ANNOUNCING THE COMPLETE COLLECTED WORKS OF HUGH NIBLEY

On March 31, 1985, Hugh Nibley will celebrate his 75th birthday. "The time has come," says Gary Gillum, "to compile and publish the Complete Collected Works of Hugh Nibley." F.A.R.M.S. is pleased to announce that arrangements for this significant publication have now been made. This monumental series will be jointly published by Dr. Nibley, F.A.R.M.S. and Deseret Book Company, with the cooperation of Bookcraft and others. This series culminates six F.A.R.M.S. projects involving the Nibley collection, including the Nibley bibliography, archive, reprint service, topical index, source index, and scriptural index.

Hugh Nibley, one of the most prolific LDS scholars on ancient history and the scriptures, has written extensively over the past 45 years. His Collected Works, which will comprise 13 to 16 volumes, will be topically arranged to permit easy reference. The topics include Ancient History, Old Testament and Apocrypha, New Testament and Early Christianity, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, Education, Politics and Society. It is hoped that the Old Testament volume will be published in time for use with the Sunday School Gospel Doctrine lessons on the Old Testament in 1986. The entire set is expected to be completed in five years.

This publication is an ambitious project, yet one which will preserve the Nibley corpus and make it available to generations of readers for decades to come. Anyone interested is assisting with editing, footnote checking, or otherwise, please contact the F.A.R.M.S. office (378-3295). Making a donation in honor of Dr. Nibley's birthday is another way you might want to help.

The F.A.R.M.S. Archive will continue to make each Nibley paper available on an individual mail order basis. A new 1985 catalog of Nibley materials is now available. Use the enclosed order form if you are interested in getting one!
F.A.R.M.S. makes many fine Doubleday books available to you at discount prices. The last Newsletter announced that Charlesworth's second volume of the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha was available. Unfortunately, final publication has been delayed until later this year. Watch for another notice when it comes off the press.

In the meantime, another Doubleday volume may interest Book of Mormon students: John Bright's work on Jeremiah in the Anchor Bible Series. Jeremiah is of special interest to Book of Mormon studies. He was a prophet in Jerusalem at the time of Lehi. He is mentioned prominently in the Book of Mormon. Like Lehi, he testified of Jerusalem's wickedness and prophesied of its destruction (Hel. 8:20). He was cast into prison for his preaching (1 Ne. 7:14).

John Bright, a highly respected Hebrew historian at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, gives you here a modern translation of the Book of Jeremiah. His very valuable introduction includes a great deal of interesting information about Jerusalem at the time of Lehi.

The Book of Jeremiah and Professor Bright's commentary show that Lehi must have had enormous courage to preach repentance in Jerusalem. Only a few years before Lehi was called to preach, the local priests had insisted that Jeremiah be executed for preaching that Jerusalem would be destroyed. Jeremiah escaped death only through the intervention of a powerful political figure. Another prophet named Uriah, who made the same prophecies, was not as lucky: King Jehoiakim had him killed. Interestingly, Professor Bright reflects, "One wonders how many lesser men in Judah shared Jeremiah's feelings and spoke as he did. Not many, perhaps—but some!" (p. 170).

Jeremiah retails for $18.00, but may be ordered through F.A.R.M.S. for only $14.50. Use the attached order form.

NOTICE

Our new 1985 catalogue of F.A.R.M.S. materials should be ready in a few weeks.

John Sorenson's book on Mesoamerica and the Book of Mormon should be available in April, 1985.

Work on the Jewish Festivals Project, the Benjamin's Speech volume, our office and research computerization, and many other projects is moving ahead steadily. We hope to complete many of these in 1985.

The narrow neck of land is an important geographical feature in the Book of Mormon. For many years people have debated whether the narrow neck was the Isthmus of Panama, the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Southern Mexico, or somewhere else. Some have argued that the neck must have been very narrow, because Alma 22:32 says that the distance across the "narrow neck" of the promised land from the east to the west sea was "a day and a half's journey for a Nephite." But how wide could this distance have been? Recently analyzed information suggests that it could have been quite wide indeed.

First, since the Limhi explores (Mos. 8:7-8; 21:25-26) passed through this narrow neck without knowing that they had done so (they thought they were still in the Land of Zarahemla), this warns us that it must be of some substantial width.

Second, we also know that some people can go a long way in a day and a half. For example, a new BYU Media Productions film "Tarahumara: Footrunners Live On," describes a northwest Mexican Indian group who call themselves the Ramamuri (footrunners). Some of them have been known to run 500 miles in six days, and to return that distance after a day's rest. Even more, the book Ultra-Marathoning, the Next Challenge (by Tom Osler and Ed Dodd, Mountain View, CA: World Publications, Inc., 1979) documents such accomplishments as Captain Barclay's covering 100 miles in 19 hours in 1806, and Edward Weston's walking 500 miles in six days. The record for the greatest distance traveled on foot in 24 hours was set in 1973 by Ron Bentley of Great Britain--161 miles. Since the Nephite record says that it was a day and a half's journey for a Nephite, we might infer that this was a significant feat and that it would have taken longer for someone else.

