

# BMC Year in Review

Book of Mormon Central

January – December 2017

## A Review of 2017

Book of Mormon Central (BMC) accomplished much in 2017. We anticipate many more significant achievements this coming year. This newsletter will summarize 2017 successes and explain 2018 goals.

## Interactive Scripture App

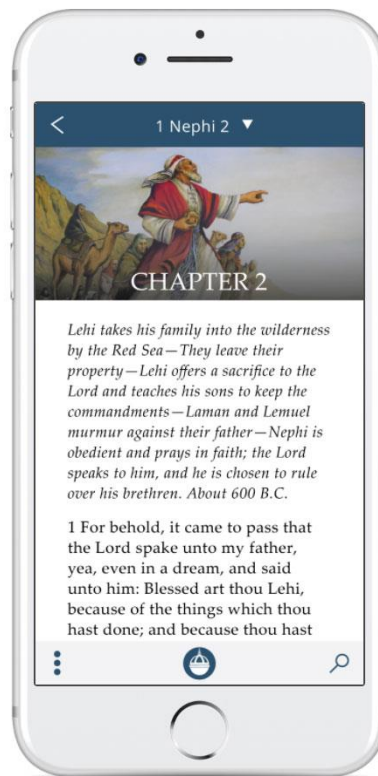
During the latter half of 2017, tremendous BMC resources began flowing to a new Interactive Book of Mormon App. More than thirty people in several countries are currently working on this project. Consultants are directing various technical aspects of the App.

For the first time, the Latter-day Saint scriptures will be available electronically, with abundant enrichment material hyperlinked to the scriptural text.

Material hyperlinked to the scriptural text will include: KnoWhy articles and videos; content from Book of Mormon Central's archive; artwork, textual variants; intertextual links between the Book of Mormon with other LDS scriptures; quotes from General Conference talks and BYU

Devotionals; and insights from Book of Mormon commentaries.

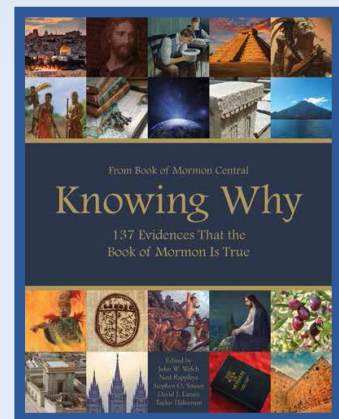
The Interactive Scriptures App will be released on



Prototype of the Interactive Scriptures App

## Publication of Book of Mormon KnoWhy Book

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At the end of 2017, Covenant Communications published a lavishly-illustrated book entitled [Knowing Why – 137 Evidences that the Book of Mormon is True](#). This beautiful book, re-producing BMC's first 137 KnoWhys, is currently appealing to scholars and lay people alike. The book is available online and in LDS bookstores in both printed and narrated audio formats.

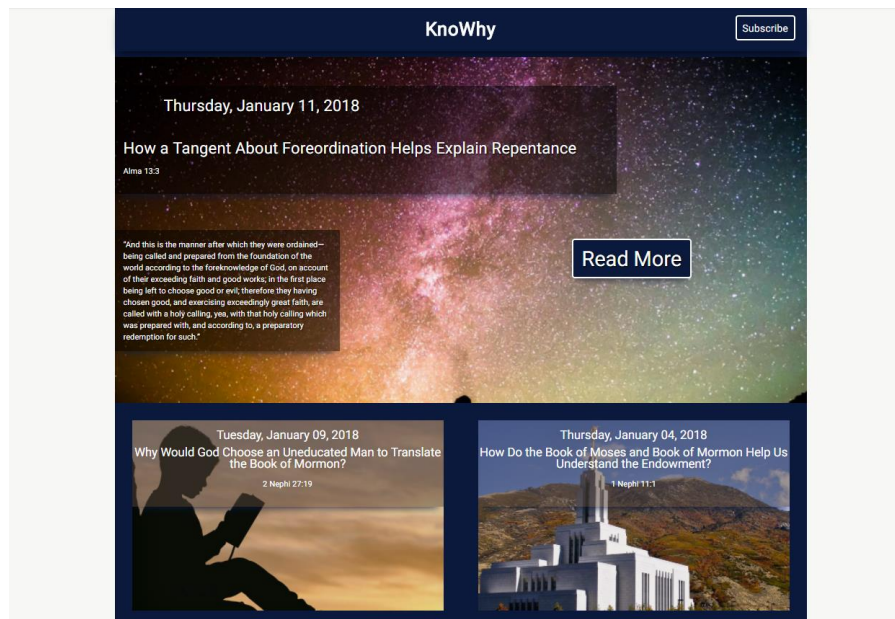
Apple's iOS, Google's Android, and Microsoft's Windows operating systems.

