

Guest Editor's Introduction

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In recent years, the central place of the Book of Mormon in the Latter-day Saint faith has been emphasized as never before. No one can fail to recognize the role of President Ezra Taft Benson in this emphasis, a contribution to our religion that will always be brought to mind when his ministry is remembered. From the youngest to the oldest in the Church, we acknowledge President Benson as the one whose urgent pleading has helped us make the Book of Mormon the "keystone of our religion." As individuals and as a Church collectively, we are better because of it, and we thank him for it.

This special issue of *BYU Studies* offers a sample of recent scholarship on the Book of Mormon. It is intentionally diverse and includes a variety that ranges from doctrine to history and from ocean currents to wordprints. If there is a common denominator, it is the fact that all of the authors take the Book of Mormon seriously and believe it to be worthy of their best scholarly efforts.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Edward A. Geary and the staff of *BYU Studies*, as well as to the many colleagues at Brigham Young University and elsewhere who assisted in reviewing the manuscripts that were submitted for publication. It is my hope that these efforts will inspire continued study—on all levels—of the Book of Mormon and the richness of gospel truth that it contains.