

The Gospel News

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*Moving
Forward*



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Reunion in Israel

By Evangelist Larry Watson

Brother Joel and Sister Ruth Gehly, Brothers Wayne Martorana and Bob Nicklow Jr., and Sister Vanessa Watson and I were greatly blessed to be given the opportunity to represent The Church of Jesus Christ on our recent journey to the "Holy Land." It was inspiring to witness this preview of the eventual reunion of the Children of Judah and Joseph in the land of their inheritance. Our Native friends were continually amazed by how much they have in common with Israel. Of course, this is not unique to this group. For example, in the early 1990s a team of Native dancers were invited to perform throughout Israel. Upon hearing their songs at the Western Wall, a group of Orthodox Rabbis became astonished—the Natives had been singing ancient Hebrew songs and chants that only the most devout Jews could have known!

It's amazing when you consider that so much of this growing realization of a shared heritage is happening with little influence from our Church, or any other church for that matter. The key individuals reflect a network of believers who are "connecting the dots"—and what a remarkable picture is beginning to emerge! It is a powerful testimony of the veracity of the Book of Mormon that needs to be shared, which is why we felt it would be helpful to provide some context for our trip.

Gathering of Tribal Nations (GTN)

In June 2017, Brother Bob Nicklow and I, with the NAOC's support, traveled to Green Bay, Wisconsin to attend the GTN Conference. I discovered that the leaders of Harvest Time Network Ministry (HTNM), Ron and Tyda Harvey, along with their colleague Jerry Tom, were practically neighbors of mine—pastors of a church only four miles down the road. HTNM, which is the sponsoring organization of the GTN, sees its primary role as a facilitator for the networking of independent Native American ministries throughout the nation. We were amazed to hear some of the speakers talk of an impending "Great Awakening" that would sweep through the Americas—in which the Native American would play a leading role. We learned of their sense of connectedness to Israel and their interest in embracing the Hebrew roots of their faith. It was apparent, however, that they lacked understanding of the significance of this connection. Since that time the Lord has given us many opportunities to speak with them in detail about this.

Congregation Zion's Sake

We learned that the interaction between the Seed of Judah and Seed of Joseph has been a central theme in this movement from the outset. They trace the beginning of the GTN to an invitation Ron and Jerry received in October 2002 from a messianic Jewish Rabbi named Eric Carlson to speak at Congregation Zion's Sake in Newport News, Virginia. After the service he presented them with a shofar (ceremonial ram's horn) he had received from a group of Rabbis in Jerusalem. Evidently, they had instructed him to give it to a Native American pastor from the western part of the United States, because it was time for them to begin to blow the ram's horn. I am reminded of the revelation given to the prophet Joel (Chapter 2:1), "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand" (italics mine).

(Continued on page 4)



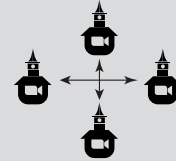
This will certainly be a summer to remember. Our prayer is that everyone can enjoy the sunshine, at least.



Helaman 6:3. If "fellowship" is defined as rejoicing with one another in the joy of Christ, then "virtual fellowship" is exactly that, just online.

That big space to the right is the gaping hole that's left in our hearts where GMBA Campout was supposed to be this month.

Hoping you can "travel" around the country and enjoy as much virtual church fellowship as possible.

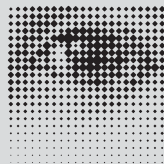


Hebrews 10:23,24 underscores our need for fellowship: "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." (next square->)



(<continued) Not forsaking the assembly of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another..."

Word Challenge: Find the verse to the right regarding the longing for a joyful fellowship. Hint: mentor to protegé:



"Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy..."



"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6)

BFTP Blast From The Past

By Sister Kellie Speck

One hundred years ago on July 15, 1920 the first General Ladies' Circle met in Monongahela, Pennsylvania.

Sister Sadie Cadman's words about organizing the Circle: "Many times I saw the folly of spending all our time with the cares of housework and with things that soon pass away. Knowing thru obedience, of the wonderful Truth in the Restored Gospel, I felt to rally my sisters in the Gospel to see if we could raise our lives to a higher standard in the Gospel of Christ; not for earthly gain but to raise our hearts and minds heavenward; to be as the scripture reads in the second Chapter of Titus; to acquaint ourselves with the scriptures; and to help the Church in promoting the Indian Mission work. I felt such a burden resting upon me in regards to this matter that I explained to Brother Alexander Cherry, President of the Church, what was on my mind. He told me, 'If you can do any good, do so.'"

"Now, after all these years have passed, we know the work is of God because of the good that has been done. Many have been brought to knowledge of the Truth and we expect many more. We have grown to understand the word of God and His work in these the latter days. Many times I have felt His Spirit in speaking of the Circle; not only I, but many of the sisters have testified of the good it has done."

