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Title Editor's Introduction: A Tidy Garden

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Abstract Building on the metaphor of a garden, Midgley introduces the reviews and articles of this issue; he deals specifically with geographical issues, in particular the Heartland model.

Editor's Introduction

A TIDY GARDEN

Louis C. Midgley, Associate Editor

When Daniel C. Peterson began what is now known as the *FARMS Review*, he indicated that his plan was to provide a venue for carefully written reviews and genuinely competent commentary on the literature being produced in what he called “the garden of Book of Mormon studies.”¹ “We hope,” he added, “for a plenteous harvest, but weeds must be recognized for what they are. Where there is shoddy writing or shallow reasoning we hope to point it out.”² He also indicated that “the garden of Book of Mormon studies will produce more abundantly and healthily if its gardeners and consumers are adept at distinguishing edible plants from weeds.”³ Subsequently the *Review* has, of course, morphed into something even more ambitious,⁴ but attention to the Book of Mormon has not slackened.

We are not, Professor Peterson insisted, engaged in *proving* to a skeptical world that the Book of Mormon is true. Such proof is, he correctly maintained, “probably impossible, and almost certainly inconsistent with the noncoercive plan of salvation adopted before this

1. See Daniel C. Peterson, “Introduction,” *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 1 (1989): ix.

2. Peterson, “Introduction,” ix.

3. Peterson, “Introduction,” ix.

4. The original title was *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*. A gradual enhancement of the content of this journal signaled the change in 1996 to *FARMS Review of Books*, which better reflected its expanded scope and contents. In 2003 the title was shortened to *The FARMS Review*.

world was.”⁵ What ultimately both warrants the dedication of the Saints to the Book of Mormon, and hence grounds our own deepest convictions, is the work of the Holy Spirit. This can and does happen if and only if we are willing to yield to its importuning. Since we have received the book, we search for a deeper comprehension of and fidelity to its contents and messages, both of which we believe the Lord has graciously given to us to drive our deeds and save our souls.

In 1989 Professor Peterson argued (correctly, I believe) that it is our solemn duty to be both willing and ready to state our reasons and thereby make our defense to anyone who demands from us an accounting for the hope that is within us (1 Peter 3:15).⁶ We are thus enjoined to respond as well as we can to criticisms of the Book of Mormon and the faith that identifies us and gives our lives meaning and direction. Our endeavors, to borrow an old formula, fit nicely under the rubric “faith seeking understanding.”⁷

Nourishing the Seed

Those responsible for the *Review*, including those who supervise or operate the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, are eager to see improvement in the literature published on the Book of Mormon. We welcome readings of the Book of Mormon if they can be shown to yield genuine fruit rather than weeds. We have sought to set in place a venue for, among other things, some vigorous yet disciplined weeding and pruning in an effort to promote and improve this literature. “We hope,” as Professor Peterson has indicated, “for a plenteous harvest, but weeds must be recognized for what they are. Where there is shoddy writing or shallow reasoning, we hope to point it out. Not that we necessarily enjoy doing so—although on those rare occasions where there is dishonesty or bad faith, it is a positive if not altogether saintly pleasure to draw attention to it.”⁸ Subsequently, Professor Peterson has proved himself adept at both exposing and col-

5. Peterson, “Introduction,” vii.

6. Peterson, “Introduction,” vii.

7. This is an English translation of *fides quaerens intellectum*, which was fashioned by Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109).

8. Peterson, “Introduction,” ix.

lapsing some of the bizarre opinions advanced by critics of the Book of Mormon and those hostile to Joseph Smith and his entire legacy.

We cannot, of course, shy away from responding to apparent weaknesses in the literature on Mormon things. Weeding the garden of Mormon studies is especially troublesome when it is necessary to address the work of fellow Latter-day Saints. Doing this, given the norms that must regulate the community of Saints, is a painful necessity—one that we seek to accomplish in a courteous, accurate, and yet forthright manner. We much prefer advancing the conversation by publishing and otherwise drawing attention to what we see as important additions to the growing store of literature with which the Saints ought to be familiar. We believe there are many avenues for understanding the Book of Mormon, and all are welcome if they genuinely bear good fruit. Professor Peterson has also indicated that “although this *Review* will not hesitate to point out bad work, we will enjoy much more the opportunity to draw attention to things that have been done well.”⁹ This is true, of course, for treatments of our other scriptures.

