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Moroni Lives Again

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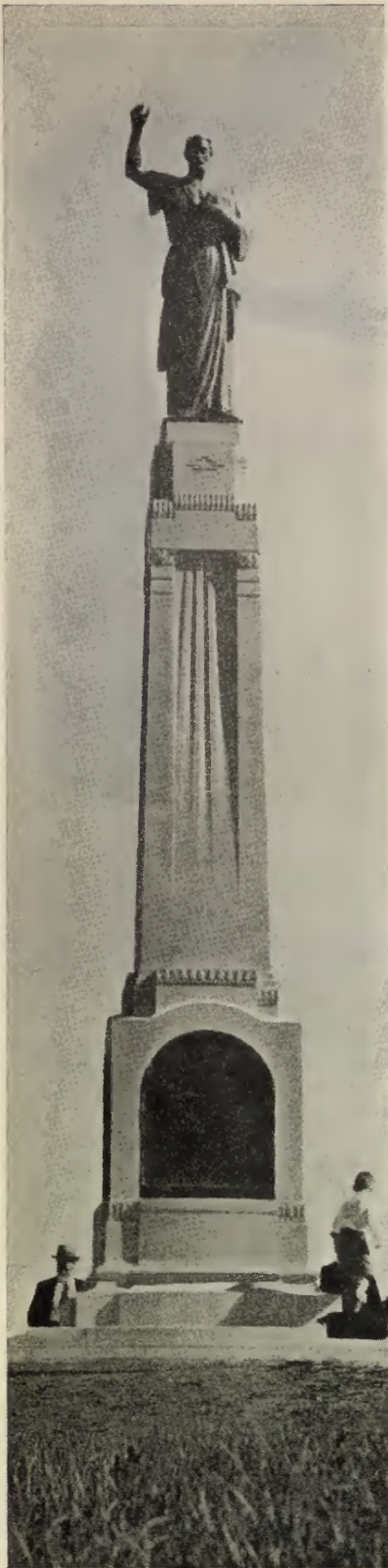
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Abstract: This article provides “an account of the dedication of the Angel Moroni Monument at Hill Cumorah, near Palmyra, New York,” and discusses the significance of this dedication to the Church.

MORONI

An account of the dedication of the Angel Moroni monument at Hill Cumorah, near Palmyra, New York, with suggestions as to its significance to the Church.

By ROSCOE A. GROVER



THE MESSAGE TO THE WORLD
Photograph of the Monument in place on the
Hill Cumorah

A MONUMENT to their 'Eternal Life' — That's what one of the writers on a great world-wide news agency wrote as he sent the story across the continent to the San Francisco cable, hoping it would be relayed to the islands beyond; for he knew that President Heber J. Grant had just returned from Hawaii in order to preside at the Cumorah Hillside services, where thousands of pilgrims from all over America had assembled to pay tribute to one, Moroni, who once lived, a real human being on this very continent, and who, ages after his death, returned to the earth to make known the fulness of a great philosophy that had guided the lives of the prophets and people of God here in America back in his own day.

The reporter thrilled at the boldness of the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" And recognized the answer as news when, in this skeptical age, President David O. McKay had the audacity to declare, "Yes, indeed! Moroni lived again. He came back to teach Joseph Smith—and others. These men still live. Moroni and Joseph are here, in spirit, today, and know what we are doing!" All that went into the story syndicated to the nation.

Twenty newspaper reporters and photographers came from Rochester, Buffalo, Syracuse, Palmyra, and surrounding communities as well as representatives from the Associated Press and United Press. Eagerly they met the General Authorities, asked questions, listened attentively, took notes and ever so many pictures. Sitting at the Press tables near the stand where they could watch the audience and look into the eyes of the speakers, they told through their established channels the story of the restoration of the Gospel and it went all over

America—perhaps beyond. Radio commentators announced the event and the newsreel people clicked off pictures of the four mission trumpeters who heralded the celebration; the singing thousands, assembled in the hillside field on rustic benches; and the General Authorities who came in a special caravan from the West. President Grant standing at the base of the 40 foot bronze and granite memorial that crowns the hill was asked to say about a hundred words for the motion picture microphones. So the dedication of the Angel Moroni Monument was carried to many who could not attend—many who lived far beyond "Cumorah land," which stretches out for 21 miles in every direction. That region has been tracted thoroughly by eager missionaries who visited every household of every farm and village, leaving special literature and an invitation to attend the dedication. 70,000 people live within that area. 300,000 more live in Rochester and they saw pictures, read news releases, and heard the story on their radio.

