

The Gospel News

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*So Very
Blessed!*



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The Evangelist and the "Father-Daughter Dance" of Caesarea

By Brother Jason Monaghan

As we search the pleasing word of God, we would be hard pressed to find a more "effective" servant and follower of Christ than Philip. We will highlight in this article just who Philip was and, in the end, we will narrow in to show a man who was 100 percent "present" in his ministry as well as for his family! Each of us reading today would agree that we all seek such a balance in our lives as we juggle the various "hats" of responsibility we all wear. We will navigate this article together considering Philip's path, his attributes, and then finish up at home with him in Caesarea.

First, let's just clear up that we read of two Philips in the New Testament. One was an Apostle (John 1:43) and the other was an Evangelist (who was also called as a part of the original seven Deacons (Acts 6). We will focus on the latter Philip!

PHILIP'S PATH:

We first are introduced to Brother Philip when he is selected by the multitude and set before the Apostles to be ordained as one of the original seven Deacons. We see that his contributions (along with Stephen and the other five) allowed the Word of God to "increase"! How powerful to pause at this time to consider the impact a Deacon can have on the progression of the "Great Work of The Lord"! We see that after Deacon Stephen was stoned to death, that many of the disciples scattered from Jerusalem (except for the 12 who remained there) and Philip was then led to "preach Christ" down in Samaria.

We do not know when, (but at some point) Brother Philip was called to be an evangelist and he is given the opportunity to fulfill the commandment that Christ gave His disciples after He resurrected, that they would take the gospel to Samaria (Acts 1:8), Jesus having already passed that way in His earthly ministry. Philip's work in Samaria was so blessed with miracles, healings, and the various signs and wonders that many were baptized! He was even used to convert a man of "sorcery" named Simon. Word got back to the Apostles (in Jerusalem) of the great work going on in Samaria by our Dear Brother, so that "the 12" sent Brothers Peter and John to assist. When they arrived, the Apostles laid their hands on those who had been baptized by Philip so that they would receive the Holy Ghost.

(Continued on page 8)

8 Spiritual Summer Tips:
(A Help to Studying Randomly)



Take a Prayer
and Praise Walk

Galatians 5:16



Read Verses
Out Loud Each Day

I Timothy 4:13

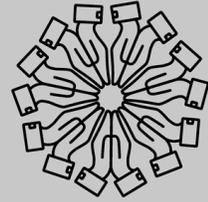
Vacation
with God

Mark 6:31



Form Circles
of Prayer

James 5:16



Get Something
Done

Proverbs 6:6-8



Eat Fresh!

Micah 7:1

Appreciate
His Order

Genesis 8:22



Camp?
Family Reunion?
Sunday Morning?
Zoom?

Hebrews 10:24,25



BFTP Blast From The Past

1967 GMBA CAMPOUT

Deemed the Summer of Love—when the Hippie counterculture gathered from Greenwich Village to Haight-Ashbury questioning every established norm of society; when the face of our nation was marred by civil rights issues and riots poured into the streets of our major cities; and when protests over the mounting casualties of a seemingly endless war in Vietnam began with a march on Washington—the saints met in Arlington, Kansas for a week of song, services, baptisms, and fellowship. Starting on July 30, it would be the first extended Campout, bringing members from across the country. "We loved having all the saints from New Jersey to California show up in Kansas - William Bickerton's territory," recalls Sister Jan Bork, a Kansas native. "Brilliant men of God focused on us 'young people,' and we blossomed. We studied scripture and prayed, and the three Nephites visited Apostle Joe Calabrese, calling for three more souls." Sister Jan was among those baptized at the Campout that year.

1967 GMBA Officers—Chuck Jumper, Issac Smith, Joe Milantoni, Anthony Scolaro, Carl Frammolino, Dominic Thomas, Paul Palmieri, Rose Corrado, and Ruth Akerman ▶





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, while working to draw Israel to Christ through efforts focused on the indigenous peoples of North, Central, and South America

Vision Statement

- Living and worshipping in unity and righteousness will result in the fullness of God's Spirit and power among the Saints, culminating in continuous growth of the Church and fulfillment of Christ's promises concerning His Kingdom on Earth.



