

Hill Cumorah Expedition Team 2010

By David B. Brown

The 2010 Hill Cumorah Expedition Team Spring Expedition took place from March 20th through March 27th of 2010. This year saw a change in the usual way that our expeditions take place. While previous expeditions are comprised of groups of seven or more people who travel two weeks and focus mainly on the Hill Cumorah in the northern area of the State of Oaxaca, this year saw a group of four who spent the largest portion of time at the ruin site of Teotihuacán. The four-person crew of Don Beebe, David Brown, Neil Steede and Gary Woods traveled to Mexico City by plane, rented a vehicle, and then traveled about the country to keep preset appointments.

This year's itinerary was to accomplish three tasks: 1) film the effects of the rising Sun on the west face of the Pyramid of the Sun on the day of the equinox; 2) travel to Ayoutla in the Cumorah region to climb up to the Mixtec outlook; and 3) travel back to Teotihuacán and photograph and catalogue the stone tablets that were found at the end of the tunnel beneath the pyramid of the Sun.

March 20, 2010

Our first blessings manifested early as we met at Neil's house in the middle of a wet, heavy snow at 3:30 AM. We made it to Neil's, to the airport, and our rides back home without incident. And, even though we boarded on-time we were delayed about twenty-five minutes because of the de-icing that had to take place before we could take off from

Kansas City. We made it to Dallas with little delay and our connecting flight into Mexico City was without incident. We rented our vehicle and with the use of Garmin we found a VIPS for some well needed nourishment. I got acquainted with Mexico City drivers very quickly as I forgot that using your blinker means it is clear for someone behind you to pass—oops. The semi driver took exception to me cutting of his path and once he had a chance he squeezed us off the road—no lie. We just smiled and passed him later on. Then it was off across the north side of town to Teotihuacán. The *Federales* were at the ruin site in-force because of the large crowds that gather for the equinox. Our hotel was completely full and thank goodness Neil had the foresight to book our rooms two weeks ago.

We checked in, got a short nap then met for a three hour conversation that was very enlightening. The possibilities of what lies in the immediate future are astounding with the recent developments in Mesoamerican archaeology is truly amazing as it parallels Book of Mormon history, and it seems to point to the ripeness of powerful developments.

Our devotions covered the topic of the scriptures admonishing us to be humble, patient and long-suffering—all the things that are difficult to do in Mexico City traffic. But, the message did hit home with us as we contemplated our worthiness (or the lack thereof) to be involved in His work. We sensed a growing hope for something unique

as God again reveals His purposes for our visit. We always arrive with a plan, but we also realize that He often shifts our attention elsewhere because His will is presenting other jobs to be fulfilled; we are open to that. We also discussed the 17th Chapter of Alma where Alma makes it very clear that the spiritual world is the reality of life with the physical realm being its reflection and not the other way around.

March 21

The morning began with a good breakfast and briefing where we discussed what would be the focus of our efforts and how to go about getting the photographs that we needed. We went to our rooms, packed, had our morning devotions and then placed our bags in the car, checked-out, left the vehicle in the hotel parking lot and walked to the Teotihuacán site to find our place among the tens of thousands of visitors who were present for this event.

We entered through Gate 1 on the southwest end of the site and because they had the Avenue of the Dead north of the San Juan roped off from visitors we walked around the east side of the site, around the north side of the Pyramid of the Sun and at about 10:15 we set up our cameras on the wall directly west of the Pyramid of the Pyramid of the Sun. The line to walk up to the top of the Pyramid of the Sun extended from the west side of the pyramid, around the south and all the way

around the east to the northeast corner of the pyramid; it was remarkable how many people were there.

Once we found a spot on the west wall of the Avenue of the Dead we spent the next two hours out in the sun gazing at this amazing stone structure. By the time we were in our place for filming the sun had already lit the main panels of the pyramid and had left the face of the steps, the face of the lower apron structures and the ring at the top in darkness to create a shadow contrast that only grew more distinct as the sun continued to rise. The rising of the Sun directly over the site caused the panels to reflect brighter and brighter as they became more fully exposed to the sun's rays, creating a greater contrast against the portions that were still in shadow.

