

The Gospel News

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A Hope of His Glory

By Apostle Joel Gehly

"For, for this intent have we written these things, that they may know that we knew of Christ, and we had a hope of his glory many hundred years before his coming; and not only we ourselves had a hope of his glory, but also all the holy prophets which were before us" (Jacob 4:4).

I am writing today on a subject that is near and very dear to my heart. While contemplating the scriptures, the above verse came to my mind. I believe this verse is a rehearsal from Jacob, the son of Lehi, concerning the fact that the knowledge of salvation through Jesus Christ was understood through faith and expectation among the family of Lehi; and in truth was understood by all the holy prophets, from Adam until today (ref. Alma 12:29-30). What a glorious understanding they had. What a glorious plan had been given to mankind from the beginning of time. What a hope, knowing that eternity with the Creator of the universe is possible to all who will accept the plan of redemption!

However, I want to consider this verse of scripture in a different light by addressing all who still 'know of Christ' many years after His coming. I want everyone who has accepted the plan of salvation through Jesus Christ to consider the additional great 'hope of His glory' we have today.

The hope of the glory I am speaking about is the Kingdom of God on the Earth – in the flesh. We have many phrases, titles, and descriptions for this Kingdom: The Peaceful Reign, Zion, The Latter Days (started 530 BC), The Restoration, The Seventh Day of Rest, The Ancient of Days, The First Dominion, etc.

I want you to think about these questions: Do you have a Hope of this Glorious Kingdom? Do you know and understand this Glory? It is my opinion that except for the advent of Jesus Christ, this is the most discussed subject in all of the writings of the holy prophets which were before us.

I ask you to consider the great and glorious period of time that we are part of today. We are participants in the greatest Hope of Glory there has ever been since the coming of Jesus Christ on the earth. Jesus said, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). There will be God's kingdom on earth. Actually, we have God's kingdom on earth, just in a small and – as yet – incomplete size and form. As Daniel stated, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed..." (Daniel 2:44). Daniel also describes the beginning of this kingdom as a stone, "thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain..." (v. 45). Today, The Church of Jesus Christ is that stone.

God's kingdom has started. How do I know? Let Jesus answer again. "...I give unto you a sign, that ye may know the time when these things shall be about to take place – that I shall gather in, from their long dispersion, my people, O house of Israel, and shall establish again among them my Zion" (III Nephi 21:1). Please read the next six verses to know and understand the sign Jesus speaks about. Believers – we have great Hope and Glorious expectations as the Kingdom of God unfolds according to the perfect plan of God in our day.

(Continued on page 8)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	1 It's Campout Month!	2 There is still time to plan a trip to be with the saints	3	4 Happy Fourth of July! Thank God today for our religious freedom
5 Pray for the upcoming GMBA Campout	6 Pull out an old Campout songbook and reminisce	7 Reconnect with someone you grew close to at a past Campout	8 Pray that God will pour out His blessings at Campout	9 Reflect on past Campouts and the blessings received	10 Are you packed and ready to go?	11 Pray for all those traveling to Campout
12 Call your favorite camp theme song	13 2015 GMBA Campout Theme "Free"	14 Read John 16:33 and 1 John 5:4-5	15 Pray for a blessed day at Campout	16 Choose an age group and pray for that seminar today at Campout	17 Pray for all traveling home from campout	18
19	20	21 Pray for the Vanderbilt Branch—pg 4	22	23	24	25
26 Give thanks in testimony	27	28	29 Spend some time with the children or young people this summer	30	31 Show your love to someone new today	1

June 2015
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 2015
S M T W T F S
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9 10 11 12 13 14 15
16 17 18 19 20 21 22
23 24 25 26 27 28 29
30 31

July 2015

"Thou art my servant; and I covenant with thee that thou shalt have eternal life; and thou shalt serve me and go forth in my name, and shalt gather together my sheep" (Mosiah 26:20).

