



7-31-2002

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Abunuwara, Ehab (2002) "Into the Desert: An Arab View of the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*: Vol. 11 : No. 1 , Article 11.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jbms/vol11/iss1/11>

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NEAL A. MAXWELL INSTITUTE
FOR RELIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY • PROVO, UTAH

Title Into the Desert: An Arab View of the Book of Mormon

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Reference *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 11/1 (2002): 60-65, 111.

ISSN 1065-9366 (print), 2168-3158 (online)

Abstract The Book of Mormon culture is found to be strikingly similar to that of the Middle East. An Arab Latter-day Saint tells his experience with the Book of Mormon and how he is able to relate to the stories within its pages because of his cultural origins. Among the congruities discussed are the structure of the family, the concept of taking oaths, the behavior of women, and the danger of the desert. Together, these points demonstrate the worth of the Book of Mormon and show how each reader is able to draw from his or her own cultural background in order to infer different messages.

Into the Desert

An Arab View of the Book of Mormon



A Bedouin tent contrasted with the modern, bustling city of Nazareth. Photo of Nazareth by Chad Emmett.

Ehab Abunuwara

IN HIS ARTICLE “A Māori view of the Book of Mormon,” Louis Midgley observes that Latter-day Saints around the world tend to read in the Book of Mormon a reflection of their own cultural and personal experiences.¹ He draws on his missionary experiences among the Māori people in New Zealand in the early 1950s as support for his view. According to Midgley, the Māori acknowledged seeing in the Nephites’ cycles of righteousness and apostasy a likeness of their own personal struggles with life’s temptations.

This essay is a personal reflection on the Book of Mormon from an Arab viewpoint. It is modeled on Midgley’s work but with some limitations. The Middle East remains one of the few areas in the world where the reach of missionary work continues to be very confined. Currently, small Arabic-speaking branches exist in Lebanon and Jordan. On the other hand, a large number of people of Arab origin have joined the church outside the Middle East; so even though it would be hard to speak of an Arab LDS culture in the Middle East, members of Arab or Middle Eastern origins² can provide insights into understanding and reading the Book of Mormon from a Middle Eastern point of view. My hope is that such insights will enrich our understanding of the book’s Middle Eastern origins and cultural imprints.

put in *Reader’s Digest*. I was living in Nazareth and was in the middle of a work year between high school and college when I bought a copy of *Reader’s Digest* in an attempt to improve my English. I vaguely remember the content of the insert—something to do with principles of good living. My English was so poor that I did not even realize that the insert was of a religious nature. At the end of the insert was a referral card for a free Book of Mormon. The book was in English and it was free, so I filled out the card and mailed it to Salt Lake City.

Months later I began attending the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. My name and address on the referral card had been forwarded to a missionary couple who represented the church in Israel. On a Friday morning in December 1981, I met with them and received a copy of an Arabic translation of selections from the Book of Mormon. At the time I was not looking for religion. I come from a Greek Orthodox Christian Arab family, but my religious education had come from weekly religion classes at the Baptist school in Nazareth, a private school sponsored by the American Southern Baptist Convention where we had daily chapel meetings and weekly Bible study classes. This was the extent of my religious education. Sunday church attendance was not a part of my life. Before giving me the Book of Mormon



A number of images and emotions have resonated within me as I have read and interacted with the Book of Mormon for the last two decades. I first learned about the Book of Mormon 22 years ago from the back of an insert that the church used to

selections, the missionaries told me the story of Joseph Smith’s first vision, which struck me as remarkable. After about a two-hour visit, the couple surprised me by showing me a shortcut from where they lived to the campus, and we then made



Ehab Abunuwara, as a child in Nazareth, stands at the feet of his mother in this family photograph.

arrangements for me to attend a meeting at the Jerusalem branch the next day.

