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Title An Analysis from a Teacher's Perspective

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Abstract Review of *Charting the Book of Mormon* (1999), by John W. Welch and J. Gregory Welch.

AN ANALYSIS FROM A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

Joseph A. Jenkins

For many years and by many prophets, we have been instructed to study the Book of Mormon in order to gain a testimony of its divinity—its doctrine and its truthfulness. This testimony comes from dedicated personal study, spiritual pondering, and mighty prayer. In other words, we must read the word of God, try to understand its meaning, and then make personal application in our lives. In September 2001, Elder Henry B. Eyring, in an address to Church Educational System instructors, admonished them to teach the doctrine of Jesus Christ and make it so clear and simple that it would sink deep into the hearts of their students.

I believe there are two significant and distinctive approaches to understanding and gaining a testimony of the Book of Mormon. The first, and most important, is to study and ponder the “word” as it is written and personally interpreted by the Holy Ghost. The second is to study the “evidences” or facts and interpretive data that would lead one to conclude from the circumstances that the Book of Mormon is true. The book *Charting the Book of Mormon* seems to take the latter approach. However, I did not see anything that would suggest from

Review of John W. Welch and J. Gregory Welch. *Charting the Book of Mormon*. Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1999. 177 charts, with scripture and subject indexes. \$14.95.

the authors that the approaches must be exclusive, but, rather, perhaps that the latter would significantly enhance the former.

In reading and studying this book, I found many charts, particularly in the beginning of the book, that helped immensely in understanding the Book of Mormon and its doctrine. However, as the book progresses, several charts seemed to add only a limited spiritual understanding of the Book of Mormon (see, for example, chart 112, "The Utility of the Onti and Limnah"; chart 140, "Ancient Steel Weapons"; and some others). In addition, some inferences in some of the charts are difficult to substantiate and therefore could leave the less sophisticated student with some difficulties (for example, chart 116, "Did Lehi Organize His Posterity into Seven Tribes?" and some of the charts in the geographic section).

All in all, I found the book to be interesting and somewhat informative. As is the case with all books or articles that are adjunct to the scriptures themselves, *Charting the Book of Mormon* is capable of adding insight and understanding but must always be subordinate to the word of the Lord that is contained in the scriptures.