

The Gospel News

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Oklahoma Outreach November 2013

By Evangelist Mark Kovacic

Our visit in November 2013 was our eighth one. Instead of relating all of the many individual blessings that Brothers George Kovacic, Nephi DeMercurio, Wayne Martorana, Bob McDonnell, Gary Coppa, Randy Lee, Joel Gehly, and I experienced, this is a summary of the Church's efforts in Oklahoma since 2009, followed by some accounts from our recent trip.

We focus our attention on meeting tribal leaders, cultural directors, language preservationists, and spiritually inclined people. In eight visits we have met with over 230 of these people, representing almost all of the 39 tribes found in Oklahoma. Our meetings generally consist of in-depth discussions and presentations lasting from 30 minutes to several hours, and almost every meeting ends with prayer. For example, in November we met with 58 new contacts and about 100 follow-up contacts. Sometimes we are one-on-one with a tribal leader and sometimes we meet with a small group of four to ten people.

Each trip includes a visit to the home of a wonderful woman who gathers eight or more members of her family, where we share testimonies, perform anointings, offer prayers, and sing praises, all with a wonderful outpouring of God's Spirit! And besides our semi-annual visits, we send numerous cards and e-mails, and have warm phone conversations with many of our contacts. Some of these relationships have blossomed into true friendships. They show their trust in us by offering names and phone numbers of other tribal leaders and friends they recommend we contact.

Sometimes our patience is tested, but we have learned to persevere and in doing so, we have received God's blessings. The test may be a lengthy wait for an appointment; other times it may be long days, and occasionally it is tough and pointed questions, which require careful and Spirit-led responses. We travel in teams of two or three and cover 4,000 to 5,000 miles each trip, without accident or incident. Praise God!

Prior to every trip we have team conference calls, eventually on a weekly basis. On one such call, the Word of the Lord was spoken, as follows: *"My Sons, My Sons, continue now in this work. For it is ordained of Me. Fear not about the future, for My purposes are being fulfilled. As you continue to plant the seed, you are planting the seed, you are making the way possible, that the future will unfold, and My glory will be shown. My Son will descend, and the uniting of all tribes will come together. All of My Israel will be gathered back in, for My promises will be fulfilled. So doubt not, fear not, but continue, continue in the work, thus saith the Lord!"* We have had many other dreams and experiences since 2009.

All trips include services with Brother John Andrews and his wife, Shela, who reside in Eufaula, Oklahoma. Brother John gave his testimony of how the Lord has healed him of various illnesses and he is looking at life with greater confidence in the Lord. He stated that even his financial status has improved and the Lord has brought him through many things. Also Shela was anointed for many health issues and received blessings.

One contact proudly pointed out that her Book of Mormon was now on the shelf next to her Bible in her tribal office. Another contact, a chief, provided us with confidential documents about the history and

(Continued on page 4)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	1	2 Thank God for all the beauty of Spring	3
4	5	6 Take the time to be thankful for the spiritual mothers in your life	7	8 Moms- Praise God that you were blessed to be a mom	9	10 Pray for those trying to start a family
11 Happy Mother's Day! Let your mom know you love her	12	13	14 Pray for the Forrest Hills Branch- pg 4	15	16	17 GMBA Conference Liberty Branch Ohio
18 GMBA Conference Liberty Branch Ohio	19	20	21 Be a spiritual mother to someone in your branch	22	23 Have you thought about going to campout?	24 Pray for those trying to start a family
25	26 Memorial Day Pray for those in the armed services	27	28	29 Husbands- Be grateful for your wives	30	31 Support your MBA and Ladies' Circle

April 2014
S M T W T F S
1 2 3 4 5
6 7 8 9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16 17 18 19
20 21 22 23 24 25 26
27 28 29 30

June 2014
S M T W T F S
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8 9 10 11 12 13 14
15 16 17 18 19 20 21
22 23 24 25 26 27 28
29 30

May 2014

*"...yea, they had been taught by their mothers,
that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them" (Alma 56:47).*

BTF Blast From The Past

The Spanish Mission

With the baptism of Juan Gonzales 54 years ago this May 8, 1960, the desire for a missionary work in the Puerto Rican community of South Lorain, Ohio would spur the Lorain Branch priesthood into fasting and prayer. But the work would not take root in the community of about 5,000 Hispanics until a dream led Brother Joseph Calabrese to a grocery and meat market on Pearl Avenue in 1968. Hoping to rent the building for church services, Brother Joe discovered upon its arrival that it was only for sale. He also found that the market had living quarters, and he, along with his wife, Sister Vickie, decided to purchase the property in which they and their children could both live and hold services. Known as the South Lorain Spanish Mission, it would flourish until it was later incorporated into the Lorain Branch in the late 1970s.

Brother Joe and Sister Vickie Calabrese ►





Purpose • Mission • Vision

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.

