

The Gospel News

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An Ensign for the Nations Religious Liberty and The Church of Jesus Christ

By Brother Daniel P. Stone

Religious liberty is a cherished right the First Amendment grants to those who live in the United States. As Americans, we can thank the Antifederalists—individuals who advocated for a “Bill of Rights” to be added to the Constitution—for the written establishment of religious freedom. “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,” is the principle within the First Amendment that allows us to serve God according to the dictates of our consciences. The federal government cannot infringe upon this right, unless the First Amendment is annulled by a new ratified amendment that states otherwise. As long as American citizens continue to sanction this principle, we can serve the Lord as we desire.

Religious freedom is an uncommon right among the world’s nations, but as the Book of Mormon reveals, this privilege is a tradition that for centuries has been perpetuated in the Americas. In the first century BC, King Mosiah, before relinquishing his throne, wrote to the Nephites, “I desire that this land be a land of liberty, and every man may enjoy his rights and privileges alike.” He formed a government of democratically-elected judges who guaranteed religious freedom to civilians. With a character similar to George Washington, Mosiah renounced monarchical rule and ensured that the subsequent government operated “by the voice of the people.” As Alma, the first Chief Judge, explained, “Now there was no law against a man’s belief; for it was strictly contrary to the commands of God that there should be a law which should bring men on to unequal grounds. For thus saith the scriptures: Choose ye this day, whom ye will serve.” As these men affirmed, the Lord prefers governments to sanction religious liberty. The principle not only authorizes individuals to liberally serve God, but it promotes equality among civilians and allows the Lord to prove that He is the God of Israel. As you will notice, the Founding Mothers and Fathers of the United States confirmed these facts.

On June 18, 1775, one day after the Battle of Bunker Hill, Abigail Adams wrote to her husband John:

“The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; but the God of Israel is He that giveth strength and power unto His people. Trust in Him at all times, ye people, pour out your hearts before Him; God is a refuge for us.”

In a letter addressed to the Reformed German Congregation of New York on November 27, 1783, Washington reminded the membership:

On May 6, 1789, while addressing the Hebrew Congregation of Savannah, Georgia, the newly-elected President George Washington stated:
“May the same wonder-working Deity, who long since delivered the Hebrews from their Egyptian oppressors (and) planted them in a promised land—whose providential agency has lately been conspicuous in establishing these United States as an independent Nation—still continue to water them with the dews of heaven and make the inhabitants of every denomination participate in the temporal and spiritual blessings of that people whose God is Jehovah.”

(Continued on page 6)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	1	2	3 Praise God for the religious freedom that we enjoy	4 Happy 4th of July	5 Spend summer free time reading more scripture	6
7	8 Pray for the Kinsman Branch pg-4	9	10	11	12 Pray for the work in the Congo pg-4	13 Campout starts!
14 Pray for God's Blessings at camp	15 Pray for the seminar leaders	16 Pray for the children at campout that they will feel God's love	17	18 Pray for the young people at campout that they will feel God's Spirit	19 Campout ends	20
21	22 Pray for the people that do not have religious freedom	23	24 Thank God for the founding fathers that fought for our freedom	25	26	27
28	29	30 Tell a friend about something God has recently done for you	31	1	2 Support your local MBA and Ladies' Circle	3

June 2013							August 2013							
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
30														

July 2013

"And it came to pass that he rent his coat; and he took a piece thereof, and wrote upon it—In memory of our God, our religion, and freedom, and our peace, our wives, and our children—and he fastened it upon the end of a pole."
Alma 46:12 (read Alma chapter 46 about Religious Freedom)

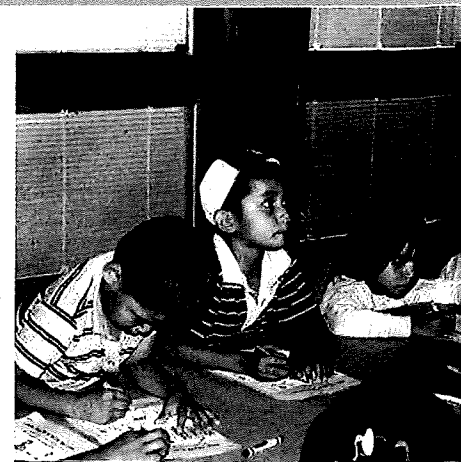
BTP Blast From The Past

Brother Charles Brown's Dream

One hundred forty years ago this month, the Church received an experience from Brother Charles Brown that would stand—to this day—as an urgent call to the work among the Native Americans. He told of a dream where he saw himself and other brothers at a coal mine who heard a rapping sound from deep within. Concluding that there were men trapped inside, the brothers attempted a rescue but to no avail. Only after more rapping was heard, did the brothers make a second attempt, this time to their success. Upon the rescue, it was discovered that the individuals brought to safety had the appearance of Native Americans. Brother William Cadman's response to the dream was immediate. These entrapped men, he said, "presented the condition of the Indian race" and—in regards to earlier failed attempts by the Church—"we should yet make another effort that would succeed!"