EACH development in the construction and erection of the monument has been sent to the papers for many weeks. There was a story of Torleif S. Knaphus, Norwegian-born artist, convert to the Church, who, in his Salt Lake City studio, designed the memorial, hoping so to mark the hill that people would say, "This is the place where the Book of Mormon was found," and not "This is the purported place," or "According to some," or "It is said that." "A tangible statue of enduring bronze and granite may help to make the story really live in the minds of those who see it," he said, and that is what it has done. The newspapers printed "Joseph the Prophet," "the Angel Moroni," "Hill

LIVES AGAIN

Cumorah, where the Book of Mormon was found," "Science Proves Book of Mormon," and other such statements without the usual qualifying phrases. It was a new and friendly note in newspaper accounts of the Latter-day Saints.

One story, sent to 150 newspapers, told how the granite came from Vermont, just about 50 miles from the birthplace of Joseph Smith. Still another, quoting Don B. Colton, Mission president, called this our most important missionary project in the last two years, announcing that 25,000 copies of a new tract and 500 copies of the Book of Mormon had been distributed in "Cumorah land" since the first of May, and that the volunteer workers, receiving no salaries, paying their own expenses, had succeeded in creating a new and favorable attitude and in making the whole countryside "Mormon conscious."

Old animosities seem to have disappeared almost entirely. Some ministers invited the Mormon Elders to share their pulpits on occasion. One little church near by (that couldn't afford to have a regular minister) turned Sunday School and the "preaching service" over to the elders on condition that the congregation be permitted to ask questions after the sermons. One minister, whether he really meant to say so or not, spoke of Hill Cumorah and vicinity as "Holy ground—just as holy as the place where God spoke to Moses."

The mayor of one village where we have had only two missionaries at a time before, gave street meeting privileges when a larger group was stationed there, saying, "Your religion seems just as good as mine—perhaps better."

A thousand people each week all through the construction of the monument have come to the very top of the hill to ask interested questions. Repeatedly the missionaries doing special duty at the hill-top ran out of literature and had to send down to the base for more tracts and Books of Mormon to reinforce their supplies.

WITH new literature, the incentive of the monument and

the dedicatory services, held July 21 to 24, the average time spent in tracting has increased and has proved to be stimulating and enjoyable. (It was a lady missionary who set the pace and outdistanced all others.) Missionaries here no longer try to pass out literature or engage in extended gospel conversation nor do they wait to be invited in on their first visit. They announce their purpose in missionary work, ask for the privilege of returning at a later date, when the whole household is present, and when they might explain more fully the details of the restoration of the Gospel of Christ. As a result, in many cases, they get more invitations to return during the evening than they really have time to fulfill—and people, even on the first visit, hold on to them asking questions they really want to know. Friends have been made and converts baptized from those who first heard of Mormonism in the newspapers or over the air. The Eastern States Mission's record of baptisms this year will be larger than that of many previous years.

Four hundred visitors in Palmyra were sent to lodge in the homes of townspeople who volunteered to give them board and room at a reasonable price during the dedicatory services. Between four and five hundred people attended meetings on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday in the "Vision Grove." Five hundred cars from twenty-eight states were neatly parked in the space provided during the Sunday morning session. All of this took special planning and is regarded as real missionary work. The Mission Singers, celebrated Mormon artists, electrical transcriptions of the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir and Organ, as well as the General Authorities, were heard during the week over the NBC and CBS stations in Rochester.

A Rochester paper printed the history of the Church in four instalments, gave detailed accounts of the unveiling, and illustrated them well. Another paper featured a full page of Mormon pictures and story. New picture postcards of the monument were a treat to travelers who wanted a memento for home folks.