THE CHURCH OF
Jesus Christ

Word Up

The Case For Christ: Holding The "Word Up" By Elder Doug Obradovich

*Is reading scripture difficult for you?
Do the "thees" and "thous" make Christ's words seem irrelevant, even losing their potency in translation?
Let's take a deeper dive into Jesus' message and see if we can make sense of it all.
If successful, let's agree to hold the "Word Up"!*

"Come and dine" (John 21:12).

My childhood home on Parker Avenue (West Palm Beach, Florida) had a large yard next door that functioned as our baseball diamond, football field, and bicycle track. This wonderful sandlot was a magnet for our friends to join us in playing outdoors all day, only to be disrupted by the sound of each mother's powerful, single word invitation that lured us to our homes immediately. "Dinner!" rained down on us and elicited immediate thoughts of homecooking as we sprinted urgently towards our backdoors. There was no contest in choosing between one more at-bat versus spaghetti dinner. Friends and fun were put on hold as "Come and dine" from Mom was met with enthusiastic compliance.

I wonder if we answer Jesus Christ's invitation with the same amount of excitement. During adolescence, "Come and dine" was defined by hamburgers, mashed potatoes, chocolate milk, and ice cream. Jesus' call to feast is very different. Are we willing to leave our lives just as quickly as a stickball game to eat from His table? This heavenly feast is a greater offering than anything we've ever consumed.

Jesus' spread includes a main course of salvation, lasting more than just one sitting; this meal is prepared for eternal consumption. When they went away to college, we purchased Meal Cards for our children, which supplied food for a specific three-month period until funds were exhausted. Christ's Meal Ticket never loses its power, as there is no threat of outspending His grace (Romans 5:20 – "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound").

But there is more than just the main course.

The appetizers readied in advance of the main course include countless servings of blessings, in the form of answered prayers, to assure lives filled with joy. There are also platters of miracles and healings infusing unexpected hope. The dessert trays contain rows of diverse Saints to supply a special sweetness and flavor to our lives. I remember attending my first "general" function (GMBA Campout, 1975) and immediately sending a postcard back to my mom (no texting 40 years ago) that simply read, "I have fallen in love with 500 people who think just like us!" The Saints have remained one of my favorite portions from the feast of Jesus Christ.

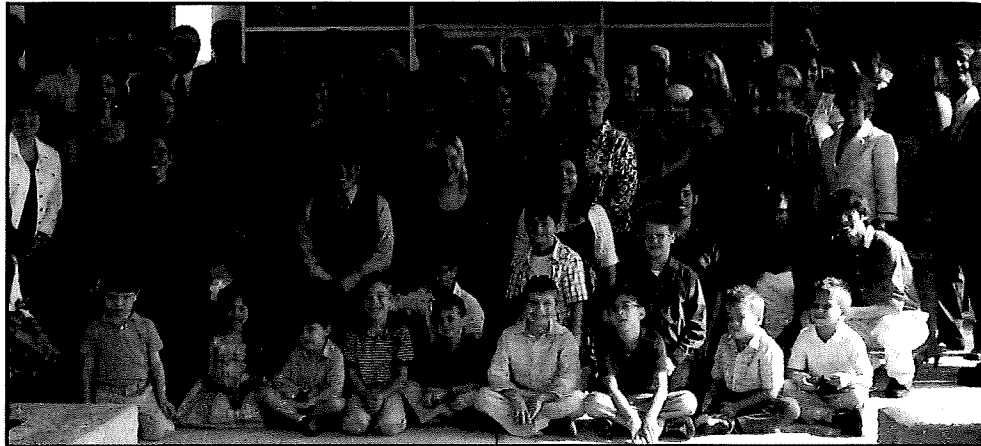
Whether playing baseball in the sandlot next door or completing a project for work, we must be ready to drop everything when we hear the sweet invitation, "Come and dine." Why? Because His main course is to die for!

Do you have a favorite verse you'd like us to dissect? Please send it in to: "Word Up"

Domestic Church — Forest Hills, FL Branch

On Sunday, September 15, 1991, a new work was dedicated to the Lord in a storefront in Palm Harbor, Florida. The brothers and sisters of the Tampa Branch saw the opportunity to spread the Gospel and agreed to institute a "growth break." That break led to the beginning of the Palm Harbor Branch. A beautiful experience was had by one of our brothers as he was on his way to our first meeting in Palm Harbor. Looking at the sunset; he saw two suns in the clear blue sky. A rainbow emerged from one of the suns, connecting the two together. It was felt that God was pleased with this work. As we fasted and prayed about this work, the word of the Lord came forth, saying, *"Thus saith the Lord: go in faith and I will be with you, thus saith the Lord."*

In 1998 we dedicated a new building in Holiday, Florida that is the present-day meeting place of the Forest Hills Branch. We have grown from approximately 25 members to 85 members ranging from 15 to 97 years old. We meet regularly on Sundays and Wednesdays. The first Tuesday of every month we have Ladies' Circle. We recently re-dedicated our building with an expansion of youth activity spaces and classrooms. We have organized youth and teen social groups that meet monthly.