"Enough for Today" By Brother Doug Obradovich

"Give us this day our daily bread." (Matthew 6:11)

She was 19. He was 22. They could barely pay their bills, creating a firsthand experience to the verse above. By the time they were in their 40s, their situation had changed and pleading for "daily bread" became a prayer for their retirement accounts. This can happen when the Lord entrusts us with His blessings. It's not necessarily arrogance or unwillingness, but once needs are met, the shift moves to wants. Because wants are "add-on" items and not contingent upon immediate answers, urgency becomes unnecessary. When need shifts to want, longer timelines are utilized and broader definitions bring a more relaxed approach to supplication.

Long before Christ said, "Give us this day our daily bread," the Israelites relied upon God's daily provision. For approximately 14,600 days, they awakened to retrieve His "necessary provisions" (manna). The miraculous manna was conditional: it spoiled within 24 hours, so they were restricted to daily

rations. Such dependence upon God serves to maintain the relationship and conversely, it can be quite common to become lax when experiencing independence. We must resist surrendering to "quite common" behavior, as our God is quite extraordinary.

When God's blessings include His satisfying needs, motivation must overcome complacency. This can result from a situation ("*compelled to be humble*" - Alma 32:14) or a choice provoked by wisdom. Independence requires responsibility (Galatians 5:13), "*Ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh.*" God provides freedom, so we must choose to combat indifference by continuing to call upon Him.

But even if all our natural needs are met, we can't sit back and relax. Jesus explains (John 6), "*I am the bread of life,*" and "*I am the living bread which came down from heaven.*" He is referencing our need daily for His spirit when He teaches us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." The 24-hour manna Israel depended upon was symbolic of Jesus,

and our ancillary natural items (ex: finance, health & safety) are representative of God's caring for Israel's every need for 40 years: "*I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot*" (Deuteronomy 19:5). If God preserved even their clothing, why wouldn't He do the same for any and all of your needs?

It all comes down to your maintenance plan. You can't plant seeds in your garden and hope they take root and bear fruit. You must water them daily. You can't eat three meals a day and hope your teeth stay clean. You must brush them daily. You can't accept a job and sporadically drop by a couple days a week. You must show up daily. So it is in your walk with God. You must care for your spirit daily. Pray. Meditate. Commune with God.

Whether 19, 49, or 79 years old, we must never allow God's generously providing for natural and spiritual wants and needs to lull us into a false sense of security. We must go to Him every day and beg for our daily bread. Once you've asked Him, then step outside your tent and collect your daily portion of awaiting manna.

With a Grateful Heart -

I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to serve The Church of Jesus Christ as the Gospel News Editor the past 13+ years. It has honestly been one of the greatest blessings of my life. When asked to take over as Editor (over a bowl of pasta shared with the OSC President on New Year's Day 2012), I committed to serving for two years. Little did I know, those first few years would be the most challenging of my life, and I am confident that this work kept me focused and driven to stay above the fear or sadness that I felt at that time. I will forever be grateful that God chose me when He did. After those first few years it became my source of joy and connection to the membership.

I am also deeply grateful for the amazing team of people I had by my side. So many of them had been working on the Gospel News long before I took over as Editor, like Sister Jan Bork, and others I recruited over the years. What a blessing to see the commitment and the love that each of them had for you, the members. It came through in their articles, during our team meetings and their overall commitment.

I am especially grateful for Brother Chuck Maddox, Jr. who agreed to serve as my assistant when Brother Don Ross stepped down and was such a pleasure to work with each month, and Brother Anthony Scolaro who edited each and every article (and made it look like I knew what I was doing!). Brother Ken Lombardo ensured each issue was visually captivating, and Brother Doug Obradivich provided an abundance of articles for selection and assisted with our fundraising efforts. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of Sister Dianne Maddox in various roles over the years and every other member of the team. You know who you are, and I give you my love and respect for all that you did!

Each month as I worked on the issue, I would focus on our mission: to Educate, Uplift, and Unite the membership. I would imagine the brothers and sisters finding the paper in their mailbox, excited to read about the news from the Church, and I would feel responsible for maintaining the integrity of this 87-year-old publication.