BTF Blast From The Past

Sister Mamie Funkhauser

Making the trip from New Jersey to Pennsylvania, Mamie, her husband George, and her father Rocco Ensana arrived at the Thomas home, sixty-five years ago this month on July 1st. *"It was my desire to be baptized by Brother Oran Thomas,"* Sister Mamie Funkhauser recalled of her baptism, taking place on the following day as witnessed by many of the Vanderbilt saints. But, after she had walked out of the water – standing next to her husband watching the saints depart – she found she could neither move nor even look up. *"I felt the most powerful arms around me, and then a gentle, soft kiss on each cheek, and I started to cry with exceedingly great joy. Only then was I able to move."* Remarking to George as to how happy he must be to have hugged and kissed her so, he received a startling response from a perplexed husband. *"I knew something had taken place within you, but I did not touch you,"* he said. In the confirmation, Brother Clyde Gibson stated that *"this girl will be blessed every day of her life."*—*Gospel News*, November 1965, p. 5



Sister Mamie Funkhauser ▶

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**

GOSPEL NEWS QUIZ

Search through this issue for answers to these questions:

- What does the stone described by Daniel represent? (Page 1)
- What did God create us to achieve? (Page 3)
- What was the first priority of King David? (Page 5)
- What is the financial goal of the Gospel News? (Page 7)
- Where did apostle John write the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ? (Page 9)

Wordup

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.*

*"I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because
I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30).*

After diving for an hour or so, getting a close-up perspective of a reef, I rested, snorkeling on the surface. It was mesmerizing, watching from atop God's natural aquarium. A short time later, raising my head out of the water, it was startling to find I was several hundred yards from the dive boat. I hadn't just been floating, but was drifting with the current. Sometimes when it feels like we're just floating or doing nothing, we might actually be drifting away.

When Christ said, "I can of mine own self do nothing," He wasn't confessing idleness. With His resume' robust with accomplishments, He was making certain everyone understood clearly it was not His doing. Drilling down further we find the source of His motivation, "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." It's enough of a struggle staying focused on things we desire for ourselves, let alone concentrating on someone else's wants. Christ never "drifted" from His Father's purpose.

Sometimes exhaustion, lack of focus, or even discouragement can result in our choosing to do nothing. It's been said, "No decision is a decision," so maybe nothing is not nothing. Paul writes (Romans 2:13), "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified," and (James 1:22) reiterates, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." Paul saw "doing" as proof of our commitment to Christ, and James saw it as maintaining honesty with ourselves. Larry the Cable Guy says it simplest, "Get'er done!" (Sorry, I live in Kentucky.)

God created us to achieve greatness, so we find fulfillment in personal accomplishment. We feel triumphant when we thrive and can experience a lack of satisfaction when we simply survive (note: there are exceptions when survival is plenty). The joy of setting and reaching personal goals reveals we are called to be involved and not spectators in life. When given opportunity to serve as local treasurer at church, clean paint brushes during a work party, or lend your voice during a hymn at a lightly attended Sunday School service, do! And do confidently and enthusiastically! Because so often when we think we're doing nothing, we're actually drifting; and we might even be drifting away!

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

Meet the Branch

Domestic Church — Vanderbilt, PA Branch



Our early records indicate the first meeting in the Vanderbilt area was held in the front yard of Brother Oran and Sister Ethel Thomas' home in the summer of 1929. There were approximately 35 people at the meeting: Brothers Isaac Smith, Charles Ashton, and Tony DiBattista, just to name a few. That humble meeting opened the door to many conversions and soon, Vanderbilt became a mission under the Glassport Branch.

Brothers Isaac Smith, W.H. Cadman, Tony DiBattista, Joseph Bittinger, and Joseph Shazer all played important roles in spreading the Gospel in the early years in the Vanderbilt area. The saints often met in homes and wherever they could find a location to hold a service. The country was in the midst of a great depression; there was no work, so money and transportation were extremely limited. The saints shared everything they had, and they relied on the Lord for everything. Brother Joseph Shazer recorded an experience from the early days of only having enough money for a basket of potatoes. When they emptied the basket, there was money in the bottom. They took the money to the man from whom they had bought the potatoes, and he told them the money did not belong to him. Surely, the Lord takes care of His people! When they planted gardens, God's blessing was poured out on their efforts. It was that kind of faith that molded the mothers and fathers of the Vanderbilt Branch.

Over the years, the Smock, Bitner, and Redstone Missions merged with Vanderbilt. The Vanderbilt Branch history shows seven various locations over the many years, one even being a former chicken coop. Much work and dedication went into making it a meeting place.

From the beginning, the saints have fundraised to support the needs of the Church, from crafts to homemade noodles to chicken dinners. Even now, members still hold an annual yard sale which has turned into a huge outreach effort within the community.

The Vanderbilt Branch is blessed to have a beautiful church building on six acres of property: a building on a hill, our blessing where the Spirit of God is ever present. You are invited to visit the Vanderbilt Branch at any time!

Dear Brothers, Sisters, and Friends of the Church,

On June 1, we were dismayed at the tragic passing of Apostle Phil Jackson. To us, it seemed so untimely and so disappointing to lose a brother while in mid-stride of providing all of us—family, church, friends, and colleagues in the ministry—with great support, fellowship, and leadership. The loss of his presence amongst us is a blow. Nevertheless, our knowledge of the Gospel gives us cause to rejoice in the life he led and the example he set.

