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Book of Mormon Translation Concerns & Questions

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BOOK OF MORMON TRANSLATION

Concerns & Questions

“I will begin by saying that we still have pictures on our Ward bulletin boards of Joseph Smith with the Gold Plates in front of him. That has become an irksome point and I think it is something the church should pay attention to. Because anyone who studies the history knows that is not what happened. There is no church historian who says that is what happened and yet it is being propagated by the church and it feeds into the notion that the church is trying to cover up embarrassing episodes and is sort of prettifying its own history.

*So, I think we ought to just stop that immediately. I am not sure we need a lot of pictures in our chapels of Joseph looking into his hat, but we certainly should tell our children that is how it worked... It's weird. It's a weird picture. It implies it's like darkening a room when we show slides. It implies that there is an image appearing in that stone and the light would make it more difficult to see that image. So, that implies a translation that's a reading and so gives us a little clue about the whole translation process. It also raises the strange question, **‘What in the world are the plates for? Why do we need them on the table if they are just wrapped up into a cloth while he looks into a seer stone?’**”*

– RICHARD BUSHMAN, LDS SCHOLAR, HISTORIAN, PATRIARCH [FAIRMORMON PODCAST, EPISODE 3: RICHARD L. BUSHMAN P.1, 47:25](#)

”People say that the Book of Mormon certainly is an inspired and inspiring book, but the backstory of the plates in the translation is irrelevant to it. What would we gain and lose [if we abandoned the plates]? What we would lose would be a powerful form of evidence that the Lord gave to Joseph Smith and to us of the actuality of all these experiences, and therefore the actuality of the transcendent sphere... That would be gutting some of the most gritty and appealing parts of the Mormon story.”

– RICHARD BUSHMAN, LDS SCHOLAR, HISTORIAN, PATRIARCH, [“THE GOLD PLATES IN MORMON CULTURE AND THOUGHT,” 41:47](#)

Unlike the story I've been taught in Sunday School, Priesthood, General Conferences, Seminary, EFY, *Ensigns*, Church history tour, Missionary Training Center, and BYU... Joseph Smith used a rock in a hat for translating the Book of Mormon.

Ah, yes. The rock in a hat.

SHORT ANSWER:

The Book of Mormon is a bonafide miracle with unmistakable marks of antiquity that could not have been produced by anyone living in 1830. No other explanation other than the one offered by Joseph Smith can account for its existence.

You do not make it disappear by simply repeating a mantra about a rock in a hat.

LONG ANSWER:

In my experience, the translation process wasn't really discussed all that often, if at all. There was some discussion about the Urim and Thummim, which were, in fact, used during the translation, although it's true that the rock in the hat never came up. That's may be in part because it's weird, and the Church doesn't like to talk about weird things that might seem embarrassing. At the same time, I'm not sure why a rock in a hat is any weirder than granny glasses attached to a metal breastplate, which is how I've always envisioned it. I guess it all comes down to expectations.

The first time I heard the rock-in-the hat story was on my mission, when Joseph Fielding McConkie, son of Bruce R. and grandson of Joseph Fielding Smith, quoted David Whitmer on the subject and claimed that Whitmer didn't know what he was talking about. Whitmer's account about the process came decades later, after Joseph Smith's death, and J.F. McConkie, taking a position he attributed to his father and grandfather, insisted it couldn't have been that way, because reading words off a seer stone seemingly contradicts D&C 9, which is the only contemporaneous document on the subject that we have. D&C 9 chastises Oliver Cowdery for his translation attempt because he "took no thought save it was to ask" the Lord rather than trying to "study it out in [his] mind."



So if the rock in the hat idea wasn't widely disseminated, which it wasn't, it may have been because there was significant disagreement among the Brethren as to its veracity, with President Smith and Elder McConkie on the side that (probably incorrectly) maintained it was nonsense. The Church is now discussing the rock in the hat and has even published pictures of the rock - but, curiously, not the hat.

So where's the hat? What are they hiding from us?!

