The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon in the Twentieth Century

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Abstract
I hope this study, however preliminary it might appear, will provide a sound first step toward developing our self-understanding as Latter-day Saints of the history of Book of Mormon use in the twentieth century and the phenomenal increase in understanding, appreciation, and study that has taken place over the last three to four decades. This study may also offer one useful perspective for the gradually emerging history of cultural Mormonism and its antipathy to the Book of Mormon. This study is grounded in the analysis of a number of possible indicators of intensity of interest in the Book of Mormon and in a dozen interviews with people who were directly involved in some of the more significant developments of the last half century. In the absence of any readily available scale that directly measures the phenomenon I wish to illuminate, I have collected a number of measures which would intuitively seem to be directly linked to it. These include statistical summaries of Book of Mormon references or citations in LDS literature and general conference addresses, as well as counts of publications related to the Book of Mormon. Almost no comparative statistical analyses have been attempted because of the incommensurability of the various indicators.

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The crowning event recorded in the Book of Mormon is the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ among the Nephites soon after His resurrection. It puts forth the doctrines of the gospel, outlines the plan of salvation, and tells men what they must do to gain peace in this life and eternal salvation in the life to come. After Mormon completed his writings, he delivered the account to his son Moroni, who added a few words of his own and hid up the plates in the Hill Cumorah. On September 21, 1823, the same Moroni, then a glorified, resurrected being, appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and gave him the keynote speech on “The Coming Forth of Plain and Precious Truths.” He describes many aspects of the gospel that may be only vaguely mentioned in the Bible, but for which we learn much more from the Book of Mormon. Some examples are the plan of salvation, the premortal life, the fall of Adam, the atonement and resurrection, and specific doctrines taught by Christ. The book then has several papers on the process of publishing the Book of Mormon. I have also learned some new things. The book has helped renew my interest in studying the Book of Mormon once again this year, and it should be a rewarding read for all who value it as scripture. ...more. flag Like · see review. Feb 09, 2016 Terry Earley rated it liked it. Advertisement for the Book of Mormon. First Edition. Joseph Smith Handwritten Document. Painting by Lewis A. Ramsey. Photography by Public Communications Photo Services and by the Church Historical Department. A view of Palmyra, New York, about 1880, looking south toward Manchester. “He said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fulness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants.” (JS—H 1:34.) Joseph Smith took the plates from the Hill Cumorah on 22 September 1827 and began to study and translate characters from them with the aid of the Urim and Thummim.