We join you in reaching out to the Lord for His comfort to our minds and hearts. All the more, we beseech your continuing prayers on behalf of Sister Fran and their children and family who feel the loss most of all. It has been gratifying to witness the tremendous outpouring of love and support so far.

As Brother Phil's colleagues in the ministry and in the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, we testify to you that Bro Phil's diligent service to the Church and dedication to the Lord was surpassed by no one. His love for God's people will live on in our memories as he enjoys the reward promised to all who love and serve the Lord. There is no question that he will be sorely missed.

As the body of Christ, let us rally in our Faith, our Hope, and our Love through Christ while our prayers lift up the Jackson family and all who feel the void due to his passing. It is incumbent upon us who remain to continue – strong in the cause of Christ.

May God's Comfort Be Upon Us All,
The Quorum of Twelve Apostles

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DOES IT YET WAVE? By Elder Jordan Champine

This time of year warrants reflection on the rich patriotic history of our nation's birth and establishment. While our tendency may be to focus on Independence Day, I was recently drawn to the history behind our national anthem. It is moving to read of how these poetic words were penned in the aftermath of the British siege on Fort McHenry. After 18 hours and over 1,800 bombs, cannonballs, and rockets, the battle ceased in the thickness of night. As the ground shaking settled into an eerie calm, the silence left great uncertainty. The author, as an onlooker to the carnage, longed for the morning light to see if the nation's flag still stood. The depth of his yearning was captured as he put his heart's plea to paper, "Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?"

That now-famed verse was born in the depth of great tribulation for our nation. That battle took place on September 13, 1814 and was part of the ongoing war of 1812. History reveals that just weeks prior to this bombardment, the nation's capital in Washington had been laid waste and burnt to the ground. Almost 40 years after America's triumphant declaration of independence, we were still looking to establish and secure the foundations of liberty. For Francis Scott Key and others that day, that assurance came by seeing their symbol of freedom still waving. His lyrics continue in this affirming sight, "Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam, In full glory reflected now shines in the stream: 'Tis the star-spangled banner! Oh long may it wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!"

For us, these considerations give way to a greater spiritual application. The emergence and fortitude of the United States of America were to serve the divine purpose of God's plan. Jesus said, "For it is wisdom in the Father that they [the Gentiles] should be established in this land [America], and be set up as a free people by the power of the Father, that these things might come forth from them unto a remnant of your seed, that the covenant of the Father may be fulfilled which he hath covenanted with his people, O house of Israel" (III Nephi 21:4).

The liberty we now possess was afforded so that God's standard could be raised and shine forth to the reaching and ultimate gathering of Israel. Scripture tells us, "And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (Isaiah 11:12). We know that ensign was the Restoration of the Gospel. Our Church history (Word of the Lord given to the Church in 1859 - History Book vol. 1) bears the account of God's declaration in that day, "...I decreed that I would set up an Ensign, and raise up a standard; the Ensign has been lifted; that Standard raised....".

Praise God, the flag of God's standard has been raised on this land as was long foretold. God's Word has been fulfilled in part, yet there is more to be done; and just as with our country's founding efforts, this liberty has not gone unchallenged. Satan lays his own siege today, and we contend to preserve our spiritual identity and pursue the fulfillment of God's latter day work.

The battle wages on, and the world is looking for a sign.

Isaiah chapter 18 reads, "All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye" (Isaiah 18:3). Israel, like the cry of our renowned anthem, yearns to see the symbol of her freedom. She is looking for that banner today and is calling out, "Is it there...does it yet wave?" Through the travail she is watching, earnestly searching the horizon for her deliverance.

As a result, God's call to us today is to advance. The standard has been raised but now it must be carried to the mountaintop. We must take it to high ground, above the fog of Satan's blinding, so all can see; so the sighting can occur with clarity.

I am reminded of King David, whose first priority as king was to bring the Ark of the Covenant to its proper resting place within the city of David. The Ark of the Covenant, also known as the "testimony," contained the commandments of God and was Israel's symbol to the world that God was with them.

"And David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent. Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever. And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the Lord unto his place, which he had prepared for it" (I Chronicles 15:1-3).

Today God has given us that symbol by way of the Restored Gospel. We have been called to carry it to the place God has "prepared for it," which Isaiah confirms is "...the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, the mount Zion" (Isaiah 18:7). Let us be inspired by the understanding God has granted us. As we press forward with the Gospel, may our steps be firm in righteousness as we resolve to bring God's standard up the mountain. So much awaits us!

When David returned with the Ark of the Covenant, scripture depicts the beautiful procession that occurred. There was great celebration, joy, music, and singing praises to God. As we reflect on the future promises of God we cannot imagine the elation and outpouring that will be witnessed as Israel finally beholds the banner of the Lord waving on the mountaintop. God's Word tells us that when they see it they will come running. "And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly" (Isaiah 5:26).

What an anthem will be sung on that day when the morning's first beam reveals that God's flag has endured! When the fullness of God's plan is realized we will long proclaim, as it is written in the Songs of Zion (#193), "Ah, how they sang and how they cheered, when battered, torn, our flag appeared, With shouts of vict'ry in the air, A nation rose and we were there!"



Aging is a unique part of life. Some say with age comes wisdom, as well as gray hair and a slower metabolism. As we get older, we slow down, we become more concerned with savings and retirement, and we get glasses because we can no longer see a restaurant menu without holding it ten feet away from our faces. Some say aging is negative and to combat the aging process, countless beauty products are sold to hide wrinkles and other signs.

I believe aging is a beautiful process that should be celebrated. Proverbs 16:31 says, *"The hoary (grayish) head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness."* Life is not about worrying about age; rather, we should glory in our age if we continue to be righteous throughout our lives. God instructs us to remember, *"Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised"* (Proverbs 31:30). God is reminding us not to think about age in a negative light; rather, we should find joy in each day the Lord grants us.

One beautiful part of the aging process is the ability to impart wisdom and knowledge to the younger generation. In Lake Worth, I started First Friday, a youth group that meets on the first Friday of each month to socialize, fellowship, and have fun in the Lord. Young people from the ages of 4 to 24 attend these gatherings, and they have evolved into a time of mentorship. Older participants have taken younger participants under their guiding wing, and lifelong connections are being made.

The Bible tells us how important it is for the older generations to guide the younger:

We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength, and His wonderful works that He hath done...That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments (Psalm 78:4,7).

The goal of this new topic series is to realize the beauty sewn into the aging process and to connect various generations through two guiding questions:

- 1. What is something an older brother or sister has taught you that impacted your life?**
- 2. What is something you know now that you wish you knew as a young person in the Church?**

I asked those two questions to many types of people: old, young, male, female, newly baptized, married, single. . .the list goes on. It doesn't matter how old you are: there is always a younger generation to nurture and guide through life, and it is clear how beneficial the nurturing process is in the answers below. As you read and reflect on your personal relationships, may you be inspired to guide the next generation through modeling spiritual behavior and sharing your personal testimony.

Each article in this topic series will feature different answers to the two guiding questions. Please enjoy the responses below:

What is something an older brother or sister has taught you that impacted your life?

To always keep God first and to give to the Church freely and willingly. The Lord will continue to bless you and repay you like you will never imagine.—*Sister Gianna DiNardo*

To always pray and ask God for direction, because God's way is the right way and the BEST way.—*Sister Tieka Wright*

Brother Bob Buffington taught me that some things are a temporary inconvenience for a permanent improvement.—*Sister Nia Haugh*

Brother Karl Moelke always told me ever since I was a young girl that God would always be by my side. I don't think I realized how impactful those small words were until I grew older. He still tells me the same thing every Sunday, and I believe it has left a huge impact and reminder to my life.—*Sister Liz Zaccagnini*

Brother Jim Lambert taught me to live so that every action I take can bring someone else closer to God.—*Sister Alyssa Maddox*

(Continued on Page 11)

Message from the Gospel News Team

MONT

For over 77 years, the Gospel News has been sharing blessings, providing news and information, and uniting the membership of The Church of Jesus Christ. Over these years, much has changed. Looking at the past issues online or in hard copy (for those of you that keep each issue), it is interesting to see that while the style, content, and layout have changed, the message is the same. God continues to bless His people and His Church, and the Gospel News is a great tool to share information with the Church. For many, it is their only connection to the General Church or to the brothers and sisters outside of their branch or mission. Our goal each month is to educate, unite, and most importantly, uplift the membership. An older sister recently approached me and said, "It was a good day on Friday." I inquired why Friday was special, and she replied, "I received my Gospel News in the mail!" Simply put, she felt joy. Our hope is that you too will find joy, learn something new, connect with the Church and feel the love the Gospel News team and the writers have for you as you open each issue.

Starting with this issue, and in subsequent issues, you will see ads and information requesting donations to assist us with spreading the good news. Last year, through our increased efforts, we collected over \$19,000, which was more than any previous year. This was accomplished with only one-third of the Gospel News readers paying for their subscription, as well as generous donations they chose to make beyond their subscription fee. We thank you all for your individual support, and we give a special acknowledgement to the Aliquippa Branch for their group donation.

Our goal is to collect enough money to fully-fund the Gospel News over the next three years. The current circulation is 1,617 copies, and the annual budget is \$33,000. A suggested donation for the 12 issues of the Gospel News is \$25, and the fee is a requested donation rather than a subscription; additionally, each donation to the Gospel News is tax deductible. We have also added the opportunity to pay by PayPal. By visiting the website, www.thechurchofjesuschrist.org, clicking on news and resources, then clicking on The Gospel News, and you will see an option to pay. Or, you can scan the QR code below. You will also receive a letter in August which will prompt you with the options above or to send in a check.

We are excited for the future of the Gospel News, and we hope you will assist us with meeting our annual budget.

May God richly bless you for your support,
The Gospel News Team



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Contact Bro Lucas Martorana at Lamartorana16@gmail.com with questions.

A Hope of His Glory Continued from Page 1

Back to Jacob's day. I would imagine there were those who got tired of hearing about this Jesus Christ who was to come some time in the future. They probably never imagined the glory of the Son of God coming in the flesh to earth. Perhaps the arguments went something like this: *"Oh just let me be faithful to the Law of Moses. There is such glory in the tabernacle. There is such wonder at the celebrations and traditions of the Law! What ease it is to offer a lamb once a year. I am certainly close to God. I am faithful to God! I'm not so sure that this Jesus will really come as they all say. Of course, I believe in Jesus, but really we have been hearing about this forever and we will never see the day."*

Have you ever heard those same type of thoughts expressed today about the Restoration and The Peaceful Reign?

When Jesus Christ made His appearance on this land of America, the Glory that was experienced was beyond measure. Mormon records; *"so great and marvelous were the words which he prayed that they cannot be written, neither can they be uttered by man"* (III Nephi 19:34). Do you not desire like many who read these words – Oh how I wish I could have witnessed that glorious day! Remember, only the believers were witnesses.

Will our Kingdom someday be glorious? Time and space do not permit me to repeat all the fantastic events and conditions the prophets and Jesus Christ declared about our future Glory. Let me conclude in this way: Mormon records in IV Nephi 1:16 the description of a previous kingdom of God that was upon this land of America. *"...and surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God."* As it was said of them, it will be even greater and more glorious for us. All nations of the House of Israel will be part of this Kingdom! A glorious and delightful city, the New Jerusalem, will be built and become the capital of this Kingdom! Righteousness, kindness, happiness, and joy will be the principal characteristics of the people! Everywhere on this land will be the people of God!

Do not doubt! Do not diminish or question the future of The Church of Jesus Christ. Do not lose Hope! The Kingdom of God is here. Believe in the Restoration. Believe in God's great plan. Be a believer of our HOPE of HIS GLORY today. *"The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts"* (Haggai 2:9).

John the Apostle *By Brother Kerry Carlini*

A disciple and one of His closest friends, John would spend three years in the elite, inner circle of Jesus along with his brother James and Peter. And though Christ referred to both John and James as the "The Sons of Thunder" for their tempestuous and avenging nature—they were rebuked for wanting the distinction of sitting on the right and left of Christ in His kingdom—John often identified himself as the disciple "whom Jesus loved." It would be, though, through his writings that he would have the greatest impact. Here are Five Amazing Facts about the Apostle John:

- 1 John was exiled late in life to the island of Patmos, there to write *"the word of God"* and *"the testimony of Jesus Christ"* (Revelation 1:9-10).
- 2 John was commanded to write not only of God's judgments of existing churches, but some of the most remarkable prophecies of latter-day events (Revelation 1:11; 10:8-11).
- 3 The prophet Nephi was told by an angel—close to 600 years before the birth of Christ—that he was prohibited to write certain prophetic events for they were to be written by John (I Nephi 14:18-30).
- 4 When questioned by Peter of John's future, Jesus responded, *"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"* (John 21:22).
- 5 Furthermore, Jesus told the Three Nephites after His resurrection that John had also desired that which they desired, to *"live to behold all the doings of the father unto the children of men..."* And to this day, John, like the Three Nephites, has revealed himself to the children of men (III Nephi 28:6-7).