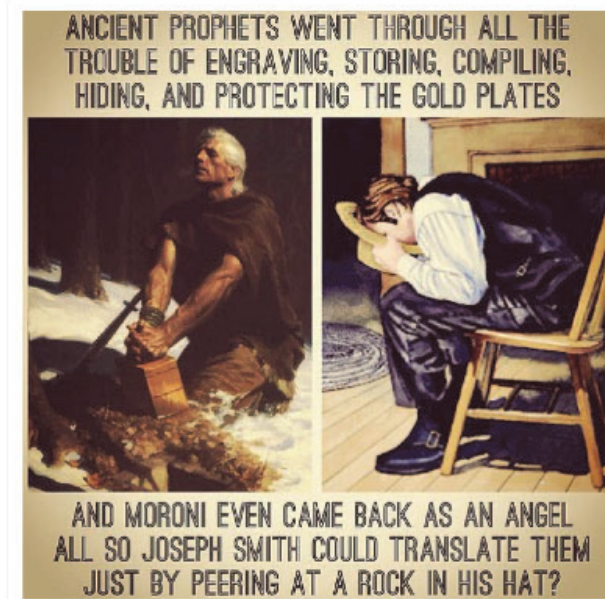
It's worth mentioning that Whitmer was not, in fact, part of the translation process, and it may well be that he was incorrect, as his statements come way, way after the fact when he was disaffected from the Church. Of course, that would force you to consider the possibility of the Church being wrong now in admitting to the rock in the hat as opposed to being wrong then when they tried not to mention it. And in your black-and-white, irreducible theological expectations, the Church is never allowed to be wrong.

Joseph Smith himself dodged questions about specifics of the translation process, saying only that it was accomplished "by the gift and power of God" and that it "was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon." So it seems the uncomfortableness about talking about the process goes way back to the beginning.

Having read through your letter multiple times, I think it's safe to say that this is the one objection that you come back to more than any other. Variations of the phrase "rock in a hat" appear thirteen times throughout this version of your letter, and as you're summing up the entirety of what you've written, you say the following:

At the end of the day? It all doesn't matter. The Book of Mormon Witnesses and their testimonies of the gold plates are irrelevant. It does not matter whether eleven 19th century treasure diggers with magical worldviews saw some gold plates or not. It doesn't matter because of this one simple fact:

JOSEPH DID NOT USE THE GOLD PLATES FOR TRANSLATING THE BOOK OF MORMON



Pictured: A tonally problematic graphic from the 2016 CES Letter

In the first version I replied to, this was followed by one final graphical dig at the rock in the hat. (Wonder where that graphic went. Tone problems, I guess.)

The problem with this is that it seems to suggest that process somehow precludes product. I confess I find your obsession with this issue baffling. It's undeniable that the Book of Mormon was produced in a manner you find strange or ridiculous. It's also undeniable that the Book of Mormon is here; it exists, and it must be accounted for. Nowhere in your CES Letter do you provide any explanation for how that could be. Instead, you offer half a dozen contradictory theories about plagiarism that are demonstrably garbage, and you fixate on the rock in the hat, as if it makes it all

265,000 words vanish in a puff of smoke. It

doesn't, which is why millions of people still have testimonies of its truthfulness and divine origin.

In other words, Joseph used the same magic device or “Ouija Board” that he used during his treasure hunting 3 days.

Those are other words, all right. They’re also wrong. Why do you put “Ouija Board” in quotes? Nobody but you is comparing this to a Ouija Board. Have you ever seen a Ouija Board?

They look like this:



Call me crazy, but that doesn’t look like a rock in a hat.

He put a rock – called a “peep stone” – in his hat...

So is it a peep stone or a Ouija Board? Both are in quotes, suggesting someone with some authority gave them both these labels, which they didn’t.

... and put his face in the hat to tell his customers the location of buried treasure on their property. He also used this same method for translating the Book of Mormon, while the gold plates were covered, placed in another room, or even buried in the woods. The gold plates were not used for the Book of Mormon we have today.

That last sentence is a curious one, as it presupposes only a single way in which the gold plates could have been “used for the Book of Mormon.” Given that Joseph Smith didn’t know how to read Reformed Egyptian, any method in which he could have translated the characters on the plates would have required divine intervention. As such, what difference does it make whether that intervention makes use of the physical plates or not?

