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## New Evidence for the Book of Mormon

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**Abstract:** This article cites the studies of numerous scientists and anthropologists (especially Thor Heyerdahl) that seem to confirm the general LDS belief that Polynesians migrated from the Americas.

living soul would read the Book of Mormon. I testify to you that it is true. It tells about the prophetic history and mission of America. It gives the comforting assurance that God has kept this great nation, as it were, in the hollow of his hand in preparation for its great mission.

Yes, the Lord planned it all. Why? So America could serve as a beacon of liberty and in preparation for the opening of a new gospel dispensation—the last and greatest of all dispensations in preparation for the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. To achieve his purposes the Lord had to have a base of operations. Later he revealed to a modern prophet that the Constitution of this land was established by “wise men” whom the Lord “raised up unto this very purpose.” (See D&C 101:80.) The Lord also directed that the constitutional laws of the land, supporting the principle of freedom, should be upheld and that honest and wise men should be sought for and upheld in public office.

The establishment of this great Christian nation, with a spiritual foundation, was all in preparation for the restoration of the gospel, following the long night of apostasy. Then in 1820 the time had arrived. God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ made their glorious appearance. I give you a few words from the Prophet Joseph Smith, who was the instrument in God’s hands in restoring the gospel and establishing the true Church of Christ again upon the earth. In response to humble prayer Joseph relates: “. . . I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

“. . . When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake

unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*” (JS 2:16-17.)

To me this is the greatest event that has occurred in this world since the resurrection of the Master—and it happened in America.

Later, other heavenly messengers came to restore the authority of the Holy Priesthood and important keys essential to the opening of the final gospel dispensation. The Church was organized in 1830. Immediately, in response to divine command, missionary-messengers began to carry the important message of salvation throughout the world. It is a world message intended for all of God’s children. And so, once this nation was well established, then the Church was restored and from here the message of the restored gospel has gone forth. All according to divine plan.

This then becomes the Lord’s base of operations in these latter days. And this base will not be shifted out of its place—the land of America. This nation will, in a measure at least, fulfil its mission even though it may face serious and troublesome days. The degree to which it achieves its full mission depends upon the righteousness of its people. God has, through his power, established a free people in this land as a means of helping to carry forward his purposes.

“It was his latter-day purpose to bring forth his gospel in America, not in any other place. It was in America where the Book of Mormon plates were deposited. That was no accident. It was his design. It was in this same America where they were brought to light by angelic ministry. It was” . . . [here] “where he organized his modern Church, where he, himself made a modern personal appearance.” (Editorial, *Church News*.)

Yes, it was here under a free government and a strong nation that protection was provided for his restored Church. Now God will not permit his base of operations—America—to be destroyed. He has promised protection to this land if we will but serve the God of the land. He has also promised protection to the righteous even, if necessary, to send fire from heaven to destroy their enemies. (Ether 2:12, 1 Nephi 22:17.)

No, God’s base of operations will not be destroyed. But it may be weakened and made less effective. One of the first rules of war strategy—and we are at war with the adversary and his agents—is to protect the base of operations. This we must do if we are to build up the kingdom throughout the world and safeguard our God-given freedom.

How will we protect this base of operations?

We must protect this base of operations from every threat—from sin, from unrighteousness, immorality, from desecration of the Sabbath day, from lawlessness, from parental and juvenile delinquency.

We must protect it from dirty movies, filthy advertising, from salacious and suggestive TV programs, magazines, and books.

We must protect this base from idleness, subsidies, doles, and soft governmental paternalism which weakens initiative, discourages industry, destroys character, and demoralizes people.

We must protect this base from complacency—from the dangerous feeling that all is well—from being lulled away into a false security. We must protect this American base from the brainwashing, increasingly administered to our youth in many educational institutions across the land, by some misinformed instructors and some wolves in sheep’s clothing. Their false indoc-

*Sunday Afternoon Session,  
April 8, 1962*

## NEW EVIDENCE FOR THE BOOK OF MORMON

*Mark E. Petersen  
of the Council of the Twelve*

It is always a great thrill to stand here at this pulpit where the prophets of God stand. It is most humbling to be in the presence of our great president, prophet, seer, and revelator. It is wonderful that we love him as we do and that we sustain him and uphold him, and I humbly and earnestly pray that every one of us may do so all the days of our lives.