Alone I would absolutely have failed at all of this, but with God's constant direction and guidance, each issue came together. "I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me" (Philippians 4:13). I wish I had written down all of the experiences along the way—it would fill pages of a journal! I would often find myself in tears when I read an article sent in that unknowingly fit the theme, or when I realized that there was space to fill and at the exact right moment, I received a communication with an article to include. What I am left with following this experience is an acute awareness of just how close God works with us when we do His work and a sense that He knows and loves me individually.

The time came for me to pass the torch. I have no doubt that Sister Sabrina Fisher and Brother David Tenorio will do an amazing job as Editor and Assistant Editor, respectively. I know they will rely on the Lord for support and direction and be used as we were. Offer them your support through answering the question of the month or sending in Blessing Bits and articles. I will be staying on as a consultant and assisting with the transition. And then, I will be open for whatever the Lord has in store for me next!

My favorite verse is on the cover this month, Proverbs 3:5-6. "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." I am confident He will direct me.

I love you all! Thank you for your kindness, love and support.

SisterCarolynn O'Connor

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by **Brother Brett Gibson**

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My wife, Sister Julie, and I like to take walks. It is a common part of our individual exercise regimens. We have a goal of walking once per day, but schedules and weather sometimes get in the way of that benchmark. We prefer to walk together; it's our chance to catch up on each other's day. We also like to record our time and distance as a relative way to measure our fitness. A sunny, 81-degree day is arguably the perfect conditions for a walk. That might be a normal day for you, but when you live in Michigan and it is mid-April, you don't let the opportunity pass you by. So, when Sister Julie had a commitment that precluded her accompanying me, I went on this walk alone. My wife always measures our walk rate, and I know our rough average. So I decided to measure my walk to see how I do as an individual. I was walking like I was trying to set a world record, or at least a personal best. That is, until I realized my technological ineptness—I had forgotten to start recording! Halfway through my planned distance, my tracker asked me "would you like to record this walk?" When I discovered that my focused effort had not been measured, my motivation completely changed. I thought, "no point in pushing myself now!" I had to finish the walk to get back home, but I did not have the same goal-oriented mindset! Now walking was just a means to an end, a chore.

Do we approach our spiritual lives any differently? We know that we should be shining our light as Jesus instructed in Matthew 5, verses 14-16: *"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."*

We have the Spirit of God within us, which makes us shine in comparison to the world. But how brightly should we shine? Candles can vary in their brightness depending on the materials used to make them. However, the difference in light output from candle to candle is virtually imperceptible. On a clear, dark night, a person can see a lit candle from 1.5 miles away. Under the same conditions, a standard 100-watt light bulb can be seen from 4–8 miles away. The advent of LED technology is improving light intensity and longevity (which is another topic for another day, Google the 'Centennial Light Bulb') but these man-made sources are still limited. Our spiritual lights, being powered by the Holy Spirit, have no limit!

At our April 2025 General conference, the following experience was accepted as a revelation of God:

"I saw the Lord Jesus Christ walking through a room that had several candles lit. Some were burning with great intensity, and others were dim but burning. As He was walking amongst the candles, He spoke stating *"I have given My light to My church. Some burn brighter than others, yet they all shine with My love. Seek now that with greater love and greater obedience to those things that I have taught, the lights may shine with more intensity that all the world will see. The time is before you when all of My promises will be made manifest in word and deed."* The Gift of Tongues then came forth followed by the Word of the Lord stating: *"The words of My Son, My blessed Son Jesus the Christ, thus saith the Lord!"*

Our goal is to shine as bright as Jesus Christ. Let's move towards that goal, increasing both in the love of God and obedience to His Word, recognizing that He is measuring us!

Youth Summit Recap

By Sister Anna Maria Mott and Brother Connor Griffith

Key Verses:

*“Behold I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I **created** the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. I was with the Father from the beginning. I am in the Father, and the Father in me; and in me hath the Father glorified his name” (3 Nephi 9:15).*

*“And behold, I say unto you, that is not all. For O how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that is the founder of **peace**, yea, even the Lord, who has **redeemed** his people; yea, him who has granted **salvation** unto his people” (Mosiah 15:18).*

The Youth Summit is an afternoon seminar for young people that attend our General Church Conferences led by the Youth Missionary Outreach Committee (YMOC) and GMBA. The leadership of this event included brothers Aaron Palmieri, Chuck Maddox, Sr., Patrick Monaghan, Jason Monaghan, Brian Smith, and Bryan Griffith.

