

# The Gospel News

## Is My Weakness Really My Strength?

By Elder Mark Naro

How many times have you wondered to yourself,  
"How could God use someone as weak as me?"

Just as Moses did when speaking with the Lord at the burning bush, we can find many seemingly valid reasons to disqualify ourselves from being used by God to help spread the Gospel. Isaiah initially hesitated when the Lord called upon him because he felt that he was inadequate, and a man of "unclean lips." In the case of Isaiah, the word translated as "unclean" was a Hebrew word meaning "foul in a religious sense, defiled, infamous, polluted." In other instances this word is translated as "vile," "impure in a religious sense, defiled, reputed as vile." One can only guess and try to imagine what kind of man Isaiah had been before the Lord called him to service. Are any of us any different? Are we all, or were we all defiled, vile, and impure at some point in our lives? Don't we all fall short of the glory of God on a regular basis?

Everyone has personal things from their past that they wish they could change about themselves. When we think of being weak or having weakness, from the world's perspective we become overwhelmed with despair by the definition. But what if we find that in reality, our weakness is indeed our strength? In II Corinthians 4:7 it says *"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us."* It stands to reason that if we didn't have weaknesses, we wouldn't need God; that our weaknesses are by design. They are given to us as a vehicle by which we can maintain our humility and keep open the intimate and necessary communion we need to have with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The world scoffs at and mocks weakness, and the enemy of our souls wants us to drown in despair over our weaknesses by never allowing us to feel good about ourselves. Satan wants us to fester and despair and bewail the fact that we are flawed, often inadequate, and sinful by nature. Jesus Christ, on the other hand, wants us to know that our weakness can in fact be the strongest weapon in our spiritual arsenal if we broach this aspect of our nature properly in prayer, fasting, and with sincere humility.

The Lord teaches us that He views weakness in a different way. Ether 12:27 states, *"And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them."*

When thinking upon this verse, should we not give consideration that our weakness may very well indeed be our best and most evident strength? We can follow the directions and recommended procedure for turning this seemingly negative trait that we all possess, sometimes in multiple forms, into a platform that allows us to draw closer to Christ by:

1. Allowing the Spirit of Christ to fill us, and compensate for our weakness.
2. Recognizing where and when we are weak, and crying out to Christ for the strength we lack in those areas, avoiding the fatal mistakes that spiritual blindness can cause.
3. Humbling ourselves, and through faith, believing that in spite of our shortcomings before God we can indeed accomplish all things through Christ.

Perhaps one of the most poignant scriptures relating to our human weakness within the framework of our inward struggle between good and evil is the Apostle Paul's writings in Romans 7. In verses 7-25 Paul very plainly illustrates the daily struggle we all encounter. *"For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I."* Paul is saying that many times we do things we know we shouldn't,

(Continued on page 11)

### IN THIS ISSUE:

Blast From The Past  
Page 2

May Calendar  
Page 2

Meet the Branch  
Page 4

Editorial Viewpoint  
Page 5

Mother's Day Quotes  
Page 6

Branch/ Mission News  
Page 7

Word Up  
Page 7

GMBA News  
Page 8

5 Amazing Facts  
Page 9

Ladies' Uplift Circle  
News  
Page 9

Children's Corner  
Page 10

Blessing Bits  
Page 12



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	1 Show your love to someone new today	2	3 Pray for the work in Burundi- pg 4	4
5 Invite the saints to your home for dinner	6	7 Support your local and regional Ladies' Circle	8	9	10	11 Reach out to someone who may be lonely or sad this weekend
12 Happy Mother's Day!	13 Praise God for the many wonderful examples of dedicated sisters	14	15	16	17 Keep a song of praise in your heart all day today	18
19	20	21 Pray for the deaconesses in the Church	22	23 Pray for couples trying to have children	24	25
26	27 Reach out to the young women in the Church	28	29 Pray for the Herndon Branch- pg 4	30	31	1

**April 2013**

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**June 2013**

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May 2013

*"Her children arise up, and call her blessed."* Proverbs 31:28

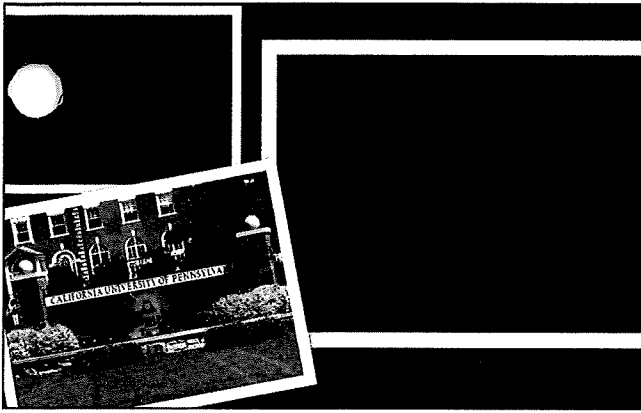
## BFP Blast From The Past

### A Trip to Hill Cumorah

"I thank God from the bottom of my heart for the most enjoyable trip I ever made!" Sister Antoinette Aquilino would write of traveling to Hill Cumorah, 76 years ago this month. A delightful account—detailing the journey of two carloads of saints from her home in Lorain, Ohio to New York state and back—she would list among the travelers a young man, Brother Gorie Ciarivino. Perhaps at this time, Antoinette and Gorie had sensed the feelings they shared for each other. By the following March they would marry. However, neither could have known the role to which the Lord would assign them in the future. With his wife's support, through many labors and works, Brother Gorie would one day occupy the office of General Church president from 1965 to 1974. More of Sister Antoinette's account can be read in Volume 1 of our Church History.