A Plenteous Harvest

In this issue of the *Review* we are pleased to include a portion of the preface to a remarkable new book by John W. Welch on the Sermon on the Mount.¹⁰ Our intention is to promote this fine book. George Mitton¹¹ introduces the excerpt from Welch’s *The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple* as well as Gaye Strathearn’s review of this fascinating new study.¹²

We have included an essay by John Tvedtnes responding to a common sectarian claim that Joseph Smith was guilty of plagiarism. Readers will also find in this issue an essay by Steven Olsen on a prominent theme in the Book of Mormon.¹³ This essay is a portion of

9. Peterson, “Introduction,” ix.

10. See John W. Welch, “From the Preface to *The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple*,” in this issue of the *Review*.

11. See George L. Mitton, “Basic New Perspectives on the Sermon on the Mount,” in this issue of the *Review*.

12. See Gaye Strathearn, “A Unique Approach to the Sermon on the Mount,” in this issue of the *Review*.

13. See Steven L. Olsen, “Prospering in the Land of Promise,” in this issue of the *Review*.

a much larger and, I believe, important study of a network of crucial themes found in the keystone of our foundational scriptures.

Our Book Notes often draw attention to books that we believe would be helpful for Latter-day Saints to consult. One examines Matthew Brown's recent study of what is known about the initial visionary experience of Joseph Smith.¹⁴ We also draw attention to a fine history of Christian theology by Roger Olson and Adam English¹⁵ and to Olson's candid history of evangelical theology.¹⁶ Both of these "pocket" books were written by competent evangelical scholars who are not in thrall to an Augustinian or Reformed worldview. Daniel C. Peterson reviews two fine studies: Grant Hardy's fruitful literary analysis of the Book of Mormon¹⁷ and William Hamblin and David Seely's book on Solomon's temple and its influence on religious imagination, culture, architecture, art, and more through the ages.¹⁸ The last volume in Hugh Nibley's collected works, *One Eternal Round*, the culmination of his research on the Book of Abraham, is also reviewed.¹⁹

Some Unavoidable Weeding

We revisit Reverend Ross Anderson's *Understanding the Book of Mormon*²⁰ with essays by Ben McGuire²¹ and Robert Boylan,²² who

14. See George L. Mitton, review of *A Pillar of Light: The History and Message of the First Vision*, by Matthew B. Brown, in this issue of the *Review*.

15. See Louis Midgley, review of *Pocket History of Theology*, by Roger E. Olson and Adam C. English, in this issue of the *Review*.

16. See Louis Midgley, review of *Pocket History of Evangelical Theology*, by Roger E. Olson, in this issue of the *Review*.

17. See Daniel C. Peterson, review of *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader's Guide*, by Grant Hardy, in this issue of the *Review*.

18. See Daniel C. Peterson, review of *Solomon's Temple: Myth and History*, by William J. Hamblin and David Rolph Seely, in this issue of the *Review*.

19. See Louis Midgley, review of *One Eternal Round*, by Hugh Nibley and Michael D. Rhodes, in this issue of the *Review*.

20. See review of *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Quick Christian Guide to the Mormon Holy Book*, by Ross Anderson, in *FARMS Review* 21/1 (2009): 234–37.

21. See Ben McGuire, "Understanding the Book of Mormon? He 'Doth Protest Too Much, Methinks,'" review of *Understanding the Book of Mormon*, by Anderson, in this issue of the *Review*.

22. See Robert Boylan, "On Not Understanding the Book of Mormon," review of *Understanding the Book of Mormon*, by Anderson, in this issue of the *Review*.

expose flaws in this effort to persuade readers not to take the Book of Mormon seriously.

