

Hill Cumorah Expedition Team

2015 Expedition Report

By David B. Brown

The expedition itinerary for this year was to travel to the Yucatan of Mexico and revisit some of the sites we had previously seen on the southern end of the Yucatan, then to travel to the northern end to investigate the nature of the Golden Age structures found in that location. Specifically, we wanted to know if the stelae in those locations gave indications of how they were related to the Book of Mormon people.

We set out to visit the “green areas” surrounding the Rio Bec area, specifically in the fields immediately east of Nicolas Bravo. Then to Calakmul, Palenque, and northward to Edzna, Sayil, Kabah, Uxmal and Coba.

June 9, 2015

We were at the airport at 4:40 AM this morning. Mike, Neil and I pulled up to the terminal behind Frank, Terry and Joannie. Doug Smith was already in the terminal waiting. Our flight from KCI to Dallas was without issue as was our journey from C Terminal to D Terminal in Dallas. We caught a breakfast at McDonald’s in D Terminal where we began doing some online research for tobacco plants. It seems that the root system for tobacco requires three to four feet soil depth with broad spread and good drainage if the leaves are to be aromatic and good quality. The green areas of the Yucatan and Belize are ideal for this; almost as if the agricultural areas were built for the ideal tobacco growing industry. This further supports our theory of Atlantic Ocean trade in BC times to provide the Mediterranean with tobacco products as research has indicated took place. This all developed before we even set foot on our plane from Dallas to Cancun. This flight also went well.

We landed in Cancun to find heat and humidity. We passed quickly through immigration and customs, then on to the rental car location where it took nearly as long to complete the transaction as it did to fly from Dallas to Cancun. Finally, about 3 PM we were on the road....until we got five miles down the road to a Pemex where we could fill up the tank. The car rental gave us a vehicle with fumes for fuel. Once the fuel tank was full we then headed down highway 307 that follows along the Caribbean Coast of the Yucatan, passing all of the resorts along the way, passing Tulum and other minor archaeological sites until we reached Bacalar at about 6:45 this evening.

We pulled into the hotel where we had made reservations. It is a beautiful location on Laguna de Bacalar. While our rooms do not have AC, we do have a wonderful breeze and

comfortable surroundings. We enjoyed a good meal this evening where we went over our plans for collecting soil samples in the Rio Bec area.

We had our devotions this evening and reflected on how important it was to ask questions; ask and it shall be given, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. This certainly is expressive of our journey to Central America where we are moving out in faith and asking the Father to bless our efforts with further knowledge and confirmation of His hand in all things. We are looking to ask the right questions so that a loving Father cannot withhold.

June 10, 2015

Shortly after sending out the email last evening we had a nice rain shower at our hotel. It cooled things off and we all reported this morning that we slept solidly in spite of the lack of air conditioning. We met at 7:30 this morning for our devotions and discussed the hopes for this trip and what we wanted to accomplish. Neil made sure we understood the manner in which we needed to take soil samples and why it was important to preserve them in a particular way. As we left the room to go eat breakfast we received a beautiful rainbow as a reminder of God's promise that we would be protected from rain.

It was just after 9 AM when we left the hotel and headed south to our intersection with Route 186 and then turned west toward Rio Bec. We identified our "green area" field just north and east of Nicolas Bravo then continued west to meet up with our friend Ezekiel who we met in 2008 when we traveled the road to Rio Bec and he served as our guide. He joined us as we headed back to Nicolas Bravo and our "green areas."

We experienced cloud-cover most of the day and there were showers happening all around, but amazingly, never in the places where we were out digging. The first location was on the east end of the large "green area" where we identified a field that we wanted to dig in and as we were unloading our equipment the owner of the property drove up to his cattle field, opened the gate, started a conversation with us through Ezekiel who then got us permission to dig on his farm. How did this happen? How is it that the owner who lived a few miles away just happened to be at the location we were wanting to dig when we got out of our vehicle? This was more than coincidence. We dug down about a foot and a half, took a few scoops of soil samples, and amazingly, there were two pottery shards in the small hole we made thereby providing a way for

us to date the layer of soil through pottery dating methods. Then down the road another couple of miles we had almost the same experience. Someone was working another end of a field we had identified as ideal for a sample. When we got out of the vehicle, that is when this land owner came running up to us to talk, again provide permission through Ezekiel's translation. We again dug down about 18 inches, took a few scoops for soil samples and again a couple of pieces of pottery shards. Additionally, there was a thunderstorm that appeared to be quickly developing and moving toward us at our second sample hole when in the midst of our work it seemed to move around us without ever threatening our efforts. Our rainbow promise was now being fulfilled without any doubt.