Brother Gorie and Sister Antoinette ►





## 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**



It's hard to believe that this is our one-year Anniversary Issue. It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve you as the Gospel News Editor for the past year. What an exciting journey and great opportunity it has been to work with so many wonderful brothers and sisters from across the Church. As a team, we are proud of the work that we've accomplished through God's help and are so pleased to hear that the results are well received by the congregation. There have been numerous blessings and experiences along the way and I can say for certain that God's hand is in each and every issue and I am amazed that it comes together, and mostly on time! It takes a great team to make it all happen and I would be remiss if I did not thank everyone who's worked so hard month after month to put this paper together.

Expect some changes and advancements with The Gospel News. It is now available to you each month in an electronic format for those who prefer to read it on a computer or mobile device. We launched our digital version with the April issue. An announcement will go out on the Gospel E-mail system alerting you each month when the electronic issue becomes available. We will also be tweeting articles in hopes of encouraging more young members to read the paper each month. We have enlisted a younger brother (and one who understands this tweeting business), Brother Chuck Maddox, Jr., to do the tweeting.

To give you an example of just how God is with us each month, I would like to share an experience. When I was contacted by the OSC in regards to making the electronic version available, I really did not know where to begin. Within moments of receiving the request, I opened an e-mail from Brother Jeff Kattan, a brother whom I have not even had the pleasure of meeting. He contacted me to let me know that if I ever wanted to make the issues available digitally, I could do so by doing the following, and he listed the steps. Wow! When I shared this with Brother Jeff, he mentioned that he had been thinking about sending the e-mail for some time and felt right about doing it just that day. Brother Jeff also graciously agreed to help us with this moving forward. Who knows, maybe we will have our own app some day.

We also want to learn more about what sections you're enjoying and what changes we can make to serve you better. With this in mind we have prepared a survey which we will e-mail out requesting that you spend just a few moments to share your thoughts so that we know what direction to move forward. Thank you in advance for your participation. Our original mission was to make this a paper for the members about the members, the Church, and the Gospel, with content that is informative, thought provoking, and spiritually edifying. We need your feedback to ensure that we remain successful with this mission.

I hope you enjoy this 13th issue of the New (now not so new) Gospel News. In this issue we celebrate all the mothers in our Church. I'd especially like to take this opportunity to express gratitude for my mother and the excellent example of diligence, dedication, and hard work she has always been for me. I was blessed with many good examples in my family and in our branch. My grandmother, Sister Isabella Bologna, worked tirelessly for the Church. The examples of women like Sister Rose Milantoni and other sisters were critical to my spiritual development and key to the growth of the Church over the years. They have helped raise and nurture the next generation of saints. They gave us courage to take on roles and responsibilities we may not otherwise have felt capable of doing. In the words of my grandmother, Sister Clara Gentile, in her strong Italian accent, "You do-a u best, God pudda da rest." How true that has been for me in the past year!

With Much Love,

*Sister Carolynn O'Connor*

Sister Carolynn O'Connor, Editor-in-Chief  
The Gospel News

## Domestic Church — Herndon, Virginia



**T**he Church of Jesus Christ began meeting in Washington, D.C. in 1948, after a few families relocated to the area, under the leadership of Brother Alvin Swanson with assistance from Brother James Curry. The meetings started with a small group of sisters that met in a row house in Georgetown. They were later joined by Brother George Timms, who was eventually ordained into the ministry. The sisters began a building fund by selling handmade soap, jewelry, and rugs with the vision of having a building of their own.

On September 26, 1962 this small group was organized as a mission and began meeting at the downtown Washington YMCA. Throughout the years, there were many fundraisers to raise money for a permanent building. In 1976, the saints first met in their newly remodeled building and were renamed the Herndon, Virginia Mission. On September 22, 1979 Herndon became a branch.

We have a unique branch in that the majority of our members live over an hour from the town of Herndon in all different directions. This does not deter us from coming together to worship Jesus Christ and fellowship together. We have an active branch with an MBA that meets on Sunday afternoon and a Ladies' Circle that meets on the last Sunday of the month. We also meet on Wednesday evenings in three different locations. Many of our members are active in the missionary work of the Church including the work among the Native Americans in Cherokee, North Carolina.

The Herndon Branch has been focused on reaching out to our surrounding community. We have held several clothing giveaways which have brought many visitors through our doors. Please pray for us as we endeavor to spread The Gospel of Jesus Christ to those in our community.

## International Church — Burundi



**I**n 2008 Brother Alexander Rudatsikira, the president of the Church in Rwanda, traveled to Burundi to meet someone who had been corresponding with Brother Joe Perri for several months. This particular gentleman did not show up; however, God had another plan because Brother Alex met up with one of his childhood friends, Osborn, who was a Christian. They started talking about their respective faiths, and when Osborn learned how we observe all of the New Testament teachings, he got very excited. Osborn introduced Alex to several other interested people in Burundi and the work began.

Four people from Burundi visited Brother Alex in Rwanda in June 2009, and were baptized after four days of sharing the gospel and attending meetings and seminars. In February 2010 the Church was established in Burundi's capital, Bujumbura. There are now 40 members currently meeting in a rented house there. The membership is young and there are many children and teenagers that attend as well.

Burundi is a very poor country with many challenges, including low employment, even for the educated, and corruption. There is much potential for this mission to grow, but we are moving slowly and cautiously, waiting on the Lord's counsel and direction. Brother Alex travels six hours by bus and stays in a low-cost hotel to meet with the saints and observe our ordinances. Each 5-day visit costs the committee around \$600. Please keep this work in your prayers.

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## The Greatest Mother-in-Making *By Evangelist Timothy Mott*

**H**ave you ever considered the greatest Mother-in-the-making? Scripture teaches that Christ will marry the Church upon His return, and that as the bride, we are preparing for that marriage. I say we because the day we make a covenant to serve the Lord through baptism, we become a member of The Church of Jesus Christ. As a member of The Church of Jesus Christ, we are now members to the very organization that is betrothed to be the bride of Christ:

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. (Revelation 19:7)

If the wedding is approaching and we as the Church are to make ourselves ready, what should that readiness be? What should that preparation look like? You may think that the key elements are being set in place by individuals like the apostles through their guardianship of our very faith and doctrine, or the evangelists who go out to preach the Gospel. However, the Word of God tells us of the most important preparation that must be made:

And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. (Revelation 19:8)

The preparation the Lord seeks is a pursuit of righteousness. Did you find the same striking message in the above verse as I? God granted that The Church of Jesus Christ should be arrayed. That is as if to say there is a choice in the matter of the very clothes that we would wear as a body. But you see—we do have a choice. Each day of our lives, we choose the path that our actions will take. As each situation presents itself, we choose how to react, where to go, what to do, what to say. Our actions form the very raiment of The Church of Jesus Christ. The above verse plainly shows us that God desires our righteousness to be that raiment. Revelation 12 further clarifies that the Church is to be clothed with the sun—the law that is the pure love of Christ.

I've been told that linen is extremely difficult to care for—it easily wrinkles, stains are difficult to remove, and improper care can cause it to yellow through time. How fitting the metaphor, because poor choices by us in our daily lives make the garment of The Church of Jesus Christ messy. And just like linen, those choices can be difficult to clean up. We must consider this wedding dress with caution, as a lack of righteousness could spell disaster for our ultimate inclusion in its making:

And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. (Revelation 19:9)

The Lord desires us to be a righteous people – clean and white like a freshly pressed set of cloths for the Lord's Supper on a bright Sunday morning. That is not an easy thing, as we all have great obstacles that we must overcome on a daily basis in order to be so. However the stakes are high, brothers and sisters. The parable of the ten virgins spells out the disaster that awaits those who are not prepared in righteousness. Also consider Paul's caution to the Corinthians on this very topic:

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. (II Corinthians 11:2)

As The Church of Jesus Christ, we form a bride that will be center stage for the most high-profile wedding this world will ever witness. But we must constantly introspect to ensure that we are in a Godly place in our lives. The Lord will only accept a bride who is a chaste virgin—virtuously pure—anything less could mean His jealousy may cut us off from His presence. We must understand that He has big plans for us. As a bride, The Church of Jesus Christ will welcome Christ as the bridegroom, and the marriage will give speed to the greatest birth since the arrival of Christ himself—the full restoration of the House of Israel and the establishment of His kingdom of peace. We do not know if we will see this day in our lifetime, but we can continue to work diligently for it. Above all, as saints of the most High God, we must be careful to consider how our actions as individual members of the Bride of Christ affect her preparation for the arrival of the Bridegroom. Let's not allow our actions to be a blemish on that beautiful garment.

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. (Revelation 19:7-9)

# Mother's Day

*My mother, Sister Janet DiFalco, always told me that although she didn't have money to give me she could share with me the keys to living, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which was worth more than gold. Sister Denise DiFalco Dickson, Detroit, Michigan Branch #1*

*My mom was Sister Margaret Benyola from Hopelawn, New Jersey. When I was a child and looking in the house for her, I would always find her in the bedroom, sitting in her chair, reading the Bible. She shared with me what she was reading. Thank you Mom! Sister Flo Perri, Lake Worth, Florida Branch*

*My mother, Collen Davella, has always done everything she could to make sure my sister and I were raised right. She is a very strong woman, always telling us what we NEEDED to hear and not always what we WANTED to hear. Love you Mom. Joseph Pittius, Hopelawn/Mutuchen, New Jersey Branch*

*Once when visiting my mother, Sister Margaret Benyola, I happened to fall asleep on the couch. I felt a warm blanket cover me. I realized I was always mom's little girl. Sister Mary Perri, New Brunswick, New Jersey Mission*

*Thank God my mom was always there to stroke my hair, through all my serious challenges. The Lord knew her presence and support were vital to me. Thank you for always being there, I love you so much Mom. Sister Suzanne Beeman, Mt. Laurel, New Jersey Branch*

*On September 27, 1997 my mother was ordained a deaconess and I was ordained a deacon. Brother Michael Zaino, Edison, New Jersey Branch*

*As a little girl, I would sit near my mom as she took sacrament. I could feel how special that moment was to her and I am thankful that my children are next to me when I take sacrament. Through it all, God has blessed us. Sister Janice Frammolino, Detroit, Michigan Branch #1*

*I'm convinced I am a writer because of my mom. From a young age I'd remember seeing her write dozens of letters and cards to family, friends and brothers and sisters of the Church. She's instilled in me the importance of remembering the little things and I'm so thankful for that. Sister Natalie Pezzenti, Cincinnati-Morrow, Ohio Mission*

*Grace Brutz - She taught me so many ways in which to serve others from the young to the old. She loved music and sang praises with all her heart until her vocal cords were severed in a car accident. A true missionary in every way, every day. Sister Diane Surdock, San Diego, California Branch*

*My mother was Sister Marie McGuire and I have many fond memories that would take a book to fill. She loved all the brothers and sisters and would do anything for them. Most of all I admired her faith that she had in the power of our God knowing He can do anything but fail. Brother Michael McGuire, Dedham, Massachusetts Mission*

*Since I'm not a mother it was VERY SPECIAL to me when a young girl at my branch took the time to make me a SPECIAL Mother's Day card last year—I'll keep it forever! Sister Karen Jo Pandone, Detroit, Michigan Branch #2*

*My favorite memory of my mom is when I was six and asked for a Easy-Bake oven and instead she bought me bakeware and said, "You want to bake I will teach you." and she did. Every time I bake, which due to a recent career change is daily, I feel her with me. Sister Rhoda Miller, Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Branch*

*As a child, I especially loved to sit between my Mom and my Grandma, Sister Carolyn Light and Sister Lena Martorana, during church so I could listen to them sing harmony together. They inspired my love of music, missionary work, and family traditions, and taught me how to pray and rely on God in all things. They are the wind beneath my wings. Sister Erin Light, Irvine, California Branch*

*I remember being young, and my brother and I just came in from sledding outside. Our mom, Sister Arleen Risola, was in the kitchen baking bread, smiling and singing. We thank God for the foundation He gave us of a loving mother and father. Sister Wendy Woods, Forrest Hills, Florida Branch*



## Quincy Branch Adds to the Quorum

By Brother Lucas Martorana

**W**hat do the Quorum of 70 and the Quincy Branch have in common? They both start with "Q" and they now both share Brother Charles Hester! On the weekend of November 17, 2012 the Quincy Branch embraced visitors from across the region and across the country to celebrate and praise God for the calling of Brother Charles to this work.

It is a common thought among charitable groups that just one person can make a difference in the world. Before God took the lead in my life, I found myself slightly skeptical of that message. How can just one person, in a world of over six billion people, make a difference? Brother Charles is an example of what one man can do, but he will be quick to smile lightly, look into your eyes and say, "Thank God, it's not me!" With this in mind, I correct my phrase and say it is amazing what one person can do with God.

I never knew Brother Cleve Baldwin, Brother Charles' predecessor and mentor, but I have heard many stories and examples of the foundation he laid. I am certain Brother Cleve is looking down at the Quincy Branch with a smile, saying, "Thank you for keeping our Father's work alive." Brothers Charles and Horace Huggins are the two elders in Quincy. We have enjoyed the visits of many families and friends and have been blessed with much growth in just a few months! The humble Quincy building has been

filling with people and with the Spirit of God due to the diligence, unity, and humility of the leadership of God's chosen.

The display of support for Brother Charles and the Quincy Branch from the Southeast Region and across the United States was amazing. The relationships he has established and nurtured through the love of Jesus Christ are powerful. Apostles, Evangelists, families, and friends of the saints traveled from across Ohio, Indiana, North Carolina, Georgia, and all parts of Florida to show their support and take part in the extraordinary day. Visiting The Church of Jesus Christ for the first time were Brother Charles' mother-in-law and two sisters-in-law, in addition to all of his children, three of whom are baptized. This support was a result of the love that Brother Charles has shown to so many.

During my first visit to Quincy, I flew from Cleveland, Ohio to Jacksonville, Florida. I then drove three hours to Tallahassee, interviewed for three jobs, got lost on the spaghetti-like streets, and found myself in the Quincy Branch on Sunday. Brother Charles and his wife, Sister Rhonda, invited me to their house for dinner that afternoon. I had eaten pasta and meatballs every Sunday afternoon for the first 25 years of my life but I am now quick to say that fried chicken and greens is a great replace-

(Continued on Page 11)

## Word Up

### The Case For Christ: Holding The "Word Up" By Elder Doug Obradovich

Is reading scripture difficult for you?  
Do the "thees" and "thous" make Christ's words seem irrelevant, even losing their potency in translation?  
Let's take a deeper dive into Jesus' message and see if we can make sense of it all.  
If successful, let's agree to hold the "Word Up"!

*"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me"* (John 17:21).

**U**nity is daunting. The most important elementary school grade wasn't in Reading, 'Riting or 'Rithmetic, but in "Plays Well With Others." The only One qualified to assess "Plays well with others" provided hope that this oneness was both achievable and expected. In this verse, Jesus Christ set the bar just that high.

This snippet from Jesus' prayer includes a challenge to duplicate the standard that He and His Father set, "...as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee." Our experiences make this seem unattainable, as few rarely enjoy complete togetherness. Offering His prayer at the end of a life filled with difficult relationships helps us realize that Christ was aware of such human frailties and in spite of this, He confidently stated, "that they ALL may be ONE."

I have found the challenge in uniting with others is never me; it's OTHERS! Others think differently than I do. Others speak differently than I do. Others do things differently than I do. If others would give in to my way of thinking, speaking, and doing, we would find unity. If this sounds familiar, then we're unified that we are each the other's problem.

Maybe the problem with all of us is that all of us think the problem is with everyone else. Since we are others' others, then each of us are each other's problem, and if all of us are to blame, then we must all look higher than us to find the answer. The answer comes in submission. The word of God (James 4:7) instructs, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Our desire to be right (pride-filled) is submitting to the devil, who celebrates our discord. The answer was found in the original verse, "...that they also might be one in us." We will never find unity in our friendships, marriages, or other relationships until we give up our need to be right.

It (righteousness) is found within God, and if all of us submit to our Heavenly Father (it only works if we all do so), the unity promised in Christ's prayer is ours. In this unity we will fulfill the promise found at the end of this verse, that "...the world may believe" that Christ is the true Son of God. Our unity draws others to the Savior; our discord drives them from Christ. Can we agree on this?

Do you have a favorite verse you'd like us to dissect? Please send it in to: "Word Up" 498

## The Impact of YOUTH IN ACTION

*Can one week during the summer change your life? Read these stories and see.*

**Y**es, I believe in God. And I know that we're all supposed to "tell the whole world about Jesus." But how often do I honestly do that? Most often, it seems like I talk about spreading the gospel on Sunday, but then I go home and forget about it for the rest of the week. Why is that? Why don't I always seize opportunities to share Jesus with others around me? Am I blind? Am I scared? Do I just not know what to say?

For me, "Youth In Action" could be better called "Faith In Action." It's a time when you force yourself to put all your excuses aside and practice sharing Jesus with others. You slowly gain confidence and learn that talking about Jesus with others isn't as hard or as scary as you initially thought. In fact, when you do get up the courage, it's amazing how God can work through you.

I remember one time I was canvassing in Kentucky with another sister from the Church, and we heard some yelling and noise coming from behind an apartment door. We nervously decided to knock on all the other doors on that floor before, finally, gathering the courage to knock on the "scary door," while silently praying to ourselves. By this time, the ruckus had died down. A woman, somewhat unkempt and quite hysterical, flung open the door and rapidly sputtered that she only had a few minutes because her friend was in the hospital. We explained that we were from a church and she exclaimed that she had been crying out to God, and that she was on the verge of relapsing and having a drink, and that she hadn't had a drink in eight years, and ... the words gushed out of her. We offered to pray with her, to which she adamantly exclaimed, "Yes, please!" The three of us grabbed hands in a circle, and I felt God's Spirit come over us as we cried out to him to chase these cravings away and to comfort this woman. After the prayer, the woman thanked us profusely and declared that she had been asking God for help.

Many times in life, we're tempted to skip the "scary door." We're afraid to talk about God with certain people for fear of judgment or rejection or simply because they're different or we don't know what to say. By doing YIA, I learned that the moments when I'm uncertain are sometimes when God is best able to work through me. It's helped me gain the courage to talk about Jesus with people who I interact with on a daily basis. That's the biggest impact of YIA for me—practicing how to share Jesus with others, and then bringing it home to my everyday life.—*Brother Jonathan Scolaro*

**O**ver a number of years, a man named Doyle had become very sickly. He had never been a religious man, but now that he was housebound, he began watching religious programs on television. He said that these programs made him realize the importance of giving his life to Jesus Christ. As part of this, he believed it was important to be baptized. However, due to his physical ailments, he did not know how this would be possible. In fact, he could not even attend a church to ask for his baptism.

He decided to pray about this and ask God to send a messenger to him to answer his dilemma. The very next day, as part of a YIA effort in Fort Worth, one of the young people put a flier on his door inviting him to The Church of Jesus Christ. Upon finding the flier, he called the branch and asked if he could be visited at his home. Three elders immediately went to his house. When they entered his home, Doyle proclaimed, "You are messengers from God and your coming here is a miracle!"

He told the brothers his life story and how he repented of all of his sins.

As an elderly man, he feared that he would die without being baptized. He asked if our church would be willing to baptize him. Doyle also told the ministers that he wanted to be completely honest with them and said that due to his physical condition he would not be able to attend church after his baptism. All three brothers felt the Spirit of God come upon them and led them to believe that God was in this matter and that Doyle should be baptized.

He was baptized the next Sunday. Brother Doyle immediately began feeling better physically. Furthermore, he began attending the branch. He was soon strong enough to drive himself to church. Brother Doyle became a constant at both Wednesday and Sunday services. God not only saved his soul but strengthened his body. He remained a wonderful brother and lived for eight more years in the service of our Lord. In fact, he was later instrumental in others coming to church. He became a "messenger of God" everywhere he went.—*Brother Joe Ignagni*

**G**MBA. MBA. LC. TCOJC. RMOC. IMOC. ECC. Have you ever thought about the number of acronyms we have in The Church? We use more letters to describe our programs than there are in a can of alphabet soup; however, there is one acronym that holds a special place in my heart: YIA. Youth In Action has helped form me into the person I am today.