We host clothing drives, garage sales, Vacation Bible School and Youth in Action tours, and support food banks and feeding the homeless. Also, many of our members are involved in the missionary fields in South and Central America.

Our Branch has been blessed with many gifts and manifestations from the Lord increasing the unity and faith of our entire membership. We welcome all to come and enjoy the wonderful fellowship of the saints in Forest Hills.

Oklahoma Outreach *Continued from page 1*

ties of his tribe. We were honored to have them. We felt that sharing these documents demonstrated a huge trust factor.

When we arrived at another location, Brother Joel suggested that only two of the four of us go to the door. That turned out to be a true inspiration. We were greeted by a security officer who blocked our way. As we talked, his position softened and he allowed us in. We were introduced to the acting chief, who was previously the assistant chief. She was quite busy. The young man sitting at a desk seemed to be interested in what we had to say. It turns out that that he was the newly-elected chief. After a few more minutes of discussion, he welcomed us back for a visit. He specifically said that when we come, to tell the receptionist that we'd already spoken and that he wanted to meet us. Just a note: if all four of us had gone to the door, we probably would have been rebuffed.

Every trip to Oklahoma includes an evening visit to an Anadarko family. This trip was no different and we were warmly greeted by the whole family (nine people). Dinner was prepared and tables set-up in the living room to seat everyone. We shared various experiences and prayer needs. They sang several hymns in their native tongue; we

sang a few hymns for them. One of them asked if we had *How Great Thou Art* in our hymnal, since his father used to sing it. He specifically recalled a time when his father was in the military and they were landing at a beach during the war and that the soldiers in his unit were frightened. He told them not to fear and started to sing *How Great Thou Art* and not one from his unit died that day.

He also testified that since he was anointed during our May 2013 visit, the pain in his leg is gone; he is now walking many miles per day; quite a miracle! Even more so a miracle considering that he did not specifically ask to be healed, but rather, that the young people of his tribe would be blessed. There were also several requests for anointing during this evening and a very powerful spirit of prayer prevailed. Most touching was a young man who bore his soul on not wanting to go down the wrong road of drugs and alcohol. During one prayer one of them thanked God for *"sending us these Shepherds."* We all formed a circle and closed in prayer.

One evening we set a meeting with a man we had met two years ago. We traveled to Lawton to meet him and his wife for dinner. This is the man that Evangelist Timothy Dom Bucci and Brother Mark met in Anadarko in

1971. When we called him for the dinner appointment, he did not recall our previous conversation regarding the Church's message. So his first question at dinner was, *"Why did you want to meet with me?"* Although a little disappointed, we explained to him again the picture from 1971 and the message of the Church, especially about Israel, the Peaceful Reign, and the Choice Seer. Then he recalled the picture we showed him of him and his brother in their regalia preparing to dance at the Indian Exposition. He then said, *"That would explain the dream I had last night."* He said he dreamed that he was arguing with some of his peers about future events. In the dream he told these people that even the animals would be at peace with each other. The others said no that would never happen. In his dream he was insistent that it would. He now realized that our message of the Peaceful Reign matched his dream. We can see that God yet again prepared the way before us and was revealing to His people what is to come. In December when the account of this meeting was being shared at a Region gathering, the Word of the Lord was spoken stating *"Yes, yes it is true! My children come and see, thus saith The Lord! The revelation is true and they will know that it is My doings, My works to perform and that I am The Lord their God, thus saith The Lord!"*

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By Brother Anthony Scolaro

During the recent Olympic games we saw members of the U.S. team saying, "Thanks, Mom!" for the years of dedication, sacrifice, and support that lay behind their children's athletic achievements. Applying that to our spiritual lives, many of us in the Church likely have more than one "mom" to be thankful for.

In His perfect order, God originated the concept of motherhood, and endowed that segment of His creation with a double measure of His own benevolent character: an instinct to nurture and protect, and a natural ability to love unconditionally.

It has been observed in all of God's creatures that the more highly developed the species, the longer its young are dependent upon their mothers. This principle reaches its height in the human family, created in God's own image, "a little lower than the angels," where children require parental care (though they might not admit it) for several decades.

Mothers—both natural and spiritual—have tremendous influence, often for the remainder of their lives, over those entrusted to them. Spiritually speaking, the role that these mothers play in our development has eternal consequences as they teach us to love God and follow His commandments. Some of their influence may be imparted through the things they say, but as in nature, they transmit so much more to us by what they do and how they live.

Remembering how faith and trust in God had been modeled to them, the two thousand stripling warriors we read about in Alma 56 spoke of how their mothers had taught them if they had faith that the Lord would deliver them, He would. "... [W]e do not doubt our mothers knew it," they told Helaman (vv. 47-48). They may have been young, but like most youngsters, were perceptive enough to know these were not just words—these boys were basing their faith, trust, and courage on the living examples under whom they had been blessed to grow up. The spiritual influence these mothers had on their children was greater than the sum of its individual parts: The *collective* example set by a body of believing mothers for the generation coming after them united their children in faith, and transformed them into an invincible army who enjoyed free access to God's conquering and protective power. As a Church, we have that same Vision before us today.

