

The Gospel News

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Anticipation, Preparation, and Focus

By Brother Anthony J. Scolari

The signs placed around the university campus read, “No Fireworks July 4.” However, the Lord seemed to have other plans for His saints on July 4, 2007, when the Wednesday evening service at the GMBA Campout was given over to a feet washing service. It would be no exaggeration to compare the blessings we experienced that evening to a display of spiritual fireworks.

In keeping with the camp’s theme, “Love One Another as I Have Loved You” (John 13:34-35), it was fitting for this sacred ordinance to play a part in the week’s activities. For many who attended, it was the central, crowning event of a Campout filled with the blessings of God. (See the inspired account of the Campout—and this service in particular—in the September, 2007 *Gospel News*).

Without recounting again the events surrounding this historic service, let it suffice to say that no one who was there will soon forget the beautiful Spirit that prevailed that evening. Reflecting on the sacredness of what we experienced, I had to ask myself whether blessings like this are available to us throughout the year, at other times and other places.

Perhaps, as with natural fireworks, blessings of this magnitude are remarkable and memorable to us by virtue of their infrequency. Realistically, it isn’t every day that we can gather together with hundreds of brothers and sisters in Christ. But for the 350+ days out of the year that we’re not at a Campout, is there anything we can do, individually, to experience and enjoy God’s blessings with more regularity?

Whether you’re part of a congregation of 5 or 35, working to have your spiritual lamp burn more brightly each day will benefit you as well as those around you, both in and out of the Church. Certainly, special events like Campouts are beneficial, but we all need to make sure the rest of the time that we’re applying three important principles that will enable us to enjoy the maximum benefit of God’s blessings whether we’re at our home branch, or at a Campout. What follows are the key ingredients for spiritual success wherever we may be, trying to put the Lord and His Church first and keeping the rest of our lives in balance:

Anticipation—At the Campout, the GMBA officers had set the tone

in advance by announcing at the end of the Tuesday evening meeting that we would be having feet washing the next evening. In the context of the preaching, teaching, and study topics surrounding the Campout’s theme, everyone was anticipating the blessings that were promised. The unexpected departure from the customary, in this case including the observance of a sacred ordinance, engaged everyone’s attention and brought them to the service barely able to wait and see how—not if—the Lord would bless them, individually and collectively.

Preparation—So many prayers by so many for a blessed Campout and a blessed service had surely formed a spiritual foundation for the event. Those planning to attend the Campout had been praying for months, not knowing exactly what was planned, what would be taking place, or how their prayers would be answered. Other aspects of the preparation that took place were a combination of the natural and the spiritual: As the head deacon and deaconess planned how to carry out their duties in a feet washing service of this magnitude, they sought and received spiritual direction that resulted in orderly proceedings, with simple instructions for the brothers and sisters to follow. The apparent

(Continued on Page 2)

Anticipation, Preparation

Continued from Page 1

simplicity and straightforwardness that enhanced our encounter with the Spirit of God that evening, however, was the result of prayerful preparation for the evening's events, with provisions and safeguards carefully put in place to forestall any confusion that might interrupt the Spirit's flow. Truly the Lord was in the details that evening as everything proceeded so smoothly and beautifully.

Focus—At the start of the meeting, everyone in the congregation was lovingly reminded to remain focused on the purpose of this evening's service, regardless of where in the chapel they might be sitting. (It was a long, narrow building; people in the back were several hundred feet from the activity taking place in the rostrum and choir areas.) Distractions normally associated with a Campout-sized congregation had been eliminated: Young children were occupied in a large room downstairs, a provision which contributed greatly to keeping their parents, and everyone else, focused on the ordinance as the service proceeded.

As all of these details helped this large congregation stay focused, the service proceeded unhindered. The absence of confusion allowed the Spirit to flow from vessel to vessel without interruption. The cumulative effect of everyone's focus set the stage for many, many blessings and manifestations of the Holy Spirit to occur, as was witnessed both by individuals and by the congregation as a whole. As stated in previous accounts, over 350 people took part in the ordinance of feet washing in less than an hour's time.

What can we bring to our branches and missions—and to our daily lives—from this experience? Can we enjoy the same type of blessings with just a handful of members? Is there a way for us to employ these same tools to experience similar blessings every day?

A Campout is always a special occasion. With so many people working so hard for so long before-

hand, with so many prayerfully making the journey, with so much unity of thought and spirit, we are guaranteed to experience an outpouring of God's blessings as we assemble for a week out of every year. I would venture to say that no matter what circumstances we may be coming from, both spiritually and temporally, we experience blessings at a level above the ordinary when we go to a Campout.

However, while we may not be able to compare the Campout atmosphere with everyday situations, there are areas we all can work at in order to enjoy a greater portion of God's blessings wherever we may be. Following are some of the ways that we can employ the same elements in our daily service to God that brought His blessings into the feet washing service we held on July 4 during the 2007 GMBA Campout. While each of us is responsible for his or her own personal effort, to allow the Spirit full reign requires the collective, united effort of the entire congregation.

Anticipation—When we're attending a Campout, we generally expend a great deal of temporal and spiritual energy looking forward to the blessings we will receive there. I use the word "will" rather than "may" because we already know, in faith believing, that we will be blessed before we even begin the journey. If we can work to maintain that attitude in our daily lives, regularly asking ourselves, "How is God going to bless me today?" we will find ourselves thinking more about God's goodness, looking forward to seeing more of His will played out in our everyday lives, and finding more opportunities to give a word fitly spoken to someone. Furthermore, as we make room for Him to work in our lives, we will be more open to the surprises God has in store for us, and will be less tempted to decide for ourselves what is the best outcome for every situation. If we put our energy into actively seeking God's will and blessings in our lives, we will be less likely to miss them.

When we're at Campout, we are in "vacation" mode, far removed

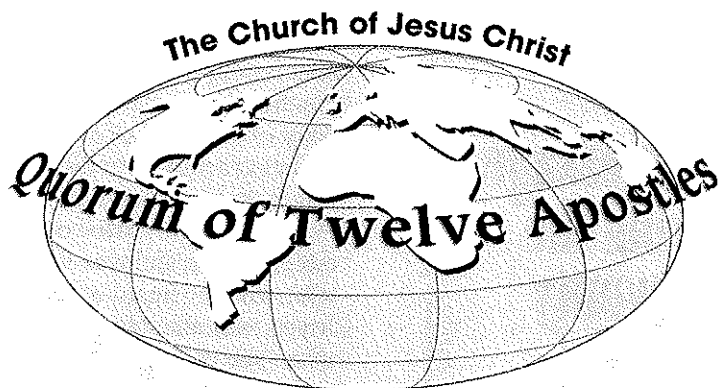
from so many of our routine responsibilities of life, work, and home. We work hard to set things in order prior to our departure, so we can fully relax and enjoy the blessings of God and the fellowship of the saints. By the time we depart for Campout, we are usually already focused on anticipating the blessings that await us.

So it should be with us each and every time we go to the house of the Lord to worship. Our other responsibilities will still be there awaiting us, but we can work a little harder at detaching ourselves—at least momentarily—from the cares that can keep us from feeling God's Holy Spirit when we meet together in worship. The sooner and more fully we can shift out of that "rush-here-rush-there" mode, the more we will be able to anticipate and look forward to God's blessings, and the more of His blessings we'll be poised to receive.

Preparation—How hard do we work at ridding ourselves of spiritual detours and distractions, foreseeing spiritual roadblocks, and adequately outfitting ourselves to maximize the opportunity for God to rain His spiritual blessings into our lives? Conversely, how easy is our spiritual "apple cart" upset when just one thing goes awry? And what can we do in advance to prevent either 1) that one thing from going wrong, or at least 2) having it upset our spiritual apple cart? In working to ensure the success of the feet washing service at the 2007 GMBA Campout, questions very similar to these had to be asked and addressed, believe it or not. And as stated before, the solutions, and preparation, were both natural and spiritual.

So much could be written here in the way of practical advice for making preparations to ensure spiritual success in our lives. Indeed, preparation is included as part of the Armor of God in Ephesians 6. Sometimes we blame the devil for what is often attributable to a lack of preparedness on our part. Prayer and fasting form the primary and most powerful line of defense against spiritual unprepared-

(Continued on Page 10)



The Importance of What You Believe

By John R. Griffith, Apostle

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21).

How much importance is given to what one believes as long as he believes with sincerity? Doctrine affects life. Truth leads to life and God; error to death and destruction. Would we consider there is no difference as to what god we worship as long as we are sincere? Would we eat anything as long as we relish it? Sincerity is a virtue; but it is not the test of sound doctrine. God wills that we shall know the truth, and He has made provision whereby we may know what is truth. God's truth is the way to salvation and eternal life.

"God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. 2:13).

As leader of the nation of Israel, Joshua thought it very important of serving the only and true God. He had found that all idolatrous worship was spiritually degrading. Also to serve the True and Living God leads to the riches and promises the Lord allows His followers. It is so very important for The Church of Jesus Christ to hold fast to the principles and precepts of Christ's teachings as He brought to earth in flesh the very will of the Heavenly Father for His creation to receive. It remains as Joshua pointed out that it is the choice of each of us to choose whom we will serve.

"Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord" (Joshua 24:14-15).

Scriptures suggest that we may determine the truthfulness of doctrine. If indeed we are to "prove all things," we need to test or prove all doctrine. The Holy Scriptures are our test of all doctrine. Doctrine is the standard of ones faith. It cannot vary from God's will. Sounding good or making sense to the human mind does not justify doctrine. It must comply with His very will. Almighty God is our creator, the author and finisher of our faith. We each set the boundary lines as to our acceptance and application of that heavenly based plan. Whatever does not harmonize with them (the teachings of Christ/Holy Scriptures) should not be accepted. Isaiah spoke of this test.

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

In Ephesians 4:14, Paul the Apostle suggests we as believers should not be as children, being tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine. Calling a doctrine a wind of such does not make it such. A wind of doctrine is one not sustained by the word of God.

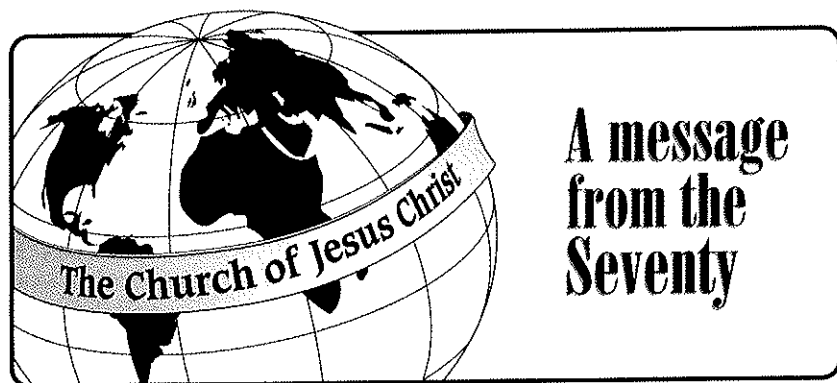
If a prophet is promoting such a wind, he is not a prophet of God. Remember 1 Kings 18 where it states that Jezebel, wife of King Ahab, chose some 450 false prophets of Baal to surround her as she chose to serve Baal and not the Almighty God of Truth. As we vary from God's truth, recognize we are choosing to serve the god of Jezebel and thus become servants of evil. Prove each line and precept. Your soul's salvation depends upon it.

"And the prophets shall become wind, and the word is not in them" (Jeremiah 5:13).

We read in 2 Timothy 3:16 that *"all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine."* As Timothy was preparing for his ministry the Apostle Paul advised him to give attendance to reading, exhortation, and (sound) doctrine (1 Tim. 4:13-16). Paul literally charged Timothy to preach the word; to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine (2 Tim. 4:1-2). His concern was that the time would come when believers would not endure sound doctrine, but through personal wickedness follow after their own lust and accept teachers of unsound doctrine, turning away their ears from the truth and be turned unto fables (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

Titus was given similar instruction in Titus 2:1-7 to *"Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine...Showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity and sincerity."* Titus was taught that as a faithful teacher he could exhort and convince the gainsayers through sound doctrine (v.9). The danger of teaching false doctrine according to 2 Timothy 2:18 is the faith of some could be overthrown. These false teachers are quickly divided from the Disciples of Christ as the true disciples have the words of truth with them and they are blessed of Christ in the truth which makes them free (John 8:31-32).

(Continued on Page 11)



Our Recent Missionary Visit to the Countries of Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo

By Evangelist J. Joseph Perri

God is continuing to bless The Church of Jesus Christ in the Countries of Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Evangelist Nephi DeMercurio and I made an extended 34 day tour of these two countries during the months of August and September.

With perseverance on our part and much prayer by our brothers and sisters of the Church in America and also our membership in the country of Zambia, we applied, were issued and received our Church Registration Certificate the 27th day of September from the Registrar of Societies. This was something our church membership in Zambia had been praying for. They are thankful to God who made this all possible. This process took just about five weeks to accomplish. We, as a church, are now officially recognized by the Zambian Government as a legal organized religious entity that can operate within the entire country.

The Church of Jesus Christ has received exposure and recognition by the Zambian Government when the Registrar of Societies received in his possession our Faith and Doctrine along with our Church's constitution. We were introduced to a man by the name of David Masupa, a Pastor placed in charge by the Zambian government of investigating churches who file for registration. He became very instrumental in assisting us in obtaining our Registration Certificate.

Brother Nephi and I both felt God placed this individual in the position he occupies to assist us in obtaining our Church registration. He is a very humble, kind, soft-spoken person who loves to pray and talk about the word of God.

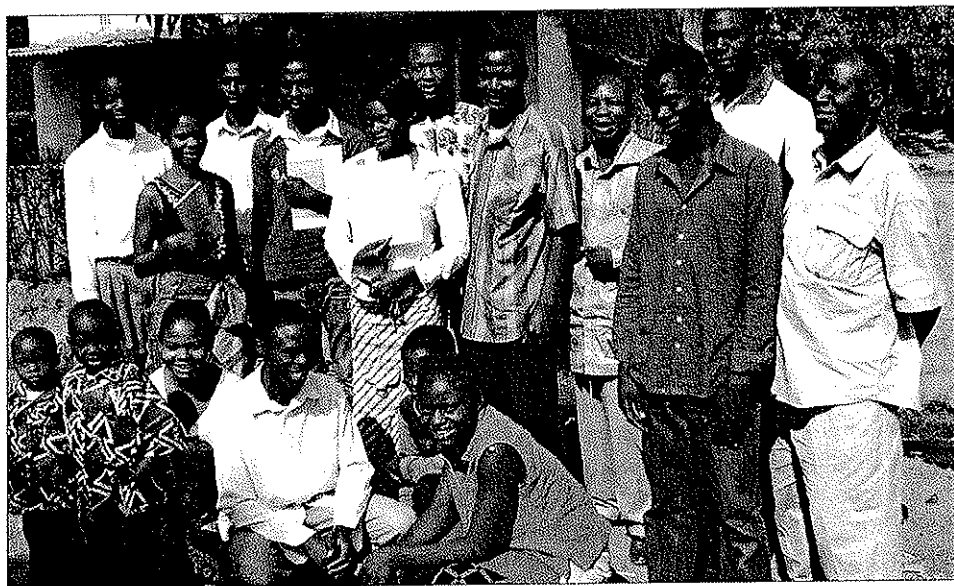
Brother Nephi and I spent many hours together with Pastor Masupa in prayer and introducing him to the Faith and Doctrine of our Church before and after applying for our Church registration. He asked a number of questions regarding our beliefs and acceptance of the Book of Mormon. We read many scriptures in the Bible that refer to the Book of Mormon and scriptures

in both the Bible and Book of Mormon concerning the seed of Joseph. He mentioned of hearing and receiving a copy of the Book of Mormon, but it was never proven to him about its origin, purpose and future events. Pastor Masupa visited our Church congregation and was very pleased with what he heard and saw. His wife, Joyce, was also pleasantly surprised when she entered our worship service and met several sisters of our Church whom she grew up with and lived nearby in the village where they were born. Was it a coincidence? We do not think so. God brought us all together for an explicit purpose.

Pastor Masupa's parting words to us were, he felt it was not a stroke of luck or a coincidence we were introduced to each other, but it was God who had a purpose for us in becoming acquainted. He requested if it would be possible for him to visit the United States where he could learn more about our Church and Her operation. Perhaps God has another purpose for this Pastor being introduced to us.

After an absence of approximately one year from Zambia and the Congo, renewing our acquaintance with the brothers and sisters who have remained faithful to the covenant made the day of their baptism and to the Church was exciting. We were

(Continued on Page 7)



IMBA Membership at the Katuba Branch in the Congo.



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Editorial Viewpoint . . .

"For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord; because they called thee an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.... The fierce anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it" (Jeremiah 30:17, 24).

The incurable wounds of Israel will be healed and those who have oppressed Israel will be punished. The nations who supported Israel in their fight with Babylon in ancient times have all but abandoned her and want to destroy her in these the latter days, but Jerusalem will be rebuilt and its splendor will rival that of the days of David and Solomon. Jesus said He would be their God and they would be His people once again. This magnificent day is coming. The time of Zion is drawing nearer, and Jerusalem will be the great holy city of the Lord once again. The Jews who have become a hiss and a byword in this entire world will come to the knowledge of Christ once again, and be restored to their former glory. Many will gather back in Jerusalem, their homeland. This will come about when they acknowledge Christ as the Son of God, and repent of all their sins. Peace will be established in Jerusalem, and the Lord will put a hedge about the city, and Jesus will be in their midst. In the land of America, this same condition is coming. The seed of Joseph will repent and be converted and build a new city upon this land called the New Jerusalem, and people will live in peace and simplicity. It will be like the Garden of Eden, and all the modern distractions that take us away from the Lord will be removed. The other tribes of Israel will be identified and sincere people from all nations will come to Zion and live in this state of peace and tranquility. The very animals will change their nature and live at peace with one another. The scripture says we will build our own homes, grow our own food, and there will be equality. Read the 4th book of Nephi, and you can get a good sense of what the condition will be like. The scripture above in Jeremiah mentions God's anger, which is destruction of the wicked, that must precede God's blessings. This day will be very different than the way we are living today.....VERY different. Satan will be bound because of our righteousness, so the work of Satan will be stopped during this time. We are certainly in that "era" of time when Zion can be established. Whether or not you, who is reading this, actually sees that day or not is irrelevant. We should pray often that God's kingdom will be established on earth as it is in Heaven. We are the only people that believe the prophecies in this way, and have a message to the world. We cannot be ashamed because our belief may not be the same as others. We have a responsibility to tell the truth. We have been given much and where much is given much is required. All of God's promises have been fulfilled in the past and will be in the future. There should not be a question in our minds "if" this will happen, we should "know" this will happen. The Book of Mormon says that when the Gentiles exercise faith as the brother of Jared, then He would reveal the great things that are hidden due to unbelief. When that day comes, then we know God's kingdom, or Zion, can be established to its fullest. So, as saints of God, our role today is to increase our faith each and every day until we can say we have faith equal to that of the brother of Jared. Quite a challenge, but I believe this is possible. It all depends on how strong our desire is to be that faithful. Faith eliminates stress and worry and gives confidence in the things God promised He would do. And His promises should cause us to be comforted and feel safe in His arms. He will take us through this time of extreme change upon the earth, and in the end, we can land in the Peaceful Reign.

What a wonderful hope and vision we have! How we should embrace these wonderful promises of the Lord, and live each day in preparation for the days that are to come. Remember, in the days before Christ's birth, the people who believed the prophets lived every day in preparation for that day. Some even began baptism! In the same way, we should prepare ourselves for the great plan of God that will land us in a new day of peace. Happy New Year.

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork

Something to Change This Year

One of the best things about our religion is that we can start over any minute. We do not have to wait until some special festival or time of year to be forgiven and start over. We do not have to pay a religious official or priest to go and talk to God for us; we have Jesus Christ! He is free. We can talk to him anytime, anywhere out loud or in our hearts.

The only thing that Jesus wants from us is a broken heart and contrite spirit (being deeply sorry). Even if we know we are wrong, but do not feel that sorry, we can go to Jesus in secret and talk it over with him. In private, we can tell Jesus that we know we are wrong and ask Him to help us change our heart. When we are angry with someone or feeling hateful or jealous, we can tell Jesus that we know we are wrong, and ask Him to help us change our heart. He knows our hearts and thoughts anyway. Why wait or try to hide our thoughts from Him? He can take away mean and unkind thoughts and give us peace, forgiveness, and clear thinking.

When I was growing up, my Mother used to say, "If you don't have something nice to say, don't say anything at all." I was shocked and annoyed. I wanted to talk bad about my friends that I was mad at. Sometimes I talked about them because I wanted to figure out what went wrong. Other times I talked about them to be mean and make other people mad at them too.

At Church Camp when my cousin and I were mad at some other teenagers from another state, Mother



said, "Remember those verses you had to memorize in Sunday school about the Seven Things God Hates? Think about what you are doing." We had learned Proverbs 16:16-19, "These six things does the Lord hate, yea seven are an abomination to him... a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, feet that are swift in running to mischief [people who are always doing wrong things], a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among the brethren [plants little bad ideas in one person's mind about another person]."

We had to memorize this verse because it is so important to follow all of our lives long. She was telling me that God heard what we were saying to each other and did not like it. In fact, God hates this when we do it.

Our job is to be loving, caring, and prayerful for all other people, especially in this church. We are not to be critical and gossipy. It is not our job to talk about other people when they are going through a problem. Not even in one little sentence should we try and cause bad thoughts about another brother, sister, or friend.

We need to pray and ask the Lord to help them. Remember, sometime we will have problems in life too. All of us constantly need to look at ourselves and try to change to be better people. If any of us were perfect, we could stay home from church and worship ourselves! The less we are saying bad things about, or being angry towards others, the happier we will be in the long run.

Don't you want to be happy and feel the power of God? Don't you want Him to be pleased with you? Then stop talking badly about others.

Jesus teaches us, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (see Luke 6:31). This means treat people the way you would like to be treated. Do you want people being cruel or unkind to you and your family? Then stop talking in a mean way about them.

The Bible also warns us in James 4:17, "Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." So, if you decide to cause problems for a brother or sister by talking about them, when you know better, you will be sinning against God.

You know what God wants you to do. Make this the year that you change yourself and please the Lord.

With love, your friend,
Sister Jan

WORD SEARCH

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Missionary Visits

Continued from Page 4

introduced to many who were baptized during our absence whom we had never met before that shared their love and fellowship with us.

The young people in both the countries of Zambia and the DR Congo have taken a great interest in the Church. They are very active in attendance and participation. Since introducing and establishing our Church in these two countries, we informed them of the GMBA, the IMBA as well as our Local MBA, its purpose and activities. They had been holding meetings but not officially organized for over a year, so their request was they be officially organized as an IMBA Local and also recognized by the GMBA. The excitement shown to us is equal to what we see among many of our young people here in America. Their choirs sing beautiful arrangements with words and music made up as they gather during the week days in preparation for Sunday worship services.

The IMBA was organized in the branch of Chiliabombwe, Zambia and the branches of Katuba and Ruashi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The youth of both countries requested whether it would be possible to begin a program which we call Pen Pals. They also requested a Casio to accompany the choir in singing, asking for nothing to benefit themselves personally but as a group.

We were blessed to witness 17 baptisms during our visit to Zambia, one being a schoolmaster named Bernadin Mulenga who had been previously associated with both of our Pastors. Another schoolmaster named Murray who had also been associated for a number of years with Brother Mulenga in the Church they once attended was also baptized. Brother Murray stated in his testimony the evil power came into the church he was attending and caused it to fall apart. He had not attended any church for a number of years; however, one day he met Brother Albert Kawama who was evangelizing in the village where they hold their worship services and was

invited to attend worship services. Brother Murray testified he accepted the invitation, began to attend our Sunday worship service, was touched by the Spirit of God in what he heard, saw Brother Mulenga whom he had not seen for some time and they both decided to get baptized. Brothers Murray and Mulenga both stated after their confirmation that this was now their church and their last baptism. Our Church membership in the two branches has grown to about 145.

During our visit in the DR Congo we were blessed to witness 13 baptisms. We traveled to a very small body of water where many children were swimming, and ladies washing their clothes. Water at this time of the year is very scarce because of the lack of rain for the last five months. We managed to quiet the crowd but could hear some of the children wanting to get back into the water because it was hot. Brothers Cipeng and Fontaine did the baptizing and since the children became noisy, both brothers started to baptize at the same time. This is a first time experience for us and given the circumstances we were faced with, it was a good decision. A number of people who stood by observing had never seen or witnessed a baptism. The membership of the two branches in DR Congo is now listed at 138.

Since we have been promoting the Book of Mormon each time we visit, the membership has embraced its acceptance of the Book of Mormon. They are pleading for us to get the Book of Mormon to them in their language as soon as possible. Bemba and English are the languages of Zambia. The only individuals who understand, read and speak some English are the young people who are required to take this course. French is the predominate language of the DR Congo. The last question of our Church membership in both of these countries is, "How can we defend our acceptance of the Book of Mormon if we do not have the book to read or know what it contains?" The excitement in listening to their comments and questions and their interest in wanting a copy of the Book of Mormon to read

was very encouraging. This was the first trip we spent more time in teaching and giving instruction from the Book of Mormon than any other subject. All because it was the request of our brothers and sisters in both of these countries.

Before concluding this article, I would like to share a few experiences we heard which are very encouraging, allowing us to understand God is manifesting His Power in the Church in Zambia and the DR Congo.

A brother, who is a bricklayer by trade, bore testimony that since he was baptized last year, he has not experienced a day of being without work and has more jobs than he can handle. Simple but a blessing.

A sister related that, prior to her hearing of the Church and making an effort to attend when invited she lived very poorly. There were days when she would go without food not knowing where her next meal was coming from; but since she has been attending church, was baptized and is serving the Lord. She praised God, who has provided a better home for her to live in and has not gone a day without food.

A sister was pregnant with twins and one of them passed away at birth. The death of her child had a serious affect on her mental health and she began hearing voices that tormented her. She was having a nervous breakdown and also experiencing nightmares. To add to her problem her natural sister also passed away. She could not have or find peace or rest anywhere. Her testimony was she continued to ask Brother Chalwe, the Pastor of her branch, to anoint and pray for her. People who knew of her condition and that she was attending our church kept telling her she was wasting her time. She said the more they kept telling her not to attend, the more she was determined to attend and ask to be anointed. Her faith was if she did not relent in her service to God and attending our church worship services and continued to ask Brother Chalwe to anoint her, God would heal and restore her health. God saw her faith just like the women who had the

(Continued on Page 8)

Missionary Visits

Continued from Page 7

issue of blood who wanted to touch the hem of Jesus' garment. One day, all of the tormenting of the voices she was hearing were gone; she does not experience having anymore nightmares. She praised God with a strong sincere voice during the Sunday worship service we attended for this miraculous healing which has increased her faith and was a blessing to the membership of her branch. She ended her testimony by saying she now sleeps all night without interruptions and the mental condition she was experiencing does not trouble her anymore. God is good all the time.

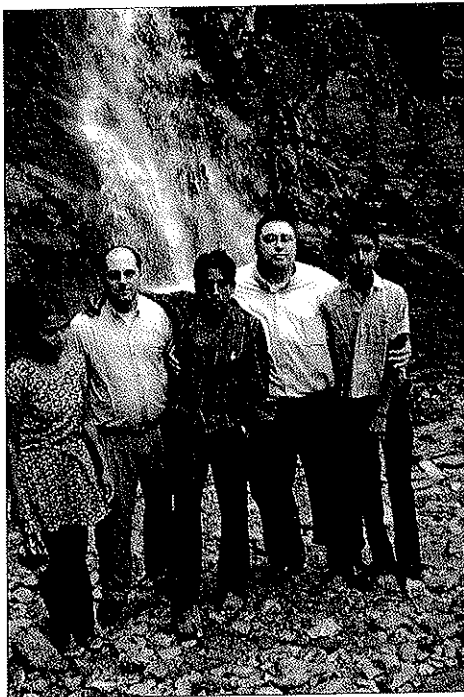
The following experience happened to Brother Nephi and me. We firmly believe it was the hand of God that protected not only the two of us but everyone on the aircraft.

After departing from Lusaka, Zambia during our flight to Johannesburg, South Africa, the plane in which we were passengers made its approach with the wheels and flaps down and was within a few feet of landing on the runway when a gust of tailwind pushed the plane forward beyond the point of a safe landing. The pilot saw he would not have enough runway to land the plane safely so he thrust the throttle forward with full power to the engines and regained the altitude needed for another approach to the runway and a safe landing. Every one of the passengers on board became frightened because of the near mishap which could have been a tragedy with the loss of many lives. The pilot came on the intercom and jokingly said he does that kind of maneuvering all the time; however, we knew that it was the hand of God and the prayers of our families and our brothers and sisters offered in our behalf to God for our protection that were heard and answered. Thank God, we are so blessed as His Saints. How can we ever sufficiently praise Him? It is very important we remember to pray and ask God for His hand of protection to be upon all of our missionaries who travel abroad to foreign mission fields.

"...Thy Faithfulness Reacheth Unto the Clouds"

By Evangelist Anthony Ricci

The writer of Psalms 36:5 simply states, "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds." From November 1-9 of 2007 our Brothers John Genaro, Nephi DeMercurio, Ron Giovannone, and Anthony Ricci were witnesses to this on their missionary trip to our "mission in the clouds" in Limchong (Sikkim), India.



Baptisms in Limchong

The mission of Limchong is an extension of the Nepal work and is a six-hour drive up thousands of feet into the foothills of the Himalayan Mountains. The scenic views and beautiful settings are secondary to the wonderful love and spirit of your brothers and sisters in this very remote, little mountain mission. To be able to stand in a place like this and declare the truth of the Restored Gospel truly makes you understand our great God sees and knows everything, and HE never forgets His promises!

What a wonderful blessing to

arrive at the mission and to find a congregation hungering and desiring for the fellowship of the saints. Dear readers, because of the remoteness and difficulty in getting to Limchong, we currently send a minister from Nepal to service them once every four months. My spirit soared to see my brothers and sisters partake in the ordinance of communion. Truly, blessed be the name of Jesus! To see our people take communion in full remembrance of the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ and to fully understand how important it is for their spiritual well being and relationship with God, I rejoiced for what God has done.

Our brothers spent the time in fellowshiping, teaching and preaching this wonderful Gospel. I watched in awe as I saw the faces of our saints. The singing and praise are just too beautiful to explain by words. The fellowship and blessings we are privileged to feel and witness from week to week is how our people in Limchong appreciated this experience. Many prayers were offered for the sick and afflicted. One man said his knee was so damaged he could hardly walk. What a wonderful witness to God's power that the day after he was anointed he stood to tell us that he was healed!

My truest blessing was in the testimony meetings. It is no different in Limchong or any other part of the world where this Church is established. The testimonies of the saints ring loud and clear of the greatness of God in our lives! To hear a young man stand to say he was a drunkard, a smoker, a man who took drugs, a robber, and a violent man—then ask for his baptism. WOW!! And to have his father stand to say how he and his wife prayed greatly for their son, and now see the prayers answered—GLORY TO GOD!! This young man's wife then stood to declare that she wanted her name written in the book that our brothers spoke about in their preaching!!

I have had the wonderful privilege to take several mission trips and I have seen many healed, I have seen the blind to see, I have seen devils cast out; but I state to you, there is nothing

more beautiful or powerful than to see the life-changing power of our Lord and Savior in the lives of men and women. I truly stand in amazement as I see the power of the blood of Christ work in places that you might think time and man has forgotten—but God never forgets!

At the unbelievable scene at the basin of a 200 foot waterfall, we had the wonderful privilege and honor to baptize this young man and woman along with another young man into The Church of Jesus Christ: two new brothers and one new sister, baptized with the same baptism as you and I were. They were confirmed with the same Spirit as you and I were. Although we are separated by half the world, we are joined together in the faith, unified in love. What a glorious work, the Great Work of the Lord!

Dear readers, I struggled as I wrote this. How do I relate to you the beauty of their singing? How do you relate the conviction of their testimonies? How do you convey their belief in the Restored Gospel? I realized, I am not able to. All I can do is give you an account of the things I have seen and heard. I must rely upon the Spirit of God in you to stir up to remembrance **your** singing, **your** testimonies, and **your** belief. I pray as you read this, that this ignites in you a desire to bring these same things to your branch and mission. I promise you, the same Spirit, the same power, and the same love we feel in the foreign work is available to us in each of our places of worship. May you feel the blessing and love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and as always—TO THE WORK!!

Israel's Advocate: "Chance Meetings" and the Need to Be Prepared

By Brother Peter Benyola

Several seemingly random, but interesting meetings have taken place between First Nations people and

brothers on the Native American Outreach Committee. In these cases, God allowed the brothers to recognize the opportunities before them to share the Good News, they prayed for quick guidance, and thank God, listened to the subtle but persistent voice of the Holy Spirit.

Brother Joe Pennell, a Teacher of the Columbus, Ohio Mission was walking outside of his office at work to get his lunch. "I very seldom leave the office during lunch," said Brother Joe. "As I walked out the door a Native American walked past me and entered another room. As I walked to the elevator I kept thinking I should introduce myself and see if he knows about the NAICCO [the Native American Indian Center of Central Ohio]."

As many of God's Called have probably been in such a position to do, Brother Joe was tempted to forget about it, telling himself that this was none of his business and not to be so idealistic as to think that making conversation might actually be productive. Brother Joe said that at the Moment of Truth, "I almost let the door close, worried that this man who doesn't know me from Adam might think I was crazy, but I decided to go ahead and follow him."

When Brother Joe asked him if he was Native American—which was obvious—he said he was and they talked for at least 10 minutes. After learning his name, tribe and especially how friendly he was, they parted ways. Brother Joe recalled, "I was left with the strong feeling that God meant us to meet for some reason. He said that he dances at the NAICCO powwows and I told him I hoped to see him there."

Several weeks later, Brother Joe and his wife, Sister Denise, saw this man at the powwow and stopped to greet him. Brother Joe said, "He was happy to meet me and he introduced me to his family at our mission's snowcone booth. It turns out that he converted to Christianity about 10 years ago although he still practices his Native traditions. When I explained we were not Mormons he said he had read what he termed 'The Book of Moroni.' He mentioned 'the lost tribes

of Israel' and I told him about our belief of the Tribe of Judah and the remnant of the Tribe of Joseph and the other hidden tribes that will one day be revealed to us. Now tell me that's coincidence!"

He said that the Native American man was very open-minded to these things and seemed to be very receptive as he listened to the reasons for our beliefs. Since these two men work in the same building, the mission sees it as a great blessing that they are now acquainted and are prayerfully looking forward to the Lord unfolding His perfect work in His perfect time.

Brother Joe, who has been laboring assiduously with the NAICCO for over a year, was recently asked to be a trustee of the local nonprofit. He commented, "When you consider America's not-so-squeaky-clean history with the Native people, we can only call it the Lord's work when a non-Native American is trusted enough to fill such an important role."

Our hope and prayer is that by Brother Joe serving on the NAICCO council, the Church can continue to build the highway which we, the saints, and the Native Americans will run upon side by side (II Nephi 29:8).

Brother Mark Kovacic, an Evangelist from the Atlanta Branch, and his brother-in-law, Brother Jerry Lee Warden, were in the Marietta Public Library on the northwest side of Atlanta, picking out some new audio books for Brother Mark's commutes to work. He overheard a man on the other side of the shelves. "I could not see his face," said Brother Mark, "But his voice and what he was saying told me he was an American Indian.

"I thought, *what an opportunity!*" Brother Mark continued. "Then I hesitated. I started rationalizing, *it's a public place, I should be careful*, and so on, but as I started for the stairs I stopped and prayed in my heart, asking the Lord for assistance."

Then the man started up the steps and Brother Mark asked him what nation he was from. The man responded that he was a Lakota Sioux, a plains tribe from North and South

(Continued on Page 10)

Israel's Advocate

Continued from Page 9

Dakota. When Brother Mark asked what brought him so far from home, the stranger said he was there to start an 'American Indian Association.' Brother Mark said, "Although he was leaving, I tried to keep the conversation going and gave him one of my church cards. I told him to call me if he needed any help."

At General Church Conference Brother Mark was sharing the story with Brother Richard Scaglione and he quickly pointed out that Sister Lucetta and he had worked among the same people during the three years they lived in Eagle Butte, South Dakota in the early 1960s. The Scagliones were in Atlanta just two months prior to Brother Mark's encounter showing slides about the Book of Mormon and sharing their experiences from their stay in South Dakota.

When Brother Mark returned from an NAO meeting in Detroit in 2006 on Saturday night to the airport in Atlanta, he boarded the shuttle to the parking lot and he observed a husband and wife, and could tell the wife had been crying. Although he didn't want to be nosy, Brother Mark wanted to reach out to her and asked why she was upset. She became more emotional as she explained that the husband of one of her good friends was severely injured in a motorcycle accident, and was not expected to survive.

"I told her I would pray for them and that in the morning I would ask my church to pray as well. She was quite appreciative," Brother Mark recounted. "She went on to say that her friend's husband had worked hard all summer to raise the money for her to come to Georgia, but the accident cut short the visit with her friend. They went to a powwow the day before and were expecting to enjoy a few days experiencing their traditions. I asked her what nation she came from and she said that she and her friend were both Cherokee, a nation which several Evangelists and other elders recently visited on a missionary trip in North Carolina."

Always ready and organized, Brother Mark whipped out an outreach pamphlet of our church, *Jew & the American Indian* by the late Evangelist Dom Bucci, and offered it to her. "It may give you some comfort to know what God has in store for you and your friend," said Brother Mark, and then gave her one of the businesses cards meant for Native Americans. Like the offer he once made to the Lakota Sioux in the library, Brother Mark asked her to call him for prayer or counsel. She thanked him as she disembarked and went to her car.

"I am always amazed at how quickly God will test our desire to labor for him and to keep His commandments," said Brother Mark, who has done his part, with the rest in God's hands. "Chance meetings? I don't think so. Please pray with me that these American Indians will get in touch when the time is right and that The Church of Jesus Christ may have an opportunity to work with their people."

If you have had any 'chance meetings' or been blessed with other experiences with Native Americans please share them with *The Gospel News*. The Church of Jesus Christ will benefit from more evidence that the *Divine Commission* is indeed alive and vital because of the Lord working through you.

Oh, that each of us would learn to be sensitive to move with the slight motions of the Spirit of God. Although our human minds often hold us back, in our hearts we have a great fervor to see the Gospel of Jesus Christ out in force among the house of Israel! We have a sustaining hope that our interactions with her remnant will potentially blossom into that marvelous, inevitable homecoming event.

Since this is so, and because everything that occurs in God's creation happens for a reason, then the advocates for Israel must be spiritually, culturally and intuitively ready for these relationships to start at any time. We must also petition the Church to join us in praying for their eventual fruition.

The promises of God are timeless—even so, they wait for no man.

