Editor's Introduction

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Abstract Introduction to the first issue of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies.*

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Since its initial publication in 1830, the Book of Mormon has played a key role in the life and thought of members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Many have noted an increased interest in the Book of Mormon in recent years, doubtless due to the stress that has been placed upon its study by President Ezra Taft Benson and other General Authorities.

In light of this increased interest, we have thought it appropriate that there be a journal dedicated solely to the serious and faithful study of the Book of Mormon in its historical, linguistic, cultural, and theological context. The *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* is just such a periodical. We are pleased to present here the first issue of this *Journal.* The *Journal* is itself divided into two sections. The first section contains articles of greater length. The second section contains "Notes and Communications," shorter pieces varying in length from a single paragraph up to a few pages. Here, especially, we wish to include ideas and insights too short for a full-length article but still deserving circulation and critical examination. As is the case with most scholarly publications, the *Journal* will have no "Letters to the Editor" section. However, responses by readers to specific ideas presented either in the "Articles" or "Notes and Communications" sections may be deemed appropriate in the "Notes and Communications" of a subsequent issue.

The editors of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* intend to be "no respecter of persons" in their selection of papers to be included in forthcoming issues. We claim no privileged access to the Book of Mormon through specific academic training—the Book of Mormon is a volume that should be accessible to all—nor do we insist that those publishing in it have certain academic credentials. We only insist that the work be rigorous, carefully thought out, and well presented. We hope that the *Journal* will represent the work of serious students of the Book of Mormon from a wide variety of backgrounds, and not

merely the product of established scholars. We wish to encourage all of those who may have articles or notes that they wish to submit for a forthcoming issue of the *Journal* to do so (the proper style for submitting these papers is given at the end of this issue). As is the case with most academic journals, each submission to the *Journal* will be refereed. Forthcoming volumes of the *Journal* will appear in two issues, one in the spring and the other in the fall.

The best test of new ideas is, of course, in the marketplace of ideas. The *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* will provide just such a marketplace for serious, faithful ideas and insights about the Book of Mormon.