This past Youth Summit at our 2025 April conference was the largest one yet. We had over 110 young people ages 13-30 in attendance, doubling previous attendance counts.

The theme was based on that of the conference: *Jesus Christ – Creator, Redeemer, Savior, Peacemaker*. Each of these themes was broken up into discussions:

Redeemer:

We discussed ways in which Christ had redeemed us. This conversation focused upon the remission of sins through the redemptive power of Jesus.

Savior:

We discussed many ways Christ saved us. Many shared personal experiences where they were in a threatening situation and Christ preserved their life. Others referenced salvation as the ultimate act of Christ as our Savior.

Peacemaker:

We began by establishing that the opposite of peace is fear and anxiety. We then made it simpler by looking at options in times

where we need His peace. Prayer, reaching out to someone, and reading scripture were some great examples. We concluded with the fact that sometimes the only thing we can do is be still.

Creator:

We began by summarizing how we see the Lord into one-word phrases. We recognized how we each are made in the image of God. Last, we discussed our purpose. Some memorable responses to our purpose were: “to spread the Gospel like wildfire,” and “to serve God to the best of our ability.”

Next, we were excited to practice three songs to sing for the evening meeting: “He’s All the World to Me,” “Victory in Jesus,” and Songs of Zion #242, “These the Latter Days.”

We ended by eating dinner with the indigenous visitors to the conference.

After dinner, Chief Jeremiah Wolf talked to the youth about his nation’s history, influence, and understanding of “the Peacemaker.” While many things he shared were unconventional, we were blessed to see that a chief of an indigenous nation understood Christ’s impact on our world. We ask the youth of the Church to pray for indigenous leaders like Wolf, that they might understand the great promises God has for their people.

As the youth of the Church, we would like to thank those that made this event possible, from the seminar teachers to those that served food. We appreciate your efforts to make a special moment for us.

A "7 Miracle" Testimony by Sister Judi Gensburg

Shortly after celebrating our 52nd wedding anniversary (April 2022), I began hearing my heartbeat in my right ear. It was constant, it never stopped. After about 6 weeks, seeing many doctors and having many tests, I got up in the middle of the night, I prayed and asked God to help me understand my situation. It was a maddening situation. I was short with people and did not like myself. After my little talk and prayer with the Lord, I decided to check my messages on my phone. When I turned on my phone the words "Pulsatile tinnitus" flashed across the screen. "What's this?" I asked and started reading about "pulsatile tinnitus" and a story of a lady who had the same situation. I realized that God had answered my prayer giving me a direction for research! **Miracle #1**

With the results of my MRI/MRA, I was diagnosed with pulsatile tinnitus. I immediately thanked the Lord for this understanding. Doing more research, I found a world-renowned doctor in New York City who has been helping people around the world with this same issue. Brain surgery would be required, but thankfully, it would be noninvasive. I would have to wait two months before I could get a virtual visit with this doctor. Inquiring about the wait, I was informed that he was backed up until February 2023. The nurse did not even know where this July appointment came from, because no one ever cancels. Again, I thanked Jesus for this opening. **Miracle #2**

During my virtual call, the doctor informed me that in fact I did not have pulsatile tinnitus, but something more serious, more rare, more complicated. The procedure would be embolization of the arteriovenous fistula. He assured me that he performs five or six of these a week, that I was in good health, and that if I did not get this taken care of, I could be facing a stroke, seizure, or aneurysm. At that point I realized how thankful I was to have this heartbeat in my ear as a warning to what could have happened. My surgery was scheduled for September 7. Remember, the doctor was booked until February of the following year. God had made a way for this opening for surgery, **Miracle #3**, and through His grace I had a direction, a diagnosis, a doctor, and a hospital. Our plan was in place.

I continued to thank God and asked that He would keep me and the doctor safe so we could proceed with this surgery. I also asked if He could soften the sound in my ear because for six months, I hadn't slept well, sometimes not at all. The next morning, I got up and discovered the sound was softer, but still there. However, I was deaf in that ear. It turned out to be an inner ear problem and within two weeks my hearing was

restored. Again, I thanked God for the heartbeat sound in my ear.