Sister Sadie Mains Cadman, First President of the General Ladies' Uplift Circle ►





Purpose Statement

- To fulfill the plan of God by bringing salvation through Christ to all people.

Mission Statement

- The Church of Jesus Christ will teach the Gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things commanded by Jesus Christ.
- To draw Israel to Christ through an effort focused on the Native Americans of North and South America.



Vision Statement

- The full manifestations of God's Spirit and power among the Saints, resulting from living and worshipping in unity and righteousness, stimulate continuous growth of the Domestic Church—even at a rate of doubling over a five year period—while strengthening the International Church.

Wordup



“Circle the Happy and Cross Out the Sad”

By Elder Doug Obradovich

“Your heart shall rejoice and your joy no man taketh from you” – (John 16:22)

I was fully engaged in the adult Sunday School class, but my attention was interrupted by a sweet voice behind me. My children were receiving their class assignment just beyond the partition, “Circle the happy and cross out the sad.” When my daughters returned from their class, Courtney and Aubrey confirmed what I had thought, showing me a picture with 12 faces, some smiling and some frowning. The happy faces were encircled in crayon and the sad faces had x’s marked through them. A passing assignment for the kids, but a game changer for me.

For 28½ years I have carried a laminated card in my wallet, reading, “CIRCLE THE HAPPY ... CROSS OUT THE SAD” – Susan Moraco, Sunday School Class January 26, 1992.”

This dear sister’s phrase had provided enough direction for my girls to complete their assignment, but her words of wisdom have guided me for nearly 30 years. I hear her voice whispering to me, providing a clear choice, with a strong reminder which is the better, wiser decision.

When situations present themselves to me, I don’t relinquish emotional control. When alternatives are before me, I don’t succumb to fear. When face-to-face with dilemma, I cling to the empowerment given me by Jesus Christ, and beg Him for direction and the courage to follow His lead. As painful experiences, distress, and even discouragement threaten to overtake me, I return to my seat in the back pew in the Hollywood Branch in South Florida, when I heard God’s confident command in Sister Susan’s gentle voice, “Circle the happy and cross out the sad.”

We all have options. It’s possible they’ve never been more obvious for such a sustained period as right now. Yes, these times are challenging, even difficult. This virus has robbed many from far more joyful experiences, such as graduations, weddings, family gatherings, and in-person church services. We can each list valid reasons to be upset, frustrated, angry, and even discouraged by such goings on. Or we can choose to find the purpose in these times. Maybe, even our purpose.

Brother Alvin Swanson, one of my first life-mentors, taught my family, “Listen for God’s voice in everything. He’ll speak to you in the message or a testimony on Sunday, in a lesson or comment on Wednesday night, or in a life experience on any given day.” There have certainly been great disappointments over these 3 months, but there have also been great moments of elation. Example: Oldham County Mission meetings have enjoyed growing from 15-20 people in February to 50-75 people on countless Sunday mornings.

My dear Brother Alvin - I am still listening.

My dear Sister Susan - I apologize for eavesdropping on your class 28½ years ago, but I want to update my report to you: I have attempted to complete your assignment, submit to Jesus’ encouragement to allow my heart to “rejoice,” and permit no one to “taketh” my joy from me.

My dear brothers, sisters, and friends – Please find a card, write these words, and let them remind you of our sister’s wonderful life-counsel: “Circle the happy and cross out the sad.”

Reunion in Israel

Continued from cover



Visions of Ron Harvey and Jerry Tom

According to his testimony, Ron Harvey received his first of a series of three visions there at the Rappahannock Reservation while in prayer with a group of Native Americans and Messianic Jews. Below are excerpts of these visions:

... I saw something like a movie screen... and it showed the United States... [A] star lights up in northern Arizona where the Navajo Nation resides, then in the middle of [the U.S.] ... then where we were on the eastern seaboard... Then the Navajo star takes off and moves toward the central star, and as it hits the central star it bursts and becomes a bigger star. Then as that star moves and hits the eastern star it bursts! And ... light shoots out to all of America – to every city, town, village, and home. Then the light shoots out to the rest of North America and South America...

... I saw a man coming out of the ground and it was a Native American man. He was all decked out ... in a white buckskin ... I saw him standing over America looking down to the people of the land, and just like that -- he went into a dance ... it was like he was doing a happy dance. Not like a Native dance, more like a native and Jewish dance put together and worshiping unto the Lord... I saw above him a writing... in gold letters. (editor's note: the writing was in Paleo Hebrew).

Subsequent to their return home, upon witnessing the blast of the shofar here on his ancient homeland, Jerry Tom saw what he described as a whirlwind filled with a host of angels stretching from Jerusalem to Window Rock, the capital of the Navajo Nation. They have since remarked that from that moment on they began to realize their destiny was somehow inextricably linked to that of Israel.