We then drove back to Nicolas Bravo to obtain the help of another local so that we could get other samples from the west end of the "green area." This time we found Jose, who accompanied us to the west end of the fields and through his connections, he provided us with opportunities for four more samples. All the samples from this end were various forms of a sticky grey clay. We took Jose back to Nicolas Bravo and thanked him for the assistance, then as we drove back to Biente de Noviembre to drop off Ezekiel, Neil took the time to explain to Ezekiel about the Tunnels at Teotihuacan. Ezekiel was enthralled. Once at his home we shared other information concerning local archaeology and then we were off to EcoVillage where we are staying this evening. Another evening with no air conditioning.

Just after we gathered in the restaurant for our evening meal it began to lightly rain for about 15 minutes. It was a quiet gentle shower that had the song birds in full chorus. We had an in-depth discussion about the information we gathered today and about the implications this has on the development of the Lowland Maya and their industry. Then off to our rooms and a final gathering for devotions.

This evening we discussed the overwhelming blessings of the day—the many ways in which God had a hand in ensuring that we were able to accomplish our tasks, and then the manner in which He assisted us in properly digesting the information we received. It was this evening that we realized that at least two of us were experiencing something from another dimension. Frank shared that on the way back from the fields to drop off Ezekiel that he had a few minutes of overwhelming understanding that something very important was transpiring today—as if there was a portal to the past being developed. I too had a similar experience at about the same time where on at least two occasion I felt that as I turned my gaze to the fields we

were passing that I would catch a glimpse of those ancient Maya who worked these fields and developed this land—it is as if the veil between the present and the past had become very thin and something between the two was being exchanged. Perhaps we were receiving the thanks from an ancient people who have been waiting for a group to come along and knock on the door to understanding them. Frank and I can both attest that it was an incredible moment.

June 11, 2015

This morning began with song birds, sunshine and devotions at 7:30 AM. Our discussion centered on the wonderful experiences of the day before and the importance of how the song-birds are the ones who are first to awaken the world to the coming light—therefore, song-birds in the San Bartolo Murals may be the ones who are sent to awaken our spirituality. We also considered the fact that God’s will is always accomplished regardless of who is working in the mix of events to get it done, but we are blessed to be able to be part of the efforts to get His work accomplished. It really is our decision as to whether or not we are going to awaken and be a part of the “marvelous work and a wonder.” We then began to discuss what we would try to accomplish today. We agreed that we will first visit Calakmul and then drive over to Palenque . After breakfast and loading the van it was 9:30 when we hit the road and made our way west to the turn south to Calakmul. But, the way to Calakmul did not seem to be so easy to find. So, we turned around and headed back east to the small town where we found several placards stating that it was in the Calakmul Biosphere. It was here that we were told to travel another 6 or 8 kilometers west and we would see the turn-off. So, 21 kilometers later we found the entrance to the site. We paid our fee to enter and traveled 30 kilometers south to the museum that is very nicely done. We purchased sodas and water, wandered around the facility and then as we were getting ready to leave the museum we talked with the receptionist and discovered she was the same Rosario that we met in January 2008 and provided her a ride from Calakmul to her home up on the main highway. It was good to touch base with a pleasant and familiar face.

We then continued on south for another 30 kilometers where we reached the site. Here we unloaded and went over a few facts and theories about Calakmul. Neil stayed back at the entrance while the rest of us headed down the long trail to the site. We trekked up several of the pyramids, took tons of photos, and commented on the architectural design which demonstrates that it is a royal city for the Mulekites. During this time Neil found a friend named Edy who

pushed him on a bike-seat and they joined us on our exploration. At this point we made a few new discoveries. It appears that Calakmul also has a two-plaza design like many of the cities in Belize. Structure #5 sits between the two plazas and it has ten stelae referring to key figures in their history and two stelae referring to a married couple. In other words, it refers to the marriage the transitioned the Mulekite nation into a spiritual heritage nation that assimilated with the Nephites. This structure represented that transition between the two plazas with the highest structure on the site being the one on the south after the Nephites joined with the Mulekites. In other words, they reached their spiritual pinnacle once the two cultures had joined together. And, it was on the top of the highest temple that we discovered how Calakmul was designed to be a defensive city. These temples sit in the lowest point of a slow slope depression which appeared to have a ridge about 15 miles out all the way around it. In other words, someone sitting on the highest point of this temple would be able to see an approaching army from 15 miles away which will buy time for preparation. This, and the defensive wall built around the city just a couple of kilometers away from the city center is a good explanation for why Calakmul had continuous occupation for at least 1500 years. This city was well designed and well positioned.