The Book of Mormon selections was a thin publication. I don't have any memory of when or how fast I read it. I think it contained parts of 1 and 3 Nephi and of the book of Alma. Curiosity and the novelty of the experience were probably my main drive during the next few weeks as I met with the missionaries and attended church meetings with them. I remember reading Alma 32, where Alma discusses faith in terms of an experiment of planting a seed. Those were among the few verses that I underlined in the book. At some point I decided to follow Alma's words, so without telling anyone, I began the experiment. A short time later I received my spiritual witness of the truth of the church and knew that God wanted me to become a member of it. The Book of Mormon was now a part of my life, my story. But Alma 32 is not the part of the book that speaks to me as an Arab.

As I consider how I respond to this book as an Arab, I am drawn to the story of Lehi and his family as detailed in 1 Nephi. The conflicts, struggles, and fears of Lehi and his family as they make their way out of Jerusalem and into the desert evoke in me vivid imagery that is strongly related to my cultural origins. The actual telling of the story of Lehi and his family in the desert is done in only a few verses while entire chapters cover that period of the family's experience. It is obvious that Nephi was much more interested in recording the spiritual context of the family's journey—the visions, sermons, and exhortations. Still, those few verses on the desert experience bring about intimate, personal, and emotive images. I believe that even though these events took place millennia ago, their sociogeographical and cultural context seems to transcend the passage of time. I am intrigued when I reflect how much these Middle Eastern cultural themes of desert travel, grief, bonds of oaths, and family structure impressed themselves on Joseph Smith's mind.

Laman and Lemuel

Reading the first few chapters of 1 Nephi has always left me with many questions concerning the motives and emotions of the main characters. This is probably due to the psychologist in me seeking for the deeper meaning behind the actions, especially when those actions seem to defy common sense. Such is the behavior of Nephi's elder brothers Laman and Lemuel, who in spite of witnessing miracles and angels resisted their father's wishes and fought against their brother Nephi.

The most sympathy these two characters receive from the average Book of Mormon reader is a shake of the head at their "stiffneckedness." But I read their story as a tragedy and overturning of the family structure. The status of eldest brother within a Middle Eastern family is culturally entrenched and derives its strength from the culture's patriarchal structure. The eldest brother is the father-in-waiting and demands equal respect with the father. I think that it would have been even more so in the preindustrial society of Lehi's time, when the first son would most likely have followed his father's career as he grew into the family's business or trade.

Lehi was surely troubled by the tensions between his sons. He understood his elder sons' need for respect, especially Laman's need in that regard. After leaving Jerusalem and traveling in the wilderness

near the Red Sea for three days, the group camped. Lehi named the river there “Laman” after his oldest son and the valley “Lemuel” after his second son. I see this as a sign of Lehi’s offering proper respect to these brothers as well as trying to subdue their resistance to his plans.

Laman and Lemuel’s resistance to Nephi’s leadership is disastrous to them and their children for generations to come, but is it much different from the conflicts between Cain and Abel, Esau and Jacob, and Joseph and his brothers? I wonder whether those stories of earlier sibling rivalry did not weigh heavily on Laman and Lemuel and fuel their sense of injustice and resentment as they saw themselves evolving into the role of the rejected, displaced elder brothers.

Oath Taking

The Book of Mormon is filled with stories about bond relationships that rest on oaths. Most of these appear in negative contexts, as part of secret and evil-doing societies. But in 1 Nephi we read the story of Zoram, the servant of Laban. After Nephi killed Laban and disguised himself as Laban, he used Zoram to gain access to Laban’s treasury and the plates of brass. Nephi then led Zoram outside the city gate, and when he had to reveal his identity to Zoram, he was able to bind him by an oath to follow him and

turned against Nephi. I think that Zoram remained loyal to Nephi at least in part because of his oath with him.

Whenever I read this story, I am reminded of my years as a teenager when my grandmother would call me to her and proceed to put me under oath that I would do her bidding before she even told me what she wanted. I still remember the feeling of resistance that this generated within me. I must have known that whatever errands she thought to ask of me would not have been much trouble. But taking an oath imposed a much more demanding requirement on me. It was something of an archaic experience for my generation but still very real, evoking a sense of solemn duty and obligation that could not be shirked.

