



Type: Magazine Article

Witnesses to the Book of Mormon

Author(s): Milton R. Hunter

Source: *Improvement Era*, Vol. 73, No. 6 (June 1970), pp. 100–101

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

Abstract: Histories produced by Native Americans during the colonial period of America contain accounts similar to those in the Book of Mormon. *The Works of Ixtlilxochitl* appears to be a Lamanite history. Four other books that may correspond with the Book of Mormon are *The Annals of the Cakchiquels*, *Title of the Lords of Totonicapan*, the *Popul Vuh*, and *Anales de los Xahil*.

you in his hands and went to sleep. But now you are home," she said, "and you can count on it that I will be interested in you as long as I live."

She is gone now, and it is remarkable how often I get the feeling that she is interested still, and forever will be.

Finally I mention *family love*, expressed in so many wonderful ways. Someone once said—it's been often quoted—that the best thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother. I believe this, and that the strongest and surest base for loving others is to love the Lord and to bring the binding and blessing balm of that love into all relationships of the home.

Children have the right to learn that love is the foundation of a good family, and that love cannot exist apart from such qualities as respect, consideration, responsibility, and loyalty. Love is not self-centered and is not self-serving, but is concerned with the well-being

and happiness of others. It is providing for our loved ones an atmosphere of warmth and kindness that accepts and preserves the uniqueness of each as an individual person while building the unity of the home.

Love means friendship and companionship and partnership and unity. It expresses itself in modesty, in generosity, in sensitivity, in courtesy, in counsel, in appropriate compromise. It inspires affection and confidence and trust and self-control. Love, mature love, provides a climate of wholesome, repentant, forgiving consideration. It listens. It hears and senses the needs of another. It can never be separated from character, from unselfishness, from good humor, and from every tender virtue. It must be strongly said of each of these avenues to family felicity that it does not just *happen*—it must be brought about by people who think and care and make the effort.

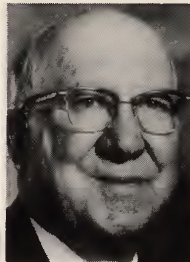
God help us to be more concerned with a high standard of life than with a high standard of living. God help us, while there is time, to take time to do everything we can to bring about now, or in the family we will one day have, by making wise choices now, the unity and strength and sweetness that a home is meant to have. I believe we can do that, or materially move toward bringing it about, through thoughtful family associations, memorable traditions, correct values, wise discipline, and great love.

What will we give our children to remember?

It is likely that what they will remember best is the treasure we unearth from beneath the hearth of our own home.

I know the gospel is true, and that it has been restored, and that it centers in the home. God bless us to strengthen the home, in Jesus' name. Amen. ○

Witnesses to the Book of Mormon



President Milton R. Hunter

Of the First Council of the Seventy

● Shortly before the Prophet Joseph Smith had completed translating the Book of Mormon, Jesus Christ and the Angel Moroni bore witness that the translation was correct and the book was true. Never in the history of the world had such astounding events occurred in relation to a book.

A few years ago an apostle said to me: "It would be a discovery of great significance if one were to find an Indian book which sustained the Book of Mormon."

Such a book exists; in fact, I shall present quotations from four such Indian books produced during the American colonial period that contain materials similar to those found in the Book of Mormon. The Indian writers

add their witness to the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. *Ixtlilxochitl*, an Indian prince who lived in the valley of Mexico, wrote a book containing the history of his ancestors from the time of their arrival in America until the coming of the Spaniards.

He wrote his book from documents inherited from his ancestors. Thus, the *Works of Ixtlilxochitl* constitutes a Lamanite version of the history of the ancient Americans, while the Book of Mormon represents the Nephite version.

The two books have numerous things in common; each verifies the other. For example, the Book of Mormon claims that ancient America was settled first by a group of colonizers called Jaredites, who came from the Tower of Babel.

Ixtlilxochitl also claims that the first settlers to come to America following the flood came from "a very high tower" or the Tower of Babel. Observe how similar the accounts are as I quote from them.

". . . Jared came forth with his brother and their families, with some others and their families, from the great tower, at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, and swore in his wrath that they should be scattered upon all the face of the earth; and according to the word of the Lord the people were scattered." (Eth. 1:33.)

Ixtlilxochitl, the Indian writer, puts it this way:

"And . . . men, multiplying made a

. . . very high tower, in order to shelter themselves in it when the second world should be destroyed.

"When things were at their best, their language was changed and, not understanding each other, they went to different parts of the world." (*Works of Ixtlilxochitl*, cited in Milton R. Hunter and Thomas Stuart Ferguson, *Ancient America and The Book of Mormon*, 1950, p. 24.)

In order that we might make additional comparison of the Book of Mormon and the *Works of Ixtlilxochitl*, we quote the Jaredite record:

". . . the Lord had compassion upon Jared; therefore he did not confound the language of [Jared's people]. . . ." (Eth. 1:35, 37.)

