore their riches. But it was, most importantly, the people at the Maxwell Institute that enriched my life and my work. Their generosity of time, their collegiality and sense of common purpose and value, and their genuine efforts to help me do the best work that I could were extraordinary. The Institute is a true gem.



I spent most of my time finishing up research for a forthcoming book-length history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as well as broader expressions of the Restoration as a global religious tradition in which I map out the contributions of missionary outreach and immigration to the growth of the Church. I devote extensive time to the faith outside the United States context but also to issues of internal transformations and the relationship to American society, broadly conceived.

During my time at the Maxwell Institute, I delivered talks at the Church History Library and Utah Valley University, as well as to the faculty seminars at the Institute and in several undergraduate courses at BYU. Alongside my archival research, the conversations I had with fellow scholars at the Institute deepened and sharpened my thinking in profound ways. I am so grateful for the time I spent there.

Kate Holbrook of the Church History Department and I codirected the "Consultation on Latter-day Saint Women in Comparative Perspective"—an enriching week of collaborative research concluding with a public conference called Women Making History. The consultation will continue through 2021.



ADAM S. MILLER

AFFILIATE FACULTY

I was honored to spend two months this summer as an affiliate faculty member at the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship at Brigham Young University. The fellowship allowed me to experience firsthand what it's like to work full time as a disciple-scholar whose mandate includes fortifying Latter-day Saints, engaging the wider world of religious ideas, and supporting my fellow disciple-scholars in an environment of deep faith and serious scholarship. I loved the experience and was deeply impressed with how, under Spencer Fluhman's direction, the Institute is realizing its commission.



As a scholar trained in philosophy and theology, I was particularly impressed with the Institute's commitment to broadening the range of disciplines invited to contribute to the realization of that vision. The Institute's work, like Latter-day Saint studies more broadly, has long been dominated almost exclusively by historians and historical questions. That work is welcome, essential, and foundational. But it is also only part of the scholarly work that needs to be done, and a philosophically informed study of our tradition's theology can help deepen and clarify Latter-day Saint beliefs for both members and scholars alike.

During my time at the Institute, my efforts were primarily focused on preparing a volume on Mormon and Words of Mormon for the Institute's new series of books, *Brief Theological Introductions to the Book of Mormon*. Theology, of course, can be practiced in any number of ways. In contemporary scholarship, systematic theologies, comparative theologies, and histories of theology tend to dominate. For my part, I practice theology as a form of "Christophysics." Taking Christ as theology's explicit end, I practice theology not as a form of history (what *did* religious people believe, say, or do?) or as a form of official dogmatics (what *should* religious people believe, say, or do?) but as a direct investigation into the fundamental forces at play in redemption. From what suffering and troubles does Christ rescue us and by what means is this rescue accomplished? What forces shape the need for and enable the realization of redemption? The urgent question at the heart of my work is always the same: exactly how, in Christ, are we saved?

Working as a Christophysicist, I primarily bring two sets of philosophical tools to bear. Grounding my theological work in scripture—in this case, primarily in the nine chapters of Mormon's book—my initial approach is hermeneutic. Hermeneutics is the work of offering very close and very careful readings of a received text. In other words, in order to generate the raw materials needed for further reflection, I begin by paying very close attention to Mormon's choice of words, to the contexts that accompany those choices, to the texts that he cites, to the themes that he emphasizes, to the history he assumes, to how he positions his readers, to the order in which he tells his story, to the underlying logic that guides his selection of what to include (or not) as part of that story, and—especially—to the larger constellations of meaning that emerge from the combination of these different elements.

Secondly, my approach is phenomenological. As a theological tool, phenomenology is primarily concerned with investigating the lived experiences revealed in or solicited by the constellations of meaning that emerge from the canonical text. What kind of world emerges from the text? What kind of structure does this world have, with what is this world populated, and what forms of life unfold in response to it? In particular, what kinds of fundamental problems (like sin, death, and suffering) structure this world and what kind of redemption is possible in relation to them?

The details gathered in my close reading of the text are used both to fill out a picture of this world and to tie that picture as tightly as possible to the shared reality of our ordinary human experiences. In this way, my approach to theology is not *about* history or doctrines. Rather, my aim is to clarify the lived experiences that these histories and doctrines are *themselves* about. For me, histories and doctrines are not the goal. They are

the raw material. When scholars—whether apologetic or critical—insist that historical questions must always take priority over theological questions, they risk insisting that Christ can or should only be approached as an artifact. They risk privileging a husk of godliness while denying the power thereof. They risk handcuffing Christ to the thin and fundamentally secular horizons of what can be historically verified. They risk, in short, bracketing Christ.

To paraphrase Ralph Waldo Emerson, my approach to theology in this book prioritizes the working assumption that God not only was but *is*, and that he not only spake but *speaks*. And so, my interest in histories and doctrines is supervened by the job of extracting from these raw materials a profile that brings Christ into sharp focus as a live power. Instead of being comprehensive or systematic, my work is targeted and pragmatic. Instead of working in the past tense, I work in the present tense. I return to the same fundamental question again and again. How, in the details of Mormon's text, is the ongoing reality of Christ's redemptive power confirmed and revealed?

I am deeply grateful for the chance to briefly join the Maxwell Institute as a research fellow and for the opportunity to contribute a volume to its trailblazing series on Book of Mormon theology. Hopefully this work will help to inspire and fortify Latter-day Saints, and hopefully, the Institute and I will continue to find ways to collaborate for many years to come.

STEVEN L. PECK

VISITING FELLOW

Working as a fellow this summer with the Maxwell Institute has been one of the most significant things I've done in a long time. While I have long been associated with the Institute—attending brown bag discussions and other events to enjoy its excellent work, in addition to publishing a book called *Evolving Faith* in their Living Faith book series—I first became directly associated in 2018 when I codirected a summer seminar there with Terryl Givens. Together we explored intriguing aspects of Church thought and history with students interested in science and religious studies. This summer I've been working with the other members of Institute, including other fellows, visiting scholars, full-time scholars, and the excellent staff. I've seen even more directly how much these women and men do in promoting our faith.

