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## The Stick of Joseph

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**Abstract:** The Book of Mormon converts people to the gospel of Jesus Christ and since its first printing a number of great individuals have been converted by its message. Once the Book of Mormon is accepted as true, other truths become evident. These are that God lives, the Church is true, Joseph was a prophet, and the Bible contains the word of God.

ers in making a special effort to impress upon the community the fact that even children who are never exposed to the obscene material may be victimized by sex criminals.

5. Co-operate with the schools in taking positive, long-range steps to help children develop wholesome interests in good literature and art—making it readily available to them at home, in the classroom, through literary and library clubs, and through student groups.

6. Help civic groups bring about the

establishment of a decent literature committee, broadly representative of the interested civic organizations in the community.

7. Get local judges, law enforcement officers, and representatives of the police force to talk before civic groups telling what they, as guardians of the community's laws, know of the relationship between the traffic in obscene literature and juvenile delinquency and sex crimes.

We must defend our youth, in the

interests of this nation which God has blessed above all others. We must rise to this task, stand up, and be counted on the side of decency. We must show by our lives and actions that we possess the virtues that made America great.

There will be those who will cry "censorship" and "suppressing of freedom of information." To these people there does not seem to be any difference between liberty and license—but there is a real difference. It is not a denial of liberty to forbid the sale of narcotics



## THE CONSTITUTION

**Antoine R. Ivins**  
*of the First Council  
of the Seventy*

My brethren and sisters, you will pardon me if I say it has been a nervous wait. Twenty-eight years ago, at the October conference, I was sustained as one of your Presidents of the seventies quorum. That means that this is the fifty-sixth time I have stood here to bear my testimony to you. I have to confess that while I like to bear my testimony, the overwhelming sense of responsibility is almost more than I can stand. I seek therefore, your interest and your faith and your prayers that perchance I may drop a word or two that may be comforting to us.

I am happy this afternoon to be one

of you, to be engaged in this wonderful work of the Church. I am especially happy and grateful this afternoon for the privilege of bringing my wife with me to this meeting. Some of you will remember that, just a little more than two years ago, reporters came over from the *Deseret News* and asked for a story they could publish in the event she would pass away. Through the faith and prayers of the Brethren, through her faith and courage, she is still with us, and for the whole time that I have been one of your servants, she has stood by my side and traveled with me being a great help and support and a blessing to the people with whom I have ministered. For this I am truly thankful. I am thankful also, regardless of the dangers that threaten us and the unholy conditions that prevail, that I live in this nation.

On Saturday morning, this body exercised the privilege of expressing approval and acceptance of the officers listed by the Presidency of the Church. It was the voice of the people—President Clark expressed it, as the Doctrine and Covenants does, as the common consent of the people. That is basic in the

organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—the voice of the people. If we are going to meet, successfully, the conditions of which we have just heard, it must be because the voice of the people shall rise up in defense of honesty, integrity, righteousness, and correct living conditions. I think it is within the power of the people to bring that about once the voice of the people could be so aroused.

Then I remember the two years or more I studied the constitution of a nation in which I was resident, a constitution which was not, as ours, the expression of the body of the people, but a constitution which was gathered out of ours and the French Constitution and adapted to that nation. It has taken more than a hundred years for those people to sense the import of their constitution.

I once heard a man say, "Democracy is not what is written on a piece of paper. It is the expression of what is within the heart of men." Our country came into existence just that way, in that the power is resident in the people and that every right and every privilege that is given to our officers is a conces-



## THE STICK OF JOSEPH

**Gordon B. Hinckley**  
*Assistant to the Council  
of the Twelve*

My dear brethren and sisters, I seek the direction of the Lord that the things I say may be in harmony with the inspirational things to which we have listened these past three days.

This has been a marvelous conference. I have missed one voice. That is the

voice of President Stephen L. Richards. His wisdom, his kindly persuasion, his unflinching courtesy were always an inspiration to me, and I shall be eternally grateful to him.

I rejoice in the appointment of President Henry D. Moyle as a member of the First Presidency. I am grateful for the opportunity of working under his direction in the great missionary program of the Church. I pledge him my loyalty and my energy.

I rejoice likewise in the appointment of Howard W. Hunter to the Council of the Twelve.

I am satisfied that the Lord guides this work. I echo the words of the

Psalms: ". . . he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." (Psalm 121:4.)

I wish to say a few words in furtherance of the theme set before us by President McKay in the opening address of the conference—"Preach the Word." I have in mind one of the great facilities available to us in carrying forth this assignment.

The other day in a stake conference, I heard an officer of the Air Force stand before the group and tell of the circumstances surrounding his coming into the Church. He said in substance:

"I had a date with a lovely young woman. When I called for her, I noticed



or alcohol to children, and neither is it a denial of liberty to ban the distribution of filthy, obscene, character destroying materials.

There has developed in this country, I am sorry to say, a species of so-called "broadmindedness" which tolerates anything and everything. It is high time right-thinking citizens showed they are fed up with such false broadmindedness. I, for one, fail to see where this so-called "tolerance" of evil has made society any better or individuals any happier.