A future web version will be accessible via common internet browsers such as Chrome,

Internet Explorer, Safari, and Firefox.

BMC hopes to formally release version 1.0 of the Interactive Scriptures App during the first half of 2018

## Publication of Weekly KnoWhys



In order to free-up resources to develop the Interactive Scriptures App, BMC during 2017 reduced new KnoWhy publication from five down to three and then two per week. KnoWhy #1 was published on January 1, 2016. KnoWhy #394 was published on December 28, 2017. During 2017, 25 KnoWhys were published directly supporting the Seminary Doctrinal Mastery curriculum and 11 more dealt with the Seminary Topical Essays. A number of 2017 KnoWhys clarified the large role the Book

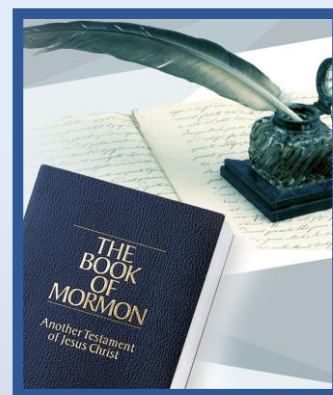
of Mormon played in early LDS Church history.

During 2018, BMC will publish many KnoWhys exploring the deep connections between the Book of Mormon and the Old Testament. Gospel Doctrine classes throughout the world will be studying the Old Testament this coming year, and these focused KnoWhys will undoubtedly be of interest to teachers and students alike.

## Book of Mormon Reading Challenge

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[BMC challenged its users](#) to read the Book of Mormon in the same amount of time it took Joseph Smith to translate it. With Oliver Cowdery as his scribe, Joseph Smith began translating the Book of Mormon on April 7th, 1829, and finished it by July 1st of that year – just 90 days! Hundreds took the challenge and enjoyed reading the Book of Mormon in the order and time-frame that Joseph Smith translated it. BMC plans to repeat the Reading Challenge annually.



## BMC Studios YouTube Channel



All KnowWhys have a short video posted on the BMC YouTube channel. We felt the need for a second channel dedicated to longer, made-for-YouTube videos.

BMC researchers and writers have been gathering and classifying evidences of the Book of Mormon, showing how science over time corroborates the Nephite text.

In 2017 BMC established [BMC Studios](#) to create a new brand

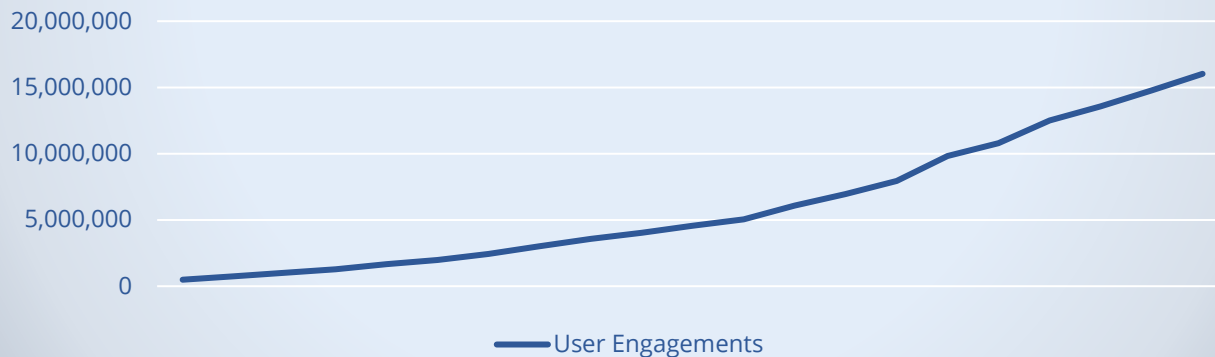
identity for high-quality video content. The BMC Video Team produced 3 evidence videos last year and others are currently in the pipeline.

Viewers seeking up-to-date, well-researched evidences of the Book of Mormon can now find serious and satisfying productions at BMC Studios. These videos are definitely worth watching and sharing.

## Book of Mormon Central User Engagements

BMC has seen a steady rise in user engagements since the inception of the organization. We define a “user engagement” as a view, read, listen, open, like, share, post, comment, tweet, pin, download, etc. of BMC content. In 2016, BMC had 5,540,000 user engagements. We are proud to announce that BMC, with your help, exceeded our 2017 goal and tripled user engagements to 15,840,000. BMC has set another robust goal to triple user engagements again in 2018 to 45 million.

### User Engagements



## Questions and Answers

A “Questions & Answers” section will soon be going live on the BMC website. This feature will give concise answers to frequently asked questions about the Book of Mormon and then refer the

reader to further credible articles or research on the topic. These “Questions & Answers” will be released in batches to show that there have been, and continue to be, serious and scholarly answers to most

queries regarding the Book of Mormon. We anticipate that this “Question & Answer” feature will soon become a subscriber favorite.

394 KnowHys were published in English through the end of 2017. 273 of these were translated and [published in Spanish](#) during 2017. Over 60,000 people follow the [BMC Spanish Facebook page](#). There is a hunger in the LDS Spanish-speaking community for high-quality Book of Mormon content.

On Saturday, November 18th, 2017, the first-ever serious Book of Mormon Conference was held in Mexico City. Avid students of the text came from hundreds of miles away to listen, learn, and share. A small cadre of Book of Mormon scholars is beginning to coalesce in Mexico around Book of Mormon Central en Español.

## Book of Mormon Central's Spanish Initiative

## Book of Mormon Central Devotional Firesides

BMC board and staff members were invited to present devotionals and firesides in 2017 at LDS Institutes and similar gatherings along the Wasatch front; in St. George and Logan, Utah; and in Las Vegas, Nevada; Palo Alto, California; and Southington,

Connecticut. In an effort to encourage engagement with the Book of Mormon, those attending the devotionals were introduced to the BMC website, KnowWhy App, and other BMC products. In addition, attendees enjoyed informative and inspiring messages about this

sacred work of scripture. These firesides were generally well-attended by young adults, college students and their families who are our principal target audience. Several LDS institute directors have asked BMC staff to return for future engagements.



## Chiasmus Conference and Jubilee



Elder Jeffrey R. Holland speaking at the Chiasmus Jubilee

August 16, 2017 marked the 50th anniversary of John W. Welch's discovery of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon. Many consider this ancient literary style of reverse parallelism to be strong evidence that the Book of Mormon is an ancient Hebrew text – just as its authors and the prophet Joseph Smith claim it to be.

To celebrate this event, a [two-day scholarly conference](#) was held in the Joseph Smith Building auditorium on the Brigham Young University campus. Chiasmus scholars from around the world presented at the conference. Conference proceedings are being edited and will appear in a printed publication in August, 2018. Meanwhile, video recordings of the

conference can be viewed on the BMC YouTube channel.

The two-day celebration ended with an evening [Jubilee](#), looking back at the past 50 years of chiasmus scholarship and looking ahead to the next 50 years. The Joseph Smith Building Auditorium was filled to capacity, requiring ushers to direct some of the crowd to pre-arranged overflow seating.

This multi-media event included music and video presentations, in addition to invited speakers who included Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve, BYU President Kevin J. Worthen, Elder Kim B. Clark, Church Commissioner of Education, as well as John

## Book of Mormon Conference 2018

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The annual BMC Conference will be held Saturday, April 7th, 2018 in the Utah Valley Conference Center.

A larger hall has been reserved in anticipation of bigger crowds expected this year. Conference attendees will listen to great speakers and participate in several hands-on experiences with virtual and physical objects.

Winners of the 2018 BMC Art Contest will be announced and finalist art pieces will be displayed.

**When:** April 7, 2018

**Where:** Utah Valley Convention Center

**What:** Book of Mormon speakers, art, activities, and vendors



Utah Valley Convention Center

W. Welch and his wife, Jeannie. The video of Elder Holland's remarkable talk entitled "The Greatness of the Evidence" is the most popular piece on BMC's YouTube channel.

Attendees at the Jubilee enjoyed several "firsts:" (1) the video premier of BMC's "Discovery of Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon;" (2) the first public performance of Betsy Lee Bailey's original vocal composition "How Exquisite was my Joy" performed by Barbara Cramer and James Welch; (3) the unveiling of an original oil painting by Robert Pack depicting a young Elder John W. Welch meeting with Jesuit Priest Paul Gaechter to

discuss chiasmus in the Book of Mormon; and (4) the presentation of the festschrift volume entitled "To Seek the Law of the Lord: Essays in Honor of John W. Welch."

Event sponsors were BMC and BYU Studies. Co-sponsors for the conference and Jubilee included The Interpreter Foundation, The John A. Widtsoe Foundation, BYU Religious Education, and the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship.

Throughout the month of August into mid-September, the general public was invited to view two separate chiasmus exhibits - one at the L. Tom Perry Special Collections area

in the Harold B. Lee Library and another at the Joseph Smith Building.

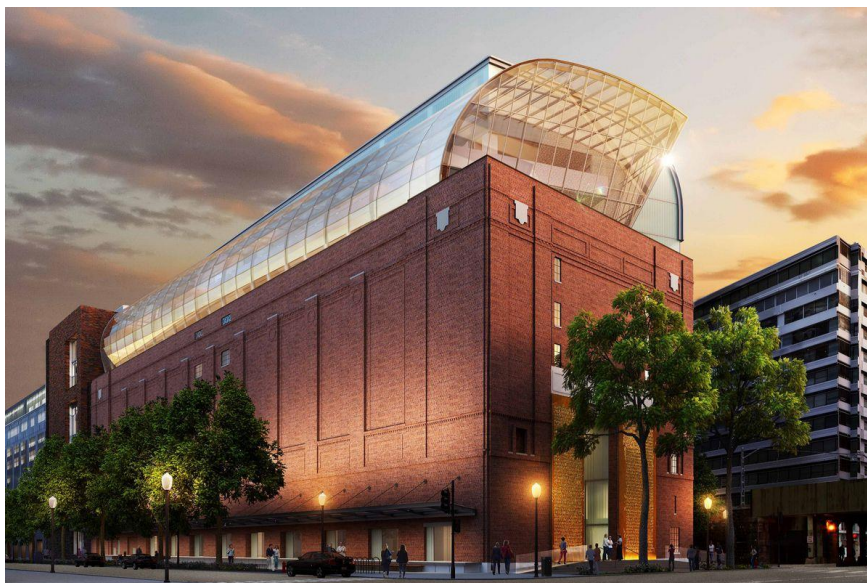


[John W. Welch](#)

Both exhibits had original material and photographs relating to the discovery of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon. Permanent legacies of the chiasmus celebration include the Chiasmus Archive in BYU Special Collections and the Chiasmus Resources website jointly maintained by BMC and BYU Studies.

## Book of Mormon Central Delegation Goes to Washington DC

A BMC delegation spent two days in the new Museum of the Bible in Washington, DC seeing how a world-class facility presents an ancient scriptural text to the public in engaging ways. The BMC representatives were warmly received by museum staff and met with the Director of Content. Museum personnel appreciated the thoughtful impressions, feedback, and suggestions BMC was able to offer from a Mormon perspective.



[Museum of the Bible, Washington DC](#)



## Report on BMC Volunteers

Book of Mormon Central continues to depend on the work and experience of devoted volunteers. These people are invaluable in

improving the quality of KnoWhy scholarship and writing. Volunteers also perform many other tasks necessary to BMC products and

projects. Thank you, volunteers. We could not do what we do without your generous contributions of time and talent.

## Donations to Book of Mormon Central

As a non-profit organization, [BMC depends on donations](#). The BMC mission to share the Book of Mormon with the world in engaging ways would not be possible without caring donors. The staff at Book of Mormon Central are extremely appreciative of our donors' generosity. Thank you. Donations to BMC during 2017 ranged from five dollars to hundreds of thousands of dollars. We appreciate every donor sacrifice. We believe the Book of Mormon deserves support.

Book of Mormon Central has ambitious goals for 2018. With your continuing support, these goals will become reality and many lives will be blessed.

