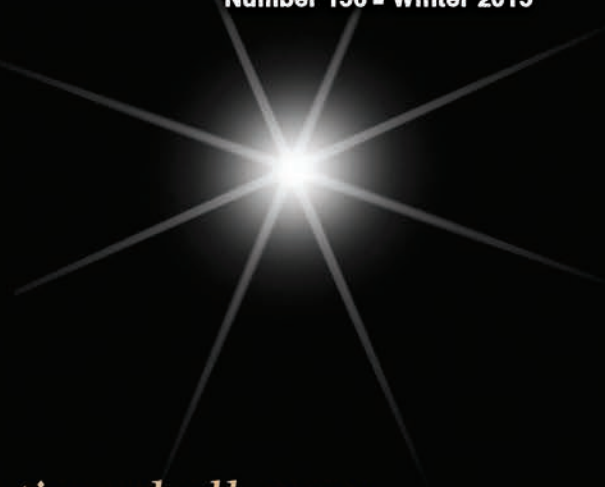


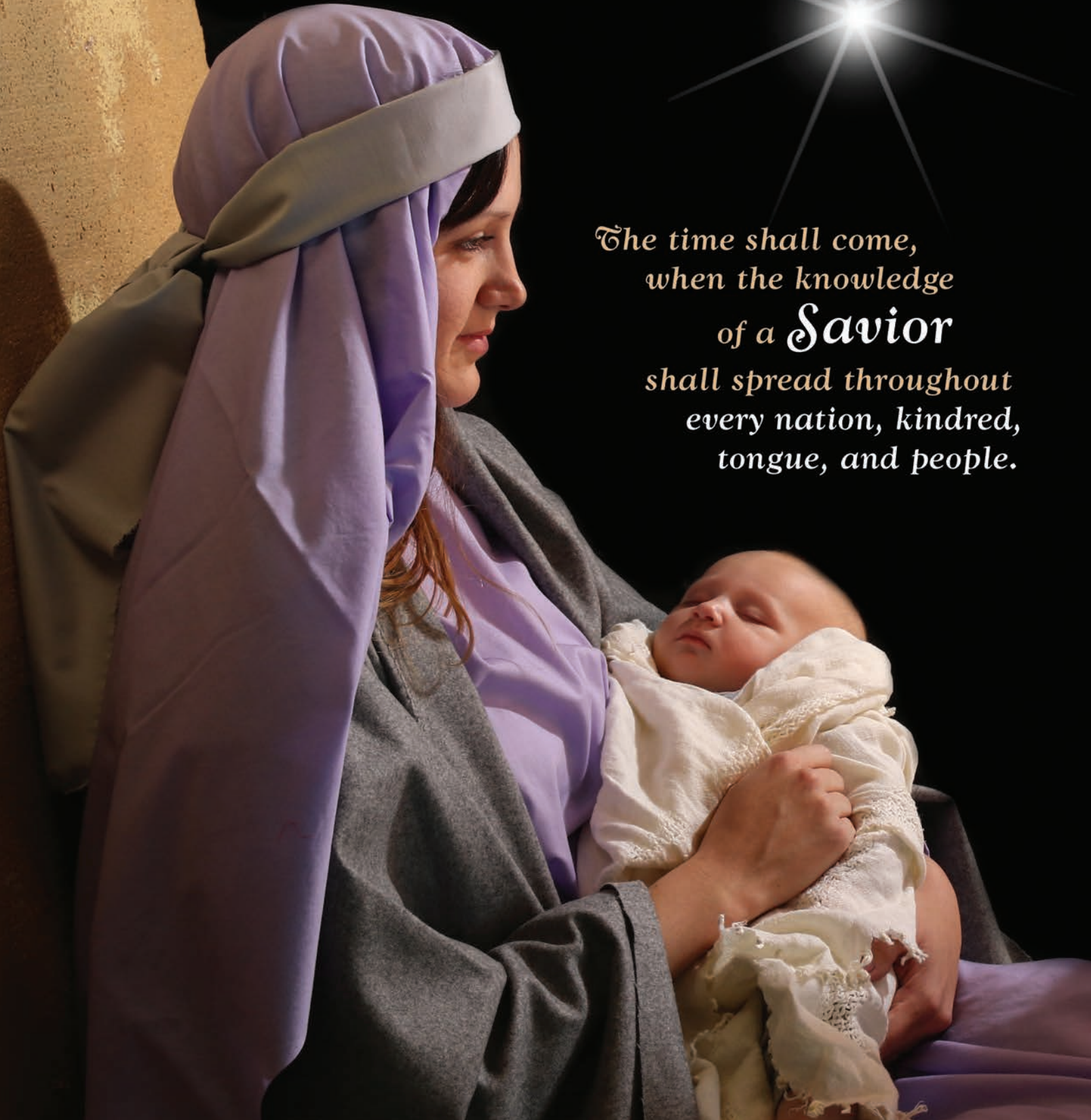


# THE WITNESS

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION BY THE BOOK OF MORMON FOUNDATION  
Number 156 ■ Winter 2015



*The time shall come,  
when the knowledge  
of a Savior  
shall spread throughout  
every nation, kindred,  
tongue, and people.*



# Our Own Shepherd Experience

They were just common shepherds abiding in the field and keeping watch over their flocks by night. Something they had done their whole life. It was a still, calm and uneventful night. And yet, the miracles prophesied around Christ's birth suddenly captured their attention. An angel appeared unto them and the glory of the Lord shone around them. They saw a heavenly host praising and glorifying God. It was pretty overwhelming and the magnitude of these events caused them to be "sore afraid." In the midst of their fear and amazement, they were told to "fear not" for the good news of Christ's birth would bring "good tidings of great joy to all people." They must have believed the angel, as their fear was replaced with peace and joy. These simple shepherds, as witnesses of the greatest divine event ever seen, said, "Let us now go, and see this thing which is come to pass."



Today, we are now in the midst of our own shepherd experience. Prophecies are being fulfilled more fully. The signs of Christ's coming are all around us and our hearts are challenged by seeing the reality of these words, "Wherefore I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth." (D&C 1:4a RLDS) [D&C 1:17 LDS] Just like the shepherds, it sometimes seems pretty overwhelming, and the magnitude of these events may cause some to be "sore afraid." Jesus knows the hastening of prophetic events, the distress of nations, the outpouring of evil and the abounding wickedness among us, would cause some to be afraid. Like the shepherds, we are once again comforted by the good news of Christ's coming and we "fear not." The same peace and joy given to the shepherds long ago, is once again bestowed upon His people. Let us also prepare to "see this thing which will come to pass." May the peace and joy of the shepherd's experience be yours as we celebrate His birth and proclaim together, "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth, peace; good will to men." (Luke 2:14 IV/KJV)

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**PRESIDENT** Marlin Guin  
**VICE PRESIDENT** Shirley Heater  
**SECRETARY** Kathy Keller  
**TREASURER** Eldon Anderson  
 Mike Ballantyne  
 Rebecca Cornish  
 Dale Godfrey  
 Don Newman  
 Rich Rowland

## THE WITNESS

**EDITOR** Linda Guin  
**COPY EDITOR** Cheryl Scofield  
**DESIGNER** Laura Clute

## THE BOOK OF MORMON FOUNDATION

**OFFICE MANAGER** Sue Manning

## The Book of Mormon Foundation

is a non-profit corporation composed of individuals who desire to promote The Book of Mormon and its witness of Jesus Christ.

