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Dear Saints:

We are writing to everyone on our mailing list, including the Pastors of independent restoration branches, warning of a hoax that is being perpetrated upon those who believe in the truth of the Restoration movement. This deception is coming from a group of people in Brazil who allege they have received the Book of Mormon plates (including the sealed portion), the interpreters¹, and the sword of Laban from the angel Moroni. A man by the name of Mauricio allegedly has been designated by Moroni to translate part of the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon. Joseph F. (Frederick) Smith (a great-grandson of Joseph Smith Jr.) and Bob Moore have visited this group, heard their story, held the purported items indicated above, and testified of the truth of the Brazil group's story at the Zarahemla Restoration Branch in Blue Springs, Missouri.

Smith and Moore have also baptized several of the Brazil group and ordained three of their men to the Melchisedec Priesthood. The group's stated intent is to publish their part of the translation of the sealed portion, to unite all believers in the Restoration movement, and to build the Temple on the spot previously designated by Joseph Smith Jr. in Independence, Missouri. The group has enlisted Smith and Moore to assist them by testifying as to the truth of what they heard and saw, by uniting those who believe in their testimony, and by finding a way to build the Temple. (See <https://secondinvitation.org> for more detailed information.)

We are not alone in our belief that the Brazil group's story is false. To date, the Conference of Restoration Elders (CRE) Coordinating Council and the CRE Chairman, the Joint Conference of Restoration Branches (JCRB), and the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) have made public statements to this effect (see CRE electronic "Monthly Tidings of Zion—January 2018;" conferenceofbranches.org/home/resources; churchofchrist-tl.org [11/29/17 Apostles' statement]).

To discern the truth of the allegations of the Brazil group, it is important to remember the counsel given by the Lord that "I will give unto you a pattern in all things, that ye may not be deceived; for Satan is abroad in the land, and he goeth forth deceiving the nations" (DC 52:4b). We believe this story to be a hoax because it does not fit the pattern God has given regarding these things in the Scriptures and in Church history, both of which we know to be true. Below is a discussion of the major issues in the story and why they do not fit this pattern.

ISSUE 1: The Brazil group indicates that the Book of Mormon plates were brought forth again at this time so that a part of the sealed portion could be translated and published.

DISCUSSION: According to the 1908 edition of the Book of Mormon,

They [the sealed portion] shall not go forth unto the Gentiles until the day that they

¹ According to Oliver Cowdery, the interpreters are also called the Urim and Thummim (see RLDS *History of the Church* 1:33).

shall repent of their iniquity, and become clean before the Lord; And in that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the Brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the Brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ. (Ether 1:100–101)

As this scripture indicates, the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon will come forth *only* when the Gentiles repent, exercise the same faith as the Brother of Jared, and become sanctified in Christ. As we look at the spiritual condition of the world today, it is obvious that mankind (including the Gentiles) does not meet this criteria. Thus, it is not yet time for the sealed portion to come forth, and any allegation that it has come forth to be translated and published is false.

ISSUE 2: As stated on the [SecondInvitation.org](https://secondinvitation.org) website, Mauricio became angry and “hammered on the interpreters and broke them. After Mauricio repented and fully applied himself, Moroni showed him how to make new stones, which he did. He gave them to Moroni the last time he saw him so Moroni could put the inscriptions on them. The inscriptions allow the stones to work. When Moroni appears again, he will give the new interpreters to Mauricio” (<https://secondinvitation.org/faq/>).

DISCUSSION: According to the Book of Mormon,

Now these things [interpreters or Urim and Thummim] were prepared from the beginning, and were handed down from generation to generation, for the purpose of interpreting languages; And they have been kept and preserved by the hand of the Lord. (Mosiah 12:19–20) These two stones [interpreters or Urim and Thummim] will I [the Lord] give unto thee [the brother of Jared]. (Ether 1:88–89)

First, *God* gave the interpreters to the brother of Jared. He did not have the brother of Jared make them as Mauricio claims he had to do to replace the ones he broke. Second, God prepared the interpreters from the beginning and has kept and preserved them through all generations. Thus, He would not have given them to a man who would have deliberately broken them. Third, there is no mention in the Scriptures or Church history that an “inscription” needs to be on the stones for them to work.

ISSUE 3: During the October 29, 2017, open forum at the Zarahemla Branch (see <https://secondinvitation.org/2017/10/29/open-forum-at-zarahemla-branch/>), Bob Moore stated that he was allowed to hold the pieces of the broken interpreters in his hands. He said the stones were two colors—one white and one clear. In addition, the breastplate was never mentioned by either Bob Moore or Joseph F. Smith as one of the items that Moroni gave to Mauricio.

DISCUSSION: Joseph Smith Jr. described the Urim and Thummim (or interpreters) as follows:

With the records was found a curious instrument . . . called “Urim and Thummim,” which consisted of *two transparent stones set in the rim of a bow fastened to a breastplate.*

Through the medium of the Urim and Thummim I translated the record by the gift, and power of God. (*Times and Seasons* 3:707, italics added)

According to Joseph Smith Jr., both stones of the Urim and Thummim (or interpreters) were transparent or clear. The allegation by Bob Moore that one of the stones was white is not consistent with the pattern already established by the Lord, as witnessed by Joseph Smith Jr. Thus, the broken stones held by Bob Moore were not the interpreters (or Urim and Thummim).

