



Type: Magazine Article

Prophecies and Blessings to the Lamanites

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Source: *Improvement Era*, Vol. 62, No. 12 (December 1959), pp. 928–931

Published by: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Abstract: God is beginning to fulfill his promises as recorded in the Book of Mormon that the gospel will be opened unto the Lamanites.

visited one of the stakes in the East and it told of this sad story:

As the story was told, a man, an employee of the city of New York for some thirty years, a respected employee, married, with grown children who were married, had working with him a young man about twenty-five, also married. Unknown to their wives, they had been in the dastardly business of producing vile film, pornography, and were arrested

with over \$500,000 worth of the filthy stuff in their possession in one of their garages. I mention again, they were married men with children of their own, deliberately poisoning the minds of young people, taking advantage of living in a land where our forefathers came to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience, a land built upon freedom and liberty.

I call to mind a statement made by a

minister a couple of weeks ago as the Premier from Russia visited in the United States. He said he hoped that Mr. Khrushchev would come to his church "... to see how we worship."

How are we worshipping? Are we the followers of Jesus Christ only on the Sabbath day, or just when we are in priesthood meeting, or is it that worship which reflects good and his peace as we go forth in our various travels, en-



PROPHECIES AND BLESSINGS TO THE LAMANITES

*Milton R. Hunter
of the First Council
of the Seventy*

My dear brothers and sisters, I humbly ask an interest in your faith and prayers that the Spirit of God will direct what I may say.

The Book of Mormon prophets made numerous predictions regarding the Indians, or the Lamanites, promising many great blessings that would come to them in the latter days. Some of the prophecies regarding the Indians have been fulfilled; others are being fulfilled; and eventually all of the predictions of the holy prophets will come to pass.

I would like this afternoon to tell two marvelous experiences had by the Indians in Guatemala, Central America. These experiences were related to me while I was visiting that country.

I toured the Central American Mission in January 1956, in the company of President and Sister Edgar Wagner. We were on a train coming from Guatemala City to Quirigua, Guatemala. Riding in the same car with us was a very lovely Indian woman, a Quiché Maya from Quezaltenango, Guatemala. She was accompanied by her husband. President Wagner introduced them to me, stating that the Indian woman was the Relief Society president in Quezaltenango. I sat in the adjacent seat and had a conversation with them. The woman told me the following story:

"When I was a girl," she said, "a marvelous thing happened in my home town. One day two strangers came to Quezaltenango. They were tall men—much taller than the Indian men of our country—and their skin was white in color. They were handsome men. Their clothing differed greatly from that worn by the Quiché Mayas. Nobody had any

idea as to who they were or whence they came. They just suddenly arrived in the middle of the city and began to preach to the people. A large group of Indians soon assembled in the street to listen to the instructions given by these strangers. Many of the things they told us were predictions of what would occur in the future.

"The thing that impressed me most," she said, "was the statements they made regarding our ancestors once having had the true gospel of Jesus Christ. They had lost it through wickedness and apostasy, resulting in the gospel being taken from the earth. They then said that God had caused the true gospel to be restored to earth again, and that in the near future that gospel would be brought to our people. Those two messengers said that we would be able to recognize the true gospel of Jesus Christ when it came, and the sign by which we would know it would be that young men, traveling two by two, would bring it to us."

A few years passed, and she had grown to womanhood. Finally Mormon missionaries came to Quezaltenango. As she observed them, and listened to them preach, she recalled the things that were predicted by the two messengers when she was a girl. She recalled that the bearers of the true gospel were to be young men, traveling two by two, and these Mormon missionaries completely fitted the predictions. Thereupon she invited them to her home and received the gospel from them.

This Indian woman bore a very strong and fervent testimony to me that she knew that these missionaries had brought her the true gospel of Jesus Christ. She said:

"I know that God sent those two strangers, his messengers, to Quezaltenango to prepare the hearts and the minds of the Quiché Mayas in this part of the country to receive the gospel of Jesus Christ. I and a number of others of our people who saw those messengers and listened to their predictions are now Mormons."

I asked her to give me the names of other Lamanites who were present when the two messengers visited Quezal-

tenango. This she did. I had one of the missionaries, the supervising elder, check with them for the purpose of verifying her story. These other Indians also gave similar accounts of those two tall, white strangers visiting Quezaltenango some years ago.