Through research, publications, seminars and related projects, members of The Book of Mormon Foundation seek to assist in bringing forth the light contained in the Book of Mormon.

A contribution to The Book of Mormon Foundation is tax deductible. Financial statements are available upon request.

Articles and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent the view of The Book of Mormon Foundation. Unsigned articles are attributable to the Foundation.

Published quarterly by

## The Book of Mormon Foundation

210 West White Oak  
 Independence, MO 64050  
 Tel: 816-461-3722

Foundation email:  
[bmfoundation@live.com](mailto:bmfoundation@live.com)

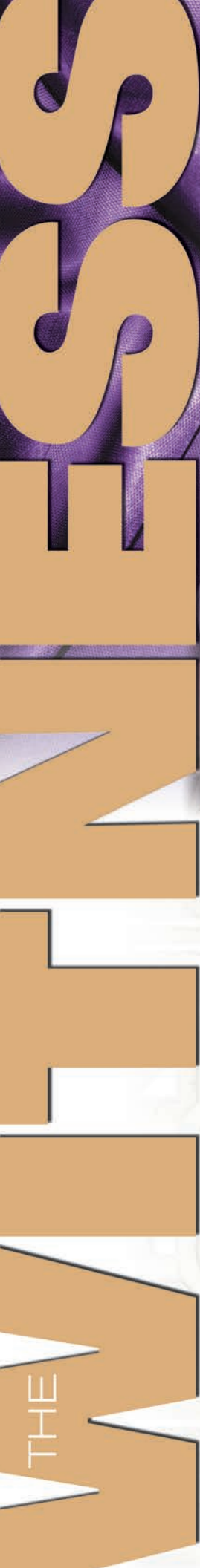
Interns email:  
[bmfinternship@gmail.com](mailto:bmfinternship@gmail.com)

Website: [www.bomf.org](http://www.bomf.org)

## Contents

- 3-6** | A Miraculous Sign *By Marla Kroesen*
- 7-8** | Thou Art Chosen and Blessed *By Allene Gilmore*
- 8-10** | He's My Son Too! *By Marlin Guin*
- 11** | 2016 Book of Mormon Retreat and Internship Program
- 12** | 2016 Book of Mormon Day for Kids
- 13-16** | 2015 SantaCaliGon

Cover Photo Courtesy of Dale Godfrey  
 (Mosiah 1:121 RLDS) [Mosiah 3:20 LDS]



# A MIRACULOUS SIGN

by Marla Kroesen

The sun beat down upon the bowed head of the young man who knelt upon the earth. He didn't pay it any heed, nor did he notice the dampness from the morning dew on the ground beneath his knees. The heavy weight upon his heart exceeded any other discomfort he might have felt. Sorrow caused his body to ache in every fiber.

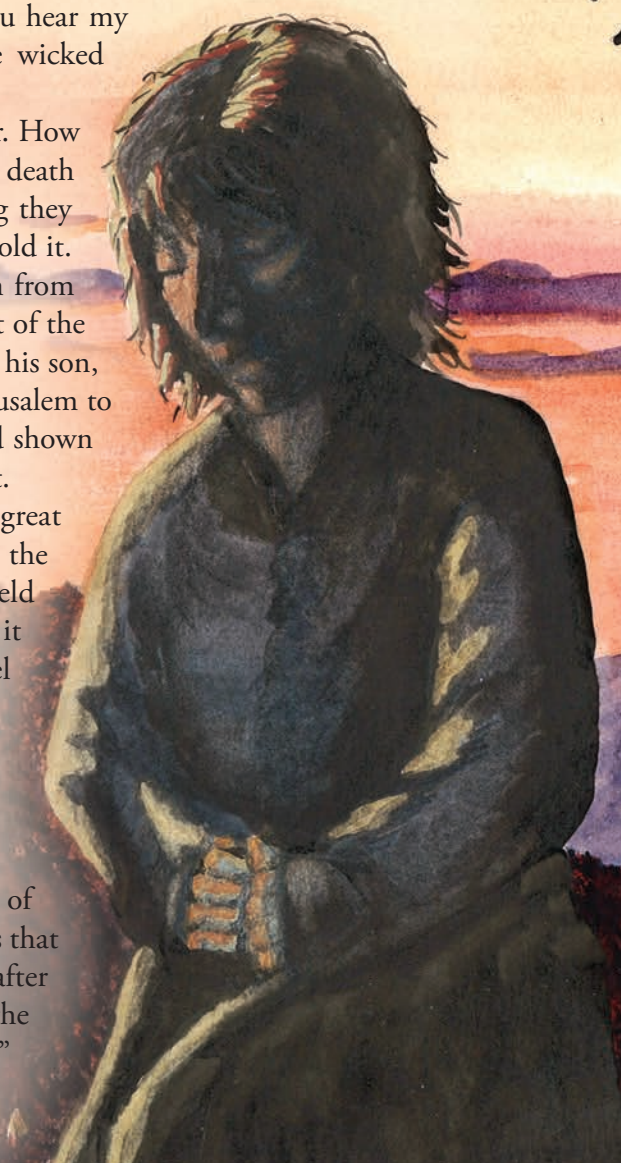
Nephi momentarily lifted his eyes to the clear blue sky above him, searching, as if to look beyond and pierce the very heavens to see into eternity. He had climbed this hill early, before the sun cast its orange glow to chase away the darkness, greatly desiring to call on God. He had been pouring out his heart in prayer, as the sun's rays caused the night's shadows to disappear. If only the shadow hanging over his people could be erased so easily! God would hear him. Nephi knew He would. He cried more fervently to His creator.