Covenant Declaration with Israel

A powerful seed was planted in 2012 when Navajo Pastor Robert Tso met Rabbi Robert Wolf of Majestic Glory Ministries. Later that same year, the two of them would collaborate in co-hosting the One New Man Conference in Farmington, New Mexico, which was attended by leaders from the Navajo Nation, as well as from some prominent Messianic Jewish ministries. The highlight of the day was the signing

of the following "Declaration by the First Nations of America" by Navajo Nation President Ben Shelley and Rabbi Wolff, who later led a delegation to Israel to hand deliver it to the Knesset:

*The First Nations of America offer the
hand of friendship and fellowship to Israel.
We stand as One with the Chosen Ones of Israel.
In the beginning our Creator gave us this earth.
In His Wisdom He designed it to be our home.
He establishes the days, the times, and the places of our lives.
He asks His children to live in harmony with each other.
Our ancestors taught us the path of principle is paved with adversity.
We understand the way before us requires great sacrifice.
Yet our knowledge of the Holy One tells us
the righteous must walk upright.
Israel was sovereignly promised a land where
she would be fruitful and multiply.
Israel distinguished herself by worshipping her Creator.
Israel was purposed to be blessed and called to be a blessing to others.
As with Israel, the First Nations are called to be a blessing.
As with Israel, the First Nations have been persecuted,
but we choose to bless.
As with Israel, the First Nations are called to be
strong in the face of adversity,
As with Israel, the First Nations were once exiled
and now returned home.
We acknowledge your courage.
We recognize the cost of standing your ground.
The First Nations of America, honor the First Nations of Israel.
The First Nations respect the Promised Land
the Creator has designated for you.
Our First Nations are the recipients of your First Nation's blessings.
We recognize the gift your Nation has been to humanity.
With grace, humility, and joy we call you our brothers.
We Declare the First Nations are One.*

Oklahoma Tribes' Covenant with Israel

Two years later, on Rosh Hashanah, the leaders of 39 more tribes signed their own "Covenant with Israel" — also presenting it to the Knesset in



(Continued on page 7)

A Bicentennial, 1820 to 2020

By Elder Duane Loyalvo

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This year, 2020 A.D., The Church of Jesus Christ will reach another significant milestone. Two hundred years will have passed since Joseph Smith Jr., then 14 years old, offered a simple prayer of faith. In the summer of 1820, he walked into the woods near his family farm in Palmyra, New York, and asked the Lord which church he should join. The answer came in the form of an unexpected and marvelous vision of Jesus Christ.

"Join none of them," the Lord said, "They draw near to Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me."

Ten years later, The Book of Mormon was published, and The Church of Jesus Christ was organized among the Gentiles in the United States of America, having the priesthood authority restored upon the face of the earth. As we know, The Book of Mormon was translated from golden plates, which Joseph retrieved from the Hill Cumorah in 1823. When these ancient records were removed from the ground in which they were deposited, a peculiar prophecy was fulfilled through the medium of music.

Psalms 85:11 predicted the moment when the plates of Mormon were lifted out of the ground, saying, *"Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven."*

A quick perusal of the entire 85th Psalm reveals that this is a song about Jacob (Twelve Tribes of Israel) begging for the Lord's mercy and deliverance from captivity. This is interesting, because many Biblical scholars credit David as the writer of this psalm. However, during his reign, David took Israel to new heights as a nation. They were neither in exile nor in captivity during the reign of King David. Therefore, it would seem more likely that the 85th Psalm is a prophecy of a latter day when Israel will cry for mercy and deliverance.

The captivity and dispersion of Israel finally occurred many years after David died when in 722 B.C., the Ten Tribes were carried away as slaves by the Assyrians. Then in 70 A.D., Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans and the Jews were scattered throughout the world. The remnant of Jacob has truly cried for mercy since these dark days in Israel.

As the Psalm predicted, the truth, i.e., the plainness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, did certainly rise out of the ground in 1823. Contained within this Gospel is the promise that God will one day restore Israel to their former glory.

Isaiah also prophesied about the Plates of Mormon saying, *"And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust."* (Isaiah 29:4)

The words of Isaiah are in harmony with the 85th Psalm, saying that the writings of the righteous who have passed away many years ago will come out of the ground.

The 11th verse states, *"And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed..."* Again, this strongly supports our understanding of the Plates of Mormon which were indeed sealed, and that contain the words of the righteous prophets who lived in this land many years ago. Now that the Book of Mormon has been published and the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored, these words continue to whisper out of the dust to all of the people living in the Latter Days. And so, we celebrate this Bicentennial of the day when God spoke to Joseph Smith Jr. and began His marvelous work among the children of men.