Anticipation, Preparation

Continued from Page 2

ness, but there are temporal measures we can take as well, as illustrated in the following example:

Shortly after the birth of their eldest child, a young brother remarked to me how surprised he and his wife were the first Sunday they brought their little bundle of joy to church, when it took so much longer to get ready and out the door. Suddenly, for this brother and sister, going to church on Sunday had taken on a whole new meaning.

I was impressed, however, by how this couple took action in the way of preparation, to deal with the situation: From then onward, this brother took a few minutes on Saturday evening to plan and prepare with his wife for the next morning, anticipating what it would take for his growing family to get ready and leave for church on time. At first it was all new to them—gathering the things they would need to bring with them, gauging how long it took to load the car, etc.—but soon laying everything out for the next day became part of their usual Saturday night routine. Through a little bit of planning, they successfully took control over the extent to which this major change in their lifestyle was allowed to disrupt their ability to continue enjoying their time in worship and fellowship.

No doubt some Sundays went better for them than others; however, rather than being chronically late or absent from church, this couple remained a vital part of their congregation, and more importantly, were available to continue receiving the Lord's blessings. Because of their discipline and preparation in the natural as well as spiritual aspects of their lives, they eventually went on to embrace increasing positions of responsibility and influence in the Church.

By carefully and deliberately preparing room for the Lord in our lives, we too can open the way for ourselves to "be there" when God is bestowing His blessings, whether at a Campout or just reading the scriptures at home on a weekday.

Focus—For some of us, this may be one of the areas where we need to work the hardest. In a Campout environment, it is easy to stay focused. Focusing on the Lord and His blessings is the whole reason we're there; it's why we made the journey. And for one week out of every year, we have an opportunity to focus on nothing but the Lord, day in and day out.

However, when we return home, maintaining that spiritual focus is not so easy. We are required to deal with demands on our thoughts, time, and energy to solve our problems, figure out how to accomplish all we need to do, etc. If we're not careful we may catch ourselves thinking we really don't have time in our busy schedules for pausing to study the scriptures, pray, or even attend church services. We may think once we get to a stage in our lives where we've got our natural cares under control, we'll be better able to make room for spiritual pursuits.

First of all, that time may never come. Second, and more importantly, if we allow our focus to shift in this direction, we can't expect the Lord to bless our lives with all of the good things He has in His storehouse. No matter what our present situation, it is important for us to cultivate a hunger and thirst for God's blessings daily, consistently, and remain focused in asking, seeking, and knocking (Matthew 7:7) to receive them.

While pondering upon the subject matter of this article, the words of a familiar hymn came to me: *With blessings briefly laid aside and reasons never known, One sweet thought consoles my mind: God's still on His throne.* There may be times in each of our lives—whether it's the time between one Campout and the next, or perhaps even longer periods—when we don't always experience the spiritual “fireworks” we would like to, notwithstanding our best efforts. Let us nevertheless be filled with anticipation, never be caught unprepared, and work at being intensely focused. At the same time, let us pray for greater faith, hope, and charity (the theme of the 2007 Campout) in our lives. If we're found

doing these things when the Lord sees fit to open the windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it (Malachi 3:10), we will be waiting, ready and able, to receive it and enjoy the spiritually abundant life that the Lord promised us.

What You Believe

Continued from Page 3

Unfortunately worshipping Christ by following false doctrine is in vain (Matt. 15:9). Don't forget the reaction of the Apostle Paul when in the first chapter of Galatians he recognized the believers of Galatia accepting another gospel, one not given of God, but a perversion of the first and only gospel given. It is important to recognize the reality of good people seeking to serve God yet falling short in seeking out the truth of the Gospel's message of truth. Their good works are in vain because the works produced are tainted with false teachings. Any false teaching is not acceptable of God. This is today's concern over the thousands of Churches and gospels that exist, swaying people to believe lesser ways, enticing them with various programs and pleasant sounds, yet their doctrine is unsound and false. God will look into the heart and sincerity of the believer as they seek truth, not large congregations or huge and fancy facilities. These words of Paul remain true today as there was only one doctrine, one Gospel presented by Jesus Christ. All variations from His word are considered a perversion of that one true Gospel of Christ.

“He that turneth away his ears from hearing the law, even His prayer shall be abomination” (Proverbs 28:9).

If God perceives in a people the weakness and willingness to follow false teachings, He will send “strong delusion” that they will believe a lie and they will be damned who do not believe the truth because of their pleasure in unrighteousness. This is

according to the Apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12.

We must always recognize the right of choice given mankind through Adam's fall. God will not be mocked nor will He force anyone to serve Him.

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of the devils” (1 Timothy 4:1).

To think we can escape the face of God is true spiritual blindness. These are latter day times. There is no time to walk the fence (meaning trying to live in two different worlds) or not making a decision who you will serve. Who is fooling who?

“Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (Matthew 15:4).

If you find yourself falling into a “spiritual ditch,” quickly find your way out through calling upon the Lord and allowing His Spirit to guide you. Be part of that righteous nation, the Church. It is the Kingdom of God.

“Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in” (Isaiah 26:2).

As Paul of old beseeched the saints of old, we the Apostles of today beseech our members today to present yourselves a living sacrifice which is your reasonable service (Romans 12). Hold fast to the teachings of Christ and The Church of Jesus Christ, His Kingdom on earth. May our Lord find us each acceptable into His great and glorious eternal reward. Praise God from whom all blessings flow for Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.

**Happy New Year
to all our readers.**

* WEDDINGS *

Jasmin Cherise Daniel and John David Cote Jr. were united in holy matrimony in Lake Worth, Florida on November 10, 2007.

Ann Lynn Dick and Patrick Edward Donley were united in holy matrimony in Roscoe, Pennsylvania on August 11, 2007.

Children Blessed

Elijah Carson McClelland, son of Fredrick Carson and Kimberly Anne McClelland was blessed on November 11, 2007 in the Brunswick, Maine Branch.

Baptisms and Reinstatements

Sister Sharaya Hunt was baptized on November 25, 2007 at the Freehold, New Jersey Branch. She was baptized by Brother Carl Huttenberger and confirmed by Apostle Jim Crudup.

Sister Ana Sauro was baptized on October 21, 2007 at the Monongahela, Pennsylvania Branch. She was baptized by Brother Jason Monaghan and confirmed by Brother William Chepanoske.

Baptism Corrections

The following baptisms were previously reported with an incorrect date:

Sister Allyssa Denise Camarda was baptized on August 12, 2007 at the Modesto, California Branch. She was baptized by Brother Rich Deulus and confirmed by Brother David Picciuto.

Sister Cassandra Calderon was baptized on August 19, 2007 at the Modesto, California Branch. She was baptized by Brother Rich Deulus and confirmed by Brother David Picciuto.

Sister Amy Lauren Burkart was baptized on August 19, 2007 at the Modesto, California Branch. She was baptized by Brother Rudy Meo and confirmed by Brother Joe Ciarolla.

Sister Jerrica Nicole Picciuto was baptized on August 19, 2007 at the Modesto, California Branch. She was baptized by Brother David Picciuto and confirmed by Brother Leonard Lovalvo.

Brother Carlos Mosqueda was baptized on August 19, 2007 at the Modesto, California Branch. He was baptized by Brother Joe Ciarolla and confirmed by Brother Tony Picciuto.

Sister Shantae Monique Segovia was baptized on August 19, 2007 at the Modesto, California Branch. She was baptized by Brother Rich Deulus and confirmed by Brother Rudy Meo.

DIRECTORY UPDATE

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Andrews, James Sr. and Rose
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301-246-4636

Arcuri, Susan
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732-991-4952

Damore, Dorothy
849 Upton Rd.
Youngstown, OH 44509
330-792-7302

Hall, Ritt (Richard) and Sandy
P.O. Box 1416
Mango, FL 33550
813-246-5570

Thompson, Doris
512 N. Lewis Run Rd., #134
West Mifflin, PA 15122-3053
412-466-2499

Vancik, Sara
133 Union St.
New Eagle, PA 15067

Ordinations

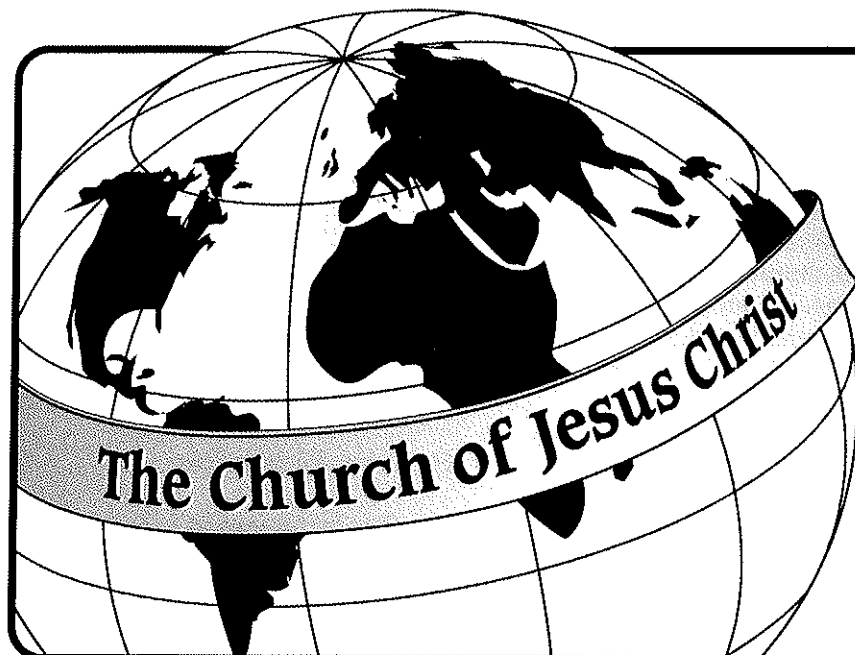
Brother Robert Golling was ordained a Deacon on October 7, 2007 at the Monongahela, Pennsylvania Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Michael Scaglione and he was ordained by Brother Richard Scaglione, Sr.

Address Change

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____



The Gospel News

World Headquarters Monongahela, PA., USA.

February, 2008

Volume 64, No. 2

“...what manner of men...”

By Evangelist George Kovacic

“And he [the beggar] gave heed unto them [Peter and John], *expecting to receive something* of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of *Jesus Christ* of Nazareth rise up and walk” (Acts 3: 5 & 6).

The power in the name of Jesus Christ when used by men who have been called into His ministry is limitless. Historically, the book of Acts gives us many examples of this. Today, The Church of Jesus Christ can lay claim to the same power. Along with that power comes responsibility. Our Lord brought this responsibility into focus, when He spoke to His Twelve Disciples in the land of America. He makes it very clear in the 27th chapter of III Nephi that they bear a great burden carrying His ministerial authority. In verse 27 he asks, “...what manner of men ought ye to be?...” It becomes imperative for us in the Latter Days to consider the immensity of this same responsibility.

These thoughts came to my mind while returning home from General Church Conference in October. I was preparing a seminar

theme for our upcoming trip to Nepal. I remember as a young minister how I was impressed with the teachings of our Apostles when they gave a discourse on this same scripture in III Nephi. I became curious to see whether it would have the same effect on our fellow ministers in Kathmandu as it had on me.

Our trip, begun on October 24th, was unfortunately not without incident. Just as I had checked into the airport in Charlotte I found out my flight was going to be delayed. My thoughts returned to last spring and I prayed we would not have a repeat of that incident. Praise the Lord, I eventually made it to Newark to be met by Evangelist Nephi DeMercurio and Brother Jeff Kattan. But we were

(Continued on Page 2)



New Converts in Kathmandu, Nepal

“...what manner of men...”

Continued from Page 1

one person short. Weather conditions had prevented Evangelist John Genaro from making it to Newark. We were the last ones to enter the plane heading for Delhi, India.

Once in Delhi, we received word Brother Nephi was to remain behind to wait for Brother John. Brother Jeff and I continued onward to Nepal, arriving Friday afternoon and were glad to hear the familiar “Jaimashi” greeting and see the faces of our beloved Nepali brothers and sisters. Some time was devoted to catching up on news since our last trip and to fill them in on what was outlined for the week.

Saturday (the religious worship day in Nepal) morning we journeyed to the river to baptize two young men and two young women. It was a beautiful day and we felt a great spirit of peace at the river. Back at the church, beautiful songs were sung and our new members were confirmed. I would like to mention at this point that our Mission members in Kathmandu (Ktm) are very young. The brothers’ and sisters’ ages vary from 15 to 37. That is a young group for 47 members. When Sister Hannah from Budhabare is visiting her family in Ktm, she does run the age up to 66 years.

While at our church building, I noticed a banner on the wall that had several lines of Nepali writing and below it said, “...what manner of men ought we to be...” I was glad to see our brothers were taking seriously the opportunity to study such an important topic.

After our meeting Saturday morning, we returned to the hotel to hear of any news of our brothers who were following us. Just in time, we found out Brothers John and Nephi were arriving that afternoon, so we quickly took a taxi to the airport to watch for them. We arrived in the nick of time and we traveled back to the hotel together.

Sunday morning (first day of the Nepali work week), our Ministerial Training sessions were started with

our brothers. The theme, of course, was III Nephi 27:27. Every morning from Sunday through Thursday we met for several hours in our hotel room with the ministry to discuss various topics related to this theme. We started with the Ministerial Training Manual and let the Holy Spirit direct us from there.

The Nepali brothers felt liberty in asking serious questions. This usually led us to delving into the scriptures for the answers.

Tuesday morning was open to all ordained officers and Brother Nephi lead the study session from the Book of Mormon. I could tell the brothers and sisters were greatly enthralled with what we were studying. They are developing a deeper appreciation and understanding of the Book of Mormon.

In the afternoon, we ventured back to the river to baptize four young men and two young women. It was an interesting drive from the church to the waters because there were 25 people in a nine-passenger van.

Back at the church, the new members were confirmed and a short meeting followed, with Brother John having his first opportunity to speak to the whole congregation of members in Ktm. After this meeting, Brother Jeff Kattan took charge of a short meeting to organize the IMBA in Nepal with most of the offices being filled by the young people. They were very excited about being involved on the same level as other young people throughout the Church.

Wednesday evening we were invited to the home of Brother Isaac and Sister Deepa for dinner and socializing. We ate some great food prepared by our brother (Sister Deepa had not felt well all week but still wanted us to come to their home) and spent time telling stories and singing praises unto the Lord.

The week went by so fast and, before we knew it, we were saying goodbye to our beloved brothers, sisters and friends of Nepal. Please remember them in prayer as they live in an environment that is hostile towards believers in Christ.



**Branch and
Mission News**

Fort Worth, Texas Celebrates 10 Years

By Sister Virginia Rose

The last weekend in September the Fort Worth Branch celebrated 10 years of God’s blessings since the work started there. The celebration weekend began Friday, with a blessed social at Brother Joe and Sister Darlene Ignagni’s home. Saturday we gathered in fellowship for good ole Texas BBQ, a powerful singspiration in praise to our Lord, and a power point presentation looking back over the years of the birth of what is now the Fort Worth Branch.

On Sunday, The Lord bestowed upon us a glorious Texas day, as we gathered at Lake Arlington to witness a soul give her life to Christ. Our awesome God announced His presence by giving Sister Bennie Jones a vision, where she saw angels out on the lake. What a way to begin the Sabbath in celebration and thanks with the baptism of Louisa Balladares by Brother Joey Giannetti. Sister Louisa received the bestowal of the Holy Ghost on the lakeshore by Brother Joe Ignagni.

Everyone then gathered at the Branch for Sunday Service, and what an awesome full house of joyful, blessed saints of the Lord. We were blessed to see Brother Jeff and Sis Kathy Giannetti and family ‘home’ from Michigan, Brother Tom and Sister Amy D’Orazio and family ‘home’ from Pennsylvania, and Brother Pete and Sis Patty Giannetti ‘home’ from Arizona visiting. Our Lord and Saviour was praised in heartfelt and beautiful singing in English and Spanish.

Brother Jeff Giannetti opened our service and began by sharing the joy with which we come to the storehouse of our Lord to praise Him and receive His blessings. His theme:

It is marvelous in our eyes. Brother Jeff expounded on the definition of marvelous and why we reserve using that word to honor Christ, our Saviour, and His Church. Our brother shared his reminiscence of the beginning works with God's people in the Fort Worth area. Sister Rose Palacios, in Lorain, Ohio, had a brother, Eddie Gonzalez, living in Fort Worth, who was ill and paralyzed. She requested our ministry visit him for anointing. Many were there and also received anointing by our Elders. This was the tool with which our Lord began His work with those who are now the saints of God in the Fort Worth Branch of The Church of Jesus Christ.

Brother Jeff proceeded to share how our ministry went to the Lord for direction as to what His will was—sell or keep the Allen church building as the work in Fort Worth was flourishing. God had sent His direction through Brother Jim Huttenberger, who was visiting the area at the time. As many were gathered on the shore of Lake Arlington for a baptism, Brother Jim was prompted by the spirit of God and stated, "Sell the Allen building." This was significant since Brother Jim had participated in the building of the Allen church building. The sale was accomplished in one week and the Lord provided the perfect church building that we were able to purchase and where we now serve God in love and unity.

Brother Tom D'Orazio followed encouraging us to diligently attend and serve God and His Church and rejoice in faithfulness. He shared how God directed our new sister in a dream of her baptism in this church before she even visited the first time. She knew where her Savior was and wasted no time seeking salvation.

Brother Pete Giannetti read the Lord's promise that through our faith and our will He will make our burdens 'light.' He expressed how we must continue to plant the seed of God's work and the salvation of Christ.

Testimony and praise was offered up to God. Many needs were presented to God as our Ministry anointed those who requested prayer.

Our cups overflowed with joy, love and fellowship as we shared in the communion and sacrifice of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Brother Joe Ignagni spoke briefly giving thanks and gratitude to God for the feast of His Spirit, gifts and guidance over the years. After singing, the congregation joined hands in a circle and Brother Doug McClellan offered closing prayer.

Praise God for 10 wonderful and amazing years!

Detroit, MI Branch #2

The word spread throughout the week that Josiah Adams had asked for his baptism. We gathered at the shore on Sunday morning, August 26, 2007, to witness this event. Josiah was taken into the water by Brother Michael Pandone and baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

After the baptism, we met at the branch for our morning service. Brother Dino DiMelis, our Presiding Elder, began the meeting by welcoming the many visitors that were there following the funeral of dear Sister Anne Lovalvo. Among those who we were honored to have with us were Brother Joe Calabrese, Brother Tom Liberto and Brother Isaac Smith and his wife Sister Bonnie.

As Brother Leonard Lovalvo came forward to open in prayer, he took a moment to reflect on his mother, who had passed away on August 20. He thanked God for her, her life and her dedication.

Brother Tom Liberto opened the meeting and spoke on baptism, the necessity of serving God and how we must receive the GIFT of the Holy Ghost. "God loved humanity so much that He gave His Son as a GIFT to mankind, a way of salvation." Brother Tom spoke about the Holy Ghost and the direction that it gives us. He shared experiences including when the Lord multiplied the food on his own table in order to feed the brothers and sisters when he did not

have enough. When they were finished, there was more food than they had started with.

Brother Tom read from Acts 8:14-17, "Now when the Apostles, which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost... Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

Brother Tom continued, "In Psalms it says I've never seen the righteous forsaken nor their seed begging for bread. That is the Holy Ghost that will lead, guide and direct us—that GIFT that we can call upon any time."

After a quartet sang, Brother Dino asked Brother Josiah to come forward to receive the gift that Brother Tom spoke about. Brother Duane Lovalvo offered prayer asking for God to choose among them. Brother David Lovalvo came forward to bestow the Gift of the Holy Ghost on Brother Josiah.

Brother Joe Calabrese shared a few thoughts with us. He spoke about Jesus' baptism and the example that He set for us today. He shared the experience that he had years ago during sacrament when he saw Jesus with the crown of thorns upon His head and blood running down His face. He was given the experience that the word LOVE stood for **LIFE**, the **OFFERING** of that life, the **VICTORY** that He had over the grave, and the **EXAMPLE** that He set.

After lunch and fellowship, we met back for the feet washing portion of our meeting. Brother Leonard A. Lovalvo opened our afternoon meeting. He spoke about the love of God. He started by putting into perspective our existence on this earth and the simplistic plan that allows us salvation for our souls. He shared that we need only break our hearts before God, feel His forgiveness, ask for baptism, go to the waters and receive the powerful gift

(Continued on Page 4)

Hold Upon Repentant Spirit

Continued from Page 3

of the Holy Ghost.

Brother Leonard continued with talking about the ordinances of the Church including feet washing. He read from John 13 where Jesus instructed the disciples on this precious ordinance.

Following testimony, we shared a beautiful spirit of worship during our feet washing service and enjoyed the opportunity to spend a few moments focusing our prayers for one another for this brief time.

We left feeling truly blessed and fortunate to be a part of this Church and share this special day.

* * * * *

On Sunday, October 14, Brother James Gross phoned the Ministry of The Church of Jesus Christ following a beautiful Sunday service to request his baptism. The decision was made to hold the baptism on Wednesday evening as a branch trip to visit the Cincinnati Branch was scheduled for the following Sunday.

We gathered at the water's shore on Wednesday evening and witnessed as Brother Dan Parravano brought him into the waters and baptized him in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

We met at Branch #2 for the bestowal of the gift of the Holy Ghost. Brother Dino DiMelis, Presiding Elder, welcomed the many visitors including Brothers Nephi DeMercurio, Rudy Mayo, Mike Capone, Jerry Benyola and their families.

Brother Nephi DeMercurio opened our meeting. "Remember the day that you went into the water. It was a wonderful day when Jesus took away our sins and we led a new life. Each day will perhaps be a day of sometimes conflict. Even with all of that the Lord is still with me because I will not deny him. The storms will come the winds will blow but we will stand on the rock of our foundation."

Brother Nephi shared experiences about his recent trip to the Congo and Zambia. He spoke about

the challenges of teaching The Book of Mormon because they do not even have a book there to read in their native language. He spoke about teaching them the basic principle of baptism, repentance, and faith in Jesus Christ as written in 3 Nephi chapter 27 and the challenges of teaching them in a way that they understand the impact of the repentance.

Brother Rudy Mayo continued the meeting by thanking God for being with him through his recent illness. He continued, "When brother Dan brought Brother James into the water, he asked him two simple questions, 'Do you repent of your sins? and, Do you promise to serve God to the best of your ability?'" Brother Rudy set the example that there are many questions that we could ask at that moment including asking Brother James if he intends to follow a list of the guidelines of the Church. Brother Rudy spoke about when Jesus was faced with the question, "What is the greatest law?" Jesus said to love the Lord thy God with all of thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy might. This is the first and greatest commandment. It is the basis for everything. Instead of listing the other rules of the time, Jesus then said to "love thy neighbor as thyself." Brother Rudy explained that the rest of the rules will come natural if you follow these two.

Brother Mike Capone shared a few thoughts as well. He read from Mark 1:9 concerning Jesus' baptism. "When we do as He did, He grants us salvation." He also read from Romans 12th chapter where it directs us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God. Brother Mike spoke about the fact that he was born and raised in the Church but did not get baptized until he was 40 years old and how it was the best decision he has made in his life.

Brother Jerry Benyola spoke about the Gift of the Holy Ghost and how precious this gift is. "The Lord promised that He would not leave us comfortless. His Spirit is always within us. God does not do things in a small way. He does things in a mighty way."

After Sister Carolyn Gross, Brother James' wife, sang *I'm Free*,

Brother James came forward to receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost. Brother Dino DiMelis petitioned God to select among the brothers there to perform the bestowal of this gift. Brother Alex Gentile came forward to pronounce upon Brother James this precious gift.

Brother James took the opportunity to testify. "I am grateful for many things. One is that I know God loves me. I have known that He loves me for a while. He has always looked out for me. I am grateful for all of the people He has put into my life who have loved me, taught me, and cared for me and I consider you all a part of that. I have a desire to serve God and be a better James in all aspects of my life. That is what I have been feeling in my heart. It is a real feeling and I don't need to deny that anymore."

We thank God for this new addition to our branch.

"Hold Upon That Repentant Spirit"

By Sister Cynthia Marie Onorato

A chapter has closed. Our beloved Sister Marie Perrello, a pillar of the Brunswick, Maine Branch went home on May 2, 2007. She was a precious jewel the Lord chose to take home. A new chapter has been opened. May it be one of joy, peace and by the Lord's grace may our strength be found in Him.

We are able to have joy because of the light of Christ unto life. God's will was manifested on this day, Sunday, May 13, 2007 as we gathered in fellowship. Visiting with us were Brother Jim, Sister Mitzi and Sister Dorothy Calabro from Hopelawn, New Jersey.

Brother Thomas Curtin opened in prayer asking the Lord to prepare our minds and hearts to focus on Him and to open the door of our hearts and fill it with His Spirit. As the sisters prepared the communion table, Brother

(Continued on Page 8)



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Editorial Viewpoint . . .

By Brother Peter Benyola

Solomon wrote, "All this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them. All things come alike to all: there is one even to the righteous, and to the wicked . . . this is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all" (*Ecclesiastes 9:1-3*).

The one event Solomon was talking about can be summed up in a single word: LIFE. It's confirmed in God's Word that good things happen to bad people as well as good people, and that bad things happen to good people even as bad things happen to bad people. A hedge of protection left human beings when they were banished from Eden and the long, often sad history of man is what resulted. That which was lost will one day be gloriously restored because of righteousness but until then, the world we live in is dangerous and unstable. It proves that anywhere outside the presence of God is a bad place to be. We can have God's protection if we have good prayer habits, if we yield to the Holy Spirit and obey His commandments. Even when on our best behavior, life won't be perfect. If it were, then we would already be experiencing eternity with the Lord and we wouldn't really be able to appreciate the joy of that which is to come.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ said, "[The Father] maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." His words reassure us that everyone deals with adversity in some way. If the sun is shining, the rain will eventually fall. It's just unavoidable. But sometimes when the rain comes, we find ourselves wondering if we are the just . . . or the unjust. As we rest easy in the words of Christ, we also recall that Apostle Paul was given to know that a person reaps what he sows and that God chastens those who He loves.

So you lost your job. Your doctor diagnosed you with some sickness. Your car was stolen. Anything in a multitude of very real problems can come one at a time or all at once. Thoughts like, *What did I do to deserve this?* and *Maybe I had this coming because of my rebellious heart*, are normal. In some ways they can be healthy because they can motivate us to examine ourselves and work on areas of our lives that are not pleasing to God, and which may be holding us back from full communion with Him. The wrongdoings we commit can, indeed, come back to haunt us in physical and emotional ways in us or loved ones.

We don't want these thoughts of bringing ills upon ourselves to get to the point of robbing us of our peace and faith in God's mercy. In fact, guilt is a tool in our enemy's arsenal to keep us from becoming sanctified—in other words, moving toward a closer reflection of Christ. A great song says, "Life holds many perils as we journey through. We must overcome them if we would be true. Running from the robber that would steal my soul, watching, fasting, praying, till I reach my goal."

We are children of the King. We're working more every day to be more like Him. We must learn to see our trials as something the Lord can resolve for us. He promised that all things work together for those who love and serve Him. Make no mistake, as hard as it is to accept while you're in the midst of it, nothing comes your way that He cannot help you through. A single flower cannot wither without it being cleared by God. Since you're more important than a flower, how much more true is it for you? Just look at storms you've been through and left behind you, and surely it's easier now to see the Lord's hand helping us through.

(Continued on Page 11)

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork

A Great Nation Almost Destroys Itself

(Ether 9)

Dear Boys and Girls and Friends,

The people that live in the Americas today are not the first great nation to be here. After Noah's ark landed, the human race was all living in one area of the world. The foolish people decided that they were so important, they would build a huge tower and reach to the heavens. God realized He had to change the languages of people and scatter them across the world or they would not be living the lives they should. One good man named Jared and his brother begged God to let them keep the same language as their friends and to guide them all to a blessed and wonderful place to live. They asked God to even bring them to a land that was "choice," or greater than any other land in the world. God heard their prayers; this was His plan all along.

When God had created the world, He set aside the Americas as a place for people to live who would serve and follow His rules of love and kindness. He told the Brother of Jared, "This is a land which is choice above all other lands...he that possesses it [lives here] shall serve God or shall be swept off [destroyed]; for it is the everlasting decree [law] of God. And it is not until the fullness of iniquity among the children of the land, that they are swept off" (Ether 2:10 and Ether 9:20).

God taught Jared's group how to



build barges to cross the great ocean. They traveled almost one year before they landed in a new world, probably near the Yucatan Peninsula in what is called Mexico, Middle America, today. They served God and He truly blessed them. As the years passed, they had many children and grew into a great nation. Soon the land between what we call the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans, became covered with people.

At first the people remembered the teachings of God and what He had done for them. They followed His laws and peace was in the land. They were blessed with great riches. Their crops grew; fruit was on the trees to eat and enjoy. The land had gold, silver, copper and all kinds of metals that could be made into useful things. They had all sorts of flocks and helpful animals. God told them that this was a land promised to belong only to people that loved and served Him. He warned them that as long as people here were good, He would bless and protect them. But, if they started doing evil, He would wipe them off the face of the land. First, He sent preachers and prophets to warn them to repent. Then, when they were full of evil, He would destroy them, or let them destroy each other.

After Jared and his brother died, everything went well until that old devil started causing troubles. Several generations had served God, then some greedy man would decide he wanted to be the next king and have more power and riches. He would form secret groups, promise them riches, and kill the king in power, even if it was his father.

One of those men was Akish. He was friend to King Omer, but Omer's

son wanted to rule. God warned Omer in a dream to take the good part of the family and leave the kingdom. King Omer traveled many days until he was far away from his palace. He went by the ocean and put up a tent to live in, far from his kingdom where evil people were letting his wicked son rule. Then, after he had left, Akish

(Continued on Page 11)

WORD SEARCH

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Penn Mid-Atlantic Area MBA Fall Festival

The Penn Mid-Atlantic Area MBA held a Fall Festival on Saturday, October 20th at the Imperial local. In all, 75 brothers, sisters and friends gathered together to participate in an afternoon of fellowship that was coordinated by Brother David Gibson, Sister Jacqui King and Sister Angela Yoder.

The afternoon began with a seminar entitled "Seeking the Treasure," which consisted of five different age groups. Brother Bobby Buffington addressed the adults while Brother Jim Haugh

worked with the High School students, Brother Eric Yoder led the Middle School group, Brother Michael Scaglione engaged the Elementary children, and Sisters Sarah and Carey Buffington took care of the Pre-school/Kindergarteners.

After seminars, Sister Jessie Scaglione led the students on a "Treasure Hunt." The children were required to read a map, follow the directions, read a compass, and ultimately find the "Treasure." The classes were reminded that before they start on a journey, they must take their sticks (Bible and Book of Mormon), the map, and a compass to provide them direction. If followed correctly, the map took them around the church property, and led them to the front door of The Church of Jesus Christ where a shiny Treasure Chest awaited them. There were challenges along the way that required the

travelers to utilize the supplies they brought along with them. Once they reached the Treasure, each child received a small treasure chest as a keepsake.

The afternoon was left open to completing crafts (which included making no-sew fleece pillows, lanterns, decoration of treasure chests and pumpkin painting), food (chili and cornbread, steak sandwiches, pretzels with cheese, tater tots and MANY, MANY wonderful desserts including a handmade treasure chest cake) and fellowship. Just before sunset, we joined together on a hayride where we could view the beautiful fall foliage. Upon return, we saw a roaring bonfire had been lit.

We are very thankful that the Lord provided us with a beautiful, sunny and warm day. We are confident that those that were in attendance were truly blessed.

Youth in Action 2008

The GMBA is sponsoring a full slate of YIA tours for the summer of 2008. Please encourage all young people to consider participating in one or more of these activities. The locations and tentative dates for 2008 are as follows:

Lakeside (Pinetop), Arizona – June 21-29
 Detroit (Branch 1), Michigan – July 11-20
 Liberty, Ohio – July or August
 Mexico City, Mexico – July 23 – August 4
 Guatemala City, Guatemala – August 8-18

Please visit <http://gmbayouthinaction.org> for exact dates. Participants may also register for tours online via the same web site. Some of the tours have limited space so register early!

Please Note: Minimum age for participation is 15 for U.S. tours and 18 for international tours. Registration fee of \$50 is in effect for all tours.

Hold Upon Repentant Spirit

Continued from Page 4

Jim and Sister Dottie felt Sister Marie's presence and felt the Lord was pleased. Sister Marie was a deaconess for 30 years and it brought her much joy in fulfilling this office.

Brother Jim requested we sing, *The Gospel's Sound*, and asked us to sing it with understanding. He proclaimed that the Gospel has a sound. We know that sound. He commissioned us to bring forth what our Father's fought for, and possess the Gospel's sound. We must carry the sound our brothers and sisters have carried. He stressed to us to BE READY when the Lord bares His arm that our hope is built upon Jesus Christ. Our brother was directed to bring forth God's message from Alma 5 entitled, "Alma's wonderful words in Zarahemla – encourages self-examination – calls for repentance and renewal," professing that today we are holding the Gospel for Israel.

"Behold, he changed their hearts; he awakened them out of a deep sleep, and they awoke unto God. Behold, they were in the midst of darkness; nevertheless, their souls were illuminated by the light of the everlasting word; yea, they were encircled about by the bands of death, and the chains of hell, and an everlasting destruction did await them...were they destroyed? Behold, I say unto you, Nay, they were not...were the bands of death broken, and the chains of hell which encircled them about, were they loosed? I say unto you, Yea, they were loosed, and their souls did expand, and they did sing redeeming love. And I say unto you that they are saved" (Alma 5:7-9).

Brother Jim stated: according to their faith, there was a mighty change. Do we remember that mighty change in our lives? Alma was trying to bring the people to repentance. God's arm is not short. He can reach the inner parts of our hearts and there is nothing too small or too big for Him. Yes, there was a mighty change and that change was, they humbled themselves. God is looking for humility. He

commissioned us to put our trust in a true and living God and asked, "Have we received the image of His countenance in our life?" It's hard for a live fish to go against the tide. Are we a live fish? Look to God with clean hands and a pure heart. We are lost without Jesus. The Lord is ready to move His hand, are we ready? "Hearken diligently, the time is at hand!" Tomorrow belongs to God. It is very serious to carry the spirit of God with us. There can be no man saved unless his garments be white. We have to be pure. Have we felt to sing the song of redeeming love?

Our meeting then opened up to the beautiful testimonies of our hearts. Brother Bob Onorato spoke of a very moving experience given to him before his sister passed away. He was at work and the spirit spoke to him in Italian twice. Brother Bob does not know the Italian language but he understood every word that was given to him. He then received a phone call to come to the hospital. Upon arriving, Brother Bob laid his hands upon his sister's head and the spirit of Christ fell upon him. He spoke once again in Italian saying, "You are now face to face with the Saviour, face to face now you'll be, you will rest in the arms of Jesus Christ." Many that witnessed this felt the Lord's presence in the room. This reassured Sister Marie that it was alright to go and she departed with the Lord.

Following Brother Bob's testimony, his brother, Edward Onorato, with all sincerity of heart testified of the Lord's goodness and with a repenting heart, he asked to be reinstated. He stated his sister Marie came to him in a vision and told him he had to come back. He knew then what he must do. Brother Ed saw a vision stating that the priesthood looked like Jesus Christ. He saw their faces enlarged and shining.

Yes the spirit of testimony fell upon the saints this day and many came forth with a repenting heart. Those candidates requesting renewal and forgiveness were encircled about and God's mercy and power was manifested through the laying on of hands through the priesthood. God's

almighty arm was outstretched as the spirit of repentance flowed from the hearts of God's people.

We united in singing *Standing on the Promises of God*. Brother Richard Onorato, Sr. addressed the congregation speaking from Alma 5:58, *"For the names of the righteous shall be written in the book of life, and unto them will I grant an inheritance at my right hand..."* He spoke of an experience had when he and his wife, Sister Mary, were reinstated into the Church many years ago. A vision was had where a big hand was shown and the hand was writing their names in a book. It was given that it was the book of life. Brother Richard stated a saint never dies in vain. The blessings of God will carry us today and tomorrow. Continue to pray.

As the sweet spirit of repentance illuminated our hearts, Frederick McClelland rose to his feet and stated his desire to be baptized. Bethany Rose Onorato then jumped up and she too cried expressing her desire to be baptized. God's spirit touched all those who were present under the Gospel's sound and praise God for His redeeming love.

Brother Darryl Onorato commented, "Oh what a beautiful day," and stressed to us to take today seriously. Tomorrow is when the blessing has to stay. He thanked God for answering his prayers. He pleaded with the saints to choose this day whom they will serve. He stressed, remember your baptism, your promise, and prove faithful until the end, not to the end of the day! In ending he said, "What greater obituary can you have then to be a saint of God?"

Prayer was offered for Fred and Bethany for the journey has just begun. Brother Tom Curtin prayed for Fred asking God to open his heart, his mind and give him understanding because this day he felt God's calling and declared his love for God. Brother Richard Onorato, Jr. prayed for Bethany. He thanked God for he has seen the countenance of Jesus upon her face. He asked the Lord that she would always follow after His teachings.

Brother Richard Jr. thanked God for he prayed that God would send His repenting spirit this day. He quoted what his uncle, the late Brother Frank Zaher, and Brother George Timms taught him, "It is hard to argue with a repenting spirit." He stressed to us to hold onto it. We cannot serve God without it. He commissioned us to teach the young ones. He spoke from sincerity of heart of the late Brother David Williams and the saint he was. He said, "God gives us things to be happy and thankful for!" He then under God's Almighty Spirit stretched forth his arm and spoke with the energy of his soul to "keep that repentant spirit upon us, hold onto the rod of iron, remain faithful, be a peacemaker, be an example, remember one another and serve God!" He ended in quoting what Brother Wilbert McNeil is known for saying, "Who wouldn't serve a God like this?"

Brother Richard Sr. and Brother Jim passed communion as we sung, *Is Your All on the Altar* and *Oh Jesus I Have Promised*. We were asked to reflect, remember, recognize and reverence our Saviour and what He has done for us as we partake of Him. Brother Darryl in ending said, "We were fed well and we will be hungry tomorrow." In order to be fed we have to go get it.

On May 27, God's Word was fulfilled as written in Alma 5, "...Come and be baptized unto repentance, that ye also may be partakers of the fruit of the tree of life." We gathered to witness the baptisms of Frederick McClelland and Bethany Onorato. Many visitors were in attendance. Brother Richard Onorato, Jr. baptized them with the authority of God. A great peace was felt as our two new converts were submerged in our Savior's love and born new again, pure and spotless before His throne. Upon returning to the church for our service we sang *Victory in Jesus*, and truly a victory has been won because of Christ's redeeming love.

The Elders encircled Sister Bethany and Brother Fred in reverence to God and Brother Richard Jr. prayed to God beseeching our Heavenly Father to bestow upon them His

Holy Spirit. Brother Tom proceeded to go forth and confirm Brother Fred and asked the Lord to bless him with strength, desire, ability and that he would take upon him the image of Christ. Brother Darryl confirmed Sister Bethany and asked the Lord to let her walk in His Spirit and to teach, protect and present unto her many gifts, and that the light of Jesus Christ would shine in her life for God's honor and glory.