During this time, I took every opportunity to be anointed, knowing that according to my faith, the Lord would help me, comfort me, and go with me through the surgery, and He would direct the doctor's hands.

I began to think of the seriousness of this operation and the possibility of being called to my heavenly home. With a visit from my daughter, we got all my worldly affairs in order. After she left, I wrote letters to all family members and purchased all the birthday gifts and Christmas gifts for the rest of the year. That night I dreamed of my mom, who had been gone for 20 years. I was getting married in my dream, and Mom was helping me dress. When I went to put on my dress, it was gone. I asked Mom "where is the dress?" and she said in her soft voice "I don't know." "Now who would take my dress?" I asked her if she had any other dresses that I could sew to make a gown. She replied, "there is nothing extra here." I suggested we go to a store and her reply was "we don't have time." I woke up very upset that if I was going to dream of my mom, I certainly did not want to argue with her. I kept thinking about this dream and what it meant. My granddaughter was getting married in October; was I not going to have a dress? Would I not be there for this celebration? Then the spiritual meaning came to light: If I was the bride, and the Lord was the groom, she was telling me that I was not ready to come and meet the Lord. I was so excited that I called all my children and friends to share this dream and to tell them I would come back home from surgery. I was assured of this. **Miracle #4!**

The surgery was on a Wednesday, and it went so well that I was released on Friday and traveled home Saturday. **Big Miracle #5.** One month later, I began seeing double in my left eye. The eye doctor diagnosed it as sixth nerve palsy. I had more tests and upon review by the doctor, he said the site of the operation looked great; however I had a brain bleed on the opposite side of the brain, and I needed to go directly to Emergency. Brother Ron Giovannone was called in to pray and anoint me. His simple prayer was "Lord if Thou will, could you just let these tests show nothing, so that this sister can return home?" That is what happened! Nothing showed up on all the scans. When the neurosurgeon looked at the original disk, he saw the bleed, but on the scans, nothing showed there. I went home thanking the good Lord. **Miracle #6.**

(Continued on page 8)

(A "7 Miracle" Testimony - continued from page 7)

At the end of November, I had suffered for two months with double vision. My physician put me on supplements and my vision started to improve, and prism glasses helped me drive. My daily prayer was for another miracle. After two and a half months, the double vision was gone. **Miracle #7**

God is so good. It has been quite a journey these past 11 months. I am thankful for God's guidance, that He never let me walk this alone, and for blessing me with seven amazing miracles!

(The Evangelist and the "Father-Daughter Dance" of Caesarea - continued from cover)

An angel of God (along with the Spirit), then directs Philip to the desert where he "runs" with great zeal at the opportunity to convert the Ethiopian eunuch reading from Isaiah. Philip points him to Christ and baptizes him! It's beautiful to consider that they found water for baptism even in a desert, and also that this scenario fit right into who Philip was. Interestingly, Philip's name means "lover of horses" and isn't it just cool that God's calling in this very moment finds him amongst a large group of chariots driven by horses? After being baptized, the Ethiopian goes on rejoicing in his newfound faith in Christ. The Spirit of God literally then "transports" Brother Philip to Azotus, where he is found preaching from there all the way back to his home in Caesarea! (Acts 9:39, 40)

PHILIP'S ATTRIBUTES:

Before we move on to his home life, let's consider the following.

ATTRIBUTES OF BROTHER PHILIP	SCRIPTURE
Honest, FULL of wisdom & the Holy Ghost	Acts 6:3
Gift of hospitality	Acts 21:8-10
Loved his family	Acts 21:9
Gift of ministering of Angels (see also next line)	Acts 9:26
Strong in faith, firm mind and in every form of godliness	Moroni 7:29-31
Moved from one location to another by the Spirit	Acts 9:39
Miracles, signs and wonders followed him	Acts 8:5-8
Knew the scriptures	Acts 8:30-35

PHILIP'S HOME:

