

The Gospel News

World Headquarters Monongahela, PA, USA

January, 2005

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Kenya – Past and Present 2004 Visit

By Evangelist J. Joseph Perri

Time has a tendency of quickly passing by without our realizing it has. It is difficult for me to believe ten years has passed since my last visit to Kenya. The growth that has taken place in the Church there from 1994 through 2004 is even more glorious than one could imagine. In 1994 there were just two brothers in the Priesthood with just a few members. During this visit, we were introduced to 11 members of the Priesthood, some of them relating to me that they remember my visit along with that of my wife in 1994 when the Church had its beginning in the villages of Kenyanya and Kiogosi. The membership has grown from just a few in number to approximately 600 members in 15 villages.

On our recent visit of September 19th through October 5th with Evangelist Jim Crudup, as we traveled about from one Church village to another, the joy and excitement we felt being among our Church membership and the excitement coming from our beloved brothers and sisters because of our visit was overwhelming. The singing of choruses and testimonies given of

God's blessings in their lives will be treasured for some time to come

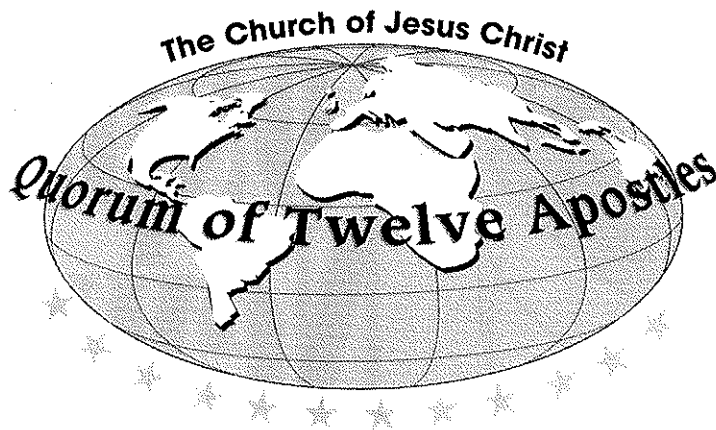
The first Sunday worship service was held in the Headquarters Building in the village of Ogembo. The brothers and sisters came by rented vehicle from various locations to share in our day's worship together. It was a blessing to see a large gathering of members and visitors alike and to feel the spirit of God in our midst. A number of choirs from various villages sang for us prior to our preaching.

My sermon was taken from St. John 15, the theme being the the great love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ towards mankind and His demonstration of love by giving His life upon the cross of Calvary to redeem our souls from the fall of our first parents. The purpose of Christ's dying on the cross was to prepare a place in the mansions of Glory, whereby, through our obedience to the Gospel and obeying the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ and in keeping the promise made the day of our baptism, we will be rewarded with the gift of eternal life. Some of the words from the song entitled *Isn't the Love of Jesus Something Wonderful*

were recited and would have been very appropriate to sing that morning if the words and music were available. Brother Jim Crudup followed, relating the importance that we (the saints of God) who are the branches must be connected to the vine who is Jesus Christ so we may bring forth much fruit. He concluded by using the words of Jesus when he said "For without me you can do nothing." Brother Jim and I had good liberty in preaching that Sunday morning. The large congregation was very attentive. During the meeting, I related how the Restored Gospel message first came to Kenya.

(Some excerpts from that experience) Upon our arrival in the town of Kisii in 1985, not knowing where the Osaka family lived, nor in what direction we were to travel, we turned our hearts to God in prayer asking Him to help us find this family. Brother Elizaphan had been corresponding with The Church of Jesus Christ in America for four years, requesting missionaries be sent to Kenya to preach the Restored Gospel to them. With all avenues exhausted in trying to locate Brother Elizaphan and when we thought our trip to Kenya would be a disappointment in not finding the Osaka family, a man from the town of Kisii led by the direction of God came to inform me

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Message from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles

“When you are in the service of your fellow beings you are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17). Though considered pillars of the Church, the Apostles of the Quorum of Twelve are your servants. In 1862, when our early brothers met in Greenoak, PA, revelation was received to set aside and ordain the Apostles. It was then that the power of God was manifested in our brethren to be servants and to direct The Church of Jesus Christ. At that time the Church was very small in number but great in power and revelations received. Whenever it was necessary to fill vacancies in the Quorum of Twelve, as we are now experiencing, our brothers would go into fasting and prayer for God to reveal who would be called to fill the vacancies. Presently we Apostles are doing the same... following the direction of God’s will to call men with the anointing of an Apostle of Jesus Christ.

During the year of 2004, God has called home Apostles V. James Loyalvo, Russell Cadman, and Emeritus Apostle Joseph Bittinger, creating two vacancies. It is the desire of the Quorum of Twelve to replace our brothers as soon as God reveals those He has chosen. We are asking the entire membership to join the Quorum of Twelve in this effort. Pray that God will **reveal to the Quorum** whom he is pleased to call. As you may already understand, members’ personal experiences regarding possible candidates to fill vacancies in the Quorum should not be revealed or discussed.

Filling the Quorum of Twelve is not the only important current work before us. Since our first meeting of this year in January 2004, the agenda has included many items of importance. “The great work of the Lord” includes the continued evaluation of our branches and missions. Every effort is being made to support the outreach program in every Region. The Quorum of Seventy has taken a special interest to expand evangelism with many brethren volunteering to support each and every region with special meetings to uplift and encourage the membership. Special efforts also include going from door to door to invite people to attend the meetings. Many good reports have been received. The *Gospel News* continues to prove its importance by printing the news of efforts in each and every region, as well as in foreign mission fields. Numerous proposals to improve the Church’s operations are under consideration.

The volume of the Quorum’s work has made it necessary to meet more often to take care of the effort. As we began the year in January, we also met in April, June and lastly in October. In between, we have also had conference calls among special committees in the quorum, working on items assigned to each. We take the time necessary to expedite our proceedings when we do meet at our appointed meetings.

The growth of the Church has made it necessary to consider expan-

Apostle Emeritus, Brother Joseph Bittinger, Passes Away

Brother Joseph Bittinger passed away on October 13, 2004, after a life of service to God in The Church of Jesus Christ since his baptism on August 10, 1930. Born on August 20, 1902, in Maryland, Brother Joe was over 102 years old. Until recent years, he was remarkably active, traveling throughout the Church and belying his age with his keen wit and intense interest in the activities of the saints. He served the Church in many capacities for as long as he was able, and two years ago when physical limitations finally prevented his effectiveness, he served again in a different way, by requesting relief from active duty. He accepted status as an Emeritus Apostle in order to provide a vacancy in the Quorum of Twelve Apostles to be filled through the calling of a younger, active man of the Lord’s choosing. Brother Joe is survived by his daughter, Sister Hulda Stroko.

In his youth, Brother Joe worked as a coal miner and met the Church through a co-worker in Bitner, Pennsylvania who was holding meetings in his home. Brother Joe was ordained an Elder in 1931, an Evangelist in 1940, and an Apostle in 1953. He served as Second Counselor of the General Church from 1956 to 1970. While assigned branch and district (now “region”) responsibilities, Brother Joe was a ready and willing missionary. He was a principal in several mission fields. He was among the pioneers of the Church’s Foreign Missions work, taking his first trip to Nigeria with Brother William H. Cadman in 1954. Brother Joe was also a key administrator of the Church: a charter member of the General Church Finance Committee, and, later, of the General Church Mission Board and, still later, of the Foreign Missions Committee. At various times, he served as Chairman

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Educational Curriculum

The scripture continually reminds us that we must take every opportunity to teach our children the commandments of the Lord, the blessings of the Lord, and the ways of the Lord. God said to Moses, "...thou shalt teach them [God's blessings and commandments] diligently unto thy children...." Solomon recommends to "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." King Benjamin strongly suggests to his people that "ye will teach them [the children] to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another." Alma urges his son, Corianton, to declare glad tidings to his people and to have them "prepare the minds of their children to hear the word...." The Apostle Paul said to Timothy, "that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." When Jesus visited the Nephites, "he did teach and minister unto the children...."