Our meeting this day made us reflect on our promise to God. We were asked, "What does God require of us? The answer is simple, "Our Hearts!"

"What is the sound of redeeming love?"
A choir of saints
A sound of distinction melodiously played
Repentant hearts full of love and humility
Obedience to God's will perfecting harmony
The sweet tingle of God's spirit,
Jesus' embrace of His merciful grace
Testimonies which illuminate words of truth for God's praise
Proof that God's Holy Spirit penetrates this fleshy state
Edification through our supplication
ringing out the Gospel's sound
"Our life for Jesus proclaimed!"

Forest Hills, FL Branch

A TEST OF FAITH

By Sister Alicia Draskovich

Serving God is an interactive experience, a hands-on exercise in mastering His lessons. In September 2006 God gave the Forest Hills Branch a very specific exercise in increasing our faith, one that extended to this past month and will resonate with us forever. At that time God spoke to us via the Gift of Tongues during an MBA lesson focused on increasing His presence and a need for a fervent desire to grow in righteousness. As the congregation was processing the

distressing news of our dear Sister Marion Rosati's diagnosis of cancer, the voice of the Lord spoke and the interpretation was, "Our beloved is a chosen vessel, who bears a cross to test the faith of the people."

What was God telling us? Would it be *our* faith, the faith of the brothers and sisters collectively, that would heal our sister of this illness? That was the first thought for many of us. Well, a task was put before us and we realized the soberness of it. We desired to see her healed. Many fast and prayer services were devoted to this endeavor. We shared the news with many saints around the Area to join us in praying and supporting our sister.

Ironically, a week after this disheartening news, Brother Mario Gonzalez, a member who was only baptized two months prior, succumbed to his illness and passed on to his reward. We were all saddened at the loss but rejoiced in his 11th hour calling. He passed on with full assurance of his final destination. Peter 4:12-14 was preached on that Sunday which advised us to rejoice in that we are partakers of Christ's suffering. We also heard from Mark 13:31 telling us that only God knows the time of parting. This message was to be a foreshadowing for the culmination of the lesson our congregation was being taught.

Since September 2006 our congregation has received many blessings and messages from God. After positive news on Sister Marion's condition and processing though a difficult decision that our congregation had to make concerning our meeting schedule (one that helped to increase our unity), the voice of God spoke and said, "I am that I am and I remain with you, thus saith the Lord." Other messages pertaining to various circumstances among the saints came forth during this period. "I am the way," given to one who questioned what to do in personal life. "I will lead you yet to another day," spoken to Brother Jim Speck the last time he was anointed prior to his passing. "You are my children and My Father is proud thus

(Continued on Page 10)

Forest Hills, FL Branch

Continued from Page 9

saith the Lord," given to the congregation during a feet washing service. "I sent angels to protect him," was given when Brother Milford related an accident where his truck was hit and rolled over with him in it. "In the palm of my hand, saith the Lord," was given to Brother Paul Paulin to reassure him the Lord was with him during his current trial with cancer. Also the Lord has visited us with songs as sung through the Gift of Tongues, including such hymns as, *Oh God Give Strength*, and *Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow*. We felt God's presence in many ways and we were being blessed with unity of spirit among us.

When you would see Sister Marion throughout the year you would never know she was sick. Aside from the loss of hair from her treatments which was always covered by various decorative hats provided by our local Ladies' Circle, her consistent smile and humor led one to believe that all was fine and it was, for our sister was sure in her faith and *never* wavered. She consistently would report that God won whether He heals her or takes her home. We continued to pray for a healing.

Praise God, He healed her! Well, not in the natural sense. Sister Marion did not win her natural battle with cancer but she passed on to her reward on November 4, 2007. We know where Sister Marion resides now and we rejoice with the Lord, but upon her passing many felt that they had failed her. The task that our God had commissioned to us back in September 2006 was not fulfilled as we wished. Was not our faith strong enough? Oh, but to share our thoughts on Sister Marion one thing was sure and that was pertaining to *her* faith. She never wavered. No matter what her circumstance in this life she NEVER complained and always praised God for His goodness toward her. Even to her dying moment she was joking with her family and the ministry at her bedside in Hospice.

Now to share the culmination of

this lesson. The Wednesday night following her death the congregation gathered for our monthly Fast and Prayer service, but the feeling was to have a season of testimony as well to praise God and share our thoughts on Sister Marion. There was an outpouring of God's spirit as we uniformly agreed that Sister Marion's trial and steadfastness in her faith would be her legacy in each of our lives. While we all gleaned a desire to be as sure and unwavering in our own faith God spoke to us once more and the interpretation was this "Now do you know the test of faith. As you too have my Gospel step forward now to receive the greater blessing." A light bulb moment! We did not fail our sister! God was using the trial that befell a saint to show us all how we should behave and accept the trials that befall each of us. He was telling us back in 2006 that Sister Marion was the example of that perfect faith. God does not want our faith to waver. When we face life's trials, and all of us do, we have to have that level of faith to not be weighed down. Focus on the overall goal—to be perfected in the state of life eternal in His presence. Praise God!

Treasure Coast, FL Branch

By Sister Lori Checchi

In the last month we have been blessed by the word of God. We have been reminded that the sound of the Gospel is a different sound, a peculiar sound, and it is free. It can be the source of our strength so long as we see through the eyes of Christ and be quick to forgive. We also learned the secret to a successful life—living in Christ. If you have been standing by this fountain of living water for a long time, now is the time to make your choice.

On October 28, 2007, our visitors were Brother Darryl, Sister Pamela, and Jonathan Poisson from Forest Hills. Brother David Checchi opened

the meeting and reminded us to be grateful that there were fewer hurricanes this year than predicted. He explained that God's ways confound the wisdom and knowledge of the world. Take for example the lack of hurricanes this year. Everyone is saying the forecasts were simply inaccurate, when in fact, we know it is God's intervention in our lives.

Brother David read from Isaiah 53:1 and stated that God calls men to serve Him. Baptism takes our sins away and Jesus bears our grief and sorrow. God can cause a change in a person when he hears the sound of the Gospel. The Gospel is free and has a different sound. We must rely upon God and not the world.

Brother Rocco followed by reading Alma 32 and described the reasons that people turn to the Lord. In the Book of Mormon, this group of people, very poor, were made to build the synagogues, but were not allowed to worship in them. Alma saw that they were ripe to hear the words of the Gospel. God had compelled this people to be humble. There are sorrows in our lives today that compel us to be humble. When things are going well, remember the source of your strength. We must praise God in times of trial as well as when things are going well.

On November 11, 2007, we began the day with having the Veterans that have served in the military come up and sing *In the Army of the True and Living God*. We were pleased to have as our visitor, Sister Penny Campbell from Mid-Georgia.

Brother Rocco Benyola opened the meeting by having the congregation sing *He'll Take Care of Me*. He stated that he wanted to explore the question: Why do bad things happen to good people? Many times people want to blame God for circumstances that occur in their lives. The answers can be found in the scriptures. In Peter 4:11, we are reminded to be sober and watch unto prayer. Above all things, have fervent charity. Trials will come upon us, but we must keep pushing on, and not be whiners. We should always look towards what God has blessed us with and remember that life

is a test, a probationary period. Trials are but a blink of the eye. He read from Alma 12:23, and commented that if we want to blame someone, we can blame Adam. God never intended for man to suffer, He simply wanted obedience. With Adam's fall, our lives became a preparatory state to determine our final destination according to God's plan. The important thing is to keep our perspective throughout a trial. Do the people around me know that I feel God will take care of me? Or do I whine and complain about my problems? We must trust in the arms of Jesus and look in the mirror every day.

Brother John D'Orazio followed by reading from the 12th chapter of Revelation. If you are asking why, this chapter speaks about a day when Satan was cast out of Heaven—woe to the inhabitants of the earth. Satan has but a short time to do what damage he will on Earth. We must simply do our best and strive to be faithful to the end, regardless of what comes upon us. Brother John related the experience of a little girl in Italy who lay dying. A woman appeared at the door and told the mother what herbs in the field to give the child and she was made well. When the mother turned around, the woman had disappeared. Years later, this family came to America and met the Church. The little girl was Brother John's mother. We should look to the Lord no matter what we are suffering.

On November 18, 2007, our visitor was Joanne Klein. Brother Frank Rogolino opened the meeting telling the experience of seeing his mother after she passed away and asking her what Heaven looked like. She said it was a beautiful place and she didn't want to come back. He said that this will be our reward if we serve God to the end. He reminded us that we have to stand up for what we believe, as Daniel did. Daniel prayed against his ruler's wishes and refused to bow to the great statue that was built. God preserved him through these trials. We must be like him and God will take care of us and provide for us. We have to hold on through our trials and have faith.

Brother John D'Orazio followed

and told us the secret to having a successful life—living in Christ. He read from John 15 and stated that Christ is the true vine and we must abide in Him. We are the branches. What kind of branch are you? Dead or fruit-bearing? We have to live the way Christ says, and though we may fall short sometimes, we will not fail. There are tough times ahead as foretold in the scriptures. God will bring us through. Sometimes we think too highly of ourselves and God must humble us to show us where we stand. We must not be lifted up in pride and be happy where we are in our lives, with our lot. Be satisfied and don't set our sights too high, and be thankful for what we have.

On November 18, 2007, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of Sister Joanne Trainor and Sister Gladys Moore in the Gospel. Following the meeting, we had cake and coffee and enjoyed fellowship with the brothers and sisters. After a presentation by the Presiding Elder, the children's Sunday School class gave them a vase of flowers and a craft they made.

Editorial Viewpoint

Continued from Page 5

As we study Scripture and apply it to our daily lives, we can learn to see through God's eyes. Only through God's eyes can things we see at first as stumbling blocks be made stepping stones to His honor and glory. The thousands of seemingly-unrelated problems that come one right after another for seven or eight decades won't phase us as much. Then in eternity we'll be able to look back at the big picture and finally see our lives as one in which God is always involved. Nephi wrote that if we are faithful today, we'll understand it all tomorrow.

This way we've chosen may be straight and narrow but when we consider the big picture, it's part of the course of the Lord, one eternal round.

The Children's Corner

Continued from Page 6

decided he would rule instead of King Omer's son.

He had his secret group kill the king and let him be in charge. He won the people to his side by offering them money. He was truly evil. He got worried his son was greater than he was; in his jealousy, he locked his son up until he starved to death. This enraged his other sons and they started a war against him. Soon, the entire country was at war (Ether 9:12).

For many years, one group fought the other until men, women, and children were all dead. Only thirty people were left. In their wickedness, everyone else but the group hiding with King Omer had destroyed everything.

It was like the Lord had warned. Secret societies are evil. When the people turned away from loving and serving God, they destroyed each other. They turned a blessed land full of happy people into a place of empty cities.

God's warnings about this land are still true. We who live here must serve Him and turn to Him or He will turn away and let us destroy ourselves. Today, we live on this promised land. We must be a clean and righteous people too, or God will let us destroy one another. We must love each other, help the poor, turn away from bad things on television, internet, videos or music. No secret societies that let one group be in power should be accepted (Ether 8:19). When we see sin sneaking into our lives or thoughts, we must ask God for help to fight it. He wants us to be honest and fair, and love one another.

The great Jaredite nation was down to a few hundred people. All of the evil people had killed one another. According to the Book of Mormon, this will happen again to the Gentile nation unless we turn to God. Pray to Him and ask God for His guidance, love, and protection. He has a great plan. We want to be part of it.

With Care,
Sister Jan

* WEDDINGS *

Sister Felicia Rose Ciminero and Bryan Parlos were united in holy matrimony in the Youngstown, Ohio Branch.

Sister Rachel Lin Robinson and Brother Bret Gensburg of the Liberty, Ohio Branch were united in holy matrimony on December 22, 2007.

Brother Paul Lambert and Sister Jennifer Conger were united in holy matrimony in Detroit, Michigan Branch #2 on July 14, 2007.

Bianca Julia Staley, daughter of Brother Cameron and Sister Jennifer Staley, was blessed on December 9, 2007 at Detroit, Michigan Branch #2.

Brianna Teresa Reyes, daughter of Brother Isaac and Sister Alyssa Reyes, was blessed on December 16, 2007 at the New Brunswick, New Jersey Branch.

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Children Blessed

Daniel James Gross, son of James and Sister Carolyn Gross, was blessed on July 15, 2007 at Detroit, Michigan Branch #2

Matthew Sidney Sanchez, son of Tiffany Swanger and Daniel Sanchez, was blessed on November 18, 2007 in Stasburg, Virginia.

Jaylen James Boston, son of David and Renee Boston, was blessed on December 2, 2007 in the Youngstown, Ohio Branch.

Joseph Angel Soto, son of Sonia and Joe Soto, Jr., was blessed on December 9, 2007 in the Simi Valley, California Branch.

OBITUARIES

ROSALIND BERARDINO

Sister Rosalind Berardino of the Youngstown, Ohio Branch passed on to her reward on November 25, 2007. She was preceded in death by her husband, Elliot Berardino. She is survived by her son, Gary (Anita) Ciminero and daughter, Sister Felicia (Bryan) Ciminero-Parlos; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren and a sister, Carrie Falcione.

MICHAEL BILARDO

Brother Michael Bilardo of the New Brunswick, New Jersey Branch passed on to his reward on October 27, 2007. He was preceded in death by his parents, Brother Natale (Chris) and Sister Antonette Bilardo and his brother, Brother Dominic Bilardo. He is survived by sons, Brother Christopher Bilardo and Michael Bilardo; daughters, Michelle Tartara and Antonia Bilardo-Alhoms; his sister, Sister Nancy Plahovansak and five grandchildren.

Note of Thanks

My family and I would like to thank all of you for your wonderful gifts, cards, calls and prayers on behalf of the passing of my husband, Brother Tony Vadasz. Words cannot express our gratitude for all your love. We love you all very much and thank you again.

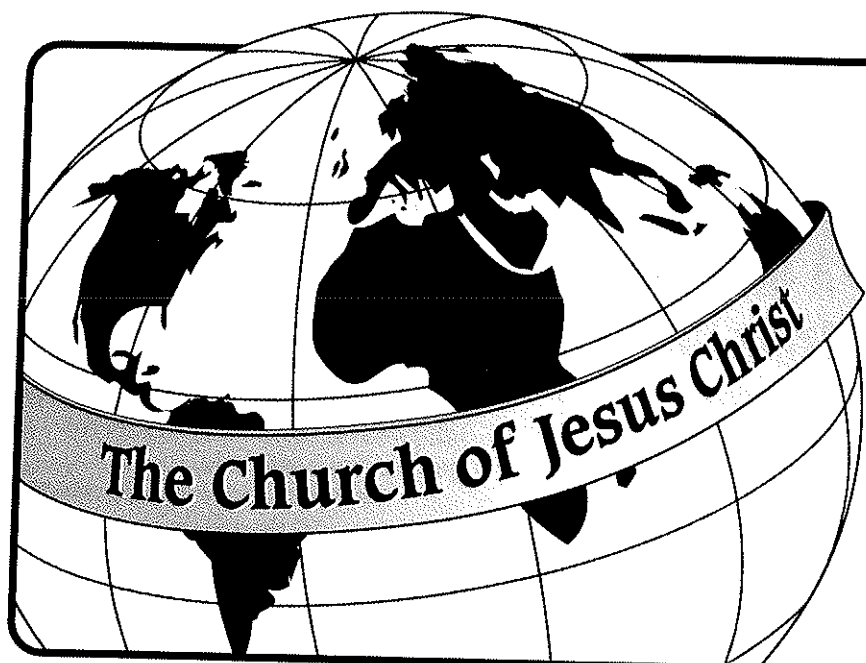
May God bless you,
Sister Theresa Vadasz
and the Vadasz family

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The Gospel News

World Headquarters Monongahela, PA., USA.

March, 2008

Volume 64, No. 3

Cancer Free

By Evangelist John DiBattista

We met Antonella for the first time last June when we were in Italy for a 10-day trip through the country. After visiting the saints, holding meetings and working with the contractor who was remodeling the building in Calabria, we left the mainland and went by overnight ferry to the island of Sardinia. Upon our arrival there our young Sister Stefania asked us if we would anoint a friend who had cancer. We made arrangements to have her come to Brother Rosario's home where several of us gathered.

When Antonella arrived she explained her condition and we could see the bandages on her right shoulder. Antonella had a cancerous tumor and the fear on her face spoke volumes—no further questions were needed. We explained to her the ordinance of anointing the sick, as Sister Stefania had previously done. She seemed comfortable with us and we all knelt in prayer.

As we were on our knees, Brother Tony Micale began silently praying that this young woman would receive a miracle like the people of old did whenever they came into contact with Jesus. After a season of prayer on our knees, the ministry

attended to the anointing. The lot fell upon me, and as I began praying, there was no doubt that the words that exited my mouth were not mine. The spirit was strong and we all said goodbye with hugs (abbracci) and kisses (bacci).

It was then that Brother Tony relayed to us the following experience. He said that the words given to me were exactly the words that were given to him while we were on our

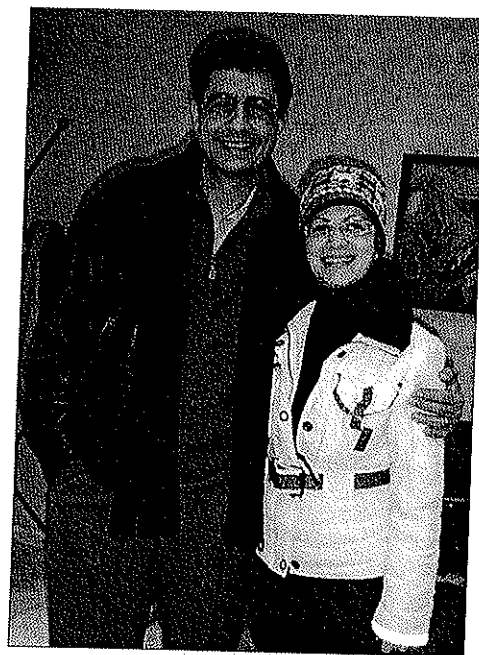
Antonella is cancer free... What joy we saw on her face... thanks to the witness of our young Sister Stefania and her desire to see others come to know The Church of Jesus Christ.

knees. A beautiful confirmation and blessing to our service to God.

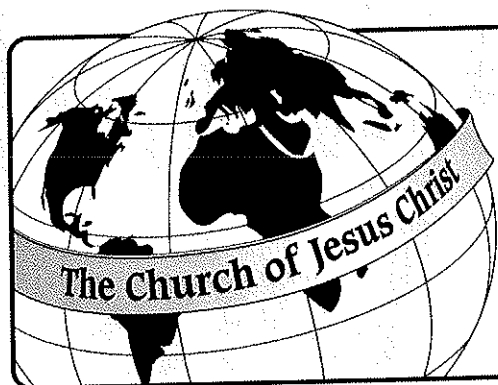
Three months had passed and we gathered near Rome for our annual conference. Once again we received the report the cancer was not altogether gone in Antonella, and Sister Stefania asked that we anoint a handkerchief for her. As we did, the power of God attended us once again and we felt the fire of the Holy Spirit envelope the handkerchief. Sister Stefania gave the cloth to Antonella

who wore it on the spot where the cancerous tumor was found.

We are happy to report that Antonella is cancer free and is now expecting her second child. She came to greet Brother Tony and me while we were in Italy this January. What a joy we saw on her face and what a boost to the faith of our small mission on the island of Sardinia, thanks to the witness of our young Sister Stefania and her desire to see others come to know The Church of Jesus Christ.



Brother John DiBattista and Antonella



A message from the Seventy

God Wants To Give His People a Better Ride

By Brother Ken Lombardo

Here is an experience that became the defining moment of my trip to Mexico City and Pedernales with Brothers Tom Liberto Jr. and Isaac Reyes last August. It was one of those moments where the reality of what you can see and the meaning of what you can't see come together with the Spirit of God and line up in a way that's inescapable. One of those, "could-it-be-possible?" moments when you'd like to believe something is true, when your rational mind is trying to convince you it isn't.

We had been in Pedernales for almost a week and were returning to Mexico City with some of the saints from Pedernales to witness and participate in two baptisms—a young teen named Gameliel, who was a cousin to Brother Efrain, the elder in charge, and a woman named Lupita, who'd been coming to church with her husband and son for a few months. These two converts from the Mexico City Mission, had asked weeks before and were waiting for the brothers from the US to come and bring the saints from Pedernales along to join in the joy and blessings of going to the river. Our efforts down there have been to bring these two missions together for as much fellowshiping and unity as would be possible for two locations that are about eight hours away from each other.

The plan was to hold the two baptisms at a location about two hours from the mission, in a small park in the mountains where the mountain

stream flows through the park in concrete channels, empties into large pools and then flows out of the park back into the river. This park had kiddie playground equipment and many picnic tables, and the saints had planned the whole morning to travel, hold the baptisms and eat a huge lunch together before returning home. Because of that, the saints had rented a regular size city bus and driver to carry us all there. They'd pooled their meager monies and spent the equivalent of \$150 to do that, which depleted their funds much more dramatically than it would have any of our US branches or missions. Many of the saints do not drive and very few have automobiles, and since the mission is in the middle of one of the many poorer areas of this giant city, attending the baptisms would have been impossible for most of them had they not secured a bus. For them to want to share in the blessings was a great sign of growth for these missions, and the brothers and I were just happy to be part of it.

We had prepared to meet at the church building and board the bus at 8:00 a.m., but as it turned out, the bus hadn't arrived yet, so we all sat in the church building and sang for almost an hour. Brother Efrain, had encouraged us all to pray as they, in fact, hadn't reconfirmed with the bus company that it was even coming for sure. Brother Luis Alberto from Pedernales prayed a powerful prayer to the Lord about how desirous we all

were to share in His blessings and His glory that day. When he was finished, Brother Tom came in to announce the bus had arrived. And what a bus! It was in such disrepair and so junky looking that if one like it had stopped in America to pick you up, you would surely tell it to pass and wait for the next one. Yet, with grateful hearts we all piled on. Brother Luis Alberto prayed for a safe ride.

We finally began moving around 9:00 a.m. All the sisters had prepared the food for the lunch, sat near the front and started to make ready the vegetables, etc. Watching them was a blessing in itself, as they chatted and cracked green beans and flopped tortillas back and forth in their hands. Coolers and bags of food had taken up the front seats, so people stacked children on laps and the brothers with their guitars stood in the aisle and began playing and singing. And the singing was non-stop. I have a favorite hymn they sing in Spanish only; one of the old ones that Brother Eugenio Mora had written so long ago called *Suenen las Trompetas* which means "Sound the Trumpets," and I kept teasing them that I wanted to hear it sung over again. (It's so sweet and bouncy that I've considered it many times for the GMBA Campout Choir. You might remember it as the chorus goes, "No, no, no, no, no, no, no... and then a series of Spanish words, and then again, No, no, no, no, no, no, no...") We were having such a nice time that time passed quickly.

Then it all changed. Our wonderful bus decided to break down—it just stopped right in the middle of the road. We had traveled 45 minutes and were still in the middle of Mexico City, and all the brothers got out and had to push the bus out of the road, as it was too dangerous for us to be in the middle of the Mexico City traffic. It was so hot that day, so most of the saints piled out and began walking the streets and buying sodas and feeding the children. The brothers and the bus driver began making calls to the bus company for some help. Some stayed on the bus and just roasted in the sun. Brother Luis prayed again that God would help us.

They had determined that the bus was not able to be fixed, and they sent us another. A newer, more comfortable bus arrived—the kind you would travel cross-country on. It had velour seats that reclined, TV screens (although they weren't working, which didn't matter, since no one had a tape to put in the tape deck anyway), large picture windows with curtains, more seats and even a bathroom in the back. As we started out on the newer bus, I made the joke that God in His heaven might have looked down and thought, "I'm not satisfied with my children riding on such a junky bus. I'll send them a newer one that's more comfortable."

As we began moving again, Brother Luis said another prayer. He stood in the aisle right in front of where I was sitting with Brother Tom. As he prayed, the Spirit of God fell on me so heavily and convicted me that what I'd said earlier was, in fact, the truth—that was exactly, precisely, what had happened. God wanted His people to have a better ride. I began to weep and couldn't stop as the thought of the wonderful providence of a loving God gripped me. Could it be true? Could the turn of events have happened because God really cares that much about the little things in our lives? Brother Tom recognized I was receiving such a blessing and was even rubbing my back at one point. When the prayer was completed, he asked whether I was okay, and I wept as I related the experience. Brother Isaac translated it to the saints and we all languished in the blessing of God.

We rode for two more hours and arrived at the site. The saints began firing up the BBQs and getting the food ready, when Brothers Luis and Efrain gathered everyone into a space where they began to preach about forgiveness and repentance. As the brothers spoke about the fears we have before making the decision to serve God, and how we should only be afraid of NOT serving Him, since He promised us He'd never leave us alone and would always help us, they wept. Brother Isaac translated to Brother Tom and I, and the same

spirit fell on him and he wept. Then, Manuel, the husband of Lupita, put his video camera down and asked to be baptized as well. We all started weeping then, as we knew God had given us a third soul. We moved to the "pool-river" and performed the baptisms, and before we were done, another soul rendered obedience—a young teen from the mission way up north in Mexicali named Abraim, who was visiting Mexico city with his elder father, Brother Miguel Apricio and family. So we came thinking we had two and left with four.

After the lunch and some wonderful fellowship, the saints spent a good half hour just cleaning the place, so as to leave it cleaner than when they arrived; a marvelous testimony of their love for the Church and its reputation. The owner of the park remarked that the place was blessed because we were there. As we traveled back to the mission building, totally spent, we spoke of the events of the day and how God in His faithfulness had provided us a comfortable ride.

I'm hoping that the sermon isn't lost on anyone. How many times have we suffered or gone through a trial and thought, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" as the Disciples did on that small boat so many years ago. We think that situation is unfair or it puzzles us that we who are His children and try to be so faithful to Him could allow us to suffer any setback at all if He is, indeed, a loving Father. Our lives are like the junky bus that we've set in motion on our own path, and while we think we might be pleasing God, we spend so much time on the affairs of life that they are more real to us than the things of God. When our "bus" breaks down, we pray, "God, why?" I can imagine Him lifting His finger to His lips to silence us, as He performs His perfect work. Why is it that we only recognize Him when we look back and trace His hand through it all? And when He sends us a better bus, why are we always so amazed at His grace? He loves us, and He wants His children to have a better ride.

An Evangelist Ordained

On the afternoon of June 10, 2007 many of the brothers, sisters and friends of the Great Lakes Region met at Detroit Branch #1 to witness the ordination of Brother John Straccia into the office of an Evangelist in The Church of Jesus Christ. As is always the case, it is truly a blessing when the saints are able to gather together.

Those in attendance were welcomed by Brother Louis Vitto, Chairman of the Great Lakes Region Quorum of Seventy. The opening prayer was offered by Brother Alex Gentile, who in his prayer stated that this was not a new work for Brother John, as he has been involved in the work in India for several years.

Brother Jeff Giannetti opened the meeting with a few remarks. He rejoiced that the Lord has sent another laborer into the vineyard and we should rejoice in the fact that there is another voice witnessing to the world, crying out to people all over the world; professing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

He then spoke on the 10th chapter of Luke where Jesus called 70 men and sent them out to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ and how excited they were when they returned, that even the demons were subject to His name. Yet, Christ's words to them were they should rejoice instead that their names were written in the book of life. Brother Jeff encouraged us to realize that, just because people may not believe the message, it does not mean the message is not true. Also, one of the beauties of the Church is we don't do things on our own and the ordination we were witnessing today is not of man but of God.

He then expounded on the 3rd chapter of Ezekiel, where Ezekiel was told to eat the word of God, ingest it and then speak to the house of Israel. He reminded us that all

(Continued on Page 4)

An Evangelist Ordained

Continued from Page 3

members of the body of Christ are called to evangelize; eat and be filled with God's word. Brother John will carry the office of an Evangelist, yet we all have the responsibility to witness to others. He encouraged us to pray for Brother John as it is a heavy responsibility.

Brother Jeff was followed by fellow Evangelist Tom Everett who brought forth a few words on the meaning of the word Evangelist; a messenger of good news; to bubble up; to speak forth abundantly.

Brother Tom emphasized the point that the office of an Evangelist is a work, not to think of it as a reward, and that an Evangelist has a burden for

peoples' souls. He must proclaim Jesus Christ, His kingdom, reveal His power and leave people with joy. An Evangelist is a messenger of good news.

The meeting continued with the washing of Brother John's feet. His feet were washed by fellow Evangelist Nephi DeMercurio. Brother John was ordained into the office of an Evangelist by Apostle Peter Sclaro.

Brother John then spoke a few words of gratitude to God and to the brothers and sisters, and also for the men who mentored him and trained him from the days of his youth. He mentioned the late Evangelist Joseph Milantoni was one of the most influential men in his life in terms of the dedication we should have to Christ. Brother John continued by telling us

that last summer the spirit spoke to him these words, "Do more for me in your latter years than you did in your beginning years."

Brother John Genaro then spoke for a few minutes and stated Satan should be shaking. He also expressed that the four sons of Mosiah abhorred the thought that anyone would be lost and how we need to have that same desire.

Truly, the blessings and message of God were felt and spoken this day, not only with regards to the ordination of Brother John but to all the members of The Church of Jesus Christ in that all of us have a responsibility to carry and live the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Let us pray for not only Brother John, but let us pray for one another that we can fulfill this responsibility.

San Carlos Event

By Brother Barry Mazzeo

The Southwest Region RMOC sponsored a weekend of activities at The Church of Jesus Christ on the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation. This event took place on Saturday and Sunday, December 8th and 9th, 2007.

Everyone anticipated a wonderful time and excitement filled our hearts as the planning began several months in advance, coordinated with the mission ministry.

Saturday morning, brothers, sisters and friends from various parts of our Region converged at the mission to begin the seminars that would be held in both morning and afternoon sessions.

MARRIAGE SEMINAR

Brother Pete Giannetti, Jr., assisted by his wife, Sister Wendy, conducted a marriage seminar for couples of every age as well as those that might be planning marriages and are interested in building long lasting relationships and strengthening their union together for life. They did an

excellent presentation stirring our hearts as the Spirit of God was in our midst filling us with desire to improve our relationships.

The family unit was discussed and how God ordained this union of man and woman and the importance of understanding that it is a lifetime commitment to be entered into seriously with prayer, seeking the counsel and approval of Almighty God. The model union was talked about regarding Christ and His Church and making application of this how that the husband should love his wife as Christ loved the Church and gave His life for it. The wife plays an extremely important role in the family as well and both husband and wife compliment each other as they harmoniously strive to develop a strong union bound by commitment and love, enhanced by the Spirit of God. We were admonished to focus on our commitment not our partner's commitment, and to build on their strengths rather than weaknesses. Encouragement was stressed rather than criticism, to be faithful and true, not deceptive, to trust, not doubt and to have a smiling face and a cheerful disposition. Communication is so important also. We are to communicate our hopes, concerns, appreciation and gratitude, our joy and

happiness. We can sustain our marriage by honoring our covenant, loving our partner, serving the Lord and keep Him as the guardian and counselor of our lives and to court each other for life.

PARENTING SEMINAR

Sister Elaine Jordan, assisted by her husband, Brother Dwayne and Jesse Begay (since baptized), led a parenting seminar for couples. There were parents and grandparents in attendance listening intently as Sister Elaine kept our attention with a very informative and interesting discussion. We were encouraged to listen to our children and how that we can develop into strong Godly parents. Creating an environment of love where it should not hurt to be a child was stressed. It is so important for a child to feel safe and loved and how we as parents provide daily nurturing unconditionally. Children need to feel that they are special and that love is not dependent on what they do or how smart/talented they are. They need to feel love through loving behaviors not just words. We were told about limits and boundaries and how children feel safe

(Continued on Page 9)



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Editorial Viewpoint . . .

There is much talk today in the Christian world about prosperity, and how those who believe in God should be financially prospering. It is being called the "prosperity gospel." This is nothing new, as anytime in history when the economy was in a poor condition, churches began to focus their preaching on how to conserve, invest, and increase one's financial status. In addition many churches increase this type of preaching near the year end, when they are preparing their budgets for the new year. When you have a paid ministry (or what the Bible calls "priestcrafts") then churches become more of a business than a place to find the Lord.

We can look to the history of the people upon the land of Americas through The Book of Mormon, and see that even many years ago this existed, but we also see what the end result of this was. In the book of 4th Nephi, there was 200 years of peace and happiness due to the righteousness of the people, which included equality. But at the end of this time period, things began to change.

"And now, I Mormon, would that ye should know that the people had multiplied, insomuch that they were spread upon all the face of the land, and that they had become exceeding rich, because of their prosperity in Christ. And now, in this two hundred and first year there began to be among those who were lifted up in pride, such as the wearing of costly apparel, and all manner of fine pearls, and of the fine things of the world. And from that time forth they did have their goods and their substance no more common among them. And they began to be divided into classes; and they began to build up churches unto themselves to get gain, and they began to deny the true church of Christ" (4 Nephi, verses 23-26).

It goes on to say that those who prospered persecuted those who did not jump on the "prosperity gospel" bandwagon (the true followers of Christ). Among the true followers of Christ were the disciples, and even the three Nephites. The disciples were eventually put in prison and were threatened with death, probably because they were preaching against the "prosperity gospel." They threatened those who were making money from continuing to do so. But as many times as they tried to kill the disciples, the disciples were delivered, even in miraculous ways. But even witnessing how the disciples were delivered time and time again, the love of money was too strong for the people to give up what they were accumulating. Wickedness grew and grew, and they continued to build prosperity churches where they could preach their doctrine and deny the true Church of Jesus Christ.

The Bible teaches us that the love of money is the root of all evil, and we can see in this situation, they loved their money more than they loved the truth. It seems there is nothing new under the sun. We see in today's world the same thing is emerging. It isn't hard to prosper financially. You can invest, conserve, hoard, or do whatever it takes, and you can become wealthy. Many churches today can teach you how to do this. In turn, their pastors can ensure their personal incomes, through donations, remain the same and hopefully increase.

We are called to prosper spiritually. We should invest, conserve, increase and do whatever it takes to achieve greater spiritual wealth. When our focus is on that, then the Lord will add all other things unto us. If His eye is on the sparrow, how much more will He ensure we are taken care of. When we preach a "spiritual prosperity gospel" then pride, division and wickedness cannot enter in. We can enjoy the great blessings of God, and His hand of providence will be upon us. As they say, in the end you can't take it with you. But one thing you will take with you is your soul. Let's make our souls as rich as they can be, and in the end receive our reward.

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork

God Works With Jaredite Nation

(Ether 9)

Dear Friends,

Last month we studied in Ether about the rise and fall of several great Jaredite kings with jealous enemies, some who were their own children! Can you imagine how scary it would be to be surrounded by false friends who were secretly planning ways to get rid of you? We all know the feeling of going by someone who doesn't like us, or a group of people who are talking about us, or leaving us out. It is scary and it makes us feel sad. This does not please God. He teaches in The Book of Mormon (Ether 8th chapter), that secret groups that harm or leave out others lead to very bad things. God does not want His people having any secret meetings and making special plans to give power to someone else. Our church is not supposed to do this. We are not supposed to do this. Our government is not either.

When evil Akish set up a secret group, they made a plan to kill the king and take over. Soon Akish was king, but he hated and feared his own son. Akish killed this son. Then his other grown sons hated him and started wars that ended up killing almost everyone on the face of the land (Ether 9:12), including their evil father. Years later, a huge country of people were dead! There were only thirty survivors who went to find old King Omer and his small group of good people who were in hiding far away by the seashore.



It is written that Omer was an old man who had seen many years of sorrow. He had gone into hiding when God told him in a dream to leave because his son was going to kill him. Omer had left his beautiful home, taken tents, and gone into hiding with a small group of family and good friends. When wars started across the land, Akish had killed Omer's son, and Omer had to live in fear of his life as warfare covered the land. Can you imagine how sad it would be to know that so many of your friends and loved ones were fighting or being attacked? What if you wondered every day if you would be killed?

Now Omer was old, but he had a son named Emer that was a godly man. He chose Emer to lead the people into starting to rebuild their empty country. Emer was a king who prayed and asked God for guidance. He was a leader who followed God. He had many children and so did the other survivors. God blessed the land exceedingly. In the space of sixty-two years, the Jaredite nation became extremely strong, and very rich. The Lord poured out His blessing upon the land and people who loved God helped each other.

Emer lived many years with peace in the land. King Emer even saw Jesus and "did rejoice and glory in his day" (Ether 9:22). Before he died in peace he chose his son, Coriantum, to rule as king. And Coriantum was another godly king who did walk in the steps of his father. He treated his people right and did good. He did build many cities and lived to be an old, old man. When his wife died, she was one hundred and two years old. King Coriantum then married a much

younger woman and they had sons and daughters. He lived until he was one hundred and forty-two years old! Can you imagine what a busy, happy life he had, serving God and living in peace with everyone happy and loving? The Jaredite nation was having a golden time. They loved and served God in the promised land and were richly blessed.

Then, King Coriantum was old and his son, Com, was chosen to be king. By this time over two hundred years of peace had been going on. The people had spread again over all the face of the land, but the old devil

(Continued on Page 10)

WORD SEARCH

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Do I Need the Circle and Does the Circle Need Me?

*By Sister Karen L. Progar,
General Circle President*

Nearly 90 years ago the leadership of The Church of Jesus Christ deemed it important for the sisters of the Church and the Church in general to support the idea of an organization in which the women of the Church could join together for their own benefit and for the benefit of the Church. Women have a need to be together and the Ladies' Uplift Circle met that need.

They found that they were able to study the scripture in an atmosphere where they were comfortable to ask questions and discuss their questions. They formed friendships that lasted their entire lives and became a marvelous benefit to the missionary work of The Church of Jesus Christ.

We are anxious to increase the

membership of our organization which has existed since 1920. Circle is even more relevant today because of the expanded missionary endeavors of the Church. If we reflect on how the money raised by the Ladies' Uplift Circle is used, it seems very clear to me that participation in the Circle is essential to support the numerous and important missionary works of the Church.

If you have ever attended a Fellowship Weekend or taken part in a Ladies' Circle Seminar, you know how much this little band of sisters has contributed to your spiritual growth and provided a place for you to develop your talents. Think about the sisters who have taken leadership roles in the Circle and their contribution to your branch and the various areas and the Church. There would be few opportunities for sisters to teach adult classes or act in these leadership roles were it not for the Ladies' Uplift Circle.

In reality what the Ladies' Circle does is:

- Enables sisters to participate in an organization developed for them and driven by them.
- Allows them to study and discuss scripture in a failure-free atmosphere.
- Contributes to the missionary commission of the Church.

- Provides the spiritual needs of women in our branches and missions.
- And develops its members' strengths.

