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INSIGHTS

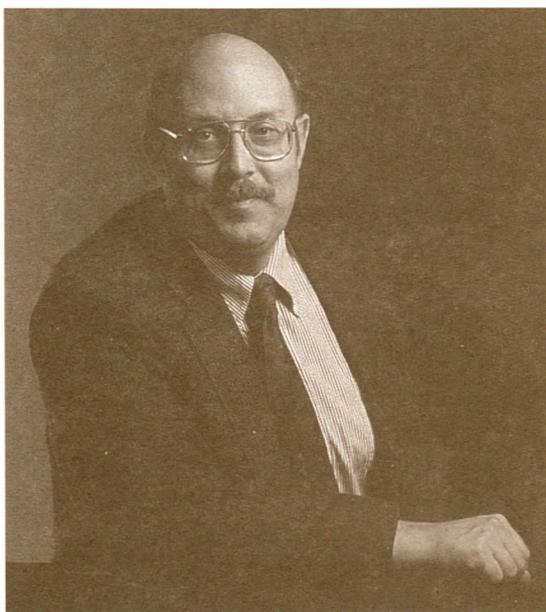
AN ANCIENT WINDOW

June 1998

"by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118)

BYU Research Center Gets New Director

One of the newest entities at Brigham Young University has a new director. The university administration has appointed Daniel C. Peterson, chairman of the FARMS board, to be the director of the Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts (CPART), a subsidiary of the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies. He succeeds Noel B. Reynolds, who was recently named associate academic vice president of BYU (see story on page 3).



This appointment will constitute Peterson's primary university assignment, and he will be released from most of his teaching duties during his service as director.

FARMS created the center in 1996 to better manage its projects in the area of electronic texts. Those efforts began in 1993 with a project jointly sponsored by FARMS and BYU to create an electronic database of texts and images from the Dead Sea Scrolls. This database has been hailed by scholars

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FARMS Review of Books Examines Works That Misrepresent the Church

The new issue of the *FARMS Review of Books* (volume 10, number 1) reviews several recent publications that are critical of the LDS Church. The *Review* also examines a Book of Mormon study aid and two novels related to the Book of Mormon.

In his review of David John Buerger's *The Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship*, Matthew B. Brown concludes that the book does not fulfill its promise to include scholarly objectivity, reverence for the sacred, sensitivity to others' opinions, and sufficient documentation. He finds the book offensive and degrading, "just one of the latest attempts . . . to discredit the mes-

sage of the restoration by questioning the divine authenticity of Latter-day Saint temple rites."

Two reviews, one by Klaus J. Hansen and one by George L. Mitton and Rhett S. James, examine D. Michael Quinn's *Same-Sex Dynamics among Nineteenth-Century Americans: A Mormon Example*. Both reviews conclude that Quinn has not made his case that nineteenth-century Mormons were more tolerant of homosexuals than Mormons are today and that the segregation between men and women in the nineteenth century encouraged same-sex relationships. Hansen points out that even Quinn acknowledges that these relationships

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The Foundation for
Ancient Research
and Mormon Studies

FARMS UPDATE

A Report on Research in Progress

Number 118

Better That One Man Perish

When constraining Nephi to slay Laban, the Spirit gave the sober justification that "it is better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief" (1 Nephi 4:13). Alma invoked this same justification when reluctantly subjecting Korihor to divine punishment (see Alma 30:47). This principle runs sharply contrary to modern liberal jurisprudence, but a different view prevailed in certain cases under biblical law.

Second Samuel 20 is a pivotal example. King David sought the life of Sheba, a rebel guilty of treason. When Sheba took refuge in the city of Abel, Joab, the leader of David's army, demanded that Sheba be released to him. The people of Abel beheaded Sheba instead, and Joab retreated. This episode became an important legal precedent justifying the killing of one person in order to preserve an entire group.

Another Old Testament case, preserved more fully in the Jewish oral tradition, involved Jehoiakim, the king of Judah who rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar went to Antioch and demanded that the great Jewish council surrender Jehoiakim or the nation would be destroyed. Jehoiakim protested, "Do they set aside one life in

favor of another?" Unmoved, the council replied, "Did not your forefather do exactly that to Sheba ben Bichri?"¹ Jehoiakim was released to Nebuchadnezzar, who took him to Babylon (see 2 Chronicles 36:6), where presumably he was executed. Because Zedekiah became king less than four months later (see verses 9–10), at the time the Book of Mormon account begins (see 1 Nephi 1:4), Nephi was probably keenly aware of how the "one for many" principle was used to justify Jehoiakim's death. Clearly, the cases of Laban and Korihor fit within this tradition.