We watched in awe as the time passed and several levels of symbolism began to emerge. Levels of the “law of center” (5) that illustrates that this creation is specifically for the salvation of man; chronology of epics with the major social changes in Olmec/Mayan Civilization; the relationship of possible prophecy symbolically written into the structure of the pyramid; and then by far our greatest revelation of the day and perhaps the trip. As things were finalizing with the zenith height of the Sun and the final dark panels were coming into light, Gary Woods asked the question that opened our eyes; when you look at the face of the pyramid, what do you see?

Gary then began to describe the cross that he saw and the light came on for the rest of us. As the fireworks echoed through the valley at the culmination of the midday equinox and thousands of hands were



raised to the sky at the few moments of the zenith of the Sun, we were in complete amazement at the obvious symbolism displayed before us. It was a pictograph of a cross set upon a base or hill with the shadow of the steps creating the vertical section of the cross and the shadow of the top “ring” creating the horizontal cross arms. And, there was more symbolism as the section that created the heart of the cross is in the form of an Egyptian symbol for “door” indicating that mankind entered the Kingdom of Heaven through the cross of the Risen Lord. And the stairs leading to the pinnacle symbolized that mankind can now reach the higher plane by way of the cross. This cross symbol is prolific throughout Mayan iconography as many inscriptions display the “tree of life” in the form of a cross; i.e. the lid on Pakal’s tomb. That Mayan tree of life is also depicted here in contrasts of light and shadow. And though most archaeologists might try to dispel the concept of a Maya tree of life

being depicted here the recent discovery of a Maya tomb within the Pyramid of the Moon demonstrates that the cultures are spiritually connected. All of this as the result of a new set of untrained eyes seeing for the first time what others had overlooked for decades; thank you Gary.

What a way to exit Teotihuacán! We walked back to our vehicle, drove out through a virtually unknown little town on the southeast side of the ruin and we were off down the east Mexico City by-pass to Puebla. After hitting a couple of unmarked *topes* (speed bumps) we found the *autopista* to Cordoba. We came to the pass that drops 8,000 feet from the Puebla Valley to the coastal planes of Veracruz and instead of the beautiful scenery we were expecting we ran into a wall of rain and mist through the entire descent. We drove on to La Tinaja where we stopped for some *queso fundido* and then on to Tuxtepec where we arrived at Hotel Meson at about 10 PM. We unpacked and enjoyed very thoughtful devotions and gave thanks for a very insightful day.

March 22

We were up by 8 AM on Monday, enjoyed breakfast, had devotions, refueled, stopped at *Chedraui* and made our way to Cerro Rabon (Cumorah) which was shrouded by clouds at about the 3,500 foot level all day; this did a good job of accentuating the undulations along the cliff face. We first drove to Ayouitla to meet up with the Moises we

met there last year. We discovered that he is currently in Mexico City to find work, but his cousin Joel was in Ayoutla and we made arrangements to come back to his home about 6 PM to spend the night so that we could get an early start on Tuesday. We then left Ayoutla and headed back to Isabel's home.

We arrived at Isabel's about 2:15 in the afternoon and we were met in the pasture by two lovely little girls who greeted us with firm hugs and then held our hands and giggled all the way to the house. There we were met by Isabel, Mama, Aunt Martha and two friends of the family that were by to visit. We chatted and caught up with the latest news, we did our annual purchase of hand embroidered materials with members of our group purchasing tablecloths, native designed napkins, custom designed napkins and Martha-made napkins. The house addition that Moises began with a cinderblock foundation, concrete pillars and a concrete floor is now complete thanks to Mama's carpentry skills in nailing on the tin roof! The girls provided us with a few more artifacts found on the property and again the very high percentage of Teotihuacán obsidian is confirmed and again supports the theory that this homestead was an ancient Nephite outpost.

We did find that the visitors had a question for us as they had recently caught a bird that had been banded with a serial number and also carried a message. Neil informed them of the hobby that some people have of homing pigeons and carrier pigeons and that the message

was intended for a particular recipient. They said the bird tasted good. After some coffee and bittersweet hugs goodbye we left the home with Isabel and the girls escorting us to the road. It is always difficult to leave these sweet people.