I am often amazed as to how much money is raised on a semi-annual basis, by less than 700 people, for the numerous missionary works of The Church of Jesus Christ. I am further amazed that not every sister and young women is a member of the Circle. I think sometimes how much we could do with the talents and efforts of all our women combined.

Now to answer those questions I posed in my title:

Do I Need the Circle? The answer is clearly, yes, if you wish to develop your talents and increase your knowledge of the scriptures, while making wonderful life-long friendships.

Does the Circle need me? The answer is, yes, the Circle needs us in order to continue its marvelous work and remain a support to The Church of Jesus Christ.

If you are wondering what you can do to participate in the Great and Divine Commissions of The Church of Jesus Christ, the answer is get involved with your local Ladies' Uplift Circle and help in any way you can. The Church will benefit from your efforts.



Branch and Mission News

An Experience

On July 18, 2007, our dear Sister Jennie Pietrangelo, of Detroit, Branch #1, passed on to her reward. The following is a dream, relayed to us by her granddaughter, Sister Julie Gibson:

"Shortly after my grandmother, Sister Jennie Pietrangelo passed away, I had a very brief vision of a very peaceful and tranquil place. I shared this with my five-year-old daughter, Gracie. I told her that Grandma was very happy in her new home. Gracie

also desired to see her Grandma, so I told her to ask God in her prayers and that in time He would give her a dream. Just over a month later, August 27, 2007, Gracie had the following dream:

"I was sleeping last night and I had a dream about Grandma Jennie. I was up where Grandma Jennie is. She was standing up waving to me saying, 'Hi Gracie!'

"When I got close to her, I was looking up at her face and she was looking down at my face, she said, 'Oh hi sweetheart.' Then she gave me a kiss.

"She asked me if I wanted to take a walk to show me all of the special things that were where she lived. She held my hand and she took me for a walk around. Everything

there was sparkly and I saw many sparkling trees. Grandma then showed me a Golden Sparkling Tree. She said that it was the most special tree there. The tree had golden branches and a golden bottom [trunk] with special fruit on it. Grandma also told me that it was the most special thing there.

"There were also many people there. I didn't know any of them, but Grandma Jennie told me all of their names. Grandma then said, 'Goodbye, I love you Gracie.' And I said, 'Goodbye Grandma Jennie, I love you.' It was fun there. And this dream was a great dream.

"When Gracie related this dream, we were immediately prompted to

(Continued on Page 8)

An Experience

Continued from Page 7

recall Lehi's dream (1 Nephi 8:10-12) and Nephi's vision (1 Nephi 11:8-9). Amazingly, the tree that Gracie saw in her dream was also referred to in a vision reported in the *Gospel News* in 1948 by Sister Marietta Ruzzi. Here is an excerpt from that vision:

"I saw a beautiful tree which stood right in front of the pulpit, where the sacrament table stands. This tree was all gold, even the leaves and the fruit were gold and its brightness was beyond description."

What a blessing that through God's mercies, Gracie saw the same tree that Sister Marietta Ruzzi saw over 60 years ago. We thank God for the comfort and understanding He gives us in our times of need. He truly is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

A Baptism in Cincinnati-Morrow

By Sister Mallory Batson

The saints of the Cincinnati-Morrow Branch along with visitors from LaGrange, Kentucky; Kinsman, Youngstown, and Columbus gathered at the water's edge on the chilly, but beautiful morning of March 4, 2007. Courtney Batson, youngest daughter of Brother Bob and Sister Ruth Batson, requested baptism after the Mid-West Winter Retreat the Sunday before. It was a beautiful sight to watch Brother Bob take his daughter into the water.

After, everyone drove back to the building where we enjoyed some singing. Brother Paul Pezzenti opened in prayer.

Brother Ron Genaro, visiting from Youngstown, Ohio spoke from Matthew 16, "...upon this rock I will build my church..." He also spoke on Jesus' question to His disciples, "...whom say ye that I am?" Brother Ron exhorted all to be a reflection of Christ's character. He then touched on the five-fold purpose of the Church:

1. Worship
2. Service
3. Discipleship
4. Fellowship
5. Evangelism

Following the preaching service, Sister Courtney was confirmed by Brother Ron Genaro. During the confirmation, Brother Chuck Maddox had an experience. He saw three people who had gone on to their reward there with us: Brother Joe and Sister Carmel Genaro, Courtney's grandparents, and Sister Rose Licata, who was the faithful sister who started the Cincinnati Branch. They were all rejoicing in Courtney's decision to commit herself to Christ.

Sister Karen Pezzenti also had an experience where she heard some of the older brothers and sisters from the Youngstown Branch who had previously passed away singing with us.

We then shared a season of testimony and the Lord's Supper. Brother Dan Palacios closed in prayer and we all enjoyed lunch and fellowship together. It was a wonderful day as we, along with the angels, rejoiced as another soul came to Christ.

Detroit Branch #2 Visits Cincinnati-Morrow

By Sister Mallory Batson

The members of the Cincinnati-Morrow Branch were excited as we waited for the arrival of the Detroit, Michigan Branch #2 bus at Fort Ancient. There we saw the ruins of an ancient Native American settlement and learned about what we believe used to be a Lamanite village.

That night, we gathered at the Cincinnati-Morrow church building, anticipating a blessing. We started the evening with singing. Brother Chuck Maddox welcomed everyone and expressed our branch's excitement and appreciation to have Branch #2 with us for the weekend. After Brother Dan Parravano opened in prayer, Brother Doug Obradovich

opened the meeting by relating a story about a man who was trying to sell a couch. He put a sign on the couch that said "free" and it sat for weeks without anyone wanting to take it. Then he changed the sign and put one up saying, "\$50," and it sold the next day. Brother Doug said salvation isn't free. Christ paid for it for each and every one of us. He wanted us to realize how much God really loves us and to understand our redemption. Once we grasp it, it no longer becomes about us; it's about them. It's about spreading the word of God, His love, and His Gospel to those who don't know about it yet. Once we grasp that, we can love fully. He also talked about making justifications for our sins and how "we're right, but we're wrong." We are the people who need to live a better life. We are the people Christ left this earth to. We have to tell others; that's the love of Christ. He left us with this thought, "All who were baptized chose to come out of the water. The question is: What are you doing now?"

Brother Jim Lambert transitioned into communion, telling us to focus on the sacrifice God made for us. After we shared communion, the young people sang a selection.

Brother James Gross, newly baptized, shared his testimony of how he came to the decision to serve the Lord. He said he felt the love of God from all of the brothers and sisters and he now has a desire to give that to others.

Brother Chuck Maddox followed and exhorted the congregation to take ownership in the fact that there are souls that we need to tell of Christ.

After we closed the meeting, we shared a wonderful time together around a campfire with food and fellowship.

We gathered at the branch Sunday morning anticipating a spirit-filled day. Apostle Leonard A. Lovalvo opened our service, talking on the three sons of Mosiah. He spoke of how they rebelled against the Church, and then once they were converted, had a desire to share the Gospel with everyone (Mosiah 28, Alma 29:9). Brother Leonard compared being an

instrument in God's hands to being in an orchestra. Just as each instrument has its own part in the orchestra, each of us has our own part in God's plan. If one note is off, the director knows, making it important for all of us to be in tune. It is imperative for each of us to feel the responsibility of fulfilling God's work. Brother Leonard urged all of us to be quick to give our testimonies and offer prayers for those who don't know of the Lord.

Brother Duane Lovalvo followed by talking about the day he was baptized and how he has the desire to be an instrument in God's hands. He told the congregation, "If you want to be an instrument, look to God. The way is so simple. Get baptized."

Brother Mike Pandone spoke on Alma and how, after he was converted, he was completely convicted and went back to right all of his wrongs (Alma 36: 27-28). Brother Mike quoted a hymn, saying, "The blood that gives me strength from day to day, it will never lose its power." It hasn't changed today (Alma 37:5-6). He encouraged us to tell others of Christ and what we have, saying, "If no one remembers my name, I don't care. One converted soul is worth it all."

Brother Chuck said as parents, you want your sons and daughters to be empowered; Christ wants the same thing for us as our Heavenly Father. He asked the congregation how long it had been since our instruments had been tuned. He continued, saying it is time to take our instruments and move forward. Every time we justify our actions, we get a little more out of tune. God is ready to tune us to be the instruments He wants us to be.

Brother David Lovalvo transitioned into testimony, saying as ministers, when they receive a message, they can't wait to get up and share it. He expressed how he hopes that all of us feel the same way, because it is also our responsibility to spread the Gospel.

In our testimony service we heard wonderful words such as, "I'm so thankful that I belong to such a loving family." "I'm excited. I'm empowered. I'm a member of The

Church of Jesus Christ," and "My testimony is this: I'm glad to be a part of God's Church." Every word spoken was beautiful.

As we were closing our meeting, Brother Doug Obradovich got up and told us two weeks prior to our meeting he was given the message that was spoken today, and once again exhorted us to play our instruments.

The Cincinnati-Morrow Branch was so thankful to have Branch #2 with us for the weekend. It was filled with fun, fellowship and the Spirit of God.

Note of Thanks

I along with my family would like to thank everyone for their wonderful cards, phone calls and prayers during Brother Sam's illness and passing on to his heavenly home. We felt strength from your prayers to the Lord and are very thankful for the brothers and sisters of The Church of Jesus Christ.

May God bless you,
Sister Geneva Dell

San Carlos Event

Continued from Page 4

and secure when they have age-appropriate boundaries and expectations that they understand, how that keeping rules to a few and following through with consequences when challenged is necessary. It was brought out how that discipline is not only punishment but teaching children internal self control and limits. It comes from modeling appropriate behaviors that the child observes. It was said how we need not dwell on the negative and what is wrong, but to give frequent positive strokes for doing well. Sister Elaine talked about how it is so necessary to emphasize each developmental step toward independent personal control and good decision making. Children must know who is safe and where it is safe. This helps

them to develop coping skills. Encouraging activities where they learn the steps of how to play basketball, how to crochet, how to bake cookies or other activities where confidence is developed is so relevant. This leads to autonomy.

We heard wonderful counsel and received great information helpful in raising healthy children who become socially and emotionally competent. It is so important to love unconditionally as God loves us and to teach by example. When we couple all this with constant prayer, we will see positive results and our children will be blessed.

YOUTH SEMINAR

Brothers Jordan Giannetti and Michael Watson led a youth seminar entitled "Single In Purpose" in the afternoon that truly was well prepared and delivered to our young people from around our region. Many thought provoking words of wisdom came forth stirring the hearts and creating desire of those present to be diligent in service to God. The necessity of being the same person whether in church or at work or just among friends was discussed. The great need to be close to the Lord and the fellowship of saints is paramount in order to have the wisdom, strength and grace of God to overcome the temptations of our day and be victorious against the enemy of all righteousness. Those present were encouraged to "hang around" the older brothers and sisters who have learned, through experience, to conquer peer pressure and many cunning devices of the enemy to draw us away from the Lord and His Church. Their counsel and many spiritual experiences are uplifting and encouraging to all and their love for the young people is rich and genuine.

The necessity of prayer, fasting and prayer, reading the scriptures and fellowship with one another that strong relationships would be established with God and with each other was brought out. This allows all to draw strength from one another that a bond of love will develop and our Heavenly Father

(Continued on Page 10)

San Carlos Event

Continued from Page 9

will keep our young people safe as they endeavor to abide in Him.

Being active was stressed, working for the Lord and bearing testimony of His goodness. To seek the counsel of God is so important as young people. There are many decisions to be made that can affect the lives of the youth either in a positive or negative manner. When one wants to serve God and seek to help build His Kingdom the right vocation and helpmate in life is of utmost importance.

There were many wonderful thoughts delivered and interesting discussions had that caused those present to think about their relationships with God and each other and what it means to be "Single in Purpose."

SATURDAY EVENING MEETING

The Area MBA Officers were in charge of the Saturday evening service. Brother Jordan Giannetti, Area President, made some introductory remarks expressing gratitude to God for the events of the day and for all of His blessings in our lives. Brother Ron Mazzeo, from the Mesa Branch, addressed the congregation. He read from the book of Hebrews, 1st chapter speaking of how God in times past spake unto the fathers by the prophets and in these last days hath spoken unto us by His Son. Brother Ron spoke of our relationship with Christ and the wonderful fellowship of the saints in The Church of Jesus Christ. He told us of the wonderful love of the Father and what He did for us in sending His only Son into the world.

The singing was beautiful and the testimonies were rich as they were expressed unto the honor and glory of God. The Spirit of the Lord was present as Christ was exalted in the congregation of the saints.

There were several anointed for illness. One of our Native American brothers told us that the Lord healed him after prayer.

The Spirit of God covered us as we saw the Lord's work, which was marvelous in our eyes.

The meeting was not prolonged as the day was well spent as we listened and participated in beautiful seminars which were beneficial and enjoyed by all present.

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE

The Southwest Region Evangelists took the lead in the morning service. Everyone gathered together in anticipation of the blessings of God as we began to sing praises unto Him prior to the introduction of our service.

Brother Dwayne Jordan, Chairman of the Southwest Region Evangelists, was our first speaker using the book of Psalms as his text. He continued on the theme of the family. He emphasized how the family was ordained of God from the beginning of time and the great importance of relationships. He mentioned the family of God and how each one plays a part and is of great importance to the body of Christ.

Brother Pete Giannetti, Jr. followed speaking on the theme presented expressing how the great blessings of God prevail when we surrender our lives to Him and put our trust in our Heavenly Father. He gave some examples and related some experiences showing the pleasure of God smiling upon His people when the family is united and functioning as God ordained it to be.

We had some special musical selections during our morning worship service which were enjoyed by all.

Brother Barry Mazzeo, Presiding Officer of the San Carlos Mission, made some closing remarks. He also thanked everyone for their support for the weekend, the Southwest Region RMOC/Evangelists, the Area MBA, the Area Ladies' Uplift Circle for providing food and serving those present, the seminar leaders and all those that attended. Thanks to everyone, their preparation and prayers, the weekend was a success and enjoyed by all.

Our weekend was brought to a close with prayer and with thanksgiving unto God for a wonderful time spent in learning and growing together.

The Children's Corner

Continued from Page 6

started working. King Com had a son named Heth who wanted power. Heth formed another secret society group to get rid of his father and get power. Heth attacked King Com with his own sword and killed him!

God was not pleased. He sent prophets in the land again. God warned them that if they did not repent of all the evil they were doing, He would put a curse upon the face of the land. There would be a great famine (no food). But the people did not listen and King Heth was not pleased. He had the prophets and preachers thrown out, or even put in pits and left to die.

God stopped the rain. No food was growing. God sent poisonous serpents that attacked humans and animals. The flocks of sheep and animals started running away toward the land that was south of them. Many people died for lack of food, including the wicked Heth. But others followed the animals and ate the animals that died, until all were gone. God then had the serpents stop chasing the animals and stay in the area so that the people could not pass them and go to the land southward to get the animals. There was nothing to eat. A nation of people had turned away from God and become evil. Now when the remaining people finally saw that they were going to die, they began to be sorry for their evil ways and cry unto the Lord.

God heard them when they were sorry and had prayed. He sent rain upon the face of the earth. There began to be fruit upon the trees again. The Jaredite nation was saved from the famine and saw the power of God. They were a broken people who then returned to righteousness. Again, God had nearly destroyed all of them when they were full of evil, or "ripe in iniquity" like a fruit that grows and grows until it is ready to be picked. This nation was nearly destroyed by choosing evil. God stopped the rain, sent the famine and poisonous snakes and let them destroy each other. But when they called on Him and repented, God forgave them. The Promised Land was clean again.

God has promised over and over that this land will be a blessed land as long as the people serve God and do right. If we do not, we too will be swept away when sin has increased. Our job is for each of us to love and serve God and ask for forgiveness when we make mistakes. We serve a living God who has made ancient promises to His people. Those ancient promises apply to us today, too. We must listen and obey.

With love,
Sister Jan

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* WEDDINGS *

Sister Alyse Suska and Matthew Faist were united in holy matrimony in Pompton Lakes, New Jersey on January 6, 2007.

Lydia Lee Link and Jay Degnegard were united in holy matrimony in Stonewood, West Virginia on April 14, 2007.

Sister Melanie Capone and Brother Jonathan Suska were united in holy matrimony in Sterling Heights, Michigan on August 10, 2007.

Franklin Theodore Lunsford and Sister Diane Everett were united in holy matrimony at Detroit, Michigan Branch #1 on October 6, 2007.

Baptisms and Reinstatements

Brother Kyle Chambers was baptized on January 17, 2008 at Detroit, Michigan Branch #1. He was baptized by Brother Brett Gibson and confirmed by Brother Jerry Benyola.

Ordinations

Brother David Williams was ordained a teacher on February 4, 2007 at Gastonia, North Carolina. His feet were washed by Brother Chris DeRoo and he was ordained by Brother George Kovacic.

Sister Jill Kovacic was ordained a deaconess on February 4, 2007 at Gastonia, North Carolina. Her feet were washed by Sister Donna Fleming and she was ordained by Brother Darrell Rossi.

Sister Connie Rossi was ordained a deaconess on February 4, 2007 at

Gastonia, North Carolina. Her feet were washed by Sister Gerri Littlejohn and she was ordained by Brother Harold Littlejohn.

Sister Barbara Persico Williams was ordained a deaconess on February 4, 2007 at Gastonia, North Carolina. Her feet were washed by Sister Florence LaRosa and she was ordained by Brother Joe Catone.

Brother Chris DeRoo was ordained an elder on April 1, 2007 at Gastonia, North Carolina. His feet were washed by Brother Joe Catone and he was ordained by Brother Paul Palmieri.

Brother Justin Onorato was ordained a Teacher on January 13, 2008 at the Miami-Dade, Florida Mission. His feet were washed by Evangelist Miguel Bicelis and he was ordained by Brother Justin Severson.

Sister Lisa DiBattista was ordained a deaconess on January 20, 2008 at Detroit, Michigan Branch #1. Her feet were washed by Sister Kathy Natoli and she was ordained by Brother Keith Lesperance.

Spiritual Anniversaries

Sister Eva Cain of the Redford, Michigan Branch celebrated her 65th spiritual anniversary in The Church of Jesus Christ.

Sister Jean Ciarolla of the Modesto, California Branch celebrated her 60th spiritual anniversary in The Church of Jesus Christ.

Sister Joanne Trainor of the Treasure Coast, Florida Branch celebrated her 50th spiritual anniversary in The Church of Jesus Christ.

Sister Gladys Moore of the Treasure Coast, Florida Branch celebrated her 50th spiritual anniversary in The Church of Jesus Christ.

Children Blessed

Olivia Rose Amalio, daughter of Angelo Amalio and Brittany Benyola, was blessed on August 12, 2007 at Detroit, Michigan Branch #1.

Arianna Christine Kechego, daughter of Branden and Candis Kechego, was blessed on December 30, 2007 at Detroit, Michigan Branch #1.

Carson Matthew Hillis, son of Amanda Zaccagnini, was blessed on December 30, 2007 at Detroit, Michigan Branch #1.

Church of Jesus Christ. He is preceded in death by his wife Katherine (Sholes) and parents Sister Rose (Valenti) and George Laessig. He is survived by his brothers, Walter and his wife Susan, Stephen and his wife Kim, Eric and his wife Judy; his sister, Sister Sally and her husband Brother Tom Curtin; along with several nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles and cousins.

GIRAUD MORTON RAO

Brother Giraud Morton Rao of the Spartanburg, South Carolina Mission passed on to his reward on November 13, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Sister Beverly Rao; two sons, Jody and his wife Sister Mindy and Jeff; one daughter, Sister Rachel Rao.

OBITUARIES

We wish to express our sympathy to those that mourn the loss of loved ones. May God bless and comfort you.

PAUL SCALA

Brother Paul Scala of the Metuchen, New Jersey Branch passed on to his reward in August, 2007. He is survived by his daughters Holly, Sandy and Donna and several grandchildren.

FREDRICK WILLIAM LAESSIG

Brother Frederick (Fred) Laessig of the Bronx, New York Mission passed on to his reward on August 30, 2007. He was a Deacon in The

ISABELLA BOLOGNA

Sister Isabella Bologna, of Detroit, Michigan Branch #2, passed on to her reward on December 9, 2007. She is survived by her husband, Brother Querino (Reno) Bologna; her children, Sister Vera and her husband Brother Leonard J. Lovalvo, Brother Richard and his wife Sister Toni Bologna, Sister Cathy and her husband Brother Alex Gentile, and Sister Loretta and her husband Brother Leonard A. Lovalvo; as well as 10 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren.

EASLY MOTT

Sister Easly Mott of the Kinsman, Ohio Branch passed on to her reward on December 25, 2007.

SEBASTIAN "SAM" RIINA

Brother Sebastian "Sam" Riina of the Sterling Heights Michigan Branch, passed on to his reward on December 27, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Sister Josephine Riina; his daughter, Sister Grace (Michael) Bashaw and two sons, Leonard (Bonnie) Riina and Sam Riina as well as 9 grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren.

SAMUEL J. DELL

Brother Samuel J. Dell of the Levittown, Pennsylvania Branch passed on to his reward on December 29, 2007. He was an ordained Evangelist in The Church of Jesus Christ. He was preceded in death by his first wife, Sister Josephine Dell. He is survived by his second wife, Sister Geneva Renda Dell; son, Brother Brent Dell and wife Susan; daughter, Flora Foster and husband Don; grandsons, Terry Rienhold, Chris Dell and Andrew Dell; 3 great-grandchildren, and his sister, Esther Krygowski.

JAMES D. GIBSON

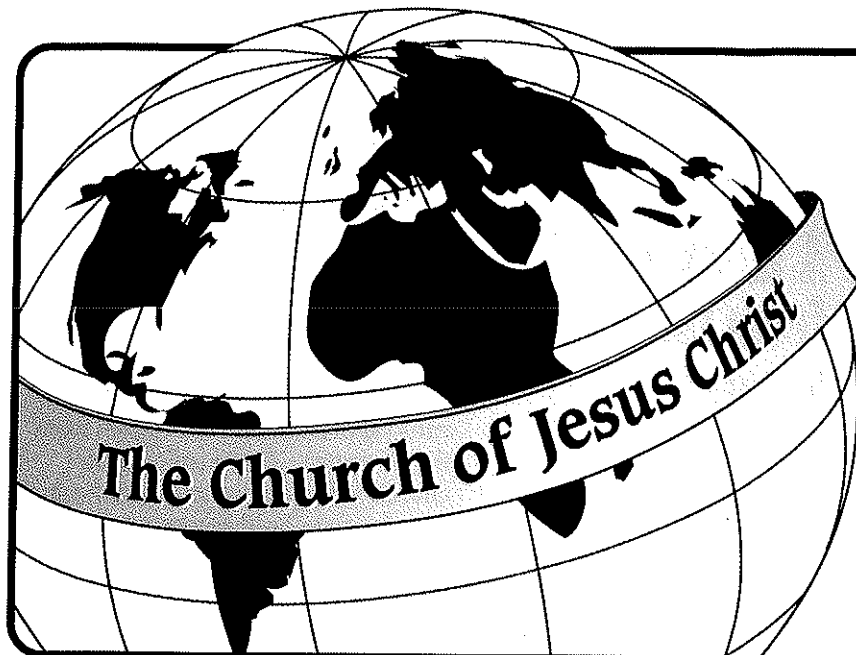
Brother James D. Gibson of the Aliquippa Branch passed to his reward on January 6, 2008. He was an ordained Elder in The Church of Jesus Christ. He was preceded in death by his parents and his wife, Sister Joan D'Antonio Gibson; a brother, Timothy Gibson and two sisters, Colleen Gibson and Constance Gibson. He is survived by his daughter, Sister Earleen Hunt and her husband Brother Thomas; two sons, David Gibson and wife Marina, Brian Gibson and his wife Kathleen; a brother, Brother Paul Gibson and his wife Sister Janet; eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Address Change

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The Gospel News

World Headquarters Monongahela, PA, USA.

April, 2008

Volume 64, No. 4

Bendiciones de Cristo en Ecuador! Blessings of Christ in Ecuador!

By Evangelist Anthony Ricci

Truly, this writer can say from February 16 to February 25, 2008, Apostle Richard Christman, Evangelist Nephi DeMercurio, Brother Juan Rivas and I experienced BENDICIONES DE CRISTO EN ECUADOR—Blessings of Christ in Ecuador! JESUS NEVER FAILS!!

The work in Ecuador was started not by a contact, but by the direction of the Spirit of God to go to this country and trust God to direct us to a people. Through the diligence and submissiveness to the Spirit, the brothers who preceded us were led to a wonderful people. What was seen was a people hungering and thirsting for truth. They are a people quick to ask questions and a willingness to discuss this Gospel. Most importantly, they are a people who were excited about the message of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ!! I praise God we see what the Apostle Paul speaks of—somebody plants, we were able to add a little water, and we ALL rejoice when God gives the increase.

This trip, to me was very wonderful. It was good to go “grass roots” and do old-fashioned visits in

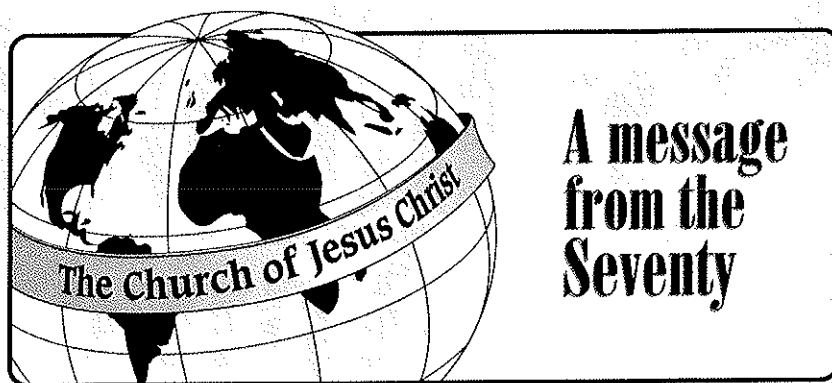
the homes. It was a blessing to spend every evening in a different home. How wonderful to walk into these homes and feel and experience the Love of God. In every home, we were welcomed and the message of the Restored Gospel was received readily. As we sat in their living rooms and around their tables, sharing

a homemade empanada or sipping from freshly made orange or cinnamon tea, we could see the Spirit of God working in their hearts and the conviction that was being felt in their souls. What a truly wonderful message we have—that Jesus loves them and that He is a Risen Savior. We rejoice that the families all want to serve God together. It was truly a blessing to see the parents wanting to make sure their children grow in the knowledge of Jesus.

(Continued on Page 4)



The hearty group searching for baptismal sites.



Venezuela

By Brother Bryan Griffith

Brothers Don Ross, Frank Palacios, and Bryan Griffith made a recent trip to Venezuela, November 2007. The purpose of the trip was to meet with the four current members in Maracaibo, further evangelize in the city and surrounding towns, and to introduce the resident Elders of the sister Church in Valle Guanape to the saints in Maracaibo. The time spent included evangelism, leadership and ministerial training. Thank God we were successful in coming together for the first union of both church locations in the country of Venezuela.

We were thankful for the accomplishments during this trip. We went to one location and met with relatives of one of our Church families. They were found to be quite happy to receive us once again. We met with approximately ten members of the family which showed us a welcome and mutual love. A woman was anointed for a skin condition and a young lady asked for prayer that God would direct her in her life. Our impression for this location was that in God's time they may receive the Church, and we should maintain contact with them when the missionaries travel. Four or five of the family members made the forty (40) minute trip to the meeting on Sunday.

During our time on another of the locations, some of the brothers introduced us to approximately four or five friends and their families. There were two young women who received us in their homes, and we

shared the Gospel with them. A nephew of one of the brothers, who is 12 years of age, was anointed. Two months ago he was struck by a car which left him in a near-paralyzed state. He does not speak and has only gross movements of his arms and legs. A great spirit was present as he was anointed. We also had the opportunity to visit with another woman and her family and were welcomed in her home. We prayed for her on Sunday for strength and direction. Our prayer is that God will work with her.

During this trip we were involved in ministerial and leadership training. In total, there were 14-16 hours spent with the brothers. We instructed them on: Following the Spirit, the Holy Kiss, freewill giving and offering, manner of dress and deportment, using the Bible and Book of Mormon together, Communion prayer, fasting and prayer and beliefs of the Church.

Deacon training was also performed for approximately one hour. We had a wonderful time talking with one of the brothers and found his spirit to be that of purity and love. He heeded our council regarding his natural and spiritual responsibilities and duties as a Deacon. What a humble example of a man of God.

While in Venezuela we evaluated the status of each church location. Overall the missions are doing well. The membership continues to meet weekly. Many have had difficulty with work. There are few jobs and many of the members rely on God for their sustenance. We counseled the brothers that they prefer one another in opening the

Sunday services. We spent time explaining the need for them to follow the Spirit's direction as they open their services. The brothers took the counsel well and stated that they understood.

One of the brothers shared with us that where he lives there is a community of fellow Native Americans (approximately 1.5 hours from the Mission). There is no formal church in the community and he spoke of a desire to hold meetings occasionally. He was questioning how to go about developing this desire. He was counseled to begin speaking individually to those interested and instruct them to set a date on a Sunday afternoon to hold a meeting. We also spoke to them about utilizing the youth. They understood our concern and stated there are good opportunities among the group. We continue to pray that God will raise up some young leadership.

We held one formal service on Sunday with approximately twenty visiting from both of the missions. A good spirit of preaching and teaching was present. It is noted that brothers led and followed with a good reviving spirit. Several people were anointed for various conditions. As we were preparing to pray for one brother and his family concerns, the word of the Lord stated "I will take care of your needs, put your trust in Me." A friend of the Church asked for God's direction in her life. She stated the Church was special to her but had questions in her heart.

We had several wonderful experiences.

1. The morning we left, Sister Rose Palacios had the following dream. "In the dream my grandson Eric came to me and stated he saw Brothers Don, Frank, and Bryan on the plane. He continued in the dream to state he saw another man with us wearing a robe." We can say that we surely felt God's presence with us throughout the whole trip.

2. Early Thursday morning Brother Frank Palacios had the following vision. "In the vision, I saw

(Continued on Page 4)



2008 ANNUAL MEXICO CONFERENCE

**Tijuana, B.C., Mexico
July 24 – 27, 2008**

For additional information regarding the conference and/or if you are interested in attending, please contact Brother Thomas P. Liberto at tliberto@san.rr.com or (858) 566-9407.

(Note: US Passport is now required to cross into the United States from Mexico)

Blessings of Christ in Ecuador

Continued from Page 1

We would spend our days traveling the Ecuadorian countryside looking for suitable baptismal sites (sometimes going 2-3 hours from our starting location) and looking for the locations of the indigenous tribes. About 25% of Ecuadorians are full-blooded indigenous with up to 80% of the population able to trace their roots to the original peoples of the land. To be among them, knowing what we know because of the revelation of the Book of Mormon, is such a wonderful experience. One day stood out in particular. We were leaving one morning and we saw two indigenous women lost in the lobby asking to use the phone. Brother Richard saw this transpire and had Brother Juan offer them the use of our phone. Within 20 minutes, we had the phone number of a contact in an indigenous tribe AND an invitation to visit on our next visit. It may seem like a small thing—but God works in such wonderful ways—being put in the path to help, and through that we established another opening! Not a small thing—a GREAT THING!

Our Sabbath services were filled with preaching and testimonies from the group. Heard were many wonderful words of testimony of the amazement that the Restored Gospel has found its way to Ecuador and we rejoiced how the Grace of God can find its way to this country and to this group of people. Truly, I stand in testimony of the goodness of God not only in my life, but in the lives of the wonderful people and families I met in Ecuador. One wonderful event stands out to me in one of our meetings. They asked the brothers from the U.S. to sing a song. Brothers Richard, Nephi, and I gave it our best try by singing one verse of *Amazing Grace*. Brother Juan then sang that verse in Spanish—and the Spirit of God filled that room. To hear Brother Juan sing that verse in their native language, to see the faces respond, to see the recognition that the Amazing Grace of God has found them—that is why we sacrifice time from our families, why

we leave the comforts of the USA—for the blessings felt in such moments. To realize the same wonderful opportunity we had to find this Gospel is now afforded to somebody else in a foreign land, is a blessed knowledge.

Dear reader, this work is in its infant stage. The brothers who have laid the foundation have done a tremendous work. We water and nourish. I ask you, as you read this and you feel the spirit of conviction for the missionary work, that you would offer prayer for our planting in Ecuador and in all our foreign fields. This congregation is a wonderful group and we look forward to see what God will do in this field.

I do want to mention that not only was I blessed to travel with the brothers I traveled with and to see their love and dedication to the work, but the Lord gave me one extra blessing. On the way home, I was in the Miami airport waiting for Brother Juan to come through customs. I was standing with our luggage and I saw Evangelist Russ and Sister Lena Martorana getting their luggage. They were just returning from their missionary trip to Panama. What a tremendous blessing to greet them and to hear about their wonderful trip. How beautiful and blessed it was to see them and share in the fellowship of Christ, even if it was only for a few moments.

I humbly ask you, as your servant, to be diligent and faithful in your own mission and branch that God would begin to give the increase not only in foreign lands but domestically as well. Our goal is that we all rejoice in the BENDICIONES DE CRISTO. As always dear friend—TO THE WORK!

Venezuela

Continued from Page 2

a truck pull up in front of our hotel. The man got out of the truck and went to the back of his truck and let two

dogs loose out of what appeared to be cages. The dogs went right up the steps and I knew they were coming to menace the brothers in the hotel room.” We knew the enemy did not like the Church’s presence in Venezuela.

3. As we were returning home through Venezuelan customs, God’s hand moved upon the military police checking our luggage. As we approached the checkpoint where we had watched and waited for nearly one hour, the guards checked every bag of the passengers ahead of us, but when Brother Don approached the officers, they spoke briefly. The guard then proceeded to permit us to pass without any bag check. I asked Brother Don later what he stated to the guard. He smiled and stated, “Brother Bryan, God goes before us!” Even though it was small, it made manifest the evidence of God’s sovereignty over His people.

During our future trips there are areas where we desire more growth. We have instructed our Venezuelan brothers to operate under the Spirit. They were encouraged to continue to be instructed on how to follow the biddings of the Holy Ghost. One of the brothers had an experience while we were instructing him about following the Spirit. At the conclusion of the lesson, we felt to pray for him. One of the brothers was directed to pray for him (following the Spirit). As he prayed, it was stated later every word spoken were the exact thoughts of the brother being prayed for. We used this experience to enlighten him on how God directs us in behalf of each other.

Overall, we felt the leading of the Spirit in administering to the Church in Venezuela. We felt the brothers were open and receptive to our counsel. We ask that you continue to pray for the work in Venezuela that the Lord might call many to the obedience of the Gospel, and that He might raise up more workers. May God bless each of you as you continue to support the work of the Church both in prayer and in donations.



Editorial Viewpoint . . .

By Brother Peter Benyola

"If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD. And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD ... Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the LORD thy God any bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish or any evil favoredness: for that is an abomination unto the LORD thy God" (Leviticus 1:3-5, Deuteronomy 17:1).

The Passover commemorates when the Spirit of God swept into Egypt to seize the souls of the firstborn in the land but passed over the homes of the Children of Israel, whose doorposts were smeared with the blood of lambs. It became an annual honor of God's miracle. Later when the temple was used to make sacrifices before God, Jerusalem was a very busy destination for hundreds of thousands of worshippers who were there to buy lambs for Passover. In the days leading up to the holy day, lambs were brought to the city so that the Levite priests could examine them for disease or defects, according to the guidelines in the book of Leviticus. The Levites sorted the spotless lambs from the unsuitable ones so that God's commandments could be honored. In dealing with each family patriarch and to meet the needs of each person in his family, the priest would survey the flock. When he spotted the one he needed, he would point and declare, "Behold the lamb!"

How did they find lambs that could be sacrificed and accepted instead of rejected by God? There were different laws for each kind of sin. As stated in the Scripture, the animal had to be a male without blemish. It could not be old and weak or sick. This animal had to be the type that could win the Blue Ribbon at the State Fair. Also, of his own volition, the sinner had to recognize that he needed his sin covered. Then, the sinner laid his own hand on the head of the animal, as a tactile sign between him and God, with the priest as a witness, that the sinner understood he was transferring his sin onto the head of the innocent creature. After the transference, the sinner *himself* had to kill the animal in his place. You and I may never have literally done this procedure ourselves, but with Christ-converted hearts, we should definitely see something very familiar in this scenario. The LORD was preparing His people for the time when He would send His own spotless lamb. In the fullness of time, a Levite named John emerged from the wilderness to proclaim "Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!" The harbinger of Christ pointed out not only a suitable sacrifice for a single man's family, but for all of mankind.

Isn't it ironic that the One who was called the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the king of the beasts, ferocious and authoritative, became the lowliest of creatures: a lamb, Who stepped up to the altar willingly, without struggling—without even making a sound? Jesus Christ Himself condescended to this world, as the Book of Mormon says, to be judged and slain by *His own creation*. He willingly poured out His own life's blood as a pure, redemptive stream to not only cover, but wash away the sins of all those who would personally and publicly acknowledge before God their sin and need for a Savior and repent. He did it for all those who would simply point and say, "Behold the Lamb of God!" and accept that sacrifice as sufficient to take away their sins.

A Lamb that was so perfect and flawless, the very best that God could find, has been chosen for us—He sent Himself to the cross. As Israel smeared the blood of the Passover lamb over the doors to their houses and passed from literal bondage to physical redemption, God has spiritually placed the blood of Jesus, the Messiah, on the entranceway of our hearts. By His grace alone, He has provided a means by which we can be saved—we have only to stay in the house all night. How beautiful is that Song of Zion, "Blessed are they who the blood have

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The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork

In Your Darkest Moments Jesus Hears You Cry

Dear Friends,

Did you ever have to do something very hard that you did not want to do? Not like a chore, or homework, but like having to say you are sorry when you were wrong. Or, like having to try and help someone later when you should have helped them at the beginning? I once made a new friend that I was trying to impress. We were walking into a building when a poor, crummy looking lady was trying to carry her laundry and squeeze through the door too. I slipped through the opening and started down the shining hall. My new friend turned quickly and ran back to pull the door open. I felt ashamed. I knew better than to ignore someone because they looked poor or beat-up. I was just trying to be cool like my lovely friend. She reminded me of whom I truly was and what I wanted to be like.

Did you ever start to do the right thing but the person was not there who needed you. So you said to yourself, "Oh well, I tried. They weren't there," and you quit? Jesus did not do that. He had a job to do in this world. He came from heaven where He walked with God. He was willing to come and be born, walk with us, teach us about love, and teach us the right way to live and forgive each other. He also taught us about heaven, where we go after our bodies are worn out and ill. Jesus let His body be killed so He could rise from the dead, and come



back to prove to us that heaven is real. God is real, and great power comes from loving and serving God.

When Jesus was walking with His twelve followers, called Apostles, he tried to warn them that He would be put to death as a final sacrifice to God. Before He came, the Israelite people had to offer a sacrifice of an animal whenever they came to the temple to pray. After Jesus was willing to die, He taught us that any of us could reach God. All we have to do is be sorry for our sins and ask for help in Jesus' name. That means, as we pray, we tell the Lord our dreams and worries and hopes and remind Him that we are asking for help through God's son, Jesus Christ.