Over the years, the proper balance between the rights of the individual and the needs of the community was debated in Jewish law. On one extreme, the Pharisees held that no individual was ever to be surrendered for the good of the community. On the other extreme, the Sadducees, who often cooperated with the Romans, argued that so long as the authorities named a specific victim, that was all that was necessary. This ruling, known as the Hadrianic Resolve, is found in the Jerusalem Talmud.²

Taking a middle position, most rabbinical scholars have accepted the "one for many" principle, but they limit it to cases like Sheba's in which (1) the demand was made by a recognized

leader, (2) the person requested was already guilty, (3) the person was identified by name, (4) the people in the group were innocent, and (5) the group faced certain destruction if they refused.

Of course, the "one for many" principle was also invoked, ironically, by Caiaphas (a Sadducee) when he argued for Jesus' death (see John 11:49–50).³ While the audience evidently knew this familiar principle, as Sadducees and Pharisees they were probably divided on its application.

Based on the New Testament alone, the "one for many" principle in the Book of Mormon might have appeared anachronistic. Yet the fuller picture shows that this principle operated much earlier in Israelite culture, notably in Nephi's own day. This was something that Joseph Smith would have had no way of knowing, and it is a point that few legal historians are aware of even today.

NOTES

1. Genesis Rabbah 94/11 on 46:26.
2. See TJ *Terumat* 8:10, 46b.
3. See Roger David Aus, "The Death of One for All in John 11:45–54 in Light of Judaic Traditions," in his *Barabbas and Esther and Other Studies in the Judaic Illumination of Earliest Christianity* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992).

Based on research by John W. Welch and Heidi Harkness Parker

Former FARMS President Receives BYU Appointment

Noel B. Reynolds, who recently stepped down as president of FARMS, has been named associate academic vice president for undergraduate studies at BYU. Reynolds has served on the FARMS board of directors for the past eleven years, as the organization's president for the past six years, and as director of the FARMS Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts for the past two years. BYU president Merrill J. Bateman extended the new appointment to Reynolds in April.

A professor of political science, Reynolds holds a master's degree and doctorate from Harvard University. His scholarly work has led to many publications on legal and political



philosophy and related areas. He brings to his new position perspective gained from his years as

a successful teacher and from earlier BYU experience as associate academic vice president for university education and as director of general education.

Reynolds's lifelong passion for the Book of Mormon has proved especially fruitful through his long association with FARMS. He has made significant contributions to Book of Mormon studies, particularly in the areas of the political dimensions of Book of Mormon life, authorship issues, research on Old World Bountiful, and the creation of research databases. Reynolds will continue to serve on the FARMS board and plans to carry on his Book of Mormon research as his new duties will allow.

BYU Scholar Clarifies Mormon Faith

"One need not become either a convert to or a crusader for the LDS Church to understand the phenomenon or the people," Robert L. Millet explains in the preface to his new book, *The Mormon Faith: A New Look at Christianity*. "And if anything is needed in this complex and confusing world, it is understanding." To help promote understanding concerning the church and its members, Dr. Millet, BYU professor of ancient scripture, attempts to objectively and accurately inform the reader about LDS beliefs and practices.

The book opens with a brief recounting of the restoration of the gospel. Since that time, Millet notes, the church has experienced staggering growth

that cannot be wholly explained by admirable Mormon practices, for this growth also results from a theology that "strikes a consonant chord in the minds and hearts of interested people." He illustrates this point by examining the LDS view of Christ and salvation, the nature of God, the origin and destiny of man, the expanding canon of scripture, the priesthood, revelation, and the second coming.

The final chapter, entitled "Questions and Answers," addresses twenty-five of the questions most frequently asked about the church, such as whether Latter-day Saints are Protestant and Christian, whether they believe they will be saved by their works and not

by grace, and what the LDS Church hopes to accomplish in the religious world.

The book's appendixes contain the Articles of Faith and proclamations by the First Presidency, as well as a discussion on distinctive LDS doctrines concerning God and man, the premortal existence, and baptism for the dead.