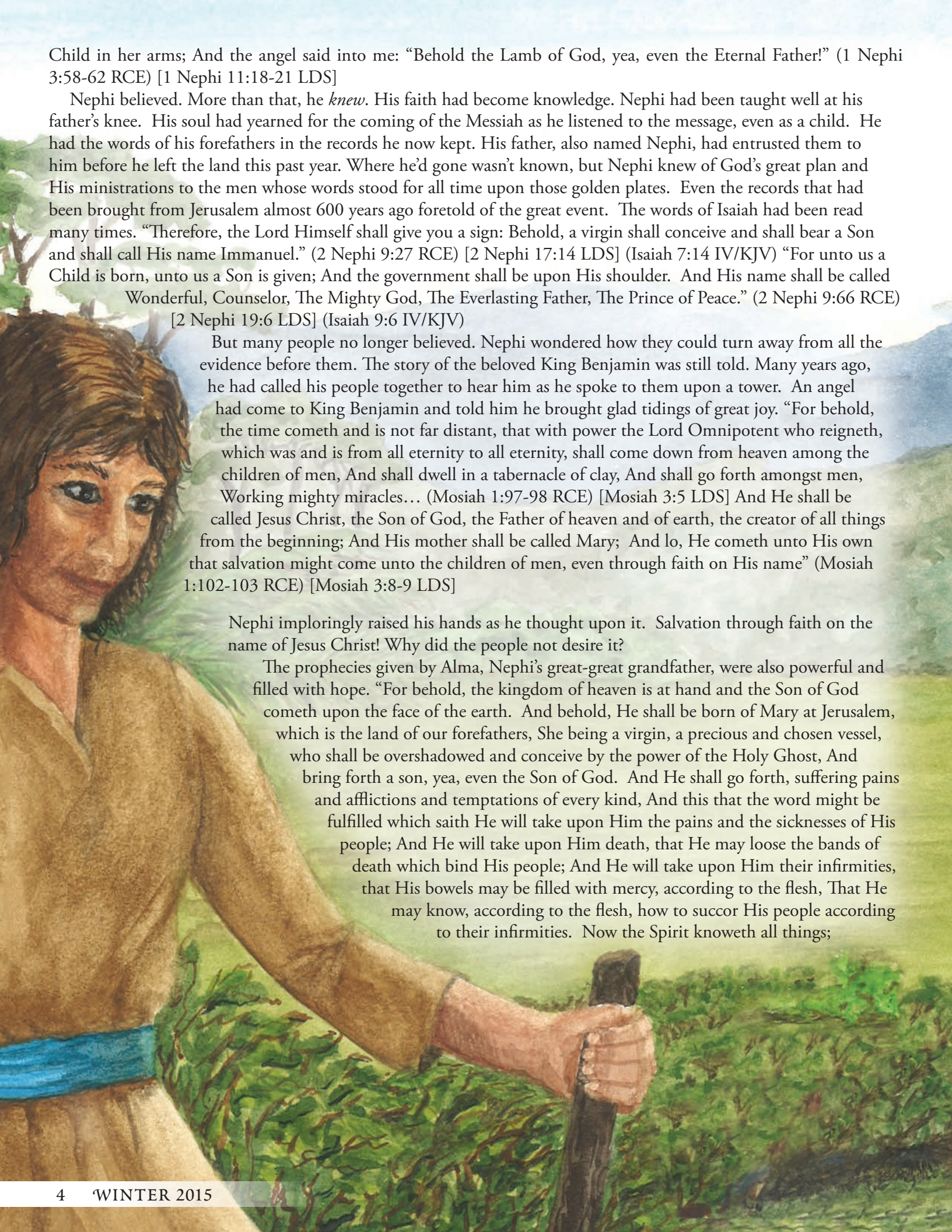
"Oh, God, Almighty One, Holy above all, wilt thou hear my prayer? Wilt thou deliver this your people from the wicked designs of evil men?"

The burden was almost more than Nephi could bear. How had it come to this? His people were going to be put to death for believing in the coming of the Messiah, something they had all been taught from birth. The prophets had foretold it. Angels had descended and brought the message. Even from the very beginnings of his people, they had been taught of the coming of Christ. Had not their forefathers, Lehi, and his son, Nephi, who had been led by the hand of God from Jerusalem to this land, been caught up in the Spirit of the Lord and shown this great event? Their words burned in his aching heart.

"And it came to pass that I looked and beheld the great City Jerusalem, and also other cities; And I beheld the City of Nazareth; And in the City of Nazareth I beheld a virgin and she was exceeding fair and white. And it came to pass that I saw the heavens open and an angel came down and stood before me; And he saith unto me: "Nephi, what beholdest thou?" And I saith unto him: "A virgin most beautiful and fair above all other virgins." (1 Nephi 3:52-55 RCE) [1 Nephi 11:13-15 LDS] And He said unto me:

"Behold, the virgin which thou seest is the mother of God, after the manner of the flesh." And it came to pass that I beheld that she was carried away in the Spirit; And after that she had been carried away in the Spirit a time, for the space of a time, the angel spake unto me, saying: "Look!" And I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a





Child in her arms; And the angel said into me: “Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Eternal Father!” (1 Nephi 3:58-62 RCE) [1 Nephi 11:18-21 LDS]

Nephi believed. More than that, he *knew*. His faith had become knowledge. Nephi had been taught well at his father’s knee. His soul had yearned for the coming of the Messiah as he listened to the message, even as a child. He had the words of his forefathers in the records he now kept. His father, also named Nephi, had entrusted them to him before he left the land this past year. Where he’d gone wasn’t known, but Nephi knew of God’s great plan and His ministrations to the men whose words stood for all time upon those golden plates. Even the records that had been brought from Jerusalem almost 600 years ago foretold of the great event. The words of Isaiah had been read many times. “Therefore, the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive and shall bear a Son and shall call His name Immanuel.” (2 Nephi 9:27 RCE) [2 Nephi 17:14 LDS] (Isaiah 7:14 IV/KJV) “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government shall be upon His shoulder. And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” (2 Nephi 9:66 RCE) [2 Nephi 19:6 LDS] (Isaiah 9:6 IV/KJV)

But many people no longer believed. Nephi wondered how they could turn away from all the evidence before them. The story of the beloved King Benjamin was still told. Many years ago, he had called his people together to hear him as he spoke to them upon a tower. An angel had come to King Benjamin and told him he brought glad tidings of great joy. “For behold, the time cometh and is not far distant, that with power the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, which was and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men, And shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay, And shall go forth amongst men, Working mighty miracles... (Mosiah 1:97-98 RCE) [Mosiah 3:5 LDS] And He shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and of earth, the creator of all things from the beginning; And His mother shall be called Mary; And lo, He cometh unto His own that salvation might come unto the children of men, even through faith on His name” (Mosiah 1:102-103 RCE) [Mosiah 3:8-9 LDS]

Nephi imploringly raised his hands as he thought upon it. Salvation through faith on the name of Jesus Christ! Why did the people not desire it?

The prophecies given by Alma, Nephi’s great-great grandfather, were also powerful and filled with hope. “For behold, the kingdom of heaven is at hand and the Son of God cometh upon the face of the earth. And behold, He shall be born of Mary at Jerusalem, which is the land of our forefathers, She being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, And bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God. And He shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind, And this that the word might be fulfilled which saith He will take upon Him the pains and the sicknesses of His people; And He will take upon Him death, that He may loose the bands of death which bind His people; And He will take upon Him their infirmities, that His bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, That He may know, according to the flesh, how to succor His people according to their infirmities. Now the Spirit knoweth all things;

Nevertheless, the Son of God suffereth, according to the flesh, That He might take upon Him the sins of His people, That He might blot out their transgressions according to the power of His deliverance.” (Alma 5:18-23 RCE) [Alma 7:9-13 LDS]

The sun rose high in the sky. Nephi bowed his head to the ground, where his tears watered the earth. The wickedness among his people had grown. Their hearts were hard, and their ears and minds were closed. They refused to hear the message of the prophets. They refused to believe in the very thing which could save them! How like the Israelites Moses led out of Egypt they were; who refused to look upon the serpent that Moses raised up before them so they might be healed after being bitten by poisonous serpents. God gave Moses the power to heal them. If they would only look, they would live. But many refused, for their hearts were hardened, and so they perished. (Alma 16:191-194; 2 Nephi 11:38-39 RCE) [Alma 33:19-20 LDS; 2 Nephi 25:20 LDS] Nephi raised his eyes once more to look toward the heavens, beseeching God. What more could be done to convince the Nephites, of whom a great number were now unbelievers? Even in their own day, with their own ears, they had heard the prophets and the angel message. Nephi was thankful the Lamanites still strove to keep the commandments.

Five years ago, God sent a Lamanite prophet named Samuel to warn the Nephites. They didn't want to hear his words. They cast him out and tried to kill him. But Samuel climbed upon the wall of the city and shouted the message an angel of the Lord gave him to deliver. His voice echoed off the stone walls and filled the city with its sound. “Behold, I give unto you a sign—For five years more cometh, And behold, then cometh the Son of God to redeem all those who shall believe on His name; And behold, this will I give unto you for a sign at the time of His coming—For behold, there shall be great lights in heaven, Insomuch that in the night before He cometh, there shall be no darkness, Insomuch that it shall appear unto man as if it was day; Therefore, there shall be one day and a night and a day, as if it were one day and there were no night. And this shall be unto you for a sign, for ye shall know of the rising of the sun, and also of its setting; Therefore, they shall know of a surety that there shall be two days and a night; Nevertheless, the night shall not be darkened; And it shall be the night before He is born. And behold, there shall be a new star arise, such an one as ye never have beheld; And, this also shall be a sign unto you. And behold this is not all—There shall be many signs and wonders in heaven; And it shall come to pass that ye shall all be amazed and wonder, Insomuch that ye shall fall to the earth. And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall believe on the Son of God, the same shall have everlasting life.” (Helaman 5:55-58 RCE) [Heleman 14:2-4 LDS]

Samuel prophesied many more things, warning them of events to come, and telling them they must repent and believe on Jesus Christ. Many had believed his words, and still more believed when they saw that the Spirit of the Lord was with Samuel, and he could not be hit with the stones and arrows the Nephites tried to slay him with. They had flocked to Nephi's father, to be baptized. Sadly, many more of them did not believe.

Now five years had come and gone, and so had Samuel. He had not been heard from again after that day on the wall. In the past year, there had been many signs and wonders given, and the words of all the prophets began to be fulfilled. Angels appeared unto wise men and declared to them the glad tidings of great joy. Still, the people hardened their hearts, and only the most believing part of the Nephites and the Lamanites still looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. Lately, the prophecies had begun to be fulfilled even more fully. There had been greater signs and miracles.



But there were people who were saying the time was past for those words which Samuel spoke to be fulfilled. They rejoiced over this and made a great uproar throughout the land. It caused the believers to be sorrowful that those wondrous events might not come to pass, but they continued to watch and wait for the day wherein there would be no night that they might know their faith had not been in vain.

Nephi single-mindedly prayed on for them, oblivious to the heat of the day, never acknowledging hunger or pain. His heart was torn within. He felt such joy and anticipation of the great events that were to come, yet so much heartache and sorrow over the wickedness of his people. For the unbelievers had set apart a day that all those who believed would be put to death, unless the sign spoken of by Samuel was given. Nephi continued to cry mightily to God all the rest of the day for those who were about to be destroyed because of their faith. How he yearned for the comforting presence, faith and powerful ministry of his father, and he wished he was kneeling beside him, as he poured out his heart to God.

A cooling breeze touched his skin, then the air grew still and peace filled his soul. Suddenly, the voice of the Lord pierced the silence. Nephi felt it in every fiber of his being. "Lift up your head and be of good cheer, for behold, the time is at hand; And on this night shall the sign be given, And on the morrow come I into the world to show unto the world that I will fulfill all that I have caused to be spoken by the mouth of My holy prophets. Behold, 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, And to do the will both of the Father and of the Son—of the Father because of Me, and of the Son because of My flesh. And behold, the time is at hand, And this night shall the sign be given." (3 Nephi 1:12-15 RCE) [3 Nephi 1:13-14 LDS].

Nephi's heart leapt within him. He looked toward the horizon where the sun had begun to set. As it went down, there was no darkness, only beautiful, abundant light. Praising and thanking God, he leapt to his feet, and ran toward home. Joy gave him wings. It coursed through his veins and filled his soul.

When Nephi came upon the city, he began to witness the fulfillment of Samuel's prophecy. All the people upon the face of the land, from west to east and from north to south, fell upon the earth in astonishment when no night came. Many who had not believed the prophets fell to the earth as if they were dead; for they knew their plan to kill those that believed, and they knew that the Son of God would soon appear! They knew the prophets had testified of these things for many years, and the sign had been given. They began to fear because of their wickedness and unbelief.

There was no darkness the whole night. It was as bright as if it was the middle of the day. The morning came, and the sun rose again, and all the people knew today was the day the Lord would be born because of the miraculous sign that was given. It had all happened just as it had been spoken of by the prophets. Every word had been fulfilled.

When darkness came again, Nephi looked up into the nighttime sky, searching. A bright new star had appeared just as it had been promised, and it was beautiful. He thought of his father and of Samuel the Lamanite prophet, and he wondered if they were somewhere looking up at this glorious sign in the heavens. Nephi's soul rejoiced, and his heart wondered, at the thought of his Savior, Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, a tiny baby, across the world in the arms of His mother, Mary.

*Illustrations by Marla Kroesen*

# THOU ART CHOSEN AND BLESSED

by Allene Gilmore

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God, unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth. To a virgin, espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her and said, Hail, thou virgin, who art highly favored of the Lord. The Lord be with thee, for thou art chosen and blessed among women. (Luke 1:26-28 IV/KJV)

No greater words could a woman wish to hear than, "Thou art chosen and blessed," spoken by one bearing the message from God himself. Mary, a young maiden, was privileged to hear these words, along with the revelation that she would bear a child, the very Son of God. That she had been endowed with faith and strength for that very moment was evident in her reply to the angel messenger, "Be it unto me according to thy word." She offered no protest, no excuse, only a willingness to allow God to use her to fulfill the greatest earthly mission to which a woman has ever been called. Perhaps she was created for that very purpose.