It is also important to note that, according to Joseph Smith Jr., the stones of the Urim and Thummim (or interpreters) were attached to a breastplate. Since the Urim and Thummim and breastplate were given to Joseph by Moroni, one would expect the pattern to be the same if Moroni truly gave this translating device to Mauricio. However, the fact that Mauricio did not mention receiving a breastplate with the interpreters (and neither Smith nor Moore mention having seen the breastplate) creates another question regarding the veracity of his entire story.

ISSUE 4: Mauricio will translate a part of the sealed portion of the plates.

DISCUSSION: According to the Book of Mormon,

whosoever has these things [interpreters or Urim and Thummim], is called a seer. (Mosiah 12:21) **Ammon said, that a seer is a revelator, and a prophet also; and a gift which is greater, can no man have, except he should possess the power of God. . . . But a seer can know of things which have past, and also of things which are to come.** (Mosiah 5:77–78)

A seer has the greatest spiritual gift from God. He is also a revelator and a prophet. These are the spiritual gifts that Joseph Smith Jr. had, as testified by the Doctrine and Covenants and Church history. Similarly, according to Mauricio, he has been tasked with translating a part of the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon, which would make him a seer like Joseph, as well as a prophet and revelator per the Scriptures. However, Mauricio has never claimed to also be a prophet and revelator, nor to our knowledge has he ever functioned as one. Thus, according to the pattern set in the Scriptures, if he is not a prophet and a revelator, he is also not a seer. And, if he is not a seer, he cannot translate the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon as he claims he has been commissioned by Moroni to do.

In addition, DC 84:3 indicates that the authority of the priesthood restored through Joseph Smith Jr. will remain on the earth until all the prophecies of the Scriptures are fulfilled. After Joseph's death, that authority continued through the Reorganization. Since the priesthood of the independent restoration branches continues the authority of the Reorganization, we would expect that the next prophet, seer, and revelator of the Church will of necessity have to receive that same authority to function in his office. Since Mauricio was ordained by Joseph F. Smith who does not have that priesthood authority from the Reorganization², Mauricio could not have received the true authority to represent God in His Church as the prophet, seer, and revelator—regardless of Joseph F. Smith's lineage.

² Joseph F. Smith was baptized and confirmed a member of the Church of Christ, Temple Lot (also known as the Hedrikites) in 1948 and ordained in 1953 to the office of elder in that church by his father, Arthur M. Smith—an apostle in the Church of Christ, Temple Lot. He was never baptized or ordained in the RLDS Church.

ISSUE 5: According to the following quote from the SecondInvitation.org website, “Joseph [F. Smith] stated that the characters on the plates feel smooth. According to the accounts of Joseph Smith Jr. and the witnesses of the Book of Mormon, they are ‘engraved.’ Why the discrepancy? Bob [Moore] further describes the characters as being ‘etched’—‘composed of tiny parallel lines’—but of a very small depth. Since this method of engraving very shallow lines was quite common in the 1800s, it would be reasonable for the witnesses to use the word ‘engraved’ to describe such etchings” (<https://secondinvitation.org/faq/>).

DISCUSSION: This explanation of the discrepancy is problematic. According to the testimony of the eight witnesses, which appears in the front of our printed Book of Mormon, the plates and *engravings* had “the appearance of ancient work, and of curious workmanship.” Had the engravings been the “very shallow lines” which were “quite common in the 1800s” as stated by Bob Moore, they would not have been described by the eight witnesses as “ancient work” and “curious workmanship.”

In addition, engraving and etching are two very different methods of imprinting metal. “Engraving is the practice of incising a design onto a hard, usually flat surface by cutting grooves into it” (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Engraving>). “Etching is traditionally the process of using strong acid . . . to cut into the unprotected parts of a metal surface to create a design” (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etching>). The angel Moroni told Joseph that the Book of Mormon plates were “engraven” (see *Times and Seasons* 3:707). Since Moroni wrote *his* record on the plates and learned this process from his fathers, he would have known which method was used to write on the metal plates of the Book of Mormon. When he told Joseph Smith Jr. that the plates were engraved, we can be assured that they were engraved and not etched. Also, the Book of Mormon itself states the writing on the plates was engraved (see 1 Nephi 2:96–97; 1 Nephi 5:218–219, 221; 2 Nephi 4:46–49; Jacob 1:1, 3–4; Jacob 3:1, 3; Jarom 1:31; Omni 1:16; Mosiah 5:64, 67 and Mosiah 9:169–170 [the previous two references pertain to the engravings on the plates of the Book of Ether—see Ether 1:1–2]; 3 Nephi 2:94; 3 Nephi 12:5; Mormon 1:4–5). The words “etch,” “etched,” or “etching” do not appear in the Book of Mormon. If the writing actually had been etched, the Lord would have translated the writing method as “etched” instead of “engraved,” as the above scriptures state.

Thus, the “smooth to the touch” feature of the Brazil plates strongly indicates that these are not the Book of Mormon plates translated by Joseph Smith Jr.

While there are other issues of the Brazil group’s story that do not fit the pattern, in our opinion the issues discussed above are significant enough to show that their entire story is false. We hope this discussion has been helpful to you. Please feel free to share this letter with the members of your branch or anyone else you think might benefit from it.

In Gospel Bonds,

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Nathan Kirksey