We cannot steer a safe course without a compass. We cannot build an enduring society except on principles of righteousness.

As Dr. Daniel A. Poling recently wrote in the *Christian Herald*, "It's time for a new crusade," a crusade for decency.

The youth of the Church and of America deserve that we parents live up to our responsibilities in this regard.

Many centuries ago, a celebrated Roman matron, Cornelia, was asked by an acquaintance to display her jewels.

Cornelia called to her children to step forward. "These are my jewels," she said.

The youth of the Church and of America are our jewels. Let us prize them as they deserve. A clean America will be a strong America, a secure America, a prosperous America, a peaceful America, a free America, an America that will continue to merit God's blessings in the future as it has in the past.

God grant it may be so, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

sion, a direct concession from the people.

I remember reading about when in the Magna Charta, the right of kings was circumscribed in Great Britain, the voice of the people determined that certain things *only* could be exercised, even by men who claimed that they presided by divine right, the divine right of kings.

That voice, brethren and sisters, has come down to us. It was the voice which produced the Constitution of the United States of America, the grandest country in the world, and with all its shortcomings, and with all the evil that there is in it, I believe that it comes the nearest to being a civil government that is in harmony with the principles that govern in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. With us the power is resident in the priesthood and in the voice of the people. If we could bring our priesthood to a proper appreciation of its function, its privilege, we could determine these things. Just think that last evening nearly 50,000 holders of the priesthood scattered all over these United States, heard the proceedings of the priesthood meeting. If each one of that 50,000 persons who heard could rise up in righteous indignation against this

curse of which we have heard, it would in a great measure be reduced if not eradicated. [See conference address of Ezra Taft Benson]

I fear, brethren and sisters, that we approach these topics with too much apathy. We hardly realize the power that there is in the organization which we have. Even though it be small in numbers compared to the total population of the United States, it could exercise a tremendous influence, and does, as a matter of fact, for righteousness throughout the country.

I wish that we could appreciate it, that we could fully magnify it. Some of us are very late in coming to an understanding of our privileges. Just after the morning meeting I was made very happy by a brother who came to me and told me that his father had recently been able, eager, and willing to gather his family together with him and have his endowments in the temple. That man has been a friend of mine over the years. Just why he never came along before, I do not know. I know that I have loved him and honored him and befriended him in our association over the years, and I am happy beyond

expression to realize that he now is assuming a part of his rights in the Melchizedek Priesthood of the Church.

We have so many of those men, brethren and sisters, who are slow in understanding the advantages of it. If we could add that hundred thousand men to the number who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood now, there is no question but that we could influence, very greatly, a reduction in these things of which we have heard.

I do not care to talk a long while this afternoon, brethren and sisters, but I do want to express to you my love and appreciation for our leaders and to hope that I may always be able to sustain them and uphold their hands, and may I be able yet many years to mingle with you brethren and sisters and do what I can to help with the organizations of the Church with which we deal.

May God bless us all, may he strengthen us, give us courage, may he give us a proper understanding and appreciation of the source of power in these United States, and the reasons for the Constitution, so that we may be willing to support it and sustain it, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

on the table a copy of the Book of Mormon. I had never heard of it before. I began to read. I became interested. I secured a copy of the book and read it through.

"I had only the traditional idea of God and Jesus Christ. I had never given serious thought to the matter. But as I read this book there came into my mind light and understanding of eternal truths, and into my heart a testimony that God is our Eternal Father, and that Jesus is our Savior."

I am confident that the experience of this man who was influenced by the Book of Mormon is similar to that of many others of our people.

Brethren and sisters, if there are miracles among us, certainly one of them is this book. Unbelievers may doubt the First Vision and say there were no witnesses to prove it. Critics may scorn every divine manifestation incident to the coming forth of this work as being of such an intangible nature as to be unprovable to the pragmatic mind, as if the things of God could be understood other than by the Spirit of God. They may discount our theology. But they cannot in honesty dismiss the Book of Mormon. It is here. They can feel it. They can read it. They can weigh its substance and its content. They can witness its influence.

Faced with its presence, but unwilling to believe the story of its coming forth, they have sought an explanation for it, other than the one given by the Prophet that it was engraven on golden plates by ancient prophet-historians, and that their record was revealed and translated by the gift and power of God.

The Book of Mormon was first printed on a little hand-operated flat-bed press in a backwoods village of New York in the year 1830. From that first edition, while critics have published volume after volume in an effort to discredit the Prophet's story, the book has gone through one edition after another. From English it has been translated into



thirty-one other languages, and printed in twenty of these.

While its detractors have called it blasphemous, the work of a paranoiac, the outpouring of a myth-maker, the result of a man's environment, the book has gone forth to change for good the lives of men and women in a score of nations. What a concourse of the people of the earth we would have if all of those who have read this book and been influenced by its message were gathered together in one place.