Ok, so now we are going to bring this all together and share with you the real beauty of the life of Philip. Here is where it gets really, really good! Let's now read **Acts 21:8 & 9** together: **"And the next day we that were with Paul's company departed and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy."** Wow! Did you catch all that was in those two short verses? First, remember Paul was once "Saul," who was one of those responsible for the death of Brother Stephen. (Acts 7:58 & 8:1) Stephen and Philip were no doubt VERY close as they were called at the same time to be Deacons! Philip was able to forgive "Saul" (now Paul) and welcome him into his home as they also housed the prophet Agabus. (Acts 8:10) Now, his four daughters...It states that they were virgins and that they all had the gift of prophecy! When we first consider their virtue, this cannot be passed over. If we look in the Book of Mormon it states that when it comes to "chastity and virtue" that they are considered "most dear and precious above all things" (Moroni 9:9). This shows a very positive influence of Philip (and no doubt his wife) upon their four children! Although we do not read of Philip's wife, she must have been a special sister. We also see the gift of hospitality here as they opened their home freely to those who needed lodging and it actually says, "for many days."

As we consider Philip's home (four daughters that prophesied) and bring this article to a close, we know that Revelation 19:10 teaches us that the "testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"! The testimony of Jesus and its impact was not only evident in Philip's "ministry" among men, but also that same impact was felt in his "ministry" at home! I often smile with great joy when I hear of my buddies (who have been blessed to raise a daughter) taking them to their school's "father-daughter dance." What a blessing! I am confident that if 2,000 years ago, Philip had the opportunity to take his girls to their "father-daughter dance" at the Caesarea Elementary School, he would have been there "with bells on"! I am inspired by his story.

(Continued on page 9)

He was effective as he worked in a group of seven (Deacons), fantastic with a group of 70 (Evangelists) and highly impactful with his group of six (at home with his family)! May The Lord add His "increase" to the efforts you give for His Church, and may that same blessing be found resting upon your home and your family.

3 John 1:4, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."



"We Fill Gaps" By Brother Doug Obradovich

"They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick" (Matthew 9:12)

In the classic movie, "Rocky," Rocky's friend, Paulie, asked why he liked his sister, Adrian, "I don't see it. What's the attraction?" Rocky told him, "I don't know. It fills gaps, I guess." Paulie asked, "What gaps?" Rocky explained, "I don't know; gaps. She's got gaps, I got gaps. Together we fill gaps."

God's purpose for mankind is clear, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

However, "whosoever believeth" only had "Him" with them, in physical form, for a brief time. Once gone, who would sustain His people in times of weakness and love them when they were most unlovable? We are His people and these are but some of our flaws. These faults (our gaps) separate perfection (meeting the standard) from imperfection (coming up short). They are the space between strength and weakness. It's in this space that discouragement and hopelessness are fostered, which attack our faith and potentially cause us to lose our way.

Jesus knew His time was short, so He expected us to fill each other's needs. "I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied" (1 Corinthians 16:17-18). We are they who supply what is "lacking" for each other. The savior's call has always resonated with broken people; those fallen from

grace and in need of saving, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

Given a life spent in solitude, we might simply give up. Realizing this, Jesus established His church as the single most important support group on earth. It provides access to those just like us, flawed and faulted, and drawn together by the love of Jesus Christ. It's in this love that we are sustained. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office. So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one, members one of another" (Romans 12:4-6). We are us, being "members one of another!" A few verses later, "Let us love without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."

Exactly! Love unconditionally because no one can claim perfection. When we understand we are each at fault, no judgment remains; we are equally broken. Don't utilize the gaps as grip-holds to pull us further apart, but instead identify the flaws and fill them with bonding glue: the love of God.

Rocky Balboa could easily have been speaking of any one of us when he said, "She's got gaps. I got gaps. Together we fill gaps." Let's fill one another's gaps with the healing, soothing love of Jesus Christ! If any of us were already whole, we wouldn't need each other. And we certainly need our personal physician, Jesus Christ!



The Land of Promise and Freedom

Dear Friends,

Have you ever wondered why we in the Americas have enjoyed so much peace, prosperity (meaning wealth and success), and blessings? The Book of Mormon tells us why, and what to do to keep the blessings of God coming. Three groups of ancient people were brought to the Americas by God. His only requirement was for them to serve Him, follow His laws and be kind and loving. God wanted this land to be set aside as a place for good people!