We also sacrifice, or give up our will. That means when I am praying to do the right thing, sometimes I know what I should do, but some part of me is rebelling. That's when I tell Jesus I am sorry and I ask Jesus to help me be willing to be willing. I ask Him to forgive me for my fighting ways, and help me change. Before I know it, I am soft hearted. I am doing what is right. I am being blessed.

The night before the soldiers were going to come and take Jesus away to prison, He knew it. He had a special supper with His twelve followers and washed their feet and told them to love one another. He taught them, "By this [love] shall all men know that you are my disciples" (John 13:35). He warned one apostle, Peter, that very soon he would be afraid to admit he even knew Jesus. This happened later when they took Jesus to prison. Jesus also turned to apostle, Judas, who was going to listen to the devil and lead the soldiers to find

Jesus. Jesus told him, "What you are going to do, do it quickly," and Judas ran off to lead enemies to the Lord.

The apostles did not understand what Jesus was warning them about. He told them many things that they understood later. He said, "A little while, and you shall not see me: and again, a little while, and you shall see me, because I go to the Father" (John 16:17). They did not understand that Jesus was warning them that He would die, go to be with God, and then come back to them. He told them that after He was gone, God would send a comforter, the Holy Ghost (which leads, guides and directs us). But they still did not understand what Jesus was telling them. After He taught them more things He lifted His eyes to

(Continued on Page 11)

WORD SEARCH

IN	JESUS
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AN	CRUCIFY
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Branch and Mission News

A Miracle

In December of 2007, Brother Edmond Buccellato suffered a stroke that impaired his speech and vocabulary memory. When the Church ministry visited Brother Ed at the hospital, his expressed concern was that he might never preach a sermon again. The love and prayers of his family, the ministry, church members and friends were lifted up to the Lord on his behalf and it is wonderful to report that God has heard and answered those prayers. Brother Edmond was able to attend church immediately and also able to express his gratitude to God with his testimony. The most agonizing struggle for our brother was the time necessary for his vocabulary to return.

One of the most rewarding events to date in his recovery occurred on Sunday, January 13, 2008. Brother Edmond was able to open the service in Simi Valley, California with the central theme of the Holy Ghost and its impact on our spiritual and natural life. He read from 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 quoting, *"...know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."* Brother Edmond expressed that although he had preached many sermons about the Holy Ghost over his years in the ministry, this life-threatening incident has allowed him a more profound understanding of how important the Spirit of God is to us. It is essential to our survival and deeply impacts every aspect of our lives. Brother Edmond testified that it was by the power of the Holy Ghost that he was able to overcome the despair of this illness and find the strength for recovery. Using scripture from III Nephi 18:37 Brother Edmond read *"...the disciples bare record that he gave them*

power to give the Holy Ghost...."

This authority rests with the ministry of the Church of Jesus Christ today and carries a tremendous impact in the effectiveness of our ministry.

Brother Edmond's inspired sermon lasted only about 15 to 20 minutes, with tears of joy flowing in the congregation the entire time. Every attendee was touched with the Holy Spirit and this carried on through the remainder of the meeting. Our cups were truly filled as we gave God all of the honor and the glory.

Brother Edmond's experience continued the next week as he had a second stroke. The following is his testimony of that event:

"I was with my family when it happened and immediately lost the use of my left hand. In the ER after being examined, the most remarkable experience happened. In about 20 minutes I witnessed my left hand completely restored. I called the nurse and asked her to squeeze my left hand. I crushed her fingers with my left hand.

"This is specifically for those who have experienced sickness, despair or loss of any kind. As human creatures, we may be subject to fear, anger and confusion when the rain falls. I have also been a friend of fear from time to time. But at that moment, when the darkness appears, I always remember my dear friend Brother Bob Watson, who said, 'When the dark clouds appear, a shaft of God's bright sun [Son] pierces the darkness.'

"I know the grip of fear that may hold us from time to time. I find consolation in the beauty of the prose of King David. *'For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock' (Psalms 27:5).*

"Even though I do have challenges, I am thankful: to be alive; for Leana, Michael, Amy and Matthew and my extended family and so many friends; all of our brothers and sisters; my hope in Christ; for scientists and my doctors; to keep my intelligence, the ability to think and to understand; breathing, seeing, reading, hearing, touching, tasting, feeling and

walking; to have emotions – to cry, laugh, feel fear, anger, anxiousness, and mostly to feel the warmth of love; to appreciate mountains, the sky, the trees, grass, air, the oceans, the sun, and the wonder of space; all things alive that have been created; for hope in this life and our future life.

"All of my doctors are amazed how quickly I am recovering. Four weeks ago I was unable to write these thoughts."

God bless you,
Brother Ed

In Search of a Lost Sheep

By Brother James Bork

Sister Jody Brieck of the Fort Berthold Reservation in North Dakota made her desire known to be re-instated in The Church of Jesus Christ. Family and friends rejoiced. She called Brother Lyle Criscuolo who looked at his busy visiting/traveling schedule. His only available time was the third week of January. He called Brother Rick Lobzun of Windsor, Canada, brother-in-law to Sister Jody, and Brother Jim Bork of Detroit Branch #2. Both brothers could be free for the week the journey would need. We began gathering winter survival gear for the truck in case we broke down along the frozen shores of Lake Superior, the isolated woods of Wisconsin and Minnesota or the sparsely populated plains of North Dakota and began praying for breaks in the winter weather. We drove straight through – trading drivers as we drank black coffee and shared experiences, arriving at the home of Sister Jody and her husband, Brother Bob.

After some rest we began with the work of the Lord, visiting His covenant people. That evening our first visit was with Butch and Theodora Starr, Sister Jody's uncle and

(Continued on Page 8)

In Search of a Lost Sheep

Continued from Page 7

aunt. Butch and his brother are descendents of Chief Son of the Star of the Arikara tribe. Chief Son of the Star is honored with a plaque on the Four Bears Memorial Bridge that crosses Hwy 23 on Lake Sakakawea, part of the Missouri-Yellowstone River. He did much good for his people. Theodora is the natural sister of Sister Lydia Hale of the Clairton, PA Branch. Her brother, Nathan Hale, is Councilman of the Three Affiliated Tribes (TAT): Hidatsa, Arikara, and Mandan residing on the Fort Berthold Reservation. After an enjoyable visit talking with Butch and Theodora, Brother Lyle anointed them both for their afflictions. Butch had just recently been released from the hospital recovering from pneumonia.

The next day we met with Brother Fred Hale, Sister Jody's natural brother. We enjoyed a nice visit with him. Brother Lyle anointed Brother Fred for his afflictions and we said goodbye.

Our third day after dinner we made preparations for our much-anticipated meeting. We opened the meeting with *Zion's Border Line*, utilizing the Missionary CD containing the *Songs of Zion*. Brother Lyle spoke using Luke 15:11-24, the parable of the prodigal son, a lost child that returned home. The scriptures tell of a son asking for his inheritance, leaving home and wasting his substance with riotous living. And it says when he came to himself (realizing his mistake) he arose and went to his father. "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him....But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry." Brother Lyle elaborated how joyous the father was to see his son just as God is to see our sister Jody come home.

Hands were then laid upon Sister Jody, as she was reinstated into fellowship. There was not a dry eye in the meeting. In testimony Sister Jody thanked God for His many blessings. She said, "God brought me to the Fort Berthold Reservation. He said His Church would be here and when it's time He will give us the right people to serve Him here." A wonderful spirit was present. Sacrament was served for the first time on the Fort Berthold Reservation. Brother Bob Brieck offered closing prayer as he graciously thanked God for his wife's reinstatement. After closing the service we thanked our brother and sister for their hospitality and the spirit of fellowship we enjoyed over the past three days and said our goodbyes. We climbed in the truck to head back home driving through the night.

Twelve hours later we arrived at Park Rapids, Minnesota. After a period of rest, arrangements were made to meet at the home of Brother Dan and Sister Inez Cotellesse in Ackley, Minnesota. The purpose was to visit with them and Sister Dianne Diserens, a newly-baptized member. Sister Dianne is a Choctaw native who recently relocated from Dallas, Texas to Park Rapids, Minnesota.

On Sunday morning we picked up Sister Dianne and drove to Brother and Sister Cotellesse's for our meeting. Selections from the *Songs of Zion* were sung accompanied by Sister Inez on the piano. A beautiful spirit filled their home. The meeting was opened in prayer. Brother Lyle opened and spoke using John 21:1-17. Jesus had just said to Peter, "...lovest thou me more than these?" Peter's response was, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus said unto him, "Feed my lambs." It continues, "He saith unto him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith upon him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him,

Lord...thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep."

After Brother Lyle expounded upon the scripture the meeting was then opened for testimony. Sister Diane praised God. She told of a visit from her son Paul. She began to tell him of the Book of Mormon. He said, "Oh, I heard about that book. Mom, don't get involved with that group." She said, "Paul, have I ever lied to you?" Her son replied, "No Mom." She explained the Book of Mormon is our (Seed of Joseph) heritage. She encouraged him to read the Book of Mormon. He picked up the book and opened it to III Nephi. Upon seeing the red letters he exclaimed, "Jesus' words!" His mother said, "Yes, Jesus appeared to our people on this land after His resurrection, to teach them." Such a spirit of conviction was felt from our sister's testimony. The Lord's Supper was administered.

After our meeting we enjoyed a wonderful meal and then drove forty-five minutes to Pequot Lake to the home of Sister Cathy Riener and her daughter Alissa. There we enjoyed visiting them for a time. Brother Lyle anointed Sister Cathy and Alissa for their afflictions. Goodbyes were exchanged and we drove back to Park Rapids for the night.

Before dawn we were back on the road. The roads were slightly covered with powdered snow and the temperature plenty cold. As we drove across Minnesota and Wisconsin the roads cleared until we reached Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Weather reports indicated snow advisories on the way. By the time we arrived at Ironwood, Michigan heavy snow began falling. What should have been a nine-hour drive (Ironwood to Harrison, MI) became a fifteen-hour drive. God truly was with us. He blessed us and protected our vehicle the entire trip. We finally arrived back in Harrison, MI at midnight. God never asks us to do a work without preparing a way. Two days after arriving home a storm blew across the entire path of our trip. The five-mile-long Mackinac Bridge connecting Michigan's upper and lower peninsulas was closed due to high winds. Our trip

was a great success with many blessings. We thanked God for delivering us home safely without the slightest of problems. Our trip totaled 3000 plus miles in eight days visiting isolated brothers, sisters and friends and reinstating one precious soul. Praise God!

Monongahela Free Clothing Drive

By Sister Heather Nicklow

"And also, ye yourselves, will succor those that stand in need of your succor; ye will administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need..." (Mosiah 4:16).

King Benjamin spoke these words to his people so that they could understand that as the children of God they had an opportunity and obligation to share their substance with those that stand in need. King Benjamin understood that this was not just an opportunity to share of the natural substance but to share of the love of God that has been bestowed upon us all. On Saturday, February 2nd, we were immensely blessed to hold our first free clothing drive for the community. For many months prior, the Monongahela branch members generously donated clothes from themselves, and their family and friends. Ads were posted in the local newspapers and television station and fliers were put up everywhere. The night before the clothing drive, the branch met together to sort, fold, and hang the clothes they had collected. It wasn't until they started this process that the brothers and sisters realized the immense amount of clothes they were able to collect. The tables were lined up and piled high with pants, shirts, jackets, suits, and even warm blankets and pillows. Saturday morning we met together to start our day off with fasting and prayer. Many prayers were offered on behalf of the day hoping that we would be able to help members of the community that stood in need.

After the meeting was over, the brothers and sisters started to hang signs and prepare food that was to be given out to those who came. We were officially to open the doors at 11:00 a.m. but people started pouring in around 10:30. What a blessing it was to see individuals coming into the church to receive of the abundance that God has given us. Many people were amazed that the clothes were free. People were also astonished that the church provided free hot dogs, sauerkraut, cookies, lemonade, and coffee to anyone who wanted. Although the day was simply about providing for the natural needs of the community, many brothers and sisters had an opportunity to share the Restored Gospel with inquisitive visitors. It was such a blessing to be able to serve our neighbors who are in need. I know that they saw the love and compassion of our brothers and sisters. One lady was even brought to tears that people would provide all these simple necessities free of charge.

Praise God that we have the abundance and ability to help those in need. It was estimated that more than eighty people came through the branch's doors. With the great success we had in helping the community, the branch is looking to make this an annual event.

Outreach Conference in Simi Valley

Brother Bob McDonnell expressed in his opening remarks on Sunday at the "Come and See" outreach/mini-conference held in Simi Valley on November 3 and 4, 2007, "God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow." Brother Bob shared an experience of one of the young brothers, Brother Frankie, as they were driving to Simi. He was deeply touched by God's Spirit as he saw rays of light coming down from heaven in front of the van. Indeed, God's Holy Spirit remained with the saints this entire weekend.

On Saturday, November 3, 2007,

25 Youth In Action and MBA representatives met in the Simi Valley Branch to extend this invitation of "come and see" to the surrounding community. Brother Stacey Light read some scripture about the four sons of Mosiah going about spreading the Gospel. Then Brother Bob, Brother Stacey and Brother Sal Azzinaro divided the young people into groups. Brother Carlos Martinez offered a prayer and then the groups went out, going door to door, inviting people in the surrounding neighborhood to attend our service. Brother Ryan McDonnell led the canvassing effort.

In the Saturday evening service, Brother Stacey Light spoke about the joys of witnessing. We enjoyed several selections from our Hispanic brothers and sisters. Brother Jim Huttenberger read and expounded on the pamphlet that was being handed out to the neighbors. He said that we would attract people to the Church by showing the love of God. Then the meeting was opened for testimony. Many of the young people spoke about the reactions of the neighbors as they went canvassing. Brother Bob McDonnell shared that he had been leery of the canvassing, but once he made the effort to get out there, he was blessed.

In the Sunday service, following Brother Bob's opening remarks and prayer by Brother Justin Paxon, Brother Stacey Light relayed that he had awakened early Sunday morning to read some scripture and was captivated by the 9th chapter of John. In this compelling story of obedience, healing and conversion, a formerly blind young man, his sight restored, looks into the eyes of Jesus and says, "I believe," for the Lord removed both his natural and spiritual blindness. In paraphrasing and summarizing the story, Brother Stacey shared how someone in this situation – having been blind from birth – was consigned to be a beggar, a second class citizen. The disciples asked Jesus, "What sin caused his blindness?" The Lord responded that no sin had caused it, "...but that the works of God should

(Continued on Page 10)

Outreach Conference

Continued from Page 9

be made manifest in him" (John 9:3). He then anointed this man's eyes with clay and told him to "go wash in the pool of Siloam" (John 9:7).

The young man obeyed and his eyes were made whole – imagine his overwhelming joy to be able to see for the first time in his life! He declared this miracle to everyone! His neighbors didn't quite believe this was the same man. When they asked him what had happened, he relayed his story of healing by Jesus. Then they took him to the Pharisees for questioning. The Pharisees disputed and murmured, "How can this be? How can he have healed him on the Sabbath?" They were oblivious – spiritually blind – to this wondrous miracle that had occurred in their very midst.

So the Jewish leaders called in the young man's parents for questioning. At this time, if one pledged allegiance to Jesus Christ, one would be cast out of the temple. Fearful, they would not admit that Jesus healed him and suggested they ask him directly because he was old enough to speak for himself. They were not willing to fully commit like their son did. The Pharisees brought in the son a second time for questioning and accused Jesus of being a sinner. The young man declared in John 9:25, "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: *one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.*" Still not satisfied, the Pharisees asked him yet again what had transpired. Probably exasperated, the young man in essence asked, "If I tell you again, will you believe?" Remaining spiritually blind, the Jewish leaders angrily cast him out of the temple because he claimed that Jesus performed this miracle.

When Jesus learned of this, He asked the young man, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He answered and said, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" And Jesus said unto him, "Thou has both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshipped him. And Jesus said, "For judgment I am come into this

world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind" (John 9:35-39). In other words, Jesus came into the world to give sight to those who are spiritually blind and to show those who think they see that they are, in fact, blind.

Brother Stacey asked, "How do we relate this to our lives today?" We can extend the invitation of "*Come and see* – come and see what I have found when Jesus Christ came into our homes, our lives, our family." He gave several examples of healing and transformation when the Lord intervenes: children with hatred toward their parents and how Jesus changed their hearts; how the Lord has extended the life of his father-in-law, Brother Russ Martorana, who was diagnosed with stage four lung cancer six months ago, but continues to preach the Gospel wherever he goes; how the Lord spared his nephews in a serious automobile accident; how prayers were answered on behalf of Michael Buccellato, who was not expected to live past his teenage years.

In conclusion, Brother Stacey urged us to share our testimonies and invite others to "come and see" because the Gospel has a blessing for each and every one of us who can look in the Lord's eyes and say, "*I believe.*"

The gift of music and singing was shared throughout the Sunday service. Sister Christina Paxon sang the beautiful song, *I Believe in a Hill Called Mount Calvary*. The words of the chorus are powerful:

I believe in a hill called Mount Calvary
I believe whatever the cost
And when time has surrendered
And earth is no more
I'll still cling to the old rugged cross.

Brother Bob remarked that there is nothing greater than what was accomplished on that hill. Jesus died for us because it was His mission so that we might live life more abundantly. Regarding the young man from the 9th chapter of John, Brother Bob reminded us that this young man – via his blindness, healing and subsequent conversion – was used as a tool to show the power and glory of God.

Jesus came for those who can't see and to give them sight – if they would only believe. Like this bold young man, Alma, Joseph of Arimathea and others sought out Jesus, their eyes and hearts were opened and they believed. "Don't make your salvation complex," exhorted Brother Bob. "It's *not*. God chose His only begotten Son to pay the debt, the price of sin. Let's not deny the gift of salvation... God isn't asking us to be blind, just to break your heart before him – a broken heart and a contrite spirit are all that's required."

Following the Bell choir's stirring renditions of *Una Vez Mas* and *Yo Se Que Cristo Vendro*, Brother Jim Huttenberger delivered a message of hope and encouragement, punctuated with an exuberant "hang in there" as he emphasized each point. He began by stating that "God takes the messes and difficulties in our lives, God is glorified, our faith is increased and we are more reliant on His spirit." Jesus makes many invitations throughout the word of God; for example, Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

When the disciples caught no fish all night, Jesus told them to cast their nets on the right side and their nets came up full, almost ready to burst. So *obedience* is most important to the Lord. The blind man in the 9th chapter of John exercised obedience when Jesus told him to wash in the pool after applying the clay to his eyes. Similarly, Abraham obeyed when he was told to sacrifice his son, Isaac. In the end, God was glorified, so "hang in there" – God will be glorified if you are obedient to Him. Trials refine us as God molds and shapes us into instruments He can use. Romans 5:19 reinforces the importance of obedience: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Using a kite analogy, Brother Jim said that sometimes our lives crash and burn, but let the wind of His Spirit carry you and make you soar – "hang in there."

After sacrament was administered to the saints, Sister Erin Light then sang a song she composed entitled *Masterpiece* and prefaced it with a brief testimony that "God is in charge of all creation and in charge of my life." As the lyrics convey, the moon doesn't rise nor does the sun set without God controlling it. The uplifting hymn, *One Day at a Time*, was sung by Dominick Todaro.

The fruits of the spirit had been manifested on this joyous day and as Brother Bob brought the meeting to a close, he urged us to go out in the world tomorrow, serve Him better and invite others to "come and see." In the closing prayer offered by Brother David Ariola, he thanked the Lord for the message that was given and petitioned him to remove the veil from our eyes so we can see clearly. Brother Justin's opening prayer in which he asked the Lord to "remain with us this day" was beautifully answered. It was good to be in the house of the Lord this day!

DIRECTORY UPDATE

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Straccia, Amanda
31129 Hoover
Warren, MI 48093
586-215-4513

Note of Thanks

The family of Brother Fred Laessig would like to thank all of the brothers, sisters and friends for the many prayers, cards and phone calls received on behalf of the passing of their dear brother, nephew and cousin. We also were comforted by and appreciated the memorial donations received towards the missionary work of the Church. Brother Fred is greatly missed by his family, friends and the brothers and sisters of the Church that he served so lovingly with. May God continue to richly bless you all.

Editorial Viewpoint

Continued from Page 5

applied, passing the death angel over. Pass from the emptiness, pass from the pain. Pass from the *dying to LIVING again!* Oh, how precious the blood of the lamb on the door, waving the death angel o'er."

During this time of year when many Christians recognize the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ, it is so sweet to think back to the day we pointed to the one and true Redeemer and accepted that this Lamb is worthy to reign *our* lives. The death angel has bypassed us. He has no claim on us thanks to the Sacrifice to end sacrifices. We have passed from the bondage of sin and death to the liberty of salvation and eternal life in Christ Jesus, the only one with both the courage and humility to spill His own blood for our sakes. What love.

The Children's Corner

Continued from Page 6

heaven and talked with God, saying "Father the hour is come..." (John 17:1). Jesus then asked His friends to go with Him to pray in the garden called Gethsemane.

He was waiting for Judas to come with the soldiers and arrest Him. Jesus, who knew all things, knew that He was going to be beaten, mocked, hurt, thrown into prison, and His body be crucified. He was in His darkest moment. He said to His friends, "Pray with me." Then He went a little bit away from them, about as far as you could throw a stone, and knelt again and began praying.

Jesus said, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup [take away the death that was coming]. But no matter what I am saying God, let your will, yours, be done." And God sent an angel to Jesus from heaven that strengthened Him. The Bible tells us that, "being in agony, Jesus prayed even deeper, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:41-49).

The man who had all power, Jesus Christ, was willing to let His body be sacrificed for us. When He arose in prayer, and went to His followers, He found them sleeping instead of praying. A moment later, a crowd led by Judas came to arrest Jesus.

Remember, Jesus had all power to "zap" the people. He could have told God that He changed His mind and said it was too painful. He could have called on lightning, or sent any kind of thing to stop them. But He did not. He prayed to God for strength to do the right thing. He submitted, (gave into) the will of God. And what Jesus did changed the face of the earth.

In our darkest moments, when the terrible problems of life are surrounding us or we are afraid of a big problem, we must do what Jesus did. Ask other believers to pray for us. Then go alone to God and pray for help. Pray in the name of Jesus. Because we belong to Jesus, He will go to God for us too. Our prayers are far more powerful. Our Messiah has come. Jesus hears our cries. He has taught us a true way of living and serving our great creator, God. Follow Him.

With love,
Your Sister in Christ,
Jan

* WEDDINGS *

Brother Patrick Giannetti and Sister Danielle Galas were united in holy matrimony in the Mesa, Arizona Branch on February 16, 2008.

Ordinations

Brother Benjamin Hemmings was ordained a Teacher on July 15, 2007 at the Fredonia, Pennsylvania Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Brad Everett and he was ordained by Brother Dan MacNamara.

Baptisms and Reinstatements

Brother Anthony Elias was baptized on February 17, 2008 at the Yucaipa, California Branch. He was baptized by Brother Rudy Carillo and confirmed by Brother Santos Zamora.

Sister Raquel Elias was reinstated into The Church of Jesus Christ on February 10, 2008 at the Yucaipa, California Branch.

Sister Loretta Manes was baptized on November 7, 2007 at the Kinsman, Ohio Branch. She was baptized by Brother Phil Jackson and confirmed by Brother Brandon Miller.

Brother Joe Manes was reinstated into The Church of Jesus Christ on January 27, 2008 at the Kinsman, Ohio Branch.

Sister Julie M. Seighman was baptized on February 24, 2008 at the Herndon, Virginia Branch. She was baptized by Brother Richard Scaglione, Jr. and confirmed by Brother Arthur Gehly, Sr.

Brother John S. Seighman was baptized on February 24, 2008 at the Herndon, Virginia Branch. He was baptized by Brother Richard Scaglione, Jr. and confirmed by Brother Clarence Smith, Jr.

Address Change

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Branch or Mission _____

OBITUARIES

We wish to express our sympathy to those that mourn the loss of loved ones. May God bless and comfort you.

HOWARD NOBLE

Brother Howard Noble of Independence, Missouri passed on to his reward on November 22, 2007. He was an ordained Deacon in The Church of Jesus Christ. He is survived by his wife and four children.

JOHN WASELCHALK

Brother John Waselchalk of Elkins, West Virginia passed on to his reward on January 5, 2008. He is survived by a son Gary and his wife Cookie; four grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

ROSE SCAGLIONE

Sister Rose Scaglione, of the Monongahela, Pennsylvania Branch passed on to her reward on January 23, 2008. She was an ordained Deaconess in The Church of Jesus Christ. She was preceded in death by her husband, Brother Louis Scaglione. She is survived by sons, Brother Richard Scaglione, Sr. and wife, Sister Lucetta; David Scaglione and wife, Bonnie; seven grandchildren, many great-grandchildren and one great-grandson.

RICKY LEE SUMMERFIELD

Ricky Lee Summerfield of Elkins, West Virginia passed on to his reward on January 28, 2008. He is survived by his mother, Sister Hattie Benyola.

ROBERT L. LENHART

Robert L. Lenhart of Smithton, Pennsylvania passed on to his reward

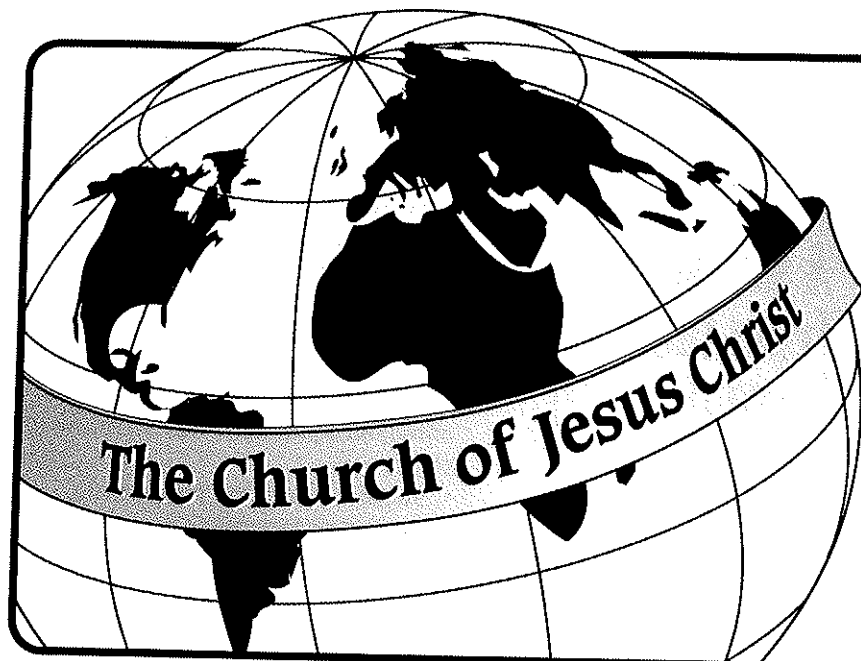
on February 5, 2008. He was preceded in death by his father, Brother Laurence Lenhart. He is survived by his mother, Sister Geraldine Lenhart; his wife, Shelly; son, Timothy and one sister, as well as five grandchildren.

DANIEL TAMBURRINO

Brother Daniel Tamburrino, of the Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Branch passed on to his reward on February 6, 2008. He was an ordained Teacher in The Church of Jesus Christ. He was preceded in death by his parents, his wife, Sister Mary (D'Antonio) Tamburrino, and a sister, Sister Mary Brown. He is survived by two sons, Ken Tamburrino and wife Andrea, and Gary Tamburrino and wife Cindy; four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

CHARLES E. SMITH

Brother Charles E. Smith of Oak Grove, Missouri passed on to his reward on February 13, 2008. He was an ordained Evangelist in The Church of Jesus Christ. He is survived by his wife, Sister Ilene Collison Smith; a brother, Apostle Isaac D. Smith; and two sisters, Helen Smith and Grace Curry.



The Gospel News

World Headquarters Monongahela, PA, USA

May, 2008

Volume 64, No. 5

Colombia – Answered Prayers

As Jesus visited with the inhabitants upon this promised land He said, *"...Behold, my bowels are filled with compassion towards you....for I see that your faith is sufficient that I should heal you.... and he did heal them every one..."* (3 Nephi 17:6, 8, 9).

It has been a wonderful experience traveling to Colombia over the past eight years. We have seen many wonderful blessings among this people. I recall the first trip where there must have been at least thirty prayers offered during one service. On our most recent trip we took note that during the whole trip, we had only two requests for prayer. We must pause and praise God for answered prayers. Prayer requests ranged from personal healings to reuniting broken families to helping with finding employment. God has answered every prayer!

Many were healed of illnesses such as high blood pressure, swollen feet, bad lungs, severe colds and flu; a baby with bad blood was born without any problem. Couples who had lived together for years were happily united in marriage. Families without children were given children. The economic situation of many was desperate, but now they have jobs. God has answered every prayer!

We have prayed for hundreds over the years and especially for spiritual understanding. As God worked, the Church grew. We have baptized 24 people and blessed at least 40 children. There are still many who have heard the word and are still searching. We need to continue to pray for them – they are a prayer waiting to be answered!

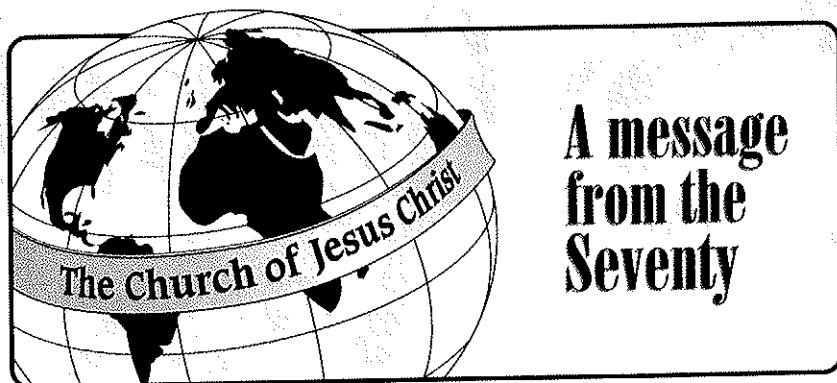
A number of our members have found work in other parts of the

country. On one hand that is sad since we miss them in the congregation in Bogota. But, God knows best. He is planting seeds in many parts of Colombia as the members continue to give their testimony and live the life of a child of God. We noticed the political situation is improving in the country as well and now traveling throughout the country is becoming safer. God is preparing the whole country for the spreading of His

(Continued on Page 3)



Congregation in Colombia



By Small Means Are Great Things Done Here a Little, There a Little

We know the scriptures in the title of this article. Can you find them? A better question is, do you believe those scriptures?

Here's an example. Brother Dennis Moraco saw a small opportunity. He took 25 copies of the first issue of the *First Voices Journal*, published by the Native American Outreach Committee of the Quorum of Seventy Evangelists (available at www.first-voices.org) and headed over to the Seminole tribal offices on the Hollywood Reservation and went inside. He spoke to one of the tribal leaders and asked whether he could leave the copies of the *Journal*. The man looked it over and said sure. Brother Dennis laid them down and before he left the center, he noticed that several people had already picked up copies and started reading them. Small means; a little here and a little there. What small thing could you do for the Divine Commission of the Church? Could you add a little to the overall progress of the Church's work?

This question leads into our next "small means." The NAOC met for its annual mid-year meeting on January 19, 2008 in Sterling Heights, Michigan. A good number of committee members, support staff and brothers and sisters were there. The morning session focused on the procedures for starting and maintaining a work among Native Americans or First Nation People. It was also announced the NAOC Handbook was

available at the General Church web site: (<http://www.thechurchofjesuschrist.com>) and everyone was encouraged to review it.

The afternoon session included a lesson on Native American traditions. Additionally four role playing scenarios were acted out by some of our Native American members and by a number of brothers and sisters. The group learned some very valuable lessons in these scenarios:

- Terminology – watch for church "jargon" that others may not understand.
- Asking the Native Americans what "tribe" they are from may get diverse answers depending on region or country, probably better to ask from which Nation they are.
- Traditions – when we approach someone, have understanding and tolerance before reacting and we should relate by example as set forth in the Bible or the Book of Mormon.
- Learn to listen before speaking.
- Be yourself – be sincere in your beliefs; be modest in dress, language, displays of wealth; and avoid conceit.
- Don't make assumptions – start the conversation without prejudices.
- Show interest in their children – avoid terms of affection; don't criticize a perceived lack of discipline; show love, build trust.
- Keep your promises – if you have an initial contact, follow up with a visit, or send materials, or issue

invitations for further contact.

- Do not judge – show love and humility.
- Trust – earn it and give it; build it over time; show respect to get respect.
- Acknowledge – give appreciation for their presence.
- Share and participate – be prepared; arm yourself with literature to share.
- Sustain – keep the momentum going; work to turn the corner on our efforts.

During this session there was a very frank discussion about treatment of one another and the past treatment of the Native Americans by government officials, which treatment still haunts many of our members. One brother noted he learned something new and startling, even though he has been involved in Native American work for many, many years. The gift of tongues was also manifested and the interpretation given as, "When the ox is in the stall, there is no work; when the ox is in the field we'll see the fruit." We felt this was a wonderful confirmation that more needed to be done, and has a similar meaning of Proverbs 14:4.

The evening session was spent fellowshiping, testifying and singing about the great latter-day work. There were songs in Cree as well as English. There was another outpouring of the Spirit of God and another gift of tongues. This time the word was, "Thus saith the Lord, There shall be no tears, neither shall you cry anymore." The meeting ended with the saints forming a great circle and prayer being offered.

So, are you prepared spiritually (fasting and prayer, and study); physically (copies of Books of Mormon, *First Voices Journal*, Church literature); and emotionally (desire and enthusiasm)? Are you ready to do your small act – step out on faith? Get ready and get in contact with your Region's Native American Outreach Committee. And by the way, the Scriptures are: 1 Nephi 16:29, Alma 37:6, and Isaiah 28:10. But you knew that!

Touring Peru

By Sister Terri Bravo

Last August 24th, a small group of brothers and sisters, led by Brother Luis Tenorio, our guide and interpreter, traveled to Lima, Peru to visit with his family, attend church services and tour the cities of Lima and Arequipa. A brief history of God's work in Lima will help you to understand why we wanted to visit Peru.

Approximately four years ago Brother Luis' parents, Humberto and Victoria, came to the United States to visit with him and his wife, Sister Lydia (formerly Zaino) and with Brother Angelo and Sister Lydia Zaino. They began attending services at the Edison, NJ Branch and after their return to Lima expressed a desire to learn more about the Church.

Our ministry went into action and found the Tenorio family and friends receptive to the Gospel. They warmly welcomed the brothers into their hearts and for the past four years services are held at the Tenorio home when the brothers travel to Peru on missionary work. The first fruits of this venture resulted in the baptism of Sister Ilda Narvaez who has now passed onto her heavenly reward.

We had the blessing of attending one of these services led by Apostle Dick Christman and Brother Ron Mazzeo. Brother Ron sang a hymn, *Tears Are a Language That God Understands*. Brother Dick opened the meeting by speaking of the sublime grace that allows us to directly approach Jesus Christ.

This was Brother Ron's first visit to Peru. Like us he was thankful for this opportunity. He spoke encouraging words about God's love and the hope of the Gospel. He encouraged Sister Ilda's husband, Carlos, and said he has the hope of seeing her because of the grace of God. The scripture he quoted was, "In this world you shall have tribulations but be of good cheer..."

As the meeting continued we could see Brother Dick had fostered a

strong relationship with the Tenorio family and friends. As the meeting was given to testimony we were so impressed by the genuine sincerity of the testimonies. Sister Ilda's husband, Carlos, and others were anointed for spiritual and physical strength. It was very touching. After the service, delicious Peruvian refreshments were served. It was a delight to our taste buds and such a wonderful evening.

On Wednesday, Victoria and Luis' brother Fernando joined us and we flew to the "white city" called Arequipa. Arequipa is called the "white city" because the buildings are constructed of white volcanic rock. It is a city where the ancient and modern co-exist. Touring the city, we saw buildings from the times of the Spanish invasion, farmlands and people dressed in modern and ethnic clothing. It was a beautiful sight to see the three volcanoes and the mountain terraces where crops are grown. One can imagine the beauty our ancient brothers and sisters must have enjoyed.

We were met by Brothers Dick and Ron, who introduced us to friends of the Church. These friends help our missionary brothers in many ways. We know God will bless them for their good works. In the evening we were privileged to attend services at the Arequipa Mission. The greeting we received from the ministry, Brothers Juan and Vincent and the brothers, sisters, and children was filled with love. We were in a foreign city but yet we felt at home.

We enjoyed an evening of seminars. The children studied Isaiah 40:31. The sisters were led in a discussion of the virtuous women found in Ecclesiastes 31:10-31. The brothers spoke on how Jesus has changed their lives. We all enjoyed our lessons and everyone was excited to be together.

One incident we would like to tell happened in the children's seminar. The children were given coloring books, crayons and candy. They were so excited to receive these treats. One young boy, Armando, hurried out of the classroom. What was he doing? He went into the room

where the brothers were meeting to share his candy with his father!

After the meeting, we took pictures. A special picture for us is of Brother Dick with the children surrounding him. In twelve years he has made forty-five trips to Peru. We could tell he has fostered loving relationships with the brothers, sisters, children and friends of the Church. There is no doubt in my mind he is well-loved in Peru and his love shows in all that he does. The blessings did not end because we were able to attend a Thursday evening meeting. After the meeting, there was time for a snack and fellowship!

As our time in Peru came to a close, we were so thankful for a blessed visit. It was such a beautiful trip it almost seemed like a dream. The Lord had granted us the desire of our hearts and there is no end to our gratitude. There were some difficulties on our trip but God helped us through them. We found when we extend ourselves we receive more than we can ever hope to repay.

We thank God for His protection for us and our families whom we left behind; and we thank all who extended their hand in friendship and love!

Colombia

Continued from Page 1

Gospel. God continues to answer prayers for the future!

On our most recent trip in January 2008 we enjoyed fellowship in our new facility. A special friend of the Church has agreed to rent a garage/store front room to us. It is on the first floor – no steps to climb and it has room to comfortably seat 80 to 100 people. We also have more freedom to travel about the city and visit in the homes of the brothers and sisters and friends. God even provided us with a humble and dedicated driver. We thank God for answered prayers!

On this particular Sunday, God

(Continued on Page 9)

Great Lakes Region Conference

By Sister Carolynn O'Connor

Brother Frank Natoli, Region President, welcomed us to Region Conference with these words, "I hope that your expectation is that you came that you might be blessed. If that wasn't your expectation, I would ask that you begin to focus your heart and your prayers in that direction, that we might feel God's Spirit...That we might show unto Him that sense of appreciation in the songs that we sing, and the words that are spoken, and the prayers that are offered, in all that we do that we might worship Him, we might praise Him."

He continued by welcoming Brother Joe Calabrese who was there as a guest to our Region, invited to come and share some of his many experiences as a member and servant of God. Brother Joe started by reading a few pages from the beginning of his autobiography.

"I don't want to lead you under the impression of boasting. That is the least. God gives us gifts, many blessings. He saw fit to place upon me these experiences that I will endeavor to give you today."

Brother Joe shared many experiences. He started with one he had soon after he was baptized. He worked in a dairy at the time where working on the Sabbath day was necessary. He quit his job as a sales manager and decided to purchase a service station which would allow him to make decisions for himself and therefore keep the Sabbath day holy. When it was time to open, the regional manager informed him that Sunday would be his best day. When he told him he would not be opened on Sunday, there was a confrontation and the manager told him he would not renew his lease in six months. Brother Joe was discouraged and began to pray and ask others for counsel. He asked a sister in the Church what to do. She said, "Why are you asking me, ask God." He felt a special spirit come over him and that night he had

an experience where he saw a great chasm, so large he could not see the bottom. He also saw a hand and a finger pointing down and he heard the words that if he opened on Sunday, he would fall down into that great chasm. He did not open on the Sabbath and six months later he lost the lease and the investment, but God was with him. He felt that this experience was a test.

The next experience Brother Joe shared was in regard to his habit of smoking. Brother Joe knew that the Church did not accept the habit of smoking in its ordained officers. He attempted to stop smoking on his own accord, with no success. One night he had an experience where he found himself in a tuberculosis sanitarium in a rocking chair, worn and beaten. Someone tapped him on his shoulder, called him Brother Joe, and asked how he was feeling. He responded that he was not feeling well. The man asked "Have you quit smoking?" When he replied, no, he said, "If you quit smoking, you will feel better." While this dream had an impact on Brother Joe, he continued smoking. In a short period of time, he began to get dizzy spells even when he was driving. He was fearful that the dream that he had was coming true. Soon after, he was going to conference with some other brothers and decided he would not touch a cigarette on the trip, and asked for the Lord's assistance. He did not smoke on the trip or upon his return home. He had finally quit smoking.

He spoke about the challenges or tests that the devil puts in front of you as a new member. He shared a dream where he was being followed by a very large and vicious dog. The dog was chasing him and they came to the side of a mountain area where on each level of the mountain was a ledge. As Brother Joe moved from ledge to ledge going up the mountain, the animal chased him until he was at the very top ledge. Once there Brother Joe could view the beyond. He did not see anybody but he could see heaven and as he looked down, he could see the flock of brothers and sisters at the very bottom and they were exclaiming, "He made it. He made it." Brother Joe said that this

experience was to show him that the devil was not happy with the work he was doing and he would chase him the entire way; however, with the help of the brothers and sisters and the determination that he had, he could make it.

Several years ago he had an experience in his branch. It was time for the wine to be passed during sacrament and as they knelt to pray, the Lord gave him a vision where he was shown the head and upper body of Christ. Brother Joe continued, "On His head was the crown of thorns, and I saw the blood trickling down his face." The scene changed and on the wall on the back of the pulpit were the words, "*Christ is Love*" and the word LOVE was spelled out. The L was for the **life** of Christ, the O was for the **offering** of his life, the V was for the **victory** over the grave, and the E for the **example** he set. Brother Joe spoke about the 2007 Campout which had the theme of LOVE. At the campout, the acronym was spelled out a little differently but with an equally impactful message. The L was for **lifestyle**, O for the **obedience**, V for the **value** and E for **endurance**. He said that it was the best campout he attended and that he had been to 38 of the 40 campouts held. Brother Joe spoke about the feet washing service held there. He said that one of the greatest experiences of his lifetime was when this service was performed. "Christ is love and what He has to offer us is a lifetime of happiness with Him if we stay close to Him and obey Him."

Brother Joe was going blind as a young person of 48. He prayed to the Lord and was anointed often but refused the surgery. He received a letter from Sister Carmella D'Amico explaining that she had an experience that he should have his surgery. She said that she saw Christ come into the operating room and operate on him. This was what he was waiting for and he decided to have the surgery. After the surgery the pain was excruciating. He had a serious hemorrhage and could lose the eye. On Sunday

(Continued on Page 9)



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Editorial Viewpoint . . .

By Brother Peter Benyola

I was once exchanging some thoughts with a brother in the ministry about the truth that the more we know about the Lord and His Gospel, the more accountable we will be to Him when we leave this fleeting life. We agreed on the point that if we as people really love the Lord and if we are always in the right place and the correct state of mind, we will not dislike or resent His commandments or anything in His Word, preferring to "just skip that part." Psalm 119:165 states, "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them."

I have heard the verse used in the context of people offending people, which Christ said would inevitably happen from time to time. Truly, this Scripture can be interpreted that if we, as brothers and sisters in Christ, love Him and each other enough, we won't be as prone to taking offense. "If I love you the way I should, I can't even be offended by you." Think of it as a continuum between our devotion to God and our sensitivity to other people's attitudes toward us. Perhaps preoccupation about others and being ready to take offense points to more room in our hearts to focus on God and His greater purposes. If our eyes are totally fixed on Him, then who has time for pettiness and offenses? There's something to be said for tunnel vision after all: it cuts out the peripheral vision!

Verses can often be correctly interpreted and applied different ways. The proverb quoted from Psalm 119 speaks of law, so the concept of obedience must not be far. Jesus Christ said, "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Psalm 119:165 and Matthew 5:29 are congruent by the mutual use of the word "offend." Christ was referring to our "members," as Apostle Paul said, offending us by causing us to stumble and sin, or in other words, not obey.

It's true that sometimes as human beings, we struggle with God's commandments, thinking they're too rigid and unattainable. We get frustrated even trying to be faithful to them and exhaustedly accept defeat—again. Sometimes we think God is being unrealistic with the level of obedience His Word seems to demand from us. According to the verse in question, loving God's law will result in peace, which will make obedience easier—which I would be remiss not to mention is only possible by His grace and strength. There is only one way to truly and effectively obey the "law" and personally come to terms with it so it is not burdensome. We must "graduate" from begrudgingly LIVING with His law and just PUTTING UP with it until we escape from this earth, to LOVING and completely EMBRACING it. God doesn't intend for His yoke to be heavy, but liking it and seeing it as a privilege will actually make it seem light. Without taking on this mind-over-matter attitude, the very high calling of being faithful to God—meant to be the greatest blessing one can receive on this earth—will instead be the most complete drudgery. To draw a parallel, to most people working out the body is not inherently fun and sometimes it hurts, but it certainly is physically beneficial and if you commit to doing it regularly, you can kind of convince yourself you actually like it!

Only being obedient from time to time makes it excruciating when we are, yet if we make a habit of doing the right thing more often, choosing the right way more often will become easier—which is a reason why God asks us for complete allegiance. The opening verse of the Gospel of John declares that God's Word is eternal and that it IS God. If there were any part of it that weren't true to Him, it wouldn't be there, so it logically follows that it is all holy and perfect. If we're at the point at which there isn't even a hint of resentment at what He's laid down as law, where we unconditionally love and adore God's Word knowing that it is pure holiness, then we will be at peace with it. Thus if we've found satisfaction with what He offers, we will be less susceptible to anything offending us by enticing us to disobey. Things which

(Continued on Page 10)

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork

What Does an Angel Do?

Dear Boys and Girls,

Have you ever studied the microscope in school? Have you looked at a tiny drop of water and seen that there are actually thousands of amazing, tiny microorganisms swimming and living in each drop of water? Have you seen magnified pictures of dust mites, or animal dander from pets that show tiny, strange looking creatures doing their job of living and moving? I am pointing this out so that you will think about some of God's creations that exist in this world that we humans cannot see and do not think about.

Angels are like this. We humans go about our busy lives, full of our own plans, while they exist, going about the world as God sends them. They are powerful spiritual beings created by God. They are usually invisible to us while they do God's work. While each generation of humans worry mostly about themselves and their daily problems, the angels are ageless. They do not die. They will be here until judgment day (Jude 6). They work on the great plans of God. Mormon tells us in Moroni 7:29-37, in the Book of Mormon, about three of the jobs angels do.

First, angels call people to repent or be sorry for the things they do wrong (remember the sons of Mosiah?). They also do the work for the ancient promises, covenants of God to come true. Whatever God has promised throughout the ages of time that will happen, they are working on



it. You can imagine that the devil is busy fighting them so it won't happen. The third job Mormon lists is that the angels declare the word of Christ unto whomever God has chosen, so those people will tell other people, and be a witness of the Lord. Think how many great men of God have seen and heard a message from an angel.

When Daniel was in the lion's den, an angel came and shut their mouths. When his three friends were tossed in a fiery furnace, an angel of God joined them and protected them (Daniel 3:28). An angel also was sent to tell Joseph not to be afraid to marry Jesus' mother. Another angel warned Joseph to get up in the night and quickly take the baby and Mary to another safer, country. Angels have also brought food to feed people.

The Bible mentions angels over 270 times. The Book of Mormon refers to them over forty times telling us about some of the incredible things they did to help the people of God. If you open the back of your Bible and Book of Mormon to the Concordance under the word angel, you can look up story after story and read how they helped humans.

Angels show themselves in many different ways. Sometimes when they appeared, they simply walked up, looking like men (see when they visited Abraham and told him his old wife who was ninety would have a baby). In Hebrews 13:2, we are also told that some could "entertain angels unaware." This means we may help someone or be with someone who is actually an angel, but looks like a person. Other times angels' faces shone with light and immediately people knew they were with a power-

ful, spiritual being. This happened in Matthew 28th chapter when the friends of Jesus found His tomb empty and an angel was waiting to tell them Jesus had risen from being dead.

There is no mention that angels have wings. There are other groups of spiritual creatures called cherubims and seraphims that are mentioned as having wings, but not angels. Scriptures say an angel has flown, or flew, so artists for centuries, have imagined wings. In truth, they could move around however God wants them to.

Many angels are warriors. Daniel was praying for answers and fasting over three weeks before an angel came to him and told him, "Fear not; for from the first day that you

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WORD SEARCH

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Saints Learn Their “Purpose” at Midwest Camp

By Sister Natalie Pezzenti

Brothers and sisters from the Midwest Region gathered at Mohican State Park March 14–16, 2008, to grow closer to one another and to the Lord. Camp Director, Brother Lucas Martorana, was given the theme of the weekend, “Chosen for His Purpose,” from Romans 8:28. The verse, which says, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose,” was discussed in seminars Saturday morning and throughout the weekend’s meetings.

Brother Paul Pezzenti opened Saturday morning’s chapel service by comparing the saints of God to the marine core. “If you are chosen, the marines say they want a few good men and few good women. If you are in the military you have a job to do and you were enlisted and chosen. We as members of The Church of Jesus Christ have something to do. We are chosen to work.” He continued by touching on the 38th chapter of Alma. Brother Paul exhorted that if we as followers of Christ do the work He has for us, we will be blessed and “prosper in the land.”

“We need to be as Alma said: ‘Now go, my son, and teach the word...’ That’s our work. To GO. To BE READY. To DO THE WORK OF THE LORD,” he said.

Brother Christopher Gehly, Area Chaplain, continued by saying we need to be sober and ready to go out and do His purpose. “The message is that we have to carry with us boldness and fulfill God’s purpose so that everyone around us might know we are the people of God and the children of Jesus Christ.”

Throughout Saturday brothers and sisters enjoyed seminars, meals together, the Area Business Meeting, and an evening service filled with God’s Spirit. A big change for the Area came with the election of three new officers: President, Chuck Maddox Jr.; Vice President, Lucas Martorana; and Chaplain, Bob Batson. The Area looks forward to the new leadership for the next year.

The evening meeting opened with a song written by Sister Christine Maddox specifically for the retreat. The chorus of the song tied in perfectly with the theme: “Not quite the same, yes we’re different from the rest, we have been chosen for His purpose.”

Brother Isaac D. Smith, winner of the Men’s Bake-Off competition the previous night, opened the service by telling the saints of his struggle to sleep the night before because he had a hunger in his soul that couldn’t be satisfied. He said his heart went to John 15 where Christ says, “Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it to you.”

“As a salesman I am encouraged to give people the product they need. But a part of me wants to tell them about something better,” Brother Isaac said.

Brother Isaac continued by quoting Alma 13 where he discusses being called from the foundation of the world. “How beautiful is it that the very God in heaven hand selected you to be called for His purpose?” he asked.

Brother Joshua Morris followed by discussing the “what” of our purpose. “I don’t know what purpose God has for each of you, but we can all agree that for each one there is a different purpose. We must become like a child and ask Him,” he said.

Brother Joshua quoted Alma 37

where Nephi and his brothers used the Liahona and were led by the Holy Spirit. “If you find yourself like that child not knowing the way or wondering what your purpose is, listen to the Holy Ghost and it will direct your paths. God will be with you whether it be in your job, school, or relationships.”

The last speaker of the evening, Brother Andre Francione, quoted the *Song of Zion, In the Army of the True and Living God*, by saying we each have a place assigned to us. “Every single person has a purpose and has been chosen. Some of us were born into this Gospel so we didn’t even have to do anything and some of us came later by a spouse or other means. Should we just sit back and do nothing if He has a work for us to do?”

Brother Andre encouraged the brothers and sisters that doing a work doesn’t necessarily mean going to a foreign land. He said often sending a card or making a phone call can have a huge impact on someone’s life.

After the evening service the annual Midwest Region Auction was held and more than \$800 was collected for the Area. Items donated ranged from a handmade tablecloth to the very popular sombrero. Additionally, a new tradition was started: a trophy was awarded to the branch or mission with the highest percentage of membership in attendance to the camp. The 2008 Midwest Region winner was the Cincinnati-Morrow Branch. The young people of the branch did a victory cheer and received a trophy that will be kept until next year’s retreat.

Sunday morning brought more blessings for the members in attendance. Brother Daniel McNamara opened the service by using Matthew chapter 4. Brother Daniel expounded on the account of the four men at the Sea of Galilee and how they dropped their nets as fishermen of fish and began to follow Christ as fishers of men. “If we could only imagine what went through their minds—if you could only think back and picture what that moment must have been like between them and Christ—pure and utter

(Continued on Page 11)



Blessings in Imperial

By Sister Jacqui King

On Sunday, March 9, the sun showered the saints arriving to the Imperial Branch foreshadowing the wonderful blessings in store for the day. Saints from across the Church joined with those from Imperial for the ordinations of Sister Angela Yoder as deaconess and Brothers Eric Yoder and Ed Nester as deacons.

Brother Bob Buffington welcomed all and related the testimony of one brother who upon being ordained a deacon had an experience showing him that even the little pieces of paper he may pick up from the floor were like nuggets of Gold. We opened the meeting with *Zion's Borderline* and Brother James Moore opened in prayer.

Brother Jim Calabro from Hopelawn, New Jersey asked if we could feel the stirring of the Spirit! He told us that today is a new day for laborers in the field – that a “calling” is from the Lord and it is a huge calling. He then exhorted us to understand that we honor Jesus Christ by honoring the offices in which we are called. He reminded us to look to the ministry, like kindly shepherds, for guidance. Brother Jim quoted King Benjamin (Mosiah 2:17) that “when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God.” He stated that King Benjamin was a righteous king in the service of God and serving his fellow man, he explained that deacons and deaconesses also labor to serve one another. He continued, “... I beseech you brothers and sisters which is our reasonable service, be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2). Brother Jim entreated us, “Brothers and sisters have an ear opened to our father; be kind, be sober.”

Brother Jim Abbot of the Roscoe Branch confirmed the previous message by revealing that he too had been given the same scripture from Mosiah. He stressed how in The Church of Jesus Christ we all work together. He shared with us that he hoped he would never get discouraged while tending to the upkeep of the Church. Referring to King Benjamin, our brother reminded us that most kings are looked upon as someone to be bowed down to, but King Benjamin worked with his people that they may have joy while doing the things of the Lord.

Brother Patrick Monaghan, of the McKees Rocks Branch, continued with the topic of King Benjamin noting that he was a type and shadow of Jesus Christ; a king but a servant. Referencing the Book of Acts 20:34, he read that, “... these hands have ministered unto my necessity.” He encouraged us to support the weak and that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Continuing with that same message, he told us about how the River Jordan empties into two different bodies of water. With one, the Dead Sea, the water drains into it and remains. It never goes into any other body of water. No life exists in the Dead Sea. The other, the Sea of Galilee, is surrounded by life. The animals and plants thrive there because the water passes through into another area and does not stay in one place. It thrives because it passes along some of the water it receives. Brother Patrick compared it to our spiritual life in that when we share our blessings, when we pass them along, we are blessed. It truly is better to give than to receive!

He then passed along some advice from his grandfather, Brother Frank DiAntonio. Brother Frank told him to always pray for the ministry and to be quick to see the needs. Brother Patrick urged all to remember that advice, but especially wanted to pass it along to our soon-to-be-ordained deacons and deaconess.

After the experiences regarding the ordinations were shared, Brother Bob Buffington read the duties of a deacon and deaconess. Sister Jean Moore washed the feet of Sister

Angela and Brother David Gibson and Brother Jeff Buffington washed the feet of Brother Eric and Brother Ed respectively. Prayer was offered prior to the ordinations for direction as to who would ordain the candidates. Brother Jim Calabro ordained Sister Angela, Brother Jim Abbot ordained Brother Eric, and Brother James Moore ordained Brother Ed. As soon as the final prayer was given, the Word of the Lord came forth, “Thus saith the Lord, I have called you, I have called you to strive further and climb higher.” These words proclaimed God’s blessing for these callings and showered all in attendance with His love. Many heartfelt testimonies were then given. The meeting closed with *God Is Leading By His Spirit* and all there felt that God really had led the day with His spirit. We praise His name for the calling of our brothers and sister into these ordained offices and praise Him for His continued blessings.

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Note of Thanks

I would like to thank everyone for their kindness and thoughtfulness shown during the recent illness and passing of Brother Charles Smith. The many cards, phone calls, visits and prayers offered to the Lord were of great comfort and strength to me and our family. We are very thankful for many friends and brothers and sisters of The Church of Jesus Christ. May God bless you.

Sister Ilene Smith

Colombia

Continued from Page 3

inspired the ministry to remind the people of who they are and where they came from, and God loves them and hasn't forgotten them. A beautiful spirit was felt during the meeting especially during testimony and the passing of communion. The mission in Colombia has gone through many changes but still is alive and well. God has inspired us to go there, and He will continue to direct us on our future missionary visits. After returning to the USA, we heard that one of the young women at the meeting had asked for her baptism. This young woman recently traveled to the USA to become the wife of Brother Timothy Mott and to be baptized the next day. Praise God for answered prayers!

We must express our gratitude to God for His blessings just as the leper, *"...when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God"* (Luke 17:15).

So, yes, definitely we have much to be thankful for in the country of Colombia. We do ask for your continued prayers and financial support. With more opportunities to travel throughout the country and the additional expenses of renting a meeting place, we do appreciate your donations. Thanks!

Great Lakes Region

Continued from Page 7

Brother Dominic Thomas came into the room and seeing Brother Joe in this condition, called the Lorain Branch asking them to kneel in prayer as he anointed him. As soon as he finished, the pain was gone. When it was time for the surgery on the other eye, all went well until he got the hiccups, which could have ruined the procedure. Brother Rocco Biscotti anointed him and the hiccups stopped.

Brother Joe also spoke about an experience where he was in church one Sunday and had a nose bleed that

would not stop. He went to the hospital and they could not stop it either. A doctor walked in and said, "I understand that you are a minister." Brother Joe's first instinct was to think, don't worry about that, and just make this stop. He said that if you are a minister, you ought to know what the 8th chapter of Romans, 28th verse is. He did not remember the verse. The doctor paraphrased the message to say that all things work out for good for those that love and serve God. He was given to understand later that God had sent a messenger to him because no one else saw that doctor and he did not return.

While in the hospital he was sleeping and through the ceiling, Christ came in and approached him, took his hand, and took him out of the room through the ceiling. After a period of time they landed on the earth feet first and he was witness to the scene where Cain killed Abel. Brother Joe realized that he had been complaining and lamenting why all of this was happening to him and the Lord wanted to show him why. Jesus said, "The same spirit that did that, Cain killing Abel, is trying to do it to you. Not only you but all the prophets, all the apostles and all the people of God throughout all the ages of time." Jesus then cautioned him to watch out for witchcraft and innocent games. His journey continued and he then saw the time of the restoration and saw Joseph Smith being shot and killed. He then told Brother Joe that he would be alright. He also spoke about the Hindu people (Brother Joe had not been to India yet). Jesus then brought him back to his room through the ceiling. When he awoke, he had been out for three days.

After corresponding with people in India for several years, he was able to travel to India as a tourist with Brother Alvin Swanson. They were ordaining Brother Dev an elder and a woman came and began to kiss his feet. They asked her to stop. When Brother Dev spoke to her later, she said that she had done this because she saw a beacon of light focus itself on Brother Swanson and Brother Dev as Brother Dev's feet were being

washed. As they were ordaining him, the same beacon of light came upon them again, proving that God was acknowledging that what they were doing was right.

Also in India, Brother Joe was performing baptisms and as he raised his hand, he saw the heavens open up and the beauty of heaven. During that same day Brother Livingston was ordained as an elder as well. Brother Livingston's son had a vision where he saw a personage in white come in and in his hands were golden plates which were so bright they were blinding. Brother Joe said that they interpreted these as the Golden plates of the Book of Mormon.

He spoke of another trip to India with Brother Paul Palmeri where they were performing baptisms and a leper came forward to be baptized. This presented complications because with this disease he was not to be in the water or around others. Brother Livingston encouraged them to baptize him. On the following trip, one year later, Brother Joe asked to see the leper. Brother Livingston pointed him out and Brother Joe asked him to stand. The man was completely healed. "The Lord healed one in the Old Testament, one in the New Testament, and He healed one in the restoration period. He didn't do it wholesale. He could have but we do not want to convert people because they are sick, we want them to be converted so that they could save their soul. This is the understanding that the Lord gave me."

Brother Joe spoke about the second trip made to India with Brother John Ross in March of 1984. Brother John had suggested that they cut the trip short by seven days because of the intense heat, and then Brother Joe told him of the experience he had where the Lord told him to use good judgment on this trip. They decided to change their itinerary. Brother Joe's appetite was failing and he began to feel ill. He went to the doctor who wanted to put him in the hospital because he had anemic colitis, hepatitis and high blood pressure. Brother Joe refused and

(Continued on Page 10)

Great Lakes Region

Continued from Page 9

asked for medication to get him home. When he arrived home, his wife asked if he wanted anything to eat. She had chicken soup but he did not have an appetite. It was as if the Lord spoke to him and told him to taste it. He said he had never tasted food like that in his life. The spirit of God told him that it was not ordinary food but that it was angel's food. The spirit of God came upon Brother Joe and his wife and they cried openly. That had never happened to them. She told him that she had prayed that it would be heavenly manna to Brother Joe as in Psalms 78:23-25. His pain left him and he went to bed praising the Lord. He was put into isolation for about one week and returned home well.

Brother Joe knew that they had beaten the devil who was not happy with the beginning of the work in India. There are now 2800 members there. Brother Joe closed by asking for prayers on his behalf in continuing to spread the Gospel.

Brother Jeff Gianetti and his daughter Allisa sang *I Surrender All*, and Brother James and Sister Carolynn Gross came forward and presented a beautiful song. After a few anointings, sacrament was served.

Brother Leonard A. Lovalvo then passionately expressed himself. "Today as I listened to Brother Joe speak, I was filled with a desire to experience the same kind of supernatural, above the earth, religious, spiritual experiences. I believe all of us have that desire. I imagine in this room there are many of you, if not a great majority of you, that have had these kinds of experiences, where God has spoken to you, where He has revealed Himself to you, where He has given you dreams or visions. He has visited you when you had affliction, He has visited your family when you were in great trouble and has helped you through all kinds of circumstances of life."

Brother Leonard said that as a natural relative to Brother Joe, he had shared in many of the experiences that Brother Joe had related. He spoke of

Brother Joe and Sister Vicki's commitment to God and the Church when they lived in Tiffin, Ohio. They would travel to the Lorain Branch three times a week, over 75 miles each way, for services. "It is of great importance that you make this kind of extraordinary and continued effort, that you might experience these kinds of blessings that he spoke about. You cannot put off your responsibility not only to the Church but to God Himself who sent His son who came and died for you and me. You cannot put off this responsibility."

"May we have the kind of experience that will propel us into our late eighties [like Brother Joe] and are able to stand up and tell of the Glory of God." He spoke as if to each one of us to be diligent and faithful. "Go to church! Go to church! Where are you going to learn about the Word of God in this world today? It is not on television, it is not on cable, it is not at the movie theaters, it is not on the internet, it is not on My Space, it is not on any of those things. In the house of God is where you are going to learn about the ways of the Lord. Stay away from those things that would deter you from becoming men and women of whom people will say, 'There goes a man of God, there goes a woman of God.' They will see it by your love. May God richly bless you with that kind of desire today."

Brother Frank Natoli shared a few thoughts with us and as the Sterling Heights Branch came forward to sing a hymn, we closed our meeting fulfilled that we had been under the sound of the Gospel and filled again with His spirit, giving us the direction and focus to serve Him.

Editorial Viewpoint

Continued from Page 5

are initially stumbling blocks will be refined as stepping stones that lead up to the Lord. There is such wisdom in the refrain of that old hymn, "Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth

will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace."

James 1:12 says, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." I pray that the action of loving the Lord enough to be obedient to His commandments will flow as freely as His Word does because without His help, such is impossible. It's for Him to say and for us to obey so let's take God at His Word—all of it. As we get over the nearsighted sentiment that God's Word is a "ball and chain" holding us back all the time from what we think is easiest and best, we realize that it's a baseline pressing us forward to the mark of the calling Christ and spending eternity in His glory.

The Children's Corner

Continued from Page 6

started to fast about understanding the words of God, your words were heard. But I was fighting the Prince of Persia for twenty-one days" (Daniel 10:11-21). The angel told Daniel that another angel named Michael came to help him. Then he was free to answer Daniel's prayers and come and explain the great plan of God to Daniel. Afterwards the angel returned to fight.

When Elisha was in a city being attacked by thousands of enemy warriors he was not afraid. He knew that God had sent angels to help them. He said, "Fear not; for they that be with us are more than those that are with our enemies." He prayed that his servant could see the armies of angels surrounding the city, and then the eyes of his servant were opened and he saw the mountains around them were full of horses and chariots of fire. God had sent them unseen armies of angels to save them (II Kings 6:17).

Angels opened prison doors and freed the apostles and Peter in Acts 5 and Acts 12. In the Book of Mormon, an angel came to stop the three sons of Mosiah and Alma the younger, from tricking people in the Church. This

angel shook the earth, and they all fell down.

Not all angels in history are good. The old mean devil was once one of God's best angels. He tried to take over. Now, he should have known that God is the creator. God will never let that old bad angel win. The Bible teaches us, "Resist the devil and he will flee [run away] from you" (James 4:7). If we serve God and do what is right, we do not need to fear. Our God has a plan for us and He will protect us. He will send an army of angels if He chooses to. Pray in the name of Jesus and trust in the Lord.

With love,
Sister Jan

Midwest Campout

Continued from Page 7

amazement. Do we ever have that moment? Do you remember the time at which Christ stood before you and said, 'Follow me?' " Brother Daniel asked. He explained that God chose those four men for a purpose, as He has chosen us as well.

Brother Ralph Cartino followed with a few words. "No matter what we go through or what we do, He will be with us always and will bless us... You don't need to be an elder or an evangelist, we ALL are chosen. And we are the chosen people of God," he said.

Brother Chuck Maddox added a few words as well to encourage the congregation. "I wonder if where you are in your life you could leave behind the things that those men did. The disciples probably thought, 'Who is this man that I am following? Who can calm the sea?' You know what He wants us to do? He wants us to be ourselves. If we take the Spirit of God that He has given us, if we follow the Spirit of God, then we are His children and then we are His heirs." Brother Chuck then related an experience he had where he had an opportunity to pray for his father who once struggled with Brother Chuck's desire to join

The Church of Jesus Christ. "When it says called with 'purpose' it doesn't always mean 'Red Sea.' Sometimes it means one moment. I would challenge all of you today to ask, 'What is my purpose?' Is God telling you to do something? To call someone? To visit someone? Every day God has called us to a purpose. If we do that every day, then we WILL have Red Seas. Every day He is giving us something to do," he said.

The saints then enjoyed the Lord's Supper together and reflected on the purpose Christ had in going to the cross.

Midwest Camp 2008 was a wonderful success and all in attendance enjoyed the sweet spirit throughout the weekend. May God continue to show us our purpose each day so that we might spread His perfect Gospel to those who still are seeking.

* WEDDINGS *

Sister Mandi Evans and Brian Brown were united in holy matrimony on November 10, 2007.

Dan Severino and Sister Jessie Painter were united in holy matrimony at the Imperial, Pennsylvania Branch on November 17, 2007.

Michael Derek Radd and Tricia Lynn Stokes were united in holy matrimony at the Lake Worth, Florida Branch on March 22, 2008.

Children Blessed

Angelina Marlene Kijewski, daughter of Gayle Kijewski was blessed at Detroit, Michigan Branch #1.

Jake Dennis Kijewski, son of Gayle Kijewski was blessed at Detroit, Michigan Branch #1.

Luca Joseph Lovalvo, son of Brother Duane and Sister Joannah Lovalvo, was blessed at Detroit, Michigan Branch #2 on April 29, 2007.

Jake Cavill, son of Tom and Alaina Cavill was blessed on December 16, 2007.

Alex Paul Brauner, son of Derek and Traci Brauner was blessed on April 6, 2008 at the Greensburg, Pennsylvania Branch.

Amayah Ellie-Jeanette Gaston, daughter of Tommie and Candice Gaston was blessed on April 13, 2008 at the Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Branch.

Thomas Jacob Perez, daughter of Thomas and Sister Chenita (Hunt) Perez was blessed on April 13, 2008 at the Freehold, New Jersey Branch.

Baptisms and Reinstatements

Sister Amanda Griffin was baptized at the Treasure Coast, Florida Branch. She was baptized by Brother David Checchi and confirmed by Brother Rocco Benyola.

Sister Cara Dahl was baptized on July 5, 2007 at the GMBA Campout in Greenville, South Carolina. She is from the Treasure Coast, Florida Branch. She was baptized by Brother Tom D'Orazio and confirmed by Brother John D'Orazio.

Sister Jimena Mott was baptized on February 24, 2008 at the Columbus, Ohio Mission. She was baptized by Brother Daniel McNamara and confirmed by Brother Alan Metzler.

Brother Joe Rabe was baptized on March 9, 2008 at the Anaheim, California Branch. He was baptized by Brother Otto Henderson and confirmed by Brother Tom P. Liberto.

(Continued on Page 12)

Baptisms and Reinstatements.

Continued from Page 11

Brother Paul Michael Vinsick, Jr. was baptized on March 23, 2008 at the Modesto, California Branch. He was baptized by Brother Joe Ciarolla and confirmed by Brother David Picciuto.

Sister Adoni Aida Martinez was baptized on March 30, 2008 at the Modesto, California Branch. She was baptized by Brother Rich Deulus and confirmed by Brother David Picciuto.

Sister Raquel Elias was reinstated on February 10, 2008 at the Yucaipa, California Branch.

Brother Kevin Yannes was baptized on April 13, 2008 at the Freehold, New Jersey Branch. He was baptized by Brother Mario Morales and confirmed by Brother Jim Calabro.

Sister Carmen Pocon was baptized on April 13, 2008 at the Freehold, New Jersey Branch. She was baptized by Brother Mario Morales and confirmed by Brother Jim Crudup.

Brother Gilberto Sacramento was baptized on April 13, 2008 at the Freehold, New Jersey Branch. He was baptized by Brother Mario Morales and confirmed by Brother Carl Huttenberger.

Ordinations

Brother Kevin Burns was ordained a deacon on March 9, 2008 at the Vanderbilt, Pennsylvania Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Dan Covalsky and he was ordained by Brother Robert Nicklow, Jr.

Sister Pamela King was ordained a deaconess on March 9, 2008 at the Vanderbilt, Pennsylvania Branch. Her feet were washed by Sister Peggy Stroko and she was ordained by Brother Richard Lowther.

Sister Angela Yoder was ordained a deaconess on March 9, 2008 at the Imperial, Pennsylvania Branch. Her feet were washed by Sister Jean Moore and she was ordained by Brother Jim Calabro.

Brother Eric Yoder was ordained a deacon on March 9, 2008 at the Imperial, Pennsylvania Branch. His feet were washed by Brother David Gibson and he was ordained by Brother James Abbott.

Brother Ed Nester was ordained a deacon on March 9, 2008 at the Imperial, Pennsylvania Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Jeff Buffington and he was ordained by Brother James Moore.

Paul Gehly and wife, Sister Carolyn; Brother Alvin Gehly and wife, Sister Nancy; Brother Arthur Gehly, Sr. and wife Sister Martha; eight grandchildren, thirteen great-grandchildren and six great-great grandchildren.

GLADYS SOPHIA MOORE

Sister Gladys Sophia Moore passed on to her reward on March 18, 2008. She is survived by her sons, Jack and Harley Moore; daughters, Sandra Morse and Carol Smith; twelve grandchildren and several great-grandchildren.

OBITUARIES

We wish to express our sympathy to those tht mourn the loss of loved ones. May God bless and comfort you.

ELSIE GEHLY

Sister Elsie Gehly, of the Fredonia, Pennsylvania Branch passed on to her reward on April 8, 2008. She was preceded in death by her husband, Brother Otto Gehly, and a great-grandson, Anthony Paul Gehly. She is survived by three sons, Brother

CORRECTION

EASLY VERINA MOTT

Sister Easly Verina Mott of the Kinsman, Ohio Branch passed on to her reward on December 25, 2007. She is survived by her son, Brother Fred Mott and wife Sister Rosalie; five grandchildren, including Sister Rachel Yeager and Brother Timothy Mott, and seven great-grandchildren.

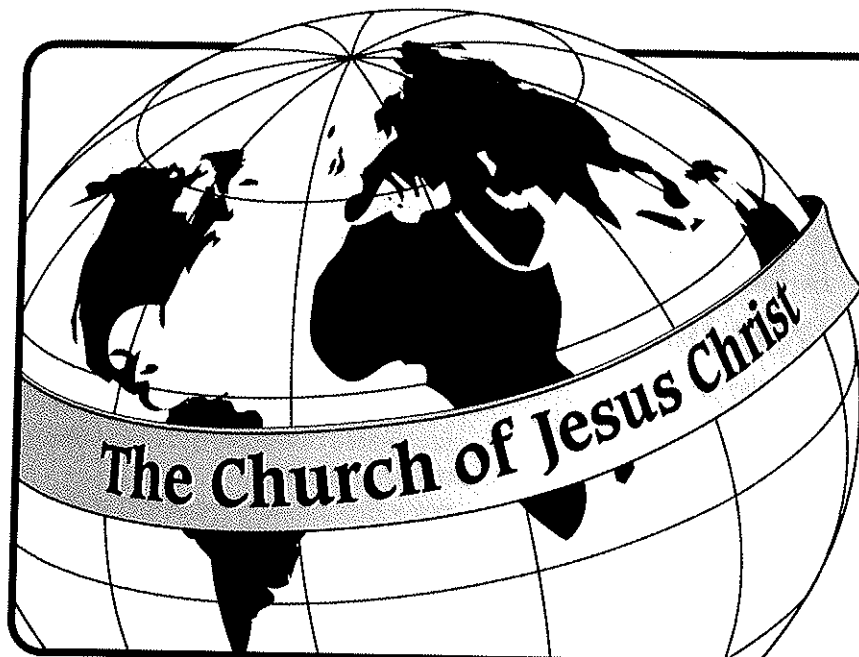
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The Gospel News

World Headquarters Monongahela, PA., USA

June, 2008

Volume 64, No. 6

Are You HIS Witness?

By Brother Patrick Giannetti

Before you answer this question, with an automatic and enthusiastic "yes," please consider the depth and seriousness of this question. To understand what it means, and to be a witness of Jesus Christ is to obey one of His most essential commands, which sometimes we unfortunately overlook.

Let us look to the example of the early Church, shortly after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, to better understand this concept of being a witness.

Upon being endowed with the Holy Ghost, the apostles began to preach the resurrection of Jesus Christ in great power. On the day of Pentecost, Peter, under the inspiration of God, delivered a sermon and three thousand souls were converted. Truly, signs and wonders followed their ministry as many were healed from sicknesses and many were baptized unto Christ daily.

The religious leaders among the Jewish community were filled with hatred toward the apostles. Not only were they preaching that a man recently put to death by crucifixion had risen from the dead, but the apostles were developing a large following.

In an attempt to stop their work, the high priest and chief priests put the apostles in jail. Upon being released by an angel of the Lord, they went back to the temple to teach and preach about Christ. When the high priest heard this, he was outraged and demanded the apostles be brought before the council. They questioned the apostles and demanded they stop preaching the resurrection of Christ. Consider the following excerpt from their response to the council:

"Him [Jesus] hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are HIS witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts 5:31-32).

Did anything just jump off the page when you read that? The part where the apostles say, "And we are HIS witnesses," is a statement filled with power. The weight of these few words can feel like a thousand pounds. The apostles were declaring that they were HIS representatives, ambassadors and witnesses to the world. Ask yourself, "Am I HIS witness? Am I Jesus' witness to my family, friends and co-workers? Can I claim that with confidence, knowing in my daily life I witness of Jesus Christ?"

Regardless of your answer, let

me reinforce, just like the apostles, we are called to witness of Jesus Christ:

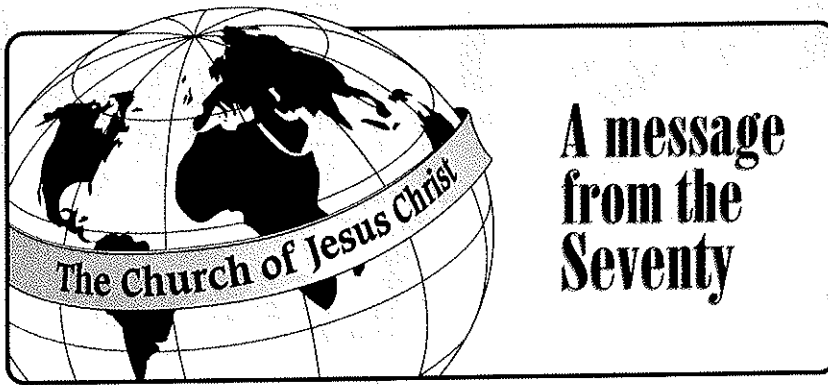
"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Notice the same word, "witnesses," is found in this scripture as well. The word "witness" is defined as: "To see, hear or know by personal experience." The apostles were commanded to be witnesses of the Lord. What had they seen? What had they experienced with Christ the three years they followed him?

First, the apostles experienced the Christ's resurrection firsthand. Remember, the whole Jewish community could attest that Jesus had been crucified. To their knowledge, he was dead. But that wasn't so, for the apostles had witnessed His resurrection. Not only had John and Peter seen the empty tomb, as recorded in all four gospels, but Jesus appeared in the apostles' midst confirming the testimony of those who were at the tomb and saw the stone rolled away.

Second, think about all the amazing things the apostles witnessed as they followed Christ during His three-year ministry. All the miracles:

(Continued on Page 9)



Israel's Advocate: *First Voices Journal* Launches; NAO Handbook Helps Guide Missionary Efforts

By Brother Peter Benyola

The message contained in the Book of Mormon is now available to the people whose history it records via *The First Voices Journal*, a free publication of The Church of Jesus Christ. In addition to the hard-copy newsletter, www.first-voices.org has been created as another source of information for those who are curious about Jesus Christ and His Scriptures.

"The *Journal* is designed as a tool to reach out to Native Americans, written from their perspective and not the Church," said Brother Mark Kovacic, chairman of the Native American Outreach Committee.

The *Journal* has its roots in an old newsletter that the Midwest Region printed and mailed to Native Americans in the early 1980s. The premiere issue of the *Journal*, which can be reprinted and distributed or used as a flyer, includes four pages of graphics and articles which are meant to draw comparisons between some Native American beliefs and those of The Church of Jesus Christ. Although the target audience of the newsletter is Native America, brothers and sisters of the Church might find their beliefs to be very fascinating.

"Communications methods have changed and expanded drastically in recent years," said Brother Mark. "Media such as the Internet are not

only options for reaching out to the Native Americans with the message of Christ's Gospel, but they are also very necessary to making our message available to as many people as possible."

Features of the website include downloadable issues of the *Journal* and an introduction to the Book of Mormon and the Church's beliefs concerning it. The site also has selected excerpts from the Book of Mormon that quote Jesus Christ, passages which use terms such as the "Great Spirit" to refer to God, prophecies of the remnant of Israel receiving the Word of God, and promises of the gathering of Israel. The site has links to www.thechurchofjesuschrist.com, other sites of interest to Native people, and online searchable versions of the Bible and the Book of Mormon.

The *Native American Outreach Handbook* is now at your disposal when sharing the Gospel with Native Americans. The *Handbook* includes a description and history of the work, and Scriptural references about the descendants of Joseph and the Church's *Divine Commission* to return the Gospel to them. It also gives detail of present-day Native American culture, as well as suggested ways of approaching them,

relating to them and establishing awareness about Christ's message of salvation. Finally, the *Handbook* outlines strategies the NAOC recommends to carry out this great work, as well as to keep track of missionary activities and implement stages at the General Church, Region and Local levels. To access this and other invaluable resources of NAO information, please visit:

www.thechurchofjesuschrist.com, "Missionary," and then "Native People of the Americas."

The committee welcomes you to contribute material for possible inclusion in *The First Voices Journal*. Most important of all, please continue to approach the Lord in prayer that these materials and all outreach efforts of the Church will be successful instruments in spreading the Gospel to His people.

Announcement

The IMOC is requesting donations of PC laptops for use in the foreign fields. They will be used to help translate the Book of Mormon into foreign/native languages. They will also be used by In-Country Ministers to communicate with the IMOC Officers, Sectors, and Field Committees. Anyone interested in making such a donation should contact Brother Frank Natoli, email: frankjnatoli@yahoo.com.

Why the Earth Did Quake and the Rocks Rent

By Brother Jim Sgro

*It was all because of God's
Amazing Grace,
Because on Calvary's Mountain
He took my place,
And some day some glorious
morning,
I shall see him face to face,
All because of God's Amazing
Grace.*

When Jesus entered into Jerusalem for the last time, He was taking His final walk to the cross and eventually to His death—a walk that no man or angel could walk for him. That day the people cried out (Luke 19:38) “Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in Heaven, and glory in the highest.” The people knew that He was a good man, that He had healed the sick, and that He cared for the sinner. But they did not understand who He was.

Many of these people had seen Him grow up; they said was not this the carpenter's son. They had heard Him preach a gospel of love for three years in His ministry and yet still did not understand His mission. Soon their voices would be stilled and not one of them would praise the King of all the ages. The Book of Mormon tells us in Jacob 4:14: “But behold, the Jews were a stiff necked people; and they despised the words of plainness, and they killed the prophets, and sought for things they could not understand. Wherefore, because of their blindness, which blindness came by looking beyond the mark, they must needs fall; for God hath taken away His plainness from them, and delivered unto them many things which they could not understand, because they desired it. And because they desired it God hath done it, that they may stumble.” These people were looking for the Messiah to

deliver them from their earthly bondage to Rome. But Jesus had come to deliver them and us from our sinful bondage and bring us back into God's eternal presence. Although they praised Him that day it would be a few hours later that many of the same people would cry out (Matthew 27:22) “Let him be crucified.” Their praise would turn to anger and their support to condemnation.

Try to picture a time when praise was not being given to God or to His Son, Jesus. From the time Jesus went from the Garden of Gethsemane, through Pilate's judgment hall, through His scourging, His beatings, the mocking, and His eventual nailing to the cross, no one praised Him. Those voices as prophesied by Jesus had become silent, but somehow praise had to continue. Jesus told the Pharisees in Luke 19:40: “I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.” What did He mean?

Where God dwells their is continual praise. Whether it's in Heaven (Revelation 4:8), “And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is, and is to come.” Or on the earth by us (Hebrews 13:15) “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.” But, when Jesus made His final walk to the cross, He was not being praised by His family or His followers. Peter denied even knowing him.

God could not spare His own son, He had to deliver him to die, (Romans 8:32) “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall He not freely give us all things?” If He spared His own son, God would have gone against His own Word and the plan of salvation would have been frustrated. Neither God nor Jesus would allow this. Jesus came into this world to do the will of His Father, (John 4:34) “My meat is to do the will of him

that sent me, and to finish His work” up to and including dying on the cross. (Matthew 26:39) “And He went a little farther, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt.” The Book of Mormon confirmed Jesus' mission: (3 Nephi 27:13-14) “Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you—that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me. And my father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil.”

Three things are clear: God would not stop His Son from dying, Jesus would walk the road to Calvary, and praise to Jesus had to continue. So where did the praise come from when Jesus was hanging on the cross?

Haggai 2:6 & 7 says, “For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the Heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts.” Haggai was prophesying not only about the coming of the Lord Jesus but the time when He would glorify God. Jesus going to the cross was glorifying God (John 13:31 & 32), “Therefore, when He had gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself. And shall straight way glorify him.” Jesus then said in (John 17:4 & 5), “I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou

(Continued on Page 4)

Why the Earth Did Quake

Continued from Page 3

me with thine own self with the Glory which I had with thee before the world began." So, how did God glorify Jesus?

The God of all nature praised His Son as only He could when the voices of the whole human family became quiet. (Luke 23:44 & 45) *"And it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst." (Matthew 27:51) "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent."*

God could not be angry with His Son for doing His will, but He praised Him and showed His great love and approval in the only way He could without disturbing the greatest sacrifice ever being done in the history of man. When Jesus was hanging on the cross, He was badly beaten, He had lost most of His blood, He had a crown of thorns on His Head, nails in His hands and feet, He barely could notice what was right at the cross (John and His mother) let alone things at a distance.

But He would know it was dark, He could feel the earth quake, He would hear the rocks renting. God was confirming His love for His Son. God was letting Jesus know through nature this was His will and that God was well pleased. God told the Nephites after Jesus was crucified, (III Nephi 11:7) *"Behold my Beloved son in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—Hear ye him."*

When the sacrifice was completed and the earth was still, man again would start to realize who had just died on the cross and again begin to praise him, (Matthew 27:54) *"Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earth quake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."*

God truly loved His Son and He loved us so much to allow this great and terrible day to happen. When partaking of Communion I realized the tremendous sacrifice God made for us, but I also realize the wonderful excitement it feels to partake of the sacrifice while eating the bread and drinking the wine. *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16).

Let's appreciate the great patience God had with us and this world the day His son was crucified. The greatest appreciation we can show is leading a righteous life before Him and the world.

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Spiritual Diet

By Sister Betty D'Orazio

Dieting is the key word today along with better nutrition, watch the fats, lowering our cholesterol, and exercise. This is very good advice for healthier living. And we need to keep this in check. But I would like to talk to you about a different diet, one that is necessary for a healthy and long life—that is our spiritual diet, or S-diet.

What are we doing for our heart to stay spiritually healthy? Is it filled with compassion and joy? Our mind, is it sharp and ready with scripture to defend His Church? Our tongue, is it prepared to testify of the goodness of God? Our hands, are they ready to help another? Our eyes, do they look where they can be of help? Our feet, are they swift to visit the sick? What grade would you give your S-diet?

Let's take a self-test:

1. Do we read the scriptures every day?
2. Do we pray daily?
3. Do we praise God in all things, good or bad?
4. Have we called, visited, or sent a card to someone this week?
5. Are we quick to help?
6. Quick to give of our substance to another?

I'm sure that you passed the test, but we can always improve our S-diet. The more you read and study the scriptures, the more you become familiar with the Lord, the better our S-diet will become. The personal relationship that we build with Jesus is rewarding, in that you know Him better, what He thinks, how He felt when He was praying in the garden, and His compassion on the cross to give us life. He is and will always be OUR BEST FRIEND. So let's join the gym of Jesus and start our S-diet today and become the fittest saints of our generation.

"Suffering from TRUTH decay? Brush up on your Scriptures."



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Editorial Viewpoint ...

By Brother Peter Benyola

"I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope ... Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures forevermore ... Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven ... He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints, even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD" (Psalms 16:8, 9, 11; 148:13, 14).

What did the Psalmist mean when he said "the LORD exalts the horn of His people?" Historically, we know Canaan was a pastoral country where livestock was naturally a necessity for Israel. The Israelites collected the horns of different animals, adapting them into flasks for oil or as trumpets. With the image of bulls charging with their horns, in that time it became an emblem of strength, signifying political power. Horns were placed at the corners of the altar of burnt offerings at the LORD'S tabernacle, bound to them the remains of sacrificial animals. In Daniel's prophecy, horns symbolized kingdoms and kings. When God Himself "exalts the horn" of a person, that means He endows prosperity and great power.

To *rejoice*, simply, is to evoke the sensation of joy. While we sing, "The joy of the Lord is my strength!" as praise to God, He uses it as a channel of His power. Did the sling and stone really take down Goliath—or was the Philistine's fate sealed the instant that young David approached him in the name of the Lord of Hosts: the God of the armies of Israel? Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD, a mighty name to bear. There are countless demonstrations in God's Word of the power of praise. Each time the Israelites circled the city of Jericho, seven priests carried the Ark of the Covenant before them, upon which sat the presence of the LORD—afterward blowing their trumpets of rams' horns. The final time they circled the city, the priests blew the trumpets and the people shouted loudly in joy and confidence in their Deliverer-God. The walls of Jericho collapsed, and Israel advanced. They vanquished the enemy without lifting a single weapon except their voices, for the sound of their rejoicing wielded a far greater power.

Though God's people may dwell in His presence, deliverance might not be instant. Centuries later, the people of Nephi had a terrible, devastating battle with the Lamanites. The Nephites mourned for the loss of thousands of their brethren, "yet they rejoice and exult in hope, and even know, according to the promises of the Lord, that they are raised to dwell at the right hand of God, in a state of never-ending happiness ... thus we see the great reason of sorrow, and also of rejoicing—sorrow because of death and destruction among men, and joy because of the light of Christ unto life."

What reasons do we have to rejoice today? First and foremost, Jesus Christ paid our sin debt with His own life and set salvation for us. We can honor Him for restoring His Gospel and our great task and place in these latter days. Let's continue by praising Him for His abounding provision and mercy, and gift of the Holy Spirit. Then let's thank Him that we can always openly approach His mercy seat, which we follow to success. Finally, let's lift up our voices to Him for what we *know* is ahead: As the ram's horn accompanied Israel's victory at Jericho, one day the trumpet will herald our resurrection to dwell at God's right hand forever, through the power of the risen Christ.

The driving spirit of this great anthem should be carried in our hearts. "Awake! Awake and sing the blessed story. Awake, awake and let your song of praise arise ... Ring out, ring out,

(Continued on Page 11)

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork

Who Has Seen an Angel?

The Bible tells us in Luke 15:7-10 that angels rejoice when a sinner repents. That is why I was not surprised at the California Campout in 1998 when a sister in our church saw angels preparing the camp for us and angels gathering at the baptism site.

When we first came to camp, I met Sister Kay Gray and her family. She told me of a dream where she had seen the camp in great detail. She saw angels cleaning every room, every step and even the rails on the cement stairs leading to the college campus where the people of The Church of Jesus Christ were holding their Campout. When the job was completed, all of the angels left. But, she said four angels stayed and went to each of the four corners of the campus where we stayed. They were there, standing guard and protecting us.

One night, a young girl who was at the camp with relatives in the Church had an amazing experience. She had a serious problem with sleep-walking. Many times she was found outside her home, in the middle of the night, not knowing where she was. Everyone worried about her. Late, late one night, when everyone at camp was sleeping, she walked out of her room, left the locked building, walked down the sidewalk and out into the dark streets.

She remembered later, a man coming up to her. He gently asked, "Child, are you lost?"

"Yes," she answered. He led her out of the street and back to the campus. He talked to her quietly and told her where to turn, and which building to



go to. Someone from the night patrol saw her in the courtyard. He came up to her and asked her what she was doing out so late. She then woke up and turned to point to the helper who was by her side, "Oh, I walked away in my sleep. He is helping me find my way back," she said turning to point at him. No one was there. This angel had protected her and brought her back safely.

After several glorious meetings, people felt the Spirit of the Lord. Several repented and asked for their baptisms. A new friend to the Church offered to let us use their property in the mountains, which had a wild rushing stream, as the baptism site.

Probably over a hundred of us from the Campout hopped in our cars and took a winding highway up into the steep mountains of southern California. We walked across the dusty rocks to the rushing river stream. Large boulders and huge rocks lined the sides of the water. We were on private property with the peaks of cactus-covered mountains all around us and not a house to be seen for miles.

People climbed on the tops of huge stones to be closer to the water so they could see. The sound of the water was so loud that those gathered could barely hear the elders as they raised their hands to the heavens and declared, "Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." One by one, sinners of who repented went into the rushing mountain stream and were baptized. All too soon, the brothers and sisters turned to walk back to the road. I was standing by Sister Kay Gray and her husband, Brother Paul

Gray. I saw the most beautiful and holy expression upon her face as she turned back to look at the side of the mountain.

I asked her, "What is it Sister Kay?"

"Angels," she answered me, still looking around. "Angels are surrounding us here."

I felt the Holy Spirit and asked, "What do they look like?"

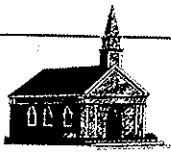
She replied quietly, "They look like angels. They are more than one size. There are hundreds of them here filling every mountain top." I was thrilled. I asked her to tell me what they were wearing. She told me that there was a row of huge angels at the back with white shining countenances (faces). They wore helmets and breastplates. There was another row of very tall, thinner angels that were simply dressed in white and finally,

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WORD SEARCH

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Branch and Mission News

God Is Always in the Matter

By Sister Karen L. Progar

I have been a member of The Church of Jesus Christ for 31 years, and I am still amazed at the power of God. On February 24, 2008, God was truly in the matter and was very present in our Sunday service. All glory goes to Him for the power He displays to His people.

Brother John D'Antonio opened our meeting in Aliquippa stating that something had been on his mind for quite some time and that he felt to bring forth the topic of "God's great forgiveness" today. Little could Brother John have known how many were waiting to hear the message God had put upon his heart.

Using the Book of Jonah as his text, Brother John rehearsed how Jonah displeased the Lord by not following God's will and not going to Ninevah as he was instructed. Because Jonah was not obedient to God's will he ended up in a tempest and ultimately thrown overboard from the ship upon which he was a passenger in order to save the lives of all onboard. Once that great fish swallowed Jonah, he realized his disobedience and began to repent of his actions and made a vow. He felt cast out of the Lord's sight and looked toward God's holy temple. Because of his repentance, God forgave him.

Brother Paul A. Palmieri followed expressing that Jonah's experience in the belly of the fish was horrific and he had no idea that God would afford him another opportunity to obey His will. He reiterated that forgiveness is available to us all and that the power of Calvary can expunge any sin.

The part of the story that seemed to ring true to so many was that forgiveness is available to all of us. During the testimony meeting we

found out that many were able to reflect on their own lives and how important it is to allow God to be in charge. Several of our brothers and sisters stated that they felt the sermon was directed to them. Was it a coincidence that Brother John chose to bring this message forth? I think not. One thing I have learned in these 31 years is that God is in the details of our lives and wants us to allow Him to guide us. We just need to be obedient to His leading. We thank God for a very timely message and a wonderful day in His service.

A Day of Rejoicing

By Sister Carolynn O'Connor

It was a day of rejoicing at Detroit, Branch #2. Sister Erica El-Kadi had asked to be reinstated into The Church of Jesus Christ. In addition to this event, Evangelist Frank Natoli, Region President, was visiting on official Region business. He was there to honor Brother Reno Bologna for his years of service as an elder of The Church of Jesus Christ.

Our meeting was opened by Brother Jason Monaghan who was visiting from Greensburg, Pennsylvania. Brother Jason started by quoting Brother Reno on a sermon that he spoke many years ago that had an impact in his life, "...and I will say it for myself as well that I myself will stand here before you that God has been willing over and over and over again to make the difference in my fight, for that which is right, and for that which is good."

Brother Jason continued with the story of Nehemiah and how his role, to bring a drink to the king, seemed insignificant, but he had a desire to make a difference. He shared a story of a man who was a recognized war hero who traveled around speaking of the heroics of the war. At one particular event, a man came up to him and said that he knew him. The hero was taken back because he did not remember him. The man said, "I was

the one who packed your parachute."

Brother Jason used this example to show how each and every roll is important, including those who are not as visible such as the parachute packer. "Whatever your roll is I would hope that you would do it with all of your mite, to the honor and Glory of God." Brother Jason continued by reading the story of Nehemiah and his service to the Lord. "What is your job in the kingdom of God today? Are you doing what God has required you to do with all of your might without murmuring? Are we still faithful to the call of God in our life?"

Brother Henry Cardillo continued the meeting reflecting on his service as a minister and those who trained him. He spoke about the jobs that we each have. "We each have a parachute to fold and it is the love that you have for one another through Jesus Christ. If you fold my parachute, you are folding a parachute for each and every one of the brothers and sisters. That labor that you put forth, we all will benefit from directly or indirectly."

Sister Erica was then asked to come forward for her reinstatement. She was reinstated by Brother Duane Loyalvo.

Brother Frank Natoli then shared some of the many responsibilities Brother Reno, 97 years old, had over the years he has been in the Church, including his missionary endeavors. Brother Reno then testified humbly to God's goodness in his life. He thanked God that his wife, Sister Isabella, had not only stood by and supported him for all of the years, but that she worked right along side of him. He spoke about the success that they had in missions around the Church where he was asked to go and preside, and how the efforts of Sister Isabella contributed equally to the building of unity and spiritual awareness of these missions.

Brother Reno then shared that the last five years of his life of service, as he cared for his wife who is suffering with Alzheimer's, had been the hardest but that he had learned the most through this service. He spoke

(Continued on Page 8)

A Day of Rejoicing

Continued from Page 7

of finally learning about unconditional love and how he loved her more now than he ever had. Brother Reno expressed that he wished he had known what he knows now many years ago.

His words were a great testimony to the love of God.

(Editor's note: Sister Isabella passed on to her reward a few short months later.)

A New Name is Written...

By Sister Kathy Vitto

January 6th was a Sunday unlike most. Our Presiding Elder Brother John Collison spoke about the gift of charity, doing for others with the love of Jesus, and how good it feels to give without expecting anything in return. He told us to be strong, that satan will try to steal our blessings by tempting us as he tempted Christ.

Brother Perry Vitto followed, telling us when we attempt to do a better job of serving the Lord, the evil one knows our weaknesses and will try to discourage us. He told us how we are created to serve and worship God, and if we will draw nearer to God, He will draw nearer to us. Brother Perry continued, "Christ must live in and be the center of our home."

Brother Brad Labute continued by saying "Jesus is the true foundation. We are living in a time of probation. This is a time for us to prepare to meet the Lord." He spoke about how the Lord puts us through the fire to refine us, and we must prove ourselves worthy of our calling.

Singing followed, and then Nora Giles stood upon her feet and asked for her baptism. Sister Melissa Matthew stood upon her feet and said she had felt the spirit of calling. Brother John confirmed this as he too was given the same feeling.

Sister Nora began coming to the

Windsor Branch approximately three years ago when she was invited to attend by Dee-Anne Trealout. Sister Nora accepted her invitation and soon found herself attending on her own. She fell in love with the Gospel and its message, as well as the congregation. Brother John anointed her because of her physical affliction and the meeting was closed with anticipation for the event ahead.

Sunday, January 20th, the branch met at the water's edge. Knowing how cold it was to be this day and the fragile condition of Sister Nora, Brother John suggested that she wait, but Sister Nora wouldn't hear of it. She was not going to let the cold deter her. So they met at the river. It was a cold 5 degrees with a wind chill of 15 below. Brother John and Sister Nora entered the frigid waters of salvation and she was baptized.

While the saints were at the water's edge, Brother Don Collison was home. He had been fighting a long-term illness, which left him too weak to attend this joyous event. However, he began praying to feel the joy that was in Heaven on this day. Soon the feeling of joy washed over him and he was able to visualize the beautiful event in his mind. He saw the angels watching over our new sister with her hand upon the rod of iron. Brother Don relayed this beautiful experience the Sunday he returned to the branch. He told us if we have faith and ask for what is good and pleasing it will be given.

Brother John spoke from Moroni 6:2, "Neither did they receive any unto baptism save they came forth with a broken heart and a contrite spirit..." He then told us that Sister Nora was going to receive the Holy Ghost to be her guide and comforter, and he laid hands upon her for the reception of the Holy Ghost.

Testimony followed. Many expressions of love and gratitude were conveyed with tremendous feelings of love felt by all. Brother John expressed how the Lord is blessing the branch with this beautiful baptism and referred to an important dream that was had many years ago with the interpretation that when we increase in

love, God will increase our numbers.

What a blessing to be knitted together in love by our Heavenly Father.

Mesa, Arizona Branch

"Bring unto me all your needs and see if I will not open the windows of heaven."

The sermon this day was from 1 Kings 17 regarding the famine in the land and Elijah's need for food. Elijah had been fed daily by ravens when one day the Lord told him to go to Zarephath where a widow woman would sustain him. Elijah found the woman who was gathering sticks to make a fire and was preparing her last meal for her son and herself. This would deplete her food supply. Elijah asked her to bring him water to drink and as she was in the process of doing so he also asked her to give him a bite of bread. The woman replied that she only had a handful of meal and a little oil that she was going to use to prepare the last meal for herself and her son and was expecting to die thereafter. Elijah beckoned her to make him a meal first so that he could eat and then to prepare the meal for herself and her son. Elijah spoke the word of the Lord saying, "The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth." The woman went and did as Elijah asked. The results were that the barrel of meal and cruse of oil did not fail this woman. However, her son fell ill and died and she blamed Elijah for this occurrence. Elijah took her son and brought him to an upper chamber where he prayed for the Lord to revive him. The boy came to life after the third time that Elijah cried unto the Lord. This miracle was proof to the woman that Elijah was a man of God who spoke God's word.

Consider the woman's seemingly difficult situation. She was asked to give her last means of survival to the prophet, but it came with a promise that her food supply would not run out. What would we do in a similar situation?

The opening speaker asked us if there was anything in our lives that we were holding onto and not giving completely to the Lord. He implored that the Lord wants us to give our all to Him, not holding anything back. The brother gave personal testimony of how he held onto his own desires for his life in the recent past and did not want to consider where the Lord was leading him. He was reluctant to be open to the changes that the Lord had brought his way. As he took small steps in the direction where the Lord was leading, he could see God's hand working and began to realize the will of God for him. In retrospect, he was able to see very plainly that God had led him and given him various opportunities that would prove necessary and valuable in his family's life. As this brother began to acknowledge God's direction and will, he became more willing to turn over current needs to the Lord. He asked us what we were holding onto that we should be turning over to God.

As the testimony service proceeded, many individuals related needs in their life. As one sister was testifying of a worsening medical condition, she related a dream that the Lord had given her several months prior in which she saw herself being fed the blessed oil used for anointing. As she was stating how she was clinging to this experience, a brother spoke the word of the Lord saying, "Bring unto me all your needs and see if I will not open the windows of heaven," which was followed by the gift of tongues and this interpretation, "Hear ye the word of the Lord." The Lord presented an invitation and several individuals testified of needs in their life for which they wanted prayer. A few testimonies included instances in which the Lord had answered prayer, demonstrated that He had directed them in career choices, and protected them from danger.

At least fourteen individuals had asked to be anointed this day. Prior to the anointings taking place, a brother from the ministry asked the priesthood to unite with him in prayer to call upon God to work through them. As he was speaking, the word of the Lord was,

again spoken saying "Yes, yes, yes, this is my will saith the Lord." The first individual anointed was a young boy who had been hit with a baseball in the joint of his leg the prior week, which created inflammation, pain and restricted movement. As the elders continued anointing, the young boy's grandmother informed all that the child said the pain in his leg was gone and he had freedom of movement.

As another individual was being prayed for seeking direction in finding a job, a brother spoke in the spirit saying, "I will open a door unto thee, thus saith the Lord." The elders offered many inspired prayers in behalf of those in need. I must say, at this point, that we were concerned about the meeting being too lengthy because of so many anointings (for we had yet to pass communion and have feet washing as well). However, the Spirit of God flowed from Elder to Elder in such a powerful and beautiful manner that it was a good lesson to show us that the Spirit has preeminence in our worship services even above the time factor. God's thoughts and ways are higher than ours.

Toward the end of the service, a brother stood to tell that the Lord had given him a message to relate. The message was to tell us that the Lord was well pleased with what went on today and that we should continue in this manner. We rejoice in the love that God has for His people and we look forward with anticipation to the opening of the windows of heaven.

Faith and Doctrine, Article 25, "We believe in continuous divine revelation. Such revelations are consistent with the Holy Scriptures. The Lord reveals Himself through the Holy Ghost in dreams, visions, signs, gifts, and His Word. God speaks when, where, and through whomever He chooses." Amen.

Are You His Witness?

Continued from Page 1

the blind received sight, the lame were walking and they even saw Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead. They wit-

nessed not only an abundance of miracles through physical healings, but oh, the spiritual healings they witnessed. How they saw Christ show love to sinners that needed it most, how they witnessed His compassion and power to forgive sins.

All of these wonderful happenings the apostles had witnessed first hand. They saw them with their own eyes. So, after receiving the Holy Ghost they went forth proclaiming what they had seen and experienced those three years with the Lord: His resurrection and His power unto salvation.

2,000 years later, we are still called to be HIS witnesses. And following in the apostles footsteps we

"...just think for a moment about all the miracles and experiences you have witnessed throughout your union with Jesus Christ...Many of us have witnessed the power of God manifested through extraordinary events that even at times goes beyond our understanding."

need to witness of Jesus Christ. But what have we witnessed in this dispensation of time?

Unlike the apostles, we did not witness the resurrection first-hand and we were not there during His three-year ministry to see His miracles. We weren't there when our resurrected Lord appeared on this land and spoke things that no man could record because of the beauty. But just think for a moment about all the miracles and experiences you have witnessed throughout your union with Jesus Christ.

Many of us have been a witness to powerful healings: people healed of cancer, people healed from sicknesses, and when the doctors thought there was no chance, Christ came through.

(Continued on Page 10)

Are You His Witness?

Continued from Page 9

Many of us have witnessed the power of God manifested through extraordinary events that even at times goes beyond our understanding.

Praise God for His grace and mercy for performing all the wonderful miracles in our lives. These are things we have been a witness to. But, maybe some of you are thinking: "I have never been healed of cancer. I didn't go through a serious event or sickness in my life where God spared me from death. What can I witness?"

The most amazing and powerful miracle the redeemed of the Lord are a witness to is our testimony—our personal story of how the Lord intervened and imparted unto us everlasting joy through the gift of salvation. Each of us can remember the day when Jesus Christ entered our hearts and we surrendered to Him. How glorious it is to be a servant of Christ, for truly each of us, before we met the Lord, were on a path to hell and now we are on a path that leads to everlasting life with Christ.

You see, a witness is required to give a testimony. In the high court of our spiritual life, Jesus has called you to be HIS witness and give your testimony. Understand that Christ did not call you or any one of us to be attorneys! This point is so critical to understand. It is our human nature that desires to jump into debates with other Christians even to, at times, the point of argument. Squabbling about doctrine with other Christians will profit nothing. I have never heard of someone joining our Church because someone beat them in an argument or proved unto them the authenticity of The Book of Mormon or Restoration. The truth of these things needs to be revealed by the Holy Ghost in order for them to take root and truly be understood.

Please do not misunderstand me, for at times we do have to defend our faith and all of our beliefs. All twenty-six articles in the *Faith and Doctrine* can be supported by scripture. But, if your desire is to evangelize and spread our Gospel by way of religious debate,

you have missed the mark. We give the testimony and Jesus, who is the attorney, by the power of the Holy Spirit does the convincing and converting.

Also, we must understand that even in the New Testament Church they were called to give their testimony as witnesses. Take for example the Apostle Paul. He was an outstanding missionary of the New Testament Church. Even though the Apostle Paul was well versed in the scriptures and was very knowledgeable to the things of God, he understood the value of sharing a testimony.

Acts records that on six different occasions the Apostle Paul chose to give his testimony in an effort to convert souls to Jesus Christ. One example that comes to mind can be found in Acts 22nd chapter. In Jerusalem, in the midst of a vicious crowd before being put into prison by the Romans, Paul on the steps of the prison shared his testimony with the angry mob. He shared how on the way to Damascus Jesus appeared before him and he was struck blind. He shared how Ananias restored his sight and since then he has been preaching Jesus Christ. The truth of his testimony cut them to their hearts. There was nothing he said that they could argue, but since their hearts were filled with hatred they cried even louder for him to be taken away.

You see, your testimony is something no one can debate or say is not true. People will debate The Book of Mormon and the Restoration, and question the truth of these things. But no one can debate your assurance that Jesus has redeemed your soul through the forgiveness of sins and changed your life by filling your heart with everlasting joy.

A few weeks ago, I was given the privilege to open the Sunday service in the Phoenix Mission and the Lord inspired me to speak on this topic. Truly the Spirit of God confirmed the message. Two weeks later my wife, Sister Danielle Giannetti, had a powerful dream about this same topic:

"I was among a large group of people. It seemed like some type of

work function. I was surrounded, and had to work with a lot of other people. As we were accomplishing our initiatives and tasks, I began talking to this middle-aged woman. I began telling her about God, for no reason at all. It's not like we were on the subject, or even discussing spiritual things. I just began to, all of a sudden, exhort this woman. I began to weep and tell her my testimony. However, my testimony wasn't my normal testimony; the words I spoke to this woman about Christ were absolutely beautiful and amazing.

"My tears along with my words of Christ and how He's changed my life, were truly wonderful. I spoke of our church and how amazing it is, the miracles I've seen, the healings, the relationships I've built, the love of the saints and the prayers lifted to Christ in my behalf. I literally was pouring my heart and soul onto this woman. It was interesting in my dream that she sat there listening to me in awe. She watched me, listening to every word. I could tell it was with an open heart. As I finished telling her my testimony, I just sat there with my hand over my face in tears. This lady, this stranger, lifted my hand from my face, gave me a hug, and said, 'Please, take me to this church, I want to experience Jesus Christ.'

"The next thing I remember is we brought her to church on a Sunday morning. She was greeted by all the saints in love. She sat and listened to the whole meeting, the testimonies, the preaching and she sat there weeping. It was evident that Jesus Christ, in our church, The Church of Jesus Christ, touched her heart and she just wept. I knew in my dream that she would eventually get baptized and give her heart and soul to Christ. Then the dream ended."

I felt this dream was so powerful because it helps us realize and execute our desire to spread the Gospel. You may agree with my sentiment, that there are many encounters with other Christians I wish I would have handled like this dream outlined. Giving my testimony, telling of experiences and sharing the love of God is something we each should strive to do in our

interactions with other believers, instead of wasting effort and energy debating religious principles.

Peter's epistle records, "...and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (Peter 3:15).

In humility, we must be willing and ready to witness of Jesus Christ and His workings in our life whenever the opportunity presents itself. If you read our Church's history book, it is filled with stories of how the Church grew because someone took the opportunity to witness. Really, think about it. We can grow the Church through being witnesses in our daily lives. The expression of what Christ has done for you needs to go beyond Sunday morning during a testimony service into your conversation with your friends and family. We need to get out of our comfort zone, open our mouths and share the good news of Christ working in our lives.

Also, realize that we have a witness that dwells inside of us. The Holy Ghost is a witness of the Father and the Son we carry every day. When we witness the miracles and love of Jesus Christ to others, we must be prayerful that the Holy Ghost accompanies and seasons our words to the point of spiritual conviction. Pray often that God gives you opportunities to witness and that we might be directed by the Holy Ghost to seize those opportunities using discernment when to share these wonderful blessings with our friends and family.

"Are you HIS witness?" I hope by now you understand the point I am making. We must tell others. If you answered this question, yes, praise God! Hopefully this helped further your understanding of what being a witness means. If you answered, no, or realize you need to improve, consider the writings of the Apostle Paul: "...Now is the accepted time." Start your change today. Witness of Christ's miracles in your life. Witness of the joy He has brought to your life. Witness of what Christ can do for someone's broken life. You never know, it might save a soul.

Editorial Viewpoint

Continued from Page 5

O bells of joy and gladness. Repeat, repeat anew the story o'er again till all the earth shall lose its weight of sadness, and shout anew the glorious refrain—with angels in the heights sing of the great salvation. He wrested from the hand of sin and death. The Lord Jehovah reigns and sin is backward hurled. Rejoice, rejoice. Lift heart and voice. *Jehovah REIGNS!* Proclaim His sovereign power to all the world, and let His glorious banner be unfurled ... Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice! Jehovah reigns!"

As God's people in the latter days given the fullness of the Gospel—in fine, the fullness of joy—He has exalted our horn. Our praise goes beyond just a matter of worship. Our sweet sound dries tears and lifts up the despondent. Our rhythm will be a call to lead the remnant of Israel to the kingdom of Zion, and our swelling fanfare will tear asunder the walls of the wicked. Of ourselves, the task is impossible. When the walls of adversity loom ahead, high and impregnable, and the opposition derisively mocks us and laughs from behind those barriers, we are reminded to venerate the LORD'S valorous name with our voices toward victory. In the name of Jesus Christ, the fight is already over. The instrument that plays joy is the only thing left in our arsenal—but oh, what a force to be reckoned with. Rejoice, Ye Saints of Latter Days!

She saw one young man struggling with the problems in his life; two angels stood beside him. His feet were tied because of his deep troubles, and as Sister Kay watched, in her vision, the earth crumbled under him. But the two angels stood on firm ground. They protected him. She saw a hand reach down from heaven and untie the cords that bound him.

None of us seemed to want to leave that beautiful site. As we turned to go, the angels moved and formed a protective circle around us. Sister Kay looked back. "We're leaving," she said to a tall angel who had been standing near to her husband.

The angel answered her, "Soon you will be returning. There will be more baptisms." And there were. The following days others found their way to repentance. And we must believe, as the Bible teaches in Luke 15:10, "...there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

With love,
Sister Jan

Baptisms and Reinstatements

Brother Ted Lundsford was baptized on May 4, 2008 at Detroit, Michigan Branch #1. He was baptized by Brother Tom Everett and confirmed by Brother Jeff Giannetti.

Spiritual Anniversaries

Sister Irma Nerone of the Kinsman, Ohio Branch celebrated her 58th anniversary as a member of The Church of Jesus Christ on March 26th 2008.

Sister Alma Brown of the Kinsman, Ohio Branch will be celebrating her 51st anniversary as a member of The Church of Jesus Christ on July 14, 2008.

The Children's Corner

Continued from Page 6

right there in the midst of the saints, there were angels in the crowd, at our sides, standing by the water and watching the baptisms.

As we moved, they moved beside us. Where young people climbed to the tops of the boulders, there were angels. Where we crowded by the edge of the cold, rushing water, there were angels.

* WEDDINGS *

Sister Letti Obradovich and Mr. Charles Otterson were united in holy matrimony at the Lake Worth, Florida Branch on May 3, 2008.

Children Blessed

Dominic Joseph Surdock, son of Brother Darron and Sister Julie Surdock, was blessed on June 17, 2007 at the San Diego, California Branch.

Madeline Claire Pittman, daughter of Brother Ed and Sister Kim Pittman, was blessed on April 29, 2008 at the Edison, New Jersey Branch.

Allen Bicelis Griffith, son of Brother Bryan and Sister Heylen Griffith, was blessed on May 4, 2008 at the Forest Hills, Florida Branch.

Kailee Elizabeth Horn, daughter of Paul and Nicole (Davella) Horn, was blessed on May 4, 2008 at the Forest Hills, Florida Branch.

Eva Milagros Castillo, daughter of Luis and Milena Castillo, was blessed on April 20, 2008 at the Forest Hills, Florida Branch.

Aaron Jacob Giannetti, son of Brother Jordan and Sister Heidi Giannetti, was blessed on May 11, 2008 in the Mesa, Arizona Branch.

Address Change

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Branch or Mission _____

OBITUARIES

We wish to express our sympathy to those that mourn the loss of loved ones. May God bless and comfort you.

KEN SURDOCK

Brother Ken Surdock, of the San Diego, California Branch passed on to his reward on November 14, 2007. He was an ordained elder in The Church of Jesus Christ. He is survived by his wife, Sister Diane Surdock; mother, Sister Rose Lombardo; children, Sister Dina O'Sullivan and her husband Brother Paul; Brother Darron and his wife Sister Julie; Christopher and his wife Lidia as well as 11 grandchildren.

PEARL ZINZI

Sister Pearl Zinzi of the Forest Hills, Florida Branch passed on to her reward on December 22, 2007. She is preceded in death by her husband, Brother Nick Zinzi and two sons, Brother Nicholas and Ralph Zinzi. She is survived by her son Ralph and wife Margie Zinzi and granddaughter Janna. She is also survived by her daughter Sister Gelsa Zinzi, grandsons Domenick and wife Keena Zinzi, and Brother Dan and wife Sister Sunshine Risola, and two great-grandsons.

Ordinations

Brother Carl McCartney was ordained a teacher on May 4, 2008 at the Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Benjamin Hemmings and he was ordained by Brother Alvin Gehly.

Brother Aaron Palmieri was ordained a deacon on May 4, 2008 at the Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Robert Bradwell, Jr. and he was ordained by Brother Paul Aaron Palmieri.

