The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon in the Twentieth Century

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Abstract
I hope this study, however preliminary it might appear, will provide a sound first step toward developing our self-understanding as Latter-day Saints of the history of Book of Mormon use in the twentieth century and the phenomenal increase in understanding, appreciation, and study that has taken place over the last three to four decades. This study may also offer one useful perspective for the gradually emerging history of cultural Mormonism and its antipathy to the Book of Mormon. This study is grounded in the analysis of a number of possible indicators of intensity of interest in the Book of Mormon and in a dozen interviews with people who were directly involved in some of the more significant developments of the last half century. In the absence of any readily available scale that directly measures the phenomenon I wish to illuminate, I have collected a number of measures which would intuitively seem to be directly linked to it. These include statistical summaries of Book of Mormon references or citations in LDS literature and general conference addresses, as well as counts of publications related to the Book of Mormon. Almost no comparative statistical analyses have been attempted because of the incommensurability of the various indicators.

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