Through many summer tours, I've made connections with young people that I would have never met. I've traveled to Pedernales, Mexico with young people to spread the gospel, and I surrendered my life to Jesus Christ on a YIA tour. In 2002, on the Cincinnati YIA Tour, on the last Sunday meeting before everyone went home after a tiresome week of telling others about Jesus, I answered the call and asked for my baptism. Some of the young people even stayed the following week so they could be there for my baptism the next Sunday! Nothing can surpass the friendships that are formed on a YIA tour.

Over the years, I've been on YIA tours in Cincinnati, Mesa, Spartanburg, Inner City, and Mexico. This summer, you have the opportunity to go to Albuquerque, New Mexico, Harrison, Michigan, and Forest Hills, Florida. As you go to sleep tonight, ask God if He wants you to go on a YIA tour this summer. If He says yes, check out the info below to apply! —*Brother Chuck Maddox, Jr.*

### TIME TO SIGN-UP !!! 2013 Youth In Action Tours

- **Albuquerque, New Mexico – June 28 — July 7**
- **Harrison, Michigan – July 19 — July 28**
- **Forest Hills, Florida – July 26 — August 4**

Please register today at the following link :  
<http://www.gmbayouthinaction.org/yia.asp>

**Any questions can be directed to Brother Mario Zaccagnini**



## Alma *By Brother Kerry Carlini*

**W**e read in the Book of Mormon of Alma, the son of Alma, who had once been numbered among the unbelievers. He was a very wicked and idolatrous man of much flattery who led many people into iniquity and became a great hindrance to the Church. Astonishingly though, one day as Alma went about in secret with the sons of Mosiah to destroy the Church, they were met by an angel of the Lord. Here are five amazing facts regarding that encounter:

- 1** Scriptures read that the ground shook by the voice of the angel, as it were thunder, causing the men to fall to the ground.
- 2** In chastisement the angel told Alma that it was through the faith and prayers of his father and the people of the Lord that caused him to be sent to *"convince thee of the power and authority of God."*
- 3** Alma then became dumb, unable to speak, losing all strength in his limbs and hands.
- 4** But, when Alma was carried to his father, his father rejoiced and caused the priests to assemble in fasting and prayer that the Lord might restore him—that the eyes of the people might be opened to God's glory.
- 5** Finally, after two days of fasting and prayer, Alma received strength and arose. *"I have repented of my sins,"* he proclaimed, *"and have been redeemed of the Lord...I was in the darkest abyss; but now I behold the marvelous light of God."*

Mosiah Chapter 27

## Ladies' Uplift Circle News



## Unconditional Love *By Sister Angela Yoder*

**W**hat is love? By definition, love is an intense feeling of deep affection; a fondness for something or someone. Unconditional love is to love someone regardless of their actions, a concept comparable to true love. Many call this "Mother's Love." Some might say that unconditional love is the greatest gift of all.

A former U.S. president once said, *"The greatest gift a parent can give a child is unconditional love. As a child wanders and strays, finding his bearings, he needs a sense of absolute love from a parent."* Not only is this comparable to a mother's bond with her child, this is like our relationship with God. We may wander and stray, but His love is absolute—unconditional. This is the type of love we should have for one another; our family, friends, brothers, and sisters.

Love is giving, not getting. Love is more than just words; it is actions. Spiritual love is unconditional. It is

an "in spite of" love which is always bestowed as a gift—freely, willingly, and without expectation. It is a state of being.

Lately, I've been realizing how very important it is to spend time with the ones that I love. I am fortunate to still have my natural mother in my life. I can call or visit her at any time and I know that I will be welcomed with open arms. I am further blessed by having many spiritual mothers. These are sisters who have spent many hours lovingly instructing me, teaching me to be a better sister. They are women who care about my spiritual well-being and set a wonderful example that I strive to mirror. These women love me unconditionally. This realization is very humbling.

Most importantly, loving one another is a commandment from God. John 13:34-35 tells us, *"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye*

*also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."*

The law of love is based on abundance; we are completely filled with love all the time, and our supply is always full and running over. When we give our love unconditionally to others with no expectations of return, the love within us extends, expands, and joins. By giving our love away we increase the love within us and everyone gains.

In I Corinthians Chapter 13, love, (termed as charity), is described as being patient, kind, not envious, not boasting, not proud, not rude, always hoping and never failing.

Spend the time with those you love and be thankful for the examples of true unconditional love in your life. To all of the influential women in my life, my mother, mother-in-law, and spiritual mothers, "I love you."



## The Faith of Two Thousand Mothers

**T**he Book of Mormon is full of amazing stories and battles of right against wrong, nation against nation, and in some cases family against family. Why did they fight? They fought for power, greed, and out of hate taught to them by their culture.

What is culture? Each of us has a culture. A lot of how we behave is because of how our families taught and raised us. For example, your family may think it is great to have pet animals in your house, eating and sleeping by you. Other cultures believe animals are too germly to walk around in a clean house. Some cultures believe that boys should rule because when they grow up, the sons will let the parents live with them so they will not be alone. Other cultures think that girls should stay at home and take care of others even if they wish they could do something else.