Moreover, the isthmus itself may have been wider than the "day and a half's" distance since we cannot be sure that the measuring point began on the east at the sea. Alma says that it was a day and a half's journey from "the east" to the west sea. The journey may have begun some distance inland.

Obviously, we don't yet know how wide the narrow neck was, but these figures show that it could have been a substantial distance. 120 miles is the width of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, which is now accepted by almost all Book of Mormon scholars as the Nephite narrow neck of land.
Ancient Book (BYU Studies and Book of Mormon Authorship), asserts that these items unquestionably show that “the Book of Mormon has a demonstrable compatibility with the ancient Near Eastern origin which it claims.” Dr. Griggs thus challenges simple-minded explanations of the Book of Mormon as a mere product of Joseph Smith and 19th Century New England.

(4) We Have Some Questions

Between 1972 and 1984, the Ensign printed 17 short features under the heading “I Have a Question” dealing with the Book of Mormon. For your convenience, these are all collected into a single reprint. Here you will find answers by LDS scholars to questions such as: Does the Book of Mormon bear any relationship to the Solomon Spaulding manuscript? Why is so much of the Book of Mormon given over to military accounts? What does the word Lamanite mean? In what way is the Book of Mormon the “most correct book”?

(5) Warfare in Ancient Mesoamerica

David A. Palmer’s paper on Warfare in Nephite America documents three main causes of war in the Book of Mormon: economic advantage, political power struggles, and religious antipathy. He also discusses the role of war captains, sieges, battles by appointment, militias, and fortifications, with respect to both the scriptures and Mesoamerican archaeology. This is an important look at one of the major aspects of the Book of Mormon—one that heretofore has received little scholarly attention.

(6) The World Around the Time of Lehi

This technical report is a valuable but highly detailed reference tool. Robert F. Smith give brief descriptions, with source references, on all the Kings of Israel of Judah, from 793 B.C. to 445 B.C., prominent figures contemporary with them, the prophets of Israel for the same period, and a wealth of raw data in the form of facts and figures. In John Sorenson’s estimation, this “gives us a thoroughly up-to-date structure of the historical framework to set the stage for the beginning of the Book of Mormon.” The report also includes an appendix giving the latest information about what was going on in Arabia at the time Lehi travelled there.

(7) Subtle Pattern for Jacob to Amaleki

The authors of the last couple of books on the Small Plates of Nephi are often passed over: Jarom, Omni, Amaron, Abinadom, Amaleki. At first glance, it seems that these writers were delinquent in their record keeping duty. But on close inspection, John Welch’s report analyzing “The Father’s Command to Keep Records in the Small Plates of Nephi” shows that these writers were all precise and careful about one thing: they all dutifully discharged the specific obligations given by Nephi’s command as recorded in Jacob 1:1-4. “Modern readers should not underrate these little books.” is one conclusion of this study.

F.A.R.M.S. TOURS

The F.A.R.M.S. June 1984 Tour to Guatemala and Southern Mexico was the finest Book of Mormon travel experience offered that year. The 1985 tour, departing June 17, for 16 days, will be even better. This unique tour focuses on those sites most likely occupied by Book of Mormon people. The itinerary is spectacular.

6/17 Oaxaca (Land of Moron)
6/18 Monte Alban, Mitla, Dainzu
6/19 Tapachula, Izapa, Antigua, Guatemala
6/20 Lake Amatitlan (Land of Shemlon)
6/21 Guatemala City, Kaminaljuyu (City of Nephi)
6/22 Lake Atitlan (Waters of Mormon)
6/23 Comitan (Manti, headwaters of River Sidon)
6/24 San Cristobal Las Casas
6/25 Tuxtla Gutierrez (Land of Zarahemla)
6/26 Chiapa de Corzo, Grijalva River (River Sidon)
6/27 Palenque, Villahermosa
6/28 LaVenta (City of Mulek), Lake Catemaco
6/29 C erro Vigia (Hill Ramah/Cumorah), Puebla
6/30 Mexico City
7/1 Mexico City, Teotihuacan

This will be the first tour to take John Sorenson’s An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon along as a handbook. Many other supplementary maps, slide presentations, and transcribed lectures will add color and interest. The knowledgeable hosts will be F.A.R.M.S. Manager Kirk Magleby and archaeologist Bruce Warren. Dr. Warren lived for several years in Southern Mexico. Kirk has traveled through this area over a dozen times.