In addition, John Gee surveys the various meanings associated with the Greek word *charis*, which in the New Testament is usually translated as “grace.”²³ He finds that the word is hardly ever attributed to Jesus of Nazareth but turns up, instead, mostly in the writings associated with the apostle Paul. Gee demonstrates that *charis* has a much wider semantic range than commonly attributed to it in contemporary conservative Protestant circles, or than was attributed to it by Martin Luther (1483–1546) or John Calvin (1509–1564) and much earlier by Augustine (354–430). This is significant since a key element—some say the one key on which the Reformation either stands or falls—is contained within the formula “justification by *grace* through faith *alone*.” A better understanding of the range of meaning associated with *charis* seems to open the possibility that some of the more belligerent opining that the Saints face from contemporary conservative Protestants—that is, Fundamentalist-style countercultists as well as much more sophisticated evangelicals—is grounded in part on a misunderstanding of a key Greek word.

Gee provides support for my own argument that the Book of Mormon teaches that our discipleship begins as we take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ in a symbolic rebirth at baptism, and hence make a covenant in which we solemnly promise to keep the commandments, as well as consent to open ourselves to the mercifully purging, cleansing, sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, as we strive in both deeds and words to become genuine Saints.²⁴ What must then follow our initial oath and covenant is described in the Book of Mormon as a subsequent baptism of the Holy Spirit (or of fire) in which we are gradually transformed from being sensual, devilish, and carnal by our merciful, forgiving God. In the final

23. See John Gee, “The Grace of Christ,” in this issue of the *Review*. In this essay, Gee builds on and extends the material he initially set out in his review of Robert Millett’s *By Grace Are We Saved* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1989). See Gee’s comments on this book in the *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 2* (1990): 100–106.

24. See Louis Midgley, “The Wedding of Athens and Jerusalem: An Evangelical Perplexity and a Latter-day Saint Answer,” *FARMS Review* 21/2 (2009): xxxiii–xxxix.

judgment, if during our mortal probation we remain true and faithful, we can confidently hope to be justified by a just God, who is also merciful and forgiving. This understanding, of course, flies in the face of the common sectarian idea that we are justified in our sins the moment we confess Jesus.

Crackpottery about Geography

Knowing where the events described in the Book of Mormon took place could and perhaps does help illuminate the meaning of some passages in the Book of Mormon and thereby feed our faith. A good test of whether a Book of Mormon geography is fruitful is its capacity to open our understanding of aspects of the text. However, all such efforts must be tentative and open to later refinement, revision, or qualification. Unfortunately, many and perhaps most of the books written on Book of Mormon geography do not yield a deeper understanding; they also tend to lack appropriate caution and modesty.²⁵ Some authors even eschew the host of cultural and geographical clues found in the Book of Mormon and, instead, impose problematic or even unwarranted notions on the text; they have engaged in some bizarre, wooden, poorly grounded, and highly factious speculation on Book of Mormon geography.

In an effort to remedy this regrettable situation, the *Review* provides a venue for genuinely competent critical assessments of the growing shelf of speculation on Book of Mormon geography. For example, in the first issue of the *Review*, Richard Hauck's effort to locate a geography for the Lehites in a portion of Mesoamerica²⁶ received trenchant criticism in an important essay by John Clark entitled "A

25. These efforts can be contrasted with Brant Gardner's *Second Witness: Analytical and Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2007). Instead of trying to find the Book of Mormon in Mesoamerica, Gardner reverses the direction; he seeks to find Mesoamerica in the Book of Mormon. Doing this, he argues, opens up the meaning of the text.

26. F. Richard Hauck, *Deciphering the Geography of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988).

Key for Evaluating Nephite Geographies.”²⁷ Clark demonstrates the necessity of drawing on all of the many direct and subtle geographical clues found in the Book of Mormon to construct what he calls an “internal map.” Only when this has been carefully fashioned should one begin looking for a real-world location for the Lehites. There are, however, those who begin by picking a favorite location like Japan, the Baja, New York or the area around the Great Lakes, Mesoamerica, or places in South America and then start looking for language in the Book of Mormon to support their hunches. Brushing aside crucial geographical information on directions, distances, and other relevant geographical clues in the text is a fatal mistake.

Despite the fact that some partisans insist that everyone they associate with the Maxwell Institute has a dogmatic ideological commitment to a Mesoamerican setting for the Book of Mormon, the *Review* began with essays pointing to the defects in one such theory.²⁸ We have always urged caution and modesty, as well as strict fidelity to the host of geographical clues found in the Book of Mormon, in dealing with efforts to locate the events described therein.