What is the price for changing these beliefs? Well, your friends or some family member may be against it. In the Book of Mormon, the Lamanites were raised to hate, distrust, rob, and kill their cousins, the Nephite people who believed in God. They believed that hundreds of years earlier, the Nephites had been mean to them and tried to rule over them when they first came to the Americas. Their culture taught them they were bad enemies. Then a Nephite preacher named Ammon came among them and taught them about the love of God and the true history of their people.

The Lamanite King, his family, and thousands of his people changed. The adults promised God that they would never fight again. They wanted peace with all people. They buried their weapons of war and promised God they would never kill again, not even to fight back. They named

themselves the Anti-Nephi-Lehi, or the people of Ammon. They were willing to die rather than kill others.

Ammon knew he had to move these people away from their old culture to a place where they would be safe. When the Nephite nation heard the Lamanite King was now a brother in the Church, they gave them the safe land of Jershon where the Nephite soldiers guarded them.

The rest of the Lamanites continued to attack all Nephite nations, including the Anti-Nephi-Lehi people in Jershon who were growing crops to supply the Nephite army. Then an amazing thing happened. Their children, who were now being raised in the Church, were teen-agers. They saw the terrible need to protect their families from their fierce enemies. They believed in God and reminded their parents that they had not made the same promise to never pick up a weapon as their parents had (See Alma Chapter 56).

They told the great Nephite Army leader, Helaman, that they wanted to join the fight and that their Mothers had taught them to have great faith in God and believe that God would protect them. They said, "...our God is with us, and he will not suffer that we should fall; then let us go forth; we would not slay our brethren if they would let us alone" (Alma 56:46). The scriptures tell us that "...they did not fear death; ...they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them" (Alma 56:47).

Helaman took his army of 2,060 young men and joined in battle (See Alma 57:25-27). The Lamanites were wiping out the Nephite army when the young warriors attacked from the other side. These young warriors fought with great courage. Even though they were smaller and younger than their enemies, their minds were firm and they put their faith in God continually. They won!

When the battle was over, Helaman, who loved the brave young men, was afraid to count how many had died. To his shock, 200 were wounded but not one was dead!

The entire army was astonished how they were spared because of the strong faith that they had been taught to exercise by their mothers in a just, fair God, and to believe whoever does not doubt shall be preserved (saved) by His marvelous power!

This is the same God that we serve today. He will protect us as He did these young warriors. We must pray, follow His laws and love Him. Remember who God and Jesus are and how much they know you and care for you.

Your friend,  
Sister Jan

### WORD SEARCH

THE	BY
BRAVE	THEIR
YOUNG	MOTHERS
WARRIORS	IF
DID	THEY
NOT	DID
FEAR	NOT
DEATH	DOUBT
THEY	GOD
HAD	WOULD
BEEN	DELIVER
TAUGHT	THEM

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

## Is My Weakness Really My Strength? *Continued from page 1*

and don't do the things we know we should. As we read this chapter, we find the Apostle Paul's acknowledgement that the inward man fights in the "law of God," that it is through Jesus Christ that we are delivered from our weakness, and that victory is gained over our carnal nature when we recognize our weakness and yield to the promptings of the Lord.

Consider the comments of Nephi in II Nephi 4:17-23:

*Nevertheless, notwithstanding the great goodness of the Lord, in showing me his great and marvelous works, my heart exclaimeth: O wretched man that I am! Yea, my heart sorroweth because of my flesh; my soul grieveth because of mine iniquities. I am encompassed about, because of the temptations and the sins which do so easily beset me. And when I desire to rejoice, my heart groaneth because of my sins; nevertheless, I know in whom I have trusted. My God hath been my support; he hath led me through mine afflictions in the wilderness; and he hath preserved me upon the waters of the great deep. He hath filled me with his love, even unto the consuming of my flesh. He hath confounded mine enemies, unto the causing of them to quake before me. Behold, he hath heard my cry by day, and he hath given me knowledge by visions in the night-time.*

Verse 28 says, "Awake, my soul! No longer droop in sin. Rejoice, O my heart, and give place no more for the enemy of my soul."

I am sure we all have tried to imagine what Nephi could have possibly done wrong to refer to himself as "wretched" and "sinful." Nephi to us is a litmus test, a standard to live up to in the sense that as he followed Christ, so we likewise should show such diligence. Yet Nephi looks upon himself and sees his weakness, his faults, and shortcomings, but he also sees his salvation and deliverance through relying upon Christ to liberate him from his frailties, and realizes that his Redeemer, Jesus Christ, lives, and is able to save us by His matchless grace and power.

We have all heard the old adage that comically states, "Whatever doesn't kill you makes you stonger." There may be a bit of truth to that with regard to weakness: Weakness most certainly can kill you spiritually, and cause severe collateral damage to those around you if it is left unchecked. But the one who recognizes and understands their weakness can begin to use that weakness as a tool to stay in constant communication and supplication to Christ for strength, guidance, wisdom, discernment, faith, and most importantly above all things, charity—the pure love of God.