It is a glorious privilege to be able to live in a day when there are prophets in the earth, and I am humbly thankful for the privilege of associating with President McKay and all of these wonderful men who surround him. I would like you to know that they are prophets of God, that the Lord guides them,

that they are men without guile, and that they have their whole purpose set in serving the Lord.

So every one of us as Latter-day Saints may place our full and complete confidence in them, and I surely hope and pray that we will do so by keeping the commandments and maintaining the high standards that the Lord has given us.

My wife and I have had a glorious experience in the last month or six weeks. It was a great spiritual uplift to us. One of these great spiritual experiences began with our accompanying Brother and Sister John Longden into the mission home in Samoa one morning about three weeks ago. There we were

met by the little five or six-year-old daughter of President and Sister [J. Phillip] Hanks, who reside in Samoa.

This lovely little child, filled with excitement, ran up to us and said, “I am going to Sauniatu.” We smiled with her and enjoyed her excitement, but we were just as excited as she was, because we were going to Sauniatu, also. We could hardly wait till we got there, just as she.

As we went along in the automobile towards Sauniatu, the mission president told again the story of a tremendous spiritual experience that took place in Sauniatu about forty years ago. President David O. McKay was the central figure in that experience. As we neared



trination, often perpetrated behind the front of so-called academic freedom, is leaving behind many faithless students, socialist-oriented, who are easy subjects for state tyranny.

"At what point, then, is the approach of danger to be expected?" asked Abraham Lincoln, and answered, ". . . If it ever reaches us, it must spring up among us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time or die by suicide." (Springfield, Ill., Jan. 27, 1837.)

The only threat to the liberty and independence of the American people from abroad is the threat of world communism spreading from its base in the Soviet Union. But the best authorities are confident that the Soviets will not provoke a major war. Their economy would not support it.

Lenin said, "The soundest strategy in war is to postpone operations until the moral disintegration of the enemy renders the mortal blow possible and easy." Commenting on Lenin's statement the Indianapolis *Star* adds: "Where then does the real danger lie? It lies with us—the American people. . . .

"Other great civilizations have died by suicide. The first free people, the Greeks, died thus.

"And why did Greece fall: 'A slackness and softness finally came over them to their ruin. In the end more than they wanted freedom they wanted security, a comfortable life, and they lost all—security, comfort and freedom.'

"It is the same with Americans today. The danger that threatens us is an internal danger. It lies in our hearts and minds and not in the hands of Khrushchev.

"It is our own ignorance—ignorance

of our own history and our heritage of liberty that threatens us. It is our ignorance of the true nature of our enemy, socialistic communism, that threatens us. . . . Our own lack of faith in freedom and ourselves, our own lack of confidence in the greatness of America and all that she stands for, morally and materially, is what puts us in mortal danger.

"Too many of us are afraid—afraid of atomic war, afraid of the disapproval of our allies or the neutrals, afraid of the threats and boasts of the bloated tyrants in the Kremlin, afraid to offend others by taking action to defend ourselves."

Yes, we are afraid to live righteously according to eternal principles—economic, moral, and spiritual. This is our danger. We must never forget that nations may—and usually do—sow the seeds of their own destruction while enjoying unprecedented prosperity. As Jenkin Lloyd Jones said, "It is time we hit the sawdust trail. It is time we revived the idea that there is such a thing as sin—just plain old willful sin. It is time we brought self-discipline back into style. . . .

"I am fed up with the educationists and pseudo-scientists who have underrated our potential as a people. . . . I am tired of seeing America debased and low-rated in the eyes of foreigners. I am genuinely disturbed that to idealistic youth in many countries the fraud of Communism appears synonymous with morality, while we, the chief repository of real freedom, are regarded as being in the last stages of decay.

"In this hour of fear, confusion and self-doubt . . . let there be a fresh breeze, a breeze of new honesty, new idealism, new integrity."

To protect this base we must protect

the soul of America—we must return to a love and respect for the basic spiritual concepts upon which this nation has been established. We must study the Constitution and the writings of the founding fathers.

Yes, we must protect the Lord's base of operations by moving away from unsound economic policies which encourage creeping socialism and its companion, insidious, atheistic communism. If we are to protect this important base, we must as a nation live within our means, balance our budgets, and pay our debts. We must establish sound monetary policies and take needed steps to compete in world markets.