This past January (1959) I was again assigned to tour the Central American Mission in company with President and Sister Wagner. Sister Hunter accompanied me on this tour.

Shortly after we arrived in Guatemala City, President Wagner told us about some very important events which had occurred in the life of a certain Cakchiquel Maya man named Daniel Mich. This good Lamanite or Indian had joined the Church not long before our arrival in Guatemala. After becoming a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and just prior to our arrival in the Central American Mission, Brother Mich came to Guatemala City and attended a Sacrament meeting. He bore his testimony at this meeting and told the wonderful story of his experiences which I shall retell to you today. In describing Daniel Mich's telling of his experiences and bearing his testimony, President Wagner said:

"The tears rolled down Brother Mich's cheeks. There was not a dry eye in the house. The Spirit of God was there in great abundance."

The following is Daniel Mich's story. He lived in Patzicia, Guatemala, a small town not far from Lake Atitlán. A few years ago an Indian rebellion against the government officials, who were primarily of Spanish blood, took place in Patzicia. The government officials decided to put to death all the Indians who had participated in this rebellion and especially those who instigated it.

Daniel Mich had taken no part in the rebellion; however, the government officials thought he was guilty. The Spirit of God whispered to him and told him and his brother to flee to the mountains and hide in a certain place. If they did not, they would be killed. They did as the Spirit instructed. As they arrived at the hiding place sug-

deavors, and walks of life, truly being an influence every day, every hour, every minute for good to our fellow men?

I pray that we as parents will seek to know what our children are feeding upon, and see that they feed upon the truths found in the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, the four Standard Works of the Church. Then they will not suffer from malnourish-

ment of the Spirit, and we will be fitting them to withstand the buffeting of Satan.

I bear you my witness and testimony that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, the Divine Son of our Heavenly Father, that Joseph Smith was and is a Prophet of God, and that those who have succeeded him as Presidents of this Church down to President David O. McKay today, have been and are mouthpieces

and prophets of our Lord.

I bear you my solemn witness that President McKay holds the keys and authority, the keys of the kingdom, and that the mantle of authority is upon him. I am so thankful for that witness, and I pray that I may be able to continue to bear this testimony as the Lord permits. I pray his peace and blessing upon us humbly, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

gested by the Spirit, they lay on a ledge and looked over the precipice. Below them they could see the government officials searching for them along the mountainside.

A number of Indians were captured at this time and put to death. Daniel Mich and his brother stayed in seclusion for two years, but finally they were also captured. Conditions had changed during the two years to the extent that the Mich brothers were not killed but were thrown into prison. For four long years they lay in prison, living under the most terrible conditions. Their clothing wore out. They had a scant amount of bedding. It was very cold, and the jail was unheated. The caretakers of the prison gave them very little food; in fact, they practically starved to death. And to make matters much worse, Daniel Mich received word from his wife that she and the children were practically starved to death. During the six years' time that he was in hiding and in prison, they had not been able to make a livelihood.

In desperation, and, of course, in great grief, Daniel Mich knelt down and prayed to God, pleading that the Eternal Father would be merciful unto him and let him die. He also prayed that the Lord would extend his mercy unto his wife and children, that they all might soon die. He pleaded with the Lord to release him and his family members from the misery and suffering that they were enduring.

But God did not let them die. Instead, Daniel Mich had a vision, or a dream, or whatever it might be called. He was going up the side of a steep mountain on a definitely defined trail. He came to a place where a side trail forked off the main trail. A man stood on the side trail and said, "Follow me."

Daniel Mich replied, "No, I cannot follow you. I must follow this trail straight ahead."

He went some distance farther, and another man stood on another side trail. He also said, "Follow me."

And again Daniel Mich replied, "No, I cannot follow you. I must go straight ahead." This experience repeated itself three or four times.

Daniel Mich explained, "Finally I came to the summit, and there standing in front of me was a tall, handsome man, with beautiful white hair. He had a very kindly and beautiful smile. This man said to me, 'Daniel, follow me.' I replied, 'I will follow you,' because as I made that remark, the Spirit of God whispered to me and said, 'That man has the truth.'"