That does not mean, however, that the plates were useless. They were extraordinarily useful. You began this section with a quote from Richard Bushman to imply that this great scholar and faithful Church member agrees with you on this point. (He does not.)

The Bushman quote I added to your opening of this section points out that the plates are “a powerful form of evidence that the Lord gave to Joseph Smith and to us of the actuality of all these experiences” and provide “some of the most gritty and appealing parts of the Mormon story.” They were used for the testimony of the witnesses and the instruction of the prophet in preparing to obtain them. It is not at all correct to say that they were “not used for the Book of Mormon we have today.”

UPDATE: These facts are now officially confirmed in the Church’s December 2013 *Book of Mormon Translation* essay.

Not sure how this is an update, as you mentioned the essay in the previous version of your letter. What you don’t mention is that the Church also confirms that the rock in the hat was not the only method of translation, and that the plates were, in fact, used for part of the translation process.

From the Church’s essay:

Nevertheless, the scribes and others who observed the translation left numerous accounts that give insight into the process. **Some accounts indicate that Joseph studied the characters on the plates.** Most of the accounts speak of Joseph’s use of the Urim and Thummim (either the interpreters or the seer stone), and many accounts refer to his use of a single stone. [Emphasis added]

The Church later admitted these facts in its October 2015 *Ensign* , where they include a photograph of the actual rock that Joseph Smith used to place in his hat for the Book of Mormon translation. Additional photos of the rock can be viewed on lds.org .

Also above. And how could the Church later “admit” what they’d already admitted in the essay two years earlier? Admissions are statements that reveal new information. Every mention of the rock in the hat by the Church cannot be defined as an admission.

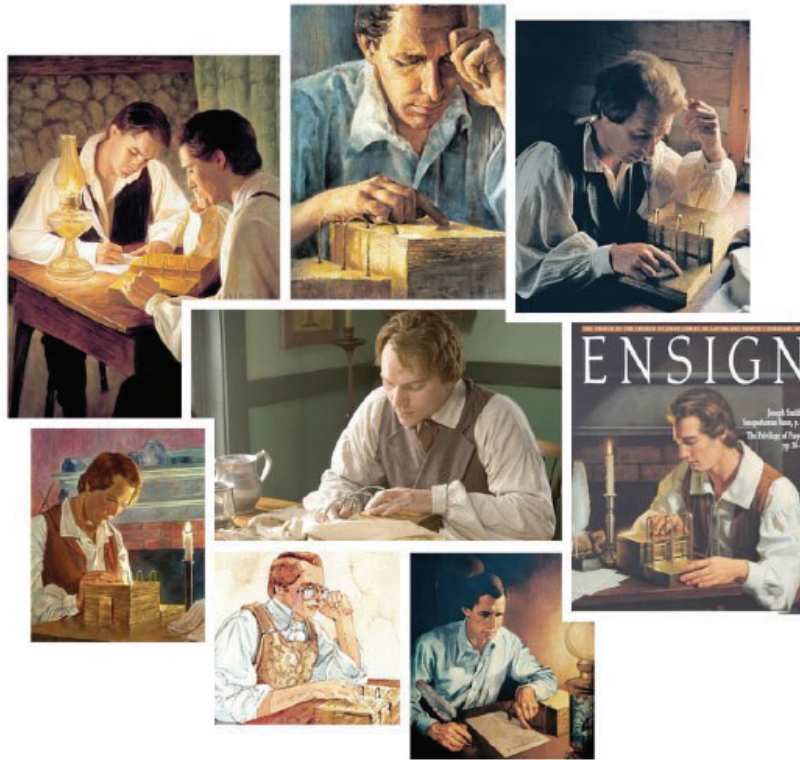
In this version, you took out the reference to then-Elder Nelson’s 1992 talk about the rock in the hat that admissions precedes the essay “admission” by nearly two decades. How many times does the Church have to admit - or “re-admit” - this information before you stop acting like each new mention is the first time?

In June 2016, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf posted on his Facebook page comparing the seer stone in the hat Book of Mormon translation to his iPhone . FairMormon posted new Book of Mormon translation artwork showing Joseph Smith’s face in a hat.