If we are to protect this American base, we must realize that all things, including information disseminated by our schools, churches, and government, should be judged according to the words of the prophets, especially the living prophet. This procedure coupled with the understanding which will come through the Spirit of the Lord, if we are living in compliance with the scriptures, is the only sure foundation and basis of judgment. Any other course of action leaves us muddled, despondent, wandering in shades of gray, easy targets for Satan.

We must not fail in these pressing and important matters. We must not fall short of the great mission the Lord has proffered and outlined for America and for his divinely restored Church.

Yes, this is a choice land—a nation with a prophetic history.

God bless America and her leaders, and all the free world. And may God protect his latter-day base of operation that his glorious message of salvation may go forth to all the world, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

the village, we saw the marker which designates the place where he stood as he called down from heaven a great blessing upon that village and upon all of Samoa.

Then we went on into the village, and there we saw the larger monument that has been erected in commemoration of this glorious event and in recognition of the love of the people of Samoa for this great man who has become the president, the prophet, seer, and revealer of this Church.

We were surrounded by the people. We went to the monument and had again recounted the marvelous experience that had made it significant. There came to us a realization that this monu-

ment was also a monument to the great spirituality which is characteristic of so many of the Polynesian people.

We remembered the experiences of Brother Matthew Cowley among those people. You recall how he thrilled us with his faith-promoting stories of the experiences he had had among them. All of this came back to us as we, ourselves, were deeply touched, and we recognized the wonderful things that had lived on in the minds and the hearts of the people there.

As we met with the people in Sauniatu, we prayed with them, we spoke to them, we sang with them, and again recognized that these people were but representative of all of the Poly-

nesian Saints and that the Polynesian Saints are characterized by a tremendous faith.

Why do they have this great faith? It is because these people are of the blood of Israel. They are heirs to the promises of the Book of Mormon. God is now awakening them to their great destiny.

As Latter-day Saints we have always believed that the Polynesians are descendants of Lehi and blood relatives of the American Indians, despite the contrary theories of other men. For that reason, from the beginning of our Church history we have had more than an ordinary interest in them as a people. But now that interest is even more



keen. Recent research on the part of world-recognized scientists and scholars has focused a new light upon them, and writings of early explorers in both America and Polynesia have become available now for detailed study.

The new knowledge which has been developed shows that the Polynesians without any reasonable doubt did come from America, that they are closely related to the American Indian in many respects, and that even their traditions and genealogies bear that out.

So pronounced is this feeling among the world scholars of today that one of them, Thor Heyerdahl, widely known Norwegian anthropologist, who sailed the raft *Kon Tiki* from America to the Polynesian Islands, titled one of his books *American Indians in the Pacific*. It is a remarkable volume of great interest to Latter-day Saints.

With him are other writers who confirm and re-confirm the facts now being disclosed that there is every reason to believe that the Polynesians are directly related to the American Indians, that they came from American shores and sailed westward to their Pacific Islands, and that they took with them their customs, their food, and their religion, all of which have left a permanent mark upon Polynesia.

Pronounced as are these views establishing the relationship of Polynesians and American Indians, there are equally impressive data now available to disprove the theory that the Polynesians originated in the Orient and came eastward from Indonesia, Malaya, and nearby lands. Let us just mention a few of the convincing points of evidence.

Most of you have seen the great stone pyramids, or photographs of them, discovered by archaeologists in Mexico, Central, and South America. Pyramids of almost identical structure, both in plan and material, if not in size, have been found in Polynesia. I saw some of them myself within the last month.

Stone roadways, so characteristic of the

pre-Inca period of America, are found to be duplicated in some of the Pacific Islands. Giant stone statues such as are found in the lands of South America and among the Incas are now discovered in the Polynesian Islands, with characteristics and markings so similar that few can doubt their common origin. This includes many of the structures found on Easter Island.

The sweet potato of the Pacific Islands, known in Polynesia as the *kumara* or *kumalla*, as it is called in Tonga, is now found by botanists to be the identical plant which is native to South America with impressive evidence as to the manner in which it was transported from Peru to the Pacific Islands.

Cotton, coconuts, pineapples, and papaya are likewise being traced from Polynesia to America by botanists who now announce that the Polynesian varieties of these plants are but offshoots of the parent plants in America.

