



Community of Christ

Sale of Printer's Manuscript: Questions and Answers

What is the Printer's Manuscript?

The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon is a copy of the original dictated manuscript. Oliver Cowdery served as the principle scribe. This copy was provided to the printer, E.B. Grandin, in Palmyra, New York. It became the guide by which the type was set for the first edition (1830) of the Book of Mormon.

Less than 30 percent of the dictated manuscript has survived. The Printer's Manuscript is virtually complete, missing only three lines of text. Community of Christ bought the Printer's Manuscript in 1903. It was part of a collection that included several other items, including the Book of Mormon "Caractors" document. The bill of sale for the entire collection was \$2,500.

By selling this manuscript, is the church changing its belief about the Book of Mormon?

No. The Book of Mormon remains one of the church's three books of scripture. The Book of Mormon is an important part of our church's heritage and ongoing sacred story. We affirm that these sacred writings do not replace or improve upon the witness of the Bible; they confirm its message that Jesus is the Christ ([Scripture in Community of Christ](#)). We continue to share the Book of Mormon through print editions and technology like the eBook released last November. This version of the Book of Mormon, with a fully linked index, can be bought through [Amazon](#).

Church leaders know that letting go of this document will cause some members sadness and grief. We feel sad, too. However, the church's use of the Book of Mormon as scripture and our appreciation and respect for our history are not dependent on owning the Printer's Manuscript. Letting go of this document does not affect the rights of Community of Christ to publish and protect the copyrights of its editions of the Book of Mormon. When a decision had to be made, we chose the well-being of people and preserving the current and future mission of the church over owning this document.

Is \$35 million a good price for the manuscript?

In the last several months, the Presiding Bishopric was working with multiple potential buyers. The Presiding Bishopric, along with its consultants, systematically evaluated what the artifact's market would pay for this manuscript. The Presiding Bishopric proceeded with the sale because it was confident the offer price represented an appropriate value for the manuscript. The \$35 million price is the highest ever paid for a manuscript. By comparison Bill Gates bought the Leonardo da Vinci *Codex Leicester* in 1994 for just under \$31 million.

What is the relationship like between Community of Christ and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

Since the manuscript has been in Community of Christ's possession, the LDS church has joined us in several conservation projects to protect and preserve this manuscript, which is important to both our faith movements. We are pleased to transfer stewardship of this important document to those who will treasure it and continue to care for it for future generations.