So many admissions! If I didn’t know any better, I’d almost believe that the Church isn’t trying to hide this information. (Except for the hat. Where’s the freakin’ hat?!)



BOOK OF MORMON TRANSLATION THAT THE CHURCH PORTRAYED AND STILL PORTRAYS TO ITS MEMBERS



“Still portrays” is belied by the fact that these images are all at least a decade old, if not older. (That *Ensign* is dated 2002.) I could be wrong, but I haven’t seen anything like this since the 2013 essay.

Indeed, there is accumulating evidence that the Church is no longer trying to downplay the rock and/or the hat at all. The release of [Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days](#) demonstrates an openness and candor that is likely to serve the Church well in the days ahead.

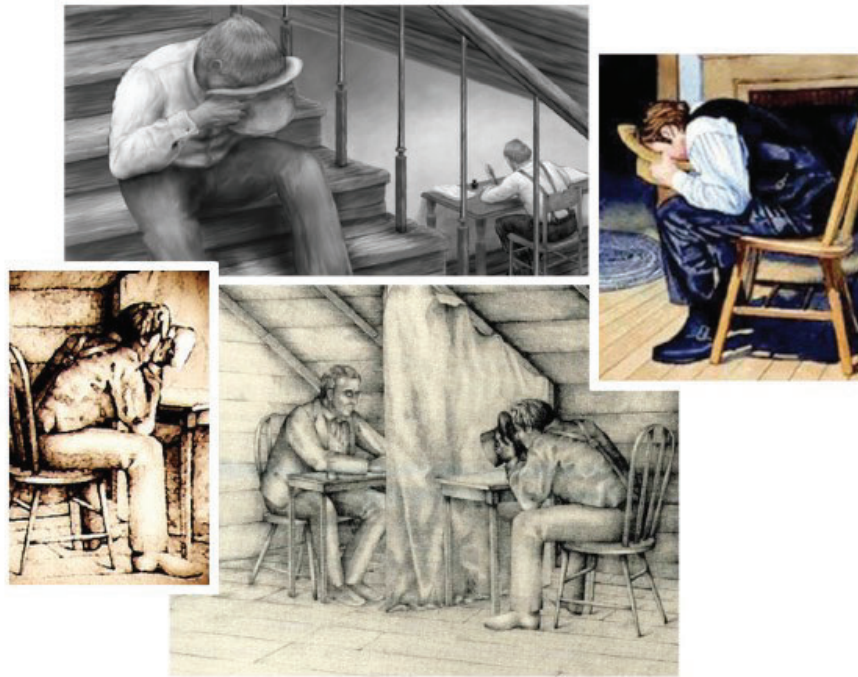
A noteworthy excerpt from Chapter 6 of the first volume:

Meanwhile, Joseph and Oliver started translating. They worked well together, weeks on end, frequently with Emma in the same room going about her daily work. Sometimes Joseph translated by looking through the interpreters and reading in English the characters on the plates.

Often he found a single seer stone to be more convenient. He would put the seer stone in his hat, place his face into the hat to block out the light, and peer at the stone. Light from the stone would shine in the darkness, revealing words that Joseph dictated as Oliver rapidly copied them down.

That account, of course, is more consistent with your next batch of pictures.

BOOK OF MORMON TRANSLATION AS IT ACTUALLY HAPPENED



Important correction: these pictures only depict *part* of how “it actually happened,” as this was not the only method of translation. Accounts suggest that the first 116 pages were done entirely with the Urim and Thummim, which would make the first batch of pictures much less misleading than your heated reaction allows.

Since learning this disturbing new information and feeling betrayed, I have been attacked and gaslighted by revisionist Mormon apologists claiming that it’s my fault and the fault of anyone else for not knowing this. “The information was there all along,” they say. “You should’ve known this,” they claim.

When you put words in quotes, you are suggesting that these specific words, verbatim, were actually said by another human being, yet you’re obviously paraphrasing. It’s just one more example of sloppy scholarship in a document riddled with them. At this point in your career as a full-time, well-compensated CES Letter apologist, you should probably know better by now.