## Quincy Branch Adds to the Quorum *Continued from Page 7*

! Brother Charles and his family opened their arms to me, naturally spiritually.

As we gathered on the day of his ordination, the expectation of God's Spirit and gifts was great! Brother Paul Aaron Palmieri, president of the Quorum of 70, declared something unique but powerful. He said that when Brother Charles was a member, God blessed him; when he was called to be a deacon, God blessed him; in his responsibility as a teacher, God blessed him; as a Minister, God blessed him; and God will bless him now! Doesn't this hold true for all of us? Whether our walk with Him just began or we have been running for years, God calls us, brings us close to Him, and blesses us!

The brothers of the ministry shared the experiences that confirmed our brother's calling. At a meeting in Cape Coral the brothers had been fasting and praying. God sent His spirit and said, "Consider Brother Charles" to one in the group. Meanwhile, one of the Region Apostles emailed the chairman of the Quorum in the Southeast Region and said the same words, "Have you considered Brother Charles?" A clear confirmation! As that experience was related to the congregation the gift of tongues and the interpretation came forth, "I have called and I have chosen."

Brother Charles then related how about three years ago he had noticed a scar on his side that he could not remember when or where it came from. He had forgotten about it but while Brother Mitchell Edwards was washing his feet this day, he felt the scar burning. The Spirit revealed to Brother

Charles that he would go through some suffering, as Christ did while on this earth.

Sister Rhonda testified that each Sunday morning she irons Brother Charles' shirt for Church. As she was ironing that morning and praying that God would bless them in this new responsibility, the Spirit told her that Brother Mitchell Edwards would wash Brother Charles' feet. She shared this with a tear in her eye as Brother Mitchell had told them earlier that he wasn't going to be able to attend the ordination. She knew this was another confirmation from God just for her.

Three weeks later, Brother Charles became ill at church. As he was anointed, the gift of tongues was spoken. The interpretation was given immediately after: "I will have a healing for you." The paramedics arrived and took him by helicopter to the hospital. Even as he was being carried away, Brother Charles was trying to speak and encourage the group, "Thank you, God Bless you, I love you."

God's Spirit revealed to Brother Charles that he would go through suffering like Jesus did. God prepared Brother Charles and us for what was coming. We're not sure exactly why. Faith? Longsuffering? The power of prayer? Testimony? Blessings? We stand amazed that God restored our brother and within 48 hours he was able to return home. Praise God! We are grateful for the opportunity to serve God with our brother at the Quincy Branch.



*...yea, and put on thy beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion;... Moroni 10:31*



# Blessing Bits

## He Was There All the Time

House hunting can be an exhausting process: researching, looking, cringing, praying, etc. I moved from Cincinnati to South Florida in 2010 and for over a year, I was searching for a house. After seeing many torn-apart foreclosures and beautiful homes that were out of my price range, I became frustrated with the process and started to wonder if there was a house on the market for me. When I least expected it (isn't that how God works?) I stumbled upon a house that exceeded my expectations. God is so good to me. When I began to doubt and lose focus, He was by my side to show me that He was there all the time. *Brother Chuck Maddox, Jr., Lake Worth, Florida Branch*

afraid and insisted there were monsters in the room. I tried to reassure her that there were no monsters in my house and that the angels and Jesus were with us to keep us safe.

This lasted for at least 45 minutes and I even had to turn a small lamp on. She still insisted there were monsters. I then prayed with her and we said good night to Jesus. She then hesitated and looked straight ahead as if staring at something. Savanna then said to me that Jesus was there with us. I agreed with her and told her it is now time to go to sleep. She said, "Nana, Jesus is here with us. He is standing right there" pointing at the foot of the bed. She told me Jesus was standing there watching us and smiling. I asked her what He looked like and she said in that innocent, three-year old logical way, "He looks like Jesus!"

## For of Such Is the Kingdom of Heaven

It was a Saturday night and my three-year-old granddaughter, Savanna, was spending the night with us. I was lying in bed with her trying to get her to go to sleep. She was

I, too, felt a peace and it was very soon after that Savanna fell asleep. I thank God for that experience, knowing that God hears even the prayers of our children and lets them know that He is there for them too.

*Sister Connie Rossi, Spartanburg, South Carolina*

## God Hears Our Every Prayer

On December 10, 2012 I was coming out of a pizzeria and walking across the parking lot, thanking God for the day's blessings. I then heard an audible voice say, "You're welcome." *Sister Mary Ann Pasko, 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](mailto:gospelnewsinfo@gmail.com)

## Question for this month: What lesson have you learned from a trial in your life?

**Answer from last month:** Have you attended a spiritual conference, campout, or meeting that was life-changing? What was the year and location and what made it special? At the 1993 campout I was in Brother Chuck Maddox and Brother Doug Obradovich's seminar. One day, the brothers ended up praying for every single person in the class. I had been struggling with smoking for 14 years and wanted to quit, but for one reason or another just couldn't do it. While I was contemplating coming forward and asking for prayer I heard an audible voice say, "It's time, it's time." While they were praying for me, I felt a wave of heat going through me, got up, and knew that I had just been healed from that awful habit. —*Brother Duane Werley, Liberty, Ohio Branch*

...yea, and put on thy beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion;... Moroni 10:31