How can we best honor the spiritual mothers who came before us, who have dedicated themselves to raising godly sons and daughters? Many in this world have not had the good fortune of growing up in a stable home with a nurturing mother. Even more do not know what it is to have spiritual mothers. It would be a shame if those of us who have been so blessed did nothing more than look back and say, "We could never be so great as they were." Like our natural mothers, true spiritual mothers would want so much more for us—and so would the Lord. Let us rather stand on their shoulders, take all of the wisdom taught to us by their examples, and with everything good that they stood for, honor and glorify God like Helaman's army, by being "all that we can be," in Him. Thanks, Mom!

Faith Love/Charity Hope Unity Righteousness Congruence
Responsibility Empathy Loyalty **Leadership** Honor Rights/Respect Duty

VALUES *By Brother Richard Nath*

Value: Leadership

Definition: The capacity and ability to lead with appropriate urgency

Vital Verses:

- "Come now therefore, and I will send thee (Moses) unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt" (Exodus 3:10).
- "And he (Moroni) fastened on his headplate, and his breastplate, and his shields, and girded on his armor about his loins; and he took the pole, which had on the end thereof his rent coat, (and he called it the title of liberty) and he bowed himself to the earth, and he prayed mightily unto his God for the blessings of liberty to rest upon his brethren, so long as there should a band of Christians remain to possess the land" (Alma 46:19).

Scriptural Example:

There are many leaders mentioned throughout scripture. Some were governmental, some were military, some spiritual, and some all of the above. One example is Moroni. He was a military and spiritual leader who, at age 25, was given command of all the Nephite armies.

Moroni was a strong and mighty man, with a perfect understanding. He did not take joy in the shedding of blood but in the liberty and freedom of his country. It was said that if all men had been and were and ever would be like Moroni, the devil would have no power over the hearts of the children of men. Moroni led his people through several conflicts, including a long war that almost resulted in the destruction of the Nephites from both internal and external threats. However, because of his excellent spiritual and military leadership, they served God first and foremost and they were preserved. Read Alma chapters 43-63 for the details of how God used this humble man.

Life Application:

Good leadership is vital in today's world, requiring courage, humility, and good situational awareness. Leaders have been around since the dawn of time, but not all have been good, God-fearing ones. Leaders can take their people down the paths of righteousness, like Moroni, or down the paths of sin (see many of the kings of Israel in the Old Testament).

In the world today, we see the same things happening. Some leaders are good and others not so much. We may not feel like we can create change, but if we are good leaders in our families, communities, businesses, and schools, we can make a positive difference. Look to be a leader in one or more of these areas, and show those you are responsible for (your kids, project team, subordinates, etc.) how you put God first. When you do that, they'll see something different. That, along with the success you'll have since God will help you in completing the task when you put Him first, will cause them to want to do the same thing. That's being a good leader, and that's what the world needs more of.

Points to Ponder:

- What are some areas of your life that need a good leader? Are you up to the task to ask God to use you in that position?
- Are you putting God first in all your "team" activities outside of church, like at home, work, community, etc.?
- Is it better to ask God to use someone else rather than you to be the leader of a specific task or project?

Presented originally on the Gospel Blog

Answers to Question *Continued from Page 12*

I see God in the crowds of birds that take up housing in the 11 big trees in our backyard! They are so excited to be back in the old neighborhood. They sing and chatter and call. I love to feed the hummingbirds, too, which have flown thousands and thousands of miles. What a miracle!—*Sister Jan Bork, Detroit, MI Branch 2*

I notice God the most in the spring in the birds singing. I enjoy hearing them in the early morning hours. I once heard that God so loved a song that He wrapped it in feathers and set it in a tree. That is a lovely thought.—*Sister Marty Jumper, Aliquippa, PA Branch*

First Baptism at the Desert Mission in Thermal, CA

By Sister Vanessa Tostado

Every week, Brother Arturo and Sister Rocío Tostado visit the Torres-Martinez Reservation in Thermal, CA to maintain contact with the souls who have visited and listened to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the monthly meetings we hold there. During this past Christmas week, Sister Bertha Gonzalez (Sister Rocío's mother) was with them as they stopped by the house of some faithful visitors. They dropped off some groceries and clothes and were invited in as usual.

Brother Arturo read scriptures, and our sisters sang hymns. There was a point when an elderly visitor, 72-year-old Reynaldo Clemente, asked, *"What do I need to do to be baptized in your Church? Because I've been thinking about it and have been changing my ways. God knows I've come to a decision, and I myself have had this thought. So now I want to be baptized."*

Brother Arturo and Sister Rocío reminded him that all that is required, according to scripture, is a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and that he would surely be blessed for his desire. That Friday, Apostle Paul Liberto, Evangelist Bob McDonnell, Elder Randy Lee, and Brother Arturo Tostado went to visit with Reynaldo. They shared with him the duties of being a member in The Church of Jesus Christ and explained doctrine as they prepared him for baptism.