This summer I engaged in scholarship for my presentation at the Institute's symposium Beyond Choice: Agency in Interdisciplinary Perspective. I expanded that presentation into a theological paper on matter, embodiment, and evolutionary responses to what agency means in biology and in the sciences, placing it all within a context of Latter-day Saint thought. The paper draws on my scholarship in both Latter-day Saint studies and the sciences. I submitted it to the *Harvard Theological Review* and await their response. In addition, another article I wrote on science and Latter-day Saint thought entitled "Trajectories in the Evolution of Mormon Studies on Faith and Science" was published in the peer-reviewed *Mormon Studies Review*.

My fellowship with the Maxwell Institute has afforded me priceless opportunities to engage with other scholars in ways that have had a profound influence on my thought and the direction of my academic research. It is a pleasure to be a part of this organization where disciple-scholars can be gathered and nurtured in both their faith and scholarship—categories which often overlap.



JOSH PROBERT

AFFILIATE FACULTY

Over the last year, I have continued to work as a historic design consultant to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on the renovation of the Salt Lake, St. George, Manti, and Mesa Temples. The decision of Church leaders to collapse the renovation of these buildings into a short time frame instead of a ten-year time frame has quadrupled my workload and simultaneously displaced my academic writing. Despite this, I have taken on another book project—an architectural biography of the Salt Lake Temple—to be coauthored with Elwin C. Robison of Kent State University and Jacob Olmstead of the Church History Department. These able scholars and I were part of the team that wrote the historic structures report for that temple a few years ago. In anticipation of the rededication of the temple in 2024, we hope to provide a more thorough history of the temple than has ever been provided and make public as much as possible the reams of information unearthed during our research. I'm extremely thankful to the Maxwell Institute for supporting these efforts.



CATHERINE GINES TAYLOR

HUGH W. NIBLEY POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

In Latin, the question *Quem quaeritis?* means “Whom do you seek?” This question is asked by Jesus in the Gospels and is the perpetual question for those who ask, seek, and knock with an eye single to receiving, finding, and having doors and pathways opened to them. These words also efficiently express the disposition of my research and writing over the past year. As a historian of late ancient Christian art, I recognize a kind of stewardship in my work to help bring to light the consecrated and quotidian piety of the earliest Christian devotees as expressed in memorial iconography.



This year I began assisting Dr. Taylor in research concerning possible Gnostic influence on a floor mosaic at Philippopolis, Syria. Dr. Taylor presented some of this work during the Material Culture and Women's Religious Experience in Antiquity conference, hosted by the Institute. I also compiled a list of female orant figures found on sarcophagi in the south of France. Currently I've been continuing research on Gnosticism, reviewing its development as a subject of ecclesiastic and academic study. My work at the Maxwell Institute for Dr. Taylor and with the other wonderful research assistants has been some of the most rewarding of my academic career, as I've been able to encounter a breadth and depth of scholarship that motivates my own research and scholastic aspirations.

—MEREDITH HANNA, RESEARCH ASSISTANT





I am an undergraduate student at BYU and have been a research assistant for Dr. Taylor since July 2019. As her research assistant, I am finding, recording, and analyzing instances in which women are associated with transitional or liminal space in the Old and New Testaments. This project provides evidence of the unique spiritual role of women as figures that facilitate transitions between various states of being—whether that be physical, spiritual, allegorical, or personal. The woman's role as a kind of gatekeeper and guide into these transitional and liminal spaces suggests a substantial spiritual female responsibility that remains relevant today.

—SUSAN KEENAN, RESEARCH ASSISTANT

My research endeavors for the year commenced in the heart of the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library in Washington, D.C. While I was studying at the library for a week, I was able to access several dozen photographs of *orans*, or praying figures, within memorial settings and to use them as comparative images for my research. As one of Harvard University's premier libraries, Dumbarton Oaks houses a copy of the Index of Christian Art. Many difficult-to-access images of sarcophagi and several catacombs are included in the index, making it a rare and invaluable resource. Being able to visit Dumbarton Oaks was pivotal to my research, part of which resulted in a peer-reviewed chapter, "Sarcophagi," in the multivolume reference work *The Reception of Jesus in the First Three Centuries*, published by T&T Clark Bloomsbury. Additionally, my book chapter "Women and the World of the New Testament" was published in *New Testament History, Culture, and Society*. Both publications appeared in 2019.

Early spring found my efforts focused on a conference at the Maxwell Institute titled Material Culture and Women's Religious Experience in Antiquity. Co-convoked with my colleague Dr. Mark Ellison from Brigham Young University's Department of Ancient Scripture, the symposium was held on March 8–9. The first day of conference sessions featured scholars from across the country—from as close to home as BYU and as far afield as Stanford and Brandeis Universities. The second day of the conference was devoted to our very capable undergraduate student presentations, allowing the students to receive feedback from some of the top scholars in their field. Dr. Carolyn Osiek, RSCJ, was our keynote speaker. She took time to meet with BYU students and also gave a fantastic Maxwell Institute Podcast interview with Blair Hodges.

Perhaps this academic conference could have taken place anywhere—papers followed traditional academic standards, and the topics presented were overall very rigorous and insightful. Yet on several occasions, visiting scholars commented to me and Dr. Ellison about the very unique nature of BYU and the Maxwell Institute as well as the institutional and personal commitment to faith and scholarship that permeates our work here. Our intellectual life was clearly integrated with our faithful, spiritual life, and that mattered to our guests.