The scriptures bear no record of Mary expressing regrets over her decision, nor even of having second thoughts. She would have known there would be unkind remarks made to her, and about her, concerning her being with child before her marriage to Joseph was finalized, even though the betrothal was legally binding. And, how would she explain this to Joseph. She also must have had many concerns about her forthcoming role in the raising of this special child. However, we detect no fear nor apprehension in her words. Instead, as she visited with her cousin Elizabeth, we hear joyous praise to her heavenly Father. Rather than hesitating or complaining about the work to which she had been called, she said,

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Savior. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden; for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he who is mighty hath done great things; and I will magnify his holy name,  
(Luke 1: 45-48 IV) [Luke 1:46-49 KJV]

Not only was spiritual strength necessary for Mary to accomplish the great responsibility that was given her,

but physical and emotional strength were also needed. It could have been no easy nor pleasant task for her to leave the comfort of her home in the final days of her pregnancy and travel approximately 80 miles, either on foot or riding on the back of a donkey. At the end of this journey to Bethlehem, there was no sterile hospital nor comfortable bed awaiting her. A crude animal shelter was her birthing room. Then, when Jesus was still a very young child, she and Joseph, in obedience to a warning from God, made a long, arduous, and probably dangerous two hundred mile journey to Egypt. They lived in this foreign land for a period of time in order to keep Jesus safe from the evil Herod, who wished him dead. God surely blessed her with the spiritual, physical and emotional strength that was required for her to carry out His will in her life.



We know little else about the life of Mary, but she must have had her joys as well as her sorrows through the years. Of course, the greatest sorrow that befell her was when her precious son was killed in the prime of his life, and by the cruel method of crucifixion. The joy to exceed all joys must have come at the end of her life when she was welcomed into the presence of the Lord and heard Him say, "Well done, my good and faithful handmaiden." Although we don't worship Mary, we do hold her in high esteem and see in her the perfect example of a godly woman. Just as she prophesied to Elizabeth, all generations have called her blessed.

The handmaidens of God in these last days can do well to look to the biblical account of Mary, as well as accounts of other strong, faithful women who are portrayed in the scriptures, and be inspired by their stories. Although women have always occupied a responsible position in God's work, the women of the church today possibly face their greatest challenge of all times. These present-day daughters of Zion have been designed

and created for this very moment in time. Like Mary, they have been chosen and blessed. Their calling is not in the magnitude of giving birth to the Son of God, but it is to assist in the birth of His earthly kingdom. One can only speculate about what will be required of the handmaidens, as well as the priesthood and all members, in the uncertain days of the near future. We do know that all will need a tremendous amount of faith, strength, courage and perseverance, but, just as God supplied these to Mary and every other person He has called to a work, so He will supply those who He has placed in His vineyard for this final work.

May each handmaiden accept her challenge without fear or hesitation, but with faith and strength; and may each, like Mary, proclaim, "I will magnify His holy name."

...for we have a labor to perform while in this tabernacle of clay, that we may conquer the enemy of all righteousness and rest our souls in the kingdom of God. (Moroni 9:6 RLDS/LDS)

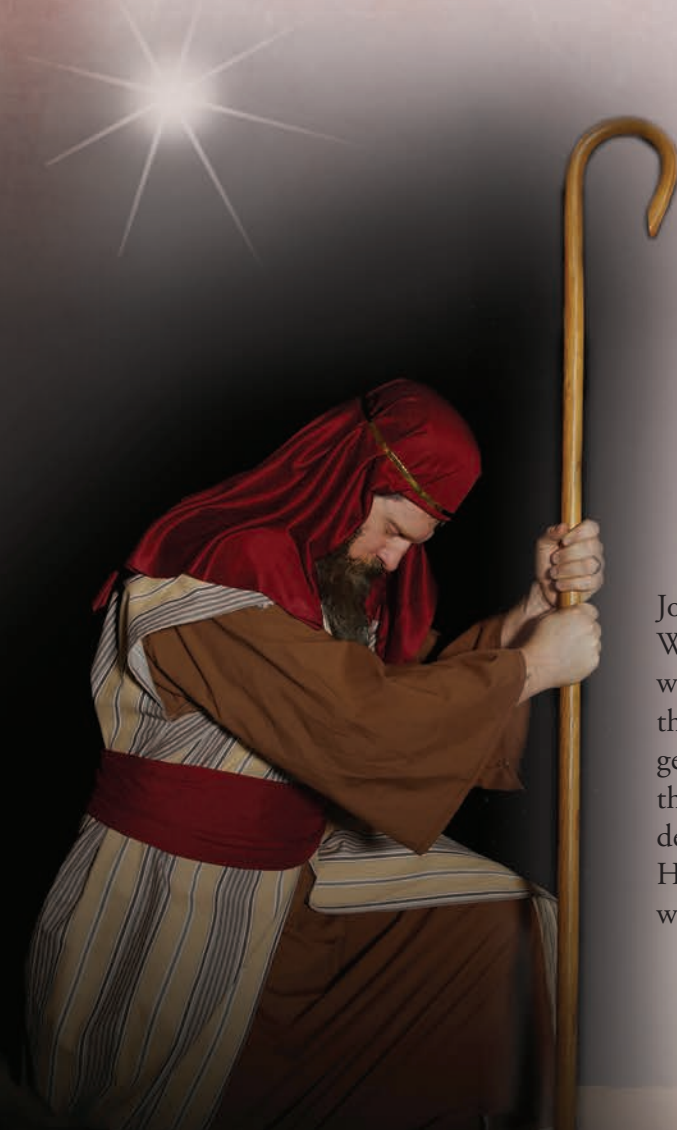
# HE'S MY SON TOO!

by Marlin Guin

And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, having lived with his father, being, as was supposed of the world, the son of Joseph... (Luke 3:30 IV) [Luke 3:23 KJV]

Much has been written about Mary, mother of Jesus, but what about Joseph? What about his role to become the earthly father of Jesus Christ? What can we learn and understand from his experience? The first thing we know about Joseph, which is in harmony with Jewish tradition, is the importance he placed on his lineage back to Abraham. His complete genealogy is given in Matthew 1. The Jews place great importance on their connection to Abraham because of God's covenants. Joseph, a devout Jew, knew the Messiah must come through the seed of Abraham. He also knew the Messiah would come through the House of David, within the tribe of Judah.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David,) (Luke 2:4 IV/KJV)





One of the best descriptions of Joseph and Mary's early life together is found in Matthew 2:

Now, as it is written, the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise. After his mother, Mary, was espoused to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph, her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a vision, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins. Now this took place, that all things might be fulfilled, which were spoken of the Lord, by the prophets, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, (which, being interpreted, is, God with us.) Then Joseph, awaking out of his vision, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife; And knew her not until she had brought forth her first-born son; and they called his name Jesus.

(Matthew 2:1-8 IV) [Matthew 1:19 KJV]

What does it mean to be “espoused” to one another? Some believe it means Joseph and Mary were engaged, and others believe they were already married at that time. Either way, “before they came together,” Mary conceived by the Holy Ghost and shared the news with Joseph.

We can only imagine the thoughts going through Joseph's mind when Mary told him she was “with child of the Holy Ghost.” Joseph must have initially felt his intelligence was insulted, as Mary explained how she became pregnant while remaining a virgin. Joseph may have said, “How could you do this to us and who's the real father?” This conversation would have been emotionally draining for both of them. Tears, disappointment, and even anger, flowed through the words as they expressed their deepest feelings. Both Joseph and Mary were firmly convicted of the truth of their own experience and unsure, at least for a while, how it would all end for their future together.

Joseph was a just man and “thought on these things.” He knew the social stigma and public humiliation they both would encounter within Jewish society. Joseph must have been pondering all his options from a personal, legal and cultural perspective. One option was to make Mary a

public example, but that was not his desire. It could even result in Mary being stoned to death. He could also put her away privately, which seemed to him like the better option. Perhaps there were other options. Any of these options would have been justified among the Jewish people.

An option Joseph didn't expect was a visit from an angel of God. It would be the only thing that could solve the dilemma, but perhaps was the furthest from his mind. God sent an angel to Joseph to reassure him and call him forth to be the earthly father of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. This divine intervention helps explain why Joseph's acceptance of Mary is different than what we would usually expect from a “letter of the law” Jew.

Notice how God didn't remove Joseph's agency and force him to comply, but instead helped him see the truth more clearly. It was still Joseph's decision, but the choices were illuminated by the revelation of God. This angelic visitation helped Joseph see and understand things thought to be impossible. Mary, a virgin, really did conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost. I'm sure Joseph had been praying and hoping for a miraculous answer to the situation. It came when the angel said to Joseph, “Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife.” He didn't seem to hesitate for a moment! It says, “Then Joseph, awaking out of his vision, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife.” This angelic visit provided Joseph a way to follow the true desire of his heart.

In the midst of all these influences, some human and some divine, Joseph's decision was also guided by a powerful spiritual force not often mentioned with this story. It was simply this: He truly loved her! It was this kind of love that helped shape and mold Joseph's heart to also love his son, Jesus. Joseph's love for Mary and Jesus came from a special kind of love only found when God dwells in us.

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

(1 John 4:16 IV/KJV)

What did Joseph think about the miraculous events surrounding the birth of Jesus? This was a new experience for him. They had found no room in the inn and sought refuge in a stable among the animals. No one complained, for the salvation of God had been born into the world. The Messiah had come! Together, Joseph and Mary held hands, hugged, kissed one another and gazed into each other's eyes as they tenderly held the Savior of the world. It was the perfect moment for them to say to each other, “I love you!” They gladly obeyed the instructions of the angel and named their son, Jesus.

Signs and wonders surrounded Joseph and Mary. Angels were appearing, shepherds were singing, prophecies were being fulfilled, and new prophecies were being given. It seemed as if all of God's creation was shouting aloud the coming of the Messiah. A new star appeared, and the time would come when wise men would bring gifts not commonly seen among them. They would come from distant lands and bring gold, frankincense and myrrh for a prophesied king! Joseph was taking it all in and giving praise and thanksgiving to God for the great things bestowed upon his family.

Their experience together, which began with confusion and uncertainty, was now a place of peace, happiness and hope, because God had revealed Himself to them. Perhaps during those tender moments, when Joseph held his precious son, Jesus, for the first time, he thought, "Thank you God, thank you for helping me make the right choice."

Joseph continued to be an obedient servant of God. As a father, he provided spiritual leadership to his family and received direction from angels, at least two more times. In those accounts, he was told to go to Egypt to protect his son from Herod. (Matthew 3:13 IV) [Matthew 2:13 KJV] When Herod died, he was then told to return to Israel so Jesus could grow up and prepare for ministry. (Matthew 3:19 IV) [Matthew 2:20 KJV] Each time, Joseph obeyed the voice of God. His life seemed to overflow with the receiving of angelic ministry. It's as if Joseph was always expecting to see angels and receive counsel from God.

As a direct descendant of David, Joseph was a faithful keeper of the Mosaic Law and must have been respected

among his family and friends. Joseph raised Jesus in the Jewish traditions and spiritual observances. As a carpenter, Joseph worked hard and developed the skills of an important trade. Like many Jewish fathers, his vocational skill was passed on to his son. Joseph spent time teaching Jesus his trade in the small town of Nazareth. Jesus, as an earthly son, honored His earthly father and worked hard learning to be a carpenter.

There is a question that comes to mind about the relationship between Joseph and Jesus. Why did Joseph, knowing Jesus was the Messiah, teach him to be a carpenter? We see the humanness of Joseph in answering that question. He was a great father and wanted to pass the family trade along to his son, Jesus. He seemed to know the time Jesus would be with him was short. I can envision Joseph showing Jesus the tools and demonstrating some of the skills while saying, "son, this is what we do." Joseph knew Jesus would prepare for public ministry, but Joseph also knew his son would be a carpenter along the way. As a father myself, this causes me to smile, because it seems dads will always be dads, no matter what!

Joseph is mentioned in the scriptures for about 12 years after Jesus is born. He then disappears from the record. Joseph's life reflects many spiritual qualities that are pleasing to our Heavenly Father. He was a skilled provider for his family, a faithful husband, a good father and a man of God! What a marvelous journey he travelled in this life. I wonder if Joseph ever smiles and thinks an earthly father's thought as he sees Jesus sitting on the right hand of God, "He's my son, too!"



Book of Mormon  
**RETREAT**

JANUARY 29-31, 2016

ARRIVE 6:30PM FRIDAY · LEAVE NOON ON SUNDAY · ODESSA HILLS CAMPGROUND

AGES 17-24 · DIRECTORS: MARK & JAMIE BENDORF

2 Nephi 1:38-39

*Awake, my sons: put on the armor of righteousness. Shake off the chains with which ye are bound, and come forth out of obscurity, and arise from the dust.*

COME EXPECTING TO BE CHALLENGED\*

**\$35** EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION  
BEFORE JANUARY 22

**\$45** LATE REGISTRATION ACCEPTED ONLINE THRU JANUARY 28  
WALK-IN REGISTRATION

REGISTER ONLINE AT [WWW.BOMF.ORG](http://WWW.BOMF.ORG)

OR CALL THE FOUNDATION 816.461.3722 | FACEBOOK - BOOK OF MORMON RETREAT

2016  
**INTERNSHIP**

JUNE 19-JULY 30, 2016

AGES 19-24 · AT LEAST 1 YEAR OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL

APPLICATION DEADLINE  
**FEB 19, 2016**  
MIDNIGHT

INTERVIEWS  
**FEB 27, 2016**  
AT THE FOUNDATION

APPLY ONLINE AT [WWW.BOMF.ORG](http://WWW.BOMF.ORG)

OR CALL THE FOUNDATION 816.461.3722

# ROAD TRIP THROUGH LEHI'S DREAM

*"And I also beheld a straight and narrow path, which came along by the rod of iron, even to the tree by which I stood." —1 Nephi 2:63*