Recently, as I was reading in the Book of Mormon, I came across the story of Amalickiah, a king of the Lamanites who was a Nephite by origin. When Amalickiah heard of his army’s defeat at the hands of the Nephites, he was “exceedingly wroth, and he did curse God, and also Moroni, swearing with an oath that he would drink his blood” (Alma 49:27). As I read, I found myself translating the words into Arabic as if that were how they were intended to be written. I have known English for many years now, but still I am not sure that I know how to curse God in English or that I have ever heard anybody do that.

*But taking an oath imposed a much more demanding requirement on me.
It was something of an archaic experience for my generation but still very real, evoking
a sense of solemn duty and obligation that could not be shirked.*

take part in his family’s journey into the desert. In fact, Nephi spoke to the servant Zoram with an oath, promising him freedom as well as safety and companionship if he would go with them. In return, Zoram gave an oath to Nephi that he would stay with them. From any rational consideration, Zoram was under great duress, and whatever he agreed to do at that moment could not be seen as binding. Still, Nephi wrote that “when Zoram had made an oath unto us, our fears did cease concerning him” (1 Nephi 4:37). After that oath, Zoram’s loyalty to Nephi was never in question, even in the most dire of situations when Laman and Lemuel physically

Nor have I heard anyone make an oath to drink someone’s blood. But in Arabic both expressions are common, and, unfortunately, I have heard both. On a preconscious level, that verse was more meaningful to me in Arabic than in English.

The Daughters of Ishmael

One of the sharpest cultural differences I have experienced between American culture and mine is the attitude toward grief for the dead. My culture’s personal and outward expression of grief over death is very intense, and for women it is accompanied with symbols and restrictions that can last for years.

When Ishmael died during the desert journey, his daughters “did mourn exceedingly” (1 Nephi 16:35). Their grief and anguish intensified the pain they had felt during the months of desert travel to such an extent that they drove the men to another rebellion against Lehi and Nephi and to another threat to return to Jerusalem. It is interesting that Nephi did not make a distinction between his wife and her sisters at this point. It seems that the grief and anger were so intense that only the intervention of the Lord’s voice was able to quell the rebellion. The Lord chastised them and brought about repentance, followed by blessings and food (see 1 Nephi 16:39). It seems that the Lord also brought much comfort to the group, so that the place where they buried Ishmael, Nahom (a name derived from the Hebrew root *NHM*, “to comfort”), carried meaning for them thereafter.

In a somewhat parallel situation, the only time that Sariah murmured against her husband was when she thought her sons were dead after Lehi sent them back to Jerusalem for the brass plates. In the words of Nephi, she “truly had mourned” for them (1 Nephi 5:1). It was in her sorrow and grief that she complained against Lehi and called him a visionary man who had brought about the death of her sons. The point is that her sorrow was deeply personal and very intense, for if she were to lose her sons, she would see her own life as having no more worth.

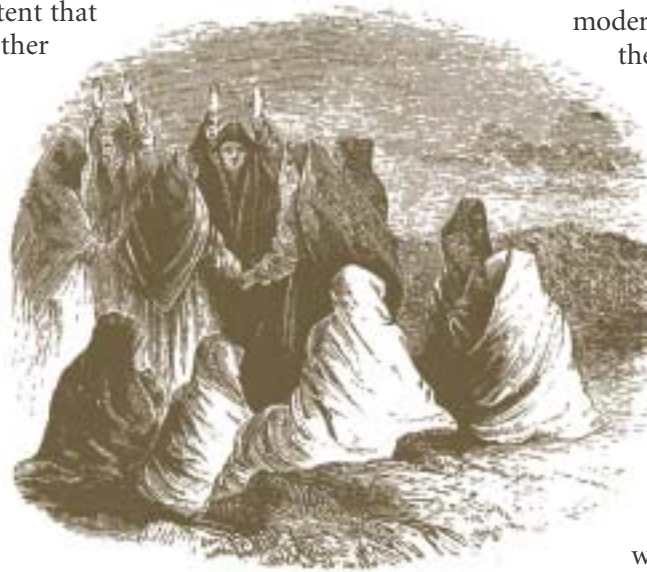
Into the Desert

During recent trips to Qatar and Egypt, I had the chance of spending time in the desert. Even though