A $200 deposit is now required to reserve your space on this exciting departure. Write F.A.R.M.S. or call Kirk or Shannon Magleby at (801) 756-4763 for further information. The deadline for reserving a place on this tour is May 15, 1985.

The Book of Mormon tour to Israel for 1985 has not carried. Watch for this one again in 1986.
F.A.R.M.S. has recently forged an agreement with the World Group, an LDS owned travel organization headquartered in Simi Valley, California. F.A.R.M.S. will supply them with credible Book of Mormon research information which, combined with their travel expertise, will create outstanding travel opportunities for people of all budget and interest levels. This is an exciting new development in Book of Mormon travel and learning experiences.

World Group is looking for tour directors. Anyone interested should contact Dean Christensen in St. George, UT, at 801-673-5885. Or, you can contact the World Group office at 800-635-4200 outside CA or 800-358-4200 inside CA.

F.A.R.M.S. IN THE NEWS

F.A.R.M.S. has two orientations: One is to do the academic scriptural research; another is to distribute those results as widely and inexpensively as possible. The recent addition of Sue Bergin to the F.A.R.M.S. staff as Coordinator of Public Relations has enhanced that second effort immensely. Like most people working with the Foundation, Sue puts in long hours as a volunteer because of her love for the scriptures.

Sue’s recent media campaigns for F.A.R.M.S. have proven very successful. “There’s a lot of interest out there for the kind of things F.A.R.M.S. is doing,” she reports. A feature article sent to 56 Utah daily and weekly newspapers and 17 LDS-oriented publications in 7 states and Belgium has been printed by many of them. A full illustrated page in the Church News Section of the Ogden Standard Examiner ran in December.

She has written a major article on F.A.R.M.S. for the February issue of BYU Today, which has a circulation of 180,000 and is sent to BYU alumni throughout the world. She now hopes to interest some national publications in doing an article about F.A.R.M.S. and current Book of Mormon research. She recently got a story on the national AP wire.

Sue has a master’s degree in journalism from Northwestern University and is a writer for BYU’s Public Communications office and BYU Today, specializing in science writing. A native of Provo, she returned to her hometown last year after five years of school and work in Salt Lake City, Ogden, Chicago, and Washington, D.C.

VOLUNTEERS STILL NEEDED

F.A.R.M.S. is always open to volunteers. There is an ongoing need for translators and for local volunteers to promote Book of Mormon projects in your community. Just drop us a note.

TELL YOUR STORY

It is apparent that the Book of Mormon means more to us that just paper and ink. This sacred volume has figured remarkably, and miraculously, in the profound spiritual experiences of thousands of people. “This aspect of the Book of Mormon’s presence needs to be recorded,” says Don Norton, Professor of English at BYU, who specializes in helping people write their personal histories. Don feels so strongly about this that he is now collecting people’s moving spiritual stories involving the Book of Mormon. Do you have such a story? Do you know someone else, or have an ancestor who does?

Don is gathering fifty or sixty of these stories. He would like to hear from as many people as possible. If you would like to help this project along, please drop Don a note by April 30, 1985. His address is 3161 JKKB, BYU, Provo, UT 84602. Or you can give him a call at (801) 378-7452.

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F.A.R.M.S. membership philosophy is really quite simple. F.A.R.M.S. will mail The Insights Newsletter to anyone who maintains an active interest in scripture studies, so long as they contribute time, money or talent to the research effort. By making the request, you or anyone you designate will be added to the mailing list and automatically receive four issues of the Newsletter.

We call our affiliates participants because the substantial research job that needs to be done will require the dedicated participation of large numbers of individuals from all walks of life.

We earnestly encourage voluntary contributions of time and money and urge all to share their research, questions and ideas. Whether you are a scholar, philanthropist, Sunday School teacher or whatever, we simply ask that you participate in an appropriate manner to help promote scripture-related research.

Let us hear from you!

F.A.R.M.S.

The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (F.A.R.M.S.) is a non-profit charitable corporation organized to promote, coordinate, and finance research on Mormon scriptures, particularly the Book of Mormon. Your contributions are tax-deductible. F.A.R.M.S.' purposes are (1) to identify, sponsor, and coordinate research on Mormon scriptures by qualified scholars both in and out of the Church; (2) to make valuable materials available to researchers and the general Church membership that might not otherwise find publication in existing outlets or that may be in periodicals not readily available; (3) to eliminate duplication by communicating as widely as possible reports on research in progress and by encouraging interdisciplinary efforts; (4) to raise money to promote and finance these purposes; and (5) ultimately to use tapes, films, magazines, documentaries, and other presentations to communicate the results of careful scholarship in a way that a mass audience can understand. F.A.R.M.S. does not intend to minimize the need for faith in the Book of Mormon but wishes to increase the understanding of the Book of Mormon to help it come truly to life.

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