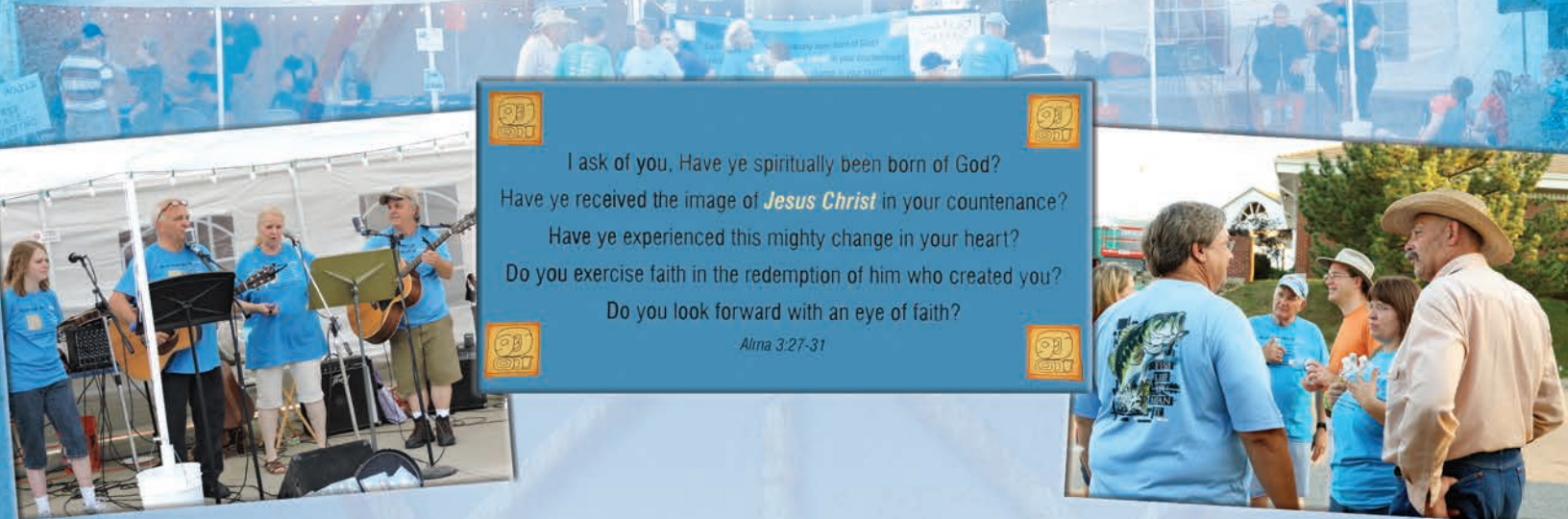
- ◆ **Saturday, January 16, 2016**  
**9:00 am-2:00 pm**  
Registration opens at 8:30  
Living Hope Restoration Branch
- ◆ **\$10 Per Child \$20 Per family**  
If registered by January 8th.  
\$15/\$30 After the 8th.
- ◆ **K-4th grades**



# SANTACALIGON

## BOOK OF MORMON BOOTH

### 2015



I ask of you, Have ye spiritually been born of God?  
 Have ye received the image of **Jesus Christ** in your countenance?  
 Have ye experienced this mighty change in your heart?  
 Do you exercise faith in the redemption of him who created you?  
 Do you look forward with an eye of faith?

*Alma 3:27-31*

### *Sharing the Book of Mormon Message at SantaCaliGon* • by Eric Woolery

In March 2015, we began our preparations for our Book of Mormon Foundation booth we would set up at the SantaCaliGon Festival over Labor Day weekend. One of the first decisions we made was to not have our booth located on the city square, as we had in previous years. We decided instead to put our tents in our parking area directly in front of the foundation office, which was one block north of the square. There were several reasons for this change, one of which was the drastic increase of cost for space rental during the festival.

We also formed a team to oversee the planning and operation of the booth—Jordan Brennan, Kelli Pedersen, Sue Manning, and Rita and Eric Woolery, with Rolland James to coordinate the music ministry for the weekend. We spent many hours in prayer, thought and discussion in preparation.

We decided to design a new banner and t-shirts for the 2015 event. We wanted to emphasize that the Book of Mormon is a *second witness of Jesus Christ*, and not the “devil’s book,” as some had referred to it. For the front of the shirts, we were led to the scripture from 2 Nephi 11:46, 48 RLDS [2 Nephi 25:25-26 LDS]: “We are made alive in **Christ** ...we talk of **Christ**, we rejoice in **Christ**, we preach of **Christ**, we prophesy of **Christ**... that our children may know to what source they look for a remission of their sins.” On the back we would print “As the Lord God liveth, there is none other name given save **Jesus Christ**, whereby man can be saved.” (2 Nephi 11:39) [2 Nephi 25:20 LDS] We chose a bright aqua color for the shirt, which made it stand out. It has been very popular with the saints, and even some outside of the Restoration have requested one because of the message the shirt carries. These are available for purchase at The Book of Mormon Foundation office, where you can see our new banner, which showcases the text from Alma 3:27-31 (RLDS) [Alma 5:14-15 LDS]

I ask of you, Have ye spiritually been born of God?  
 Have ye received the image of **Jesus Christ** in your countenance?  
 Have ye experienced this mighty change in your heart?  
 Do ye exercise faith in the redemption of him who created you?  
 Do you look forward with an eye of faith?



We also made several hundred "Jesus" cards to give away to children. On the front of the card was a picture of Jesus with two verses from Helaman 2:74-75 (RLDS) [Helaman 5:12 LDS] on the back: "Remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation, that the devil shall have no power over you, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build, they cannot fall."

During the weekend, we gave away over 500 bottles of water, over 200 "Jesus" cards, 24 copies of the Book of Mormon, and shared many testimonies with those visiting the booth (children and adults). One of our teams found that, by sending a team member to each corner of our street, they could direct families with children to our booth for face painting, which increased our opportunity to share. We continued this throughout Labor Day weekend and enjoyed many opportunities to witness for Jesus Christ.

Approximately 100 saints helped to make this weekend a success! We had ten teams provide help for the booth. There were also ten groups or individuals who brought music ministry throughout the weekend. Many people expressed their appreciation for this ministry and the way it was provided. Good fellowship was enjoyed, and old friendships were renewed during our weekend together. We feel God has blessed our efforts in many ways, with many seeds having been planted. (Alma 17:35 RLDS) [Alma 37:6 LDS] We give God the glory and honor for His rich kindness, mercy, love, grace, and blessings too numerous to adequately express! We look forward to participating in this festival again next year.

