

The Gospel News

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Fifth Oklahoma Outreach

By Evangelists Wayne Martorana, George Kovacic, Nephi DeMercurio, and Mark Kovacic

How do we measure success? Nephi wrote, "For after the book of which I have spoken shall come forth, and be written unto the Gentiles, and sealed up again unto the Lord, there shall be many which shall believe the words which are written; and they shall carry them forth unto the remnant of our seed." (II Nephi 30:3). This action was confirmed during one of our days of fast and prayer, when one of our brothers, while praying, was inspired by phrase "great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord", which he researched both in the Bible and Book of Mormon. After he related his inspiration during one of the pre-trip conference calls, another brother said he had an experience several weeks prior to the call, wherein he heard a voice say, "I have done a marvelous work and wonder; go tell it!" Such is our calling and vocation.

How do we measure success? This trip was the fifth to the state of Oklahoma. We paid particular attention to building on established relationships, as well as making new ones. We met with 24 people (10 tribes) and 29 newly contacted people (7 new tribes). We estimate that since 2009 almost 180 people have received detailed descriptions of The Church of Jesus Christ message through conversations and presentations, along with books, pamphlets and literature, not counting numerous others who have received fliers and First Voices Journals or which we shared brief chats. In all cases we have been well-received and welcomed back. There are 36 tribal organizations in Oklahoma and we have had some type of intensive contact with over 30 of them.

How do we measure success? We are thankful for our relationships. They are willing to make arrangements with other Native Americans on our behalf or provide names of other Native Americans who would be interested in the Lord's message. Specifically, we were provided additional contacts in North Carolina, Missouri, and several other cities in Oklahoma. Additionally, those whom we spent time with have shown a greater willingness to share their spiritual experiences with us.

How do we measure success? We were given the opportunity to anoint this wise and instrumental tribal leader and to ask for God's healing power. Prayer was welcomed and also offered for another leader after she related the personal tragedies her family has suffered since our last visit. In another location, a church building was acquired for our use. After a season of singing in their tribal language and spoken testimonies, the meeting was turned over to us. We then proceeded to expound the scriptures regarding the lineage of Abraham, particularly Judah and

(Continued on page 3)

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|-----------|---|---|--|---|
| 1 Campout all week Enjoy the Blessings! | 2 Pray for the country and government | 3 | 4 Independence Day Praise God for our FREEDOM! | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 Go to Church | 9 Pray for the month's featured branch and foreign work - see pg 4 | 10 | 11 Share a miracle with someone today | 12 | 13 Count the number of books in the Bible and Book of Mormon - learn | 14 |
| 15 Fellowship. Invite a brother or sister to your home | 16 Pray for Branch #2 and Italy featured last month (we forgot) | 17 | 18 | 19 Give a compliment to a co-worker or friend today | 20 | 21 |
| 22 Go to Church | 23 Pray for the Native American Outreach Committee NAOC | 24 | 25 Call or send a card of encouragement | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 Go to Church | 30 Pray for a desire to work more for the Lord | 31 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 Go to MBA and Ladies' Circle this month |
| June 2012 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 | August 2012 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 31 | | | | | |

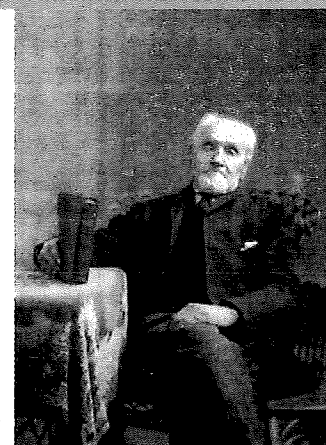
July 2012

UNITY- On the calendar are suggested activities to complete on specific days as a way to unite the membership throughout the Church. Let's focus our prayers every Monday!

BFP Blast From The Past

One hundred fifty years ago this month, The Church of Jesus Christ was organized during a conference in Greenock, Pennsylvania. An early Church publication, *The Ensign*, states that on July 5th, "President William Bickerton was chosen to preside, and Charles Brown and George Barnes were sustained as counselors," and on July 7th, "The word of the Lord came unto us saying set apart and ordain the twelve." A historical reference shows that the organization of the Church took place during the Civil War – four days after the Battle of Malvern Hill at the Confederate capital Richmond, Virginia.

William Bickerton ►





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

Fifth Oklahoma Outreach

(Continued from Page 1)

Joseph, closing with the connection to the Native Americans and their future. During the presentation, our host distributed our flyers for us! The pastor closed the meeting by quoting Ezekiel 37:19 (two sticks as one in the hand of God), not fully realizing its true meaning, but opening the door for more discussions.

How do we measure success? In one location we ran into some opposition, but we persevered and at the conclusion, one of the brothers, stood, walked around the desk and hugged the man who had displayed the opposition. He invited us back! Two others who disagreed with the premise of the Church's message welcomed us back and shared more about themselves then they had in past visits. In another relationship, we were invited to a grand council, which is to take place some time this year – a true honor. Others are still intrigued with the message and are seeking answers.