Religious Experiences and Expectations, pp 7-8; Vol. 2 the Church History Book, p 422-423

VBS class at Tse Bonito ▶





Note:

The Church of Jesus Christ headquartered in Monongahela, Pennsylvania, is a global Church with branches in over 21 countries. This issue of *The Gospel News* features mostly information about the United States, its foundation, the pursuit of independence and religious freedom, and our mission to share the Gospel and preserve this liberty. We do not wish to offend or exclude by making this our focus.

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.



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"!

"If you know these things, happy are ye if you do them" (John 13:17).

One of my favorite "Early-walk-with-the-Lord" stories involves Brother Chuck Maddox. While dating Sister Dianne, he had visited The Church. One evening he sat in the Church parking lot in his Camaro, deciding whether to enter the building or wait outside. The services he had attended were enjoyable, but each meeting brought more direction to what he should and shouldn't be doing. So this young man was stranded outside the Church between desire and responsibility.

Our brother's dilemma convinces me the unsaid version of Christ's words might be, *"If you are just learning these things, surely ye will be miserable until ye start doing them."* James wrote, *"Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves"* (James 1:22). He understood introduction to the Word makes us debtors to its instruction, as our ignoring its wisdom leaves us unhappily unfulfilled, with misery the awaiting result of such self-deception.

"If you know these things" is the foundation to a life of fulfillment, with your walk towards happiness beginning in learning Christ's message. 1. Study the Word as your defense against the evil one (Ephesians 6:17). 2. Embrace it as your life-guide, that it becomes *"delicious"* (Alma 32: 28) to you (this is to *"know"*). 3. Climb out of your Camaro. Brother Chuck had to walk from his car, to walk towards the Church. Sitting in his car created misery and sitting in the service facilitated joy. Acceptance by *"doing these things"* is our courageous commitment steps towards Jesus Christ. Because Christ's message taught obedience to something higher, an unconditional love for God and others, forgiveness granted those who sin against us with mercy and grace as a means of existence, His words introduce a more robust life. Compliance to His words brings the fulfillment of true happiness.

One could easily argue, utilizing the old saying, "Ignorance is bliss" as a valid counter to all I've written. The bliss referenced speaks to our remaining in darkness concerning the subject of spirituality. Years ago, a young teenage boy sat in his Camaro and had to decide between the blissfulness of staying uneducated to the truth of Jesus Christ or stepping courageously forward in his earlywalk with Christ. As Brother Chuck did so many years ago, I hope you'll step out of your Camaro and step up your relationship with Christ, because *"If you know these things, happy are ye if you do them."*

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

Domestic Church — Kinsman, Ohio



In the summer of 1955, a small group of families attending meetings at the Niles, Ohio Branch of The Church of Jesus Christ desired to move away from the city. They fasted, prayed, and sought direction from the Lord.

Brother Jack and Sister Esther Ford's family felt directed to go to Kinsman, Ohio, a rural area about 25 miles north of Niles. They found a house with a "For Sale" sign on the front lawn. The owner of the house said to Brother Jack, "You couldn't guess what nationality I am." A voice spoke to Brother Jack and said, "Tell him he is an American Indian." The homeowner was surprised that Brother Jack knew, and it was confirmation that they were directed to the home of one of God's chosen people.

The sale did not go through, but another trip was made to Kinsman with Brother Howard Jackson, who saw and purchased a home there. The Jackson family relocated to Kinsman in October 1955, and were joined shortly afterwards by the Ford family, who purchased a home close to theirs in December 1955. After seven months and twelve days, The Church of Jesus Christ in Kinsman, Ohio, held its first Church service on August 19, 1956, in their new building. The building was dedicated on August 26, 1956, with Apostle Gorie Ciaravino of Detroit, Michigan as guest speaker. The membership at the Kinsman Mission at this time totaled ten. Kinsman Mission in its early years enjoyed a close relationship with the work in Canada, visiting and hosting visitors.

Over the years, Kinsman has performed many Sunday School programs and Vacation Bible Schools. Years have passed by, and with them the small Church building was replaced with a brand new building next door in 1998. Today, we are 30 members strong and have nine children and four teens that attend our meetings. We enjoy a very active Ladies' Circle and have recently added a Little Ladies' Circle with many fun activities. We continue to grow, enjoying many visitors, sharing beautiful testimonies, and glorifying the Lord whenever we meet.