I traveled in reliable cars and enjoyed modern means of communication, the desert was uninviting and formidable. It stretches endlessly, barren and monotonous with a harsh climate. Such a route must have been much more inhospitable and treacherous to Lehi’s band. At that time, the Arabian desert was sparsely populated.

Off the beaten path, its inhabitants were mostly nomads who accumulated wealth by raiding and pillaging other tribes. When Lehi led his family out of Jerusalem, he wisely left his gold and silver behind. Such wealth would only have marked them as an easy and profitable target. Of course, their journey across the desert would not have been possible without the aid of the Liahona, and still the trek was fraught with difficulty. It took the group eight years to cross an area that would take an experienced traveler about four months.

Nephi described the afflictions the family suffered, including hunger, thirst, and fatigue. In one remarkable entry, he wrote that they had to eat their meat raw, probably to avoid exposing themselves to danger by lighting a fire and thereby attracting the attention of marauders (see 1 Nephi 17:2, 12). These trials and difficulties underscore a sharp Middle Eastern demographical division between city dwellers and nomads. I imagine that Lehi and his



Middle Eastern women mourning at a grave.



A Bedouin kitchen inside a tent. Courtesy Ray L. Huntington.

people were, like me, city dwellers who only wanted to survive the desert. Though this division has largely narrowed since the formation of the modern Arab states and the beginning of the oil boom, the desert and its nomads retain their mystique in the Arab subconsciousness.

A Book for Our Days

One major characteristic of the Book of Mormon is that it was compiled with our times in mind. The lessons, sermons, and stories are for us to learn and apply in our lives. If there is a theme that has dominated the psyche of the Middle East for the last 55 years, it has been the Arab-Israeli conflict. As I became a member of the church and then attended Brigham Young University, I could not escape the political and cultural leanings in America toward the Middle East, informed in part by religious beliefs about the Lord's covenant with the house of Israel and the return of Jews to the land of their forebears. How does the Book of Mormon fit into this picture for me as an Arab Christian? It was with great personal relief that I found these promises clarified plainly and repeatedly in the pages of the Book of Mormon: in the words of Nephi (see 1 Nephi 19:14–15), Jacob (see 2 Nephi 6:11; 2 Nephi 10:7), and the Savior (see 3 Nephi 20:30–33, 46). In all these writings it is clear that God welcomes the return of Jews to their ancient homeland. It is also clear that he does so with conditions, including a belief in Christ. For example, Jacob wrote, “When the day cometh that they [the Jews] shall believe in me, that I am Christ, then have I covenanted with their fathers that they shall be restored in the flesh, upon the earth, unto the lands of their inheritance” (2 Nephi 10:7).

For me, this is one example of the wonder and importance of the Book of Mormon: that it makes clear what is often muddled in the Bible. The story of the peoples of the Book of Mormon extends the

story of the Israelites in the Bible. It rehearses the journey of a chosen people and their interaction with God. But in the Book of Mormon, there is not a chosen people but chosen peoples—the Jaredites, the Nephites, the Lamanites, and the Mulekites, among others.

As John the Baptist told crowds at the river Jordan, “Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham” (Matthew 3:9). The principle of being chosen is a universal one in the Book of Mormon, which makes clear that it is not who I am but my relationship with God that is important. Whenever Book of Mormon peoples were righteous, the divisions of the “-ites” disappeared, only to reappear in times of wickedness (see 4 Nephi 1:17). This is a very important message for people in the Middle East, where Moslems, Christians, and Jews with their sects and divisions live side by side. It reminds me of one of the great sayings in Islam—“No virtue to an Arab over non-Arab except in piety”—which means that no person is better than another and that the highest worth of a human being comes in living a truly religious life. This saying became current when the newly organized Arab-Moslems conquered and converted other nations to their new religion and there was a danger that the Arab lineage was turning into an elite class that might undermine the universality of humankind under Islam.