Then the Lord guided Jared's colonists over the land to the seashore and, in barges brought them to America, "into a land which [he declared] is choice above all the lands of the earth." (Eth. 1:42.)

The comparable story in *Ixtlilxochitl* states:

". . . and the Tultecas, who were as many as seven companions and their wives, who understood their language among themselves, came to these parts, having first crossed lands and seas, living in caves and undergoing great hardships, until they came to this land, which they found good and fertile for their habitation." (*Ixtlilxochitl*, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.)

Both the Book of Mormon and the *Works of Ixtlilxochitl* claim that two other groups of colonists migrated from the Old World to America. The first of these groups came from Jerusalem in 600 B.C. They split into two groups, called Nephites and Lamanites. The latter group became dark or bronze colored, such as the American Indians. The third group, the Mulekites, left Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and later merged with the Nephites.

The Book of Mormon speaks of the Nephites as "a white and delightsome people." (2 Ne. 5:21.)

Ixtlilxochitl, speaking of this second group of colonists, whom he called Toltecs, said:

"These kings were high of stature, and white, and bearded like the Spaniards. . . ." (*Ixtlilxochitl*, *op. cit.*, p. 240.)

Shortly after Don Pedro Pizarro and his conquistadores conquered Guatemala, or about 1550 A.D., the Indians of that land wrote four books. They were: *The Annals of the Cakchiquels*, *Title of the Lords of Totonicapan*, *Popol Vuh*, and the *Anales de los Xahil*. These books all give added testimony to the Book of Mormon.

Each of these four books agrees with the *Works of Ixtlilxochitl*, and they

"All of these Indian traditions and writings bear witness to the visits made by the resurrected Savior to America"

all verify the Book of Mormon, which claims that the ancient Americans came from the other side of the sea. A ship was built at a place called Bountiful under the direction of Nephi, the youngest of four brothers who left Jerusalem with their father, Lehi. Under Nephi's direction, the colonists came to America in that ship.

In the *Anales de los Xahil*, we read:

"How shall we cross the sea, oh our younger brother?" they said. And we answered: "We shall cross in the ships. . . ." Then we entered the ships. . . . then we traveled eastward and arrived there.'" (*Anales de los Xahil*, Translation y notes de George Raymond, Miguel Angel Asturias, y J. M. Gonzales Mendoza, National University, Mexico, 1946.)

The Quiche Indians who wrote *Totonicapan* declared that they were "descendants of Israel, of the same language and the same customs. . . . They were the sons of Abraham and Jacob." (*Title of the Lords of Totonicapan*, p. 170.)

The Book of Mormon made a similar claim. The Nephites, Lamanites, and Mulekites came from Jerusalem, and so they were descendants of Israel or sons of Abraham and Jacob.

The claim is made in the *Totonicapan* that the Lord gave the ancient leader of this group a "present called Giron-Galgal," which guided the ancestors of the Indians across the ocean to their new land. (*Ibid.*) This gift is comparable to the Liahona, which was given to Father Lehi by the Lord to serve as a compass to guide his people from Jerusalem to America. (1 Ne. 16:10, 27; 18:12; D&C 17:1.)

It is of significance to note that Ixtlilxochitl describes the terrible storm that occurred in America at the time of the crucifixion of Christ, which confirms the Book of Mormon account. To quote Ixtlilxochitl:

". . . the sun and the moon eclipsed, and the earth trembled, and the rocks broke, and many other things and signs took place. . . . This happened in the year of ce Calli, which, adjusting the

count to ours, comes to be at the same time when Christ our Lord suffered, and they say it happened during the first days of the year." (*Ixtlilxochitl*, *op. cit.*, p. 190.)

It is important to note that the Book of Mormon account also places the great storm exactly at the time Jesus Christ was on the cross and during the first days of the year. (3 Ne. 8:5-19.)

Following this terrible storm and three days of darkness, the Nephites gathered together around the temple in Bountiful. They heard a voice speak three times from heaven. The third time they perceived that it said:

"Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him." (3 Ne. 11:7.)

They all looked up toward heaven and saw a "man descending out of heaven . . . clothed in a white robe." (3 Ne. 11:8.) He came down and stood in their midst and said: "Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world." (3 Ne. 11:10.)

During the following month or more he appeared to the Nephites many times, gave them the priesthood, and taught them the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So impressive was the influence of the resurrected Lord on the ancient Americans that when the Spaniards came, they found all the Indian tribes throughout the western hemisphere ardently worshiping his memory. During the American colonial period everywhere, traditions were found that told of a white and bearded God who visited the ancestors of the Indians in ancient America. All of these Indian traditions and writings bear witness to the visits made by the resurrected Savior to America, as recorded in the Book of Mormon.

I bear my testimony, as a result of reading the Book of Mormon, that the Holy Ghost has born witness to me that it is true. I testify that it contains the word of God, that it is a true history of the ancient Americans. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○