The Editor's Notebook

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Title      The Editor’s Notebook

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Abstract   Introduction to the current issue.
Some people see great potential for research to turn up new ways of seeing and thinking about the world. Others tend to feel that everything important must already have been discovered. For the latter, “research” means finding authorities who offer a confident answer to each question that occurs to us to ask. For the former, the best part of any question is the quest part.

Brigham Young once observed, “A spirit and power of research is planted within [humans], yet they remain undeveloped.”1 He also said, “If I do not learn what is in the world, from first to last, somebody will be wiser than I am. I intend to know the whole of it, both good and bad.”2

Book of Mormon studies is one special manifestation of that general curiosity that Brother Brigham recommended. Simply treading the same mental and spiritual ground year after year as we examine the scripture may not advance our understanding as much as it puts us to sleep. For us to read scripture doggedly time after time may yield little new insight or appreciation of what the text contains that might inspire. We might well gain more by pausing to ask, “Why did the Lord make this statement at this historical moment?” or, more specifically, “Why did Book of Mormon writers use the name Jehovah only twice in the entire text—and one of those in the last verse of the book?” Just as challenging is seeking new depth in a word we have read so many times that we no longer think about its meaning—for example, what does it mean to “harrow up” a person’s soul (2 Nephi 9:47; Mormon 5:8)?

All the authors whose work we publish offer us new views of expressions that may have become commonplace in our reading. That is what research is about—to crack open previously closed windows of our minds. This issue of the Journal offers a new tool to help us do so. Dr. Cynthia Hallen, a linguist at BYU, starts a new department entitled “What’s in a Word?” As she pursues her own quest for new understanding, she will share items of interest that will extend and enrich our grasp of scripture.

Submitting Articles to the Journal of Book of Mormon Studies

Guidelines for preparing and submitting articles for publication in the Journal are available on the FARMS Web site (farms.byu.edu), by e-mail request to jbms@byu.edu, or by mail from FARMS. In general, authors should submit a detailed outline or abstract to the editors for approval before submitting a completed manuscript.

2. The brass plates version of Isaiah pref- pages, including the last verse of Isaiah 12 and the entirety of Mosiah 13–16.


4. Based on the description of the plates contained in the Brass Plates, this is a possible reference to the "seed of Joseph." 


7. This change in word order may have been to avoid repetition of the name Joseph Smith.

10. "From this point on in the dialogue, I quote rather than paraphrase Abinadi's powerful words.


13. William A. McConkie points out that the plates are significantly different, for example, the fol-


23. The Saints' Herald, 4 October 1884, 644.


25. Of What Material were the Plates?

1. "The Plates of Mormon of Tum- baga" Improvement Era, September 1966, 788–89, 828–31; also in Ross T. Christensen, ed., Papers of the Fifteenth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1877, Historical Department Archives, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Original capitalization and punctuation have been modernized. In Stevenson's interview, Whitmer recounted his mother's description of the rings.


7. It is also possible that other metallurgi- cal treatments such as a hammered copper-silver-gold alloy could have fur-