

MORMONS ARE COMMITTED TO THE BOOK OF MORMON. NO MATTER WHAT, IT'S TRUE. LOOK AT THESE INSTRUCTIONS BY A "LIVING PROPHET" TO HIS FOLLOWERS, THE MILLIONS OF MEMBERS OF THE MORMON CHURCH, REPUBLISHED IN JUNE 2000 IN THE CHURCH'S FLAGSHIP MAGAZINE, *THE ENSIGN*.

Celebrating its healthy leader (who was 90 at the time and died 8 years later, to be succeeded by the current prophet, Thomas S. Monson) the magazine published "Recurring Themes of President Hinckley." From then-president and prophet Gordon B. Hinckley:

- "Our membership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a precious thing. It isn't a simple or ordinary thing; this is the Church and kingdom of God on earth. This is His work in which we are engaged, and there is no more important work in the world than this work. It concerns the eternal salvation of the sons and daughters of God, those living, those who have lived upon the earth, and those who will yet live."
- "Believe in this Church."
- "...Believe in the Book of Mormon. Be not faithless in the knowledge that the priesthood of God has been restored to the earth. Believe in goodness. Believe in yourselves. Believe that each of you is a child of God with a divine birthright."
- "Believe in the Book of Mormon as another witness of the Son of God. ...The Bible is the testament of the Old World. The Book of Mormon is the testament of the New World.... I can't understand why those of other faiths cannot accept the Book of Mormon. One would think that they would be looking for additional witnesses to the great and solemn truths of the Bible. We have that witness.... Let us read it. Let us dwell upon its truths."

COMMENTS. **Some underlying assumptions in Mormon religion.** •Every person on earth is a literal descendant of God, lived with their divine parents before Creation, and now possesses divine attributes and potential and a claim on the blessings of God. •The Mormon church is the one and only true church on earth today, a restoration of Christ's original church, which had ceased to exist some 1500-or-so years before Joseph Smith rediscovered it in the 19th century. •The Bible alone is not enough, requiring the additions and clarification provided by the Book of Mormon (and, incidentally, other Mormon scriptures). •Some time after death, everyone will enjoy life in a glorious kingdom, but only through the work of the current Mormon church and its members will those living and dead have opportunity for the most glorious kingdom and eternal life.

Does the Mormon I know really believe this? You'll have to ask—or better yet, listen before you ask. Many Mormons may not *believe*, but *accept* Mormonism's stories: •How the Book of Mormon was discovered; how it was written (Mormons would say "translated"). •That rewards in the hereafter are earned during mortality. •That God loves everyone because they are His children from time immemorial. •That their religion is the best place to raise a family and enjoy a safe and wholesome lifestyle.

AN ASIDE. Here are some people and places named in the Book of Mormon text. No independent record of them exists.

Zarahemla, the land of **King Mosiah** and **King Benjamin** somewhere in the Americas, where Christ visited after His resurrection, healing, teaching, and appointing leaders for the church in America.

Nephi, a great prophet from the Mideast who established the **Nephite** nation in the Americas.

Jaredites. Another nation in the ancient Americas.

Moron—pronounced "MOR-un," not "MOR-on."

Moroni—pronounced "mo-RO-ni," with long vowels.

Coriantor, son of Moron, not to be confused with **Coriantumr**, "a king over all the land."

Moronihah, a righteous general, among the **Lamanites** (people described by the Mormon church in its *Book of Mormon Reader* for children as lazy and wicked).

Other people: **Alma**, **Mosiah I & Mosiah II**, **Zeezrom & Zoram**, **Helaman**, **Limhi**, **King Noah**, etc.

A SUGGESTION OR TWO. •It's okay to ask Mormons what Gospel truth you might lack because you do not read the Book of Mormon or follow their prophet. Ask what essential truth they have learned from their current prophet in, say, the last month or year.

•Mormons might benefit if they hear you say that you follow a true living prophet, your Lord Jesus Christ, with whom you always have direct and personal access. Ask them if that is their experience with their church's "living prophet."