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New Series Launched with Book on DNA Research

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INSIGHTS

The Newsletter of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship

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New Series Launched with Book on DNA Research


In the last few years, the topic of how DNA research fits in with the text of the Book of Mormon has become increasingly divisive. On the one hand, critics of the Church seize on recent DNA studies to claim that Native Americans are descended from Asian, not Middle Eastern, ancestors. On the other hand, faithful LDS scholars, including some of the most respected DNA researchers in the country, say the data from recent research is insufficient to deny or confirm the claims of the Book of Mormon.

The Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship has published several articles dealing with DNA and the Book of Mormon in its *FARMS Review* and *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*. Now, for the first time, all of these articles will be available in one volume, entitled *The Book of Mormon and DNA Research*.

Edited by Daniel C. Peterson, *The Book of Mormon and DNA Research* is the first volume in a new series, The Best of the Maxwell Institute. This series will publish collections of articles on persis-

tently important themes. *The Book of Mormon and DNA Research* will appear this summer and other volumes will follow periodically.

This new publication includes contributions by Book of Mormon scholars John L. Sorenson and Matthew Roper, who address the complex cultural, historical, and theological questions surrounding the Book of Mormon text. John M. Butler, the lead scientist in developing DNA tests used in identifying the victims of the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, discusses the difficulties with conducting ancestry studies, especially on ancient populations.

Other contributors include Michael F. Whiting, a BYU professor of biology; David A. McClellan, a geneticist; D. Jeffrey Meldrum and Trent D. Stephens, biologists; Brian Stubbs, who studies population dynamics; and David G. Stewart Jr., a medical doctor. The studies offer different perspectives on how to deal with the DNA questions surrounding the Book of Mormon. However, many of the authors also emphasize that the authenticity of the Book of Mormon lies in the realm of faith, not science. 

Institute Supports Graduates and Undergraduates

The Maxwell Institute continues to encourage and support the work of graduate and undergraduate students through two funds.

Nibley Fellowship Program

Each year at this time we remind graduate students about the Nibley Fellowship Program and its application deadline. Named in honor of the late eminent Latter-day Saint scholar Hugh Nibley, this program provides financial aid to students enrolled in accredited PhD programs in areas of study directly related to the work and mission of the Maxwell Institute, particularly work done under the auspices of one department of the Institute, the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, such as studies of the Book of Mormon, the Book of

Abraham, the Old and New Testaments, early Christianity, ancient temples, and related subjects. Applicants cannot be employed at the Maxwell Institute or be related to an Institute employee.

Those interested in applying for the first time or who wish to renew their fellowships for the 2008–2009 academic year should know that the deadline for submitting a completed application form and all supporting documentation is **August 31, 2008**. Guidelines and an application form are available by downloading from maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/nibleyfellowships or by e-mailing nibleyfellowships@byu.edu.

The Maxwell Institute awarded Nibley Fellowships to the following graduate students for the 2007–2008 academic year:

Continuing Nibley Fellows are **Jared William Anderson**, history of the Bible, Department of

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