We went to Jalapa and munched on some delicious pork tacos and then headed to Ayoutla. Our host allowed us to spend the evening in the upper room of his home where we enjoyed a very lengthy devotion prior to making our way to our cots in the outer room. It was an extremely cold night for which we had made little preparation and found ourselves inventing ways to stay warm by wrapping in ponchos and trash bags. We finally got to sleep, though none of it was restful.

March 23

We were up just after 4 AM and on our way out of town by 4:45. Don chose to stay at the vehicle as he was not feeling up to the climb. The rest of the “gringos” snuck down the road with the grace of a herd of water buffalo; we were invisible to the village up until about 4:30, but audible to them until about 10 AM when we were finally out of range. The morning sky prior to sunrise was remarkable with the stars and the Milky Way so prominent that it was amazing. Even Neil was able to distinguish the Milky Way and several of the bright stars. On any given night a person is supposed to be able to discern about 7 to 8 thousand stars; we must have been able to see 12 thousand.

We headed east down the concrete road until it ended and then switched to dirt. We looked for ways of cutting up through the pasture to the pathway leading to the top and we experienced a God-send with one of the locals who happened to be walking to work at 5 AM. We asked about the path and he took us up the hill until we hit the road to the top. Actually, the guide was moving so fast up the steep incline that I sprinted to stay with him while Gary assisted Neil and they caught up with me later. And it was at that point, as Neil reported to us later, that he felt a darkness come over him and tempt him to give up on this whole venture as it was of no importance and would yield nothing. Neil fought that feeling for a couple of hours and continued up the path in spite of that darkness. Once on the path to the top of the hill we spent most of the rest of the morning navigating the rocks and mud along the trail until we arrived at the top around 10 AM. The view was amazing. We arrived at the top in the midst of a cloud that cleared in a few minutes and then we could behold Cumorahcita, Cerro Rabon, the skirts around the mountains and the river in full view.

After a rest we began walking around several



paths across the top of the area beginning with a pathway that followed along the top of the inner valley where farming is taking place by the locals in the town who were passing us all morning along the path to the top. Gary and I walked for a couple of hours and found several places of interest to investigate. Gary found a spring inside a minor cave that is obviously used by the locals who run out of water and don't want to return to the town at the base of the mountain. This can also be evidence that it is possible for a person to remain in the upper portions of this mountain for long periods of time such as a Moroni who is hiding from the Lamanites while translating the Plates of Ether. I followed the path through a coffee field almost all the way to the very top of the south ridge until the path ended and the jungle got very thick before I could reach the top. We brought no machete and had no guide so I turned back down the path. Gary and I then started down the path to the base of the valley and it was here that Gary came across a stone axe head in the path—the only real artifact found on this adventure. Neil had already started back down the path about 12:45 while Gary and I tried a couple more ways to reach outer points in the area, but again the heavy brush and lack of machetes stopped our progress.

We spent some time resting under an *jicara* tree and watching the eagles ride the currents up the side of the mountain, and then we started down about 3:30 PM. We finally got to the road in Ayoutla at about 5:30 and after thanking our hosts we made our way to Tuxtepec. Neil, Gary

and I were spent and happy to let Don drive us the hour and half back to the hotel. Neil commented that he felt this was the roughest path he had ever attempted in the Cumorah region as it was a mud and stone path on terrain so steep that it was just one switchback after another.

The outcome of this trip up the side of the mountain above Ayoutla is that we found no obvious terracing or stacked stones. We did find a natural water source for a few people, but certainly not to sustain a large group on the mountaintop, although water collection does not seem to be a problem with all of the natural clouds and mists in the upper portions of the valley. The only ancient item found was the stone axe head that Neil estimated to probably be Olmec (Jaredite) period. It would be interesting to take another group up higher and plan to spend a night in the upper valley above Ayoutla, but that will require at least a sleeping bag and a few MREs with water as well. There may yet be ancient ruins up higher as there was another point about a half mile west and about 2,000 feet higher than the one we were climbed. And, it would also be interesting to find a way out to the promontory that appeared to be on the farthest east exposure of our mountain and about 300 feet below where our pathway circled the mountain face. I believe that to be a very advantageous position to coordinate a battle that relied on several organized attacks.