It is evident that from the earliest times in scriptural history to our day and time, there has always been an intense desire to teach our children about the Lord and His Church. Sister Mabel Bickerton, a notable and recognized teacher of children, has been quoted as saying, "Teach the children. Our children should know the Gospel." Consequently, over the years, Sister Mabel and many brothers and sisters have written lessons for the purpose of educating our children so that they might gain knowledge regarding the Lord God, His son, Jesus Christ, His Church, His doctrine, and the Restoration of His Gospel.

The Educational Curriculum Committee (ECC) of The Church of Jesus Christ first met in September, 2002 as a study project under the Quorum of Seventy. It was established as a subcommittee of the National Education Committee (NEC) of the Church in 2003 with its mission to design a curriculum that would

encompass all aspects of the Church's doctrine, history, organization responsibilities, and scriptural beliefs. Currently, Brother Joel Calabrese, Chairperson, Brother Leonard A. Lovalvo, Ass't. Chairperson, and Brother John Ford, Secretary, are the officers of the ECC. Brothers Peter Scolaro and John Griffith are Apostle liaisons to the ECC. Together with the ECC officers the following brothers and sisters form the steering committee: Brothers Tom Curtin and Joe Saeli, and Sisters Sally Curtin, Connie Frankenbery, Jacqui King, Darlene Markazene, Karen Progar, Alice Saeli, and Amy Urana. To date, approximately 40 additional brothers and sisters have volunteered to help with the further development of ECC projects.

The Educational Curriculum was developed and presented to the April, 2004 General Conference and was approved for implementation in all of our branches and missions. This comprehensive basic core curriculum is to be taught to our children in a sequence of presentations from the preschool years through the high school years. The Educational Curriculum's scope encompasses the following eight categories:

- Scripture stories and characters
- Life of Jesus
- Ordinances
- Life Lessons and Commandments
- Faith and Doctrine
- Structure of the Church
- Divine Gifts
- History of the Church

Two instructional tools have been developed to assist in the delivery of the curriculum. The ECC has designed a 2' X 3' **Curriculum Chart** delineating the scope and sequence mentioned previously, and it is intended that it be conveniently posted in every branch and mission throughout the Church. It is to be used as a guide to determine which lessons are to be taught and when they should be taught. The chart has recently been translated into Spanish and will be available in regions where the Spanish version is desired. In addition to the chart, the ECC has

created an instructional **Notebook** for teachers. It contains eight **Signature Lessons** which are example lessons for each of the eight categories listed in the chart. These lessons have been designed and formatted in a specific and clearly defined manner to assist teachers in developing their lessons as they work through the curriculum. Also, the notebook contains a section devoted to **Teaching Strategies** that will help the teacher develop skills and techniques for improving their instruction. Lessons written in the bimonthly *Fence Post*, an ECC subcommittee newsletter, are following the formatted design and are available for the instruction of our children. These newsletters have been mailed to every branch and mission. For more information regarding the *Fence Post* newsletter, contact Sister Chandra Young at: fence@thechurchofjesuschrist-ohio.org

The **Curriculum Chart** and the Teacher's **Notebook** are currently in the process of being produced. Both of these items will be mailed from the Print House to the Presiding Elder of every branch and mission of the Church in the United States and Canada. The Region Presidents will assist the ECC by verifying that every branch and mission has received the materials. Soon afterward, the ECC will plan to schedule training sessions in every Region to help the membership and teachers of Sunday School and MBA classes understand and utilize the materials. It is expected that the training sessions will start in the first quarter of 2005. Announcements will be forthcoming.