Shortly after having this dream or vision, Daniel Mich and his brother were released from jail. They returned to their home town. Soon thereafter, and possibly about a year before I visited Guatemala, missionaries came to Patzicia, Brother Mich's home town. They had not been working there long until one day the mayor sent for them to come to his office. When the missionaries arrived, they saw a large crowd of Indians, perhaps 200 or more, collected in front of the mayor's office. As the missionaries approached, according to the description given by the missionaries, "The crowd of Indians opened as the Red Sea opened for the Israelites to go through. We walked between two columns of Indians and on into the mayor's office."

The elders said to the mayor, "You sent for us?"

"Yes, I did," was the reply.

"What do you want?" they asked.

The mayor answered, "I have here in front of me a petition signed by two hundred citizens of our community in which they demand that you young men leave town immediately and that you refrain from teaching your religion any more in our community. Will you go?"

"No, we will not go," the missionaries replied. "We will not leave this town until our mission president tells us to leave."

The elders sat silently in the mayor's office for several minutes, and then one of them asked, "What do you intend to do?"

The mayor replied, "I do not know."

Thereupon one of the missionaries suggested that he telephone the governor, and perhaps the governor could instruct him. The mayor immediately picked up the telephone, called the governor, and explained the situation.

The governor emphatically instructed, "Let those Mormon missionaries alone. They have a right to teach their religion in your town or in any other town or city in Guatemala, because we have religious freedom in our country."

After this favorable solution of the problem, the missionaries came out of the mayor's office. Once again they described the crowd, stating that it opened as the Red Sea opened for the Israelites. The elders passed between those two long lines of Indians. As they arrived at the edge of the crowd, two men approached them and said, "Will you come to our homes and talk to us?" One of the men was Daniel Mich.

The missionaries were happy to accept the invitation. They went to Daniel Mich's home and taught him the gospel. He received all they taught with much faith and sincerity. They taught him only three or four lessons when a very important event occurred. One day while in the midst of one of the lessons, one of the missionaries opened his book, and Daniel Mich saw a photograph of a tall, handsome man, with beautiful white hair.

Brother Mich immediately and excitedly exclaimed, "This is the man! It is he whom I saw!"

Of course the missionaries wondered what he was talking about, and so they questioned him. In response he told them the wonderful story which I have just told you good people today.

Then Daniel Mich asked, "Who is this man whose photograph you have in your book?"

"His name is David O. McKay," the missionaries replied. "He is the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He is God's holy prophet, seer, and revelator upon the earth at the present time. He is the man who holds the keys of the kingdom of God and stands as Christ's representative in the true Church and the leader in spreading the true gospel of Jesus Christ."

In deep sincerity Daniel Mich replied, "I know that all of the things you have told me are true. I know that you missionaries have the true gospel

of Jesus Christ." Then he asked, "Do you know why I invited you to come to my home that day as you came out of the mayor's office?"

"Of course we do not know but would certainly like to know," they replied.

Then Daniel Mich explained, "At the time that the tall, handsome man, with beautiful white hair—whom you have told me was President David O. McKay—said to me, 'Daniel, follow me,' the Spirit of the Lord whispered to me and said, 'This man has the truth.' The Spirit also said, 'Two young men will bring you the truth'; and when you came into our town recently and began to teach your religion, I became curious. I had been watching you and attempting to find out all about you

that I could. When the citizens of Patzicia signed the petition to have you thrown out of town and when you called to see the mayor, I joined the crowd in front of the mayor's office to see what would take place. And now," he said, "all the things that I believed have been verified. I know that David O. McKay is a prophet of God. I also know that you have the true religion of Jesus Christ."

These two important stories demonstrate the fact that the Lord is touching the hearts of the Lamanites, and they are receiving the gospel. He is opening the way for the fulfilment of the promises made to the Lamanites or Indians by the Book of Mormon prophets.

The last meeting of our mission tour

was held at Chimaltenango, Guatemala, in the evening of January 30, 1959. Missionary work was opened in this district only two years earlier. There are four towns in the district, having a Church membership of 141 people.

There were 425 people in attendance at the conference, practically all being Indians. Based on the Church population in the district, we had 300 percent attendance. Practically every Indian mother was carrying a baby wrapped in a shawl and tied to her body. Most of the people were barefoot; they were humble, God-fearing, faithful people, poor in economic goods, but rich in spirituality and their love for the Lord.