Since this was the first baptism in Thermal, we all quickly began praying for a baptism site, especially since we knew finding open water in the desert would be a challenge. Brother Arturo and his daughter, Sister Vanessa, called around to local parks with lakes, and investigated canals the Salton Sea for possible baptism locations. Sister Vanessa had left a message with the White Water Preserve that Saturday, about 50 miles away, as a last resort. The next day as we were on our way to Church in Yucaipa, while on the freeway, Sister Vanessa's phone rang. It was the park ranger from White Water giving us permission to have the baptism the following week. The next exit on the freeway was White Water; we were only minutes away! Praise God for confirming the baptism location!

On January 5, 2014, while saints from the different branches in our area began arriving with excitement, a few women of Asian descent were walking around the water among us out of curiosity. Sister Guillermina M. quickly invited them to witness the baptism, and they joined our little group. While conversing, we discovered that they were from the Los Angeles area on a day trip and on their way to Thermal. They had just stopped at White Water to take a break when they noticed a gathering. We quickly told them that we would be going to Thermal right after the baptism, and we were all surprised to learn that we were headed to the same place so many miles away.

One of them named Lisa (born in Taiwan) began asking many questions about our Church. Brother Stacey Light briefly explained baptism and our Church beliefs to the visitors, as we all invited them to learn more about the Gospel.

At the baptism site the following visions were had: *"While we were singing 'I'm Free,' the sky opened up like a cracked line. When Brother Stacey was praying, before performing the baptism, an angel came out of the sky flying U shape and then entered back into the sky through the other side."*—Sister Emilia D.

"When Brother Stacey began to pray, a light appeared between both Brothers Stacey and Reynaldo, and became like a big star, shining like gold."—Sister Alicia D.

"After Brother Reynaldo emerged out of the water, behind the rocks the sky appeared as if connected to the rocks, and the sky was very blue. Then steps appeared from the smallest to the largest going upward to the top."—Sister Alicia D.

While our brothers changed following the baptism, we gathered in the living room of the Tostado family home and Lisa shared her testimony of how God had given her a vision while she was in college in Taiwan over 30 years ago. She had seen the city of Thermal and the Salton Sea, but had no idea where it was. She then immigrated to the United States and lived in Texas, where she searched and could not find what God had shown her in the vision. Years later, she moved to the Los Angeles area and researched enough to find out that it was only about three hours away. Lisa had visited Thermal once before but wanted to return with three of her friends to see the place that God had shown her in a vision. We invited them to join us for our service. They accepted, and we all gathered at the mission!

During the meeting, the following vision was had: *"When Brother Stacey knelt to pray before the bestowal of the Holy Ghost, I saw a flame of fire, which began on Brother Reynaldo's right shoulder, and spread over his head, all the way to his left shoulder."*—Sister Emilia D.

Praise God for the gifts of the Spirit! Brother Stacey spoke on how we all came from different backgrounds but were all one people when serving God and that there is only one God. He expounded on how Jesus set the example in the Bible and Book of Mormon and how The Church of Jesus Christ follows His teachings.

We then had a wonderful season of testimonies and singing. One of our newest visitors from the Philippines even joined us up front, singing in Spanish. Afterward, we enjoyed eating and fellowship together. The four visitors brought fruit, tofu, and yogurt to the table to share! Everyone agreed that it was a miracle the way we were brought together at that specific site at White Water at that precise moment, for such a special occasion. The visitors spent their day trip worshipping God with the Saints.

Praise God, it was a marvelous day, and we all felt a beautiful spirit! Please continue to pray for us, for our new friends Lisa, Rosalinda, Barbara, and Cathy, and for the souls on the reservation.



"I Remember a Jar"

By Elder Tom D'Orazio, GMBA President

I remember a jar. It was the biggest jar I had ever seen. Probably three gallons in size, glass, round and with a metal screw top. It had a piece of paper taped to the side and a slit cut in the top. It always stayed in the same place—behind my parents' bedroom door in the crevice made by the door and the dresser. I don't know what was in it before, but in my house, it was one of the most precious things we owned.


I don't know the conversations that took place, but as a parent, I now understand those same hopes. My parents wanted their children to be a part of something wonderful, something valuable, and something worthy of our time, our money, and our attention. They made sure that we wanted it too and that we worked for it. Every year, around August, this jar would come out and a new paper would be taped to the side: "Massanetta 1978" or "White Oak 1985"—it didn't matter what was on it, we knew what it meant to us. It was time to start saving. Throughout the year, we would watch as the money pile grew. I

spent a lot of time looking at it. I loved the sound the coins made against the glass. At the time, it was nothing more than excitement to me, but now I understand why I felt that way looking at an old jar. It was because of the growing influence and impact summer GMBA campout made on a young boy's heart. Without question, those camps laid a foundation that saved me.