In addition to generating the concept of the conference, co-convoking it, and hosting guests, I presented a paper entitled "Foreseeing the Feminine Divine: Allegorical Reception and the Mosaic of *Eutekneia*, *Philosophia*, and *Dikaioσύνη* from Shahba, Syria." I connected unique household mosaic decoration with textual evidences for early Christian practices. Proceedings from the conference will be published as an edited volume with Lexington Books, a division of Rowman & Littlefield. This conference provided the backdrop for the connective experiences I am seeking to foster in both my community and with my fellow scholars.

April was the highlight of the year for me as I traveled to the south of France to examine and photograph a series of early Christian sarcophagi in and around the city of Arles. The Musée départemental Arles antique houses the largest collection of sarcophagi outside of Rome and the Vatican. I was able to access their collection as well as their archives. Additionally, I located and examined a number of sarcophagi in churches, private



Les Alyscamps cemetery in Arles, France

collections, and museums from around Provence. I have studied some of these sarcophagi in books and catalogs, but there are details and visual nuances that can only be read by seeing the artifact in person. While in France, I participated in Holy Week festivities leading up to Easter and wrote a blog post for the Maxwell Institute on Mary Magdalene and her attentiveness at the cross, the tomb, and the morning of resurrection when she became apostle to the apostles.

My research findings in France have led me to several conclusions regarding female Christian piety, practice, and authority. Women in particular had a vested interest in the act of aspirational *imitatio*, or imitation of idealized biblical narratives, in the aesthetics of death, and in the necessity of their presence in the most liminal of spaces, including the passing from life into death. These images reflect back to us the very presence of the much-neglected women I am seeking. Their voices have been long forgotten, but the iconography fostered within these ancient communities in Gaul help us to recover and restore them, and in so doing, they help us understand ourselves as part of their heritage.

Every four years the International Conference on Patristic Studies convenes at Oxford University in the month of August. My paper for the conference this year was titled “To House the Burning Heart: Sarcophagi from Arles and Women’s Strategies for Memory.” I addressed the varied interpretations of the female praying figure on sarcophagi. This year concluded with the Society of Biblical Literature conference in San Diego, where I presented a paper titled “Mourning in the Streets: Sarcophagi from Arles and the Avenue of the Dead” in the Art and Religions of Antiquity session.

My continuing fieldwork provides the primary source material for a new monographic collection of essays on these themes. My proposal for this book will be completed by the end of this year with an introduction and sample chapter to be submitted to Oxford University Press, among others. My Maxwell Institute scholar seminar in October complimented this project by bringing together conversation partners to discuss my new iconographic theories for the female *orans* figure on strigilated Christian sarcophagi. The gathering of scholars



Working with Dr. Catherine Taylor has presented me with a beautiful merging of academic rigor and spirituality. Dr. Taylor’s work on depictions of women in early Christian sarcophagi has fleshed out my understanding of early Christian belief and given useful depth to my own research on Early Modern images of female devotion. I am so grateful for the additional theoretical training I am receiving and the opportunity to present my research in an academic setting through events sponsored by the Maxwell Institute. The weekly meetings Dr. Taylor holds with her research assistants are teaching me invaluable lessons about scholarship and navigating the world of academia as a woman of faith.

—KRIS KRYSCYNSKI, RESEARCH ASSISTANT



I am currently looking at texts that present information about Early Christian banquets, especially banquet culture and connections to “liturgical” use of meals and gatherings. Through my work with Dr. Taylor, I have and will continue to expand my research, writing, and communication skills, which are vital parts of my current graduate studies and future education. Additionally, my research and discussions with Dr. Taylor and my fellow research assistants continue to strengthen my knowledge of early Christianity, providing a stepping-stone and key background information for my interest in Christian imagery.

—JOSIE ABLEMAN, RESEARCH ASSISTANT



Studying the ritualistic practices of early Latter-day Saint women and comparing them to those of early Christian women not only helps me situate myself within the broader context of what it means to be a Christian woman but also opens my eyes to important female role models that were previously unknown to me. The work I do for Dr. Taylor requires synthesizing secular historical context with deep understanding of contemporary religious practice and belief. This skill is important to me as a student of art history, and I am grateful for the opportunity to develop it under Dr. Taylor's kind and mindful mentorship.

—ALLISON FOSTER, RESEARCH ASSISTANT

who work within the parameters of late ancient Christianity at the Maxwell Institute and BYU is rather rich and remarkable. They are truly my people, and I am humbled to be in this academic community.

An equally important component of my work at the Institute includes mentoring student research assistants. The collaborative work that comes from my deeply committed assistants is truly remarkable. Research assistants have been essential to the success of my research and writing. Reciprocally, engagement with my work on early Christian women, art, iconography, and Woman Wisdom tropes as well as devotion to and with Jesus has also generated a kind of serious, thoughtful, and careful attention in the lives, work, and aspirations of my assistants. These students are seekers themselves, joined to this work by their own devoted hearts and sharp, insightful minds.

My work at the Maxwell Institute is work that changes me, and hopefully it has an effect on others as it expands and deepens our mutual understanding of early Christianity. My aim is to continue to demonstrate how early Christian women used their meaningful and necessary capacities and vocations, especially within the most liminal of spiritual spaces. Their love for and witness of Jesus marked them as true disciples and has much to teach us today as emblematic exemplars of living, loving, quickened beings in Christ Jesus, whom we also seek.

REBEKAH CRAWFORD

SHORT-TERM RESEARCH GRANT RECIPIENT

I am thankful for the amazing opportunity I had as a recipient of a short-term research grant this summer at the Maxwell Institute. I'm so excited by all the good work that is going on here. A book stipend allowed me to purchase the most recent scholarship on Latter-day Saint communities, the social determinants of health, and an organization's role in supporting mental wellness. Participating in Institute symposia and brown bags enabled me to connect to the most current theological thought. Of especial interest to me was pondering about vulnerability, woundedness, passability, and healing. The quiet office space allowed me to finish a chapter for a Routledge edited volume and to draft an article submitted to the *Journal of Applied Communication Scholarship*. The personal connections I made with fellow scholars were intangible but perhaps the most valuable part of my experience.