"Whether one chooses to pursue his or her study of the LDS faith out of sheer curiosity or more academically from a sociological, historical, anthropological, or theological point of view, there is a great deal to investigate," Millet notes in his preface. *The Mormon Faith* illuminates Mormon belief with clarity and insight.

LDS Scholar Reviews Southern Baptists' Attempt to Understand So-Called Mormon Puzzle

In anticipation of its June 1998 national meeting in Salt Lake City, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) released a kit of curriculum materials designed to assist Southern Baptists in understanding and evangelizing Latter-day Saints. Daniel C. Peterson's thorough and penetrating review of this material appears in the current *FARMS Review of Books*. Because of heavy prepublication interest, we are also making this review available as a separate reprint (see the order form).

In "Shall They Not Both Fall into the Ditch? What Certain Baptists Think They Know about the Restored Gospel," Peterson devotes eighty-five pages to showing how the videocassette and assorted manuals and pamphlets (collectively called *The Mormon Puzzle: Understanding and Witnessing to*

Latter-day Saints) fall short in their attempt to clarify LDS beliefs. He handily sets the record straight on many distortions and misrepresentations, such as that Latter-day Saints are not Christians, do not value the Bible, reject Christ as their personal savior, bear testimonies devoid of references to Christ, and do not believe in the one true God.

Peterson sees the *Mormon Puzzle* as a "huge advance over earlier productions by critics of the church," but he also finds the "level of distortion and mischaracterization" to be disheartening. He concludes that "the SBC has forfeited a marvelous opportunity to further understanding of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints among American evangelical Christians."

FARMS Welcomes Two New Staff Members



FARMS is pleased to welcome Wendy C. Thompson and Jann E. Cahoon as its newest staff members.

Wendy joined the editorial staff as assistant production editor in February 1998. During the previous year, she worked as an editorial intern and proofreader for FARMS. She graduated from Dixie College in 1994

with an associate in science degree and from BYU in 1997 with a bachelor's degree in humanities with an English emphasis.

Originally from St. George, Utah, Wendy lives with her husband, Kelly, in Provo. She enjoys waterskiing, backpacking, and dancing. Wendy is an excellent addition to the editorial department, where her skills in proofreading and document layout and design are much appreciated.

Jann Cahoon of Holladay, Utah, works in the



operations building as customer service manager. She previously worked as an administrative assistant for the Sundance organization for two years, and before that she served a mission at the Nauvoo Visitors' Center.

At FARMS her responsibilities include processing invoices, maintaining a customer database, and

fielding phone calls. "It's a pleasure to receive calls from people searching for greater understanding of the gospel," says Jann. She relishes the opportunity to keep current with the various FARMS publications so she can efficiently direct callers to the people and materials with the right answers.

A junior at BYU pursuing a degree in humanities, Jann enjoys field hockey, soccer, reading, and spending time with her family.

Reprint Probes How Evidence Facilitates Belief

A new FARMS reprint makes available a lengthy paper first presented by John W. Welch in 1995 at the twenty-fourth annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium at BYU. In "The Power of Evidence in the Nurturing of Faith," Welch offers the most extensive analysis available of the role of evidence in strengthening one's faith in the Book of Mormon.

To combine evidence and faith, Welch draws on his legal background and careful research of the Book of Mormon and other ancient texts. He gives several examples of evidence for the sacred book and emphasizes that although material evidence can be instrumental in furthering one's conviction of the text, it brings with it certain complexities and problems, both intellectual and spiritual. For example, physical evidence is difficult to prove whether in a religious or legal forum. Ultimately,

he reasons, it is the Holy Ghost that verifies most compellingly the Book of Mormon's goodness and truthfulness.

Welch further explores several models for coupling careful study with sincere faith. He quotes Elder Neal A. Maxwell, who said: "The Lord sees no conflict between faith and learning in a broad curriculum. . . . The scriptures see faith and learning as mutually facilitating, not separate processes."

The paper concludes with five practical suggestions on how to cultivate both the spirit and the intellect: be competent but not prideful, avoid oversimplifying and overcomplicating, give purpose to your learning, overcome rebellious thoughts as well as disobedient acts, and strive to bring the fullness of the everlasting gospel into your life.

BYU Research Center Gets New Director (continued from page 1)

working on translating the scrolls as a major tool for improving their work.