Today, we are so very blessed to be able to do so much in life. Many of us have the means to have bigger homes, better cars, better vacations (or any vacation, for that matter) than our predecessors. I too enjoy taking my family to the beach or an amusement park. We have many fond memories. However, and I really mean this, without question or comparison, when I look into the eyes of my children at the end of a GMBA camp week, there is absolutely no equal. Their hearts are spiritually full. They have been loved. They have seen and heard wonderful things. All of us are changed. Our family is better for having been there. Now as an officer, we spend hundreds of hours each year preparing for a single week

of camp. Each one is like putting a coin into an old jar, in essence "saving up" to make camp a reality. Now that it's almost full, we look at that jar with excitement and anticipation. We have tried to learn and improve each year because we want so much for all of you. We want lives to be changed, hearts to be touched, souls to be saved, and everyone to feel loved. It is with this purpose and intent that we look to camp 2014. This year, our inspired theme is "Forgiveness." In reference to Matthew 18:22, you might also see "Camp 490" here and there, but it all means the same thing: forgiveness is at the heart of everything we believe in, everything we have gained, and everything we hope to receive. It is the force that liberated us from our very sins and liberates our heart from the burden of anger, guilt, and offense. It really doesn't get any better than that.

**For Camp 2014 Information
and Registration,
please visit our Facebook page,
"GMBA Campout 2014".**



**"Our goal is that
you walk away
from this week
blessed, uplifted,
strengthened,
and changed."**

CAMP 490

GMBA Camp 2014
California, Pennsylvania

An Era of Peace By Brother Kerry Carlini

At the time of Christ's crucifixion, judgment came upon the Nephites. Scriptures tell that *"there arose a great storm, such an one as never had been known in all the land...[having] a great and terrible tempest; and thunder, insomuch that it did shake the whole earth as if it was about to divide asunder."* We read that *"the whole face of the land was changed...[a]nd many great and notable cities were sunk...burned, and...shaken."* Only the more righteous among the people were spared, but following the visits of Jesus Christ they would become a people who would experience a time of peace and prosperity unknown before to the human existence. Here are five amazing facts regarding this "era of peace":

- 1 All the people who survived, both Nephite and Lamanite, were converted to the Lord within the Church.
- 2 They had all things common among them. There were neither rich nor poor, bond nor free.
- 3 There were great and marvelous works wrought by the disciples where the sick were healed, the lame walked, the blind given sight, the deaf heard, and even the dead rose.
- 4 Scripture states that *"surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God."*
- 5 And finally, these blessed people lived in righteousness without any contentions or disputations for almost two centuries.

III Nephi Chapters 8-9; IV Nephi



Ladies' Uplift Circle News

Who Are Our Mothers?

By Sister Lisa Champine, General Ladies' Uplift Circle President

Matthew 12:46-50 states, *"While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."*

I think about this scripture often. What did Jesus mean when He spoke these words? Mary, His natural mother, wanted to speak with Him; her love for her Son was not unlike that of any other mother since Eve and yet Jesus makes this statement. What could the deeper meaning be?

I don't think Jesus was forgetting Mary or diminishing her place in His life or minimizing His love for her or her love for Him. I do think that Jesus was again

teaching His followers a wonderful lesson if they, and we, look a little deeper. Mother's Day was always intended to honor the women that gave us life. All of us have our own traditions and methods by which we show how much we love and appreciate our mothers for their unconditional love, nurturing, and support. This kind of love is special and unique.

But is there another type of mother that can have these same qualities? I can tell you that I have been blessed to have a wonderful mother. No one on this earth loves me the way she does and thankfully I know that will never change. When my family met the Church, I was exposed to another kind of mother, a spiritual mother. I have had some wonderful spiritual mothers that have impacted my journey through this life. They have mentored me, cared for me, and nurtured me even though they did not give me life, or sit by my sick bed, or comfort me in the middle of the night.

Without both of these types of mothers in my life I would not be the person I am today. I give honor to them all. Whether

they were single or married, whether they were young or old, whether they had their own children and still took me under their wings, or if they had none and still treated me like a daughter, I honor them. I recognize that without their help and concern I would be missing something, and I find I am blessed beyond measure that God found me and placed me here that I might benefit from all the mothers in my life.

As I have grown older I realize that I now have a responsibility as well. Can I be a spiritual mother to those who come after me? Can I show the same kind of unconditional love that is exhibited by my natural mother and my spiritual mothers? I think we can; I think that through the love of God that we all possess we can be that influence and we can shine the light of God's love to all the children that need it if we try.

So, as you celebrate your own mother on Mother's Day take a minute to let your spiritual mothers know you care and appreciate their place in your life as well. Because a mother's love is to be cherished, regardless of whether that love is natural-born or born of the Spirit.



God Cares For You

Where do you live? Do you have a roof over your head at night? Do you have enough to eat day by day? Are you blessed and lucky enough that your family has a car to go places in?

