

Alma 63:5-8*Hagoth – never heard of more*

1

The belief that Polynesian ancestry includes Book of Mormon people can be traced back at least to 1851, when George Q. Cannon taught it. . . . President Brigham Young detailed the belief in a letter to King Kamehameha V in 1865. Other Church leaders have since affirmed the belief, some indicating that among Polynesian ancestors were the people of Hagoth, who set sail from Nephite lands in approximately 54 B.C. (cf. Alma 63:5-8). In a statement to the Maoris of New Zealand, for instance, President Joseph F. Smith said, “I would like to say to you brethren and sisters . . . you are some of Hagoth’s people, and there is NO PERHAPS about it!” (Cole and Jensen, p. 388.) In the prayer offered at the dedication of the Hawaii Temple, President Heber J. Grant referred to the “descendants of Lehi” in Hawaii (IE 23 [Feb. 1920]:283).

Daniel H. Ludlow, ed, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 3:1110

2

This man Built Other Ships: . . . You know, in the 63rd chapter of Alma, there is a little story which tells of Hagoth who was such an exceedingly curious man that he built a boat, and he went out on the seas, and he came back. He built other boats, and then finally the boats went forth and never returned. We are told in The Book of Mormon the place where those ships were built was near a narrow neck of land.

When I was on my first mission as a young boy, I used to ask the old-timers out there, “Where did you come from?” They would say (in Maori), “We came from the place where the sweet potato grows wild, where it is not planted, does not have to be cultivated.”

There is only one place in all the world where the sweet potato grows wild, and that is within the environs of that narrow neck of land where Hagoth built his ships. They will tell you that they came from several degrees of distance (Maori). One degree of distance, a greater degree of distance, and then a far greater degree of distance.

The Maori scholars tell you that . . . (spoken in Maori) means the place where the spirits are joined. But I have a little different interpretation of that. *Wairua* in the Maori language means “spirit.” *Wairua* also means “two waters,” *wai* meaning water, *rua* meaning two.

In the Hawaiian language *Wailua* means “two waters”; in the Samoan language *Vailua* means “two waters.” The word for spirit in those other languages isn’t *Wairua*, the same as in the Maori language.

The Maori scholars say that they came from a far distant place, where the spirits are joined, or where the body returns to the spirit. But I say, knowing the story of Hagoth as I do, that they came from the joining of two waters, a narrow neck of land between two bodies of water which joins those two great continents.

Matthew Cowley—Speaks, 114-115.

3

Now where would the west sea be? The west sea would be the Pacific Ocean, and the narrow neck of land leading into the land northward must mean the Panama Canal area. . . .

In a great gathering of Polynesians held in Salt Lake City just prior to 1915, a prophet of the Lord, President Joseph F. Smith, . . . made the statement that without a doubt this man

Hagoth and his company were the progenitors of the Polynesian races, and that this migration was the beginning of the Polynesian population in the South Pacific.

Now up until very recently men of science have said no, the Polynesians have come from the Malay states, they have come from the Asian side of Africa, and they have migrated from a westerly direction to the Polynesian islands—not from the Americas. This was popular thinking until about 1940, when a very bold scholar by the name of Thor Heyerdahl made the observation that indeed these people must be from the Americas. He set out to prove this by building some balsa rafts on which he set himself adrift off the shores of South and Central America. He and his companions drifted for about one hundred days; and depending only on the prevailing tides and winds of that area, they found themselves cast upon the shores of these South Pacific islands, not far from Tahiti...

The Lord was mindful of Hagoth. The Lord guided Hagoth.

Robert L. Simpson, *Proven Paths* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Books, 1974], 53-54, 60.

4

And They Were Never Heard of More: I hope I may help to make the whole world weep for the children of Lehi. Can one refrain from tears as he contemplates the fall of these people who have been brought down from culture and achievement to illiteracy and degradation; from kings and emperors to slavery and serfdom; from landowners of vast continents, to indigent wards of governments and peons—from sons of God with knowledge of God, to rude savages, victims of superstition, and from builders of temples to dwellers in dirt hogans.

The predictions concerning the scattering of the early American was fulfilled to the letter. Not long before the birth of Christ, a great man by the name of Hagoth left continental America with colonies of people. He ... went forth and built him an exceedingly large ship... and launched it forth into the west sea,...

And behold, there were many Nephites who did ... sail forth with much provisions, and also many women and children; and they took their course northward....

And the next year:

... this man built other ships. And the first ship did also return and many more people did enter into it;... and set out again to the land northward.

And it came to pass that they were never heard of more And... one other ship did also sail forth....(Alma 63:5-8).

It has been thought by many people that they went to the Pacific Islands. And the scripture would so indicate:

But great are the promises of the Lord unto them who are upon the isles of the sea; wherefore as it says isles, there must needs be more than this, and they are inhabited also by our brethren (2 Nephi 10:21).

Elder Cowley and I visited some of these peoples on the “isles of the sea” and found them developing and progressing and doing well.

Spencer W. Kimball, CR, April 1947, 145-146.

5

As Latter-day Saints we have always believed that the Polynesians are descendants of Lehi and blood relatives of the American Indians, despite the contrary theories of other men. For that reason, from the beginning of our Church history we have had more than an ordinary interest in them as a people. But now that interest is even more keen. Recent research on the part of world-recognized scientists and scholars has focused a new light upon them, and writings of early explorers in both America and Polynesia have become available now for detailed study.

The new knowledge which has been developed shows that the Polynesians without any reasonable doubt did come from America, that they are closely related to the American Indian in many respects, and that even their traditions and genealogies bear that out.

Pronounced as are these views establishing the relationship of Polynesian and American Indians, there are equally impressive data now available to disprove the theory that the Polynesians originated in the Orient and came eastward from Indonesia, Maxaya, and nearby lands. Let us just mention a few of the convincing points of evidence.

Most of you have seen the great stone pyramids, or photographs of them, discovered by archaeologists in Mexico, Central, and South America. Pyramids of almost identical structure, both in plan and material, if not in size, have been found in Polynesia. I saw some of them myself within the last month.

Stone roadways, so characteristic of the pre-Inca period of America, are found to be duplicated in some of the Pacific Islands. Giant stone statues such as are found in the lands of South America and among the Incas are now discovered in the Polynesian Islands, with characteristics and markings so similar that few can doubt their common origin. This includes many of the structures found on Easter Island.

The sweet potato of the Pacific Islands, known in Polynesia as the *kumara* or *kamala*, as it is called in Tonga, is found by botanists to be the identical plant which is native to South America with impressive evidence as to the manner in which it was transported from Peru to the Pacific Islands.

Cotton, coconuts, pineapples, and papaya are likewise being traced from Polynesia to America by botanists who now announce that the Polynesian varieties of these plants are but offshoots of the parent plants in America.

The ocean currents have been observed in our time to carry drifting objects to Polynesia from two places in America, one being the Pacific Northwest and the other the Central and South American region. Large Pacific Northwest pine logs have been traced in the drifting currents of the Pacific Ocean from the Vancouver area of North America to the Hawaiian, Marshall, and Caroline Islands. Hawaiians and other Polynesians have made canoes from these drifted pine logs and in them have traveled from island to island. There are no such trees growing in Polynesia. They came by ocean currents from the Pacific Northwest of America.

This is the more notable when it is observed that customs and household articles characteristic of the Indians of the Pacific Northwest of America have been found on a wide scale in Polynesia.

Mark E. Peterson, CR, April 1962.

Alma 63:10-13*Engravings kept sacred*

6

No one is commonplace, and I doubt if you can ever read a biography from which you cannot learn something from the difficulties overcome and the struggles made to succeed. These are the measuring rods for the progress of humanity. As we read the stories of great men, we discover that they did not become famous overnight nor were they born professionals or skilled craftsmen. The story of how they became what they are may be helpful to us all. Your own journal, like most others, will tell of problems as old as the world and how you dealt with them.

Some of what you write may be humdrum dates and places, but there will also be rich passages that will be quoted by your posterity. Get a notebook, my young folks, a journal that will last through all time, and maybe the angels may quote from it for eternity. Begin today and write in it your goings and comings, your deepest thoughts, your achievements and your failures, your associations and your triumphs, your impressions and your testimonies. Remember, the Savior chastised those who failed to record important events.

Spencer W. Kimball, "The Angels May Quote from It," *New Era*, October 1975, p. 5