I hasten to add that other Arab members of the church might have different reactions to the scriptural passages I have discussed and will likely have additional insights regarding the events recorded in the Book of Mormon. As Midgley observed, the Book of Mormon can impress on its readers different messages, depending on their cultural backgrounds and life experiences. As I have considered the Book of Mormon in that light, I have come to appreciate more its richness and depth. ■

handed down from one generation to another? Why would the Lord allow a people to have two sets of interpreters? Where did Moroni leave Mosiah's other interpreters, if not with the gold plates (Joseph Smith found only one set)?

7. Hugh Nibley, in trying to solve the seeming anachronism, suggested that Benjamin in his last years had a share in the record keeping of the 24 plates with his son Mosiah. Besides the possibility that the sealed record and the 24 plates were separate records, this is rather unlikely since Benjamin was probably already dead or, if he still lived, in his very last months. Why would Moroni particularly refer to Benjamin's very short joint record keeping of the Jaredite plates if Mosiah had already been given custody of all the records and sacred artifacts three years earlier? See Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 7.

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1. See Louis Midgley, "A Maori View of the Book of Mormon," *JBMS* 8/1 (1999): 4–11.
2. I make a distinction between Arab and Middle Eastern to acknowledge the non-Arab ethnic groups that exist in the Middle East and that have been or are exposed to missionary work, including Iranians and Armenians.

Women in the Book of Mormon: Inclusion, Exclusion, and Interpretation
Camille S. Williams

1. Phyllis A. Bird, *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities: Women and Gender in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 6–7. While Professor Bird's comments are publishing on the Hebrew Bible, I believe her notion of dialogue with the text can be expanded to include the ways we approach the scriptures of the restored church. Using the tools of modern biblical scholarship, Sidney B. Sperry, Hugh W. Nibley, and the scholars at FARMS have contributed immensely to our attempts to find reasonably undistorted reconstructions of the Book of Mormon writers' and compilers' worldviews.
2. Sharon H. Ringe, "When Women Interpret the Bible," in *The Women's Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (London: SPCK, 1992), 1–2.
3. See Katharine Bartlett, "Feminist Legal Methods," reprinted, with deletions of text and notes, from *Harvard Law Review* 829 (1990) in *Feminist Legal Theory: Readings in Law and Gender*, ed. Katharine Bartlett and Rosanne Kennedy (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1991), 371.
4. See John L. Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs: Women of the Old Testament among Biblical Commentators from Philo through the Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3, 222–35.
5. Alice Bach, ed., *Women in the Hebrew Bible: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1999), xiii.
6. Esther Fuchs, "Status and Role of Female Heroines in the Biblical Narrative," in *Women in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Bach, 77.
7. Bird, *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities*, 9.
8. *Ibid.*, 82–83.
9. See, for example, Robert C. Solomon,

The Big Questions: A Short Introduction to Philosophy, 3rd ed. (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990).