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What I Miss Most About Attending Church in Person

FELLOWSHIP

Fellowshipping with the family of God.
-Sister KarenJo Pandone

The fellowship with my brothers and sisters. -Sister Carla King

Fellowship with sisters, brothers, and friends who attend our branches. -Brother Ralph Cartino, Sr

I miss fellowshiping with my brothers and sisters the most.-Sister Chantel Rhodes

The fellowship with my sisters and brothers – I miss seeing them!
-Sister Kim Morle

The fellowship. -Brother Richard Pandone

The fellowship of the people and the love for one another through Jesus Christ. This is ultimately what manifested itself to me the day I asked for my baptism after attending this Church with my husband, Carl, for 6 years.”
-Sister Janice Gaulin Romano

I miss the social aspect.- Brother Dominic DiMelis

I miss the fellowship, worshipping, and praising God with the brothers and sisters.
-Sister Cheketha Littlejohn

The love of God shining through the faces of the Saints.
-Sister Anita Znoy

I miss seeing the congregation.- Brother Anthony Gentile

Music

The beautiful singing and musical accompaniment with the Saints together in harmony praising Our Lord and Savior. -Sister Donna Amormino

Playing instruments with my fellow brethren/musicians in praise to the Lord. Group worship through song brings such a joyful spirit to our meetings, and that is not easy to replicate in an online meeting. "But we won't cry tomorrow when we reach the mountaintop, and when the saints start singing there, no one will want to stop. -Brother Timothy Mott

Singing hymns together with my brothers and sisters!
-Sister Angeles Palafox-Mora

I miss singing with everyone. There is something special about being unified singing praises together. -Sister Alyssa Maddox

I miss singing our hymns and hearing the saints' voices.
-Sister Donna Repcheck

I miss singing together!
- Sister Sophia O'Connor

Sister Mary Perri's piano playing and singing as a congregation.” -Sister Suzanne Beeman

COMMUNION

I miss our regular participation in the Lord's supper.- Sister Nancy Plahovinsak

Partaking of the Lord's Supper. -Brother Michael Zaino

Sacrament. -Sister Fay Loyalvo

Communion and fellowship. -Sister Gelsa Staley

I miss the fellowship of those I attend Church with but, I miss communion the most. -Sister Joann Cotellesse

I miss partaking of the Lord's Supper most of all. It's that spiritual uplift that we all need. But I also miss the fellowship with my brothers and sisters! And their hugs! -Sister Debbie Kyriakakos

Partaking of sacrament and being with the family of God! -Sister Dienna Rogers

I miss the fellowship with the Brothers and Sisters but most of all I miss receiving the bread and wine where I receive that extra spiritual strength.
-Sister Lucetta Scaglione

HUGS

I miss the Hugs-Brother Marco DiMelis

I miss hugging everyone.
-Sister Celeste Gentile

I miss all the great hugs! -Lola O'Connor

I miss hugging my brothers and sisters, and the testimonials.
-Sister Lili Arellano

Hugs and laughter – simple things that are actually quite big.
-Sister Natalie Shawver

Hugs! From all the kids and the saints.
-Sister Juliette Coppa, Monongahela, PA Branch.

Hugging everyone!! I know this time has been difficult for so many – I just want to hug each one and say it's gonna be ok! -Sister Lori Kimmel

Multiple

Fellowship, singing, sacrament...I'm sure there's more. -Sister Janice Frammolino

"Testimony and sacrament is what I miss the most but the online church has truly been a blessing for me. I didn't know it existed until now."
-Sister Diann Stelzer.

The communion, feet washing, and laying on of hands.” -Sister Sharon Sloan

The physical aspect of being in church sitting amongst my church family singing, looking around the room witnessing the spirit in everyone's faces. Listening to the elders preach the

word, testimony, and sacrament!
-Brother Greg Davis

What I miss the most about seeing the brothers and sister and potentially new members in person is the Singing, Testimonies, Sacrament, Visions, Anointings so PRETTY MUCH, I MISS IT ALL!!! Being only 1 year as a sister is difficult at times with the opposition and I miss getting away from the world just sitting in my seat we don't have assigned seats but we act like we do lol. I Love Jesus Christ because He called me out and brought me into a whole other version of myself that's still a work in progress. A spiritual family I will forever love and be grateful to be a part of. -Sister Heather Duran

I miss the one to one fellowship, singing and hearing the hymns of praise to God.-Sister Sylvia King

What I miss most is the personal fellowship with one another including Communion, Feet washing, Testimony, Speaking lessons. In a word: I miss EVERYTHING!”
-Brother Darrell Rossi

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Reunion in Israel

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Jerusalem. It included these beautiful words, "Israel is the Apple of God's eye. She is still His chosen people. He is in eternal covenant with her, and she will be a very strategic part of the fulfillment of His eternal plan. All of us who are in Christ are Abraham's seed, and we are directly linked to Israel's roots as ingrafted branches... I submit to you that if we are going to stand firm to the end, and be prepared for Christ's coming, we must stand in covenant solidarity with Israel. This is not a plea. This is a scriptural obligation."