A LOVELY PANEL OF THE HILL CUMORAH MONUMENT BY TORLEIF KNAPHUS

THE THREE WITNESSES

It is not often that our Church has had such hearty cooperation from communities, newspapers, newsreels and the radio. This may mark the beginning of a new era in missionary work, in which outside agencies may be called upon to help our limited missionary forces. They should be used in carrying the message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

The monument and the attendant campaign have been a great missionary adventure. The lighting of that great shaft at night is a soul-stirring experience to all who pass by, and will help to tell the story in a new way. That it was a real

A TESTIMONY IN GRANITE AND BRONZE
THAT MEN ARE RESURRECTED. ANGEL
MORONI MONUMENT ON THE HILL CUMORAH

success is attested by the kindly and sympathetic attitude of thousands who came and experienced a genuine spiritual "lift." The same reporter who clicked out the message that it was a monument to "eternal life," concluded his story with, "People came and asked to be affiliated with the Church. They will be baptized in the little winding creek of Cumorah."



Dedicatory Prayer

Delivered by President Heber J. Grant on top of the Hill Cumorah, July 21, 1935

GOD, our heavenly and eternal Father, the Maker of heaven and earth, the Father of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world, the Savior of mankind, we thank Thee that Thou hast again seen fit to restore to the earth the plan of life and salvation, whereby men and women, through obedience to the laws that Thou hast revealed, can come back into Thy presence and dwell with Thee forever.

O Father, we thank Thee from the bottom of our hearts that Thou didst see fit to reveal Thyself and Thy Son to the boy, Joseph Smith. We thank Thee that we have no doubt in our minds regarding Thy personalty, that in very deed Thou didst declare to all the world by Thy personal visitation and the visitation of Thy Son, that man was created in the image of his Maker.

We thank Thee, oh Father, in heaven, that Thou didst allow Thy devoted and faithful prophet, Moroni, to visit the boy Joseph Smith, that Thou didst allow him for four long years to meet the prophet on this hill and instruct him regarding the principles of the

gospel, and fit and prepare him to stand at the head of Thy Church, again established upon the earth, the Church of Thy Son, Jesus Christ.

We are grateful, Father, for the delivery unto him of the plates, and that he was inspired of Thee through the instrumentality of the urim and thummim that was placed in his hands, to translate the holy scripture as recorded in the Book of Mormon.

We are thankful, Heavenly Father, that as the years come and go Thou hast seen fit to uncover evidences regarding the divinity of the work in which we are engaged. We thank Thee, Father, that the claims that were made against the Book of Mormon, that it was false because there were no dwellings that had been erected of cement to be found upon this land and that therefore the book was false have been disproved. We are grateful that such dwellings have been discovered, that mounds are being uncovered, and that under those mounds, not far from the city of Mexico, splendid cement dwellings have been found.

WE are grateful for the radio, whereby the ridicule of the statement in the Book of Mormon that the voice of Jesus was heard all over the land, can be successfully met. This statement was ridiculed because it was thought that the human voice carried only a few hundred feet, but today through the discovery of the radio the voice can be heard around the world.

We are grateful that the ridicule of that part of the Book of Mormon which says that there were horses upon this continent has been satisfactorily answered. It was thought that because there were no horses to be found here when Columbus arrived, that statement was untrue, but skeletons of horses and other animals have been dug out of the oil wells in California.

We are thankful for the hundreds and thousands of special manifestations that have been given to individuals, yes even millions of manifestations, as to the divinity of the Book of Mormon.

We are grateful oh Father, that Thou didst allow John the Baptist,

who held the Aaronic Priesthood, the power and authority to baptize the Savior, to appear to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, and that he did bestow upon them this priesthood, and this power. Our hearts go out in gratitude that the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, Peter, James, and John, came to the earth, laid their hands upon the heads of the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and restored the higher or Melchizedek Priesthood, and the apostleship that was not upon the earth.

We humbly pray unto Thee that those of us who have received the ordinance of baptism, those of us who have been ordained to the higher priesthood, and all of those that have received a testimony of the divinity of the work that has been established—we humbly pray that Thou wilt help us to so live that our lives may proclaim the divinity of the work in which we are engaged.

We are thankful for the organization of Thy Church and for its wonderful growth. We are grateful beyond expression that notwithstanding the opposition and the lying statements that were sent out here in the state of New York and the persecutions of the people which made it necessary to move to Ohio, the then frontier, that yet Thy people prospered and that the numbers grew in the Church.