Soon thereafter FARMS was asked to direct or participate in similar projects involving other ancient texts. FARMS has assisted in the digital imaging and storing of ancient Maya murals from the site of Bonampak and has been given custodianship of ancient Syriac documents.

FARMS formed CPART to put these related projects under a common management. When FARMS was invited to become part of BYU earlier this year, the center joined the BYU community along with its parent organization. Now CPART has a new director, bringing with him new work for the center.

Daniel C. Peterson is an associate professor of Islamic studies and Arabic in the Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages at BYU. A native of southern California, Peterson received a bachelor's degree in Greek and philosophy from BYU and, after study in Jerusalem and Cairo, earned his Ph.D. in Near Eastern languages and cultures from the University of California at Los Angeles. He served in the Switzerland Zurich Mission and, for approximately eight years, on the Gospel Doctrine writing committee for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Peterson is married to the former Deborah Stephens of Lakewood,

Colorado, and they are the parents of three boys.

Since 1991 Peterson has been the managing editor of the Islamic Translation Series published by Brigham Young University Press and distributed by the University of Chicago Press. The recently published first volume in the series has received rave reviews from scholars who study Middle Eastern civilization and from Muslims throughout the world. Peterson will now administer the project under the umbrella of CPART.

Another CPART project under way involves creating digital images of Greek papyri from the sixth-century site of Petra (at the request of the American Center for Oriental Research in Amman, Jordan). Until now, suitable images could not be produced because of the poor state of the papyri, which were carbonized by fire to the extent that, when unrolled, some portions were very difficult to read without visual enhancement. But CPART's experts solved the problem using sophisticated multispectral scanning techniques.

The center's primary purpose in all these projects is to make ancient religious texts more readily available to scholars for study. Interpretation of these texts will be left to other scholars; the focus of CPART is on preserving and improving access to documents that are important for understanding the world's religious heritage.

Review of Books Examines Works That Misrepresent the Church (continued from page 1)

stopped short of deviant practices. Mitton and James demonstrate clearly that Quinn's supposed evidence was taken out of context and inaccurately analyzed and that he relies heavily on unsubstantiated innuendo. Overall they find Quinn's arguments to be "equivocal, conceptually confused, often baseless, and ultimately absurd."

Leon Cornforth's *Meeting the Mormon Challenge with Love* is reviewed by John A. Tvedtnes, who says that the book, though well written, contains no new information. The book has other shortcomings: it includes evidence offered by scholars who have since been proved to be liars, it presents criticisms that have already been rebutted, it contradicts itself, it relies on outdated research, and it reflects Cornforth's misunderstanding of some very basic and familiar facts despite his claim of having carefully studied Mormonism for fifty-five years.

Robert F. Lewis reviews Keith C. Terry's *Into the Light: A Novel* and Keith C. Terry and Wesley Jarvis's *The Remnant*, the second and third novels in a three-book series. Lewis enjoyed reading *Into the Light*, although he found the evidence for the historicity of the Book of Mormon to be confusing, in part because the line between fact and fiction is blurred.

The third volume, *The Remnant*, is the worst of the series, according to Lewis. He finds that the story is based on premises that are either moot or incorrect, the source citations are sloppy, and the book relies on evidence that is speculative. In addition, the protagonists accept doctrines that are not endorsed by LDS Church leaders.

Randall P. Spackman reviews Thomas O. Moore's wall chart, *A Detailed Chronology of the Book of Mormon*, which gives Book of Mormon chronology from 600 B.C. to A.D. 420. Although Spackman believes the chart may be helpful to some readers, he disputes its claim to be a "detailed chronology" of the Book of Mormon. He finds factual errors in the chart and asserts that it "mischaracterizes the actual complexity and detail of the Book of Mormon text."

The *FARMS Review of Books* also includes Louis Midgley's review of Keith Edward Tolbert and Eric Pement's *The 1996 Directory of Cult Research Organizations: A Worldwide Listing of 752 Agencies and Individuals* and Daniel C. Peterson's review of *The Mormon Puzzle: Understanding and Witnessing to Latter-day Saints* (see article on page 4).

This issue of the *Review* (available through the enclosed order form) does much to set the record straight on some serious issues that deserve a thorough response.