The first group came over after Noah's ark had landed. The foolish people at that time decided to build a big tower that reached to heaven. So, God changed the people's languages. They couldn't speak to one another, so they quit tower building and were spread out all over the earth. (Read Genesis 11:1-9.)

One special man and his brother, Jared, served God. They begged God to not confuse their language and their friends' and to lead them to a good land above all others. (See Ether 1:35-40.) God had them build special boats, gather all kinds of animals and fruits, and come. It took almost a year to cross the ocean. Evidence suggests they landed around the Yucatán and in the Book of Mormon these people were called Jaredites. They became a nation of powerful people.

Their great, loving, leader, who was faithful to God, was the Brother of Jared. (Read the book of Ether in The Book of Mormon). At first, they were so thankful to be there that they all loved and served God. Jared and his brother warned their people not to have kings. But they did not listen. They chose to have kings. And kings wanted power and riches.

Years passed and people spread across the land until there were hundreds of thousands of them. But they started fighting and killing each other. As the years passed, many of those kings stopped serving God. They fought wars to get power. If they won, they kept the others as their slaves, killed them, or took everything. God sent preachers and prophets to remind the people how they should be living and treating each other. They did not listen. God warned them over and over. Finally, he took away the rain. No plants grew. People starved and died, and some people changed and turned to Him. Some tried to go to a part of the land where there was good hunting. God sent poisonous snakes that stopped them. Finally, many then started praying and were sorry. They became good to each other again for many years. (See Ether 9:31.)

As the years passed on this promised land, thousands more people were born. If people turned away from the good ways of God, evil took over. When God sent prophets and preachers to warn them to stop or be destroyed, they killed the men of God. Finally, they separated into two groups. They were determined to fight to the death. And they did.

Men, women and even children chose a side! They destroyed each other, leaving everything behind. One last man, the warrior King Coriantumr, was so sorry he had led his people to hate and kill each other. He traveled to the land southward. All of his great Jaredite people had killed each other off in great battles as the prophets had warned. Huge cities full of swords and all kinds of riches were just left behind. They had turned evil and were destroyed. He was the only Jaredite left alive. He found the other group of people that God had brought to this land. Both groups blessed by God to come to this Promised Land came right before their country of Judah and king Zedekiah were destroyed. One group followed a man of God named Lehi. He brought his wife, friends, and sons. The oldest two were named Laman and Lemuel. They wanted to go back to their wealth in their big city and even tried to kill their younger brother Nephi who served God.

They were sent to go and get the records written on brass plates that explained who their people were, and how to serve God. An angel came and spoke to the brothers, telling them to stop and trust God. Later they were warned that the people who live here in the Americas, this promised land,

(Continued on page 11)

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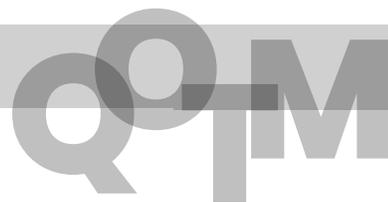
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What is your favorite campout memory?

"We got engaged at the 2006 GMBA Camp while Brother Eric was serving as Camp Director, after dating for two years. Our story began at a previous GMBA Camp in 2004 held at the very same location—Saginaw, MI—so it's a special place for us. We're excited to return this year and revisit those meaningful memories."- Sister Linda Baez, Columbus, OH Branch

"1983 Camp Eagle Eyrie—Met my wife—just celebrated 37 years."- Paul Vinsick, Simi Valley, CA Branch

"When my husband and daughter got baptized."- Sister Lisa Meador, Oldham County, KY Mission

"My favorite Campout was in Nauvoo, IL. We got to tour Nauvoo and received a tour of early Church history. Amen!" - Michael McGuire, Cape Coral, FL Branch

"My favorite memory is meeting my husband, Brother Ron." - Sister Kim Morle, Atlanta, GA Branch

"There are two campouts that stand out in my mind and they are the 1970 Campout at Canfield, OH where I was baptized, and 1982 Massanetta Springs, VA where I met my wife of 42 years, Sister Kelly Warden." - Brother Mark Kovacic, North Georgia Mission

"1970 Canfield, OH Campout when Brother Harold Batalucco injured his shoulder on the baseball field and everyone at camp stopped what they were doing and dropped to their knees. His shoulder was healed after being anointed and we went directly to the river for additional baptisms, including Brother Harold's." - Sister KarenJo Pandone, Farmington Hills, MI Branch

(The Land of Promise and Freedom - continued from page 10)

must be good or when they were full of evil God would destroy them off this blessed land. The years passed and the people grew into nations of millions of people. But evil started and they fought and killed each other. Many of the Nephites became bad. But a huge group of Lamanites gave up their weapons and started serving God with great power. (See Helaman Chapters 14 -17.)