BENJAMIN KEOGH

SHORT-TERM RESEARCH GRANT RECIPIENT

The Maxwell Institute's visiting scholar experience was invaluable to my work. Mediating people and place, the Institute's hospitality provided opportunities not otherwise accessible. These included a dedicated space to work, a vibrant community with which to engage, and a veritable treasure trove of resources to draw upon.

Having returned home I now work as before, in bedrooms and nooks, hiding from kids, grabbing spots of quiet. Access to a space where resources were handy and periods without interruption were prolonged was a luxury. It facilitated thinking that was deep and clear. It allowed greater engagement with a wider variety of texts. It cut a path for unbroken focus. Combined, the effect was stark. I produced in two days what would often take a week—frequently more. It opened new vistas to the possible. Whetted my appetite. Experiencing the reality of the game increased my desire to play.

Clear thoughts were sharpened further by opportunities to participate. My snatched snippets in bedrooms and nooks at home are solitary. My work, largely unengaged. At the Institute this situation was reversed. There I was part of a vibrant community. Conversations were in person—immediate and ongoing, electrifying, energizing. Thoughts were sparked that occasional emails could never ignite. Trails were uncovered that sparse texts could never discover. Thinking that was deepened by space was exploded by people.

These intimate conversations were bolstered and often initiated by much more public opportunities. Presenting at the weekly brown bag allowed people to engage with my work in a manner I'd never previously experienced. This opportunity was pivotal to shaping future directions my work might take—including invitations to participate in projects that would otherwise wend their way without me.

Access to a vast library was helpful, giving me access to a reservoir of resources. The generous provision of research funds ensured that access continues to be wider than previously conceived. From it my work has been and will continue to be enriched.

This summer's Maxwell Institute experience was more than I hoped. It has nurtured this disciple-scholar. It has made my work better. It has made me better. It has opened my eyes, broadened my horizon, and provided companions for the trek.



ROSALYNDE FRANDSEN WELCH

SHORT-TERM RESEARCH GRANT RECIPIENT

It has been my privilege to spend four weeks in residence at the Maxwell Institute as a visiting scholar. Institute leadership invited me to use the time for any scholarly project that might benefit from the resources and collegiality of the Institute and its personnel. I chose to dedicate these weeks to the research and drafting of the Ether volume of the Institute's forthcoming series of Brief Theological Introductions to the Book of Mormon.

Participation in the Maxwell research community has been wonderfully productive and pleasurable. Having time and space set aside from the competing demands that scholars typically must negotiate allowed me to focus and accelerate my process. Easy



access to BYU library resources and, especially, to diverse BYU scholars enriched my research greatly. The community life built into the rhythms of the Institute allowed me to develop new personal and professional connections. Conversations with Institute scholars over lunch, at Institute events, and in the halls enriched my thinking and situated my scholarly project in new contexts. The Institute maintains a lively pace of both public and internal intellectual events, including weekly public brown bag talks on topics of interest to the wider BYU community and in-depth faculty seminars aimed at deeper engagement. It has been fantastically stimulating to participate in these events during my time here.

I'm delighted with all I was able to accomplish during my brief stay in the Institute's unique setting. The opportunity to present my work in progress at a Wednesday brown bag session was excellent motivation to formulate and polish my ideas on the book of Ether to this point. The feedback I received was encouraging and very helpful, particularly because the Institute was able to attract a diverse scholarly and nonscholarly audience to the event.

Aside from the nurturing of my personal project, my experience at the Institute as a visiting scholar has given me insight into the workings and character of the research community that will helpfully inform the guidance I'm able to provide as an advisory board member of the Institute. I'm grateful to the staff and faculty of the Maxwell Institute for welcoming me so warmly, and I deeply value all I've gained from my sojourn with the community.

NATHANIEL WIEWORA

SHORT-TERM RESEARCH GRANT RECIPIENT

I was privileged to receive a short-term research grant from the Maxwell Institute for the summer of 2019. During this period, I worked on revising my manuscript on the relationship between evangelicals and Latter-day Saints in the nineteenth century. Examining the close ties between these two groups, I hope to reveal something unexplored in the histories of anti-Mormonism, American evangelicalism, and religious intolerance. Spending several weeks at the Maxwell Institute afforded me the resources, space, and time to make significant progress on this project.

At the Institute, I had the rich resources of the BYU library, particularly the L. Tom Perry Special Collections, to engage in research that I would have been unable to do anywhere else. Access to these rich materials provided new angles and nuance to my work. Time at the Institute also put me in contact with world-class scholars who also happened to be some of the most generous people I have ever met. I enjoyed all of the weekly meetings and impromptu opportunities with the faculty of the Institute. (And experiencing the famous BYU brownies is something I won't soon forget.)

I presented some of my research at one of the Institute's weekly brown bag gatherings. I received what every author desires: kindness, generosity, and being taken seriously. The staff at the Institute provided me with everything I could need and made my time in Provo a pleasure. Working in Provo was a dream and a scholar's paradise. I am thankful to everyone there, especially Spencer Fluhman and Philip Barlow, for bringing me to the Institute.



Inspiring Learning at BYU's Neal A. Maxwell Institute

Over the past two years the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship at Brigham Young University has undergone a significant revolution. Not merely in the scholarly production of ever more faith-fortifying books, articles, lectures, and other publications, but also in the number of students gathering into our corner of the vineyard to be mentored and nourished by faithful, rigorous scholars. Notably, these students are not mere passive recipients. They also contribute their unique voices and abilities to further the Institute's mission of inspiring and fortifying Latter-day Saints in their testimonies of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and engaging the world of religious ideas.

Seventy students joined the Institute team as research assistants, communication interns, and office assistants in 2019 alone. Glimpses of some of their experiences can be found interspersed with our scholar's reports on pages 68–95.

