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A Book to Bring the World to Christ

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Abstract: Speaks of the distribution of the Book of Mormon, and gives testimonial accounts of missionaries and converts who have felt the power of the Book of Mormon. Missionaries who use the Book of Mormon in their proselytizing efforts have great success.

So many burning testimonies have come through the Book of Mormon that it can honestly be said this is . . .

A BOOK TO BRING THE WORLD TO CHRIST

*by Joel Richards**



THE HILL CUMORAH

Art by Ed. Maryon.

In June, 1907, while German E. Ellsworth was presiding over the Northern States Mission, he visited the Hill Cumorah with Elder George Albert Smith of the Council of the Twelve. Standing on the hill, President Ellsworth heard an unseen voice say: "PUSH THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE RECORD TAKEN FROM THIS HILL. IT WILL HELP TO BRING THE WORLD TO CHRIST."

I heard President Ellsworth relate the above incident at a meeting of the mission presidents and general authorities of the Church in the Salt Lake Temple, March 31, 1948. I had been president of the Northwestern States Mission for only three and a half months and had just inaugurated a new lesson plan centered around the Book of Mormon; we used this book instead of tracts to approach new contacts, as the missionaries went from door to door seeking investigators. The testimony of President Ellsworth struck a responsive chord in my heart, and I felt sure we were on the right track in pushing distribution of the Book of Mormon.

Subsequent experiences and testimonies of our missionaries confirmed that the promise made on the Hill Cumorah was being fulfilled in our mission

(For Course 8, lesson of October 27, "How Does the Holy Ghost Help Us?"; for Course 14, lessons of December 8 to 29, "The Book of Mormon"; for Course 16, lesson of December 29, "Man's Part in Revelation"; for Course 26, lesson of November 3, "Prayer Is the Soul's Sincere Desire"; for Course 28, lesson of October 6, "Discern the Things of God"; for Course 30, lessons of October 13 and November 3, "A New Witness for Christ" and "Divinity of the Book of Mormon"; to support family home evening lesson 9; and of general interest.)

under this new plan. Our convert baptisms increased in about the same ratio as the number of copies of the Book of Mormon distributed. In the first full year of the operation of this program, convert baptisms increased over 250 percent—from 400 to over 1,000. Our missionaries were energetic and enthusiastic in their work, and they grew to love the Book of Mormon because they were getting results. It was thrilling to read the weekly reports of their experiences and the many testimonies of investigators who were reading the Book of Mormon and attending weekly cottage meetings.

Testimonies

Two of our elders told of leaving a Book of Mormon with a lady and then having to make several calls back before finding her home again. When they

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finally contacted her, she said: "I know the Book of Mormon is true just from the peace and comfort it has brought into our home." Four months later she was baptized.

When the elders called back on one man with whom they had left a Book of Mormon, he said: "We have some mighty smart men in the world today, but no one is smart enough to write a book like that."

A 70-year-old lady who was reading the Book of Mormon was asked what she thought of it. Her eyes filled with tears, and she couldn't speak for a few minutes. Then she told how much joy she had gained from reading and studying this book. She asked to be baptized as soon as the elders felt she was ready.

One elder told of being prompted by the Spirit to call at a certain house with his companion, on their way to their tracting district. They were warmly received by the lady of the house, who said she had been anxiously waiting for them to call. She showed them a copy of the Book of Mormon her husband had found in a tubfull of old books he bought at an auction sale. They had been reading the Book of Mormon together, and they knew it was true.

Burning the Book of Mormon

A Methodist minister used to invite his parishioners to bring to revival meeting their unwanted religious books to be burned, claiming the Bible contained "all the word of God." After his conversion to the Church through the Book of Mormon, he was invited to speak at a branch meeting. He held up a Book of Mormon and bore this testimony:

"I thank God for this new revelation, even if in days gone by I used to pour oil on copies of this book and burn them. I hope the Lord will forgive me, for now I know this book is true."

According to his desire, this ex-protestant minister was baptized in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on January 6, 1950. In a letter to me soon after his baptism, he wrote: "What a privilege to be baptized in the Salt Lake Tabernacle! Shortly I shall take time to write you in full the things that were major in my passing from religious confusion to unified certainty about God and all things that matter most."

A Pocket Edition

A Catholic girl and boy, engaged to be married, went to their priest to talk about their forthcoming marriage. As they talked with him, the girl felt impressed to break off their engagement. She did so. Later she met and married an inactive Latter-

day Saint. He served in World War II, and while on active duty he received a pocket edition of the Book of Mormon. After the war his wife was looking through his trunk one day and found the book. She started to read it and became very interested. Then the thought came to her, "I wonder if I am doing right." So she went to her priest and asked him if it was all right for her to read the Book of Mormon. He said, "You will be damned if you do."