Restoring Nations International (RNI)

RNI, led by Anne Richardson, chief of the Rappahannock Tribe in Virginia, in partnership with the above-mentioned Rabbi Carlson and others, co-hosted the Arise America event in 2007 commemorating the 400th anniversary of the founding of our nation's first colony in Jamestown. The vision of RNI is to facilitate the healing of the nations through reconciliation and restoration. In that spirit, she led a team of Native Americans to the Holy Land in October of 2009 to express their identification and solidarity with the Jews—urging them not to give up their land. According to the RNI website, "God must heal the First peoples first! Then and only then, can we experience an outpouring of revival such as the church ... has been calling for ...". They go on to encourage their native friends with the message "[prepare] for the restoration He is bringing for all [your] suffering. He has not forgotten you, but to the contrary, He has chosen you and preserved you as a remnant, for such a time as this, so that you can stand up and receive the promise of many generations."

Experience of Denise Cantu

It has been inspirational to watch how some of the Native Americans associated with the GTN are beginning to "connect the dots." This was certainly reflected in the testimony given by Denise Cantu of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe at an event we attended in Los Angeles in 2018. She spoke about her skepticism upon hearing the stories of how the Native Americans would be "forerunners"



to ignite a "Great Awakening" in the last days. "I know my people", she said, in explanation of why this seemed impossible to her. After making it a matter of prayer she said the Lord brought back to her remembrance the Sanilac Petroglyphs that had been discovered near her reservation. As she was reflecting upon the significance of the fact that a group of Jewish scholars had identified one of the glyphs as depicting a Hebrew menorah, she heard the voice of the Spirit say, "I am telling you who you are." She was then told that the following words of the prophet Isaiah were now being fulfilled in the First Nations people, "I am God ... declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Isaiah 46:9,10). She said there is now an accelerating of the "mega-power" of His glory in the last days, likening it to the giving of life described in Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones. It was as though the Lord was telling her—that's the answer to your question—it's because you are of the House of Israel and I will fulfill My covenants to you in your generation.

Experience of Alvin Cheah

More than once we have heard this evangelist from China describe a revelation he received directing him to come to America to pursue a "deeper connection with the people of the First Nations" because the answer to the key to the greatest move of God in history, in this country and in the nations, is somewhere there." In response, he came to the United States in order to partner with Natives who would resonate with this message. This led him to the Harveys, who have featured him at several GTN events. He believes there is an ethnic connection between the indigenous people of China and

America.

Exchanging of Rings

In 2019 Tyda Harvey was invited to a women's conference in California where she met an Israeli by the name of Dvora Ganani. Dvora is the director of Jewish-Christian relations for the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem. They immediately connected—to such a degree that they exchanged rings (designed by Navajo and Israeli jewelers) as a symbol of their friendship. Dvora invited Tyda to speak at the Alliance for Christian Women with Israel Conference to be held in Jerusalem later that year. During that visit seeds were planted for a follow-up trip. The intent was to assemble a team of Christian ministry and tribal leaders from Native America and return back as soon as it could be arranged. The invitation extended to us to join them on this trip can, in part, be attributed to the loving support the Church has given them.

Yad Vashem

After this overview of the events leading up to our invitation to Israel, I realize anything I write about the actual trip may sound a bit anticlimactic. Those of you who keep up with the Gospel Blog will have read some of the highlights of our tour, so I will not focus on that in this article, except to say it was one of the most life-changing experiences I've ever had. I do, however, want to focus briefly on our last night of the tour. After sharing a meal together at a beautiful restaurant, we were asked to identify our most memorable part of the week. For the two tribal leaders in the group it was our tour of Yad Vashem—the holocaust museum. As they described their response to that experience it was evident it had opened up some deep wounds as they shared from their heart in



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ICYMI - In Case You Missed It: GMBA Youth Mini Camp Recap

WHEN: March 2020

WHERE: Camp Luz in Orville, Ohio

WHO: Over 60 young people from across the country

WHAT:

- More than 10 lbs of candy
- Fellowship, Seminars, Chapel, Worship and Praise
- 1 massive game of Tug of War! (So huge the rope snapped!)
- Sledge hammers swinging at our faces
- Golden egg hunt, Game show night, and Spontaneous Karaoke
- Bonfire and smores
- Canoeing, basketball, soccer, foosball, and gaga ball
- 9 square in the air, apples to apples, and puzzles

THE RESULT:

Lifelong relationships with each other and with Jesus Christ

Why We Meet In Person *By Apostle Jerry Valenti*

During the time that our church buildings were closed due to the coronavirus crisis, many church branches held “virtual meetings,” using electronic devices to share sermons and testimonies. This was an acceptable substitute in some ways for meeting in person, but there are some things that just can’t be replicated electronically. Shown here as 5 amazing facts are five church activities that are compelling reasons for meeting in person.