I also still don’t understand why this information is “disturbing.” There’s nothing morally or ethically problematic about a rock in a hat versus a pair of gray spectacles attached to a breastplate, and the only reason the second isn’t upsetting to you is that it’s what you expect, and the first isn’t. I would think, to someone with no knowledge of these events, that both scenarios would be equally weird. The picture in your first batch with Joseph using the Urim and Thummim looks stranger to me than any picture in the second batch.

And, again, none of this diminishes the reality of the Book of Mormon, its historicity, or its message.

As for you being “attacked” and “gaslighted,” those are certainly dramatic verbs, but the fact remains that, yes, the information was there all along. That’s a statement of fact. Whether or not you should have known about it is a different question, as I don’t think knowledge of the rock in the hat substantively changes anything about the Book of Mormon’s relevance or its place in Latter-day Saint theology.

Respected LDS historian and scholar Richard Bushman, as quoted above, understands the problem.

And yet, as demonstrated by my additional quote above, you fail to understand or accurately represent Richard Bushman’s position on the subject.

Unlike these gaslighting revisionist apologists, he has compassion, understanding, and empathy for those who are shocked to learn this faith challenging information.

He’s also unlike you, a man who frequently calls his opponents names and flings personal insults. (I’m pretty sure that, contrary to your online assault, my family likes me.)

In 2000, two BYU religion professors, Joseph Fielding McConkie (son of Elder Bruce R. McConkie) and Craig J. Ostler, wrote an essay titled, *“The Process of Translating the Book of Mormon”*.

Yes! Thank you! I was looking for a link like this when I wrote my previous version of my reply, where I mentioned that this was President McConkie’s position. (He was my mission president, so I can’t think of him with any other title. He was a great man, and I adored him.)

They wrote:

“Thus, everything we have in the Book of Mormon, according to Mr. Whitmer, was translated by placing the chocolate-colored stone in a hat into which Joseph would bury his head so as to close out the light. While doing so he could see ‘an oblong piece of parchment, on which the hieroglyphics would appear,’ and below the ancient writing, the translation would be given in English. Joseph would then read this to Oliver Cowdery, who in turn would write it. If he did so correctly, the characters and the interpretation would disappear and be replaced by other characters with their interpretation.”

After laying the groundwork, the professors continue:

“Finally, the testimony of David Whitmer simply does not accord with the divine pattern. If Joseph Smith translated everything that is now in the Book of Mormon without using the gold plates, we are left to wonder why the plates were necessary in the first place. It will be remembered that possession of the plates placed the Smith family in considerable danger, causing them a host of difficulties. If the plates were not part of the translation process, this would not have been the case. It also leaves us wondering why the Lord directed the writers of the Book of Mormon to take a

duplicate record of the plates of Lehi. This provision which compensate for the loss of the 116 pages would have served no purpose either.



Pictured: Joseph Fielding McConkie.
A master teacher and a disciple of Christ.

be necessary after all. Is this, we would ask, really a credible explanation of the way the heavens operate?"

Further, we would be left to wonder why it was necessary for Moroni to instruct Joseph each year for four years before he was entrusted with the plates. We would also wonder why it was so important for Moroni to show the plates to the three witnesses, including David Whitmer. And why did the Lord have the Prophet show the plates to the eight witnesses? Why all this flap and fuss if the Prophet didn't really have the plates and if they were not used in the process of translation?

What David Whitmer is asking us to believe is that the Lord had Moroni seal up the plates and the means by which they were to be translated hundreds of years before they would come into Joseph Smith's possession and then decided to have the Prophet use a seer stone found while digging a well so that none of these things would

Those are good questions. I was first introduced to the rock in the hat in 1989 when the ideas of this essay were delivered live in a zone conference by Pres. McConkie himself. As I mentioned earlier, this, more than the inherent weirdness of the rock in the hat, is probably why Whitmer's account isn't widely discussed, because the McConkies and the Fielding Smiths didn't think Whitmer, at such a late date and because of his disaffected status, was a reliable source on the subject. And there's the possibility that they may well be right, that the current interpretation of the historical narrative is incorrect, and that the conventional wisdom was right the first time.

