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The Editor's Notebook

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NEAL A. MAXWELL INSTITUTE
FOR RELIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

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Title The Editor's Notebook

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Abstract Introduction to this issue.

THE EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Starting with volume 7, the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* takes a new direction and changes to a different format in the hands of a new staff. Its purpose will be the same as it has always been—to shed fresh light on the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ by encouraging and publishing studies of high scholarly quality. New findings on the Bible and other scriptures of the restored church may also be published, especially when they relate to the Book of Mormon. We intend that the *Journal* become the publication that people rely on for current, key information from a perspective of faith regarding all significant developments in Book of Mormon and related scholarly investigation.

The new format will serve two audiences. The first is scholars presenting their findings to fellow scholars. The second group is the far wider readership consisting of all who want to become better informed about research on the scriptures without having to decipher technical jargon. The staff will assist our expert authors to say what they have to say in language plain enough that it will communicate clearly to both audiences—the small group of fellow scholars and the tens of thousands of intelligent nonspecialist readers. We plan to use superior contemporary design and attractive illustrations to help achieve that clarity.

We intend to solicit articles for the *Journal* from well-informed researchers. Anyone is welcome to present an idea for a piece that they might wish to prepare; however, only rarely will we use an article submitted to us in complete form without advance consultation about our needs. Occasionally we will reprint a piece published elsewhere if we consider that it deserves wider attention than it seems to have received.

One concern will be to balance the *Journal's* contents. To us, the exciting field of Book of Mormon studies uses methods and ideas from a variety of disciplines, such as anthropology, archaeology, art, history, linguistics, literary analysis, psychology, sociology, and the natural sciences. None of the work stemming from these academic disciplines in connection with scripture is vital if a person's only concern is using the sacred books for spiritual enlightenment and guidance. But we believe that expert studies can shed helpful new light on the inspired texts as well as on the historical and cultural scenes in which they were produced. Using facts, methods, and approaches from scholarship or science can help substantially those who desire to maximize their understanding of the sacred writings. At the same time, we hope that much of what we publish will be inspirational to our readers in addition to adding to their knowledge.

This first and only issue of volume 7 has been delayed because the new format has required a lot of learning on our part. Present plans call for two issues per year, but if our efforts are greeted enthusiastically enough by readers, authors, and sponsors, we may increase the frequency in subsequent years.

Our sincere thanks for help rendered go to many. First to the FARMS officers and board of trustees for their leap of faith in committing major resources in support of our new concept for the *Journal*. Our editorial advisory board and a number of reviewers of manuscripts have also contributed. My co-editors have never wavered in their support. The content and appearance of this issue owe much to Melvin J. Thorne, FARMS Director of Publications, and his staff, and to our designers from BYU Publications and Graphics.

Please send us your reactions to our efforts; we hope to improve our product continually. We do not intend to publish correspondence that we receive, however.

To the scriptural motto that FARMS has adopted for the Foundation's work ("by study and also by faith"), we now add our own footnote, "and enjoy!"

Meet the New Editors

Editor John L. Sorenson, emeritus professor of anthropology at BYU, holds B.S. and M.A. degrees from BYU, an M.S. from California Institute of Technology, and a Ph.D. in anthropology from UCLA. He is author and editor of many books and articles on the Book of Mormon.



Associate Editor M. Gerald Bradford received his Ph.D. from the University of California, Santa Barbara, in the field of religious studies. Before becoming Research Director for FARMS, he was director for the office of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences located at the University of California at Irvine.



Associate Editor S. Kent Brown, professor of ancient scripture at BYU, is director of its Ancient Studies program. He directed the BYU Jerusalem Center for three years. His Ph.D. is from Brown University in biblical and early Christian studies.