This significant expansion of the Institute's circle of engagement was prompted by the vision of President Kevin J. Worthen, who in 2017 announced BYU's intention to provide University entities with “substantial additional funding . . . with the central stipulation that the funds be directed to students.”¹ With these precious resources, we forged ahead to fulfill BYU's call to multiply student moments of what President Worthen called “inspiring learning”:

Because we challenge faculty members to be leaders in their fields of research and because we also ask them to be faithful in the gospel, BYU faculty members provide living examples of the power of learning by study and by faith. Students can first see, then work with, and eventually emulate role models who have demonstrated that they can excel in both their fields and their faithfulness.²

The Reverend Dr. Andrew Teal of Pembroke College, Oxford, witnessed this remarkable process firsthand when he visited BYU in April at the invitation of Elder Jeffrey R. Holland. During his whirlwind tour, Dr. Teal sat in on the Institute's first annual Inspiring Learning Seminar, where scholars and research assistants gathered to discuss their ongoing research—highlighting discoveries, discussing challenges, and speaking of their faith. He expressed gratitude at witnessing the “remarkable” seminar where “scholars have invited young people to find faithful ways to fall in love with scholarship under their tutelage”:





The Institute seems to have created a community of proper conversation, informed by a spirit of reciprocity. I was impressed to see the scholars expressing gratitude to their students, telling them “I was really grateful to be able to entrust my writing to you, to hone, to reflect upon, to give feedback to.” The academy can be quite hierarchical in so many ways, but here we see students and scholars learning together, creating the beginnings of lifelong connections. And that is absolutely worth celebrating! I don’t mean to embarrass them, but the scholars with whom these students work have obviously been extraordinary examples and inspirations to them. And the influence runs both ways.³

Spencer Fluhman said the gathering was one of the most thrilling things he has witnessed since becoming executive director of the Institute in 2016:

The kind of exchange you’ve experienced and modeled for us today, in both its generosity and rigor, is central to the Institute’s purposes. The way you are willing to be challenged intellectually and spiritually, and the way you’ve grappled with what you’ve learned—this is not easy to do. And the faithful courage you’ve modeled here—learning from seasoned scholars but being willing to add your own voice—that kind of faith, rigor, and courage, when it’s shared in community, is a lot like love. Thank you for your willingness to contribute to a place we all love—here at the Institute, and the University, and the Church, and throughout the broader connections we’re endeavoring to forge.⁴

In our ongoing work with the remarkable students of Brigham Young University, the Institute is striving to fulfill President Worthen’s hope that “we can make each of our classrooms a place of inspiring learning, a place in which students become excited about learning and in which that learning leads to revelation.” Restoration scripture describes this process as learning “by the spirit of truth.” When our scholars and students seek to “understand one another . . . both are edified and rejoice together” (Doctrine and Covenants 50:17–24). Our students are crucial partners in fulfilling the vision described by President Dallin H. Oaks: “The work of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship must be genuine and pervasive—as broad as the spiritual interests of the children of God, as faithful as eternal truth, and as bright as the light of truth that is in us.”⁵

NOTES

1. Kevin J Worthen, “Inspiring Learning” (University Conference address, August 22, 2017, <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/kevin-j-worthen/inspiring-learning>).
2. Worthen, “Inspiring Learning.”
3. Unpublished transcript of Reverend Dr. Andrew Teal’s concluding remarks at the 2019 Inspiring Learning Seminar.
4. Unpublished transcript of Spencer Fluhman’s concluding remarks at the 2019 Inspiring Learning Seminar.
5. Dallin H. Oaks, unpublished remarks at the event celebrating the naming of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, April 26, 2006, 5.

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Academic Programs & Events

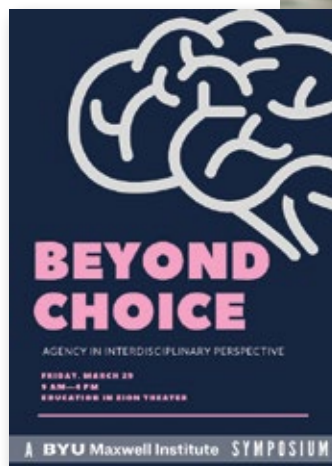
CONFERENCES, SYMPOSIA, & SEMINARS

BEYOND CHOICE: AGENCY IN INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE (MARCH 2019)



PARTICIPANTS

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Philip Barlow, *Neal A. Maxwell Institute*
Ryan Davis, *Brigham Young University*
Deidre Green, *Neal A. Maxwell Institute*
Charles W. Nuckolls, *Brigham Young University*
Carl Griffin, *Neal A. Maxwell Institute*
Steve Peck, *Brigham Young University*





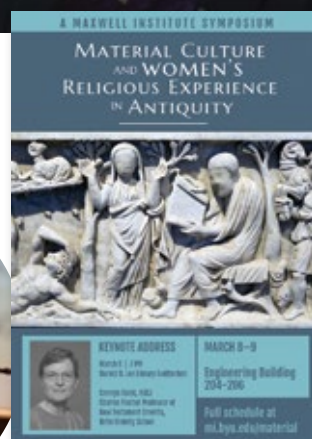
MATERIAL CULTURE AND WOMEN'S RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE IN ANTIQUITY (MARCH 2019)

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Krystal V. L. Pierce, *Brigham Young University*
 Elizabeth B. Tracy, *Independent scholar*
 Sari Fein, *Brandeis University*
 Sarah Madole Lewis, *City University of New York*
 Kerry Hull, *Brigham Young University*
 Catherine Gines Taylor, *Neal A. Maxwell Institute*
 Spencer C. Woolley, *University of Utah*
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 Isabel Moreira, *University of Utah*
 Carolyn Osiek, RSCJ, *Brite Divinity School*
 Jonathon Riley, *Trinity Western University*
 Amanda Colleen Brown, *Brigham Young University*
 Meagan Anderson Evans, *Brigham Young University*
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THE BOOK OF MORMON: BRIEF THEOLOGICAL INTRODUCTIONS SEMINAR (APRIL 2019)

