

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



Edited by
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of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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could not be priests. The keys of that priesthood remained with Aaron and his direct posterity (*MD*, pp. 9–10; Widtsoe, pp. 12–17). Hence, the lesser priesthood was called the Aaronic Priesthood, after Aaron, but is sometimes referred to as the Levitical Priesthood because all those who possessed it in ancient times belonged to the tribe of Levi (Num. 3:12–13). In the strict sense the Levitical Priesthood is a lesser part of the Aaronic Priesthood, held among those who were Levites, but not of the family of Aaron. The Doctrine and Covenants states that “there are, in the church, two priesthoods, namely, the Melchizedek and Aaronic, including the Levitical Priesthood” (D&C 107:1). It is anticipated that in the restoration of all things, the sons of Levi will once again function in the Levitical Priesthood on the earth (Mal. 3:2–3).

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VERDON W. BALLANTYNE

LIAHONA

The Liahona was a compass or director “prepared . . . by the hand of the Lord” for the Book of Mormon prophet LEHI as he and his family traveled in the wilderness (2 Ne. 5:12). It was shown to the Prophet Joseph SMITH and the Three Witnesses in 1829 along with the Book of Mormon plates (D&C 17:1). The Liahona was also understood as a symbol for the words of Christ: “For just as surely as this [Liahona] did bring our fathers, by following its course, to the promised land, shall the words of Christ, if we follow their course, carry us . . . into a far better land of promise” (Alma 37:45).

Described as a ball made of fine brass and “of curious workmanship,” it had two spindles, one pointing the direction Lehi’s family should travel (1 Ne. 16:10). The term “Liahona” appears only once in the Book of Mormon (Alma 37:38). It was usually referred to as “the ball” (1 Ne. 16:16, 26–27; etc.), “compass” (1 Ne. 18:12; Alma 37:43–44; etc.), or “director” (Mosiah 1:16; cf. D&C 17:1).

Lehi found the Liahona, provided by the Lord (Alma 37:38), outside of his tent door while camp-



Lehi and His People Discover the Liahona, by Arnold Friberg (1951; oil on canvas, 43" × 61"), in the South Visitors Center, Temple Square, Salt Lake City. While traveling in the wilderness south of Jerusalem, the Book of Mormon prophet Lehi and his family found the Liahona, a compass or director prepared by the Lord.

ing in the wilderness after leaving Jerusalem (1 Ne. 16:10). As his party traveled through the Arabian desert and across the ocean to the PROMISED LAND, one of the spindles pointed the direction to travel. Moreover, the Liahona was a medium through which God communicated with Lehi's family. Written messages occasionally appeared on it, giving them specific directions (1 Ne. 16:26–29).

The instrument worked according to the faith and obedience of Lehi's family. When they lacked faith or disobeyed, it ceased to function. Passed down from generation to generation along with the sacred records, it was stored with the GOLD PLATES.

Liahona is the title of an international Spanish-language magazine published by the Church.

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LIAHONA THE ELDERS' JOURNAL

The official publication for all the North American missions of the Church from 1907 to 1945 was *Liahona the Elders' Journal*, published in Independence, Missouri. It arose from the merger of *The Elders' Journal*, published by the Southern States Mission from 1903 to 1907, and *The Liahona*, a multimission publication begun by the Central States Mission in Independence on April 6, 1907. Publishing articles of interest to missionaries, people considering membership in the Church, and general members, it helped build a feeling of community among the Saints scattered throughout the North American missions. Thomas C. Romney's *World Religions in the Light of Mormonism* (1946) grew out of articles he first published in the *Liahona*. In its prime, the journal had nearly 20,000 subscribers.

With several missions publishing their own bulletins after World War I and the *Deseret News* introducing the weekly "Church Section" in 1931, *Liahona* subscriptions continually decreased until it ceased publication in 1945.

[See also *Liahona*.]

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ARNOLD K. GARR

LIBERTY JAIL

In 1833 a small jail was constructed in Liberty, the seat of Clay County, Missouri. In 1856 the building was abandoned. After a short tenure as an ice house, it fell into disrepair and was finally demolished near the turn of the century. Today, thousands of Latter-day Saints and other tourists visit the partially reconstructed jail and view it as what the LDS historian B. H. Roberts called a "prison temple" because of a notable prisoner it housed: the Prophet Joseph SMITH languished within its four-foot-thick walls from December 1, 1838 until April 6, 1839. Sharing this incarceration were his brother Hyrum (*see* Hyrum SMITH), who served as his second counselor in the presidency of the Church; Sidney RIGDON, his first counselor; and three other brethren—Lyman Wight, Alexander McRae, and Caleb Baldwin.

They were held on a variety of unsubstantiated charges stemming from the "Mormon War" (*see* MISSOURI CONFLICT), which had culminated in their betrayal and the fall of the LDS settlement of Far West, Missouri, a few weeks earlier. As they awaited trial, they suffered severe privation. Confined to the lower level or dungeon portion of the building, they slept on the straw-strewn stone floor with little light and scant protection from the Missouri winter. Alexander McRae described the food they were served as "very coarse, and so filthy that we could not eat it until we were driven to it by hunger" (*CHC* 1:521). He also recorded that several attempts were made to poison them.

Notwithstanding these trying physical conditions, Joseph Smith's greater suffering seemed to come from his anguish for the thousands of Latter-day Saints, including his own family, who were being driven from the state under the executive order of Governor Lilburn W. Boggs calling for the extermination of the Mormons (*see* EXTERMINATION ORDER). In a very long, two-part letter to the Church, written between March 20 and March 25, Joseph cried out, "O God, where art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding