



THE CHURCH OF Jesus Christ

International Headquarters in
Monongahela, Pennsylvania

March, 2012

Volume 68, No.3

Be Ye Therefore Perfect

The admonition from our Lord, recorded in Matthew 5:48 as *“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect”*, and repeated in III Nephi 12:48 as *“Therefore I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or as your Father who is in heaven is perfect”*, sounds like an impossible task.

The word “perfect” in modern English is most frequently understood to convey an image of absolute flawlessness. Whether or not this is even possible—every human has weaknesses, failings, ways in which they “miss the bulls-eye” [the fundamental meaning of the Greek word typically translated “sin”]—is not the point here.

What is “be ye therefore perfect” really trying to convey? Is this passage demanding the impossible—absolute flawlessness, a characteristic rightly reserved to God himself—of us?

The Greek word translated “perfect” here is “teleios”. Its fundamental meaning is conveyed by phrases like “brought to its end”, “finished”, “lack-

ing nothing necessary to completeness”. As applied to people, it carries the meaning “full-grown”, “adult”, “of full age”, “mature”. The verb form, “teleo” basically means “complete, fulfill, bring to a close”, and it is a form of this verb—“tetelestai”—that is recorded in John 19:30 as the last word Jesus uttered on the cross.

One image that comes to mind for me for the word “perfect” is that of the work of an expert cabinet maker who is commissioned to build a bureau out of the finest woods, designed to last as an heirloom for centuries. He puts forth his best effort, chooses the finest woods he can obtain, crafts the joints with utmost care, and does his very best to ensure that there is no trace of dust in any of the layers of finish used to protect the wood. Is the effort to be discarded if there is a seepage of glue in one of the joints, if there is a small knot in the wood of one of the unseen parts of a drawer, or if a tiny dust-speck appears in the finish? The answer to that question is whether the bureau suits its purpose—satisfies the requirements of the person who commissioned the bureau and serves his family for generations to come. When

the cabinetmaker finished the bureau, it was “perfect”.

Another image is of the composer Johannes Brahms. He spent fifteen years writing and revising his First Symphony, and even destroyed the original slow movement after the first few performances and wrote another for publication. Was the result the “perfect” symphony, the “best” symphony ever? No, but when he approved it for publication it was “perfect”. The final published result was what he ultimately meant, and represented the very best he could do. It was the “perfect” Brahms First Symphony. It was complete.

*“Be ye therefore perfect,
even as your Father which is
in heaven is perfect”*
(Matthew 5:48)

The admonition in Matthew 5:48 means we all must strive to do the best we can with the time, resources, and tools we have available to us. It does not mean we have failed utterly if the results are not what we might wish them to be. None of us can achieve flawlessness.

The King James Version of the New Testament and The Church of Jesus Christ

Nearly a century ago, a revelation was given to, and accepted by, The Church of Jesus Christ to the effect that the Church should adhere to the King James Version [KJV, also known as the Authorized Version, or AV] dating from 1611 and resulting from a commission by James I, King of England.

At the time this revelation was given, there were only two generally available English translations of the New Testament. These versions were the King James Version, favored by English-speaking Protestants, dating from 1611 and based on a published compendium of Greek manuscripts, and the Challoner Revision of the Douay-Rheims dating in this form from 1749-1752 and translated from the Latin Vulgate. Although other translations from the Greek New Testament existed at the time, they were not widely available.

How did these two versions come to exist?

The Greek text underlying the King James Version is referred to as the “Textus Receptus” [TR], primarily versions of 1589 and 1599. This title comes from the preface of the edition of this text, published in 1633 by the brothers Elzevir, in the preface of which they commented that this was “textum. . . ab omnibus receptus” [“the text. . . received/accepted by all”]. Subsequent discoveries of ancient manuscripts dating from the first five centuries AD have revealed that some details of the Textus Receptus reflect later scribal additions, notes, and amendments that are not present in the earliest texts.

An outgrowth of the pronouncement by the Council of Trent in 1546 supporting the Vulgate as the “authentic” version of the New Testament, the Douay-Rheims version is a translation of the accepted Vulgate at the time. Subsequent revisions [notably by Challoner in 1749-1752 and the Confraternaty edition of 1941] remained faithful to the Vulgate where the Latin disagreed with available Greek texts. Roman Catholic editions subsequent to the pronouncement by Pope Pius XII in 1943 are made from the earliest Greek texts available rather than the Vulgate.

Why was this direction important back then?

At the time of the revelation to The Church of Jesus Christ, the King James Version was the best—and the only generally available—translation of the original Greek. The Challoner-Rheims was a translation of the Vulgate, and was thus a secondary translation, and the text on which it was based was “received” only by the Roman Catholic Church.

Why is this revelation important today?

Although the circumstances that prevailed at the time of this revelation have changed, there are still a number of reasons to prefer the King James Version.

1) The style and word choices in the Book of Mormon reflects that of the King James Version. This includes the preservation of the distinction between “thee/thou/thy/thine”, which is always singular, and “ye/you/your/yours”, which

is always plural, and this distinction is often important for proper understanding of the text.

2) Although many other translations into English have come forth, the wording used in citations from the King James Version is recognized more immediately by more people, in and out of The Church of Jesus Christ, than that of any other English translation.

3) Research material is available to support careful analysis of the King James Version relative to the relationship of the English to the original Greek text of the Textus Receptus; the changes in the meaning of English words that have occurred since 1611; and the insights provided by the discoveries of Greek texts significantly predating those underlying the Textus Receptus. The body of this research material is far larger than that for any other English translation.

4) The King James Version in comparison to other available translations [regardless of source] is among the very best in terms of representing the original text in maintaining a balance between maintaining a clear sense of the intent of the original Greek wording and in ensuring that a given Greek word is translated the same way wherever it appears in the New Testament.

Is the King James Version of the New Testament without flaw? Of course not. No human endeavor is. Should we continue to rely on the King James Version as the best available version today for our personal scripture study of the New Testament? Yes. While other good modern translations can be consulted for clarification, the King James Version remains, and should remain, the standard Bible used by The Church of Jesus Christ.



Purpose – Mission – Vision

Purpose Statement

- To fulfill the plan of God by bringing salvation through Christ to all people.

Mission Statement

- The Church of Jesus Christ will teach the Gospel to all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things commanded by Jesus Christ.
- To draw Israel to Christ through an effort focused on the Native Americans of North and South America.

Vision Statement

- The full manifestations of God's Spirit and power among the Saints, resulting from living and worshipping in unity and righteousness, stimulate continuous growth of the Domestic Church—even at a rate of doubling over a five year period—while strengthening the International Church.

Fear of the Lord

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding"
(Proverbs 9:10)

This theme is repeated frequently in the Old Testament. Does the modern English sense of the word "fear" in such contexts correctly and completely convey the intent of the original Hebrew text?

According to *"Young's Analytical Concordance of the Bible"*, in most cases in which the word "fear" appears in phrases like "Fear of the Lord", the Hebrew three-letter root yod, resh, aleph, whose basic verb form is pronounced "yara", is what is used. That includes this instance and five others in Psalms, and fourteen instances in Proverbs alone.

According to *"A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament"* [Brown, Driver, and Briggs], the fundamental meaning of this root is not so much "stand in terror of" as it is "stand

in awe of, have deep respect for, be reverent toward". There are a number of other Hebrew roots in which "terror, fright, fear, trembling" form a significant part of their meaning, but "yara" is a clear, and in this author's view unique, exception. "Yara" isn't about terror, it's about respect, admiration, and awe.

How did the use of the word "fear" come to be traditional in this context in English translations? There are two reasons.

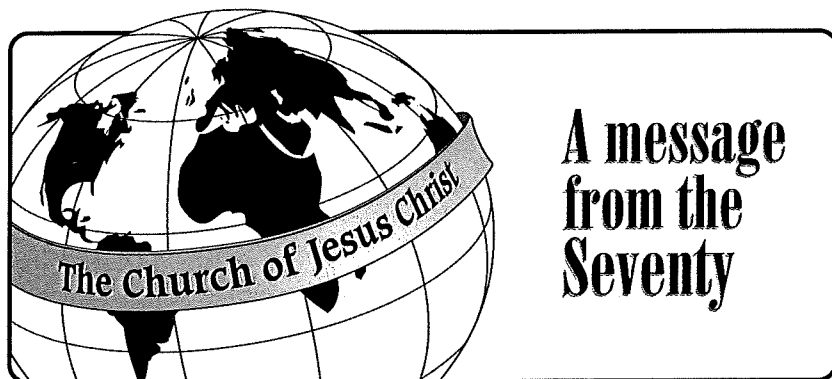
First, it appears that in the Greek of two millennia ago there were only two words available in the language conveying the basic semantics of the many words in Hebrew that had overlapping meanings. These two Greek words were "deilia", conveying fundamentally "timidity", and "phobos", from which English gets the word "phobia", and conveying primarily "fright" or even "terror".

Second, the Old Testament was translated into Greek before 100 BC, and widely circulated in that form, in-

cluding during Jesus' time on earth. It was in this form, not the original Hebrew, that the Old Testament was most widely circulated in apostolic times. For those cases in which the original Hebrew was a form of "yara", the Septuagint uses a form of the Greek word "phobos". There wasn't a better word available, and the oft-repeated idea "fear of the Lord" was customarily rendered using "phobos".

This limitation of Koine Greek carries over into the New Testament as well. "Fear of God" appears in Romans 3:18, II Corinthians 7:1, and Ephesians 5:21, and "fear of the Lord" appears in Acts 9:31. An examination of each of these passages reveals that the intent of the authors is not to recommend "terror of" God, but rather reference toward, respect of, and awe toward, the Lord.

Love and terror are mutually-incompatible attitudes. *"And we have known and believed the love that God hath for us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him"* (I John 4:16).



Great Blessings – Swahili Book of Mormon

By Brothers Art Gehly, Sr., and Joel Gehly

Bwana Asifiwe, Bwana Asifiwe, again! [Praise God, Praise God, Again!] This was the greeting we heard over and over again in Kenya and Tanzania as we ended 2011, and shared the first week of the new year—2012, with the saints of God in these two African countries. The saints of God there are strong spiritually in the love of Jesus Christ and the Church. However, the tremendous excitement during our latest visit was the fact that we were able to deliver to each mission village the Book of Mormon in the Swahili language. After years of hard work and [sometimes] unbelievable hardships, setbacks, and opposition—the Swahili Book of Mormon is available to your brothers and sisters in Africa. What joy and rejoicing we experienced from the saints when we saw them pick up and read those words for the first time in their own language. **Bwana Asifiwe, Bwana Asifiwe, again!!**

In each mission village from Nairobi, Kisii, Migori, Kagoja, etc., we taught and explained the record of the Book of Mormon again to the saints. The only difference this time as we taught them, we had all the saints follow along in their own copy of the book! Now the words were truly coming alive. The story about Alma [the son], and his conversion, was read and discussed comparing Alma to the conversion to the Apostle Paul. The words in III Nephi were read and discussed concerning the naming of the Church. The words in the gospel of John concerning the ‘other sheep’ were compared with the words of Christ in III Nephi chapter 15. In all these examples, and many others, we saw the importance of the Word in the language of the people.

As you have read in past articles about the missionary work in foreign lands, the activities of the missionary are extremely wide ranging from many mundane natural issues to spiritual activities of prayer, teaching, anointing, preaching, singing, etc. Of course during this trip, we did all these activities and more. However, I believe this trip was unique in my experience for the fact that in every village that we visited [and taught/preached], there were baptisms performed or requested! Every village! **Bwana Asifiwe!**

On our last day as we visited the Nairobi mission, one of our ordained teachers, Brother Moses [who had received his copy of the Book of Mormon the day before], stood before the congregation and very happily read from his new Book of Mormon—II Nephi 31:19-21.

“And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this straight and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save. Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life. And now, behold, my beloved brethren, this is the way; and there is none other way nor name given under heaven whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God. And now, behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God, without end. Amen.”

The saints of God in Kenya and Tanzania are firmly on that straight and narrow path. Let us pray that they—along with us—will remain steadfast on that path until the end of our days. **Bwana Asifiwe, Bwana Asifiwe, again!**

In the October Gospel News, it was noted by Brother Paul Palmieri, President of The Church of Jesus Christ, that translating and printing the Book of Mormon in foreign languages is critical to the success of growing the foreign missionary works. A letter was sent to member’s homes in November, 2011, requesting each member to consider making a contribution to the Book of Mormon translation fund. A target goal of \$195,000 was established by taking 2,600 members x \$75 per member. In nine weeks, nearly \$40,000 has been donated! As noted in this article, the membership in Kenya and Tanzania are now better

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THE GOSPEL NEWS (ISSN 0279-1056) is published monthly for \$18.00 per year by The Church of Jesus Christ PRINT HOUSE, World Operations Center, 110 Walton Tea Room Road, Greensburg, PA 15601-9998, 724-837-7799. Periodical postage paid at Greensburg, Pennsylvania and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO: THE GOSPEL NEWS BUSINESS OFFICE, World Operations Center, 110 Walton Tea Room Road, Greensburg, PA 15601-9998.

Editorial Viewpoint . . .

"But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:10-13).

The Philippians had sent a message to Paul about how much they loved and missed him. Paul responded to them in this passage how much he rejoiced in their love for him, even though he had not heard from them in sometime [due to slow means of communication in those days]. He wanted them to know that their expression of love, though much appreciated, was not necessary for Paul to "feel good". He went on to teach them that he has learned, through very difficult circumstances in his life [imprisonment, starvation, etc.], that true inner joy comes from complete independence of man's praise, and complete dependence on God in order to "feel good". Paul had advanced his spiritual understanding to a point of no return. As he stated in another part of scripture, there is nothing that would separate him from the love of God. Therefore, he was able to do ALL things through Christ [not some things. . he says ALL things which includes spiritual, natural. . anything. . because God can do all things!].

Today, as much as we say that we don't care about the praise of man, but would rather have the approval of God, I'm not sure this is truly the case, when put to the test. Not many of us have been imprisoned, or are starving, or had to face the many of the things Paul had to face in his life, yet when faced with our little afflictions or problems [little in comparison to Paul], we complain and become hopeless, and desperately seek the approval and support of others. While getting approval and support from others is nice [even Paul rejoiced in the Philippians expression of love], and we should be thankful for this, we should not be dependent on this. Rather, we should be dependent on our strength and joy coming from the living God. Only He can lift us up, carry us through, and truly make us "feel good".

I had a conversation with a sister from my branch the other day, whose testimony of overcoming hardship and hopeless situations, by relying completely on God, and not at all on man, was inspiring. In all situations she mentioned, the one thing that was consistent was that she, nor anyone else, did anything to solve the situation. Miraculously, it worked itself out on its own. This is the involvement of a true and living God in her life. Paul had learned this [though it took many years], and even in the most deplorable conditions, never complained, or needed a shoulder to cry on. He cried on the shoulder of our heavenly Father, and was never let down. In traveling to other countries on missionary work, it is interesting to see how people who live in poverty are so happy and joyful. We expect them to be miserable and depressed, and just the opposite is true. They don't know or understand any other life. They are content with different things than we might be. We can't gauge happiness and joy on natural things or on human kind. If we do, we will eventually be let down. We must rely on God for our contentment, for our answers, for that "good feeling" because we will never be disappointed. Every obstacle will be removed by Him, not by natural means. When we can learn this, as Paul did, we can actually live a life in constant joy and assurance, and never, ever work to solve a problem on our own, but truly rely on Him. We can then say assuredly like Paul and many other people who have overcome extreme odds, that we too can do ALL things through Him!

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork

What Was Going On In The Promised Land After the Birth of Jesus?

Dear Boys and Girls,

We all know the Bible story of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem when a bright star shone and the shepherds saw the sky full of angels singing with praise. But signs were also given in other parts of the world. The special star was seen far across the ocean in the Promised Land of the Americas. (see III Nephi 1: 21)

The Book of Mormon tells us that God sent prophets throughout the Promised Land to announce Jesus' coming. Jesus himself spoke to the leader of the believers and said,

*"Lift up your head
and be of good cheer;
... on the morrow come
I into the world,
... I come unto my own,
to fulfill all things which
I have made known unto
the children of men from the
foundation of the world. . ."*
(III Nephi 1:13,14)

That night when the sun went down, it remained as bright as noon-time. A new star appeared shining so brightly that it was light for a day, a night and a day. ". . . for the signal



which had been given was already at hand. And they began to know that the Son of God must shortly appear; . . . all the people upon the face of the whole earth from the west to the east, both in the land north and in the land south, were so exceedingly astonished that they fell to the earth. For they knew that the prophets had testified of these things for many years. . . and they began to fear because of their iniquity and their unbelief" (III Nephi 1:16-18).

Many repented, made a decision to serve God and were baptized. But the devil started working hard on some of the weak people. He encouraged them to doubt and to do bad things. They set up secret groups to get power and left the cities and joined in bands of robbers in the mountains called the Gadianon robbers. Around the ninth year after the great star told of Jesus' birth, these bad men were coming out of their hiding places in the mountains in big numbers and were attacking, robbing, and destroying entire peaceful cities of the Nephite and Lamanite people.

By the thirteenth year it had gotten so dangerous that all of the good people both Lamanites and Nephites had to join together and take up weapons to protect their families.

Their chief judge and governor, Lachoneus, prayed to God for guidance. He told all of his people to gather their families, all of their food,

herds of animals, and everything of value and come together in the middle of the country and create a large gathering. He caused extremely big walls to be built around them and set up armies made up of the good Lamanites and good Nephites to guard them from the robbers both day and night. And he told them that only God could save them and they must pray and be sorry for anything they had done wrong!

The people listened (see III Nephi 3:15,16) and called on God. Now it was the custom of the Nephites to choose someone that had the spirit of revelation and prophecy to be their leader in times of war. That way, they could be guided by God when they did not know what to do or where to go. Lachoneus was this kind of good man and the new great commander of all the armies, named Gidgiddoni, was also.

Right away the people told him, "Pray unto the Lord, and let us go up into the mountains and attack those robbers!"

But Gidgiddoni told them, "The Lord says, 'no'. If we went against them there, we would be destroyed. Instead, we will prepare ourselves in the center of our lands. We will gather all our armies together and wait until they shall come against us. If we do this, the Lord will deliver them into our hands."

The Lord knew the best way to defeat the armies, and Gidgiddoni was willing to listen to the Lord.

By the seventeenth year after the star announced Jesus' birth, all of the good people were gathered in the state of Zarahemla. These followers of God changed their name to Nephites. They gathered together by thousands and

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The Children's Corner

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tens of thousands to defend themselves against the Gadianton robbers. (see III Nephi 3:22) They had enough supplies to live for seven years once they brought all their horses, chariots, flocks, herds, grains and everything of value with them. It was the hope of their good leaders that they would be able to destroy the robbers in that time.

Can you imagine how strange it would be to just walk away from your home, carrying all of your food, things of value, and family and go to a huge gathering like this with thousands and thousands of people? Once they were together they built a huge wall to surround them and placed soldiers to guard them. In those days there weren't any airplanes, bombs, or guns. People fought against each other carrying shields, spears, arrows, knives and swords. A good strong wall really helped. And these people also surrounded themselves with mighty prayer that God would forgive them for their sins and deliver them from their enemies.

In the eighteenth year, the robbers started coming out of the mountains and taking over the homes and lands left by the good people. However, one thing they had not counted on, there was nothing to eat! This was God's plan. No one was growing crops for them to steal. No one had left herds of animals to eat. The only wild game was back in the mountains, not among the abandoned homes!

So the robbers came up to battle God's people. They wore lambskins around their hips that were dyed in blood. Their heads were shaved and they had head plates upon them, and great and terrible was their appearance

because of their armor and being dyed in blood.

When the armies of the good people saw the appearance of the thousands of robber soldiers, they fell to the earth and lifted their cries to the Lord their God that He would spare them and bring them safely away from their enemies!

The robbers saw this and were filled with joy, thinking that they were afraid. But the good armies did not fear them; they feared their God and begged Him for help. (see III Nephi chapter 4) God heard their cries, and in the strength of the Lord, they did fight and win over the robber groups. More people were killed in this great battle than had ever been killed before among these people since Lehi had come over. God saved His believers.

Yet, the attacks continued. The Gadianton robbers left for a few months then came back and surrounded the walled country where God's people lived. They planned to cut them off from going and coming, but they started starving! The wild game was running out and they had nothing to eat. The robbers' leader decided to take his weak group and go live up north for a while while they got stronger.

But Gidgidoni sent out his armies in the nighttime and cut off the way of their escape and placed his armies in the way of their retreat. The next day when the robbers began their march, they were met by the armies of the Nephites both in the front and behind. There were many thousands who gave themselves up for prisoners, and the rest of the bad men died in battle.

The robbers were put into prison and the word of God was preached to them. As many of them that repented and promised they would murder no

more were free. They were given food and even land to live on. The ones still full of hate chose to be condemned and punished according to the law.

Finally, the robbers were destroyed! The soldiers' ". . . *hearts were swollen with joy, unto the gushing out of many tears, because of the great goodness of God in delivering them out of the hands of their enemies; and they knew it was because of their repentance and humility that they had been delivered from an everlasting destruction!*" (III Nephi 4:33) The Book of Mormon tells us that there was not a living soul among all of the people of God who doubted that the words of the prophets must be fulfilled. They knew the sign of Jesus' birth had been given twenty-five years before and that the great plan of God was in effect.

They had been saved from destruction by the Gadianton robbers who had been wiped off the face of the earth. Now they were each allowed to take what possessions they had brought and return to their homes and abandoned cities. They had so much to be grateful for as they began rebuilding their cities in the twenty-sixth through twenty-eighth years since the star had shone telling them of the birth of Jesus. As long as they were humble and fair with each other and repented and served God, they were spared and several years were spent in peace.

We are supposed to rely on God like this, too. We are supposed to love one another and work to get along. God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. Follow the words of His prophets and love and forgive one another. We can't go wrong if we do.

With care,
Sister Jan

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Ladies' Circle Rolls Into Atlanta, Georgia

*By Sisters Bonnie Kunkle
and Colleena Eutsey*

On Saturday, August 20, 2011, the sisters of the Atlanta Branch met with much anticipation and excitement. Today, after so many years, a Ladies' Uplift Circle was about to be organized. We were blessed with the presence of our General Ladies' Uplift Circle president, Sister Karen Progar from Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, Vice-President Lisa Champine from Detroit Inner-City and Secretary Sister Gelsa Staley from Forest Hills, Florida, who is not only a General Circle Secretary but the South East Region President. We also had visiting with us from Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Sister Patty Giannetti.

We began by singing #181 *"He's My Rock"* and meeting was opened in prayer by Sister Mary Morle-Morrin.

Sister Karen Progar opened by giving a brief history of the Ladies' Uplift Circle telling us about the desire of Sister Sadie Cadman. Her goal was to involve the sisters in a work for the Church that would help support the American Indian work. Sister Karen gave us figures for the number of layettes that have been provided and the amount of monies that the Circle has raised for missionary work, not only for the NAOB but also for foreign work. She spoke of her desire to see Atlanta organize a Ladies' Circle and how happy she was to see its fruition.

Several Atlanta sisters gave remarks about how the Circle had affected them when they were young or in other branches. We had eleven sisters and three young ladies from the Atlanta Branch in attendance. There was a brief season of questions and answers before the devotions for this morning.

Sister Lisa Champine stated that the Ladies' Uplift Circle is a blessed group of women that not only hear the Spirit speaking but they put it to work. She reminded us that our mission, as women of The Church of Jesus Christ, is extremely important. Atlanta would be a small part of a large group that supports, instructs and shares in the legacy of our late Sister Sadie Cadman. Since she started the Ladies' Uplift Circle over 91 years ago, the core purpose has never changed. It is the method of delivery that has changed. Sister Lisa, changing the pronoun, then read Psalm 126:6,

*"He [she] that goeth forth
and weepeth,
bearing precious seed
shall doubtless
come again with rejoicing,
bringing his [her] sheaves
with him [her]."*

There is much work to be done and we must be diligent doing the Lord's work.

Sister Gelsa Staley, Southeast Region President, then instructed us on the duties of the officers and our agendas for the meetings. She also remarked how blessed she was to finally be able to assist in organizing Atlanta's Circle. We then had election of officers and went on to discuss fund-raising, both on a local level and a region level. All aspects of a typical meeting were addressed. Sister Gelsa also spoke about the upcoming Fel-

lowship Weekend to be held in May, 2012 in Florida.

The theme for this weekend was, *"Seest Thou This Woman?"* The Atlanta sisters presented our visitors with gifts and used *"To The Work"* as a closing hymn. A circle was formed by all of those present as we closed in prayer. We had a luncheon after which the sisters broke off into groups to shop then meet up later for supper.

The blessings continued to our Sunday meeting when Presiding Elder, Brother Joe Giannetti, gave the sisters time to express themselves and sing a couple of hymns. After the Sunday service, we had a spaghetti dinner at the church after which our visiting sisters took their leave to return home. What a blessed weekend we had and

*It is now official—
Atlanta, Georgia
has a Ladies' Uplift Circle!
Praise God!*

FYI—We meet on the first Sunday of every month at the Atlanta Branch building, right after the Sunday morning service. The sisters bring a sandwich and drink from home and after cleaning up from lunch, we go right into our Ladies' Uplift Circle Meeting. Please feel free to come join us. Please call ahead to let one of our members know that you will be joining us for our Ladies' Circle and we will bring extra drinks and sandwiches.

We have had three new members added to our Ladies Uplift Circle in the short time that we have been established. We praise God for the increase.

Please pray for our Circle and we will pray for yours as well. God bless each one of you.



Branch and Mission News

“A Call to Duty”

By Sister Alicia Draskovich

Eagerly anticipating the message God has for His saints at the Sunday service, January 22, 2012, the Forest Hills Branch welcomed the Quorum of Twelve, the leadership of God’s glorious kingdom here on earth. It was evident during introductions that the Apostles had soberly and thoroughly discussed the affairs of the Church during the week and as they serenaded the congregation with “*In the Army of the True and Living God*” one could feel the sense of dedication and duty the brothers have toward the Church and the Gospel. As the inspired message was delivered it was clear that a “call to duty” in the spiritual war to save souls was being made to all members of the Church.

Brother Paul Palmieri opened the meeting and reminded us that we are engaged in warfare for our souls and we need to fight. He asserted that we need to be stirred up to know what our duty is to God. Utilizing Alma Chapter 4, he reminded us about the people of Zarahemla who were in constant opposition with each other, to the point where thousands were killed in battle. Each and every soul met an eternal fate, good or bad. When the natural fighting was over and peace was restored in the land, the survivors were terribly grief stricken and believing God’s judgment was upon them because of their conduct, they were once again awakened to a remembrance of their spiritual duty to God and began to establish the Church more fully. This pattern is the same

today in America. The people then realized there was something much more important than fighting with their brothers. Brother Paul implored us to be awakened to our duty and responsibility to the Church and God’s kingdom. If we can be more dedicated and more diligent in serving God and be obedient to His will, the enemy of our souls can be kept at bay. Then we will be able to help the lost and confused find their way to God’s grace.

Brother Peter Scolaro, having no intentions to preach because of a bad cold, felt his sense of duty to address the congregation and follow Brother Paul. He contemplated the idea of “duty” as he felt it was not a particularly exciting word and perhaps even wearisome. He also thought upon the ability we each have to keep ourselves contained, as he is able to manage a bad cold and keep it contained with medication. God does not contain His love. He shines forth Himself into the world for all those searching and is likened to a beacon light. If we are to emulate God, then the portion of light we are given as His saints should not be contained within ourselves. Jesus explained that light has come into the world but men love the darkness. Although Nicodemus felt the light, his life was so enshrouded with darkness that he could only visit Jesus at night. Jesus reminded us not to nurture the darkness and let the light go forth. We have a duty to be beacon lights to this dark world, illuminating it and helping those lost in darkness find their way to God. Our duty is to show others what the light of Jesus has done for us. Brother Peter told us that when we impact the lives of others by being those beacon lights our “duty” becomes exciting.

Brother Ike Smith expressed that God constantly gives us opportunities to shine our light and be used to His purpose but in order to do that we have

to be available and not get in our own way. We are the greatest obstacles to fulfilling our duty to God. Brother Phil Jackson reminded us that God’s spirit is within us to direct us and stir us up to do His work. This spirit can be stirred up to rise and grow beyond our natural frame. He shared that at the beginning of World War II there was trouble getting men to enlist and fight. A gentleman named John Paul Jones was able to write songs which played on the radio to motivate the men to fight. Successfully the songs convicted many and stirred within their hearts the conviction to enlist and fight for the freedom of others. As music can stir the spirit, so too the gospel of the Church has a peculiar and ancient sound that will stir our spirits to our call and duty. Brother Ike shared that when the Lord convicts our hearts, it is easy to free ourselves to do His work and fight for the spiritual freedom of others. Brother Phil said we are the kingdom of God on earth, a precursor to the Kingdom of Zion coming, a government ruled by the spirit of God. Workers will be needed then. We need to work now for that kingdom. There is place for everyone.

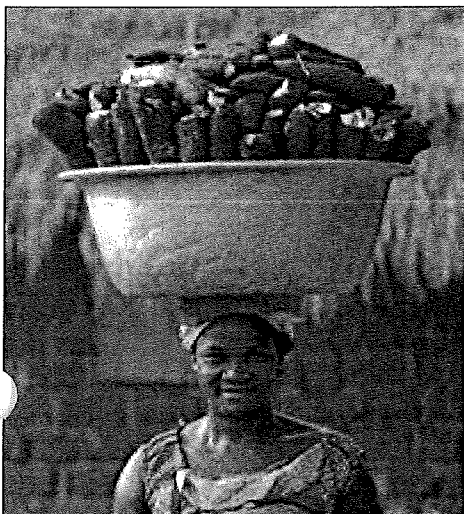
As confirmation to the spirit we felt during our service, Brother Dick Christman testified that he has been ill for two years and has no strength. Upon arriving to the quorum meetings in Forest Hills he has regained his strength for the first time. It was also pointed out that the MBA service in Forest Hills that prior Wednesday focused specifically on Alma Chapter 4, the same scripture used by Brother Paul to introduce the message, a confirmation to the sermon preached. We thank God for always speaking to us through the divine inspiration of our brothers. Let us be stirred up and dutiful to the work our Father in heaven has called His saints to do as reminded to us by our leadership this day.

The Quorum of 70 Evangelists Visit Lake Worth, Florida

Sunday morning, January 22, 2012

The kick off to a wonderful week of hosting the Evangelists of The Church of Jesus Christ!

The first taste of this amazing week that we were about to embark on was viewing photos of Brother Lyle Crisculo's travels through Malawi and Mozambique. Brother Lyle guided us through his travels and the lives of our brothers and sisters in these foreign lands. As we observed their humble existence we all quickly realized those among us that have the least, are monetarily rich when compared to these humble people. But, that is only monetary richness. Brother Lyle described their love and dedication for the Lord and how the branches in their country are continually growing as a result. They rise to the occasion and overcome many difficulties that include cooking the small amount of food they have over an open fire, sparse roofs and no plumbing. A common scene in this country are women trudging along the dirt road, with children along side, often with child, another very possibly strapped on their back, while bearing a "burden" on their head.



While the attached picture is not from Brother Lyle's presentation, it is a similar photo of those we viewed in his presentation. The basket that these women carry is called their "burden". But instead of this burden causing them to be stooped as our burdens often do to us, they must stand upright and straight to ensure its safety and balance. These women are a shining example!

Later that morning, Brother Lyle addressed us in the Sunday morning service exhorting us to make a difference in this life. He told us about his usual morning routine which often includes meeting friends at a local restaurant to eat breakfast. He explained that they are a group of retired men and often their conversation turns to those that have passed from this life. He said a typical morning discussion may include "Did you hear Fred died?" And the reply comes. . . "That's too bad, hey, pass the cream, would you?" Is that the extent of our works on this earth? Brother Lyle asked us. So easily dismissed by those that know us? It should be our goal to be the most impactful servant of God that we can be.

Flash forward one week—Saturday, January 28, 2012

The Lake Worth Branch was blessed to be the chosen location to host the annual gathering of our Evangelists. Over twenty-five Evangelists, along with Brother Paul Liberto, the Apostle liaison to the Quorum of Seventy, were in attendance. As our brothers met for all day sessions on Friday and Saturday, they did not allow their weariness to overcome them. On Saturday evening they shared a wonderful overview of the Domestic and International works being performed throughout the world. Through the use of technology, the Southeast Region watched in awe as

the IMOC took us on a world-wide trip with frequent stops to enlighten us on the various works that are occurring, the challenges they face and the blessings they receive. Each stop included an explanation of the work, when it began, the growth rate that each location is enjoying and a beautiful experience to demonstrate how God has ordained each effort. Our brothers reminded us that people need the Lord in every country. As Matthew 28:19,20 states: *"Go ye therefore, and teach 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 whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."*

Sunday, January 29, 2012

Our day began at the waters of regeneration as we watched Brother Eugene Perri take John Little into the water. While still at the water's shore, God's spirit was clearly present as Brother Chuck Maddox reminded us of the images we viewed the prior evening of our brothers and sisters not as prosperous as we are. He said that God has blessed us so much in this country that these material things can turn into weights that may hold us back. He encouraged us to let go and allow our lives to be changed this very day. As we left the baptism site, we knew we were on the verge of a wonderful day!

Once our meeting was opened, Brother Ron Mazzeo sang *"The Old Rugged Cross Made the Difference"* while playing the guitar. What a blessing it is to see the talents God has given His people! Our first speaker was Brother Jerry Valenti and *"The Family of God"* was his topic. In Matthew Chapter 12, Jesus tells His

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Great Blessings — Swahili Book of Mormon

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Evangelists Visit Lake Worth, Florida

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disciples that those around Him were His mother and His brethren. Brother Jerry instructed us to remember the importance of the “Family of God” in our lives. He told us that the most effective evangelist tool that the church has is the “Family of God”.

Brother Tony Ricci was the next brother inspired to address us. Brother Tony told us to “*Get in the Game!*” He stressed the importance of being free. Some are held back by a silken thread while others are held by heavy chains. Whatever the reason, if you are not free, you are kidnapped! What does a kidnapper want? He wants a ransom, but our ransom has already been paid. Tongues were spoken and the interpretation was “*Come unto me for my arms are outstretched all the day long, and know the true joy of life. Come unto me!*” Brother Tony then continued and told us that when we claim the power of the resurrection in our lives, demons have to flee!

Brother Barry Mazzeo then sang “*Down From His Glory*” which was a wonderful addition to our meeting as the Spirit continued to flow.

At the invitation of our ministry, several people went forward to ask for prayer. The spirit of prayer in the room was undeniable. As the brothers waited upon the inspiration of God before approaching each person in need, the congregation was just as prayerful as the various burdens were shared. One young brother confessed that he was being troubled with memories of his past life and admitted that he needed strength from God to overcome these temptations. Tongues were spoken and another brother, in a voice more powerful than his own, gave the interpretation “*You are free, you are free!*”

As God’s spirit prevailed throughout the day, the following experiences were reported from the congregation:

“As we opened in prayer at the water’s shore, I saw Christ with His arms outstretched to receive us.”

“As the brothers knelt around Brother John Little, I saw a ring of fire around them and as Brother Kevin Jasmin prayed to bestow the Holy Ghost, the fire engulfed him.”

“As Brother Frank Natoli was anointing Brother John, before he could even put his hands on his head, I saw Christ’s hands on his head.”

“As Brother Barry Mazzeo prayed for the bread, I saw Christ carrying the cross up the hill. As our brother prayed for the wine, I saw Christ on the cross.”

What a glorious time the Lord gave us over the course of the Evangelist’s visit! Those in the Southeast Region appreciate their efforts and we thank God for His blessings!

The Children’s Corner

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WORD SEARCH

GOVERNOR	THEY
LACHONEUS	REPENTED
GATHERED	PRAYED
ALL	GOD
THE	WOULD
GOOD	SAVE
FAMILIES	THEM
CROPS	HE
AND	DID
FOOD	

P	R	A	Y	E	D	T	H	S
V	D	S	A	V	E	H	U	D
A	E	G	O	O	D	E	W	E
N	R	A	L	L	N	Y	O	T
D	E	H	G	O	D	V	U	N
O	H	T	H	E	M	I	L	E
O	T	C	R	O	P	S	D	P
F	A	M	I	L	I	E	S	E
L	G	O	V	E	R	N	O	R

*“...God is the same
yesterday,
today
and forever...”*
(Mormon 9:9)

**Attention all teachers of:
Sunday School, Ladies' Uplift Circle,
Missionary Benevolent Association,
Vacation Bible School, Junior Church, etc.**

The following titles represent the Branch/Mission Lesson Plans that are available in various grade levels on the Education Site. Additional lesson plans for specific grade levels can be found under the category of Individual Class Lessons.

Please take advantage of this resource when giving consideration to what you will teach. Visit the lesson site at: www.thechurchofjesuschrist.org/educationrev2.cfm

- A Firm Foundation—I Corinthians, 3: 9-11
- Abinadi Teaches God's Commandments—Mosiah 12:33
- Alma Holds the People of God Accountable for Their Sins—
Mosiah 26:29
- America the Promised Land [The Decrees of God]—II Nephi 1:7
- Are Your Garments White or Spotted?—Alma 5:22
- Covenants—Jeremiah 31:33
- Divine Revelation—Matthew 16:17
- Faith [As Demonstrated by the Brother of Jared]— Ether 4:7
- Fruit of the Spirit – Joy—Galatians 5:22
- Fruit of the Spirit – Longsuffering—Galatians 5:22
- Fruit of the Spirit – Love—Galatians 5:22
- Fruit of the Spirit – Peace—Galatians 5:22
- God Empowers Alma to Restore the Church to Righteousness,—
Mosiah 18:17
- King Mosiah Liberates His People—Mosiah 29:25
- Lehi Receives a Blessing of a Land of Promise—II Nephi 1:5
- Obedience is Better than Sacrifice—I Samuel 15:22
- Ordinances of God—Ezekiel 11:19,20
- Righteousness—Matthew 5:6
- The Divine Commission [Restoring the House of Israel]—
Jeremiah 16:16
- The Jaredites Receive the Promise of a Choice Land—Ether 2:8
- The Jaredites Travel to the Promised Land—Ether 6:3
- The Life Span of Man—II Nephi 2:21
- The Plan of Redemption – The Tree of Life—Alma 5:62
- The Prayer of Faith and Fasting and Prayer—Mosiah 27:14
- To Be Highly Favored of the Lord—I Nephi 1:1
- Zeniff is Over-zealous and Slow to Remember the Lord—Mosiah 9:3

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