

From the Editor

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The front and back covers of this issue of *BYU Studies Quarterly* feature a unique stained glass window. It is found in the chapel of the La Cañada Ward meetinghouse in Southern California. Since I grew up in that ward, where my parents lived and served for fifty years, I have many special personal reasons for wanting to share these pictures with all who enjoy this journal.

A few old-timers still remember laying bricks and working together on the construction of this distinctive building in 1949–50, but none of them can remember who designed or made this impressive window. The anonymity of this window's maker only enhances its value to every member of this LDS congregation. And for almost seventy years now, this window's tender messages and distinctively LDS symbols have inspired, consoled, taught, and strengthened the many who have worshiped in this chapel with the window in view.

Integral to the architecture of this building, the window is positioned directly behind the pulpit from which Church leaders and members have taught and testified, all in the name of Jesus Christ. From the audience's perspective, this Christ-centered illumination stands behind everything that is said and done, every ordinance that is administered, and every musical number that is performed in this sacred space.

The expression on the face of Jesus is calm and reassuring. He wears a red cloak over his shoulders, and his head tilts kindly toward the door that he hopes will be opened by those inside in response to his inviting knock. His right arm is raised, and at his waist his open left hand holds a golden lamp, offering to light our way as we follow him, the light and

the life of the world. The lamp's purple top gives the impression that this vessel is topped off with grapes. All of this symbolizes many things in the mission of Christ and our relationship to him at his impending arrival.

On each side of this central figure of the Savior are two conspicuous circular stained-glass medallions. The one on the viewer's left depicts the Bible, subtitled as the "Stick of Judah." On the right is the Book of Mormon, with its subtitle on the scroll behind it as the "Stick of Joseph." There is no mistaking that this is a Mormon window. These two books of scripture lie open, ready to read. They bring to constant memory the two sticks mentioned in Ezekiel 37, which appear here as two witnesses and testaments of Jesus Christ. Positioned near the head of Jesus, these two scriptures portray the word of Christ, containing the messages by which we can recognize that it is he who knocks as our friend and mentor.

Four additional single-pane images are placed toward the bottom of the left and right sides of this triptych.

Underneath the stick of Judah, on the far left side, a dove of peace, with a leafy branch in its beak, represents God's gift of his covenantal reconciliation with Noah and all mankind. That dove also foreshadows the sign of the dove falling upon Christ at his baptism as well as the gift of the Holy Ghost. The dove of peace also bespeaks the promise of comfort given by Jesus the night of his Last Supper, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you" (John 14:27).

Beside it, two gold keys may represent the keys of the Aaronic and Melchizedek orders of the priesthood, mentioned in the stick of Judah, especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Images of keys such as these often appear in Catholic depictions of Jesus giving to Peter in Matthew 16 the keys of the kingdom and the power to bind temporally and spiritually, on earth as it is in heaven. In the restoration of these keys by John the Baptist and Peter, James, and John, Latter-day Saints find assurances that the same organization that existed in biblical times is efficacious once again upon the earth.

Underneath the Book of Mormon and on the inside edge of the right side, two hands are shown gripping one another, in parity. The hand-clasp was a common symbol in ancient classical art for marriage. Close inspection of the cuffs on these two white sleeves reveals that the husband's hand is on the right, while the wife's fancier lace cuff is on the left. The two are united as one for time and for all eternity by the culminating ordinance of the temple, which epitomizes the new and everlasting covenant of the dispensation of the gospel of Jesus Christ that was opened by the coming forth of the stick of Joseph in 1830.

Above and to the right of that emblem of marriage, the all-seeing eye of God looks down from heaven and out toward the center of the overall window, carefully mindful of all that the Father's eternal plan is bringing to pass. The piercing glance of the all-knowing eye both chastens and reassures. God's omniscience, symbolized here, also reminds the viewer of his unsurpassed intelligence, which is his glory. The equilateral triangle around this all-seeing eye has three streams of glory brightly beaming forth from each of its sides. This is an apt depiction of the Latter-day Saint understanding of the Godhead, revealed by the Book of Mormon and by the Prophet Joseph, of three perfect beings unified in bringing to pass the eternal life of all who will receive the love, the atonement, the ordinances, and the blessings of Jesus Christ.

Little wonder that this window is a cherished treasure of light. Its meaningful details reward close introspection, while its overall composition warms even the passing glance. I hope that this Latter-day Saint masterpiece will help students and scholars, young and old, to follow the Master in all that we say, do, and think. We are, after all, accountable for our words, deeds, and thoughts, as Alma 12:14 makes unmistakably clear.

Perhaps it was my seeing this window every week as a teenager that engendered in me the principles that I and my colleagues have tried to follow in editing and publishing *BYU Studies Quarterly*, including the pages of this issue.

While it is good to be learned, we strive concurrently to hearken unto the inspired words of revealed scripture, both of Judah and of Joseph.

While we yearn for peace, we also recognize that it is ultimately only God's descending doves that will establish lasting peace.

While we cite scholarly authorities, we also keep in sight the keys of priesthood authority.

While valuing individuality, we also cling tenaciously to the hopes and promises of the indivisible unions of holy matrimony and joyous bonds of eternal lives.

And to accomplish all this, we strive to keep Christ prominently central in our lives, to deny not his gifts, to hear his knocking on our door, and to go forth, loving him and all things that are of him, with all our hearts, with all our many strengths, and with all the capacities of our less-than-all-seeing brains and intellects. With all this in mind, I hope you will enjoy all the content of this issue.