How do we measure success? By our hosts sharing sacred stories about "the healer" that had come among them. And about the similarities to Ancient Israel and sacred relics that are not shared with others. Still others tell us about how they have read the Book of Mormon, but need additional explanation and guidance (providing us the opportunity to expound the purpose of it and the coming of the choice seer) or thanking us for explaining Old Testament names and lineage.

As a side note, anytime we note the location of the Church headquarters in Monongahela, Pennsylvania, it is immediately recognized as a Native American word. So we remind them that the Church that is sharing such a message of hope is the one with the Native American name. And the Lord reminded us what this activity was all about when we passed a sign in Apache, Oklahoma, that read, "Welcome Home Joseph." How fitting! Our hope is that one day, a sign like that will be posted in each town or city where the Native American people reside.

How do we measure success? In one location, after speaking to the chief, a humble and spiritual man, we asked if we came back could we share some power point presentations which go into more detail concerning our beliefs about Native People and he agreed. Another woman whom we have met with several times and who brings others to the meeting, did not want us to leave without seeing her and sharing some time with her. A new location brought us to a language school where we were warmly received and given the opportunity to share the message to the eight people sitting there.

It's obvious how success is measured: it is measured by fulfilling the scriptures. Besides the verse in II Nephi 30:3, we see the fulfillment of II Nephi 3:11 and III Nephi 21:26.

One plants, another waters, but only God gives the increase.

IVB Meet the Branch

Domestic Church -- Hollywood, Florida



Established and dedicated in 1986, The Hollywood Branch, held its earliest meetings at Sister Pauline Bellot's home in Miramar, Florida. Sisters Kathryn Henshaw and Vi Catone and Brother Joseph Catone, Sr., were our first members. Our little branch began to grow as others moved to the area and soon we settled into our current home in a residential area in the city of Hollywood, Florida.

We currently have thirty-two members ranging from the age of sixteen up to the mid-eighties. We are blessed with an abundance of children, and it is not uncommon for us to enjoy twenty children in our midst. What an exciting opportunity this provides for us!

Our Sunday School and MBA auxiliaries keep us busy with events throughout the year. These activities include Mother's Day and Father's Day breakfasts, a Watch Meeting, MBA game and movie nights, Vacation Bible School, Youth Ministry Summer Adventures (YMSA,) and a Christmas Program.

We recently hosted an Area Youth In Action tour and will be hosting the GMBA YIA tour this summer. Our Area MBA Camp is actively supported by our members. This past March we won the Annual Attendance Cup by having the highest percentage of attendance at camp! We are also blessed with an energetic Ladies' Uplift Circle, and through their dedication and hard work, two years ago they helped us renovate our building. Our Wednesday night meetings rotate between Ladies' Uplift Circle, MBA and branch meetings.

Missionary work is important to our members. We are fortunate to be surrounded by the seed of Joseph and we have been active with many missionary efforts reaching out to this tribe. Some of our elders and members have also been involved with missionary work internationally and domestically in Dominica, Venezuela and Homestead.

We welcome all to come and visit our newly renovated branch in our little slice of tropical paradise. The sun is always burning and so is the Spirit of God!

International Church -- Philippine Missions



The Church is established in three locations among the Philippine Islands with 269 members. The Philippine work began on September 21, 1998, with a letter from someone requesting information about the Church.

The first trip to the Davao City area was made in 2000 with Philippine ministers ordained in 2001. In 2002 ministers from Mindanao were inspired to take the Gospel to family members on the island of Bohol. By the end of the year, there were 17 members baptized, two elders and one deaconess ordained there. The work has continued to expand and in April 2009 a mission was started in Pagadian City, through another independent inquiry.

Our missions with 125 members plus 50 children are on the island of Mindanao in the Davao City area. All the missions are located in the mountains; they meet in block buildings and are separated by one to two hours travel with an elder at each location.

On Mindanao, is the Pagadian City Mission. There are eight members and they conduct a Sunday School where they teach and feed 25-40 children of poor families in an open-air science center owned by Brother Edison Abraham, the elder in charge.

Our missions, 136 members and almost 100 children, are on the island of Bohol located in the highest part of the mountains, separated by about 30 minutes travel time. All are serviced by Elder Orencio Jaso.

We always enjoy many special song selections at each mission we visit. The people love to sing and they all play instruments and sing well. We also enjoy the testimonies and fellowship as most of our members can speak English. Please pray for the work here.

Gifts *By Evangelist Carl Huttenberger*

"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will" (I Corinthians 12: 8-11).

Spiritual gifts are one of the most special things the Lord can give to a man or woman. First of all, the gift is ongoing. The gift is given to a person for their entire life. It never goes away, and is used over and over again, for the uplifting of that person, and often times, for everyone around them. How beautiful is it when we hear of a vision, dream or hear the gift of tongues. It is then we all feel very connected to God, as if He is speaking directly to His Church, or as individuals.