PARTICIPANTS

Spencer Fluhman, *Neal A. Maxwell Institute*
 Jim Faulconer, *Brigham Young University*
 Kristine Haglund, *Independent scholar*
 Joseph Spencer, *Brigham Young University*
 Rosalynde Welch, *Independent scholar*
 Terryl Givens, *Neal A. Maxwell Institute*
 Deidre Green, *Neal A. Maxwell Institute*
 Sharon Harris, *Brigham Young University*
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 Mark Wrathall, *University of Oxford*
 Kimberly Berkey, *Loyola University Chicago*
 Daniel Becerra, *Brigham Young University*
 Adam Miller, *Collin College*
 Philip Barlow, *Neal A. Maxwell Institute*
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 Sandra Shurtleff, *Neal A. Maxwell Institute*
 Blair Hodges, *Neal A. Maxwell Institute*

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MAXWELL INSTITUTE STUDENT RESEARCH ASSISTANT SEMINAR (APRIL 2019)

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Ryder Seamons
Britta Adams
Samantha Miller
Savannah Clawson
Sarah Matthews
Rachel Hendrickson
Jessica Mitton
Amelia Campbell
Hazel Scullin



WOMEN MAKING HISTORY (JUNE 2019)

PARTICIPANTS

Ann Braude, *Harvard Divinity School*
Hasia Diner, *New York University*
Melissa Inouye, *University of Auckland*
Kate Holbrook, *Church History Library*
Colleen McDannell, *University of Utah*
Laurie Maffly-Kipp, *Washington University in St. Louis*
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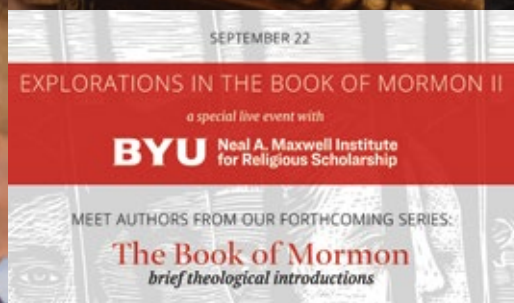
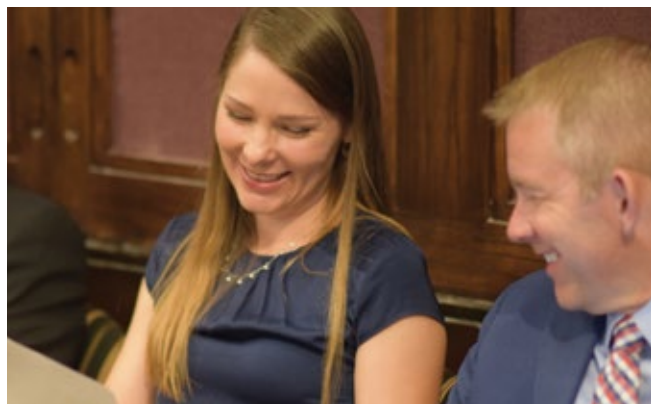
EXPLORATIONS IN THE BOOK OF MORMON (JULY, SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER 2019)

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 Terryl Givens, *Neal A. Maxwell Institute*
 Joseph M. Spencer, *Brigham Young University*
 Mark Wrathall, *Oxford University*
 Sharon J. Harris, *Brigham Young University*
 Kylie Nielson Turley, *Brigham Young University*
 James E. Faulconer, *Brigham Young University*
 Kimberly Berkey, *Loyola University Chicago*
 Daniel Becerra, *Brigham Young University*
 Deidre Green, *Neal A. Maxwell Institute*
 Adam Miller, *Collin College*
 David Holland, *Harvard Divinity School*

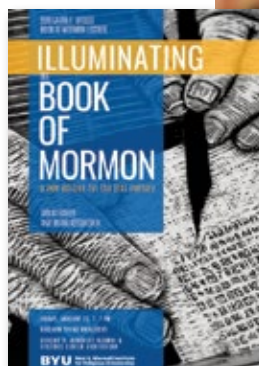
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BIENNIAL LAURA F. WILLES BOOK OF MORMON LECTURE

GRANT HARDY AND BRIAN KERSHISNIK, "ILLUMINATING THE BOOK OF MORMON: A NEW EDITION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY," JANUARY 25, 2019





ANNUAL NEAL A. MAXWELL LECTURE

TERRYL L. GIVENS, NEAL A. MAXWELL INSTITUTE,
 "APOLOGETICS AND DISCIPLES OF THE SECOND SORT,"
 NOVEMBER 16, 2019





MAXWELL INSTITUTE SCHOLAR & GUEST LECTURES

- Brian M. Hauglid (Brigham Young University) and Robin Scott Jensen (Church History Department), “A Window into Joseph Smith’s Translation: Exploring the Book of Abraham Manuscripts,” *January 11, 2019*
- Tisa Wenger (Yale University), “Religious Freedom: The Contested History of an American Ideal,” *February 13, 2019*
- Xi Lian (Duke Divinity School), “Opposing Totalitarianism in the Name of God: Lin Zhao’s Martyrdom in Mao’s China,” *March 12, 2019*
- George B. Handley, “Humanities and Belief: Reflections on the Call to Faithful Scholarship,” *April 30, 2019*
- Melissa Inouye, “Making Zion: Insights on Living with Contradictions from a Latter-day Saint Scholar,” *June 11, 2019*
- David Charles Gore, “Equality versus Self-Indulgence in the Book of Mormon,” *September 12, 2019*
- David Walker, “Saints, and Other Western Wonders: Tourist Interests in the Railroad Age,” *October 10, 2019*
- Quincy D. Newell, “Afflicting the Comfortable: Jane James, American Racism, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” *October 18, 2019*