I confess that I, personally, lean in that direction based on D&C 9's explanation that translation required study and effort beyond just reading words on a stone. The Book of Mormon also appears to be clothed in Joseph Smith's language and vocabulary, which would suggest the prophet had a part in choosing the words. For my part, I don't see the translation process as critical to a testimony of the Book of Mormon, so I am untroubled that my opinion is, at the moment, out of the mainstream. My opinion on a number of Church subjects is fairly heterodox, actually. I'm grateful the Church has far more room for a variety of points of view than you give it credit for.

In any case, what you're encountering here is the reality that even prophets and apostles have differences of opinion. It's disconcerting that, for you and many active Church members, the possibility of such differences still comes as a great surprise.

How could it have been expected of me and any other member to know about and to embrace the rock in the hat translation when even these two faithful full-time professors of religion at BYU rejected it as a fictitious lie meant to undermine Joseph Smith and the truth claims of the Restoration?

Well, two things.

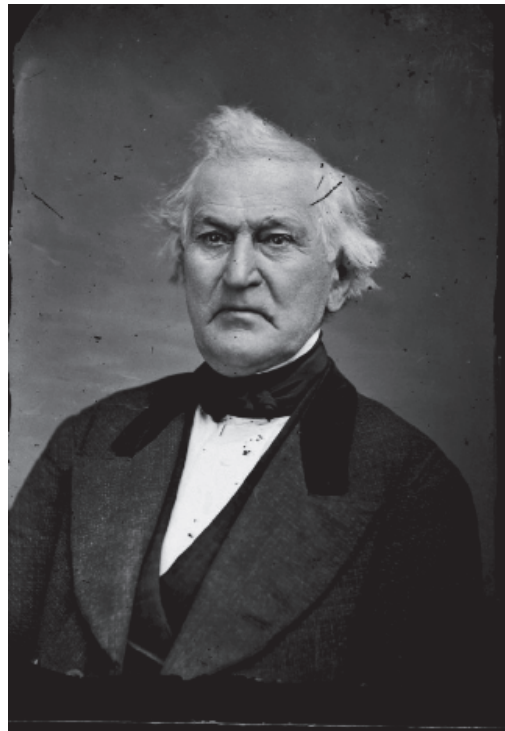
First, I can confidently assert that President McConkie did not think the rock in the hat was a “fictitious lie meant to undermine Joseph Smith and the truth claims of the Restoration.” I have heard him speak about this firsthand. He bases his interpretation of Whitmer’s description on the fact that David Whitmer’s comments were decades removed from a process he did not himself witness, which means he may have gotten his facts wrong for any number of innocent reasons. He thought David Whitmer was mistaken, not that he was deliberately misleading anybody. Certainly Whitmer wasn’t trying to undermine the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. He was true to his testimony of that sacred record throughout his life, even when he was deeply disaffected with Joseph Smith. President McConkie would have been the first to acknowledge that.

A lie requires deliberate intent to deceive. If you were to ask me how to get to my house, and I tell you to turn right instead of left at some point, it may well be that my atrocious sense of direction is to blame rather than dishonesty, and that I have made an honest mistake.

This also cuts to the heart of many of your objections against the Church. Every time you encounter fallibility in Church history, you immediately assume malicious intent when non-malicious human error is a more likely, and certainly more charitable, explanation for missteps.

Bad information often comes from well-intentioned sources. As a word of advice, I would caution you against characterizing all factual errors as lies, as you would be branding yourself a liar for the legions of mistakes that can be found in every version of the CES Letter.

Second, it was not “expected” of you to know about, let alone “embrace,” the rock in the hat. The Church, frankly, doesn’t particularly care what you, me, or anyone thinks about the translation process. To repeat, Joseph Smith himself said it “was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.” It turns out you can be a faithful Latter-day Saint in full fellowship and ultimately be saved in the Celestial Kingdom of God regardless of your views on this particular subject, or even if you remain blissfully unaware of both the rock and the hat for the entirety of your mortal life.