International Church — Congo



The Church of Jesus Christ in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) began with Brother A. Kepend Cipeng, currently the Church President in that country, corresponding with the General Church. In 2003 he met with brothers from America in Kenya, accepted our Faith and Doctrine, and was baptized. In 2004 the American brothers went to the DR C, baptized 35 members, and established the Church. There are four missions: Katuba—Congo's Church Headquarters with 78 members; Rwashu with 107 members; Kalebuka with 64 members; and Likasi with 82 members. Each location meets in mud huts with tin roofs and no electricity. Every mission has many children under 12 along with teens, young adults, middle age people, and seniors.

The Church is not registered in this country because humanitarian work has not been established. Currently the Book of Mormon is being translated into French, the country's official language. The printing of the book will be costly and we ask for prayers that the funds will become available so that the members can read the word of God in their own language.

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Revolution and Rebirth *By Elder Duane Loyalvo*

This year The United States of America celebrates the 237th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence by the American Colonies. The adoption of this document by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776 was the key event in the American Revolution. Never before had a nation embarked on a journey to independence under these self-evident truths: that all men are created equal and are endowed by God with certain unalienable rights including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. On this date a new nation was born as the American people slipped off the shackles of tyranny and looked to the light of their new-found freedom. Let us examine this wonderful event in American history, as it holds similarities to our spiritual transformation from sinful creatures to born-again saints of God.

Until 1775, most American colonists were proud to be considered members of the British Empire. This sentiment peaked in 1763 after huge military victories were won over France in the Seven Years War (French and Indian War). In those days the colonists had become accustomed to handling their own affairs. They were permitted to form their own colonial assemblies, which they considered to be sovereign. The colonial economy boomed under the British Mercantile System, which guaranteed a market for American raw materials. The colonies were expected to provide their own defense, which they performed very effectively. In a word, the American colonists were happy, believing they were free.

But their unwavering loyalty to Great Britain began to fade quickly as the King and British Parliament executed a series of steps to raise taxes, to pay for their military debts, and ultimately to take control of affairs in America. Americans became painfully aware that they lacked Parliamentary representation in the mother country as taxes were levied, rights were eliminated, and atrocities occurred. When the British Army moved into Boston to quell the rioting on March 5, 1770, an incident occurred in which British troops fired into an angry mob, killing and wounding several men. Paul Revere's engraving of what became known as the Boston Massacre ignited the masses. This image of British Redcoats firing into a civilian crowd confirmed their fears that King George would stop at nothing to enforce his will on the colonists. Freedom was fading.

By 1775, tensions had heightened to the point that the colonies had formed their own militias. On April 19, in the town of Lexington, Massachusetts the first shots of the American Revolution were fired. On May 10, the 2nd Continental Congress convened, paving the way for a Declaration of Independence and a revolutionary war. The struggle ended eight years later when the badly beaten British decided to cut their losses and quit the war. Victory came at a tremendous cost. Out of a total population of 2.5 million, 25,000 Americans gave their lives. By the grace of God, freedom was secured and the colonies were transformed into a new united republic of states.

Now let's put this history into a spiritual perspective. According to the scripture, all men are free to act for themselves, being enticed by good and evil. *"Wherefore, the Lord God gave unto man that he should act for himself. Wherefore, man could not act for himself save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other"* (II Nephi 2:16). In our carnal state, before we were baptized, we utilized this freedom to become servants of sin. Like the early American colonists who were happy believing incorrectly that they were free from tyranny, we were happy in sin as the devil lied to us, cheating our souls and carefully leading us down a dark path.

The day came on March 5, 1770 that the colonists woke up to the extent of their captivity. We also awoke and beheld the chains of sin that tied us down. This happened when we heard the preaching of the word of God, witnessed the love of the saints, and listened to the testimonies of Christ's goodness.

Finally, American colonists made the conscious decision to start a revolution. Through war, a declaration, and the creation of a constitution, America was transformed from 13 British colonies into the United States of America. Likewise, we chose baptism and received the gift of the Holy Ghost, becoming born-again saints unto Jesus Christ.

"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Romans 6:22).

An Ensign for the Nations Continued from Page 1

President Thomas Jefferson, on March 4, 1805, declared to the American people in his Second Inaugural Address:

"In matters of religion I have considered that its free exercise is placed by the Constitution independent of the powers of the General Government ... I shall need, therefore, all the indulgence I have heretofore experienced ... I shall need, too, the favor of that Being in whose hands we are, who led our forefathers, as Israel of old, from their native land and planted them in a country flowing with all the necessities and comforts of life, who has covered our infancy with His Providence and our riper years with His wisdom and power, and to whose goodness I ask you to join with me in supplications that He will so enlighten the minds of your servants, guide their councils and prosper their measures, that whatever they do shall result in your good, and shall secure to you the peace, friendship and approbation of all nations."