The ocean currents have been observed in our time to carry drifting objects to Polynesia from two places in America, one being the Pacific Northwest and the other the Central and South American region. Large Pacific Northwest pine logs have been traced in the drifting currents of the Pacific Ocean from the Vancouver area of North America to the Hawaiian, Marshall, and Caroline Islands. Hawaiians and other Polynesians have made canoes from these drifted pine logs and in them have traveled from island to island. There are no such trees growing in Polynesia. They came by ocean currents from the Pacific Northwest of America.

This is the more notable when it is observed that customs and household articles characteristic of the Indians of the Pacific Northwest of America have been found on a wide scale in Polynesia.

Written descriptions of fortifications built on some of the Polynesian Islands remind one of chapters in the Book of Mormon which portray the fortifications built by the great General Moroni here

in ancient America. Kivas, characteristic of American Indians today, are found in Polynesia.

Words and place names in the language of the Polynesians of the various island groups are now found to be identical to those common among the early people of Peru. Many of these words are actually identical in spelling and pronunciation.

I cannot resist mentioning one of them. It is *Kanakana*, the name of one of the dieties of both the Incas and the Polynesians. The reason this name interests me so much is that it means brightness or light or knowledge or intelligence. They believed that the glory of God was intelligence and therefore named him so. This is noted in both pre-Inca and Polynesian religions.

There are many other religious teachings which are the same in both areas. Both peoples believe in the creation by the Almighty. They both believe that the first man was the father of all living and that the first woman was the mother of all living, using these actual phrases. They believe in the Flood. They accept an atonement by a Savior. They both believe in a White God who came among their forefathers and performed mighty miracles. They believe in the water of life or living water which is given by the Savior.

The islanders say that their forefathers came from the east, from a land of high mountains and plateaus in the skies, which fits the description of the western coast of South America. The genealogies of the Pacific Islanders are traced to American ancestors.

Large fonts which archaeologists claim were baptismal fonts have been found in both areas. Burial customs are similar. Both groups believed in an all-powerful governing Trinity of Gods. There is one story in Polynesia which reminds us of the story of the brother of Jared.

One of the most interesting of all the reports brought out by Heyerdahl and

## PARENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR CHILDREN

*S. Dilworth Young*

*of the First Council of the Seventy*

As I listened to Elder Mark E. Petersen, I wished that all of the youth of the Church could hear what he was saying. Many of us talk over the heads of children; I believe he said something they could understand. He mentioned the affection that he and the twelve have for President McKay as well as his assurance of the prophetic calling of the President of the Church.

I felt that I should like to get up and shout, "Please include me in that, also." I am certain that everyone here would

want to be included. If they were asked to voice their feeling, the roar of approval would have shaken this building, so glad would they have been to express their affection also.

Heber C. Kimball, a member of the First Presidency at one time, and the grandfather of Elder Spencer W. Kimball, had great prophetic vision. He voiced it occasionally, and once he said, (I am not quoting him verbatim but as I recall it) "There is a test coming; there will be a testing." What he was

trying to imply, I suppose, was that we must not get smug, that the test would come, and each one of us would have an opportunity to find out if he would stand when the pressure was on, when seemingly the evidences were against us, when all hell would be raised up to defeat us. Would we stand the test? I am sure he meant to imply that every man would be tested before he would be accepted.

I submit that the modern testing which comes from the insidious boring-



other scientists who have made a serious study of the Polynesians and their relationship to the Americans is this, and it surprised me tremendously:

These anthropologists have learned that prior to the coming of the Spaniards there were both white and brown people in America, that the white people were as white as snow, according to their descriptions, and that they had brown, blonde, or red hair. The hair was not dyed nor treated in any way. It grew that way. Now, to our great astonishment, they tell us also that white people as well as brown people emigrated from America to Polynesia and that some of these white people lived in the islands in the times of the early explorers in the Pacific who saw them and wrote about them. Think of the significance of that fact in relation to the Book of Mormon.

I repeat: Anthropologists now say that white people, more fair than the Spaniards, and brown people like the Polynesians of today, lived side by side in America in pre-Spanish times. Both white and brown people emigrated from America to the Pacific Islands. They were seen by the early explorers in those islands. The white people were blondes and redheads, and some had soft, brown hair. Their skins were as white as snow, whiter than the Spaniards. All of this from the anthropologists!