March 24

We awoke a little later this morning having taken the time to sleep in a little and rest. We gathered for breakfast about 8:30 AM and took a two block trip to VIPS for breakfast. We then ventured back to the hotel, packed our bags, said our goodbyes to the staff, stopped for gas and headed back on the road to Teotihuacán.

The travel back was uneventful though we did get through the pass at Cordoba in full daylight and take in the vastness of the area with the snow-capped volcano of Orizaba towering overhead. We got into the Puebla Valley and enjoyed much cooler temperatures than we were experiencing in the lower coastal plains. After ignoring my female Garmin navigator because I knew I was right, she got mad and purposefully sent me on a wild goose chase telling me to turn onto roads that didn't exist. I continued to ignore her and got back on the road I wanted and after some "mad time" she cooled off and brought us safely into Teotihuacán. Who says technology can't mimic life?

While on the drive through the Puebla Valley Neil was able to make some phone calls that seem to have a good chance of setting the Valsequillo project back on the road to completion (ancient man in America). Neil was ecstatic about this apparent move in what seemed to be a stalled situation. This was one of his goals while he was in Mexico this trip.

We arrived at our hotel in Teotihuacán about 7:45, checked-in, and sat down for dinner. At about 10 PM we gathered for devotions and

enjoyed a wonderful spirit. We know that your prayers are supporting us because we feel the impress of the spirit on several occasions assuring us that we are protected and that important insights are being revealed. For example, it is so important that we are here at Teotihuacán to review these items of the layout of the Avenue of the Dead, the Pyramid of the Sun and the Pyramid of the Moon. I am certain that in the coming months there will be a new theory developed on the purpose of the symbolism and the messages that are resident in the structures here. They are truly amazing.

March 25

We began the morning about 7:15 with a wake-up call, got our breakfast, loaded equipment and headed for the office of Sergio Gomez by 9 AM. Sergio arrived about 5 minutes later and guided us to our warehouse where we were given specific instructions on the limitations of our presence on the grounds and introduced to our assistant Reuben. We started in on arranging the furniture in the small room and laid out our equipment, graph and numbering plates. Soon we were into a rhythm that saw us complete this project within 3 hours time, photographing both sides of all the stone tablets.

We left the grounds about noon and Neil caught a taxi to Mexico City to meet with Tomas while Gary, Don and I caught a little lunch and a quick nap. We expected to be on our own for several hours as Neil

prepared us to not expect his return until about 7 PM. We were surprised to hear from him about 2:30 indicating that he was already on his way back to the hotel with the report in hand for which he had made the trip. When Neil arrived he grabbed a late lunch and filled us in on the trip to Mexico, telling us how he insisted that the taxi driver get him to a certain destination by 2 PM, and that the taxi driver was able to coerce a Teotihuacán police commander to accompany in the taxi as an escort in case there were problems in managing the “faster” travel to make the destination in Mexico by the appointed time. Neil further reported that it all came together like clockwork. In spite of his tardiness in leaving Teotihuacán he made the destination by the appointed time, waited no more than ten minutes, met Tomas, had the necessary conversation and was back in the taxi and on the way to the hotel in less than 20 minutes.

After the briefing and some food, Neil also caught a nap while the three of us worked on reviewing the report and sharing some other digital programs. We then gathered for more discussion of the progress of the day while Neil contacted Sergio and waited for his arrival for dinner. During this time, a call came in from the United States concerning the Valsequillo project and further progress in this regard in essence setting the stage for the evening discussion with Sergio. Sergio arrived with his assistant Reuben, and after the usual graces of introduction we sat down to dinner. Neil and Sergio spent most of the evening talking at length concerning the politics, hopes, and future

projects in archaeology in Mexico. Neil joyfully received some news that his longtime friend Mario has been assigned a new position that puts him in a high leadership role in Mexican archaeology. Neil was also told that the tunnel project under the Temple of Quetzalcoatl has come to a halt due to a lack of funding at the present time; they are still about twelve feet away from the tunnel. Neil also had some very important exchanges of information with Sergio and some key pieces of the puzzle fell into place providing clear direction as to ways to resolve the present road blocks with Valsequillo. This implies that the coming year might prove to be very fruitful for this particular project.