The afternoon was hot. We were beginning to melt and running out of water. We eventually reached the van and made our way back up the 60 kilometers to the main highway. Along the way we saw foxes, coatimundi, oscillating turkey and other exotic fauna of the region. AND, it began raining in sheets. Again, we were spared the discomfort of rain while we had cameras capturing hundreds of photos of the location. This was another remarkable testimony of the graciousness that Heaven extended to us.

Once on the main road, we headed west to Escárcega where we got fuel for the van and Burger King to go at about 7 PM this evening. Then we continued on west, through periods of small showers until we finally reached our turn south for 26 kilometers to Palenque. We got in this evening about 10 PM, Mike quickly arranged our accommodations and we were soon unpacked and settling into our room with air conditioning for the first time on this trip. At 10:30 we meet for devotions and headed to bed. Three or four of us got a hefty dose of sun so we are exhausted.

June 12, 2015

Well, the day began with a knock on the door where Neil and I are staying telling us that it was time for 8 AM devotions—we were still sleeping. The AC was soo very relaxing that we had overslept. Ten minutes later we were in Doug and Terry’s room with the rest of the group going over our devotion for the morning. Again, we were impressed with the events of these last few days and the level of accomplishment we have been allowed to receive. We set our desires to again accomplish things for God’s purpose and glory and then headed to breakfast at the restaurant that is attached to the hotel.

We left the hotel about 10 AM and after a few kilometers we were at the archaeological site paying to enter by vehicle. Mike and Neil dropped us off and then headed back to the museum to contact Hector. No sooner had Terry, Doug, Frank, Joannie and I stepped out of the vehicle and I went to purchase our tickets, Joannie was approached by a guide who immediately started telling Joannie about his personal belief of the site. He stated that there were Aramaic writings in the palace, that the site was not only Maya, but that archaeologists had found Chinese and Hebrew letters at different places on the site. Why was this man just immediately talking to us about these things? We continued to talk with Victor for the next twenty minutes and the five of us were in awe. He was speaking our story and he was impressed to find someone who also believed as he did and was so receptive to his concepts. We exchanged contact information and we thanked him for being a mystic connection this morning.

Our party of five headed to the open area of the site. We visited the Tomb of the Red Queen, went over the Temple of the Inscriptions, visited the Palace with the three-level tower, the Temple of the Cross, the Temple of the Foliated Cross, The tablet of the Warriors, Temple XIX , Temple XXI and the Temple of the Sun. All of these expressing the story of Christ from the Three Wise Men to the visitation in the Americas after His resurrection and His challenge to the people of this land with the Great Commission. We finally finished about 2:30 in the afternoon and headed down the terraces to the parking lot where Mike and Neil were waiting. We found Neil telling some of the vendors of the latest finds at Teotihuacan. Also, we found our friend Victor and introduced him to Neil. It was here that we found that they needed no introduction; Victor has worked at Palenque since 1965 and he is the one who took Neil to see the Aramaic letters at the Palace when Neil went to ask about them in 1965. We then invited Victor to share a Coke and talk about what he knows while Neil was able to share about findings

at Teotihuacan. It was while the Neil and Victor conversation was occurring that Terry, Joannie and Doug spent an hour taking as many photos as possible at the museum.

We completed our visit about 4 PM with a prayer for Victor and he agreed to let us convey him to his home in old-town Palenque. Mike dropped five of us off at a facility to get our money exchanged (the vendors at the airport were giving a terrible exchange rate) while he and Neil took Victor home. Once we completed our money exchange from dollars to pesos, we headed to a market where we searched for, and found, some seeds that Neil is planning to use for demonstration at an upcoming conference in Europe. But, when we finished purchasing the seeds, the van would not start. For about 5 minutes, try as he may, Mike could not get the van motor to stay running. Finally, (after much prayer) the van started and with generous pushing of the gas pedal it stayed running long enough to get us to a gas station where we filled up and put some Heet in the tank to displace water that must have been the problem. The van ran much better after that and we were finally on our way to the hotel for a much needed shower and refreshment.