OTHER EVENTS COSPONSORED BY THE MAXWELL INSTITUTE

- Faith in a Secular Age symposium, *March 2019, Brigham Young University*
- FairMormon Conference, *August 2019, Provo, Utah*
- 30th Anniversary of the Dedication of the BYU Jerusalem Center conference, *October 2019, Brigham Young University*
- Stewardship and Consecration: LDSSA Conference, *October 2019, Yale University*
- The Choice to Believe lecture series, with Terryl Givens, *October–December 2019, Brigham Young University*
- 2019 Book of Mormon Studies Conference, *October 2019, Utah State University*
- Guest lecture, Fabrizio D'iozzi, “The Herculaneum Papyri in 2019: The History and Current State of the World’s Most Ancient Library,” *October 2019, Brigham Young University*
- Missionary Interests: Protestant and Latter-day Saint Missions in the 19th and 20th Centuries conference, *November 2019, Salt Lake City, Utah*
- Guest lecture, Margaret Bendroth, “New Life from Old Stories: Faith and Scholarship in Anxious Times,” *November 2019, Brigham Young University*



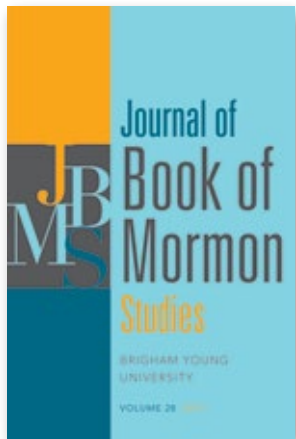
BROWN BAG

Each Wednesday, faculty and visiting scholars from the Maxwell Institute, Brigham Young University, and other friends gather in an informal setting to discuss new research ideas, publications, and presentations. Brown bag sessions allow scholars to workshop their own research and to peek over the fence at what other disciple-scholars are working on.



Publications

PERIODICAL

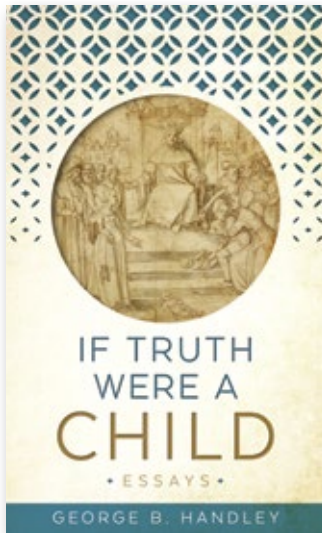


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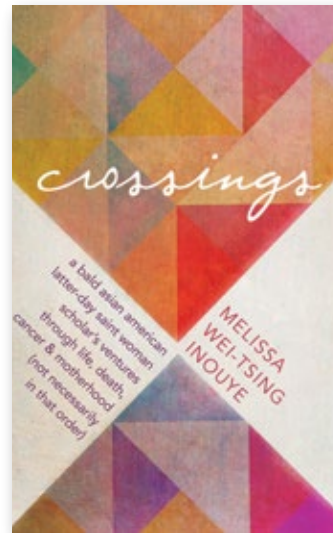
Editor in chief Joseph M. Spencer, Brigham Young University. • *Associate editors* Matthew Bowman, Henderson State University; Amy Easton-Flake, Brigham Young University; Jacob Rennaker, John A. Widtsoe Foundation; Andrew Smith, Brigham Young University; Rosalynde Welch, Independent scholar • *Book review editor* Janiece Johnson, Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship

LIVING FAITH SERIES



IF TRUTH WERE A CHILD: ESSAYS

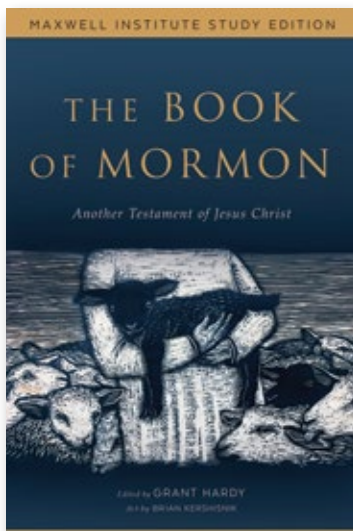
George B. Handley
(April 2019)



CROSSINGS: A BALD ASIAN AMERICAN LATTER-DAY SAINT WOMAN SCHOLAR'S VENTURES THROUGH LIFE, DEATH, CANCER & MOTHERHOOD (NOT NECESSARILY IN THAT ORDER)

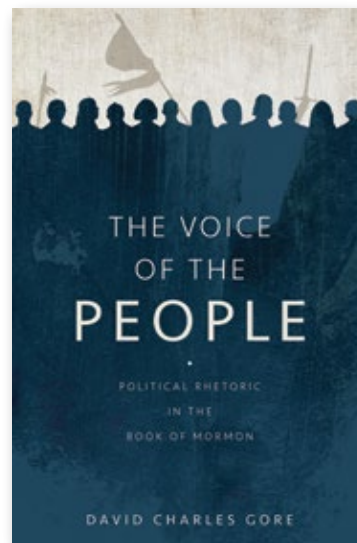
Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye
(June 2019, with Deseret Book)

OTHER BOOKS



THE BOOK OF MORMON: ANOTHER TESTAMENT OF JESUS CHRIST (MAXWELL INSTITUTE STUDY EDITION)

Grant Hardy, ed., Brian Kershnik, artist
(January 2019, with BYU Religious Studies Center and Deseret Book)



THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE: POLITICAL RHETORIC IN THE BOOK OF MORMON

David Charles Gore
(August 2019)

Maxwell Institute Media Outlets

MAXWELL INSTITUTE PODCAST

The Maxwell Institute Podcast plugs listeners directly into the Institute's ongoing discussions of scholarship and faith. Guests in 2019 included Catherine Cornille, Colleen McDannell, Grant Hardy, Brian Kershnik, Tisa Wenger, Robin Jensen, Brian Hauglid, Carolyn Osiek, Devan Stahl, Munorwei Chirovamavi, Neil Cudney, Katie Steed, Christopher Rajkumar, Andy Calder, John Swinton, Topher Endress, Jill Harshaw, Shelly Christensen, Barbara J. Newman, Bill Gaventa, Spencer Fluhman, Xi Lian, Andrew Teal, Joseph Spencer, Terryl Givens, and Catherine Taylor.