The prize for the most bizarre effort to fix a geographical setting for the Book of Mormon must go to what might actually be a joke—a theory that the Book of Mormon took place in Africa (specifically Abyssinia).²⁹ Others have tried to place the events depicted in the

27. See John Clark, “A Key for Evaluating Nephite Geographies,” review of *Deciphering the Geography of the Book of Mormon*, by F. Richard Hauck, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 1 (1989): 20–70. See also, in the same issue, William Hamblin, “A Stumble Forward,” 71–77, another review of Hauck’s book.

28. See Michael J. Preece, review of *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*, by Joseph L. Allen, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 3 (1989): 32–51. See also Brant A. Gardner, “With What Measure?” review of *Mesoamerica and the Book of Mormon: Is This the Place?* by John Lund, *FARMS Review* 21/2 (2009): 153–67.

29. Embaye Melekin, *Manifestations Mysteries Revealed: An Account of Bible Truth and the Book of Mormon Prophecies* (self-published, 2000). See Michael R. Ash, “Lehi of Africa,” *FARMS Review of Books* 13/2 (2001): 5–20, for comments on this bizarre bit of nonsense.

Book of Mormon on the Malaysian Peninsula,³⁰ in Peru,³¹ in western New York,³² and in an area beginning in the south in Panama and including the area from Texas to Florida and farther north, as well as in the entire Caribbean, which its author actually insists was dry land and hence had Lehitites living where there is now an enormous ocean.³³ A survey of this literature might yield the conclusion that there are a few toadstools in the garden of Book of Mormon studies. Fortunately, however, these theories have not garnered much attention among the Saints. There is thus no urgency or perhaps even necessity to address them in the *Review*. In addition, we have chosen not to evaluate opinions circulated on DVDs or merely posted on Web sites or sold through the travel industry catering to Latter-day Saints.

In one notable instance dealt with earlier in the *Review*, Wayne May, the author of a series of self-published books entitled *This Land*,³⁴ has been offering as “proof” for the Book of Mormon the so-called Michigan artifacts, which are apparently fakes, in an effort to advance a Great Lakes Book of Mormon geography.³⁵

30. Ralph Austin Olson, *A More Promising Land of Promise: For the Book of Mormon Prophecies* (self-published [Vivid Volumes], 2006). See also Olson’s essay entitled “A Malay Site for Book of Mormon Events,” *Sunstone*, March 2004, 30–34. Olson is a retired chemistry professor at Montana State University and, unlike Melekin, is not joking.

31. George D. Potter, *Nephi in the Promised Land: More Evidences That the Book of Mormon Is a True History* (Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, 2009). By placing the geography of the Book of Mormon in Peru, Potter seems to be following in the footsteps of Arthur J. Kocherhans, *Lehi’s Isle of Promise* (Fullerton, CA: Et Cetera, 1989). For a response, see James H. Fleugel’s review in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 3 (1991): 96–100. An earlier version of the argument that the Book of Mormon took place in Peru can be found in Venice Priddis, *The Book and the Map: New Insights into Book of Mormon Geography* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1975).

32. See W. Vincent Coon, *Choice Above all Other Lands: Book of Mormon Covenant Lands According to the Best Sources* (Salt Lake City: Brit Publishing, 2008), for a version of this theory.

33. See Peter Covino Jr., *A Promised Land, the Land of Promise, the Land of Ancient America: A Nephite Perspective*, ed. Vince and Kim Covino and Heidi Luekenga (Meridian, ID: Alpha Publishing, 2006).

34. Wayne N. May’s three-volume *This Land* series appeared in 2002, 2004, and 2005. He published these books under the Ancient American Archaeology imprint.

35. See Brant A. Gardner, “This Idea: The ‘This Land’ Series and the U.S.-Centric Reading of the Book of Mormon,” *FARMS Review* 20/2 (2008): 141–62, for a survey of

The Beginnings of a New Movement—A “Heartland Model”