We met for dinner at 6:30 this evening, had a very good discussion of the how mystically our day had progressed. It was here that all of us discovered that Victor felt “impressed” to speak with us because he was being told that we needed to hear what he had to say. That is why he walked up to Joannie and started in talking as he did. This is information he shared with Mike and Neil as they were taking him to his home.

When dinner was finished, we met for devotions, made plans for tomorrow and again thanked God for such a marvelous experience. We plan to purchase a few more seeds before we leave town tomorrow and then head north to the west side of the Yucatan in the area of Edzna and Sayil.

June 13, 2015

We were up early this morning getting ready to pack our bags and leave Palenque. We had our devotions this morning where several scriptures were read. The prayer of the Zoramites led to the fatherly advice of Alma to his son Shiblon, then to the conversion experience of Alma and the sons of Mosiah. We were all impressed with the lesson of the day; Love one another and pray for one another. After devotions, we ate a wonderful buffet meal with table full of Federal Police next to us—we felt very safe.

We loaded our van about 9 AM and headed down the road to the city market in Palenque where Neil was looking to purchase some more seeds for his exhibition model he is planning next year. We found a market vendor who did sell seeds, but we couldn't find anyone who sold fresh atuns (fruit of the prickly pear cactus) as they are not in season right now. We did however find an odd little fruit called a "rambutan" which has an odd shaped hairy outer shell with a meaty interior that has the consistency of a grape. We bought a few and then moved on. Having accomplished all we could in Palenque we headed north up the road to the east/west highway that took us back to Escarciga and then north through the town of Compeche to the town of Uxmal.

The day was beautiful with large white wispy clouds in the sky as we traveled across the lowland area of Compeche and then up along the western coast of the Yucatan with the Gulf of Mexico making its periodic appearances to the west of us along the highway. The colors of the water were varied in beautiful blue palettes. We finally reached the small location of Uxmal which has a few hotels built very close to the site. Mike arranged a very affordable rate and this is the only reason we are able to stay at this very nice location. Air Conditioning again makes a world of difference in getting the restful sleep we need to deal with the heat and humidity of the day.

We enjoyed a relaxed evening dinner and had another good discussion at devotions as we talked about the location of those Book of Mormon migrations that took place moving "northward." There was a population explosion that took place where the entire land was covered, indicating how vast a change was happening in the region. This is part of the motivation to develop the lands in the Yucatan area that was not previously occupied by the Nephite people. That is part of the reason we are here on this trip.

June 14, 2015

Today began with a 7:30 devotion focusing on the importance of observing God's laws as a means of devotion to His viewpoint of life; that when we are observant of His perspective, then we are true to the purposes of His creation. We then went to breakfast and were soon on our way to the site of Uxmal just a couple of kilometers down the street.

We arrived at the site just after 9 AM and were soon looking at the huge structure they call the Pyramid of the Magician. This structure was the tallest. It had extremely rounded corners

on the base and then a squared building at the top with lots of ornamentation. Moving to the west was another courtyard with clear indications of numerology and orientations that reflect the pathway of the sun with east indicating the opening of the day, the west as the close of the day and the point where we receive the wages of our labor. The south was the place of light and the north was a place of darkness (not evil but the unknown). This courtyard was a place that represented our walk through life and of our hope for the afterlife.

Just south of this location was a place of the millennial reign with Christ's Kingdom and then another ballcourt to indicate that prior to the final judgment, Satan will be loosed for a small season; hence, the ballcourt to represent the battle between darkness and light. Then the ballcourt transitions to the place of the glories; the prison house, the telestial, the terrestrial and the celestial as indicated by the various levels where these buildings were placed and how they were arranged with doorway, steps and ornamentation on the top of the buildings. This site is a model of the Christian belief system with a temporal judgment concerning our walk through this life, the millennial reign with Christ and the final judgment and assignments to eternal glory that is consistent with our spiritual condition.

I Corinthians 15:40: There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. [41] There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. [42] So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: [43] It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: [44] It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

We spent a lot of time walking these structures and discussing the intricacy of the details, the stonework detail and the variations of architecture. It appears that the people who built this were from Mulekite background out of the Rio Bec area, and that they had migrated to this location during the Golden Age Period, it being a later construction in the Classical Maya Period. We completed our visit to the ruins about 1 PM, being beat from the sun and heat we ventured back to the entrance where there were several shops and found Mike and Neil had been discussing replicas of important Maya pieces with one of the vendors. We had the opportunity at

that point to share what we understood about the inscriptions found on Pakal's Tomb Lid, the Tablet of the Cross and the Tablet of the Foliated Cross. The vendor Luis seemed to be very appreciative of the information we had to share and it gave him new insight on how to share with others.