On February 16, 1809, nine years after serving as the second president of the United States, John Adams wrote to his friend, François Adriaan van der Kemp:

"The Hebrews have done more to civilize men than any other nation ... [God] ordered the Jews to preserve and propagate to all mankind the doctrine of a supreme, intelligent, wise, almighty sovereign of the universe ... [which is] to be the great essential principle of morality, and consequently all civilization."

The above remarks made by the Founding Mothers and Fathers parallel the teachings of the Book of Mormon prophets. Therefore, it is no surprise that both groups cautioned posterity to not forget the Lord.

In the first century BC, King Mosiah wrote to the Nephites:

"It is not common that the voice of the people desireth anything contrary to that which is right; but it is common for the lesser part of the people to desire that which is not right ... And if the time comes that the voice of the people doth choose iniquity, then is the time that the judgments of God will come upon you; yea, then is the time he will visit you with great destruction."

In the fifth century AD, Moroni wrote to the Gentiles who now occupy the Americas:

"For behold, this is a land which is choice above all other lands; wherefore he that doth possess it shall serve God or shall be swept off; for it is the everlasting decree of God. And it is not until the fulness of iniquity among the children of the land, that they are swept off ... Behold this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ, who hath been manifested by the things which we have written."

In early November 1775, Abigail Adams penned to her friend, Mercy Warren:

"A patriot without religion in my estimation is as great a paradox as an honest Man without the fear of God. Is it possible that he whom no moral obligations bind, can have any real Good Will towards Men? Can he be a patriot who, by an openly vicious conduct, is undermining the very bonds of Society? ... The Scriptures tell us 'righteousness exalteth a Nation.'"

In his book, Notes on the State of Virginia, written in 1781, Jefferson penned:

"And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with his wrath? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just: that his justice cannot sleep for ever."

(Continued on Page 11)

Time

By Elder David Nolfi

Scripture's truth continues to unfold. Almighty God swore in His wrath that whoso should possess this promised land would serve Him or be swept off in the fullness of His wrath (Ether Chapter 2). As the nation continues to ripen in iniquity, time speeds our country to an unavoidable destruction—a destruction that the masses are blind to, do not believe, and do not care about. The Lord's blessings of food, energy, water, heat, comforts... [the endless list of God's goodness] continue; but all are taken for granted by a hard-hearted, selfish, unbelieving populace—rich or poor—the masses are rejecting the source of their blessings and the precious treasure of Salvation through Jesus Christ!

The Word of God written some 2600 years ago speaks to the righteous and the wicked: 1 Nephi Chapter 22 imparts assurance to the righteous and judgment to the wicked. This chapter contains inevitable prophetic events that beg the question: "What part do I play?"

As this great nation continues to crumble from within, will there be a harvest for Christ? Will The Church of Jesus Christ rise to the occasion? Do we, the Army of His Church, emanate the love of Jesus Christ that will draw all men? Are we praying, praying, praying? Is our lamp lit and burning brightly? Are we a missionary reaching out to the lost sinner? Will our faith sustain us as the nation rushes to judgment and we witness its horrible fall? The answers are within us if we will serve humbly, faithfully, and obediently. The harvest is truly great; are we a laborer?

If ever there was a time to sound the alarm, a time to blow the trumpet, today is that day! It is time to cry out with our prayers to God and call out to our loved ones.

May the Lord bless and strengthen us and our families as we sail this tempestuous stream of time!

Taking the Gospel to Oaxaca, Mexico

By Apostle Joel Gehly and Brother Abelardo Granados

Brothers, Sisters, and Friends,

The following is a brief account by Brother Abelardo Granados of Tijuana, Mexico of the activities conducted by Brother Teodoro Arguelles and Brother Abelardo in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico earlier this year. Brother Teodoro and Brother Abelardo spent three weeks in Oaxaca for the NAOC/IMOC investigating, preaching, and praying for the start of a new mission in this part of Mexico with the Oaxacan people.

Brother Joel

From Brother Abelardo:

Brother Teodoro and I were in Oaxaca from March 21 to April 8, 2013. We were welcomed in the home of Antonio and Sister Juanita Martinez and their four children.

1st week: We visited homes of family, neighbors, and friends of the Martinez family. They allowed us to sing and at every home we went they welcomed us and received the Gospel in a very pleasant way. We were in a place called Cuilapan and in this area they do not have large Christian churches. Also, the languages that are spoken in this place are the Zapoteco and Mixteco. In the afternoon we would normally go to the local park to sing. During this time, some people approached and asked about the songs and we would take the opportunity to introduce The Church of Jesus Christ. The peo-

ple who live in that place are very religious (mostly Catholic), and we talked with them about the Church and invited them for Sunday because we were having a small service at the Martinez home.

2nd week: This was a special week because it was Easter and the religious fervor is very strong. We were friendly, but our firmness in the Gospel was greater. Also we had the opportunity to meet at different homes where Antonio and his wife, Sister Juanita took us. One of the homes that we visited was of his eldest daughter, Corina. She is 20 years old and has diabetes, and can't see more than one foot away. Corina was suffering from depression and would not leave her home; however, we visited and tried to encourage her. We also had the opportunity to visit the rest of the Martinez family.

3rd week: This week was great as we counted with the presence of the Apostle Joel Gehly, Brothers Stacey Light, Efrain O. (of Mexico City); two brothers of Mexico City, and a brother from Tijuana. They joined perfectly the work team and together we visited different households, especially with the Martinez family. The coexistence with them made us feel loved. The visiting brothers explained to us many things from the Book of Mormon. Thursday night was full of the Spirit of God and Brother Antonio confessed his repentance with tears in his eyes and asked for his baptism. We welcomed him to The Church of Jesus Christ. We hugged him together with his

(Continued on Page 8)

Through the Eyes of a Missionary's Wife

By Sister Mary Perri

I have been blessed to spend time as a missionary with my husband, Brother Joe Perri, in the country of Nigeria in 1985, and in Italy and Kenya in 1994. I experienced people in these countries who have a lot of love for God. When they get to know you and your reason for wanting to visit and spend time with them, you have gained a friend for life.

They put on their best clothes for Church and have a lot of respect when they come into God's house. In Nigeria I noticed as soon as they would enter the building, they would seat themselves and bow their head in reverence to God. Some I would see take their shoes or sandals off and kneel down to pray. For many families, compared to our standards they have a very difficult life, but they make the best of what little they

have. They may not understand nor have complete knowledge of the Gospel of The Church of Jesus Christ but they love JESUS. One thing I admired when being introduced to either a brother or sister of the Church is that they would have a smile on their face as they greeted you with a handshake.

The children are very respectful as they accompany their parents into the building. Their behavior is noteworthy and they sit quietly through the entire meeting. The children do not have toys with them like many of our children here in America.

Another fascinating thing that I saw was a family of five, three children, a mother, and father riding on a single bicycle coming to church. Many do

not have transportation but walk miles in the rain and heat so they can attend worship services at Church.

The singing is beautiful; they harmonize a song in parts. Their choirs will meet evenings after school or work at the Church buildings to write a song and put a tune to it, and will sing for their branch services on Sunday. There are branches we attended in Nigeria and Kenya that have a Casio piano while others have some type of musical instrument. Some of the choirs and congregations sing without any accompanying music. While singing they are glorifying God, which makes it very enjoyable to listen to.

(Continued on Page 11)

Are You Ready for the Blessings? Campout 2013 is coming soon!

That powerful moment when you see the elder's hand go in the air. Be a part of it all again this year at GMBA Campout!

GMBA CAMPOUT
JULY 13-19, 2013
CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY
LIVING SACRIFICE
ROMANS 12:1-2
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Taking the Gospel to Oaxaca, Mexico Continued from Page 7

wife and children. On Sunday our new brother was taken to the waters of baptism, and we had a beautiful service full of the Spirit of God. We prayed for the sick, passed sacrament, the people gave their testimonies, and even the children were crying, filled with the Spirit of God.

God bless you all.

Please be diligent in prayer for the Martinez family in Oaxaca. Please pray for Corina that the Lord will perform a miracle and restore her eyesight. Continue to be faithful in prayer that the Lord will continue to open the way that a mission can be established in Oaxaca in the near future. Other trips will be planned in the coming months to continue seeing the Lord work in the hearts of the people of Oaxaca.

God Bless,
Brother Joel

TIMELINE OF THE UNITED STATES HISTORY AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

2000 BC

(approx.)
Jaredites
arrive in the
Promised Land

589 BC

Lehi and his family
arrive in the
Promised Land

1620 AD

The Pilgrims arrive

1775 AD

The American
Revolution starts

1776 AD

The Declaration of In-
dependence is signed

1785 AD

The Bill of Rights is
added to the Constitution

1827 AD

The Book of Mormon
is found in this land

...for he truly told them of all things, from the beginning of man; and that after the waters had receded from off the face of this land it became a choice land above all other lands, a chosen land of the Lord; wherefore the Lord would have that all men should serve him who dwell upon the face thereof" (Ether 13:2).

The Twelve Spies *By Brother Kerry Carlini*

Two years into the wilderness the Lord commanded Moses to send 12 men—heads of the families of Israel—to spy out the land of Canaan, its people, cities, and strongholds—and to be of good courage, bringing back the fruit of the land. Forty days later they returned with pomegranates, figs, and a cluster of grapes borne upon a staff between two men. Here are five amazing facts regarding their report:

- 1 At first it was favorable, saying surely the land “floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it.”
- 2 But quickly turning to doom, the spies told of great walled cities and nations—comparing themselves to grasshoppers in a land of giants.
- 3 Two of the spies, though—Caleb of Judah and Joshua of Ephraim—would give a good report, encouraging the Israelites to go up at once and possess it. “The land is exceedingly good,” they said, “and the Lord is with us.”
- 4 But having no faith and fearing the worst, the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron, and bade that Caleb and Joshua be stoned.
- 5 However, before this could happen, “the glory of the Lord” appeared before all the children of Israel at the tabernacle. Moses then entreated the Lord not to destroy His people. But God would punish them for their lack of faith, causing them to wander 40 years in the wilderness—one year for each day the spies had searched out the land of Canaan.

Numbers 13-14

Ladies' Uplift Circle News

Women: Past, Present, and Future

By Sister Angela Yoder, General Ladies' Uplift Circle Editor



On March 22, 2013, the sisters gathered together at the Laurelville Mennonite Center for the Penn Mid-Atlantic Area Fellowship weekend, hosted by the Vanderbilt Local Ladies' Circle. We were blessed to find sisters joining us from New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Michigan. We were further blessed to also have several of our Little Ladies' Circle members, as well as the General Ladies' Uplift Circle President, Sister Lisa Champine, present.

On Friday evening, the Imperial Local Ladies' Circle hosted a 'babyless' baby shower that benefited the Three Rivers Indian Council. The sisters gathered in our rustic living room with a fire blazing in the stone hearth as we played baby shower games and devoured teddy bear sugar cookies and other snacks.

Saturday morning was dedicated to our Area Circle business and organization meeting. The business and spending of our funds went by swiftly and before we knew it was lunchtime. After we fed our bodies naturally, Sister Sylvia King fed our souls with a thought-provoking seminar on vari-

ous women of the Bible which followed our theme, *"Women: Past, Present, and Future."*

After our seminar, we were challenged to design and create a spring grapevine wreath. The creativity of the sisters is amazing, and it didn't take long for the room to be filled with beautiful arrangements. Even the "craft challenged' among the group were able to design beautiful wreaths for their homes.

After dinner, the Aliquippa Local Ladies' Circle facilitated our evening activity. Earlier that day, each sister had selected an Easter egg at random. Inside the egg was a specific letter of the alphabet. Our challenge was to find the sister in the group with the matching letter and follow the skit instructions associated with our letter. Some of the topics for the skits included feet washing, baptism, and inviting others to church. Some of the presentations were very serious while some were hysterically funny.

When all of our skits were completed, Sister Shannon Uzman presented us with an exercise that proved to be one of the

biggest blessings of the weekend. Each sister stood in a circle as we began to pass a gift box from one sister to another. We were instructed to search the room and take the box to someone who influenced your life. Once the sister was selected, the 'giver' announced to the 'receiver,' "I love you because..." That sister then selected another in the room until everyone had been chosen. We all left that evening realizing just how much of an impact each one made in the life of someone else.

On Sunday morning, we were fortunate to have five elders attend our meeting. Brother Tony Ricci opened the meeting and shared a quote from a sister on the day of her baptism, *"I serve God Monday through Saturday, but on Sunday, I praise Him."* What a wonderful thought to start our service.

After a lively testimony meeting followed by a touching communion service, our meeting was brought to a close. As we gathered for lunch and began to say our goodbyes, it became evident that no one wanted to leave, but with a large snow-storm on the way, reality set in. We thank God that our weekend was overflowing with blessings and fellowship.



Pharaoh's Wizards Have No Power

Yet, over the long years of ignorance and unbelief, one group of people never forgot there was one God. Those are the Jewish people of the world. They prayed to God and kept the ancient records about Adam and Eve, Noah, Joseph, Moses and the Ten Commandments that tell us how to live. Their big difference is that they are still waiting for a Messiah and do not realize that Jesus, our Savior has come in peace. We know Jesus is here and we can walk with Him and talk with Him now. They are waiting.

But in the days of Moses, the Israelite people had become slaves. The Egyptian Pharaoh and people treated them cruelly. (See Exodus chapters 7-12). They began to cry out to God and He heard their prayers. God made a plan to bring His people out of slavery. He sent Moses to tell the Pharaoh that God wanted His people to be free to worship Him. The Pharaoh and his advisors laughed in his face. They had become very rich using these slaves; after Moses spoke to them they treated the Israelites even worse.

In these days the Pharaoh had many tricky men and women who called themselves wizards or magicians working for him to give him advice. All of these people served idols of false gods. One by one, the Lord put ten curses on the land and each of their superstitious false gods was shown up to be powerless. They worshipped the Nile River; God turned the water to blood. They worshipped statues for the insects and the frogs. God sent swarms of locusts, lice, flies, and frogs. They worshipped statues for the weather; God sent terrible storms of uncontrollable, killing hail. They worshipped cows and animals; God sent sores on the body of livestock and three days of darkness.

Finally God told Pharaoh to let His people go or He would send the angel of death take the life of every firstborn human or animal who did not serve God. Instead of listening to God, he turned to help from his court magicians and wizards. They gave him bad advice not to listen and obey God.

God warned them, *"For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD"* (Exodus 12:12).

And that night God showed His great power and unhappiness with false, evil gods. A great destruction came upon those unbelievers and finally the Pharaoh let them go from being enslaved and leave to serve God.

This is the same God we serve today. He loves us. He sent His only begotten son Jesus, to put love in our hearts. He hears us. He saves us. Our job is to pray and talk to Him about what is going on in our lives, ask for forgiveness, and have love for all others.

Remember, WE trust in the Lord. We are not superstitious. We do not believe in wizards, or fake magic. We are children of the God who has all power, and have an amazing friend in Jesus. *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not unto your own understanding"* (See Proverbs 3:5).

With Love,
Your friend,
Sister Jan

Dear friends,
Do you know how blessed and safe we are because we believe in one God and his son, Jesus Christ? Do you realize that for thousands of years there have been people who lived and died without knowing how to pray and speak with our Lord?

For example, the people that I descended from hundreds of years ago were from a part of Europe that once worshipped the spirits of trees. Do you think a tree could hear you if you prayed to it? I don't. If you are from the Mediterranean area like Greece or Italy, people worshipped all kinds of statues. Do you think a big piece of carved rock can hear you or help you? I don't. Other people worshipped the forces of nature like the sun, the rain, or spring-time. I know they don't hear me when I pray or talk; they are just weather. But God, the Creator of the Universe, lives in my heart. His Son Jesus walked the earth just like I do. He knows all about being human. When Jesus went to heaven He left His Holy Spirit to comfort and guide me. I do not have to be afraid; I can call on my friend Jesus, to help me each day.

We do not believe in paying someone to pray for us, preach to us or guide us. Jesus and his Twelve Apostles in Jerusalem were called by God to preach and teach and work mighty miracles. God sends great men today as helpers to help us for free. They are not trying to be famous, get on television, make a lot of money from others, have power over others, or act important. They have jobs too.

We also do not believe in fortunetellers, wizards, or trick magic. They do not have the power of God we can trust. A coin we call lucky, or a special necklace or clothes we wear only give us hopeful memories. They do not have power to hear a human's needs, prayers, or the things of our hearts. Only the living God and Jesus care for you like that.

WORD SEARCH

WE	AND	US
SERVE	HIS	HEARS
A	ONLY	US
LIVING	BEGOTTEN	NOT
GOD	SON	FAKE
THE	JESUS	WIZARDS
CREATOR	CHRIST	OR
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An Ensign for the Nations Continued from page 6

After the American Revolution, on June 14, 1783, General Washington wrote to the states of the new republic:

"I now make it my earnest prayer that God would ... dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind, which were the humble characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion; without an humble imitation of whose example, in these things, we can never hope to be a happy nation."

While the delegates of the Constitutional Convention discussed how to form the federal government, Benjamin Franklin, on June 28, 1787, warned the delegates:

"If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We've been assured in the sacred writing that, 'Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.'"

On March 11, 1792, President Washington penned to his friend, John Armstrong:

"I am sure that never was a people, who had more reason to acknowledge a Divine interposition in their affairs, than those of the United States; and I should be pained to believe that they have forgotten that agency, which was so often manifested during our Revolution, or that they failed to consider the omnipotence of that God who is alone able to protect them."