INSIGHTS AN ANCIENT WINDOW

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The Purpose of FARMS

The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) encourages and supports research about the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ and other ancient scriptures. It also works to preserve ancient religious documents.

FARMS is a nonprofit educational foundation affiliated with Brigham Young University. Its main research interests include ancient history, language, literature, culture, geography, politics, and law relevant to the scriptures. Although such subjects are of secondary importance when compared with the spiritual and eternal messages of the scriptures, solid research and academic perspectives alone can supply certain kinds of useful information, even if only tentatively, concerning many significant and interesting questions about the scriptures.

The Foundation works to make interim and final reports about this research available widely, promptly, and economically. These publications are peer reviewed to ensure scholarly standards are met. The proceeds from the sale of these publications, including most royalties, are used to support further research and publications on the scriptures. As a service to teachers and students of the scriptures, research results are distributed in both scholarly and popular formats.

It is hoped that this information will help all interested people to "come unto Christ" (Jacob 1:7) and to understand and take more seriously these ancient witnesses of the atonement of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

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MIL-98	Robert L. Millet, <i>The Mormon Faith: A New Look at Christianity</i> , 1998, 222 pp., hardbound, retail \$15.95		\$12.75	
WEL-95	John W. Welch, "The Power of Evidence in the Nurturing of Faith," 38 pp.		\$4.00	
PPP-98	Donald W. Parry, Jay A. Parry, and Tina Peterson, <i>Understanding Isaiah</i> , 1998, 675 pp., hardbound, Deseret Book, retail \$29.95		\$23.95	
PET-98	Daniel C. Peterson, "'Shall They Not Both Fall into the Ditch?' What Certain Baptists Think They Know about the Restored Gospel," review of <i>The Mormon Puzzle</i> , reprinted from <i>FARMS Review of Books</i> 10/1, 84 pp.		\$5.00	
MPS-AK	<i>Akedah: The Binding</i> , video, 15 minutes, retail \$10.95		\$8.75	
Items featured in the previous issue of INSIGHTS				
SOR-98	John L. Sorenson, <i>Images of Ancient America: Visualizing Book of Mormon Life</i> , 1998, 249 pp., hardbound, large format, fully illustrated, full color, retail \$39.95		\$31.95	
W&R-98	John W. Welch and Stephen D. Ricks, eds., <i>King Benjamin's Speech: "That Ye May Learn Wisdom,"</i> 1998, 679 pp., hardbound, retail \$24.95		\$19.95	
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Recent FARMS publications				
REY-97b	Noel B. Reynolds, ed., <i>Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins</i> , 574 pp., hardbound, retail \$49.95		\$15.95	
P&W-97	Donald W. Parry and John W. Welch, eds., <i>Isaiah in the Book of Mormon</i> , 1998, 558 pp., hardbound, retail \$24.95		\$19.95	
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From other publishers

New Book Brings Isaiah's Writings to Life

Understanding Isaiah, a new book by Donald W. Parry, Jay A. Parry, and Tina Peterson, published by Deseret Book, examines Isaiah's message in light of historical and prophetic details.

This 675-page book is offered to complement the FARMS publication *Isaiah in the Book of Mormon*, released earlier this year (see the order form). It includes an exhaustive phrase-by-phrase (and sometimes word-by-word) commentary based on the words of the prophets. The authors introduce each chapter of Isaiah with ideas on how its message can be likened to us and our day. In addition to providing helpful background information on many of Isaiah's unique words and symbols, the book arranges the scriptural text into its naturally poetic form to reveal the prophet's extensive use of parallelisms.

According to Robert L. Millet, dean of Religious Education at BYU, *Understanding Isaiah* brings Isaiah's message to life and is "well researched while remaining highly readable." It is available at a special discount for FARMS subscribers (see the order form).

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Abraham and Isaac Story on Video

A new film produced by the LDS motion picture studio, *Akedah: The Binding*, richly portrays Abraham's great test of faith when God commanded him to sacrifice his son, Isaac.

This stirring fifteen-minute film treats the vital importance of honoring eternally binding covenants. It explains that just as Isaac was literally bound upon the altar, Abraham was spiritually bound to the Lord, who in turn was bound to fulfill his promises because of Abraham's obedience. In addition, Isaac and his father were more firmly bound to each other as a result of their harrowing experience.

Akedah: The Binding appeals to Bible students of all ages and can be purchased through the enclosed

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