More recently, DVDs have been circulated, rallies held, and tours conducted selling the idea that there is compelling DNA evidence for the truth of the Book of Mormon, an effort linked to something like Wayne May’s version of a Great Lakes geography and including the fake Michigan artifacts. One center for this new “movement”³⁶ is a business venture known as the Foundation for Indigenous Research and Mormonism Foundation (or FIRM Foundation).³⁷ This is not a scientific or historical research institution but rather a *firm* that markets what is dubbed a “Heartland” Book of Mormon geography (or “Heartland Model”) by selling at sales rallies products such as DVDs, tours through the travel industry that caters to Latter-day Saints, patriotic paintings, encounters with relics, and most recently two books.³⁸

grave problems clinging to May’s effort to use the Michigan artifacts as “proof” for the historical authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

36. On 9 June 2010, two items appeared on a new Web site entitled “The FIRM Foundation,” accessible at www.firmlds.com (accessed 2 July 2010). Under the heading “Further Evidence of a ‘Heartland’ shift,” it was reported that “even the most avid supporters of Mesoamerican models now admit that the Heartland Model Book of Mormon geography has become a movement sufficient to warrant their utmost attention and concern.” This item was immediately followed by a heading announcing “Heartland Model declared a ‘movement.’” This was followed by the claim that “both LDS and non-LDS people are now officially calling the ‘Heartland Model’ research a ‘movement’ within the membership of the Church!” These claims were based on two newspaper reports, cited on the organization’s webpage, calling attention to the fact that some Heartland disciples claim that there is a new “movement” that will, they believe, soon sweep through the Church of Jesus Christ and radically transform the opinions of the Saints concerning the Book of Mormon and other matters.

37. See “Book of Mormon Evidence” at www.bookofmormonevidence.org (accessed 2 July 2010).

38. See Rod L. Meldrum, *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon Remnant through DNA* (Honeoye Falls, NY: Digital Legend, 2009); and Bruce H. Porter and Rod L. Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises: The Book of Mormon and the United States of America* (New York: Digital Legend, 2009). The latter volume has been issued in two somewhat different versions, identified as either “First Printing: Oct 2009 (V5)” or as “Third Printing: Dec 2009 (V6)” on the publication pages of these editions. The reason for two closely published editions is that, it seems, those at Deseret Book insisted that changes be made to V5, which resulted in V6. It is not clear whether the presumably offending edition continued to be sold at Deseret Book outlets until the supply was exhausted.

Much like what we have done with other amateur, ephemeral efforts to locate a place for the events described in the Book of Mormon, the editors of the *Review*, along with others at the Maxwell Institute and after a careful review of an initial set of DVDs sold by the FIRM Foundation, decided not to challenge this ideology unless it was set out in printed form, which is now the case. We were aware that the Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research (FAIR)³⁹ had undertaken an exhaustive examination of the new Heartland geography and had offered the author the opportunity to address FAIR's concerns and objections before posting them on its webpage.⁴⁰ If no books setting out Heartlander beliefs had been published, we would not have commissioned essays responding to this new geography and its related ideology.

The Heartland ideology rests on the assumption that there must necessarily be DNA proof for the Book of Mormon and that in fact such proof is now available that places the Lehi colony in the area around the Great Lakes—now dubbed “Heartland”—which is also believed to be the promised land for both the Lehites and their remote descendants. Heartlanders downplay or even brush aside the host of geo-

39. See www.fairlds.org. FAIR is a nonprofit endeavor by a large group of volunteers to explain and defend the faith of the Saints. They do this by answering questions, making available accurate information on puzzling and controversial issues, and by holding an annual conference.

40. For the results of the careful examination of the Meldrum's stance by a group of FAIR volunteers, see “Misguided Zeal and Defense of the Church,” at www.fairlds.org/Book_of_Mormon/MisguidedF.html (accessed 28 June 2010). For a PDF version, see www.fairlds.org/Book_of_Mormon/MisguidedF.pdf (accessed 28 June 2010); for an “Executive Summary,” see www.fairlds.org/Book_of_Mormon/MisguidedS.html (accessed 28 June 2010). Meldrum worked briefly on a degree in marketing at Utah State University. Subsequently, among other entrepreneurial endeavors, he “was President and CEO of High Country Gourmet in Orem, Utah,” which sold a dehydrated soup mix to those anxious about the Y2K scare. “More recently he was Director of Business Development for Interact Medical,” which sells electronic “training systems for surgeons and patients in the medical device industry.” In addition, he “served as senior scientific researcher for 7 years on a natural science book to be published in the near future.” This 1200-page university-level text “will be the culmination of over 12 years of research.” His role as “researcher . . . on a university-level text” seems to have involved fashioning a young earth creationist/anti-evolution ideology. All quoted material above is found in “About the Author” in Meldrum's book *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon Remnant through DNA*, v.

graphical clues in the Book of Mormon in favor of what is considered proof that the promises to the remote descendants of the Lehites must now be known solely through DNA. The Heartland must necessarily be located only in the United States of America, where it is claimed there is now compelling evidence of their existence, and hence not in Central and South America or in the islands of the Pacific.