After reading these quotes, it is apparent that God had blessed the United States with a sacred purpose. Now evaluate the state of the country and ask yourself, "Are the prophetic words of the Book of Mormon prophets and the Founding Mothers and Fathers being fulfilled?" If so, then what is our purpose as The Church of Jesus Christ? The answer is found in 3 Nephi 21:4. Christ declared, "For it is wisdom in the Father that they (the Gentiles) should be established in this land, and be set up as a free people by the power of the Father, that these things (the Restored Gospel) might come forth from them unto a remnant of your seed (the American Indians), that the covenant of the Father may be fulfilled which he hath covenanted with his people, O house of Israel." As the Church, we are the free Gentiles that Jesus prophesied should teach the Restored Gospel to the American Indians (Joseph). If the First Amendment did not exist, the Book of Mormon could not have been published and proselytized in the United States. Our First Amendment right supports our divine commission to tell Joseph's descendants and the world about Jesus Christ. **If you ever wondered how important your role is in the Church, the answer may astound you. God established the United States so that The Church of Jesus Christ could fulfill many of the latter-day prophecies.** As God's people, we have to use our liberty to help accomplish the Lord's work. Remind yourself and the people around you that Christ loves the world; be an ambassador to the House of Israel; and raise the final plea to a nation that is forgetting its divine heritage. As if from the dust, John Adams spoke to our generation. On April 26, 1777, in the midst of the American Revolution, John lamented to his wife, Abigail: "Posterity! You will never know how much it cost the present Generation to preserve your Freedom! I hope you will make good use of it. If you do not, I shall repent in Heaven, that I ever took half the Pains to preserve it."

Through the Eyes of a Missionary's Wife

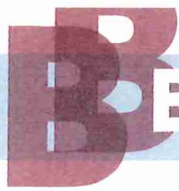
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Their food supply is scarce, and many live off of their farm land. Women cultivate the land, plant, harvest their crops, and go to the market to sell. What food we were able to buy in stores was high priced but the people from these countries make the best of what they have. To see their culture and how they live, it makes me appreciate the land of America more, with the many conveniences we have that so often we take for granted.

Meeting Brother and Sister Arthur and family from Nigeria, Sister Nina Osaka and family from Kenya, Brother and Sister Oliva in Italy and spending time in their homes, eating at their tables, conversing with them, and meeting many of the saints in these countries will be a lasting memory that I will not soon forget. I feel blessed to have been able to make missionary trips to the countries of Nigeria, Kenya, and Italy to meet our beloved brothers and sisters in Christ and to make many friends.



Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free... Galatians 5:1



Blessing Bits

BB The Day My Life Changed

Almost 25 years ago, I was sitting in a GMBA camp meeting (yeah!) with little to no connection with Christ. Arms folded, blank stare, communion service—all of a sudden, an image was implanted in my mind of Christ standing over the communion table, long flowing robe, arms outstretched, prints in His hands, and calling to welcome everyone in. My eyes welled with tears and I shook it off like the foolish mental fabrication that I thought it must have been. I didn't actually SEE it with my own eyes, you know. When the service ended, 400 people away from me, a deacon walked up from the back of the room with a piece of paper in his hand. The brother began to read of a vision that was had by a sister: Christ, standing over the table, long flowing robe, arms outstretched, prints in His hands, and calling to welcome everyone in. Shocked, the reality of what just happened enveloped me and faith took over. Three days later, my life changed for— and faith materialized into joy as I was baptized.—*Elder Tom D'Orazio, McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania Branch*

BB God Sees What Lies Ahead

My husband, Matthew, and I were driving

home several years ago on a two-lane country highway where everyone goes at least 55 mph. There are no stop signs or traffic lights on the road, and there are deep open ditches on either side. Up ahead I noticed that traffic was coming to a stop for no apparent reason. Matthew was just chugging along, not noticing the stopped cars, and we were getting closer and closer. I only had time to yell Matthew's name twice but it was too late. Matthew veered off the road at the only spot for miles that was not an open ditch. God spared us from what should have been a horrible accident, and all the way home I praised Jesus' name over and over again for that small section of road that had a filled-in ditch.—*Sister Gina Rine, Youngstown, Ohio Branch*

BB The Gift of Life

God blessed me with the gift of a new life. Literally! At the age of eighteen months, I died in the back of the Hollywood Branch building. After everything possible was attempted to revive me, I was anointed and CPR was performed again. In the words of Brother Dennis Moraco, "Then they heard the wonderful sound of a cry and my life was restored!" This happened over 26 years ago and just this last summer I found out that the woman who per-

formed CPR on me was supposed to attend another branch that day but there was an accident on the way, so they turned around and headed to the Hollywood Branch. Talk about a DOUBLE miracle! God has blessed me many times since that day, and I thank and praise Him for His love and mercy in my life!—*Brother Andrew Dinardo, Hollywood, Florida Branch*

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

Question for this month: *Have you taken on a role in the church that was outside of your comfort zone and if so, were you blessed for it?*

Answer from last month: *What are you looking forward to at camp?* The most frequent answer was looking forward to spending time, reconnecting, and fellowshiping with the family of God. "Spending time with the brothers and sisters and being away from all the busy day to day things that take our mind away from the Lord." —*Sister Terry Goode, Metuchen, New Jersey Branch*

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