10. While published discussion of women in the Book of Mormon has focused on the small number of named women, and their mostly unknown roles in the narratives of these peoples, interpreters interested in women in the Book of Mormon may also ask, for example: Is there a woman or woman's point of view in this text? (The places where women do not appear in the text can be as significant as the places where they do appear.) How are women portrayed in this text? Who has the power in this text? How is power distributed? How have women's lives and voices been suppressed by this text? What hidden gender assumptions lie behind this text (for example, women lead men astray or women cannot be trusted)? Whose interests are being served by the text? These questions (slightly modified and with considerable text deleted) are taken from J. Cheryl Exum, "Feminist Criticism: Whose Interests Are Being Served?" in *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, ed. Gale A. Yee (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 69.
11. There are many "feminisms." Perhaps the most widespread is what is sometimes called "equality feminism," such as that defined by B. Kent Harrison and Mary Stovall Richards as affirming "the equal worth of all people, the equal right to and capacity for spirituality, and the evils of abuse" ("Feminism in the Light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ," *BYU Studies* 36/2 [1996–97]: 181). Feminism concerns itself with the status of women in all areas of life, including theology and church practices, and is pervasive, even in its more radical forms, in university settings. However, feminist biblical scholar Esther Fuchs lists the lack of independent journals and independent scholarly associations or presses as a hindrance to feminist publishing on biblical texts (*Sexual Politics in the Biblical Narrative: Reading the Hebrew Bible as a Woman* [Sheffield, England: Sheffield, 2000], 18).
12. Phyllis Trible's book *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), treating the stories of Hagar, Tamar, an unnamed concubine, and Jephthah's daughter, has become a "description for many other narratives where the God of the Bible seems not only to allow cruelty against women but even to abet it with a silence that looks all too much like complicity" (quoted in Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 3).
13. *Women's Bible Commentary*, ed. Newsom and Ringe, xiii. Alice Bach raises questions like these: How does the text reflect and support the patriarchal structure of Western society? Can I as a reader stand outside this structure and cast off the underpinnings of misogyny? What images of female goodness does this text present? Do the good woman and her sister, the serpentine siren, have stories of their own? Can you uproot her story from inside his story? What does the text say or fail to say about the reader's own set of issues? Bach then advises readers not to allow the text to set the agenda, but to learn to read all over again by analyzing who speaks, who sees, and who acts and by analyzing whose story is told more fully, whose agenda is fulfilled, which characters are approved of or disapproved of by the narrator, and whose

agenda supports the social order. She also points out that those who focus on the presence or absence of women in the text make the reading a gendered one, not the eyes or mindset of those who read the text. For fuller discussion, see Alice Bach, "Man's World, Women's Place: Sexual Politics in the Hebrew Bible," in *Women in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Bach, xxiv–xxv.

14. Carol Smith, "Delilah: A Suitable Case for (Feminist) Treatment?" in *Judges: A Feminist Companion to the Bible*, 2nd series, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield, England: Sheffield, 1999), 106. See her discussion of feminist biblical criticism in general on pp. 93–108, as well as her discussion of Delilah and feminist criticism on pp. 108–16.
15. See Bird, *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities*, 249.
16. For a brief outline of this movement, as represented particularly in the work of Rosemary Radford Ruether, see Camille S. Williams, "Redeeming Feminism: A Feminist Testament," *The World and I* 14/6 (1999): 297–317. See also Frances Devlin-Glass and Lyn McCredden, "Inside and Outside the Traditions: The Changing Shapes of Feminist Spiritualities," in *Feminist Poetics of the Sacred: Creative Suspicions*, ed. Frances Devlin-Glass and Lyn McCredden, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3–20.
17. There may be a dearth of publishers willing to publish LDS feminist writings. LDS publishers may be uncomfortable with the term *feminism* itself, which is widely associated with support for abortion and gay/lesbian rights; and non-LDS publishers may consider the audience interested in LDS feminism too small to justify publication or may consider Mormons too cultlike to interest readers from other religious traditions.
18. See, for example, Gordon B. Hinckley, "Women of the Church," *Ensign*, November 1996, 67–70; Spencer W. Kimball, "The Blessings and Responsibilities of Womanhood," *Ensign*, March 1976, 70–73 (address given to the last Relief Society General Conference, 1–2 October 1975); Bruce R. McConkie, "Our Sisters from the Beginning," *Ensign*, January 1979, 61–63; and Richard G. Scott, "The Joy of Living the Great Plan of Happiness," *Ensign*, November 1996, 73–75. Note also references to our Mother in Heaven in the hymn "O, My Father," "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," and M. Russell Ballard, "Here Am I, Send Me," devotional address given 13 March 2001 at Brigham Young University. See also Camille S. Williams, "The Father, the Family, and Feminism," in *Launching Conversations between Latter-day Saints and Nonrestoration Christians*, ed. David L. Paulsen and Donald W. Musser (SUNY Press and BYU Press, forthcoming).
19. See Doctrine and Covenants 138:38–39 and Genesis 19:11–15 in *The Bible Corrected by Joseph Smith*, 2nd ed., ed. Kenneth and Lyndell Lutes (Midway, Utah: Lutes International, 1998), 58.
20. Carol Lynn Pearson, "Could Feminism Have Saved the Nephites?" *Sunstone* 19/1 (1996): 35–36.
21. Francine R. Bennon, "Women and the Book of Mormon: Tradition and Revelation," in *Women of Wisdom and Knowledge: Talks Selected from the BYU Women's Conferences*, ed. Marie Cornwall and Susan Howe (Salt Lake City: Deseret