We are thankful that notwithstanding the opposition that was so great in Ohio that the people moved to Missouri, still Thou didst see fit to prosper the people, and that Thou didst touch the hearts of people and they embraced the gospel notwithstanding these persecutions.

WE are thankful beyond all the power which Thou hast given us with which to express our thoughts that notwithstanding an exterminating order of the governor of the state of Missouri, that notwithstanding Joseph Smith and others had been sentenced to be shot the following morning, Thou didst preserve the lives of these men, and that one of the greatest of all the great revelations that have come to Thy people was given to the Prophet Joseph Smith in Liberty jail shortly after this decree of his death had been made.

We pray that whenever we read that marvelous and wonderful revelation the inspiration of the living God may be given to us,

that we may keep the commandments of the Lord.

We are grateful, Father, that notwithstanding the expulsion of our people from Missouri Thou didst bless and prosper them, and that they built a magnificent temple in Nauvoo, and that a great city was established there, one of the most prosperous and in fact the largest city, if I am not in error, in the entire state of Illinois.

But through the animosity and the hatred and the falsehoods of people, again the Latter-day Saints were driven, and they traveled 1500 miles out into the desert country to the Salt Lake Valley.

We are grateful for the preservation of the people. We are grateful that a prophecy has been fulfilled which was uttered just before his martyrdom by the Prophet Joseph Smith, on the west bank of the Missouri river.

"I prophesy," he said, "that the saints will continue to suffer much persecution, that many will be put to death by our persecutors, others will lose their lives in consequence of exposure and disease, but, some of you shall live to go and build cities and settlements, and see the Saints become a mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains."

We are grateful that they have become a mighty people. From Canada on the north to Mexico on the south. We have 112 stakes of Zion, and Thy spirit and Thy blessing have attended the men and the women who have been appointed to preside in these stakes and who have been called to preside over the various quorums of the priesthood, and over the Relief Society, the Sunday Schools, the Primaries, and the Young Men's and Young Women's Associations.

We are grateful that in the far-off land of Hawaii a stake of Zion has been organized. Thy people have in every way become a great and a mighty people, fulfilling the prophecy of the Prophet Joseph Smith on the west bank of the Mississippi river.

We are truly grateful unto Thee, our Heavenly Father, for the hospitality of the people in this section of the country. We are grateful that the spirit of opposition has disappeared. We are thankful that the reputation of Thy people has changed and that today from New York to San Francisco, from Can-

ada to Mexico, to be known as a Latter-day Saint living the Gospel, is of great value.

The reputation of the Savior was such that He was crucified but after He has been dead for nearly 2,000 years men are beginning to find that His teachings were for the benefit of every living soul, not only in this life, but if lived, will bring exaltation in the life to come.

WE are grateful that no one can find fault with the teachings of the Latter-day Saints, that our religion is in absolute harmony with the teaching of the Bible. We are thankful O Father, for these things and we humbly pray unto Thee that our minds may never become darkened, that we may never depart from the truth, that we may never break any of the covenants that we have made with Thee; but that as we grow in years and increase in understanding we may grow in the light, knowledge, and testimony of the Divinity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that we have espoused.

May we ever be faithful to the commandments in Holy Writ. May we ever remember the teachings of the Savior while here upon the earth among the Nephites, after His resurrection, and His teachings to His followers and apostles upon the other continent. We humbly pray, O Father, that Thy spirit shall ever abide with us.

We are thankful above all things for the restoration to the earth of the priesthood, the power to minister in the name of Thine only Begotten Son, which has been given to us of Thee, and by the authority of that priesthood, O, Father, and in the name of our Redeemer, we dedicate unto Thee at this time this monument that has been erected upon this sacred hill.

We dedicate the hill itself and the ground surrounding it and all of the materials that have been used in this monument; and we humbly pray unto Thee that it may be preserved from the elements, and that it may stand here as a testimony of God, of Jesus Christ, and of the dealings of Jesus Christ with the people that lived anciently upon this continent.

These things we do in humility, in gratitude, and in thanksgiving to Thee, by the authority of the priesthood of God, and in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.