Paul is very clear in his writings above that these gifts are given by the SAME Spirit. He mentions that four times in the short verses above to be sure we understand the SAME Spirit of the Lord manifests in different ways, but will always "feel" or "sound" the same. This is how we know it is a true gift from the Lord. Why did Paul emphasize that? Because we know that there is an opposition to all things. The magicians were able to duplicate many miracles that Moses did in his day, and the devil is no different today. But it "feels" and "sounds" different. Thank God in The Church of Jesus Christ, we witness that Spirit of God manifest through many of His wonderful gifts. How wonderful, comforting and uplifting it feels to receive or even witness one of His gifts. It increases our faith in what we believe and have committed to.

Some gifts listed above are not so tangible (like a vision or tongues), but are just as obvious. Have you ever heard a minister, or maybe a brother or sister was speaking with you, and just seemed to say the right thing to you? Maybe a question or concern you had, and they said something that changed your feelings, or even changed your life?! That is a person who is using their gift of wisdom (knowingly or unknowingly) to help you. How wonderful!

Or, have you sat in a Sunday School class or been in a teaching lesson where you

learned so much from a brother or sister regarding some scripture and what it means. In the world, one might say the person was well educated. But in the Church, some of the most enlightening and best teachings came from brothers and sisters who had little or no education. This is a gift of knowledge that God has given them. How beautiful! In the world, one would have to spend many years in school to learn, but isn't it amazing God is not a respecter of persons, and in the Church can give this gift to someone who never even went to school?!

What about the gift of faith? I have seen brothers and sisters go through such fiery trials in their life, and never lost footing in the Gospel, and did not fall apart. They continuously gave God honor and praise and knew that He would work it out for them. This is a beautiful gift of faith! Even though you may not "officially" be given one of these gifts, by encountering and interacting with those who do, your faith is increased, your knowledge is increased, and your wisdom is increased. What a wonderful God we serve.

There are those who see the future, and speak about it in a very moving way. These could have the gift of prophecy, which is predicting things to come in order to help us prepare. Gifts of healing or working of miracles are given to those in an appropriate position to use it. (The disciples of Jesus performed many miracles and healed many after Christ's departure. The same is true today).

I'm sure there are many other gifts not even listed in this scripture that exist today in the Church. If God has given you a gift, you'll know it. Use it for His honor and glory and use it to edify others. Nothing we do causes us to deserve these gifts; they are just given because of His great love for His children. Thank you Lord for your beautiful gifts!

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GMBA Campout 2012

What did you expect to get out of campout?

"Strength to press forward."

– Sister Diane Maddox

"Blessings! A chance to experience Zion for a few days. No stress, no worries... just like minded people seeking the glory of the Lord."

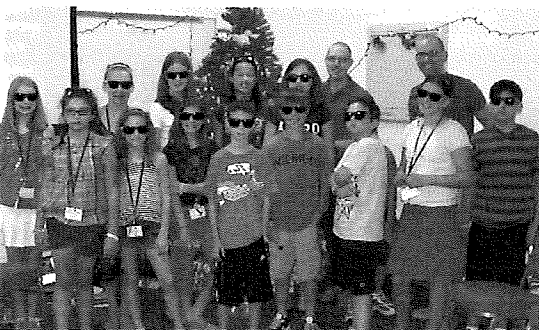
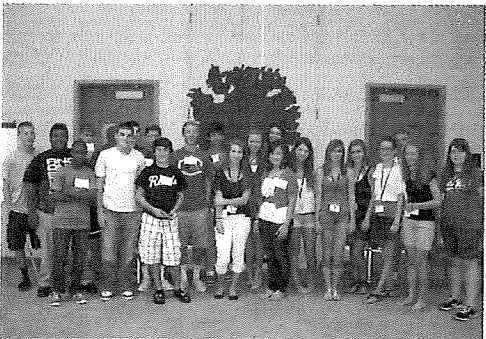
– Sister Jennifer Lambert

"I wanted to get out of camp a sense of understanding and purpose of where God wants me to be and what He wants me to do in this life."

– Brother Scotty Monaghan

"A re-vamping of my spiritual well-being."

– Brother Jared Stone



Why did you come to camp?

"I came for the blessings, and it's a time for revival." – Sister Erma Draskovich

"Other than the obvious, to get my kids engaged in campouts, to fellowship with the Saints, and to make friends."

– Brother Jim Draskovich

"To see old friends from the Church."

– Ally D'Orazio

"To have fun, see old friends, and to learn about God." – Jackson Hamet

"Because it is the best week in the year!"

– Justin Benyola

"To see all the brothers and sisters, friends and family, and it was a good chance to ask for my baptism."

– Sister Elizabeth Zaccagnini

"I go to camp because it gives me a taste of Zion and always fills me with the blessings of God, almost always in ways I never could have expected."

– Brother Bryan Champine

"To help with registration and re-energize my spirit." – Sister Laura Stone



"The fact that you are here and alive proves God has something for you to do."

– Brother John Genero



"If you let the events of the day dictate your glory you will be disappointed. If He gives you the breath of life it's a glorious Day."

– Brother Chuck Maddox



What was your favorite part of campout?

"Midnight baptisms! Seeing four kids from the seminar I taught and one from my own branch was the highlight of my week." – *Brother Chuck Maddox, Jr.*

"My favorite part was getting baptized, for sure." – *Brother Sean Monaghan*

"Witnessing how the Lord used each willing individual that offered themselves to be used for camp!! Thank You ALL!!!"

– *Brother Jim Lambert, Jr.*

How should we keep the campout Spirit going following camp?

"Just Think About It, but don't think too big...stay in the moment and recognize the GLORY in God's love for you!!" – *Brother Jim Lambert, Jr.*

"We need to LIVE the Camp theme, 'Glorious Day'! There was a reason why the theme built up to the last day of 'Glorious Life' and we can keep that Spirit going by choosing to be a happy people and choosing to live closer to Christ as we do at camp and keep that fire going daily! It will be contagious!"

– *Brother Jason Monohagan*

"Remain focused on spiritual things and spend time together."

– *Brother Tom Dorazio*



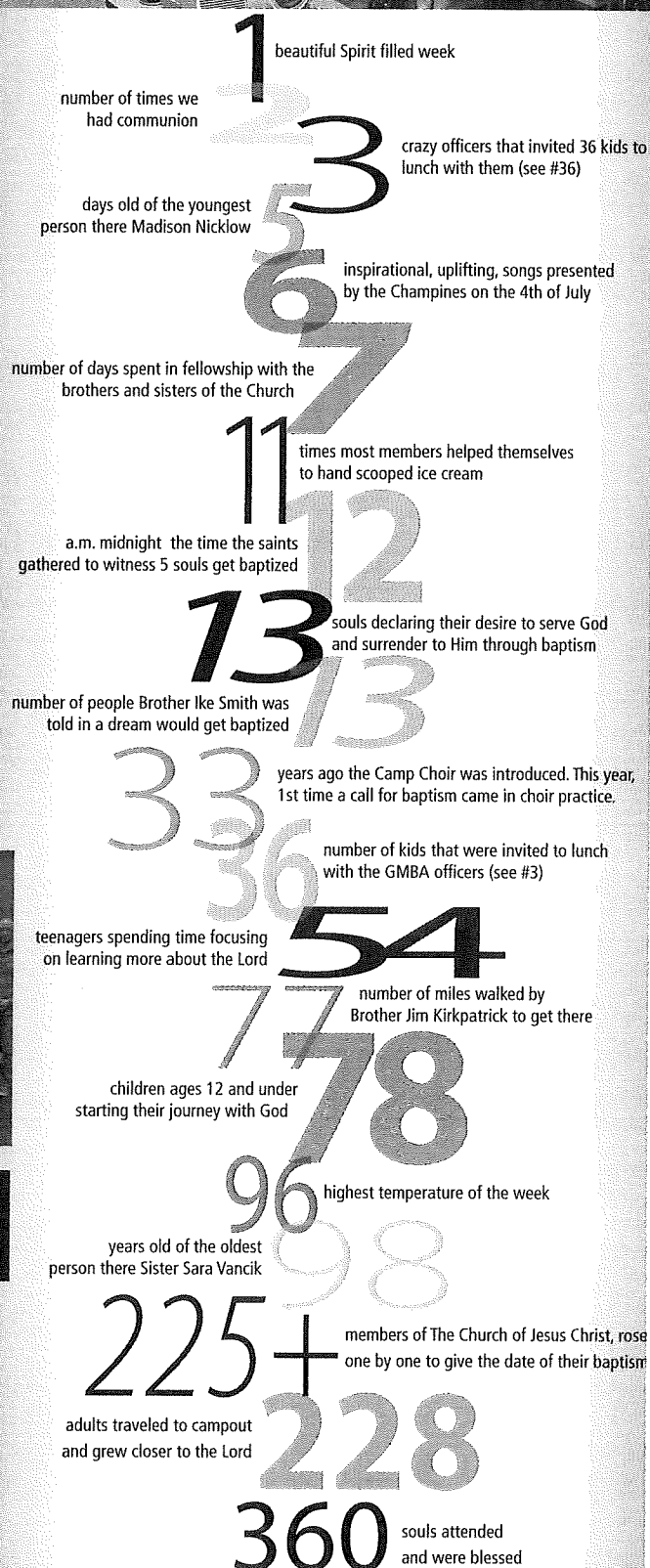
What are your overall thoughts following camp?

"God is really, truly so very good to us!" – *Brother Tom Dorazio*

"Do the two and don't do you!" – *Brother Doug Obradivich referring to the 2 greatest commandments and putting yourself aside.*

"It's an inside joke that we call it campout because the experience has nothing to do with camping. It's the experience of life and knowing Christ in your life. Our lives are campout."

– *Brother Ken Lombardo*



Bridging the Gap

By Brother Daniel P. Stone

During the October 2011 General Church Conference, the following dream was presented and accepted as a revelation from God:

Another Brother Elder, a Brother Deacon, and I were standing at the bottom of a hill talking. We must have been attending some kind of Church gathering because the youth were all playing together. After a while we noticed that the youth were missing. We heard their voices coming from the other side of the hill. We started to walk up the hill at an angle to intercept them. The sky was getting dark as evening was approaching. We hurried our pace for concern of their welfare was intensifying as darkness approached. We broke the crest of the hill laboring from the steep incline. We saw the youth slightly below the crest of the hill to our right. Then I noticed something else: dogs—nothing but dark outlines of big dogs. They looked at us with yellow glowing eyes. Their attention was on the youth. We screamed at the kids to run down the hill, we ran at an angle to intercept them before the dogs did. We realized that we weren't going to make it so we screamed at the dogs trying to get their attention on us to no avail. The dogs overtook our youth and started to carry them away. One of the Brother elders said, "Kneel." Doing so, he started to pray. "Dear Father, please Lord spare the youth from such a horrible death." There was a loud noise and a bright flash of light and the dogs were gone but so were some of the youth.

Although most individuals in the Church have read this dream or heard it referenced, the GMBA officers feel inspired to relay the key message of the revelation: The Church of Jesus Christ must BRIDGE THE GAP between the older and younger generations to keep the young people safe. This has become the GMBA's primary mission, and the officers want to let the younger generation know how important they are to the Church.

The first effort by the GMBA to "bridge the gap" was held on Saturday evening during the October 2011 General Church Conference. With the younger and older generations in attendance, the officers conducted an interactive presentation in the World Conference Center. Placing the young people on the left side of the auditorium, and the older individuals in the center of the auditorium, a gap between the groups was created. This gap represented the generational divide between the young and old, as well as the opportunity for both groups to "reach out" to another. Next, the GMBA officers displayed a PowerPoint presentation while they asked the groups several engaging questions. If a question pertained to certain individuals, they were asked to stand. The intent of this exercise was to comprehend how both groups felt about the divide between the generations, helping both groups gain a clearer understanding of themselves and each other, as well as determine how to "bridge the gap." Then, the officers presented a few recollections from the older generation, who reminisced about Church members who had positive impacts on their lives. By the end of the night, both groups had a clearer understanding about the gap and how to fuse it together.

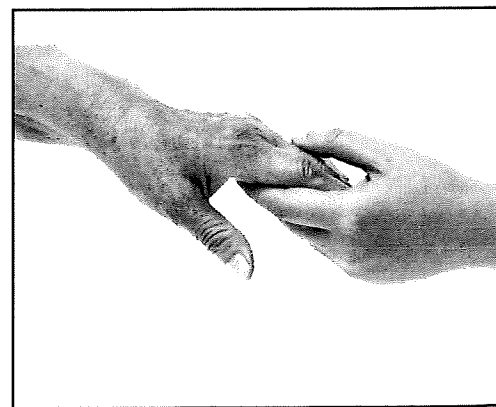
A month later, another activity was held after the Saturday night business meeting during the 2011 November GMBA Conference. This "General Night of Fun and Fellowship for All Ages" was held at the Hempfield Township Athletic Complex. The event included food, games, and music, allowing everyone to interact with each other in a casual setting. Also, the night included a "Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader" game. What made the game unique is how it implemented the "bridging the gap" mission. Children were contestants for the game, while teenagers and adults participated as the audience. However, if the kids did not know a correct answer, they were allowed to ask anyone in the audience

for help. The game was a great deal of fun, not only because it was a rendition of a popular TV game show, but because all the children, teenagers, and adults were able to participate. The children depended upon the audience for help, while the audience gave their assistance through helpful hints and encouraging cheers.

The underlying intent of this activity was to encourage everyone to feel comfortable with their strengths and weaknesses in trivia knowledge. If a child did not know a correct answer, they could ask someone from the audience. And if an audience member did not know a correct answer, they could easily refer to someone else. The game demonstrated that everyone, whether young or old, has weaknesses, and that support can be obtained if people depend upon each other, care for another, and pay attention to their peers' needs.

The activities held during the October and November conferences tried to demonstrate that the generational gap needs to be closed by both groups. The older generation must mentor the young people who need guidance, while the younger generation must reach out to those older individuals who are more stable and experienced in the Church.

With this combined effort, the GMBA officers hope the children will not be swept up by wolves, but instead, will be nurtured by the Lamb. The Church looks forward to seeing both generations at the next GMBA event!



Jesus and Children

By Brother Kerry Carlini

At one occasion in Jesus' ministry little children were brought to him that He might bless them. However, to those who brought the children, Matthew wrote "the disciples rebuked them." Jesus' response was profound stating "for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Yet, as beautifully scripted this is by Matthew, the Book of Mormon tells of an even more incredible time when Jesus blessed the children. Here are five amazing facts:

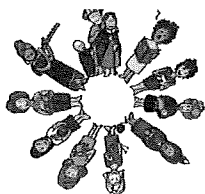
1. After Jesus had descended from heaven and spent time with a multitude of people, He commanded that their little children be brought to Him that He might pray on them.
2. Of that prayer, one witness would exclaim *"(t)he eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard, before, so great and marvelous things as we saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father."*
3. He would go on to state that the multitude was completely overcome for *"the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father."*
4. Jesus then blessed the children one by one. Astoundingly, the heavens opened up, and all witnessed the descending of angels as it were in a midst of fire encircling the little children.
5. What was to occur a few days later would be even more amazing. It was then when Jesus did *"loose the tongues"* of the children *"that the multitude. . .both saw and heard these children; yea, even babes. . . open their mouths and utter marvelous things. . . forbidden that there should not any man write them."*

Matthew 19:13-15

III Nephi 17:11-24

III Nephi 26:14,16

Ladies' Uplift Circle News



Surrender to Jesus While There is Still Time

By Lisa Champine, Vice President

I was listening to an old CD recently, when I heard the song *Look To The Right, Child* being sung. I know I've probably heard that song hundreds of times, but that day when I listened to it a couple things struck me. **"Surrender to Jesus while there is time"** I think when I have sung or heard this verse before I considered myself exempt, or, I think that it is a completed step. I've already done it, so somehow it doesn't apply to me. I realized the other day that surrendering to Jesus takes many forms. Yes, 29 years ago I surrendered my life to Him, in the years since that day I have had to or needed to surrender other things to Him in order to live a life that is pleasing in the sight of God.

What do I mean by this? God has given us the gift of freewill and sometimes in exercising that gift, I make a choice that puts me in conflict with surrendering my will to Jesus. I'm not talking about, going against my commitment made at baptism. I'm talking about the decisions and choices I make that affect my spiritual growth and maturity. The little things, that at the end of any given day when I sit in quiet prayer and reflection I think to myself, "I wish I could have a do-over on that one." It is at those times, it is every bit as important to **"surrender to Jesus while there is time."** Sometimes we experience trials so great that we don't see an end to the problem or may feel that we've made mistakes that are so big or unforgivable in our eyes that we can't see how we can fix it all. The truth is WE can't, but JESUS can. Acknowledging the simplicity of that statement requires another form of surrender, but it is no less powerful or miraculous than the surrender we experienced when we requested our baptism but sometimes I think it is harder to put into action.

We may think we have everything under control, we can handle the problem/trial on our own until we realize we've sapped strength and exhausted every possible solution. We have to surrender to Jesus, but how is it done? The last line of the last verse of the song has the solution. It is stunning in its beauty and ease. It says, **"So hold up your white flag, Jesus will see."** Lesson learned, Lord.



What Would You Do If God Told You To Build A Ship?

There is a wonderful story in the Book of Mormon when God told Lehi to leave the great city of Jerusalem. The city was going to be attacked. Lehi left behind gold, silver and all his riches. (See 1 Nephi 3:16). What would you do if God told your family to pack up your belongings, get a tent and walk away from your home because a war was coming to your city? What would you bring with you? You might think about your favorite electronic game, but batteries wear out plus you'll need all the strength you've got to carry things to drink, eat and survive.

There are two things that are the very most important to never leave behind. They are your faith and the Word of God. Bring your trust in God, too. He will help you in all you have to do! Nephi said, *"I know that the Lord does not give commandments to us unless he shall prepare a way for them that they can do what God commands!"* (see 1 Nephi 3:7) He lived this way.

Can you imagine how strange it would be to leave behind the city lights, the water, stores, and nowadays, electricity? Lehi's two oldest sons, Laman and Lemuel liked living in the city. They did not want to believe their enemies were coming. The other sons, Nephi and Sam, followed God's words and believed their dad, Lehi.

Lehi listened to the Lord. He knew they were going to need a record with the laws of God to teach the people.

His record was engraved on sheets, or plates made out of the metal, brass. A man named Laban had the job of

keeping the records. They went back to greedy Laban's house with all their riches to trade for the record, and he tried to kill them and keep their money! They quickly ran away.

The older brothers were so angry with their younger brother, Nephi, they started to beat him with a big stick. God sent an angel to stop them. He told them that Nephi would be the ruler over them and he commanded them to return to Jerusalem. But still they complained and feared. Nephi reminded them that God saved the Egyptians in the days of Moses and God could save them, too.

When he returned to Laban's, he found him passed out, lying on the ground. God told Nephi to go get the plates of brass to take on their journey. Nephi followed God's words. Now his people would have the Word of God. Lehi rejoiced when they brought the books back. (see 1 Nephi Chapters 3 and 4)

Next, God sent the four sons back to speak with a friend named Ishmael who had five daughters and several sons. (see 1 Nephi 7:1-6) God chose them to be wives and husbands for Lehi's family. What if Ishmael said no? They would be alone! Can you imagine how many prayers they said hoping God would soften Ishmael's heart? It worked; they came.

After journeying for a while, everyone was so hungry but their bows were broken. (see 1 Nephi 16:17-32) Even Lehi, was complaining. But Nephi used his faith and trust and made a bow and arrow that worked! God had given them a special ball, or compass that gave them directions when they followed Him. Lehi prayed and God showed Nephi where to find animals to hunt.

For eight long years they traveled through the wilderness leaning on

God and learning. The women became strong as the men. New babies were born. Finally they reached the ocean shore.

Now God told Nephi he was going to build a ship! Nephi did not doubt or complain, or say, "How can I do this?" He only asked, "Lord, where shall I go to find ore (metal) to make tools?" He went alone, prayed, and the Lord showed him.

When his angry brothers refused to help him after everything God had done, Nephi was so sad. The Lord gave him great power to speak to his brothers and reminded them of all God had done. God told him to touch them and He shocked them. Then they quit doubting and helped. Day by day the Lord showed them how to build an unusual ship that was strong enough to sail across to the Promised Land. Nephi, the man who trusted God, started a great nation.

He had the faith to leave the city that was going to be destroyed. He believed God would find a way to give them the records written on the brass plates. He believed God would help them so Ishmael's family would leave and join them. Nephi trusted God to show him where to hunt for food and to teach him how to make a strong bow to kill food. He trusted God to show them where to go in the deep wilderness. Nephi let God direct him in finding ore, making tools and building a very unusual ship. And finally, he trusted God to guide their ship to the Promised Land of the Americas where they served God.

Remember, what God did in days of old, He does today. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He said, *"I am the Lord I change not!"* Love and trust in Him.

With Love, Sister Jan Bork

(Continued on Page 11)

WORD SEARCH

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Introducing the Gospel Blog

By Sister Michelle Watson

We're excited to announce that The Church of Jesus Christ has an official blog! Wait. Let's back up. What's a blog?

Blog is short for "web log." Web + log = blog. A web log is like an online journal. The Church blog — or Gospel Blog, as we like to call it — contains spiritually minded articles on a variety of relevant topics, and we're constantly adding new articles.

The blog is kind of like the Gospel News, but instead of collecting articles to publish in an organized, monthly magazine, we publish one article per day. Type:

thechurchofjesuschrist.org/blog into your Internet browser and check us out.

Why Blog?

Because the Church wants to communicate with you every day. We hope the articles will uplift and encourage you. We won't take too much of your time. Each article is short and to the point. Plus, it's a great way to connect with our members who don't live near a branch. What's more, a blog can feature multimedia: photos, videos, podcasts, and other fancy stuff.

What to Expect

The Gospel Blog publishes one article per day. On Miracle Monday, you'll read about a testimony or an experience that God gave someone. On Free-for-All Friday, we'll ask you, our readers, to respond to a fun question or give your opinion on a topic. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, anything goes! Articles range from devotionals to apologetics, from trivia to mission-field video logs. Buckle your seatbelts.

The blog also features a weekly poll, so don't forget to stop by and cast your vote. We're constantly striving to meet your needs, so we'll be changing things up frequently. Hang on tight.

How to Subscribe

You don't have to visit the website every day to read the newest blog post. We'll send it directly to your email inbox. All you have to do is go to the home page and look for the words "Subscribe Now." Punch your email address into the box to sign up. Every morning you'll be greeted by an uplifting message.

We hope you're excited about the Gospel Blog. We sure are. Between the Gospel Blog, the Ladies' Circle blog, the Facebook pages and the Gospel News, we want to offer you something different, something Christ-centered to add to your daily routine.

Atlantic Coast Region Conference

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lost a lot of weight but she never got discouraged. She said that she felt God's presence in her home.

One day while sitting on her couch in the living room, she had a vision of a woman with her arms outstretched, holding many gifts. She said they were wrapped in the most beautiful paper she had ever seen. Then the woman disappeared. She got up and went into the den and as soon as she sat on her recliner, the same woman appeared again, holding the same gifts, but this time she walked toward Sister Mary and handed her a gift. Sister Mary was so encouraged.

In early December, she awoke in the morning and saw that the tumor had disappeared during the night. After several days, her eye started to open more and her eyesight was improved. Those who had visited her and saw the difference were amazed. She slowly started to gain weight again. On Christmas Eve, her oncologist visited her in her home

and was also amazed. She said to him, "Do you believe in prayers? Do you believe in miracles?" He said, "Yes I do." Then in February 2012, she went to see her oncologist again and he told her that she was cancer free and that he was amazed. He acknowledged that this was a healing from above. He brought in some of his co-workers so that they could see the difference and everyone was amazed. He said on the following week he would be speaking at a seminar and would tell this story.