Pictured: David Whitmer
Faithful to the Book of Mormon to the end

BONUS SECTION: A FINAL B of M SERMON

I would hope, at this point, that it's obvious to readers that you haven't managed to lay a glove on the Book of Mormon. You have provided several meager, contradictory, poorly-researched and easily-debunked explanations for its origins; you have completely ignored the significant external and internal evidence as to its authenticity, and you have tried to dismiss it entirely based solely on the weirdness of a rock in a hat. And, of course, your arguments pale in comparison to the nearly two centuries of assaults that book has endured from all sides.

And yet, the Book of Mormon still stands. Why is that?

I'll answer by way of a story and a sermon.

In early 2015, my father, former Utah Senator Robert F. Bennett, discovered that he had pancreatic cancer.

Prior to his diagnosis, Dad had planned to move from his townhouse in Arlington, Virginia to his childhood home in Salt Lake City, which he had purchased more than a decade earlier with the intent of living in Salt Lake City full time. But the cancer changed his plans, and he decided to seek treatment at John Hopkins University Hospital, which had a global reputation for being the best place to receive treatment for pancreatic cancer. The cancer had not spread, but the tumor was impinging on an artery, which made it impossible to remove. The goal, then, was to shrink the tumor by means of chemotherapy and then, by means of surgery, slice it out of his body.

It seemed a good plan at the time, but the tumor remained stubborn, and, while the chemo kept it from growing, it wasn't shrinking, either. The goal shifted. The new plan was to kill the tumor and just leave it there. After another round of chemo and a new round of radiation, this was the presumed outcome. Dad came back to Utah for Christmas, and all seemed to be well. He had survived for a year after his diagnosis, and the idea that he had more years to come seemed like a real possibility.

Alas, no. The last day of February, 2016, we learned that the cancer had spread, and spread aggressively. He had only a few months left to live. Maybe weeks. It was time to get his affairs in order.

Since leaving the Senate, Dad had been extraordinarily active, and he had no interest in slowing down. Cancer had caused him to streamline his activities - he resigned from all the corporate boards that he said he "didn't want to be on anyway" - but he still wasn't willing to retire. He only focused on the things that truly mattered to him.

Learning that his days were definitely numbered, even more things fell by the wayside. There were only a handful of projects that remained a high priority, and his scheduled April 10, 2016 fireside on the Book of Mormon was at the top of his list.

It was back in 2009, that Deseret Book published *Leap of Faith: Confronting the Origins of the Book of Mormon*, a book Dad had been working on for the better part of seven years. Its release raised the eyebrows of a number of political pundits who thought it nothing more than a campaign gimmick, as Dad, at the time, was engaged in a very tough race that he eventually lost. But time has been quite kind to the book, and many now recognize it as a sober and valuable work.

“In my own turn, to be perfectly candid, when I first heard that Bennett had written such a manuscript, I doubted that it would be of much value,” [wrote your favorite professor Daniel Peterson](#). “He was, after all, not a specialist, and I was certain that a busy senator had little time to keep up with the explosion of scholarship on the Book of Mormon that has occurred over the past several decades. What, beyond a shallow rehash, could it possibly offer?”

“The answer, I quickly found out, was plenty. ‘Leap of Faith’ ... is a surprisingly good book.” He also said that “[i]t was plainly the product of sustained, careful reflection, not a hasty political ploy.”

President Henry B. Eyring went even further. As the concluding speaker at my father’s funeral in Salt Lake City, President Eyring called Dad’s book “possibly the best defense of the Book of Mormon ever written.” (I think that would make a pretty good blurb on the back of the paperback edition.)

Dad had long been passionate advocate of the Book of Mormon, and he was frustrated with this who refused to take it seriously. Indeed, the catalyst for writing “Leap of Faith” was the book “Mormon America” by Richard and Joan K. Ostling, which essentially dismissed the book as an obvious 19th Century invention and not an ancient record, siding with those who “assume that Joseph Smith wrote it” and that its origins have a “commonsense, naturalistic explanation.” From Dad’s point of view, the Book of Mormon was divinely designed to defy such easy and intellectually lazy dismissals, and he felt it necessary to demonstrate that faith in the Book of Mormon and reason-based arguments in favor of its historicity were not mutually exclusive. This idea animated him even into the waning hours of his life.