A great Lamine prophet named Samuel came and told the wicked people all that was going to happen if they did not start serving God. He told them about the star that would shine for two days and a night that would not give them any darkness. This was the sign Jesus was born. (See III Nephi Chapter 3.)

Many people believed the prophets when this star happened. But within a few years they were tricked by the devil and were fighting among themselves again. They forgot the prophet Samuel had warned them that a huge destruction would come across the land. They had separated into groups with many

rules. One group killed the Chief Judge and made up their own unfair laws. But this land of promise was supposed to be fair and filled with people following God's laws of kindness and love. A great destruction fell upon the land. From coast to coast, huge lightning storms, earthquakes, tornado winds, and fires hit the wicked cities. Only the most righteous were saved.

It was what the Prophets had warned would happen. We all must remember God and live in fairness and love with each other. Otherwise, he will wipe us off this promised land also. If we let evil grow, if we start living wrong, God will remove us as well. But when we follow God's laws and serve him with gladness and thankfulness, he will bless us continually. We also will have joy and freedom.

With care,
Your friend and Sister in Christ

Sister Jan

Blessing Bits

BB I Serve a God of Mighty Miracles

I was diagnosed with a pre-cancerous disease called Barrett's Esophagus with Gastrointestinal Reflux in 2021, after having an endoscopy test and biopsy. Such big words, but the bottom line is that Barrett's does not repair itself or go away with medicine. The following year, the endoscopy showed the same results. I was anointed the Sunday before the third procedure. I asked the Lord that the results would show no Barrett's. After having my third endoscopy, the biopsies show NO BARRETT'S and all results from that and my colonoscopy were benign. Praise God! I am ever so grateful that He so graciously continues on with His Mighty Miracles- Sister Karen Pezzenti, Cincy-Morrow, OH Mission

BB He Saw My Need

A few weeks ago I was cooking a macaroni and cheese cup for my daughter because our microwave is too high for her to reach. I had the bowl on a paper plate to avoid spillover and, as I pulled it out of the microwave, the

paper plate folded. The bowl of boiling water spilled out all over my hand and wrist. It hurt horribly and burned for hours afterwards. I went to bed that night expecting blisters in the morning. Praise God! I woke up to zero burns, zero redness, zero blisters, zero pain!- Sister Melanie Suska, Creekside, MI Branch

BB Vision at our Cape Coral Home

Since we are heading into the hurricane season, I am reminded of a vision that my wife and I had back in 2017 here in the Cape. We did all we could that year to prepare for the hurricane that was headed our way—we completed safety checklist after checklist to ensure we were ready. I had prayed day and night to our God vowing that we were putting our trust in Him with whatever faith we had. We could hear the winds gusting all around our home, but He protected us by placing a hedge around us. In a vision, I saw a wall like a hedge around my property and home about four feet tall with four angels posted, one in the north, one in the south, one in the east, and one in the west. The next day after the storm, as my wife and I were talking,

she told me that she saw four angels ascending in the sky after she awoke. She saw my vision as well! I cannot praise God enough for the protection He provided through that hurricane! I can say He heard my prayers and I praise Him for His mercy, and protection that day through the storm.- Brother Michael McQuire, Cape Coral, FL Mission

Send us your Blessing Bits by contacting Sister Elizabeth McDonnell at eksanchor@gmail.com. [in approximately 150 words].
Answers to Question of the Month to gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org.



Question for this month:

What was your Favorite moment of Campout 2025?



Answer from last month:

Share a favorite campout memory.

Turn to page 11 for more answers.

Thank you, Sister Carolynn, for years of dedicated service to The Gospel News

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