Brother Daniel Mich from Patzicia was present. We called on this humble



MISSIONARY WORK

*LeGrand Richards
of the Council of
the Twelve*

I rejoice with you, my brothers and sisters, in the privilege of attending this wonderful conference and listening to the testimonies of the servants of the Lord, including the great witness borne to us this morning by President McKay. I thank the Lord for my testimony that I know this work is true, and I know the power of God is in it; that this Church is built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, and that Christ our Lord is truly the head of his Church today, as he has always been.

I have just had the privilege, with my wife, by appointment of President McKay, of touring five of the missions of Europe—the Danish, the Swedish, the Norwegian, the Finnish, and the Netherlands Missions—and Sister Richards and I appreciate that opportunity very, very much. I love missionary work. I love the spirit of missionary work. I know the Spirit of the Lord is in the missionary work.

When Jesus was resurrected and sent his disciples into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature, he said, "And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," (Matthew 28:20), indicating that when his kingdom should be set up in the latter days

that he would be with his servants until the end of the world. And I know that the Spirit of the Lord is in this great missionary movement.

It was our privilege to visit and hear the testimonies of over five hundred missionaries, and each one I interviewed personally; and if you parents could have heard the testimonies of those missionaries, you would have been proud, and you would have felt compensated for the sacrifices you are making to keep them in the mission field. Many of them bore testimony of their gratitude to their parents for the privilege of being in the mission field. Some told of the financial struggles their parents had had. One boy said that his father was out of work when he was called to go, but he would not stand in the way of that son of his being an ambassador of eternal truth, and many of them testified that their parents had prospered financially as never before while their sons were in the mission field.

Another thing that thrilled me in their testimonies: Many of them testified that their parents and the members of their families had become more interested and active in the Church while their sons were in the mission field, so that this great missionary program in a way is like a two-edged sword. It does a marvelous work in the mission field, and it does a marvelous work here at home.

One missionary whom I interviewed in Denmark said, "I almost worship President Petersen, my mission president. It was he who brought the gospel to my father in this land, and there are now fifty-seven of us in the Church by virtue of that one conversion."

Another young man who was a counselor in the mission presidency in that mission was the seventh son of a convert from that mission to go back into

the mission field—a wonderful young man—and he said, "Brother Richards, couldn't I stay another six months?" I said, "No, you had better go home. You have your military work to get back of you and your schooling, and then you ought to get married, and then you can raise your boys as your father did and send them back on missions, and they will do the rest of your missionary work for you."

It was a wonderful thing to be with those missionaries and feel their spirit, and I thank the Lord for the experiences that have been mine. They say the proof of the pudding is in the eating of it, and I have had the privilege of filling four missions and presiding over two, and touring many of the missions, and I would not want to raise a boy in this day and generation and not have him go on a mission for his good and, because I think we owe so much to the world, to share with them the wonderful truths of the gospel.

If you parents could have seen the glow in their faces when the missionaries would bring their investigators up to shake our hands, you would not figure that there was anything in this world that could compensate and take the place of the experiences that were theirs.

The missionaries fast for their investigators. Two of the missionaries fasted all day that their investigator would not disappoint them when they had a baptismal service arranged for her that night up in Trondheim, in the northern part of Norway. We went out to the bank of a fjord after ten o'clock at night, the sun still shining, and what a marvelous sight to see the missionaries and the sister dressed in white! The missionary led her out into the waters of baptism, and when she came back, my wife said, through the interpreter, "Was it cold?" She said, "It's *deilig*." That

Indian to talk. When I listened to his testimony for thirty to forty minutes and felt the spiritual influence of God which emanated from him, I could understand why the Lord loved this humble intelligent, and spiritual-minded Lamanite enough to give him the marvelous experiences of which I have told you. I shall always remember our conference at Chimaltenango and the beautiful testimony given by Brother Daniel Mich from Patzicia, one of the towns in the Chimaltenango district. I am convinced that God loves the Lamanite people.