Book, 1990), 171.

22. Thompson attributes the coining of this term to Paul Ricoeur, who also envisioned a hermeneutic of faith as part of a dialectic leading to reflection (see Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 5, 15). See Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 32–36, as cited in Thompson.
23. See Pearson, "Could Feminism Have Saved the Nephites?" 32–40.
24. For example, Maxine Hanks sees a need for what she calls "Mormon feminist theology," in which "the female or feminine needs to fully emerge in Mormon theology and doctrine" (Maxine Hanks, ed., *Women and Authority: Re-emerging Mormon Feminism* [Salt Lake City: Signature, 1992], xxv–xxvii). Janice Allred deals with the same issue in her book *God the Mother and Other Theological Essays* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1997), noting, however, that she does not attempt in her "constructive theology" to make official pronouncements about LDS theology. Related treatments include Melodie Moench Charles, "Scriptural Precedents for Priesthood," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18/3 (1985): 15–20; Melodie Moench Charles, "The Need for a New Mormon Heaven," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 21/3 (1988): 73–87; and Margaret M. Toscano, "The Missing Rib: The Forgotten Place of Queens and Priestesses in the Establishment of Zion," *Sunstone* 10/7 (1985): 17–22. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher predicts a grassroots movement in which "increasing charismatic experience and greater openness" of mothers participating in blessing babies at home prior to the public blessing and pronouncing blessings on women and children will eventually be accepted by the institutional church, which she says has responded to feminist challenges in ways that seem "to muddy the waters of doctrinal consistency" but at the same time show sympathy for women's individual circumstances ("Forum: Female Experience in American Religion," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 5/1 [1995]: 15–16).
25. See the discussion of the hermeneutic of charity in Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 5–15, especially notes 7 and 23.
26. See the broad range of evidence from the text in Kevin and Shauna Christensen, "Nephite Feminism Revisited: Thoughts on Carol Lynn Pearson's View of Women in the Book of Mormon," *FARMS Review of Books* 10/2 (1998), 9–61. Of uneven quality and containing much *ad hominem* is Rush Utah's *Could Feminism Have Destroyed the Nephites? A Rebuttal to Carol Lynn Pearson's Article "Could Feminism Have Saved the Nephites?"* (Albuquerque: Gallstone, 1996).
27. See, for example, Jerrie W. Hurd, *Our Sisters in the Latter-day Scriptures* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987); and Camille Fronk, "Desert Epiphany: Sarah and the Women in 1 Nephi," *JBMS* 9/2 (2000): 5–15.
28. Marie Cornwall, "Women: Changing Ideas and New Directions," *Sunstone* 14/3 (1990): 54. See Jerrie Hurd, *Laven: 150 Women in Scripture Whose Lives Lift Ours* (Murray, Utah: Aspen, 1995), 66. Hurd notes that in her teaching "sooner or later the inevitable question would arise: Where are the young women in scripture?" She contends that young women today