Mark 10:35-45 Luke 9:52-56 John 13:23



Ladies' Uplift Circle News

Blessings at the Pacific Coast Fellowship Weekend

By Sister Virginia Surprenant

Over 100 sisters gathered at the Red Lion Hotel in Anaheim, California, for the Pacific Coast Fellowship Weekend February 27, 2015. The Little Ladies Circle girls, Brooklyn and Summer Schweitzer, Cattee Huttenberger, and Lily Grace Balilo, sang a medley of songs, followed by a song by Tori, Amanda, and Sabrina Liberto with Sabrina playing the ukulele. Throughout the weekend, the Liberto sisters led the singing and Sisters Diane Surdock and Sharon Church played the piano. We enjoyed the beautiful music all weekend.

The seminar theme was *"I AM."* Sister Lillian Liberto gave a wonderful presentation on how the Lord, the great I AM, changes who we are. She outlined sadness, adversity, discontentment, brokenness, and many other emotional feelings we go through as women. We separated into groups based on these feelings, and each sister went to the group that she identified with most.

At the end of group discussions, a leader shared what they came away with. The sisters came to these conclusions: God can do all things, leading us out of the darkness if we ask; we need to talk less and do more; doing God's work brings Him glory

and us happiness; and a changed vision brings a changed life. Many of the sisters said they could identify with all the groups, so it was evident that many are struggling with similar things. We thank Sister Lillian for the wonderful seminar she presented.

The afternoon session consisted of crafts and a fundraiser bazaar. Sisters sold crochet items, handbags, homemade skin creams, cupcakes, handmade greeting cards, and jewelry. Proceeds went to support the Guatemala Youth Camp. It was a fun, Spirit-filled afternoon. At dinner, we gathered for a wonderful meal. Together, we laughed, cried, prayed, and shared our happiness and sadness with each other at the individual tables. The Spirit of God was starting to spread.

Sister Zarella prepared a scriptural Jeopardy game for Fun Night, and it was so realistic you felt like you were really on the show. We agreed to study more scripture from the Bible and Book of Mormon to gear up for future games.

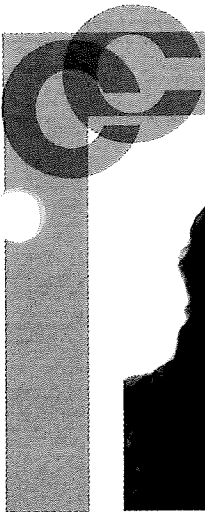
Sunday morning, we had even more sisters attending for the day. The meeting room was packed, and we were so blessed to have Brothers David Piccuito and Justin

Paxon administer to us. The brothers spoke on the theme and administered sacrament. Over 30 women were anointed or prayed for. The tears flowed and the blessings poured. Outside it was pouring rain, which was a good relief from the Southern California drought. That day, the heavens opened up, the rain poured down, and Glory filled our souls.

A season of testimony followed. On a scale from 1 to 20, I give the meeting a big 20. There was not a dry eye as each sister poured her heart out, asked forgiveness, shared her burden, and told how much she loved us. No one was left out, and some said, *"I never cry, but today I am sobbing because God is touching me."* How much better can that get?

I left with so much love for each of my sisters and know I will be praying for each of them and their burdens that were laid at the foot of the cross that day. I wish you all could have been there to share and enjoy the love.

I am thankful that God allowed me to go to another retreat, and I look forward to the General Ladies Circle Fellowship Weekend in Albuquerque in 2016.



What Could Ruth Do?

fields and handpicked the dropped grains. She brought them home to her mother-in-law, Naomi. As she worked, the wealthy owner of the field noticed her. His name was Boaz, and he was related to Naomi's late husband and sons. In the Hebrew religion when a man died, it was expected that a close relative would marry the widow and remember the name of the person who had died. Boaz was not married.

He noticed what a good girl Ruth was. He told his workers to drop more grain for her. He told Ruth to be safe and pick grains in his fields by his workers. He also told her she could eat with his people and drink the water they would carry out.

At the end of the good harvest, there was a party to celebrate. Boaz was out in the place where the grains were separated from the stalks. He ate and drank and fell asleep happily by his crops.

That night, Naomi reminded Ruth about the Hebrew law which taught them to marry a relative's widow. She told Ruth to wash up and then, when it was dark, after the party, once Boaz was asleep, to go and quietly lie down at his feet. Naomi told her that Boaz would tell her what to do. Boaz woke at midnight and was shocked to find a woman at his feet. He asked who it was, and Ruth answered and asked him if he would protect her (marry her).