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to bear my testimony. I know that God lives as I know that I am alive. I know that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world. I know that Joseph Smith

is one of the greatest prophets that has been upon the earth. I bear witness that the true gospel of our Master was restored upon the earth through him. Also, I testify that each of the presidents of the Church from Joseph's time to the present has held the keys of the kingdom. Each one, up to and including President David O. McKay, was divinely selected to be the President of the Church, each being a prophet, a seer, and a revelator.

I feel as Daniel Mich explained, I am willing to follow President David O. McKay at all times and to do anything that he asks me to do. I pray to God that I will have the strength, the faith, and the understanding that I might follow all the things that he tells me to

do, because I know that he will not tell me to do anything that will be to my detriment or to the detriment of the people with whom I work.

I also humbly plead with all Latter-day Saints that we will have the same spirit and testimony that this humble Indian had. May all of us follow at all times the leadership of President David O. McKay and do all that he asks us to do. We accept him as God's holy prophet. If we will follow his leadership in all things, we will work out our eternal exaltation. May this be our happy lot, and may our Eternal Father bless us with sufficient faith and strength of character to keep all of his commandments always, I humbly pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.

means, it's beautiful. I do not know whether any of you Scandinavians will recognize that or not, but that was her way of saying it was wonderful.

It was wonderful. It was a wonderful thing to witness that baptism. We stood there watching it, and many of the tourists or the vacationers were watching it and a little sailboat that sailed up the fjord because this was out in the open. We have no baptismal fonts there yet. However, they are building a beautiful new chapel and had the foundation in when we were there. As I looked and watched that beautiful sight, I thought of the account in the Bible where John led the Redeemer of the world down into the waters of baptism. He did not take a little water and sprinkle upon the head of the Savior. He led him down into the water, and we read that when he was baptized they came up out of the water, and I wondered how Christians could satisfy themselves having a little water sprinkled upon their heads instead of really being baptized as the Redeemer of the world was baptized, especially when they read so many predictions of the prophets and apostles that the day would come when men would "transgress the laws and change the ordinances."

I visited with quite a number of people who had been to the temple. They had just had a tour from each of those Scandinavian missions and from up in Finland to the temple. About one hundred went in each group. And I want to pay tribute here to you members of these foreign-speaking groups. I have something to do with your work. But you have sent money to these mission presidents to help some of these underprivileged members to go to the temple. You should see the joy that it brings into their lives! Those

temples have literally changed the attitude of the Saints in many respects.

I was visiting with one young man and his wife who had three children. They had just returned from the temple in Switzerland, and she said this: "Brother Richards, we have been members of the Church for only six years, and we figure we are only six years old. We did not know how to live, and what to live for, until we found the Church."

When you stop to think in those lands, according to reports, there are only about five percent (I think it was three, but to be safe I will say five percent) of the people of those lands who attend church at all of any kind, and then you know how little there can be in their lives really to live for. Sometimes I thought as we went through those missions that about all they live for was their vacation, because they are great people to have a vacation every summer. I will not take time to go into detail about that. But they did not seem to be looking to eternal life or eternal exaltation or eternal companionship with those whom they love. They did not know anything about things like that. The newspapers even write articles discussing the fact that there is no God.

I was told that many of the ministers will openly admit to their members that they do not know whether there is a God or not. So, you see, they need the missionaries. They need this wonderful message that we have.

Speaking of the temples, I remind you of when Nicodemus came to Jesus by night and said:

"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

"Jesus answered and said unto him,

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

And Nicodemus, you will remember, could not understand that, so he said, "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"

And Jesus said:

"... Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

And Nicodemus could not understand and Jesus said, I

"Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

"If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" (John 3:2-5, 10-12.)

And I have always thought that the heavenly things that Jesus spoke of were these wonderful blessings that we receive in the temples of the Lord, and I thank the Lord that temples are reaching out to our people in these far-off lands.

In 1906 I heard President Joseph F. Smith make this statement in Rotterdam, Holland: "The day will come when temples of the Lord will dot this whole land of Europe," and I have lived long enough to see two of them there, and I tell you it is changing the feeling of our people toward the Church to know that these glorious blessings are coming within their reach.

As we went to leave the London Temple to come home, one good brother, who must have been in his sixties, said, "Brother Richards, why couldn't I have known this thirty years ago? Why couldn't I have had the joy all these