Sister Mary thanks the good Lord for her healing and she wants to thank everyone for their prayers. God is still a God of Miracles! The woman she saw in her vision handed her the gift of healing!

We felt God's Spirit as communion was administered. There was a wonderful Spirit throughout the entire week-end. Our prayer is that God will continue to bless The Church of Jesus Christ and bless our Region.

Blessing Bits

BB *Through the Eyes of a Child* When I was three years old, I fell down at a park and broke my right arm. We were at a family picnic, and I remember my parents scooping me up to rush me to the hospital. We didn't have the much needed ice to put on my arm and I remember being in the backseat of the car crying from the pain. Suddenly, a woman walked up to the side of the car with a bag of ice. We didn't know who she was or how she knew we needed ice. She gave it to us and we thanked her and quickly left for the hospital. I remember watching the woman as we drove away, and I saw her disappear! To this day, I am confident that she was an angel sent from God. This was the first experience I remember from God, and it was the start of His miracles in my life. -- Sister Christine Maddox, Quincy

BB *Challenging Path to Find the Church* A man from Trenton, New Jersey, was looking for a church and came across the name and address of our Church in Levittown in an on-line directory. Clearly, the Spirit of God was in the matter as this man left his home that Sunday, took a train from Trenton to Levittown and walked

two miles down Levittown Parkway (passing at least four churches along the way) and finally arrived at our Church where he knew nobody. He enjoyed the meeting enough that he repeated the process the following Sunday. After a few weeks, when we realized he was walking so far, we had someone start picking him up at the train station each Sunday. After a few months, the man was baptized. His testimony today is that this series of events has changed his life. -- Shared by Brother Jerry Valenti

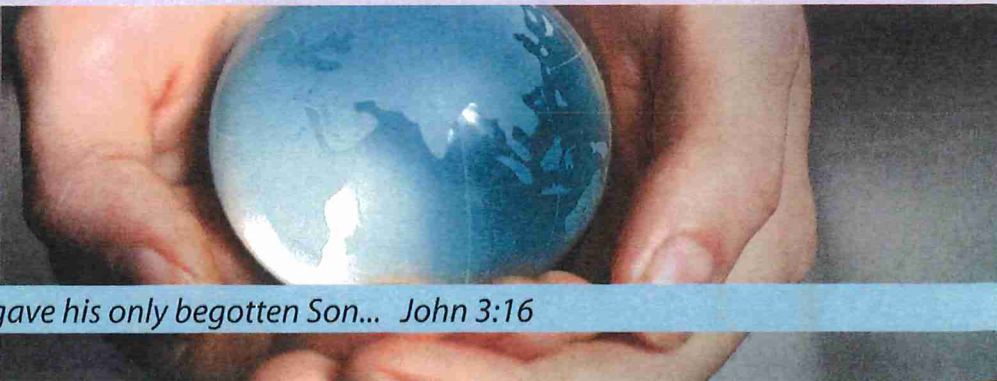
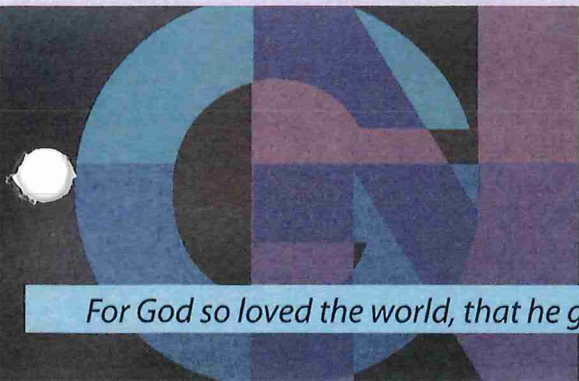
BB *God Knows My Needs* When I graduated from Kettering College of Medical Arts in 2005, I immediately had three job offers and a very hard decision to make. One was at an adult hospital; one was at an adult echo lab; and the other was at a pediatric hospital. I knew I would love working with children, but that was the field I had the least experience in. As I made it a matter of prayer, I wanted God to tell me what to do because I wanted this to be where I would stay and pursue my new career. In His miraculous way, the Lord completely eliminated the two adult positions and left me with only one choice-- the pediatric hospital! It was as if He

spoke directly to me and said, "This is what I want you to do." I am so thankful He knows me so well that He gave me a job that I absolutely love! -- Sister Ruth Batson, Cincinnati-Morrow

Q **Question for this month:** How many branches have you been a member of in your lifetime? Please include branches that you attended prior to becoming a member as well as after you were baptized. Check back to see who has been a member of the most branches!

A **Answer from last month:** Looking for the results of last month's question, "What branch activity or meeting is your favorite of the year?" Check back next month. The answers will be delayed for one issue to accommodate our print schedule.

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



For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son... John 3:16