After saying our graceful goodbyes to Sergio and Reuben, we ended the evening with a very good devotion and reassurance that God is directing this work and we are privileged to be a part of it—just need to get more people involved; wanna help? Neil and I stayed up for a while afterward and worked on the star chart program concerning the Bethlehem Star.

March 26

We began the morning without breakfast and headed directly to Teotihuacán to begin filming the rise of the morning sun as soon as possible. We were in by 7:15 and filming by 7:30 with thousands less people around as compared to the previous Sunday on the equinox. With the filming in progress, Gary and I headed down the Avenue of the Dead

to the Temple of Quetzalcoatl to begin getting a sense of the layout of the site and the messages that might be found in the architecture. It was here that the unique conversation going on between Gary and I began to provide some new understandings concerning the origins of the Jaredite culture and their interaction with Christ when it began to become very, very clear; Teotihuacán is the same expression of the Christ as found with the City of Enoch. Christ and the plan for the salvation of mankind are imprinted in every aspect of the site. As we walked up the Avenue of the Dead, continuing to talk and contemplate possible meanings the many levels of symbolism just seemed to blossom. We shared a few of our understandings with Neil and Don as we passed by them in front of the Pyramid of the Sun and then Gary and I were on to the north end of the site keeping our destination set on the Pyramid of the Moon. It was here that many of the final aspects fell into place and completed, or rather validated the Enochian aspects of the site. The people who designed and built this city were full of the Spirit of Christ and gave their all to express it. From my viewpoint, there is no other interpretation of these structures that accounts for the building placement and the purposes for each structure. Neil joined us about 9 AM and filled in some of the final aspects of this new perspective that almost literally left me with my mouth agape and my chin on my chest.

By 10:30 we were completed with filming as the sun had completely illuminated the western surfaces of the Temple of the Sun, so

we packed our things and drove to the southern end of the site to drop off a project proposal with the site director named Alejandro. We then drove around to the east side of the site and ordered some *barbacoa* at eatery number 9. It was delicious.

We left there and hit the road for the Ramada Inn by the airport, checked-in, got some refreshments, then took the car to the rental agency to turn it in. They were good to us and drove us back to the hotel at no charge. We all relaxed for a while and continued to talk about our experience over the last week. We then had a very moving and remarkable devotion this evening as we again thanked God for the revelation of so much insight and information. We could never have understood all these things without the circumstances that began with Gary noticing the shadow of a cross on the Pyramid of the Sun on the equinox. It continued to inspire us through the week and we marveled at the shadow or type of things indicated in that when we place Christ first in our lives then everything else falls into place; so too, when at Gary's urging we were able to see the cross so largely displayed at Teotihuacán, then all the other peripheral buildings and their meanings fell into place!!! God is so good that way.

We went to the restaurant for dinner and were joined by Moises. He looked good and Neil filled him in on the events of the week. Moises expressed that our visit to his home is an annual event with his family and that he has known for many years that he wants to be part of our

group. Neil stayed downstairs with Moises until about 1:30 AM while the rest of us tried to get some sleep as we had a wake-up call set for 3 AM so we could take the 3:30 shuttle to the airport for a 5:25 AM take off to Dallas.

March 27

We were up at 3 AM this morning and scurried to the shuttle vans getting to the airport at 3:30 this morning. It took nearly an hour to get through the ticket counter, but we did make the plane without trouble, although we sat on the plane at the gate until some details were worked out allowing us to fly into Texas. We left Mexico City about 25 minutes late.

We landed in Dallas and again dealt with long lines in both customs and baggage claims, but again with some quick moving were able to make the connecting flight to KC on time, landing in KC at 12:09 in the afternoon. While it was cold and wet, we were glad to be home and to have the down time to now process all the information we gathered on this trip.

Thank you again for your prayers and desires to support us in gathering this information for a better understanding of our ancient brothers and sisters in the faith. Now more than ever we are convinced that Teotihuacán is the structural representation of the faith system of the remnant Jaredite Christians; it is their testimony of Christ's birth, death,

and resurrection. Teotihuacán is Nuahtl for "Birthplace of the Gods." We now understand that this site is the celestial marker of the planetary positions when Jesus was born and should be interpreted more like "The place that marks the birth event of God." Beyond that the site is a teaching tool concerning the ages of man and the role of the Savior. It is the Jaredite record of Christ.