When this Heartland business was launched in 2007, no attention had been given to the work of competent LDS geneticists, who had demonstrated that, given the current state of DNA research, it is not at all likely that the maternally inherited DNA markers brought by the Lehi colony to the New World could have survived being inserted into a much larger population.⁴¹ Hence the competent LDS response to a claim made by two dissident Latter-day Saints that research on the DNA of Native Americans disproves the Book of Mormon⁴² is that at this point such research simply cannot address the question of whether there have been small insertions of peoples into a much larger population, even if one could be at all confident of the genetic marker one was looking for. But Heartland advocates eschew such findings since they do not yield a DNA proof for the Book of Mormon. Heartlanders insist that there must be DNA proof for a Lehi colony in the New World. In addition, they insist that not having such proof

41. See Daniel C. Peterson, ed., *The Book of Mormon and DNA Research* (Provo, UT: Maxwell Institute, 2008), especially the chapters by John M. Butler, "Addressing Questions surrounding the Book of Mormon and DNA Research," 71–78; Michael F. Whiting, "DNA and the Book of Mormon: A Phylogenetic Perspective," 79–97; and David A. McClellan, "Detecting Lehi's Genetic Signature," 99–155. See also Kevin L. Barney, "A Brief Review of Murphy and Southerton's 'Galileo Event,'" www.fairlds.org/Book_of_Mormon/Brief_Review_of_Murphy_and_Southerton_Galileo_Event.html (accessed 28 June 2010); and the extensive review at http://en.fairmormon.org/Losing_a_Lost_Tribe:_Native_Americans,_DNA,_and_the_Mormon_Church (accessed 28 June 2010).

42. Thomas W. Murphy, "Lamanite Genesis, Genealogy, and Genetics," in *American Apocrypha: Essays on the Book of Mormon*, ed. Dan Vogel and Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 47–77; Thomas W. Murphy and Simon G. Southerton, "Genetic Research a 'Galileo Event' for Mormons," *Anthropology News* 44/2 (February 2003): 20; and Simon Southerton, *Losing a Lost Tribe: Native Americans, DNA, and the Mormon Church* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004).

makes it impossible to scientifically identify a remote remnant of the Lehites to whom the Book of Mormon stands as a prophetic witness.

The Heartlander ideology consists of the claim that there is DNA proof for the Book of Mormon that settles the question of where the events described in that text took place. This premise is then supplemented with the additional assumption that all the events in the New World depicted in the Book of Mormon must have taken place in the United States, not in Central (or South) America. The Heartland Model is a Great Lakes–centered Book of Mormon geography,⁴³ versions of which have already been assessed in considerable detail in the *Review*.⁴⁴

A Trendy Jingo Geography

Heartland disciples are thus led to believe that the prophetic promises as set out in the Book of Mormon for the eventual blessing of the remote remnant of the Lehite colony are strictly limited to some of the indigenous peoples currently living in the northeastern United States.⁴⁵ If this is true, then those indigenous peoples living elsewhere, including south of the U.S. border or on the Pacific islands, cannot genuinely claim the promises offered to the future remote and now very heavily genetically mixed descendants of Lehi. Instead,

43. The Lehites thus are pictured in the Heartland ideology as either identical to or closely related to those Native Americans who built the extensive mounds scattered around the area in which Joseph Smith lived. This is also one of the favorite explanations for the Book of Mormon fashioned by its earliest critics, who sometimes claimed that Joseph had fashioned fiction to explain those mounds. There is, however, evidence in the Book of Mormon of urban centers, fortifications, towers, temples, and so forth, but little or nothing to suggest anything like the mounds that so fascinated early European settlers. But the Heartland Model points only to those elaborate mounds.