She left the Book of Mormon alone for some time, but finally her curiosity overcame her fear and she started reading it again. The more she read, the more she was convinced it was true. She told her husband of her feelings toward the Book of Mormon and said she would like to know more about the Mormons. So he looked up the missionaries and invited them to hold cottage meetings in their home. In a short time the wife was converted and baptized. In time her husband also became active in the Church, and later they were both called on a stake mission to labor among the Indians in that area.

A devout couple who were teachers in a Presbyterian Sunday School were converted to the Church by reading the Book of Mormon and attending weekly cottage meetings. One day the elders received a letter from them stating they were resigning from the Presbyterian Sunday School the following Sunday morning. They concluded the letter with these words:

"Give our love to all of our new brothers and sisters, and our endless gratitude goes to you for instruction, understanding, prayers, and our most precious gift—the Book of Mormon. We will all be with you for keeps very soon."

A Most Impressive Dream

Now I should like to tell you how I first gained a testimony of the divinity of the Book of Mormon. While I was studying this book of scripture at the old LDS High School¹ years ago, one night near the close of the school year, after preparing my Book of Mormon lesson, I had a most impressive dream. It seemed I was attending college with a group of fellows who were discussing the churches they belonged to. When asked what church I belonged to, I said, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." Then one of the young men said, "Oh, you are a Mormon, are you?" And when I answered, "Yes," they began ridiculing the Book of Mormon and repeating some of the false tales they had heard about it. I asked how many of them

(Concluded on page 418.)

¹The Salt Lake Academy, founded in 1886 and renamed the LDS College in 1889, had departments of general courses for high school and junior college students. In 1931 it became the LDS Business College. (See Milton R. Hunter, *The Utah Story*; page 285.)

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had read the Book of Mormon, and not one responded. Then there came over me a testimony, burning in every fibre of my being, that the Book of Mormon was true. I bore my testimony to them and promised them that if they would read the Book of Mormon with a sincere desire to know the truth, and if they would pray about it, they would also know it was true. Then I awoke. A few days later I was again preparing a Book of Mormon lesson, which included the tenth chapter of Moroni, when I read these wonderful words:

And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest

the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. (Moroni 10:4.)

As I read this promise, I realized it was almost identical with the one I had made my schoolmates in my dream, and there came over me the same burning testimony I had felt in that dream. But this time I was wide awake, and I knew beyond all shadow of doubt that the Book of Mormon was true and had been translated by the gift and power of God. That testimony has grown stronger as I have observed the effects of the Book of Mormon in the lives of others—how it has been the means of “the convincing of the Jew and the Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations.”²

²From the flyleaf of the Book of Mormon, second paragraph. Library File Reference: BOOK OF MORMON.

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gifts. They were happy and grateful for all their blessings.³

“In those days people didn’t have the pretty decorations and ornaments that we have today, so they made their own. They used the things they could find around home and the plants growing wild nearby. Would you like to make some homemade decorations?”

Decorate a Christmas Tree

Paper chains—make them red, green, or in all colors.

Materials:

Construction paper cut in one-inch strips across the short side of the paper
Glue.

Directions:

1. Put a little glue on the end of one strip.
2. Press this end onto the other end of the strip to make a circle.
3. Put a little glue on the end of the next strip.
4. Slip one end through the circle just made and then press the ends together.
5. Continue until the chain reaches the desired length.

Popcorn or cranberry chains.

Materials:

Darning needle
Strong string
Fresh, raw cranberries
Popped popcorn (not buttered).

Directions:

1. Thread the darning needle with the string and tie a big knot at the end.
2. Push the needle through the middle of a piece of

popcorn or a cranberry and pull it to the end of the string.

3. When the popcorn or cranberry string is long enough, pull off the needle and tie a big knot in the end of the string to keep the popcorn or cranberries from falling off. (Show cover picture of *The Instructor*, December, 1965.)

Each chain may be just popcorn or just cranberries, or popcorn and cranberries can be alternated on the same chain.

One way of enjoying these decorations and capturing the spirit of a pioneer Christmas would be to have a small Christmas tree in the room that the children can decorate. Let them actually pretend they are in an old cabin and are decorating the room just as the pioneers did. An additional touch may be given by making some cutout cookies with strings attached that can be hung on the tree. Have these in a box and bring them out just as the children have completed making their decorations and are beginning to place them on the tree.

When the tree is decorated, sit around it and sing as the pioneers did.

Conclusion: Reemphasize the “giving” part of Christmas and tell how the ways of celebrating Christmas change: “We celebrate Christmas differently than did the shepherds and the wise men who saw the star when Christ was born; and we celebrate differently than our grandparents did a long time ago. But the meaning of Christmas is the same all over the world, and the gift of Jesus to us is honored and loved by Christians everywhere, however they may celebrate Christmas.”

Library File Reference: CHRISTMAS.