1 Anointing – Although it’s good to have the option of sending anointed handkerchiefs when the ministry is physically unable to reach someone who is afflicted (see Acts 19:12), we need to meet in person to be anointed with oil when we are sick such that “the prayer of faith shall save the sick” (see James 5:14-15).

2 The Lord’s Supper – There’s no such thing as “virtual communion.” We need to meet in person to be able to partake of the bread and the wine (see Moroni 6:6). And, even when we bring communion to shut-ins, it is not the same as communing with the Lord as part of a congregation, sharing in the plate and cup that hold the representation of the

body and blood of Christ. See 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, 3 Nephi 18:1-9 and other scriptures.

3 Singing – It’s true that you can always sing at home, but it’s not the same as singing with a congregation. If a group of you tried making a joyful noise unto the Lord (Psalm 100:1) during one of your virtual meetings, you likely discovered that it was more noise than it was joyful.

4 Greeting & Fellowship – You can’t greet someone with a holy kiss (see Romans 16:16, 1 Corinthians 16:20, etc.) or embrace them if you’re not in the same room with them. Also, although we can always speak to each other on the phone, it’s when

we’re together in church that we seem to be most likely to focus on sharing the things of God with each other. As it says in Moroni 6:5, “the church did meet together oft...to speak one with another concerning the welfare of their souls.”

5 Baptism – We were happy to hear of souls being brought to repentance even while we were meeting virtually. However, there’s only one way baptism can be done – by physically going to the water’s edge, going out into the water, and being immersed by a minister “having authority of Jesus Christ” (see 3 Nephi 11:22-26). Needless to say, the bestowal of the Holy Ghost which follows baptism can also only be performed when we are meeting in person.



Ladies' Uplift Circle News

Go Forth *By Sister LuAnn Carson*

Have you ever said the words ‘Go forth?’ I don’t think I ever have. But those two words are in the scriptures many times. By definition the word forth means forward out from a starting point. No standing still, no moving backward. In Genesis 8:16 we find God telling Noah to “Go forth of the ark” after the waters receded. God didn’t want Noah to go back to the days before the flood. Noah was expected to learn from the flood, a widespread catastrophic event, and move on with a renewed outlook.

In the 16th chapter of 1 Nephi we read about Lehi and his family after the Lord told them to leave their homes and go into the wilderness. As Lehi’s son, Nephi, hunts for food, his bow is broken, and he comes back to his family and friends empty handed. Because of their great hunger and suffering, they complain and murmur against God. After his family was chastised by God and repented, he writes, “I, Nephi, did go forth up into the top of the mountain, according to the directions which were given” (1 Nephi 16:30). Nephi, through God’s direction, was able to provide for his friends and family. After struggling in the wilderness, it would have been easy to turn back to the comfort of their home. Had they done that, when Israel was besieged, Lehi and his family could have been taken captive or killed. Instead they moved forward with God’s direction to a great land of

promise, America.

We read in John 15:16, “Go and bring forth fruit, . . . that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.” We need to ‘go forth’ from this time of turmoil, bring forth fruit, and depend upon the Lord. During our time of confinement and isolation, hopefully we have focused more on God. With many distractions removed, many have fasted and prayed often, read more scripture, been thoughtful and considerate of others, and spent more time focused on spiritual things. When things ‘go back to normal’ and the distractions return abundantly, will we go back to the same old routines? Or will we ‘Go forth,’ moving forward to a place where we still keep our main focus on God? Let’s choose the latter, bringing about a state of greater righteousness and closeness with the Lord. As we read in John, He will answer our prayers and bless His people.

I’m reminded of the words of the song “See a Victory”: “You take what the enemy meant for evil. . . And You turn it for good. . . I’m gonna see a victory.” God has an amazing way of turning the negatives into His great plan. From wherever our places are now, we will go forth and see the victory.



Who Were The First Travelers To America?

Dear Friends,

With the bad virus that hit the world in spring of 2020, we all have seen and felt many, many different, even scary things. But we are not the first people who served the Lord to go through a huge, scary change like this. Way back in the years after Noah had landed his ark and huge numbers of people were born, something bad happened. (See Genesis chapter 11.) The foolish people decided to build a great tower to touch heaven. God was not pleased by their plan. He had a simple way to stop them too. God mixed up everyone's language.

Can you imagine waking up and not understanding the words of your teachers or friends? No one could talk, do business, or build a tower! But there was one good family who trusted God. They were Jared and his Brother. The Brother of Jared was a large, faithful man who loved God and loved to pray! Jared told his brother to pray and ask God not to mix up the language of them and their small group of friends. God agreed. What a relief for them and a miracle! Jared told his brother to ask God whether he wanted them to stay there or leave, and if they were to go, ask God to take them to a wonderful, good place.