With having another wonderful day of sunshine we decided to venture down the road to Kabah to try and see yet another site. We unloaded and no sooner had got to the ticket booth when it started to rain. We waited for a few minutes, but just as we were about to purchase our tickets and go ahead, the rain came again even harder than before. We believe that God was telling us we were done for the day. We packed up and headed up the road back to our hotel at Uxmal, but just before we got the hotel we were out of the rain. This was a definite sign that we were done for the day; as it turned out there were several of us who needed to take a nap and rest.

We grabbed a little snack and took naps or rested as the afternoon progressed, then met again about 7 PM for dinner. This evening we held devotions and discussed the fact that the gospel is truly a better weapon than the sword as it tends to unite the hearts of humanity as opposed to solidifying disconnected people in their separations. How true of the world in which we live today. Separations are abounding as we feel our worlds teetering, but the grace of the gospel and connections it creates can correct the ailments we experience if we will but let our perspective shift to how God views our heart and our actions. His is a much better view of what should be done in our personal lives as well as our communal ones.

June 15, 2015

The day began again with devotions and a consideration of how being ethical in problem solving is very important to getting the blessing of heaven and the stability of the societal trust. We then moved to breakfast, packed our bags, loaded into the van and headed to Kabah.

The morning was overcast with a light sprinkle when we got out of the van and entered the site. We first visited the eastern set of ruins. The central plaza was again oriented to the four cardinal directions with architectural features that indicated the plaza was emblematic of the physical walk through life, much like the site of Uxmal yesterday. Then, moving out of the plaza to the south and west, we find the three levels of the glories with telestial, terrestrial, and celestial. Again, this is an expression of their concept of life-after-death and the purposes for living ethically while we journey through this life. We then crossed the highway to another

section of the site in hope that we might find other structures to help solidify the concepts we were developing, but all of the structures were overgrown and still in disarray. The only completed structure was the archway that was over the sacbe that led to Uxmal from Kabah. Of interest here is also the “red-hand” imprint that was found on some of the stones of the archway.

While at the site we struck up a conversation with one of the visitors and discovered they were from Prescott, Arizona . The gentleman had worked for a while helping to excavate sites in Belize, and he and his wife had visited many of the sites in Western Yucatan. He asked where we were going next and we told him, then he mentioned he had been to the cave and had found nothing of real interest there—it was a cave. He then said that the site of Ek Balam was very unique and close to Chichen Itza just north of Valladolid. We took this conversation as something more than coincidence. We looked up the site and found that it has a unique frieze of “winged Maya warriors.” We were hooked and changed our direction.

Heading north from Kabah we traveled southeast of Merida and then east on the autopista to Chichen Itza. We found a little hotel where we had stayed before called Dolores Alba, checked in and enjoyed a nice afternoon meal. Our group discussion was over the site of Ek Balam and speculation of what the “winged warriors” might represent. Once in our rooms, we were visited by a bird at the window who continually tried to enter and pecked at the window over and over. We think he probably saw his own reflection and found it offensive, but it provided a wonderful opportunity to take photos.

Our evening devotions were centered on the importance of language and the multiple languages understood by the writers of the Book of Mormon—a lesson in the preservation of knowledge and context. Frank shared his personal testimony of his conversion to the faith, the seeking for doctrinal truth and evidence of God working through the ages and around the world. He found that in the Restoration belief system. This evening is a quiet and early evening for bed.

June 16, 2015

It was a good morning that again began with devotions followed by breakfast. We were soon out on the road for Valladolid and the ruins of Ek Balam. We knew where we wanted to go, but the GPS was taking us somewhere too far south. Once we realized that we and the GPS weren't working on the same map, we got things corrected, reversed course and set out on the right road for the ruins. We arrived at Ek Balam at about 10:30.

This site is located on typical northern Yucatan landscape; flat and rocky with soil depth only being about 12 to 18 inches before you start hitting bedrock. Therefore, the pathway to the site was rocky with lots of exposed tree roots—all of this was a real challenge for Neil, but he endured and walked the half mile from the parking facility to the site.