He said, "...Blessed be thou of the Lord....for thou hast showed more kindness" (Ruth 3:10). He told her not to fear, and that all of the city knew that she was a good woman. He said, "It is the law that I can marry you, but there is one other man who is a closer relative. Stay here now and in the morning I will go to the city to the judges and will ask him if he will do the part of a relative and marry you. If he will not, then I will!"

Boaz did as he said. The other relative did not want to marry Ruth. To his joy, Boaz now had a loving, good woman to marry. She had been so sad, but now happiness was there. She kept her dear mother-in-law, Naomi, close by her. When Boaz and Ruth got married, Naomi even helped take care of their baby. Now Naomi was not so bitter and hurt. God had worked everything out for them.

This baby was named Obed. When he grew up he had a son named Jesse. Jesse grew up and was the father of David, who fought Goliath and who later became king.

Can you imagine, when Ruth and Naomi were

crying, that God had a great big plan for them to not be so lonely and sad? Who would have thought that such a good thing could have come out of sadness and loss? Remember, the Apostle Paul also teaches us in Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose."

With love,

Your friend, who is called according to His purpose—like you

Sister Jan

WORD SEARCH

RUTH	HAPPY
AND	DAYS
NAOMI	FOR
WENT	THEM
THROUGH	HE
HEART	CARES
ACHE	FOR
BUT	EACH
GOD	OF
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P	L	A	N	T	H	E	M	T
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A	C	H	E	N	F	O	R	N
P	T	A	T	D	A	Y	S	D
C	A	R	E	S	P	R	A	Y

Dear Friends,

Have you ever really, really wanted something that you prayed and asked God about but things were not working out the way you wanted? Did you wonder why, or get mad at God? This has happened to me several times in my life.

Off and on I felt all those bad feelings, but I still trusted God. I still do know that God IS in charge of the whole universe. He is in charge of me and every human that I love. I still see all of His blessings and kindnesses that surround me, even when my heart hurts. And I can still talk to the Lord and pray in the name of Jesus for God to get me through sadness and fear and be a good, happy person who loves and is loved by others. I know God knows the future for every one of us. Jesus is by our sides.

There was a young woman in the Bible named Ruth. She married a Hebrew man whose family had come to work in her country of Moab, because of a famine. Then something terrible happened! Her husband, his brother and his father got very ill and died. Ruth's mother-in-law, Naomi, wanted to go back to her hometown of Bethlehem and live by her relatives. Ruth loved her husband's mother, Naomi, and she chose to leave her own country and stay by her side. Ruth said to Naomi, "...whither (wherever) thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest (live), I will lodge (live); thy people shall be my people, and thy God will be my God" (Ruth 1:16- 22). Ruth was going to serve our great, big, wonderful God.

The older woman was so hurt, and sad that because her husband and two sons died, she changed her name to Mara, which means bitter (sad and angry). Her heart was broken. There was nothing for her in the place where they were alone with no family. She and Ruth travelled back to Bethlehem. Their husbands were gone and they were poor.

The Hebrew people had a law that hungry and poor people were allowed to go into the fields during harvest and pick up the dropped grains to cook and eat. Ruth quietly went out to the

A Visit to San Demetrio *By Elder Tony Micale*

The Italy Committee has been actively supporting the Great Work of the Lord for many years via visits, outreach, emails, phone calls and ongoing communication. In October 2014, myself along with my wife Sister Lydia and Brother Paul Benyola once again made a trip to visit and encourage the saints in Italy.

We have ten members in San Demetrio with a lot of possibilities of others coming in. We have made tremendous progress over the last few years, thanks to the hard work of the brothers and sisters coming here. It is important that we bring young people into the Church here, as the members are all up in years.

Brother Johnny Marino is a resident elder in the area, but every so many months he and his wife, Sister Filomena, must travel back to Germany for their healthcare to stay active. Sister Filomena had a dream telling them not to leave for Germany until after the group's visit. The Lord provided the time needed for us to spend together.

An activity that has been successful in opening doors for us in the past is having a fiesta. Sister Lydia was charged with organizing this event and inviting friends we have cultivated throughout the years to join in fellowship with the saints who live in the area. Approximately 20 persons gathered that evening, many bringing desserts. Brother Paul Benyola opened with a few remarks, suggesting that we do a variety of things to have fun and bring back memories of the two major families that worked so hard to start the work and kept it going for so many years, the Oliva and Buonofiglio families. The members of these families all gave their testimony about

what they remembered. It was a perfect way to bring back to them the hard work and wonderful memories they had of their parents and the past. Before the close of the evening many asked for prayer, and we anointed at least five, three of whom were not members yet, and we are praying that the Lord touches their hearts and they will ask for their baptism. All in all, the evening was a great success. Once again Sister Lydia, who can speak Italian, was put to the test and interpreted the entire evening. We went home thanking God for His blessings.