And the Lord told them He would take them to the best land of promise. It was for people who would be good to one another and serve God. If they did not, God would wait until their evil badness reached its highpoint and then that people would be wiped off the face of this Promised Land. (See Ether chapter 1.)

Can you imagine leaving your home and city? You wouldn't even be able to use words to say good-bye to friends you'd never see again as everyone packed up to leave. In the confusion you would've stayed close to your family so you

wouldn't get lost. What toy or special thing would you bring? You would have to be able to carry everything for miles and miles! Or would you bring a pan, water, and knife to fix food? Plastic and electricity were not invented yet. Nor were bikes, cars, or trains. People rode animals and walked. But we know how to pray even when everyone around us is confused and horribly angry. We know and trust that God's in charge.

As they travelled, there were no houses to sleep in; Jared's group brought tents as they moved out. And God told the little group to gather and bring their flocks of every kind, and also seeds of every kind. Who watched those flocks and herds as they journeyed? I am sure every child, woman and man was alert and watching as they went into a wild place! They also made traps to catch the birds of the air, some kind of holders to carry fish and even brought swarms of bees. What a job to travel with that kind of group!

When they came to the edge of the wilderness where no one had ever been, God talked with them as he stood with them in a cloud. He gave directions where they should travel. And as they travelled in the wilderness, and God showed

them how to build barges to put everything in as they crossed many waters.

The Lord would not have them stop beyond the sea in the wilderness; they kept trusting God and moving.

In the months ahead, when they reached the actual shore of the big ocean, they had to build more barges for a long journey. They would bring with them all the animals, fish, fowls, and seeds they had gathered plus the brave people who believed in God! What a bumpy, scary, smelly, loud trip! Blown by fierce winds, sometimes the little barges went far under water. The Brother of Jared sang and prayed throughout the day and night! People and animals would be so afraid at times.

God's plan was to take them to a land of promise, the best of all lands that God had saved for a righteous people. This was going to be in the Americas. And these were the first group of good people that The Book of Mormon tells us came to settle. They were called the Jaredites!

With love, your friend, *Sister Jan*

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Reunion in Israel

Continued from page 9

order to help us understand their people better.

We were challenged to balance compassion with truth when ministering to their people. Expressed as dos and don'ts: Do acknowledge their pain and validate their worth; but don't treat them like victims—it sends the wrong message about taking responsibility for their own recovery and success.

We learned that recognition of the collective trauma of the Long Walk is critical to understanding the Navajos' sense of identity as a people. The Long Walk refers to the nearly 400-mile forced-march across the State of New Mexico to an internment camp in Fort Sumner. Many died along the way, and when they eventually returned to their homeland, their spirits were crushed. Jonathan Nez spoke about the inspiration he had for the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the signing of the treaty of 1868. He led a team of runners from Fort Sumner back to Window Rock. It was their way of burying the demons of disgrace and humiliation as a defeated nation. Now they would return as victorious warriors.

We were reminded of a key step in the healing process. Our Israeli tour guide, when speaking of the suffering inflicted on many of his family members in the holocaust, made the statement, "We will never forget and never forgive"; but later that evening, President Nez, in speaking of the Long Walk, said, "We, too, will never forget, but we must learn to forgive."

It was such a fitting ending to the trip for them to ask Brother Joel Gehly to speak on behalf of our Church. He spoke beautifully as he explained from the Bible about the blessing given by Jacob to Judah and then to Joseph, and how that the covenants that God made with Israel are being fulfilled in our day—clearly articulating our belief that the First Nations of America are descendants of Joseph. We were then given the opportunity to sing the hymn, "Won't It Be Something to See Israel Smile." Then Brother Joel presented the two tribal leaders with a plaque with the words of that song actually imprinted on the wood.

Lastly, I want to express my sincere appreciation for your prayers during our trip. Without a doubt they made an impact. And, in time, we will learn just how all of this will fit into the unfolding of God's plan to reveal His Glory in the last days.

What I Miss Most.

Continued from page 6

I just miss being able to attend the meetings and sit there in the pews and listen to the sermon surrounded by friends and family that love me. I really miss the singing and praising God. I lead the singing in my branch when we first open and I just miss looking out at the congregation and seeing all the smiling faces." -Giovanni Lind

Communion and if we're allowed two answers, my 2nd answer is singing. -Sister Dianne Maddox

Singing, the fellowship, and the sacrament – just about everything! -Sister Tori Verbanick

"I miss the smiles, singing, and the ordinances – especially feet washing!" -Brother Josh Gehly

I miss the hugs from the brothers and sisters, seeing all of the children playing together, but most of all I miss partaking of communion! -Sister Kathy Golling