Significantly enough, these white men living in the islands wore beards and their faces resembled the faces of Europeans. Anthropologists now say that these white islanders were of Caucasian descent without a doubt, and remember, they were already there when the first explorers arrived and found them.

Such white people actually were seen on Easter Island, as well as on other Pacific Islands, and although they no longer survive, the traditions of the natives tell of them as do the authentic writings of early historians.

On Easter Island, Heyerdahl himself

was told by the mayor of the principal community that there were two kinds of people on that island at first, white and brown, and that the white people were really white people with light hair. The anthropologists have long since discarded the idea that they might have been albinos.

Captain Cook saw some of these white natives on his journeys and wrote about them. One came aboard his ship. The other natives told Captain Cook that this white native was their leader and that he was of divine descent and was therefore held in high respect.

It is notable that the highest ideal of beauty among these islanders was the white skin. It was regarded as a sign of descent from the best of the ancient lineages and as a symbol of chieftainship of pure blood.

But where did these white people come from and how did they reach these islands?

The evidence recently compiled says they came from America.

But were there white men in early America, previous to the coming of the Spaniards?

Recently published records from the Spaniard Pizarro tell about similar white people found in Peru.

Pedro Pizarro, chronicler of the Spanish conquerors, wrote that whereas the majority of the Indians in the Andes Mountains were small and of brown complexion, the members of the Inca ruling family were tall and had whiter skins than the Spaniards themselves. Pizarro says that these white Incas of Peru actually were white, not albinos, but white people with soft blonde or brown or red hair.

Archaeologists have now found mummies of the Inca period bearing out this fact. They were well-preserved mummies with soft hair, blonde, or red or brown in color. Colored photographs of these mummies have been published and widely distributed. They are available in books sold right here in Salt Lake

City. They are the work of anthropologists and archaeologists having no connection with the Church whatsoever.

Pizarro asked the Incas of his day who these white people were and was told that they were the last of the descendants of a divine race of white men with beards. These men were given the name of *Viracocha*, or "sea foam" because they were so white.

We live today in a time of research, discovery, and knowledge. The new knowledge bears testimony that both Nephites and Lamanites lived in ancient America. Regardless of the names given them by the scientists or the early Incas, to us they were Nephites and Lamanites. This new knowledge likewise bears testimony that both Nephites and Lamanites emigrated from America to Polynesia, that they have been seen by modern explorers and seafarers who have written about them and that their customs and beliefs relate to the Book of Mormon.

To me it all adds up to a renewed testimony that the Book of Mormon is true, that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God, that the gospel is true, and that indeed Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the White God known as well to the Polynesians as to the early Americans, and that his coming to America after his resurrection in Palestine is the basis of the religion of both ancient Americans and ancient Polynesians, now handed down to modern times with the rest of their traditions.

It is glorious to see the confirming evidence as it comes forth from unexpected sources, sustaining in principle after principle our holy faith. We do not depend upon it for our faith at all, but we welcome its sustaining power nevertheless.

The gospel is true. The Book of Mormon is true. Jesus is the Christ, and Joseph Smith is his Prophet. That is the testimony I leave with you, in the name of the Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

in of ideas which imitate truth, excuse deception, and discount both evil and its author, is a much more difficult one to encompass and to resist than the physical tests of the past. In the day when Brother Kimball spoke, there appeared to be more physical difficulties to encompass than those spiritual or mental. At that time we could protect our children. Life was simple. We could easily persuade them to see as we saw and do as we did, because a large part of communication was from parent

to children. No one else had very much to do with them.

Now, however, the test is directed at the children. They are being deceived into believing that they can think and act with maturity long before they are mature. In this they are much deceived, and rebellious against parental restraint. They are ripe fruit for the plucking.

Today our test is with our families and the false ideals of the day. We need not succumb to it. Parents can protect their children if they will, but

it takes time and effort; but parents are still the most potent and sure protection and defense, provided they are righteous parents, alert and informed.

I cannot believe, personally, that the Lord God compromises black and white into gray—if I might use a metaphor of color. If I read correctly, his constant admonition is to become white, to purify one's self, to become perfect. I think the Lord draws sharp lines and declares that whatever leads to evil is evil. It is the evil in us which leads us