The details of the structures at Ek Balam are oriented along a north/south axis. While there are large structures along the east and west, they are not elongated on this axis, nor are the structures on the east/west axis rebuilt and detailed. This site is about the north/south axis that brings us from the location of knowledge (light in the south) to the location of faith (heaven and the afterlife in the north). In this location, we enter on the southwest and at the place of the oval temple in the south. The oval makes allusion to the egg and the beginning of our faith journey where we are born into the faith. Interesting that there is a recessed square with stairs in the upper levels of this pyramid—it seems to indicate a baptism or some type of water rite.

The walk across the plaza includes a ballcourt in the west. The ballcourt is the place where we battle between our physical and spiritual bodies; in the end, one aspect will win and the other will die. Then we reach the teaching place at the north temple which rises high above the plaza. There are many doorways that enter into rooms that go no where. These are undoubtedly rooms with murals that tell a story or teach a moral lesson that is necessary for us to understand before we can ascend up the stairs to the next level and the next set of lessons. Eventually, about two-thirds of the way up the main stairway, you come to the set of friezes on the left that tell the story of resurrection. Here is a huge jaguar mouth that swallows the one who is physically dead, but above the nose of the jaguar is Kulkulcan (Quetzalcoatl) who has conquered death. And one level down from His throne are four figures with Quetzal wings who are not dead. Are these John the Beloved and the Three Nephites who have received the gift of life until Christ returns? This site certainly has some features that indicate enough uniqueness from other sites that we believe there is a case to be made here.

This was our experience as we left the site; that this indeed was a unique and very important site in the testimony of these ancient Maya (Nephites) who possessed a full knowledge of the gospel during the Golden Age. Certain locations of the site seemed to possess a mystical presence that would make itself known when we had insight given to us. Neil seemed to exit with more speed when we left and we all enjoyed the ice cream and frozen juice bars when we reached the entrance with all of the vendors. We also met a lady there from Germany who is on

vacation while she is on summer break from her teaching job. We talked with her for some time and gave her a ride to the central area of Valladolid. Then we found a hotel. This seems to be a very nice location, good restaurant and very accommodating staff. We will probably stay here tomorrow night as well.

We had devotions this evening and discussed the manner in which we have received so many blessings. We feel certain that there were very important things we needed to get done and to be taught, and that it is the blessing of heaven that has given us the insights we have received. After devotions we went to dinner and enjoyed a very delicious meal.

Tomorrow we head for Coba. We discovered today that Ek Balam is connected to Coba, so it definitely was not coincidence that we were led to Ek Balam. We hope to discover more of that connection tomorrow and why it has so many stela.

June 17, 2015

The day opened with a good devotion concerning the basics of the gospel that has been unchanged since it was first preached to Adam; faith, repentance, and baptism. Also, we read of the admonition to read the prophecies of Isaiah as he spoke of all things concerning the children of Israel. We then went to breakfast and were soon out on the road heading southeast to Coba.

We got to the site about 10 AM. After purchasing tickets and heading into the compound, we acquired a guide and a cart so that Neil would be able to trek to the big pyramid 2 kilometers down the pathway. We received a lot of information concerning the Maya in the Coba area; how they were the original builders of the major sites, but were soon overtaken by the Toltecs and some of the social and religious practices were changed at that time. The first structure we encountered was the Temple of the Church. This structure has as its foundation nine rounded bodies of stones that were used to establish the structure of the church. And, there was a ballcourt placed right next to it to indicate that this was an outcome of the battle between the physical and the spiritual planes of existence. This is the reason we had to first see El Balam on Tuesday.

Coba is the Mayan testimony of the establishment of the church and the nine who died as Disciples of Christ, preaching and teaching the gospel until they reached a certain age and then joined with Christ in His kingdom. But, eventually the gospel as taught by these was hidden from the world because of the dwindling of faith. Therefore, the church (queen, or Christ's bride) was

taken to Ek Balam and there entombed (preserved) and watched over by the four Winged Warriors (Three Nephites and John the Beloved). Eventually the fullness of the gospel would be reborn into the physical realm and the gospel as taught by the Christ would be restored. This is the testimony between the two sites of Coba and Ek Balam. Between the two, the testimony of the 12 disciples of the New World is made complete and a prophecy is written in stone and stucco. This was incredible as events set in motion on Sunday led us to this discovery over the last two days.