Can you go to school and learn to read, write, and understand numbers? Can you learn how to act so you can get a job when you are older?

Do your legs and arms work so you can run, jump, and swim? Do you have a bicycle? Have you gone to a doctor for help if you were sick? Have you been prayed on and taken medicine to heal you if you did get the flu, a cold, or even something more serious?

Do you have a mom, a dad, or friend, or family member that you know cares about you? What if someone mean is going to hurt you? Will someone listen to you if you have a problem or see a problem coming? Can you read in the Bible for ideas of how to pray and act? Can you figure out what to do this time?

These are all blessing from the Lord. The scriptures tell us that God so loved the world (that's us) that He sent His only begotten Son Jesus, to love us, help, protect, guide us, and give us a place for our souls to go when our bodies pass away. (See John 3:16.)

Jesus constantly taught us to pray and tell Him about our troubles and fears. His Apostle, Peter, said *"Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God*

(do not act so important that you can just do anything you think—ask God first),...casting all your care upon him (throw your problems up to Him), for he careth for you." (See 1 Peter 5:7).

Last week, money came for me in the mail. I knew I needed to take the check to the bank but I was worried about other things and waited. Then, I could not find it. I looked quickly for it, then harder. I did not remember where it was in the big piles of paperwork grown-ups have during tax time. I got scared and frantic and told my friend. She also looked through files and stacks of papers for me. No big white envelope with a check was located.

Finally I asked my Mother, my friend, and my daughter to pray for me that it was not thrown out or stolen, and this time I truly cried out to God, in the name of Jesus, to show me what to do and to help me. I asked the Lord to help me figure out if I should call the place that sent me the check to see if anyone had stolen it or if they would send me a new one. I put the problem in Jesus' hands and went to sleep.

First thing this morning, I quietly started looking through the paper sorter on the table. I felt calm and hopeful as I prayed. And—there it was! Right in front of me! Now I had gone through those papers many times. My friend had too. But today, after praying and begging God for help instead of just counting on myself, I found the big white envelope and check for money.

Why hadn't we seen it there these last few days? Was it even there? I do not know. I only know when I stopped being in charge, when I quit being frantic and started calling on

Jesus to help me, I had help. I cast my burdens on Him and He was a very real help in time of trouble.

God loves you. Jesus loves you. I am proof He loves us each.

With Care,
Your friend,
Sister Jan

WORD SEARCH

ASK	YOU
GOD	HE
IN	WHO
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HELP	US
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L	L	E	A	D	Y
K	P	A	L	L	A
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L	O	V	E	S	P

Share your blessings about being a mother...

It is so gratifying watching my boys, 7 and 10, being blessed by our Lord and acknowledging His miracles in their life. At their tender ages they already see the difference between those who have and those who do not have God in their lives.
—Sister Alicia Draskovich, Forest Hills, FL Branch

I am thankful for the privilege to be a mother and to share the Gospel with my children. They are an inspiration to me and have enriched my life. —Sister Laurie Whitton, Creekside, MI Branch

I thank God for the knowledge God gave me to raise my daughter and how God helped me learn from my daughter. —Sister Vicki VanDeWeghe, Irvine, CA Branch

The joys of motherhood in the world today are usually measured by Pinterest perfect homes and lives. But I am thankful that the true joys of motherhood are in fact witnessing God's purest gifts: life and love. We are entrusted with the heritage of the Lord. Psalm 127:3 says: "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is his reward."
—Sister Rachel Cotellesse, Lakeside, AZ Branch

I truly believe that the Lord blessed me with our son, Jordan, to help me understand His love for me. You don't understand until you are a parent how much you can love and forgive unconditionally. It is through the blessings of being a mother that I believe God could and does love and forgive me. All He asks is that I love Him too...and I do.
—Sister Suzanne Beeman, Mt. Laurel, NJ Branch

Being a mother is one of the most important responsibilities in my life. My 5 children and 5 grandchildren are truly a blessing from God. They have helped me grow spiritually as I have always looked to the Lord for guidance in bringing them up. To know that you have such an impact or influence on another person's life is such a humble feeling...I can only pray that I have met most of those goals that the Lord has set before me as a mother. —Sister Connie Ross, Spartanburg, SC Branch

I am so blessed to be a mother. The day my son was born, a brother pointed to my newborn baby and spoke in the Gift of Tongues and the Word of the Lord said, "My gift to you, thus saith the Lord." God has now given us two gifts in our two sons, and I pray as a mother, I can raise them with the love and knowledge of the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ. That is my gift back to my Lord for all He has blessed me with! —Sister Mandy Griffith, Forest Hills, FL Branch

A mother is a precious gift from God. In our thanks to Him, we raise our children to love and serve Him. —Sister Jennifer Gehly, Monogahela, PA Branch

Being a mother is undoubtedly one of the most treasured gifts God ever gave me. —Sister Diane Maddox, Lake Worth, FL Branch