The first edition was comprised of 5,000 volumes. That edition met all demands for a number of years. I think you may be interested to know that during the first nine months of this year, more than 350,000 copies were sold in English alone. I am satisfied that by the close of the year we shall have sold more than 500,000 copies of the Book of Mormon in various languages, all within a period of a single year. We now distribute every three or four days, more copies than were included in the entire first edition.

The same book which converted Brigham Young, Willard Richards, Orson and Parley Pratt, and many others of the early leaders of the Church, is also converting people in Germany, in the British Isles, in Finland, in Japan, in Tonga, and wherever else men and women are reading it prayerfully and with real intent. The promise of Moroni, written in his loneliness, following the destruction of his people, is being fulfilled every day.

Each time we encourage a man to read the Book of Mormon we do him a favor. If he reads it prayerfully and with a sincere desire to know the truth, he will know by the power of the Holy Ghost that the book is true. And from that knowledge there will flow a conviction of the truth of many other things.

For if the Book of Mormon is true, then God lives. Testimony upon testimony runs through its pages of the solemn fact that our Father is real, that he is personal, that he loves his children and seeks their happiness.

If the Book of Mormon is true, then Jesus is the Son of God, the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh, born of Mary, "a virgin most beautiful above all other virgins," for the book so testi-

fies in a description unexcelled in all literature.

If the Book of Mormon is true, then Jesus is verily our Redeemer, the Savior of the world. The great purpose of its preservation and coming forth, according to its own statement, is "to the convincing of the Jew and the Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations." (See title page of the Book of Mormon.)

If the Book of Mormon is true, then this land is choice above all other lands, but if it is to remain such the inhabitants of the land must worship the God of the land, the Lord Jesus Christ. The histories of two great nations, told with warning in this sacred volume, indicate that while we must have science, while we must have education, while we must have arms, we must also have righteousness if we are to merit the protection of God, as Brother Benson has so eloquently indicated here this afternoon.

If the Book of Mormon is true, Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God, for he was the instrument in the hands of God in bringing to light this testimony of the divinity of our Lord.

If this book is true, David O. McKay is a prophet, for he holds all of the keys, the gifts, powers, and authority held by the Prophet Joseph who brought forth this latter-day work.

I repeat, if the Book of Mormon is true, the Church is true, for the same authority under which this sacred record came to light is present and manifest among us today. It is a restoration of the Church set up by the Savior in Palestine. It is a restoration of the Church set up by the Savior when he visited this continent as set forth in this sacred record.

If the Book of Mormon is true, the Bible is true. The Bible is the Testament of the Old World. The Book of Mormon is the Testament of the New. The one is the record of Judah, the other is the record of Joseph, and they have come together in the hand of the Lord in fulfilment of the prophecy of Ezekiel. Together they declare the Kingship of the Redeemer of the world, and the reality of his kingdom.

Here is a voice that has spoken from the dust with a familiar spirit, and touched the hearts of men and women in many lands. Those who have read

it prayerfully, be they rich or poor, learned or unlearned, have grown under its power.

Let me tell you of a letter which we received a few years ago. A man wrote saying in substance: "I am in a federal reformatory in Ohio. I recently came across a copy of the Book of Mormon in the prison library. I have read it, and when I read Mormon's lamentation, over his fallen people—'O ye fair ones, how could ye have departed from the ways of the Lord, how could ye have rejected that Jesus, who stood with open arms to receive you! Behold, if ye had not done this, ye would not have fallen. . . .' (Mormon 6:17-18.) When I read this I felt that Mormon was talking to me. Can I get a copy of that book?"

We sent him a copy. He walked in the office some months later, a changed man. I am happy to report that a boy who had stolen gasoline, and then stolen automobiles, and then done other things until finally he was placed in a federal reformatory, was touched by the spirit of this book, and the report today is that he is now a successful man, rehabilitated, earning a living honestly for himself and family in a west coast city.

Such has been the power of this great book in the lives of those who have read it prayerfully.

I give you my testimony that it is true. That I know by the witness of the Holy Ghost, and that knowledge to me is certain.

Sidney Rigdon did not write it. Oliver Cowdery did not write it. It is not the result of a paranoiac or of a dissociated personality, as some have said. It is not the product of a myth-maker. It is not the result of the environment of a farm boy who grew up in western New York. Joseph Smith did not write it. He, the Prophet of this dispensation, translated the writings of prophets of old under the power of God, to testify in our day.

We invite all men everywhere to read it. Its witness lies within itself.

I so testify. This marvelous record, preserved over fourteen centuries, has confirmed my faith in God, in my Redeemer, in the land in which I live, in the work of which I am a part. I leave you my witness in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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## OF JOY

by Lee Avery

Happiness is a thing of here and now,  
The bright leaf in the hand, the moment's sun,  
The work accomplished, or the summit won;  
The sweet fruition, not the why or how.  
Joy is a buoyant, lilting kind of thing

That knows past beauties, breathes a future rose,  
Anticipates the spring, though deep in snows,  
That lifts the bird more surely than its wing.  
When things go smoothly, happiness may start;  
But joy is secret smiling in the heart.