The assignment to give a fireside on the subject of the Book of Mormon came from the bishop of the Arlington Ward, and Dad saw this as more than just another speaking opportunity. He felt this was a calling from God, and he prepared accordingly. When he was told the cancer had spread, he almost immediately said, “I’ve got to stay alive for the fireside.” He repeated this over and over again, and the mantra worked. On the night of April 10, 2016, my father sat on a stool in the Arlington Chapel’s cultural hall and delivered a 50-minute sermon on the Book of Mormon. Weakened by cancer, he stayed seated much of the time, but he repeatedly stood to write on a blackboard, diagramming much of the book’s complexity for the gathered congregation. He spoke, as was his custom, without ever referring to notes. He spoke clearly and forcefully, and all who attended knew they were seeing something remarkable. (You can listen to a rough recording of the fireside and read a transcript [here](#).)

That was Sunday. And on Monday morning, he suffered a severe stroke that left him paralyzed and confined to a hospital bed. He died three weeks later.

To his family, this seemed clear evidence that the Lord was sustaining my father specifically to share this one, simple message. After the fireside, Dad's work was done, and he was called home. So whatever this message was seemed likely to be a pretty big deal.



Pictured: Bob Bennett with Sam Bennett on shoulders, Jim Bennett with Jeddy B. on shoulders
I miss this man every day.

So what was the message for which the Lord kept him alive to deliver?

“Well, the time is gone,” he said about forty-five minutes into his presentation, “but I need to end with the main point.” He recognized this was an odd way to structure a sermon. “You say, ‘Gee, you’ve been rambling for forty-five minutes. Get to the main point.’”

Prior to the “main point,” Dad had spent all his time recounting the various compelling evidences for the Book of Mormon’s authenticity. He cited the existence of Nahom and plethora of metal plates that prove that writing sacred records on plates and burying them for future generations was a practice rooted in antiquity. He also highlighted the use of ancient Egyptian names in the Book of Mormon that were unknown at the time of the book’s publication.

“All of this is interesting,” he said, “and it’s fun, and it’s important for us to know as we get attacked by those who are leaving the Church by telling Joseph Smith was a fraud, the Book of Mormon is a forgery, and so on – important for us to have the tools [to address these issues.]” But he insisted that “it’s not the main point.”

“You don’t need to know about the location of Nahom,” he said. “You don’t need to know about the proliferation of plates. You don’t need to understand about ancient names in order to live a more successful and worthwhile life.” Had he thought about it, he could have also said that you don’t need to know about the rock in the hat.

So what is it you need to know? Dad’s answer was simple:

“You need to know about the Lord Jesus Christ.”

He recounted an experience from his mission in Scotland more than sixty years earlier, in which he met Bill and Marian Proctor. “When we called on Bill and Marian Proctor for the first meeting, we had left a Book of Mormon with Marian,” he said. “We had gone tracting that morning, came back that night. He was reading it – Bill Proctor was reading the book by the fire, which I took as a good sign. And then he stood up and came to me, and he said, ‘Look, lads, I know why you’re here, and you’re wasting your time. I have no intention of joining your church. But this is an interesting book you have. So I’ll tell you what let’s do. I’ll buy your book, and you go on your way, and we’ll both save time. Agreed?’

“I said, ‘Agreed. Yep. But as long as we’re here...’

“Okay, so as long as we’re here, we sat down, and we gave them the first discussion of the Book of Mormon. And then we asked the magic question – when would be a good time for us to come back? And he gave us an appointment back, and there’s much more to the story, but very powerfully, before I left Scotland...”

Then Dad started to tear up. “Excuse me,” he said. “I get dewy-eyed at the dedication of a parking lot.”

After regaining his composure, he continued. “Before I left Scotland, I said to him, ‘When did you know? Bill, when did it happen [that you knew] the Book of Mormon was true?’ And he said, ‘Oh, that first night.’ He said, ‘The Spirit was there overwhelmingly, telling me it was true.’”

Bill Proctor “didn’t need any internal or external validations, or any intellectual analysis. All he needed was an open heart and the presence of the Holy Ghost, and he knew. The Book of Mormon can survive any attack by any enemy of the Church because the Proctor example has been repeated millions of times, in every culture, in every country, all around the world.”

Dad was absolutely right.