### *Brief Encounters and a Subtle Witness*

by Eric Woolery

Rita and I went to the SantaCaliGon Festival, a local celebration of the place where the Santa Fe, California and Oregon trails departed Independence, Missouri for lands west. We were waiting in line for some home-brewed root beer when we noticed two women in front of us, a

mother and her adult daughter. The younger woman was staring back at us when the older woman, attempting to keep them moving forward, said to her, "Come on, let's move up." The younger woman responded, saying "Just a minute! I am reading this." She was reading the scripture printed on the front of our t-shirts, which said, We are made alive in Christ ...we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ... that our children may know to what source they look for a remission of their sins." (2 Nephi 11:46, 48 RLDS) [2 Nephi 25:25-26 LDS] We did not get the opportunity to show her what was on the back of the shirt, which read, "As the Lord God liveth, there is none other name given save Jesus Christ, whereby man can be saved." (2 Nephi 11:39 RLDS) [2 Nephi 25:20 LDS] We were, however, reminded that what we wear and how we conduct ourselves bears testimony to whom we belong.

On Saturday, we saw a "No Parking" sign on the curb across the street from The Book of Mormon Foundation. As much as possible, we warned people of this when they started to park there, as the police had been through several times writing tickets for illegal parking. We continued alerting people on Sunday afternoon, during which time I had the opportunity to witness to a police officer who had been writing tickets and noticed we were warning people not to park in the no parking zone. We gave him a Book of Mormon and one of our "Jesus" cards, which has a picture of Jesus on the front and a quotation from Helaman 2:74-75 (RLDS) [Helaman 5:12 LDS] on the back. He put the picture on the dash of his car, where he could see it easily. He asked about the Book of Mormon and why we needed it, saying "after all, we have a Bible." (There was a Bible on the front seat of his car.) We spent about 30 minutes discussing this, among other things that were on his heart. He told us he was very appreciative of our efforts to warn people about the no parking area. We did not tell him that every time we crossed the street to tell someone, we gave them the opportunity to read what was written on our t-shirts!

A woman, walking home from church, stopped at the Book of Mormon Foundation booth as we were finishing our setup on Sunday. She briefly looked at what we had displayed there, and asked if she could pray with us. I asked if she would like me to pray, or if she would rather pray. She said she wanted me to pray first, and then she would pray. I felt impressed to center my prayer on Christ and her witness of Him. I also prayed for God to bless her in her life. She prayed for our witness of Jesus during the day. I felt she was surprised at my prayer for her, and thought she had expected something different.



This same woman came by again on Monday afternoon, when Caleb Geno and I were taking down the tents. She asked me if I believed in Jesus Christ and if I had been saved! I replied emphatically that I did believe in Jesus Christ and that "without Him we would have no salvation." She said "Oh!" and walked away.

### *Rita Woolery*

During our shift on Friday, I sang some songs that the Lord has given me. I began with songs that come from the Book of Mormon. I felt that the Lord was blessing me as I sang, because my voice was clear and open. It seemed to take no effort at all on my part to sing. When I would finish my Book of Mormon songs, I would stop and say, "If you have enjoyed these songs and would like a free copy of the words, we have a book from which the words were taken, that you are welcome to have." Even though I saw no one watching as I sang, I felt someone was listening and hearing what I was singing. The next morning, when I came back with Eric to set up for Saturday, a man who had been working across the street from the booth on Friday, brought a donation by and told us how much he appreciated our ministry of music. Someone was listening!

On Saturday, as we offered free bottles of water to those who came by the booth, I had a strong desire to offer them the water in the name of Jesus Christ, as in Mark 9:38 (IV) [Mark 9:41 KJV] "And whosoever shall give you **a cup of water** to drink, in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, He shall not lose his reward."

I had a great desire to share my testimony of Christ with the people who came to the booth for free water and face painting. The Lord took away my fear and gave me great joy in talking with or singing to old and young alike who were visiting our booth. However, my physical body was weaker than the new spiritual strength I was gaining by working with all of the wonderful volunteers and the visitors. As evening approached, I was so tired that I had to go home. As I sat in my air-conditioned family room and watched some Classic Evangelism reruns, I felt the voice of an old evangelist was speaking directly to me! He said my heart had become hard to the promptings of the Holy Spirit through my disobedience by thinking I would do what the Lord was leading me to do "later." He said, "All will make a choice for the Lord this night: Whether it is yes, no, maybe, or I'll wait till later!" He also said, "You used to be moved to tears at the reading of the Scriptures and by the spoken word, but your heart has been made hard by not responding immediately to the promptings of the Lord!" At that moment, I realized that, even though I was very tired (mentally and physically), the Lord had used this time of service at The Book of Mormon Foundation booth to break my heart for HIS work. This brokenness allowed a new place in my heart to desire to witness to others of Jesus Christ. He had taken my heart of stone (that I had not realized I had) and given me a heart of flesh in its place. As I stood by the people who had come to the booth for face paint or water, my heart yearned to speak to them of Christ, share my testimony of Him or sing of His love. I am praising God for this opportunity and pray my ears will remain open and my heart soft to His leadings through my obedience.

Eric, Caleb and I went to set up The Book of Mormon Foundation booth on Sunday morning. I was joyful because of the good experiences from



The Book of Mormon Foundation  
210 West White Oak  
Independence, MO 64050

Change Service Requested

Nonprofit  
Organization  
US. Postage  
**PAID**  
Kansas City, MO  
Permit No. 1016



the previous days, but growing weary from the heat and the many busy hours outside. It was about an hour before we were scheduled to open and we didn't even have all of our equipment set out yet, when a mommy and two little boys came by to take advantage of the free face painting. Eric and Caleb were eager to have me come outside and meet the guests. To say the least, I was not prepared to begin my day of service just yet. I struggled before I went to meet them, feeling grouchy that I was required to begin earlier than I planned. I prayed and asked for help, that my own selfishness wouldn't spoil this opportunity to witness for Jesus Christ.

I have very little face painting skill. However, the little boys were very appreciative and didn't seem to notice my inadequacies, for which I was very thankful! When I finished, I gave them a picture of Christ we had specially prepared with Helaman 2:74-75 (RLDS) [Helaman 5:12 LDS] on the back. I asked the boys if they knew who was in the picture. When they said it was Jesus, I asked if I could share my testimony of Jesus with them. They listened very attentively. Their mom seemed to be very appreciative of my sharing. She shared with us that the boys were twins, and the smaller of the two did not have the ability to sweat, so they needed to go back home before the heat of the day settled in. The littlest boy then said to me, "You know what? I talk to God all the time in my head!" I said, "That is wonderful, that is called prayer!" What a blessing the Lord gave me! Perhaps I was entertaining an angel unawares? I could have missed it if I had given in to my selfish, grouchy thoughts.

### *Karen Bates*

On Saturday, we attended SantaCaliGon, as we walked down the street, we could hear the noisy, booming sounds of bands on the Square. We couldn't make out any tunes, let alone the words. As we approached The Book of Mormon Foundation booth, there was a sweet, calm spirit there. Beautiful, meaningful music was filling the area. As we stood there, with a group of about 25 people, we were able to greet old friends in the faith who we had not seen for awhile. When we left, we passed a couple, not far from the booth. I mentioned how peaceful it was to have this beautiful music in contrast to the bands on the Square. They whole-heartedly agreed, and I knew the Book of Mormon booth was reaching even more than those who stopped at the booth. Praise the Lord!