44. See, for example, John E. Clark, “The Final Battle for Cumorah,” review of *Christ in North America*, by Delbert W. Curtis, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/2 (1994): 79–113; Clark, “Two Points of Book of Mormon Geography: A Review,” review of *The Land of Lehi*, by Paul Hedengren, *FARMS Review of Books* 8/2 (1996): 1–24; and especially Clark, “Evaluating the Case for a Limited Great Lakes Setting,” *FARMS Review of Books* 14/1–2 (2002): 9–77.

45. Heartland partisans do not indicate whether they have in mind the United States as it was originally, as it was when the Book of Mormon was recovered, or as it is presently constituted, which would include Alaska, Hawaii, and other insular territories currently under the hegemony of the government of the United States of America.

Heartlanders seem to hold that the prophetic promises mentioned in the Book of Mormon are extended only to the indigenous peoples now living in the United States. This seems to also explain some of the appeal of the Heartland political ideology. This new jingo geography makes up for its lack of coherence with a stirring appeal to those who, in troubled times, insist on seeing the flag waved.

Following the Brethren

It is not at all well known, but on Saturday, 25 May 1903, a group of Latter-day Saints held a two-day “Book of Mormon Convention” at the Brigham Young Academy in Provo, Utah. Those who attended included President Joseph F. Smith, his counselor Anthony H. Lund, local church and community leaders, students, and apostles John Henry Smith, Reed Smoot, Hyrum M. Smith, Charles W. Penrose, and Orson F. Whitney, as well as Elders B. H. Roberts and Seymour B. Young of the Seventy. During the afternoon session of the first day, “the meeting was devoted to the consideration of the location of the lands and cities inhabited by the Nephites after landing on this continent.”⁴⁶

President Joseph F. Smith, at the close of the Saturday session, gave sound prophetic counsel that the location of Book of Mormon sites “was one of interest certainly,” but if such sites could not be located, it “was not of vital importance, and if there were differences of opinion on the matter it would not affect the salvation of the people; and he advised against considering the question of such vital importance as are the principles of the Gospel.” At the end of the conference, President Smith again “cautioned . . . against making . . . the location of cities and lands of equal importance with the doctrines contained in the book.” Exactly nothing was said about Joseph Smith knowing the place in which the Book of Mormon took place. And the Brethren subsequently declined to identify the location on this continent of

46. “Book of Mormon Convention,” *Provo Daily Enquirer*, Saturday, 23 May 1903, also quoted in “Where Was Zarahemla?” *Provo Daily Enquirer*, Monday, 25 May 1903. Essentially the same news report was published under the title “Book of Mormon Students Meet,” *Deseret Morning News*, Monday, 25 May 1903, p. 9. All subsequent quotations are found in both accounts. Matthew Roper deserves full credit for identifying these items.

the events described in the Book of Mormon. Geographical issues are, of course, interesting, but they are clearly of much lesser significance than the messages it contains. Heartland advocates grant that “the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has made no official statement on the geography of the Book of Mormon; that is a well known fact.”⁴⁷ But Heartlanders insist that Joseph Smith knew by special divine revelation exactly where the events depicted in the Book of Mormon took place.⁴⁸ If so, it follows that the Brethren have made a serious mistake when they have indicated that the question of where the Book of Mormon took place in the New World is neither settled nor crucial, and hence must remain open to genuinely competent scholarly inquiry. The Brethren seem inclined to allow others to tidy the garden of Book of Mormon scholarship.

Heartland advocates do not claim, as some theorists once did and perhaps may still do, that the Book of Mormon is the history of all the pre-Columbian inhabitants of the American continent. There are, of course, no longer reasonable objections to efforts by Latter-day Saint scholars to place the events described in the Book of Mormon in a limited geographical area or to see other peoples in the Americas besides those migrations mentioned in it. There are, however, as I will demonstrate, good reasons not to limit the prophetic promises given by Lehi and others merely to the boundaries of the place where the events described in the Book of Mormon actually took place, wherever that might have been.

47. Porter and Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises*, first page of the preface in both version 5 and 6.