On Sunday, as we drove to the church, I reflected that the Church really is a shining light on a hill. It was wonderful to see the people coming with smiles on their faces. There were 19 in attendance, nine members of San Demetrio and 10 visitors, including the three of us. The family across from the Church had a son, Giuseppe, who lived in Canada and agreed to interpret for us. He found out that he is related to some of our members. Giuseppe interpreted our sermons into the dialect spoken in San Demetrio. While doing so, Giuseppe also learned about the Gospel and enjoyed the experience. Brother Johnny played the guitar as we sang hymns, and Brother Paul opened our meeting on the topic of love. He shared the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke Chapter 10) and I followed on the same theme. We encouraged the members to support Brother Francesco and Brother Pasquale during the next five months while Brother Johnny was gone. Many gave their testimony, and we felt the Spirit of the Lord in the meeting. We were happy to see the good feeling and desire to serve the Lord in the members. The Lord had allowed us a lot of success during our trip to Italy. We left there feeling the Love of God and the strengthening of the Church.

Topic Series Continued from Page 6

What is something you know now that you wish you knew as a young person in the Church?

The older brothers and sisters really do know what they are talking about. The counsel they give will be the best you may ever receive.—*Sister Deanna McKay*

Do not be afraid to reach out to someone when you need it. The brothers and sisters have a true love and care for you.—*Sister Kristy Zaino*

To wait on the Lord and have patience.—*Sister Joann Cotellesse*

Trust in the Lord and wait patiently for His answer to your prayers. Never murmur or doubt but know that He's always on time. Trust, lean, and be confident.—*Sister Sharon Sloan*

If you truly put God first, everything will work out (maybe not what you wanted, but what is best for you).—*Sister Kim Morle*



For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return. 2 Nephi 20:22

Blessing Bits

BB For I Know the Plans I Have for You

During my last year of college I interned for a company and after graduation I expected that they would offer me a full-time position. Unfortunately that was not the case and I started to job search, but every job offer required that I would have to work on Sunday. Trusting in the Lord, I declined those job offers but several months passed by and my financial situation was becoming a concern. Although I was somewhat discouraged I still continued to trust that the Lord would provide the best job for me. When my funds were at the lowest it was then that I was contacted by the company I had interned for offering me a position. Twenty years later I am still employed with the same company and I praise the Lord for teaching me this lesson of patience by trusting in Him. He has always provided for our every need.—*Brother Kevin Jasmin, Lake Worth, Florida Branch*

BB The Power of a Child's Prayer

About 30 years ago, I was cleaning out the fire place and I couldn't get the embers out, so I threw water on them. The steam burned

my face and neck so badly that my skin was hanging off my face. My sons Winston and Angelo, then ages 10 and 8, saw what happened and ran upstairs and prayed. My neighbor called an ambulance. To make matters worse, the ambulance had to drive through an ice storm on the way to the hospital. The doctor treated my face with topical medication and sent me home. My face and neck healed perfectly. I have no scars and I know it was due to the prayers of my sons.—*Sister Trisha Licata, Cincinnati-Morrow, Ohio Mission*

BB New Flowers

During this past March, we were in Quito, Ecuador preparing a location to be the first meeting place in the eight years of the work there. It was in a neighborhood next to the one where most of the saints live. I noticed the dead plants in the planters embedded into the sidewalk out in front, and the thought flashed through my mind – call it a quick prayer – that one day these planters would have flowers. I never mentioned the thought to anyone, which was surprising as most of our conversations those days were about how to beautify the surroundings. The following day, as we were pulling up to

the place in a taxi, we saw the landlord and his wife planting trees with orange flowers in the planters. I felt the Spirit of God fall on me and witness that they represent the work of the Lord blooming in Quito.—*Brother Ken Lombardo, Metuchen, New Jersey 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: *Brother Phil Jackson visited 15 countries on missionary work. If you could go on a missionary trip anywhere, where would you like to go and why?*

Answer from last month: *This one is for the young people and kids! What is your favorite summertime activity?* I love spending time outside with the family. Just cooking out, the beach, or backyard badminton tournaments are some of my favorite times in the summer. Branch picnics and VBS are favorite summertime activities as well. Anything that brings family together, natural or spiritual, are just a few of my favorite things.

—*Sister Kristina Calabrese, Detroit, MI Branch #2*



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