I miss the hugs and singing- Anna DiMelis and Anthony Gentile Jr

OTHER THINGS

My Sunday Children's Church kids. They bring joy to my heart each week! I love you Zane, Zeke, Zyden, Alexa, Jay Ryan, Dash and Demi." -Sister Dora Armstrong

I miss attending Church altogether. Not going to Church has left a big void. I truly enjoy listening to our Brothers preach and teach in person as there is interaction. I miss the one on one fellowship with everyone

and seeing each other each week. -Sister Connie Rossi

To be fed by our elders and the fellowship of our brothers and sisters of the Church. -Sister JoAnn McGuire

I have lived in Clark County Washington since 1978. One of my main contacts with the Church has been through the Gospel News. The past several weeks I have been blessed with the opportunity to have fellowship with the Saints via "Zoom" sponsored by the San Diego Branch on Wednesdays and Sundays. Brother Tom and Sister Marcia Liberto introduced me to the Gospel while I was in the Marine Corps in 1963. The pandemic was one reason I have had fellowship and face to face contact with the Church. -Brother Dean Longrie

Since the start of COVID-19 quarantine, I have lost a few people very close to me in church. I miss that I will never be able to hug them again and tell them that I love them. I also miss the spirit that is felt in the meetings. There is just something about entering the Church and knowing we are going to feel the spirit of God in our midst. We have wonderful online meetings and I am thankful for them. -Sister Kathleen Pastorelli

"Interacting in person with the saints and friends who attend Church. Then I miss the Sacraments but I don't miss the long drive.-Brother George Katsaras, Hollywood, FL Branch

We are thankful for technology!

Blessing Bits

BB One week into the COVID quarantine, our hours at work were cut by 25 percent. This also meant a 25 percent decrease in our pay. Jerry and I were going to be okay, but my heart broke for my coworkers, whose families I knew would be negatively impacted by this news. Two of my closest coworker friends were invited to attend the online service held in Fort Worth for Easter. During the service, they sent messages as to how much they enjoyed it and how it was exactly what they needed. Before the service was over, we had each received a message from our manager indicating we could return to the normal 40-hour work week the following day. God showed my coworkers that HE indeed is alive and still able to perform miracles. We all thanked God for our Easter miracle. -*Sister Linda Morle, Fort Worth, TX Branch*

BB Ten years ago, I moved to Michoacán, Mexico. I wanted to support my husband who was presiding elder there at the time. I felt overwhelmed and incompetent. What could I contribute to such a great task? I prayed to the Lord repeatedly, I read and studied the

scriptures, articles of faith and everything I thought was useful to know in order to help, but still I did not feel ready nor did I feel I was doing enough. One night, I prayed to God for help and for the words to say to the souls who came to Church. That night I had a short dream where God told me, "Read Alma 37." I woke up and looked for that chapter, and in verses 33 and 34 I found the answer. That continues to be my guide when I seek to support someone or share what God has given me. -*Sister Cinthia Calvillo, Modesto, CA Branch*

BB At GMBA Campout 2013, as we proceeded to the baptismal site, I sought the Lord and looked for a confirmation that He was there with us. To the left of the baptisms I saw a silhouette of a ship filled with people. At the helm of the ship was a larger personage whom I knew was Jesus Christ. I questioned, might this be a BOAT where the Lord was fishing for fishers of men? After studying the white lit fog again, there was no doubt it was a SHIP with many personages. I was naturally distracted and could not refocus my mind and spirit for the rest of the evening no matter how hard I tried.

In the June issue of the Gospel News, the GMBA article referenced Apostle Jerry Valenti as the writer. The article was written by Sister Christine Martorana. We apologize for the error.

I did not ponder this gift again until the next morning when Brother Paul Ciotti, Sr. opened his sermon saying, "Invite Jesus into the SHIP of your life!" -*Sister Christina DiCenzo, McKees Rocks, PA Branch*

Send us your Blessing Bits [in approximately 150 words] and answer the Question of the Month by contacting us at gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org



Question for this month: We are all missing Campout this year! What was your favorite Camp or favorite Camp memory? Please share a photo from that Camp if you would like to as well.



Answer from last month: What do you miss most about attending Church in person during the COVID-19 Pandemic? "I'm not sure I could miss any one thing most... I miss EVERYTHING most! Just to list a few... communion, the spirit of God in our singing his praises, being able to reach out & touch my sisters & brothers - shaking hands, hugging one another in Christ's love, feeling and seeing the power of God manifested on their faces & moving in the hearts of the congregation during the preaching, having immediate access to the Lord's healing power thru anointing, feeling comforted by being surrounded by the family of God, studying the scripture all together. I don't know if these describe fully what I miss most- but, I miss it all." -*Sister Tracey Cuerrier, Detroit, MI Branch #1*

Turn back to page 6 for answers to this question.



"Trust in Him at all times, O people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us." Psalm 62:8