

"The ancient peoples of America built cities, temples, monuments, roads, aqueducts, irrigation canals, and other structures indicative of a large population and in many instances of a high degree of culture."⁵

Second, when the dominant Indian culture is considered, we find the highest centers in Central America, Mexico, and Peru. "The New World culture is thus a kind of pyramid whose base is as broad as the two Americas and whose apex rests over Middle America."⁶

The spread of ancient culture in America has been closely scrutinized by archaeologists. They have discovered a marked similarity between the Eskimo and northeastern Asiatic tribes. Skin color, language, and the mongoloid eye are readily associated. In fact the Eskimo is so distinctive in language, culture, and somatic characteristics that recent investigators tend to place them apart from the Indian into a separate ethnic group. These characteristics rapidly disappear as we move southward. Aside from the Eskimo and northwest Indians there is no evidence of recent mongoloid influx.

These general conclusions of archaeological research in no way refute the story as found in the Book of Mormon. In fact similarities in the general picture are strikingly clear. The problem of choosing any particular nation, city, or river and of identifying it as the one mentioned in the Book of Mormon is quite another matter. Only the most careful study should justify a strong opinion on such questions. A trained observer who is equipped with technical knowledge and who approaches the subject sympathetically would be best qualified to make a contribution on this challenging subject.

Note 6

Anthropology and the Book of Mormon

The subject of the American Indian naturally has a special interest for those who believe in the Book of Mormon. Indian ancestry, at least in part, is attributed by the

⁵Widtsoe and Harris, *Seven Claims of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City, 1937), 63.

⁶Clark Wissler, *The American Indian* (New York, 1922), 305.

Nephite record to the Lamanites. However, the Book of Mormon deals only with the history and expansion of three small colonies which came to America and it does not deny or disprove the possibility of other immigrations, which probably would be unknown to its writers. Jewish origin may represent only a part of the total ancestry of the American Indian today.

A parallel is found in the Bible writings which mentions only a small portion of the Old World geographical areas and its people, even though Palestine was the land bridge of ancient civilizations. The Hebrew writers mentioned other lands and people only when they came in contact with them.

When America was discovered by Europeans, it was inhabited from Alaska to Cape Horn by a people of which no counterpart could be found in the Old World. They possessed as a race certain physical, cultural, religious, and social characteristics in common. Within the Indian type were group and individual differences in color, stature, and culture, but these were no greater than differences found in the white, yellow, and black races. They had developed, therefore, what may be termed an indigenous or racial culture pattern. Native culture should not be confused with indigenous origin.

"Certainly, many, Hrdlicka, Wissler, Kroeber, etc., hold that the native Americans are only culturally indigenous; that is, that man arrived at a very early date, bringing with him a primitive culture out of which has grown a culture peculiar to America, and in that sense indigenous."⁷

"Few if any scientists now believe that America was the cradle of the human race, or that its inhabitants rose and multiplied in complete independence of man in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australasia."⁸

Most of these authorities are of the opinion that some elements of Indian ancestry have inhabited this continent

⁷Diamond Jenness, *American Aborigines* (Toronto, 1932), Preface cited in (Salt Lake City, 1937).

Widtsoe and Harris, *Seven Claims of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City, 1937), 86.

⁸Diamond Jenness, *American Aborigines*, (Toronto, 1932), Preface.