The ECC has made presentations reporting their progress to the General Church Conference in April and October, 2004 Conferences, in FENCE Workshops, and recently to the October, 2004 General Ladies' Circle Conference. A great deal of interest, excitement, and enthusiasm has been received, and it is the hope of the ECC that this work will be expanded through the efforts of many

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Missionary
Benevolent
Association

November, 2004 GMBA Conference

By Sister Christine Maddox

Greensburg, Pennsylvania had an unusually large amount of people at the World Conference Center on November 12 and 13 due to the 2004 November Conference. The Saturday evening meeting marked the end of the business portion of the weekend and the commencement of the spiritual part.

Brother Larry Champine welcomed everyone to the meeting, chose *A New Name in Glory* as the opening song and called upon Brother Ryan McDonnell to open the night in prayer. During Brother Ryan's prayer, a woman in the congregation was blessed with a vision in which she saw a cross with a light shining on it extending to Heaven. It was evident that God had entered our meeting and would remain with us from that moment forward.

Brother Jeff Giannetti followed the opening prayer and exalted the members of the Church to take ownership in the name sung about in *A New Name In Glory*. He said, "This night is a celebration of our names being written down in glory." Brother Jeff then invited all of the brothers and sisters holding newly elected and re-elected GMBA offices to come up front to be installed. Brother Chuck Maddox offered a prayer over the group, pleading with God to guide their decisions and continue to send blessings for the GMBA.

The Kids For Christ, children ages four through twelve, were then called up to present a program of their day's activities. They told everyone that they had been on a trip to paradise and visited "the palm tree of prayer, the beach of beauty, and the songs of sunshine." A slideshow of pictures from the afternoon followed their speaking and provided a blessing to all in the congregation.

Following the Kids For Christ presentation, Brother Jeff asked Brother Justin and Sister Christina Paxon to sing a duet. The two of them selected *Just As I Am* and melodious voices sang their praises to Jesus Christ.

Brother Paul Palmieri presented the congregation with the question: "Can you still sing the song of redeeming grace?" Brother Paul explained that Jesus took us as we were and changed us so we would never have the desire to go back. "This is the story of our lives, and this power of the Lord Jesus Christ will affect people everywhere," he commented. Brother Paul continued by declaring that the power of Jesus Christ will "move the Church forward and captivate souls away from sin." He urged all in attendance to take no thought for tomorrow because "we already know where we're going." Instead, Brother Paul said to focus on "the purpose of our lives – to get busy for the Lord." By getting busy for the Lord, Brother Paul elaborated that we need to "touch people" and practice a "greater commitment of ourselves to the Lord by sharing our testimony." Brother Paul concluded his message with a powerful statement: "We need to get busy for the Lord. It's a matter of life and death."

Brother Paul Aaron Palmieri addressed the congregation. He excitedly proclaimed that the "GMBA is on the move! Get excited and get ready for work – God has a plan." Brother Paul Aaron referred to Ammon in Alma 26 and asked if anyone could ever "glory too much in the Lord [or] say that God has been too good." He encouraged the brothers and sisters of the Church to live their lives as examples in order to give instruction to the people who are seeking the way into Heaven.

The meeting continued with a message from Brother Chuck. "I hope you're getting ready to testify. The call could come anytime, but it's going to come," he said. Brother Chuck pointed out that week after week we are getting the same message – now is the time to step up. "Are you hearing it?" he questioned. Brother Chuck directly addressed the people in the

congregation who are wondering if it is their time to answer God's call. "Is it your time?" he asked. "Being around The Church of Jesus Christ is contagious, and if you are thinking that it's not your time right now, you're in trouble. You're around the saints and this is contagious!"

Brother Chuck then touched on the speed in which we share our testimony. "Be quick to praise God," he said. "The evil one knows how to get you. Stay focused! Don't let Satan steal your peace." Referring to Philippians 4:13, Brother Chuck proclaimed, "Jesus Christ is so much more powerful. The evil one knows the power we have in Jesus Christ. But have no fear! There is no fear in Jesus Christ."