The Faith Matters Foundation cosponsored more episodes of "Maxwell Institute Conversations," featuring Terryl L. Givens interviewing Thom Wayment, Thomas Wirthlin McConkie, Samuel Brown, and Rosalynde Welch.

The Maxwell Institute Podcast is freely available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Play, Stitcher, YouTube, mi.byu.edu/mipodcast, and on a variety of other podcasting apps.



Executive producer J. Spencer Fluhman • *Host, editor, producer* Blair Hodges • *Assistant editor* Colin Stuart •
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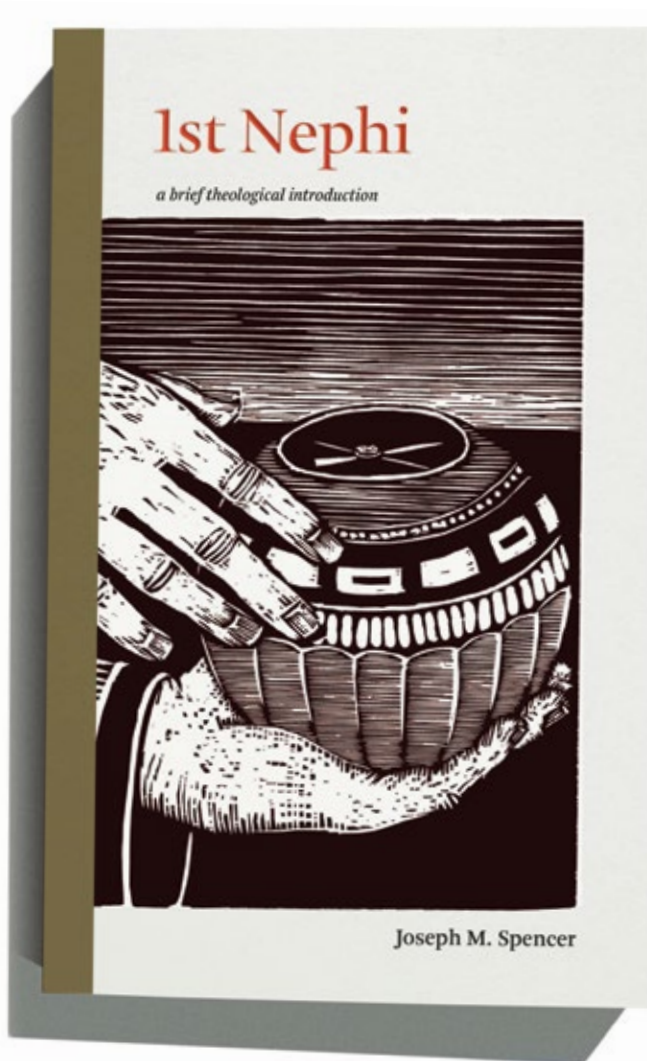
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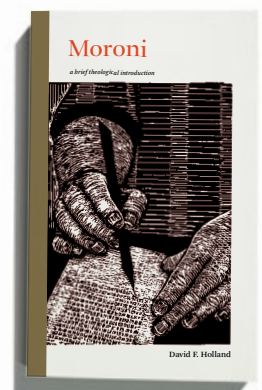
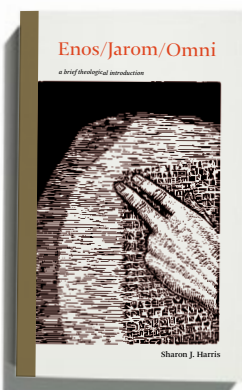
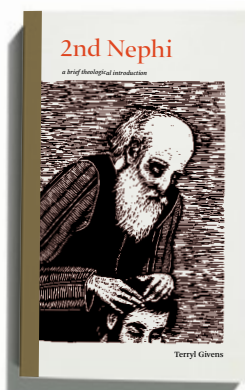


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Page 4. J. Spencer Fluhman.

Page 7. J. Spencer Fluhman at BYU's Karl G. Maeser Building. Photo by Rebekah Baker, BYU Photo.

Page 8. BYU entrance sign. Photo by Nate Edwards, BYU Photo.

Page 11. Clyde Engineering Building. Photo by Nate Edwards, BYU Photo.

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Page 16. John Gilbert. Courtesy of Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Page 17. Book of Mormon, 1830, pp. 74–75, The Joseph Smith Papers, [josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/book-of-mormon-1830/80](https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/book-of-mormon-1830/80).

Page 18. Book of Mormon, 1879, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

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Page 20. *The Holy Bible, New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 509.

Page 21. Grant Hardy, *The Book of Mormon: A Reader's Edition* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 76–77 (top) and p. v (bottom).

Page 22. Royal Skousen, *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 91.

Page 23. Grant Hardy. Photo by Blair Hodges.

Page 24. *NRSV Standard Bible* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 216.

Pages 25–27. Grant Hardy, ed., *The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ (Maxwell Institute Study Edition)* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship; Religious Studies Center; Deseret Book, 2019), 71–73.

Page 33. Brian Kershnik woodcuts originally published in Grant Hardy, ed., *The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ (Maxwell Institute Study Edition)* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship; Religious Studies Center; Deseret Book, 2019).

Page 34. Brian Kershnik presenting the 2019 Laura F. Willes Book of Mormon Lecture. Photo by Blair Hodges.

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Back cover: President Dallin H. Oaks of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Photo courtesy of Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

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"The work of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship must be genuine and pervasive—as broad as the spiritual interests of the children of God, as faithful as eternal truth, and as bright as the light of truth that is in us."

—PRESIDENT DALLIN H. OAKS