God has granted me two beautiful daughters in a very unique way—through adoption. He has shown me that they are in His perfect plan to be part of our family. I am truly grateful for having the opportunity to be their mother and first and foremost to teach them to become godly women. —Sister Linda Scolaro, Mesa, AZ Branch

It is a special blessing to be a mom for my son, Jonas. We adopted him when he was 6 months old. I prayed to the Lord to help me become a mother and he gave me the wonderful gift of a son. I tell Jonas that the Lord picked him to be our son because "He wanted you to know the Lord." —Sister Denise Bodo, Detroit, MI Branch 2

I desired to have children for many years after we were married. Many prayers were offered that God would fulfill our desire, and He answered in His time and in His way. There was a dream related to me that I would receive children through a fire. Little did we know what it meant. After some time had passed we received two children, a boy and a girl, who were available for our adoption. Their mother had died in a fire! Our children are grown now, but God gave them a home and a family when they needed one, and they filled a giant void in my heart. I am so thankful and blessed to be their Mom. —Sister Wilma King, Vanderbilt, PA Branch

One day when my two boys were very young, I fell to my knees in the kitchen in fasting and prayer for the souls of a couple of people who desperately needed God. My boys came in the door, saw and heard me praying and quietly went back out the door. When I finished praying, I saw that they left a bouquet of wildflowers by my knees. I thanked God for the two most wonderful sons He could have given me, and for the blessings they have been to me. As adult children they love God greatly and are kind, compassionate, and loving to all with whom they come in contact. Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." —Sister Karen Watford, Houston, TX

It has been a blessing having my daughters blessed and nurtured in The Church of Jesus Christ. I look forward to their baptisms. In addition it has been a blessing having my mother, Sister Claudia Wright, as my sister in Christ. I am the oldest of three children and was the first to be baptized in my family and watched my mother's baptism—what a blessing! Thank you, Lord! —Sister Sherri Wright-Harris, Omaha, NE Mission

Blessing Bits

BB God Knows Our Future

In 2003, we lived in Virginia, and I was working 60 miles from home. Due to the distance, I accepted a different position which was three miles from home. Shortly after being hired, I noticed a problem with my eyesight. I was extremely concerned when a specialist informed me that immediate surgery needed to be done. Having just started in a new position, I was very concerned: Would I lose the job? What about insurance? Coverage wouldn't begin for six months. Many miracles occurred! First and foremost, the surgery, and additional unexpected surgeries that were required, were successful. My employer held a position for me, even though I was gone for three months, rather than the anticipated one month. Also, the six month waiting period for the insurance coverage was waived! The entire cost of the surgeries was covered! What a series of miracles! God is good!—Sister Ruth Rogalla, Atlanta GA Branch

BB God Hears the "Smallest Prayers"

I was put in charge of the teen activities for our Fall Picnic. My main event, the big shebang, was a water balloon fight. To my

surprise, every store I went to was out of water balloons. (Cut me some slack, I live in Florida!) As I was traveling to my final stop, I said a quick prayer and said, "God I know it's silly but I just want these kids to have a good time and awesome memories. Please let there be water balloons here." I walked in and went to where they should be, and nothing. Something caught my eye, and I walked down the aisle, looked up, and right at eye level were water balloons, HALF OFF! I couldn't help but to thank and praise God!—Brother Andrew DiNardo, Hollywood FL Branch

BB God Provides Our "Manna"

I have a huge avocado tree in my backyard, and this year it was loaded with avocados, but most of them were high up in the tree, and I could only reach them with a "picker," a long stick with a wire basket on the end. It is cumbersome to try to finagle it through the branches. My husband, Jimmy, was the one who used to pick these for me, but this year he unexpectedly passed away from cancer on August 5. I prayed to God and asked Him if He could send me Jimmy back just for a little while to help me pick these avocados. I know it may have been a silly prayer, but the next morning, I went in

the backyard and there were at least 30 avocados on the ground! It wasn't even windy the night before! The next day there were at least 10 more. I know this was an answered prayer. Thank you, Lord!—Sister Dottie Henderson, Irvine CA Branch,

Send us your Blessing Bits [in approximately 150 words] and answer the Question of the Month by contacting us at gospelnewsinfo@gmail.com

Q

Question for this month: *"If you could be present for an event from the scriptures, what would it be?"*

A

Answer from last month: *"How do we see God in spring?"* I see God the most in the spring when the flowers bloom so beautifully, the trees turn green, and the birds are singing. It is so refreshing to awake each day to hear the chirping and the sun shines brightly within the blue skies with a few white pillow-like clouds. I know God created all these features that make it so remarkably awesome.—Sister Lorraine Rose, Leesburg, FL Mission

Whenever I see a robin, I know that spring is here. These little red-breasted birds just bring a smile to my face and remind me of God's creation. Now, living in Arizona, I don't see robins, and spring-like weather is most of the year. However, I've adopted a new bird that makes me smile: the hummingbird.—Sister Linda Scolaro, Mesa, AZ Branch

Turn back to page 6 for more answers to the question.

...for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. Isaiah 35:6