Following Brother Chuck's delivery, the young people were called up. They enjoyed a spirit of singing and testimony before heading back to their seats and listening to Brother David Catalano bring the meeting to a close. "Was it worth packing up suitcases to come here today?" Brother David asked. He read Alma 26:22 and encouraged everyone to "put this into action and the mysteries of God will be revealed."

Brother David asked everyone to pray for blessings and God's spirit in the Sunday meeting and asked adults and parents to "pray continually for the young people. The young need The Church of Jesus Christ. Mysteries will be revealed to them."

The Sunday morning meeting began with a welcome by Brother Larry Champine and a prayer offered by Brother Carl Frammolino. Brothers Jameson Staley, Issac D. Smith, Cameron Staley, Jason Monaghan, and Patrick Monaghan then sang *It Is Well* as an appropriate beginning to the day.

Brother Paul Palmieri introduced the communion portion of the meeting by commenting that "It is well with our souls and with the Lord." He advised all of the brothers and sisters to show the Lord how much He is loved by the taking of communion. Evangelists John DiBattista, Paul Ciotti, Ken Staley, Richard Scaglione, Tom Everett, Carl

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Editorial Viewpoint . . .

"For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge"
(Romans 10:2).

This month's *Gospel News* contains an article about a new committee in the Church, the Educational Curriculum Committee. This Committee is committed to teaching our young people about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I quoted the scripture in Romans above because we can have a zeal for God, but unless it is according to knowledge, it is misguided. There are too many people today who believe in God and serve Him in their own way. They have created their own "Bible" and really have no need for the actual written Word of God. They have decided what righteousness means and the way in which they will obtain eternal life. Jesus, on the other hand, taught us that there is just one way. He taught us about a straight and narrow path that will lead us to Heaven.

Thank God that in The Church of Jesus Christ, we have always fostered an environment of learning through the numerous Sunday School teachers and other teachers who have, through study and inspiration, worked hard to help us become better rooted in the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ. Most adults in the Church today have very fond memories of their Sunday School teachers from whom they have learned so much, not only by instruction, but by example. I am fortunate that my Sunday School teachers are still alive today, so I can thank them for all they have given me.

The Lord loves a people who will humbly be willing and ready to learn about His Word, His will, and His love. He loves a people who will accept any instruction and guidance His Church can offer, in order to grow in knowledge. The Church of Jesus Christ has a great opportunity, through this committee, to provide a very structured way of learning the Word of God, without taking away the ever important place for inspiration. Without learning, our young people will grow up like a tree that is not rooted. Every wind and doctrine will "blow" them in all the wrong directions. Naturally speaking, imagine if there were no schools! Imagine if children could just grow up and "figure things out" for themselves! What kind of world would it be? It is the same way in the Church. Our Sunday School and other avenues of learning are so critical to our spiritual success.

Learning is very contagious. Once it begins, others get involved and get excited. Learning helps us to be more confident in defending the Restored Gospel. *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"* (2nd Timothy 2:15). When we know what we're talking about, it is hard to be convinced of false doctrines and teachings. Unfortunately, there may be some who have left the Church because they never really studied the Word of God and became "ashamed" of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, not being able to "divide the word of truth." That is why creating a strong infrastructure of sound learning can ensure that not only are the "What's" answered, but also the "Why's." The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak, and we are all guilty of putting off learning from the Word of God. But with our wonderful teachers, and with the wonderful materials the Church can provide, we can be sure that we will always have someone or something to "motivate" us to learn.

In Lehi's vision, the Word of God was likened unto a rod of iron which many were holding onto. I've always imagined this as many people trekking across a rickety bridge with a great chasm below, but a strong and solid handrail to hold onto. This prevents them from slipping and falling. The Word of God will keep us from slipping and falling. All we have to do is read, and increase in knowledge. How beautiful is it to have a zeal for God ACCORDING to knowledge! Then we can fully enjoy all that God has for us in this life, and ensure our spot in Heaven in the life to come.