We wandered on down the pathway to another ballcourt that had a marker of a decapitated jaguar holding a deer head. Interesting symbolism that we couldn't quite put together, but the glyphic reading of the marker will eventually tell us more. We believe the marker is hinting as to seeing things through the eyes of the deer (Christ) and this particular marker faces a well that probably alludes to a water rite (baptism). We then ventured to the tallest pyramid on the site. It stood alone off to one end. It was an invigorating climb and the breeze at the top was certainly needed after the steep climb in the noonday sultry heat. At the top we did witness a sacrifice conducted by a young couple from Atlanta. They were fun to watch and talk with. We all climbed down and some of us rode carts back while others of us walked the 2 kilometers back to the parking lot. It was about 2 PM. We did a little shopping, snacked on juice bars and stayed in the shade. Eventually we headed back to the hotel, had a mid-afternoon meal and then rested for a while.

We had devotions at 7:30 this evening, then headed to the hotel restaurant for our last dinner of the trip. We enjoyed the atmosphere of being a group with a purpose in a foreign land and knowing that we had been blessed beyond measure in both protection and the acquisition of knowledge.

June 18, 2015

We were up and having devotions at 8 AM yesterday morning then off to breakfast, loading the van and down the road to Cancun . We reached the airport just after 11 AM, turned in the rental car, made our way to the ticket counter, checked in our luggage and shopped during the one and half hour wait for the flight to take off.

Just after 2 PM we were over the Caribbean, flew over Cuba and landed in Miami , FL just before 5 PM Eastern time. Apparently the terminal was very busy because they deboarded us

at a closed terminal and then bussed us over to the immigration terminal. We passed through immigration, claimed our luggage, then passed through customs, dropped off our luggage at the check point and went through another security line to get to our gate for the 9:30 PM Kansas City flight. This ordeal in Miami makes us appreciate the immigration/customs set up in Dallas/Fort Worth. The Miami set up was burdensome and the distances required to travel were taxing to the weary traveler.

We took time to sit and eat a good meal. Everyone caught up on their electronic communication while we were in the terminal. We also began digesting much of the information we had received and also began developing requests for photos to further workout details of what we saw in the structures and murals.

As we drew closer to the flight we received word from the airline that we were delayed until 10:30 PM for our take-off. Then as we were making phone calls and plans for the time change, they started calling us for a quick board. We were off the ground at 10 PM instead of 10:30 and we landed in Kansas City only 15 minutes after our scheduled time of arrival. We waited for our luggage and left the airport about 12:40 AM on Friday morning. Everyone arrived home safely.

The information we acquired on this trip further developed theories we have been working for decades now. The confirmation of the layering of soil in the Maya Green Areas further supports the theory of tobacco trade being the catalyst for Phoenician trade with the Zoramites, and it explains why the Zoramites were against unifying with the Nephites; they wanted autonomy and to remain separated from the fire of spiritual reformation that was sweeping through the Maya Lowlands thanks to the influence of Nephite gospel. Only in separation could the Zoramites keep their economical boom from being busted by the equalizing influence of the gospel. Eventually the Zoramites lost the battle as Alma and his fellow ministers brought the gospel to the Zoramites, and it eventually helped to kill the tobacco trade from this region.

Also, the information from Palenque, Uxmal, and Kabah further confirmed our development of the theory that there is a Geometrical Gospel—a moral story embedded in the design of structures; both in artwork and in relational positioning of structures. This Geometrical Gospel uses the concepts we find in the Hebrew Kabbalistic Tree of Life. Three axis define the direction of East to West as the journey from birth to death, the direction of South to North as the

journey from literal/physical to faith-born/spiritual, and the direction of Earth to Heaven as the journey with Christ and His invitation to join Him in eternity. All of these aspects can be read in the relational designs we found in these locations.

Then came our unforeseen information. A meeting with a stranger on a rainy day in Kabah turned into redirection to Ek Balam. There we found the “Winged Warriors” in a stucco frieze and the site was ruled by three kings. Also, there was a Queen brought to Ek Balam and buried here who originated from Coba. Once we were in Coba on Wednesday we realized that there is a testimony of nine foundational ones who established the church here. Combine the nine with the three “kings” in Ek Balam and you get a total of twelve. Why are the three “kings” part of the twelve? Because they are “winged” protectors of the tomb for the Queen (Bride) just as the Three Nephites are the guardians of the gospel until Christ comes again. This seems to be at least one strong connection between the two cities and could be the reason we were led to see Ek Balam before we visited Coba.