48. “This book,” according to the Heartlanders, “is dedicated to the historically documented position that the Prophet Joseph Smith did, indeed, have much knowledge and insight into the geographical setting for the Book of Mormon and that he did actually claim inspiration for numerous statements he made in that regard” (Porter and Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises*, version 6, p. 95). “Joseph Smith was not a confused bystander in the unfolding to our view the realities of ancient America and Book of Mormon historicity, indeed he was the leading expert on those events certainly regarding the general whereabouts of the Book of Mormon saga and as we have seen in some cases, the exact location of certain events.” They also insist that, “in contrast to the confusion and perplexity that has dogged this subject over the ensuing years, Joseph himself was clear and concise in his declaration of inspiration and in his knowledge of the geographical setting for the Book of Mormon” (p. 120).

Dismay at a Miasma

Heartlanders seem to restrict blessings to the distant remnants of the Lehites who now live in the United States of America, and perhaps even to what they describe as the “Heartland,” and also to those who carry the X2a genetic marker. There are numerous objections to such an ideology. One can easily find solid evidence that many thousands and perhaps even hundreds of thousands of faithful Latter-day Saints currently living outside the continental boundaries of the United States have appropriated the prophetic promises set out in the Book of Mormon. Are they mistaken, or have they been deceived? The Brethren have for a long time embraced the concept that indigenous peoples throughout the Americas, as well as in some of the islands in the Pacific, may rightfully consider themselves for covenant reasons to be, in some way not fully understood, authentic descendants of Lehi.

Evidence of this can be found in many temple dedicatory prayers in Mexico and farther south on the American continent and even in the Pacific. For example, President Heber J. Grant, on 27–30 November 1919, when he dedicated the Laie Hawaii Temple, the first LDS temple outside continental America, thanked God “that thousands and tens of thousands of the descendants of Lehi, in this favored land, have come to a knowledge of the gospel, many of whom have endured faithfully to the end of their lives.”⁴⁹ Later, when the Hamilton New Zealand Temple—the first one in the South Pacific—was dedicated by President David O. McKay on 20 April 1958, he expressed to God his own “gratitude that to these fertile Islands Thou didst guide descendants of Father Lehi.”⁵⁰

A Final Note

We have attempted in this issue of the *Review* to tidy a portion of the garden of Book of Mormon studies by including Gregory Smith’s

49. This prayer can be accessed at www.ldschurchtemples.com/laie/prayer (accessed 28 June 2010).

50. This prayer can be accessed at www.ldschurchtemples.com/hamilton/prayer (accessed 28 June 2010).

examination of the array of “scientific” claims found in *Remnant through DNA*.⁵¹ His conclusion is that there is much confusion and garbled science in that publication. In addition to Smith’s review essay, Ugo Perego provides an astute unraveling of the Heartlander claim that a maternally transmitted genetic marker—a mutation (known as X2a) of the older marker called X—provides DNA proof of Lehites in the New World.⁵² These two essays thus demolish the claim that a mutation of that marker now identifies a remnant of the Lehi colony. Smith and Perego demonstrate that X simply cannot mark the spot.⁵³

Editor’s Picks

Although always a difficult task, we hereby undertake to assign levels of merit to the books that are reviewed in this issue of the *Review*.

This is the scale that we use in our rating system:

- **** Outstanding, a seminal work of the kind that appears only rarely
- *** Enthusiastically recommended
- ** Warmly recommended
- * Recommended

And now for the results:

- **** Hugh Nibley and Michael D. Rhodes, *One Eternal Round*
- **** John W. Welch, *The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple*
- **** Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader’s Guide*
- *** William J. Hamblin and David Rolph Seely, *Solomon’s Temple: Myth and History*

51. See Gregory L. Smith, “Often in Error, Seldom in Doubt—Rod Meldrum and Book of Mormon DNA,” in this issue of the *Review*.

52. See Ugo A. Perego, “The Book of Mormon and the Origin of Native Americans from a Maternally Inherited DNA Standpoint,” in this issue of the *Review*.

53. Neither Greg Smith nor Ugo Perego argues for a Mesoamerican location for the Lehi colony in the New World. In addition, while I believe that a Mesoamerican location is by far the most plausible, I have never addressed this topic in anything I have published, and this is, I also believe, true for my colleagues George Mitton and Daniel C. Peterson.

** Matthew B. Brown, *A Pillar of Light: The History and Message of the First Vision*

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