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork



Seven Things That the Lord Hates

Dear Friends,

In January, as the new year begins, people all over the world think about ways they can change their lives and be better, richer, healthier, or happier. Many people want to change but aren't sure what to change or how to change for the better. We do not have to worry about that in our Church. We can read the scripture and get good ideas of what we can do to be better. We can listen to our Elders when they preach. We can listen to that little voice inside us saying, "Oh, I shouldn't do that."

In our Church, we have a deeper understanding about the way things really are. We know that there is good and there is evil in this world. The Lord tells us to pray to him about all things. He tells us to be wise as a serpent but gentle as a dove. He makes us brave by teaching us "Resist the Devil and he will flee [run away] from you." This lets us know God can make us better.

In Proverbs 6:16 there is a list of things that God hates. I read this list and thought about the times that I had slipped into some of these wrong ways. I felt sad and scared that I make so many mistakes at times. I want God to be pleased with me. Then I remember that God can take away our bad habits. God can make us strong so we can change even if our friends and families are not changing with us. We can be better and kinder the way we want to, all we have to do is pray and ask God to forgive us and change us.

The seven things that God hates are these: a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that are swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and a person that soweth discord (causes problems) among the brethren (God's people). God hates these things so strongly that the Bible says they are an abomination to God! That means it is really bad to do these things.

"What do these words mean? When do I do them? "you may ask yourself. Well, let's think. The last time people complimented you on something you had done did you stop to think about the reason you could do them? Did you think that God had given you the ability and talent? Did you think about the times that God had even kept you alive and well so you could do this? If you were proud about something that you had bought with money and riches, did you think that God had given you the chance to have those blessings and that it wasn't just up to you to act so proud and better than other people who did not have what you did?

How many times have you caught yourself telling just a little lie, or a big one? Maybe you lied to get out of trouble. Maybe you lied to show off and impress someone or make yourself look better. Maybe you lied to get out of trouble instead of admitting you were wrong and saying you were sorry. Once we start lying to ourselves then we are really in big trouble. If we cannot face the truth about our weaknesses, then we don't ask God for forgiveness so we can change. We need to stop lying. God knows us and still loves us.

God hates hands that shed innocent blood. Nowadays, this usually only happens in war. But it also says God hates a heart that deviseth (thinks about and makes up) wicked things they imagine. God's people are not supposed to sit around thinking about things like that. We are supposed to be busy and loving and happily involved helping and loving others. Nowadays, the Internet has many, many bad things on it. God's people must stay away from dark places. We are the servants of Jesus, and we are supposed to be clean and let His light shine from our lives. Turn off that TV,

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WORD SEARCH

GOD	SHEDS
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THE	BLOOD
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THAT	MISCHIEF
SOWETH	TONGUE
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AMONG	MADE
BRETHREN	WICKED

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I	R	A	I	E	L	O	N	A
H	O	M	W	T	I	O	I	D
C	C	O	K	H	E	L	O	U
S	S	N	O	R	S	B	A	O
I	I	G	O	E	N	N	U	R
M	D	B	L	N	T	W	J	P



Ohio Midwest Area Ladies' Circle

By Sister Teresa Pandone

The Ohio Midwest Area Ladies' Uplift Circle hosted a Mother-Daughter Luncheon on Saturday, October 23, 2004 at Mary Yoder's Amish Kitchen in Middlefield, Ohio. Approximately 75 were in attendance. We enjoyed fellowship with one another, meeting new friends, and renewing old acquaintances.

Sister Katherine Cocco offered the prayer for our fellowship and lunch. After we enjoyed a delicious family-style Amish meal, President, Sister Rosalie Mott, introduced our guest speaker, Sister Karen Progar, President of the General Ladies' Uplift Circle.

Sister Karen's topic was "Hospitality." "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another... Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality" (Romans 12:10,13).

The following comments were made by Sister Karen: "Hospitality is a special gift given to The Church of Jesus Christ. Most of the stories we hear regarding the spread of the Gospel are that people heard of the Gospel from one of the saints, usually in their home(s). I firmly believe because of the generosity of our early brothers and sisters, they were richly blessed by God, both spiritually and naturally. From those early acts of hospitality came numerous members to the Church. If we look to the scriptures, we can read marvelous stories throughout God's Word of hospitality rewarded by God. Rahab and Lydia are excellent examples.

Sister Karen's discourse adequately addressed the following: (1) The beginning of hospitality, (2) What is necessary to perform this gift? (3)

Who can be hospitable? (4) How do you prepare? (5) To whom should we be hospitable? (6) Keep it simple. (7) Does this gift help to spread the Gospel? (8) What are the rewards? Her concluding comments were that "we all dedicate ourselves to show greater hospitality. Be prayerful, be prepared, be hospitable to everyone, begin immediately, make [have] a plan, stick to the plan, keep the burden factor low, accept your guest's assistance, be grateful for the opportunity and the ability to display this important gift. You will be blessed and will be a blessing to others."

Several sisters and friends in attendance were recognized and received token gifts.

Sister Carol Baird of Liberty, OH Branch, who recently made her covenant with the Lord and was baptized, was asked to give her personal testimony, which was enjoyed by all.

Sister Patty Gruver read a poem entitled "Finding A Friend." We sang, *Blest Be The Tie That Binds* and benediction was offered by Sister Elizabeth Kall.

It was time well spent in fellowship on a beautiful sunny, fall day. The drive to the restaurant was delightful as we viewed the beauty of the colored leaves of the fall season.

Community Outreach Project

By Sister Terri Bravo

The Lord blessed the sisters of the Atlantic Coast Area Ladies' Uplift Circle to organize and complete their first community outreach project. The sisters provided the seventy-five men, women and children of the Ozanam Homeless Shelter in Edison, New Jersey with toiletry bags. The toiletry bags consisted of items such as shampoo, conditioner, toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, shaving crème, razors, band aids, combs, hand lotion, etc.

The delivery date was November 10, 2004. We met at the Edison

branch and were thankful to have Evangelist Brother Jim and Sister Lydia Link join us in this activity. It was exciting to pack the bags and boxed items into our vehicles. Brother Jim offered a word of prayer that God would go with us.

We were warmly welcomed by the director, Connie Karli, the assistants and residents of the shelter. Our arrival and donation generated much excitement. It was very sad to see so many people deprived of a home and of the basic necessities which we take for granted. As we toured the facility, Connie explained that the residents become as a family and it can be difficult for them to leave the shelter because of the relations they develop. It was a cold night but the shelter was warm and there were caring people who have dedicated their lives to helping the poor and homeless. When we help them we become a part of the solution.

We returned to the Edison branch for our Wednesday evening service. Brother Jim led the service by speaking of how God can help us to do all things. That was an especially appropriate message for the sisters. The Lord touched our hearts to provide items needed for the cleansing of the natural man. Next we hope to bring the love of Jesus Christ that is most refreshing and cleansing to the soul.

After the meeting we enjoyed coffee and cake. We spoke of our hope that this will be the start of our work with the shelter.

We want to offer our thanks to the generosity of the sisters, friends and family members who contributed to the success of the project. The Lord touched our hearts to help those in need and multiplied our efforts as only He can do.

Happy New Year
to all our readers.



Branch and Mission News

Mesa, Arizona YIA/ Vacation Bible School

By Brother Dan Arcuri

Truly it was a privilege and a blessing to have several young people attend the Mesa Youth-In-Action, June 19-27, 2004. Young missionaries came from all across the country to help uplift and support our branch. Those that participated were Peter Benyola, Linda Calabrese, Anthony Dyer, Kristen Elzby, Ben Hemmings, Erin Light, Chuck Maddox, Ryan McDonnell, Heather Onorato, Jessica Palacios, Stefanie Suska, Bethany and Rachel Smith, Dan and Kristina Arcuri, Jordan and Chelsea Giannetti, Courtney and Caitlin Ivey, Heidi Landrey, Michael Watson and Brother David Catalano, GMBA Vice President.

We engaged in such activities as canvassing, visiting the elderly, and having seminar lessons taught by the Mesa ministry. God truly showed His presence as He was with us all, while we were out canvassing and bearing the heat of the day (literally). While canvassing we put out around 1,500 fliers, focusing on the neighborhoods around our new building. We thank God for the brothers that drove the vans. While visiting the elderly we sang songs and prayed with them. It was such a blessing to hear stories of our Church's history and the testimonies of the saints. We witnessed healings, which was a blessing and a testimony for not only those who received, but for those who had never witnessed before.

Thank God for the sisters in our branch. As we would be out doing the work of the Lord, they would stay back and prepare lunch for us. After lunch we would participate in seminars, followed by the preparation for our first Vacation Bible School. The theme for our Vacation Bible School was "The Treasure Hunt Bible

Adventure." The VBS committee passed out 400 fliers to the surrounding neighborhoods. Much fasting, praying and preparation went before the Lord that He would bless our efforts.

Each day we had approximately 20 children. Some discouragement was felt on Monday when not one child came from the neighborhood. On Tuesday we did receive three visitors from one family, friends of one of our Church families. But as we continued to teach the children in attendance, the blessings flowed and the anticipation and excitement grew each day. Some highlights were the plays that were performed by John and Ben Scolaro every day reinforcing the Bible points the children were learning.

The children made crafts, ate treats, had games outside and learned songs that they sang with great enthusiasm. By the end of the week, the Lord showed us that our efforts were well worth it. Not only were the children blessed, but the bond of love grew immensely between the children, Youth-in-Action kids and the brothers and sisters helping with VBS. That brought all of us great joy and we praise the Lord for His greatness! God truly manifested His spirit in a blessed week that we shared together. The love of Christ has truly been present in our branch!

Kenya

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that he knew Elizaphan Osaka. Words cannot express the joy I felt when I heard these words "I know Reverend Osaka." Brother Osaka was not baptized at the time, but he was known as Reverend. This man would accompany us in our rented vehicle directly to the Osaka home in the village of Kenyeny 25 miles in another direction from where we were in Kisii.

When we arrived at the Osaka home that Sunday morning, they were in the attitude of prayer. With prayer being concluded, I knocked on the door and when Brother Osaka opened it, he seemed to gasp for breath in seeing two men, complete strangers. Before he could utter a word, I introduced ourselves as being missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ. He began to weep and invited us into his home. We addressed the group assembled, telling them of our mission in coming to their home, and for the first time in the country of Kenya, the message of the Restored Gospel was heard. That afternoon, we spent many hours under a large shade tree with a cool breeze blowing, answering Brother Osaka's questions about the faith of our Church, The Book of Mormon, baptism, blessing of children, marriage, etc. Before we left to return back to Nairobi, Brother Elizaphan and Sister Nina Osaka requested to be baptized. This experience will be kept alive in my memory, and I know Brother and Sister Osaka will also have it in their memory for as long as God will permit us to live. During our visit to the Poly-Technical school in Kenyeny, Sister Nina related word for word the experience she had the morning of our entrance into their home.

Brother Elizaphan and Sister Nina Osaka were the first two converts baptized into the Church in 1985 during our first visit to this East African country. However, it was not until 1991 after six years of numerous visits to the Registrar and the Assistant Registrar's office in Nairobi, about 250 miles east of Kisii town and traveling to Kisumu and other places to see men of official capacity, the Church finally

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