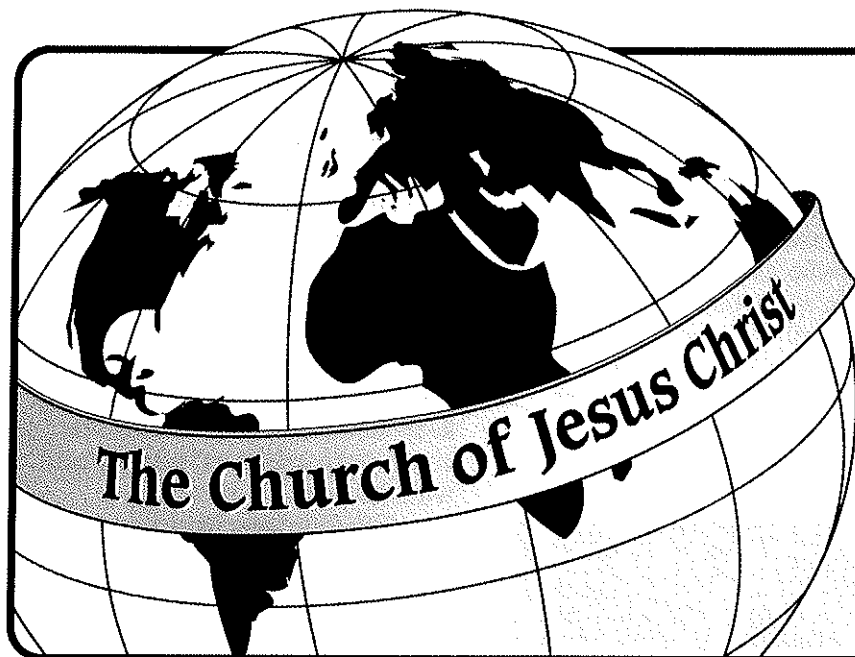
Brother Ray Intrieri was ordained a deacon on May 4, 2008 at the Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Brandon Hunt and he was ordained by Brother Larry Ali.

Brother Paul Gibson was ordained a deacon on May 4, 2008 at the Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Dan Covalessky and he was ordained by Brother Brett Gibson.

Brother Moroni Gonzalez was ordained a deacon on February 24, 2008 at the San Diego, California Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Jose Gonzalez and he was ordained by Brother Ysidro Gonzalez.

Brother Joe Arcuri was ordained a deacon on April 27, 2008 at the Mesa, Arizona Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Dan Arcuri and he was ordained by Brother Isaac Smith.

Brother Jonathan Scolaro was ordained a deacon on April 27, 2008 at the Mesa, Arizona Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Austin Landrey and he was ordained by Brother Tim Scolaro.



The Gospel News

World Headquarters Monongahela, PA., USA.

July, 2008

Volume 64, No. 7

Spirit-Filled Trip to Durango, Mexico

By Brother Thomas P. Liberto

On Thursday, May 22, 2008, Apostle Paul Liberto and Evangelist Thomas P. Liberto began a trip to visit the brothers and sisters of the Durango Mission, located in Durango, Mexico. To reach Durango in the most cost effective way after leaving San Diego Airport at about 9:00 a.m., the brothers had two extended lay-overs before reaching Torreon, Mexico at about 10:30 p.m. where they were met by Brother Hector Gastelum, President of the Church in Mexico, and Brother Cesareo Martinez, resident missionary in Durango. After a very long day of travel it was wonderful to finally reach Brother Cesareo's home in Gomez Palacio, Durango, Mexico, where his wife, Sister Josefina, daughters, Sisters Lucerna and Dinora, and Brother Hector's wife, Sister Elva Gastelum, were waiting for them. A wonderful time was had visiting and praising God together.

The second day of the trip was spent studying with the brothers and conducting ministerial training with Brother Cesareo, who was ordained into the Ministry in 2003. Because Durango is located in such a remote region (about 400 miles south of Chihuahua, Mexico), it has been very

difficult to provide training for our brother who serves the membership in Durango alone, so this was one of the priorities of the trip. A beautiful spirit was felt as the brothers discussed the Holy Spirit, the calling of a minister and how to feed the saints.

Later in the day the group made the 30-minute drive to the church building for the weekly Friday evening

Bible Study. The Spirit of God again filled the room as the meeting began with much singing as the brothers and sisters lifted their voices in praise.

The service continued with Brother Hector teaching a class using the scripture Matthew 11:28-30. He explained that the Lord wants us to follow Him, and that He will give them rest, but some people – even after hearing the true Gospel and seeing miracles in their life – still do not accept Jesus.

(Continued on Page 2)



Sunday Service in Durango

Trip to Durango, Mexico

Continued from Page 1

After about 40 minutes, our brother turned the meeting over to testimony and many in the congregation shared how the Lord has blessed them. Brother Paul and Brother Tom followed with words of encouragement and shared that it is important to tell others, especially outside of the

Church, about how the Lord has blessed us!

After the service there were many who asked for prayer, including a woman who had been visiting the Church for about one month. As she came forward she expressed that she believed the words spoken during the service, but that she felt as though chains were binding her. The ministry prayed for her and again there

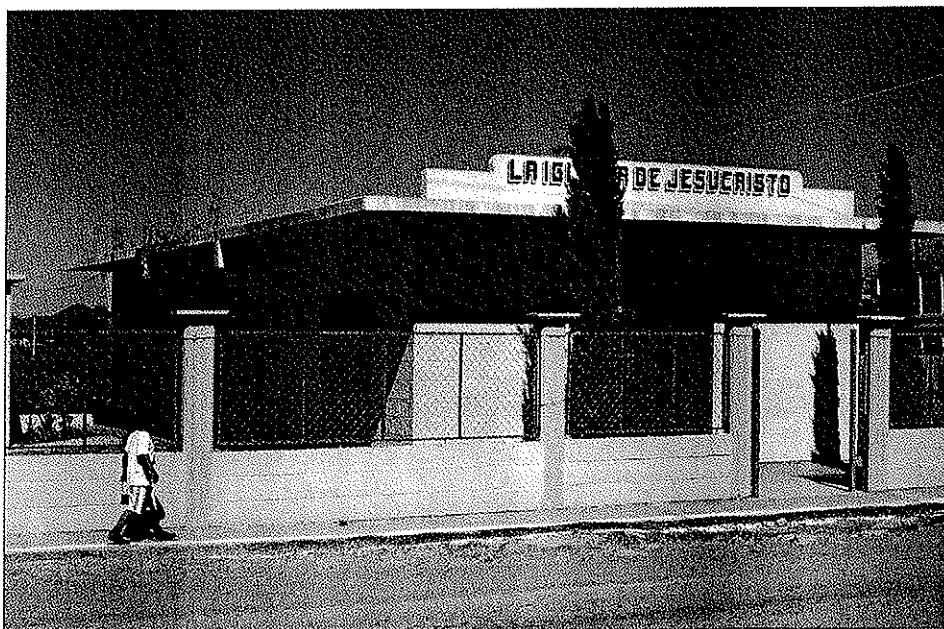
was a powerful and calming spirit felt by all. As she arose in tears and greeted the brothers, she expressed that the weight had been lifted and she felt a spirit she had never felt before. The brothers explained to the woman that she was feeling the Holy Spirit, which is only given by the true and living God, and that they would keep her in their prayers until she could make a personal commitment with the Lord.

The following day everyone awoke very early as a Fast and Prayer Service was planned, followed by a work party at the Church to pour a foundation in the kitchen/Sunday School room. After the drive to the church building the group gathered and sang many songs as five young sisters played the guitars. The chairs were placed in a circle at the front of the building and everyone knelt in prayer following the protocol established in this mission to have two prayers and then everyone rose for another song. The time was spent lifting spirit-filled prayers to the Lord, and all in attendance received a wonderful blessing. At the end of the two-hour service, Brother Cesareo reminded all in attendance of John's question to Christ about why the disciples did not fast and Christ's explanation that He was with them, but doing so would be important in the future (after He was crucified). The meeting was closed at approximately 12:10 p.m. After the service the group sang *Felicidades* to a young sister who was celebrating her 19th birthday and each took a turn to greet her during the song. The entire group then walked to Sister Maria Luisa Sifuentes' home for lunch.

After lunch everyone returned to the church and the brothers completed their work on the floor while the rest of the group went to the home of Sister Ana Hernandez to sing songs and to visit together. While there many of our sister's family (some members of the Church, some not) came to visit also, and we had a wonderful time sharing testimonies and visiting with them in general. As

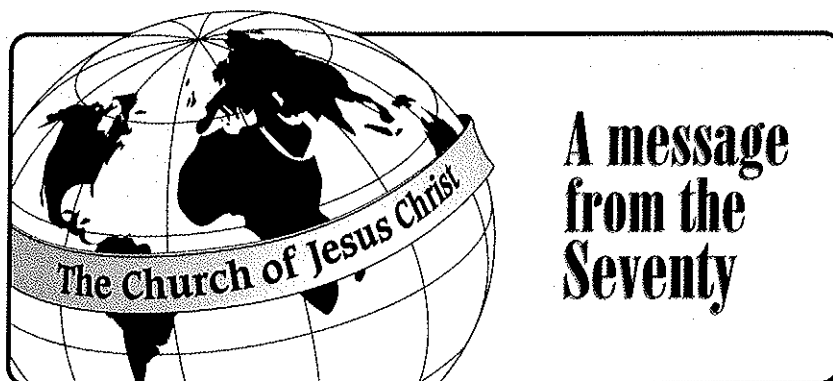


Young People Singing in Durango



Church Building in Durango

(Continued on Page 4)



A Miracle in Zambia as a Result of Our Church-Wide Fast and Prayer!

By Evangelist Joseph Perri

I want to share a testimony of a miracle that occurred in Zambia as a result of our Churchwide fast and prayer effort.

At the April General Church Conference, our President, Brother Paul Palmieri, set the date of Saturday, May 3, aside for our Church's worldwide fast and prayer meeting. I requested each of our Africa Sector Mission Field Chairman notify the President of our Church in their respective mission field to have their entire congregations join in with us on that date asking for God's blessings upon the Church worldwide, that we would see miracles, etc. I felt inspired to ask the brothers from Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, should there be any experiences to let me know.

Having been in communication on the morning of May 6, 2008 with Brother Malama Chalwe our Presiding Elder of the Chililabombwe, Zambia Branch, before ending our conversation he relayed an experience that occurred as a result of their efforts as a branch to join the entire Church in holding a fast and prayer service. On Saturday morning as the saints gathered for prayer service, one of our church members, a sister who was pregnant and long overdue to give birth, joined in attending the meeting. The doctor was very concerned because of the length of

her pregnancy, and she showed no signs of giving birth.

During prayer service many prayers were offered for God's blessings upon the Church of Jesus Christ worldwide, that He would open the way for them to increase the number of their congregations by bringing souls to the knowledge of the Gospel, to enjoy what they were blest with that the Church worldwide would increase in number and we would begin to experience more miracles among us as His saints. Prayers were offered for this sister to give birth to a normal and healthy baby. I do not know the length of their prayer meeting; however, immediately after the conclusion of their fast and prayer service she went into labor and was taken directly to the hospital where she delivered her baby early Sunday morning. Brother Chalwe told me it was a miracle for our sister to give birth, as she did, to a normal and healthy baby.

Just as our brothers and sisters prayed for God's blessings, to be able to see more miracles for their branch and for The Church of Jesus Christ in every part of the world where the Restored Gospel is being preached and the Church is established, a miracle happened before their very eyes.

Our God is alive with rich blessings to give to His people if we would but ask with faith.

Translating Faith

By Brother Christopher Gehly

Faith; it is a concept that we talk of many times within our daily walk with God. I know that even in my young life within the Gospel of Christ, I have heard many sermons and even preached one myself on the subject. It is that conviction; it is that which drives us to believe what we hold so near and dear to our hearts. We can learn in Hebrews that it is the "substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Powerful thoughts and images of stories within the Scriptures of great acts and people of faith come to mind when we bring up the subject: Abraham, Jacob, Noah, the Brother of Jared, Lehi, Nephi, Alma, the list goes on and on. I would even submit ourselves for inclusion on this list. The Church of Jesus Christ has persevered throughout these past 190 years because of great acts of faith by us, its members. Maybe we would not say that we have shown the faith of some of these great individuals in history, but faith has kept us close to the Gospel when the wicked world around us has continually shouted that there is no God.

The Bible and the Book of Mormon help us as we travel along

(Continued on Page 8)

Notice

To our readers and donors to the HFF, (Humanitarian Foundation Fund), please make a note that the proper and registered name for the daycare in India is, "Desire Daycare of India."

May God bless all of you for your generosity, prayers, and support.

Trip to Durango, Mexico

Continued from Page 2

the visit came to a close Sister Ana's husband, Eulogio, shared how happy he was that we were in his home and that he came into contact with the Church. As we said our good-byes many from the family vowed to attend church the following day. After a beautiful day spent with the saints the group drove back to Brother Cesario's home to conduct more training with him. It was another long day, but one that was truly blessed as God sent His Spirit to all who served Him.

After having breakfast the following morning and arriving at the Church at about 10:00 a.m., the Sunday service began by the congregation singing praises to God in anticipation of another blessed day. The meeting was opened in prayer and Brother Hector taught a lesson on Matthew 8. He began by speaking about how Jesus healed the leper due to the man's faith and how our lives are blessed when we trust in Him. The lesson continued throughout the chapter citing other examples where faith was used to bring about God's healing. Brother Hector closed the lesson by stating that the greatest act of faith is committing one's life to Christ.

Brother Tom opened the preaching service using the 31st chapter of 2 Nephi and explained that the Lord Himself set the example of being baptized to show that He would be obedient to the Father's will and to fulfill righteousness. Brother Tom continued by using Acts 8 when Philip preached to the eunuch and the man asked the question, "What hindereth me from being baptized?" Brother Tom encouraged those in the congregation who have not been to the water's edge to ask themselves the same question and to consider following Christ's example.

Brother Paul continued by stating that God is calling and asking us to fulfill righteousness. He continued by telling a story of once being in Mexico and calling to a cat in a sister's home by saying, "Kitty, kitty, kitty!" The cat did not move, so he tried again and received the same result. Finally the sister asked what he was doing and explained that in Mexico you call a cat by saying, "Wishta, wishta, wishta." Once Brother Paul did this the cat came running to him. He used the example that even the animals are subject to language and when God calls His people we know His voice. Brother Paul used the 2nd Chapter of Joel and Luke 10 to bring this message to the congregation.

Many testimonies were given about how the Lord has blessed the brothers and sisters since they gave their life to Him. During the testimony service a visitor who was at the church for the first time stated that she always believed serving God in any church was acceptable, but that she felt during today's service a wonderful spirit she never felt before and she committed to attending The Church of Jesus Christ from then on.

Brother Cesareo served sacrament and Brother Hector closed the service by again stating that the Lord is calling and it is up to each and every one to make a decision whether or not to serve Him. He encouraged those in attendance that if they could not make that commitment today, to ask for prayer and to continue to ask the Lord if the words they heard today are true. After the service was closed in prayer approximately 20 individuals, including the visitors who felt the Spirit for the first time, asked the ministry to pray for them. We pray the Lord will continue to bless all of them as they grow in His Spirit.

At about 2:30 p.m. the group then walked to Sister Maria Luisa's home for a lunch before driving back to Brother Cesareo's home. Once there Brother Paul and Brother Tom packed their belongings and prepared to return to Torreon for an early flight back to the United States on Monday morning. Brother Hector and Sister Elva, and Brother Cesareo's entire family drove the brothers to their hotel, and all enjoyed ice cream together in the lobby before returning to their home.

The 10-hour trip home was just as long and physically tiring as the trip to Durango, but it was much easier for the brothers as they held the memories of the past four days in their minds. The Lord was truly with them as they visited this part of the vineyard and it was evident that He will continue to bless the Church, no matter where the saints live and worship. Although the membership in Durango is strong, we ask that you keep our brothers and sisters in your prayers as they do their part to spread the Gospel to all who will hear in that part of the vineyard.



Saints in Durango



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Editorial Viewpoint...

By Brother Peter Benyola

Sir Isaac Newton, a 17th-century physicist, alchemist and mathematician, often engaged in discussions with his colleagues and friends on the subject of God, creation, and design. A legend recounted in *The Truth: God or Evolution?* — and widely repeated — tells of one of Newton's projects after his atheist-scientist friend denied the evidence of design in the universe. Allegedly, he was motivated to build a clockwork model of the Solar System on a table in his home, which included all the planets and their moons that were known at the time. Each orb rotated on its axis, revolving around the others and the center of the model, powered by a lever and system of gears beneath the table. When Newton's scientist friend returned to visit, he noticed it and was intrigued by its impressive workmanship. He asked, "How were you able to construct such an ingenious device?" Newton casually replied, "I just tossed the pieces at random into a corner, and they accidentally assembled themselves into this model." Annoyed, his friend protested, "That's absurdly impossible."

"A lot less absurd," Newton countered, "than your belief that such was the origin of the real Solar System, of which this toy is but a much-simplified model."

Having laid the groundwork for modern engineering, Newton's research is well respected and regarded — especially the three laws of motion, which we learned about in grade school. Yet, he was more sensitive in his study of our world than to just take into account the "empirically quantifiable." Quantum physicist Stephen Hawking — and many others — have brilliant minds and are also known for scientific contributions. Hawking, who has famously said, "There is no place for a Creator," is probably agnostic, having tried to discredit Newton any way he can, such as in his appendix to *A Brief History of Time*. Some scientists might be annoyed that a pillar of science could possibly also be a man of faith. Yet, Newton was an accomplished authority and still managed to mesh with the scientific community. In *The General Scholium*, he said that the organization of the Solar System was under the "counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being." Hundreds of years earlier, Alma the Younger was more assertive when he said it. "Thou hast had signs enough; will ye tempt your God? Will ye say, Show unto me a sign, when ye have the testimony of all these thy brethren, and also the holy prophets? The scriptures are laid before thee, yea, and all things denote there is a God, yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form, do witness that there is a Supreme Creator."

In his letter to the saints at Ephesus, Apostle Paul said, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened." As people with bodies and minds of flesh, we aren't inclined to think of understanding as something that is in the realm of our heart. To look at the facts of Scripture as a historian or academic and acknowledge them is one thing, but to believe them by the convincing power of the Holy Spirit is something else — mental acceptance of raw facts does not mean conversion. And to be a follower of Christ takes great courage. Often the things of faith fly in the face of "empirically based reason." So to declare that you believe that Jesus Christ is God Who descended to this earth in the manner of flesh; Who, within the parameters of time, shed His own blood and died a horrible physical death to make eternal life possible; then emerged from the crypt alive to prove that His death was accepted by God; takes boldness before a mocking, faithless, secular world that demands a sign in order to believe.

It's sad when learned, intelligent people passionately observe and study this beautiful creation and somehow get lost in it, failing to see God as the author of it all. Understanding, in and of itself, is not a bad thing but not channeled by the Spirit, can misguide the fallen human soul. When understanding is laced elegantly with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we realize that not all things are relegated just to the territory of the mind. Really, if great "head knowledge" were

(Continued on Page 11)

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork

God Sends a Heavenly Messenger to Defeat a Gang

Dear Friends,

You know, we think that gangs are new, but they have been around causing trouble for thousands of years. Their true leader is the old devil, which likes to make people sad and afraid. But God can always beat that devil. If you read your Bible, you will see that a gang of evil guys in the city of Sodom, tried to hurt angels visiting a man named Lot.

The gang surrounded his house and threatened to hurt Lot's entire family unless he sent the angels out. The angels stepped out the door and turned the entire gang of evil men blind (read Genesis 19:1-8).

In our Church, we have another wonderful, true story about Brother Ishmael D'Amico who was also saved by a heavenly messenger from a gang who threatened many times to murder him. Brother Ishmael had moved from Italy to America and was working hard to support his family, and working even harder to spread the word of God about The Church of Jesus Christ. The devil did not like this and tried to stop him. This true story is found in our church's booklet called *My Testimony* by Ishmael D'Amico.

On page nineteen Brother Ishmael tells us, "One night we were conversing about the Lord. Two men, who belonged to the gang called Black Hand, came into our house. They had



been ordered by their leader to harm me for having started this church mission. They insulted me and threatened to kill me. One of the men took out his knife and was about to stab me in the chest. I cried out, "O Lord, if my hour has come, take up my spirit!" When I uttered these words the blade bent and he struck me with the handle of the knife.

"When he saw this, he regained himself and tried to punch Brother Frammolino. He missed and instead, punched the wall and broke it. [This entire disturbance took place because they wanted to put a stop to the preaching of the Gospel.] This same man came two more times to kill me. Once, when he was two blocks from the house, he met an old man who asked him where he was going. He told him that he was going to my home. This old man [who was a messenger from God] told him, 'Don't go to that home because that place belongs to me. A servant of God abides there and if you molest him, you will be destroyed!' This man [the killer] became frightened and he immediately went on his way.

"At another time when this man was sent to kill me, he met the same old man who again asked him where he was going. He told him that he was going to my home. Once more the old man repeated, 'Did I not tell you to stay away? Do not touch that home, or you surely will be destroyed.' This man became so frightened that he could not accomplish the task, which he was sent to do. His gang mocked him [made fun of him] when he returned and he told them to try the job themselves.

"Therefore, two other men of the

same gang came to try and kill me. When they were a short distance from my home, the same old man appeared to them and repeated the same words which he had said twice before. These men became frightened, too, and had to return.

"They had been ordered by a priest to kill me and they were to be awarded \$600.00. These men returned to the priest and the priest had to

(Continued on Page 12)

WORD SEARCH

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The Good and the Great

By Brother Ronald Mazzeo

There have been many shepherds throughout earth's time periods, both B.C. and A.D. In John's Gospel chapter 10 we find the description of two types of shepherds, both good and bad. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep; while a hireling, who doesn't own the sheep, flees at the first sign of danger (see John 10:10-18). The hireling is a bad shepherd because he merely receives his wages and doesn't own the sheep; he is not willing to risk life and limb for someone else's sheep.

On the other hand, my favorite example of a good shepherd is 1 Samuel 17:34-37. David says, "Thy servant kept his Father's sheep and there came a lion and a bear and took a lamb out of the flock: and I went after him and smote him and delivered him out of his mouth; and when he arose against me I caught him by his beard and smote him and slew him." This is the perfect depiction of the traits Jesus spoke of in the 10th chapter of John's Gospel! It shows ownership (they were the family sheep). He was no hireling. He did not flee but rather went after the lamb risking life and limb against tremendous odds. It's safe to say that David was a very good shepherd! I'm sure there were many other good shepherds, also, but I feel David is such a perfect example; and therefore could speak with understanding when he wrote the 23rd Psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd," which brings me to the next part of this article.

Having established the "Good," let us take a look at the "Great." I wish to use several scriptures in the New Testament to establish the distinct differences between the many good shepherds like David, and the one and only Great Shepherd. My favorite is Hebrews 13:20, "Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, *that Great Shepherd of the sheep*, through the blood of the *everlasting* covenant."

No one else is ever referred to as "*that Great Shepherd of the sheep*."

Let us explore this glorious and fascinating topic to see what sets Christ apart from the many other good shepherds down through the annals of time and gives Him, only, the distinction of "The Great Shepherd." To do this we must cover two areas of thought: (1) The identity of the shepherd and (2) What was accomplished by the shepherd. We'll start with the first, or identity. David was a good shepherd but he was a very ordinary man, even though the Spirit of God was in him. He was the son of Jesse and possessed human flaws like all human beings. We don't need to go into the sins of his life. We are all aware of them. On the other hand, the Lord Jesus was anything but ordinary. We do not detract, at all, from His humanity when we say that Joseph was only His foster father. God truly was His Father! I love the account in Luke 2:41-52 where Mary and Joseph have Jesus with them when they go up to the feast of Passover (Jesus at 12 years of age) but when returning home discover He is nowhere to be found. After a three-day search, they find Him in the temple back at Jerusalem astonishing all there with His understanding and answers to their questions. Mary begins to reprove her son saying, "Why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold *thy father* and I have sought thee sorrowing." She refers to Joseph as His father. Listen, now, to the answer Jesus gives her. "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about *my Father's business*? And they understood not the saying He spake unto them." The answer Jesus gave to His mother is an open revelation to His real identity! He was not an ordinary twelve-year-old Jewish child—He was the Son of God, already about His Father's business. They didn't find Him selling or fixing wood items from Joseph's carpenter shop; so Jesus couldn't have been referring to Joseph's business that he was "about;" but they found Him in *His Father's temple*, discussing the word of God with an understanding that was astonishing to all who heard the words flowing out of the mouth of

this extraordinary twelve-year-old. He was, like David, already tending His Father's sheep; however, these were not ordinary sheep. These were not animals to be sold at market like Jesse's sheep. These were precious souls of eternal value that Jesus was tending.

There's another scripture which I feel may very well be the paramount scripture pertaining to the identity of Christ. It is John 14:8-11 where Phillip asks, "Show us the Father." Jesus answered, "Have I been so long time with you; and yet hast thou not known me, Phillip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." If you combine these words of Christ with the scripture recorded in the Book of Hebrews chapter 1 (entire chapter) you will begin to identify the "Great" persona of this Shepherd that is singular, only to Him. The writer shows here how that God had spoken many times in the past through many Prophets (good shepherds) in many divers or different ways; but now He has spoken unto us by His Son, who is the "brightness of His glory and the express image of His person. He didn't resemble His foster father, but rather, His Heavenly Father! Looking back at verse 2, we discover that He, along with His Father was the very God of creation (see Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi 9:15). "*Behold I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth and all things that in them are. I was with the Father from the beginning.*"

These scriptures prove, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the divine identity of our Master, Jesus Christ. Look how very great this shepherd is as we continue in the Book of Hebrews 1:5, "For unto which of the angels said He at any time, thou art my son?" Verse 4 states that "He was so much better than the angels." Verse 13 says, "But to which of the angels said He at any time, sit on my right hand." He was so much more than just a "good shepherd." Now let us continue to explore part (2) What was accomplished by the shepherd? The many good shepherds, like David, saved the lives of their animals or

(Continued on Page 8)

The Good and the Great

Continued from Page 7

sheep so that they could secure their value at market. Their bravery was commendable but their reasons were, for the most part, for their own benefit. David saved the lamb's life from the mouth of the lion only to deliver him eventually to market where it would be slain for food and stripped of its wool. On the other hand, Christ, the Great Shepherd left the beauty of heaven and His Fathers side to condescend to earth to "suffer hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be His anguish for the wickedness and abominations of His people" (see Book of Mormon, Mosiah 3:7, also verse 5 refers to this "Great Shepherd" as "the Lord Omnipotent who was and is from all eternity to all eternity"). This Shepherd did something no other shepherd has ever or will ever perform. This Shepherd became a lamb!

In John's Gospel 1:29 it states, "The next day John [Baptist] seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Oh how I love the words from the hymn, *Down from His Glory*, where it says "what condescension bringing us redemption." Is it any wonder that the angel of the Lord said to Nephi, "...Knowest thou the condescension of God?" (1 Nephi 11:16). In verses 20 and 21 Nephi sees the virgin Mary bearing a child in her arms and the angel says "...Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father!..." When Nephi sees this Lamb he suddenly understands the meaning of the tree of life—it is the love of God. It was this boundless, unlimited eternal love, not the nails that held him to His cross; thus becoming the only Shepherd in all the ages, past or future, to become a Lamb! No, merely, "good shepherd" could ever fulfill the words of John the Baptist "*behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.*" It had to be that "Great" and last sacrifice spoken of by Amulek in The Book of Mormon, Alma chapter

34:10-16 (please read it). It could not be a human sacrifice offered by just an ordinary man (good shepherd) it had to be the Divine Son of God. So as we all stand now at the foot of the cross gazing upward at this amazing sight before us we see, as it was mentioned earlier, "that Great Shepherd of the sheep" who, alone, became a Lamb through the blood of the everlasting covenant; thus securing our eternal salvation. We can see from this that the value of Christ's shepherding surpasses any of the past or future because it, unlike others, holds eternal rewards for our eternal welfare. 1 Peter chapter 5:4 says, "*And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*"

1 Peter 2:1 says, "*For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and*

Peter 5:4 says, "*And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*"

Bishop of your souls." We can see the amazing efficacy of this Great and last sacrifice and truly sing "there's power, wonder working power in the precious blood of the Lamb!" So thus we have before us both "The Good and The Great." There have been many good but only one Great Shepherd that could bring about the resurrection of the dead and return all the sheep to the fold of God eternally to dwell in the city of the New Jerusalem. Jesus Christ was the only Shepherd in history to become a lamb. The Creator became the creature (see Hebrews 2:14-17), "*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.*" This writer can't help but close this article by quoting the hymn, *How Great Thou Art*.

Translating Faith

Continued from Page 3

our path. It is truly not a wonder that within Lehi's marvelous dream we see them represented by a Rod of Iron. They are the crutch that God has given us to complete our journey with. He speaks to us through them; we can better understand His mysteries with them. As two sticks joined together into one, we now have a walking stick to guide us over those rocks that may come up in our way. It is a beautiful part of our faith.

I would now submit to you that there is yet an even greater beauty of faith within our numbers. Some of us have been fortunate enough to be able to travel throughout the world and visit some of the saints of God in foreign lands, while all of us have seen pictures or heard stories about those wonderful people that God has also called to be members within His fold. They are now more than ever, an important part of this Gospel restored on the face of the earth in the Latter Days of time. The spirit that they carry is an inspiration to all of God's children. Throughout the world, we are now looking at roughly 10,000 members of The Church of Jesus Christ in foreign countries throughout every inhabited continent except Australia. Let us always remember to praise God for them and their dedication to the Gospel of Christ. However, many if not most of them have done something that we have not in our walk with Christ and acceptance of the Church—many of them have never read the Book of Mormon. Yet despite this problem, there is story after story about how many of them have defended their faith in a book they cannot read. God has blessed them with this incredible faith.

I have been blessed to see this first hand. Within the last year, I had the opportunity to travel to the countries of Malawi and Mozambique. These countries have been two of the many amazing stories within the Church's missionary efforts. From humble beginnings of the first two baptisms in a puddle no bigger than your average desk at work to now

where these two countries contain roughly 1300 members or about 10% of the population of the Church. The land is beautiful and the saints are devoted to the Gospel. The Elders and Teachers give of their time and livelihood to spread the good news of the Gospel. When you hear the singing, you cannot help but be caught up in that wonderful spirit just like when we sing *Amazing Grace* or *Sing Hallelujah*. English is a language that is taught to them while they are in school, but the majority of the people find this a difficult thing. The native language in these countries is called Chichewa. World wide it represents roughly 1.5 million native speakers and is spoken throughout the countries of Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia, where we have members. There are Bibles printed in this language, but as of yet there is no Book of Mormon printed in this language. As we would travel from village to village, we would hear the pleas, "Bring us more Bibles," and "When will we have Books of Mormon?" It breaks your heart to know that we carry around nice leather bound books and many of us have two or three copies within our homes, while they usually share two or three among the whole village.

I had the distinct honor of being the one to teach them a little bit about the restoration story. It was a goal to teach them so that they could understand a little bit about the Church that they have become such an intricate part of. Their eyes would light up when the story began to unfold before them. The conviction that we have all felt of our own soul and its longing to gain acceptance by its Creator became more evident to them. When the Scriptures in Ezekiel, Psalms, John, Isaiah and other books were unfolded to them you could almost hear them say in English, "Where is this record that I might read it?" They have accepted without understanding. They have given their complete faith over to God without having the luxury that we have. We can read when we have questions. They cannot. We can study the Scriptures to learn. They must learn by hearing and remembering.

This is where the really good

news comes into the picture. There is now an effort within the Church to begin to translate the Book of Mormon into the many languages of the world. Under the guidance of the newly-formed Translational Sub-Committee of the General Church, there are members of the Church diligently working on these translations. Due to the large population of the Church which speaks Chichewa, this committee has selected it to be one of the first languages for the Book of Mormon to be translated into. The goal is that eventually all the peoples of the world have an opportunity to read about the wonderful mysteries of God that we can enjoy today. The progress in the country of Malawi is currently being accomplished by members of the Church. Brothers and sisters in teams of two are working on various sections of the Book of Mormon. These members are completely fluent in English and are very capable of creating an accurate translation. Many of them have positions in schools or the government which makes a fluency in both English and Chichewa a necessity. After completing their portion of the translation, they pass their section on to one of the other teams of two for proofreading. The proofreading process is done twice to try and ensure a completely accurate translation. Eventually before printing and publication, professional translators will be used to verify the work. The effort is going quickly and smoothly up to this point. The goal is to have this translation done and printed within the next 12 months.

I would ask you as the members of The Church of Jesus Christ to look deep within your hearts and pray for this work. While the work for Chichewa is commencing quickly, there are still thousands of members of the Church who don't have the Book of Mormon in their language and billions of people in the world who still need to hear the good news of the Gospel. There is still much work to do as we all try and fulfill that Great Commission that Christ gave to His disciples and to us in our day in time.

The New Wine Is Found in the Cluster

By Brother Joel Gehly

The phrase used as the title of this article is taken from the book of Isaiah, chapter 65, verse 8. *"Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all."* My grandfather taught me as a very young man that this scripture is referring to a vine of grapes and there are numerous clusters of grapes on the vine. This vine is the restoration of the Gospel. But this cluster, this new wine, the pure Restored Gospel, is held intact in The Church of Jesus Christ. It has been revealed unto our people

"...He has indeed restored His Gospel...no other church possesses its purity and completeness, and...we have a commission to take this message to Israel and to all who will listen."

that we have the Gospel purer than any other people. The Church of Jesus Christ, with headquarters in Monongahela, Pennsylvania, is the Cluster on the Vine of the Restoration with the New Wine. We are the Church that God has looked upon since the restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in 1830 and found to be true to the teachings and principals of the Restored Gospel. As the Apostles told us in September 2005:

"God spoke to the Apostles in a very powerful way as they met together on April 13, 2005, confirming that He has indeed restored His Gospel, that no other church possesses its purity and completeness, and

(Continued on Page 10)



Branch and Mission News

The Power of God

By Sister Rose Palacios

My husband, Brother Frank, and I had been visiting with Brother John and Sister Joan Ricco. Before we were to leave, their granddaughter, Tasha desired to be anointed, as she was to undergo a brain scan. She went in for her scan and the physician told her results had come back showing a brain tumor. Our prayers continued on her behalf. By Sunday, February 10th, Tasha stood and gave her testimony that she had gone for a follow-up brain scan and this time, there was no tumor found! Yes! God answers prayers! She truly has seen the power of God in her grandparent's home.

God has spoken through His Spirit in our meetings that He was going to show miracles to the world. Many times, friends in the world will ask for prayers of the Church and many times the prayers are answered for them. About 18 years ago, I met a lady while shopping at a store. Her name was Mary. She was crying as she was telling a friend of hers (a cashier at the store), "I just came from my doctor and he told me that I have cancer on my body. I'm going home for Thanksgiving and give my parents the bad news. We won't be having a good Thanksgiving." She then said to her friend, "Will you pray for me?" Her friend replied, "How can I pray for you? I can't even pray for myself." When I heard this, I tapped Mary on the arm and said, "I heard what you said, I'll pray for you." She said, "You don't even know me." I said, "But God knows you! You know, my church is having a meeting of fast and prayer tonight, they will pray for you too." I invited her to attend but she was leaving for her parent's home that next morning. At that point in time, something led me to ask her to go with me to the ladies' fitting room of the

store. I said, "I'm going to pray for you, don't doubt, but believe, okay?" All I said was, "Lord, have mercy upon this young lady." I gave her one of my husband's church business cards that I always carry with me and we said our good-byes. I received a call two weeks after Thanksgiving and Mary said, "I've got good news to tell you! I went to two different physicians and they both confirmed to me that I did not have any cancer on my body! I need to thank you and your church for praying for me." At the beginning of this year, I received a call from Mary. She said that over the years she had lost the business card I had given her, but her friend had recently found it. She said, "I have gone to the doctor again and he told me that I am **STILL** cancer-free!"

At this time, we want to thank God for answering our prayers and being merciful in blessing our branch recently with ordinations, reinstatements, baptisms and even in the manifestations of the Spirit and Gifts of God. He is the Good Shepherd, the Great God of Israel!

A New Name Written Down in Glory

By Brother Marc Rabe

It was March 9, 2008 and we were going down to the water's shore. I could not fully believe this was actually happening. It seemed like a dream. Were my fervent prayers and those of my family finally being fulfilled? Yes, and all praise be to God! My father, Joe Rabe, was baptized by his father-in-law, Brother Otto Henderson.

Many saints had gathered from different branches to witness this glorious day. It was so wonderful to see the saints come and support my father. That is the one thing about this church that always stuck with my father these past 31 years: THE LOVE OF GOD. He loved feeling loved in this church and wanted it so much more. After he walked to the

shore, he spoke a few words about how he felt joy and love and hope.

Later that night, my father, **Brother** Joe Rabe, and I went for a walk and we were talking about his baptism and how he just couldn't believe he finally did it. But what really touched me was that he stopped walking, turned to me and said, "I have a hope," in the most sincere and humbling tone of voice I have ever heard from him. It was such a blessing to not only hear that, but to know that!

Sometimes we may say to ourselves, "Oh that person will never get baptized," or "They'll never accept Christ," and that is simply not the case. It is not for us to say, but for us to pray as Jesus required of us. We are to remain faithful even until the end and that means faithful in all things. Just remember God has the final say.

All honor and glory be to God!

New Wine Found in Cluster

Continued from Page 9

that we have a commission to take this message to Israel and to all who will listen." Excerpt from: *Now Is Our Time! – A Message from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles; Issue 1, September 2005.*

However, as this scripture indicates, there are other clusters (or other parts of the restoration) that may be destroyed. The scripture says concerning one cluster of that vine, "...one saith, *Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all.*" We have an inkling here that God is going to destroy some. Brother Russell Cadman wrote, "It is possible that God had thought, because of the language that is used here, that God had thought to destroy the restoration of the Gospel because of the sin which had entered in. We know spiritually, those that have turned away from the pure Gospel of Christ, that spiritually they have been destroyed. Their minds have been opened up to such vile things."

Knowing this scripture, therefore, we must constantly be aware and cautious that we keep the Restoration knowledge and principles we have been taught in the hearts and minds of all of the Church today. It is my experience that diluting or making our Restoration beliefs "politically correct" will only result in the loss of our standing with God as the Cluster with the New Wine.

I wish to bring to your mind some past experiences and revelations of God concerning the angel Moroni and His fulfillment of the scripture in Revelation 14:6-7.

"Be it known unto the world that the Church of Jesus Christ acclaims Joseph Smith as the person whom the Lord used as an instrument in His hand, in restoring the Gospel of Christ back to earth again. As a Church, we proclaim that an angel of God did appear and manifest himself to Joseph Smith,..." A History of The Church of Jesus Christ (Page 1); Published 1945.

Recorded in Conference, 1983, an experience of Brother Daniel Livingston of South India—December 6, 1981:

While Brother Daniel Livingston, age 22, was being confirmed by Brothers Joseph Calabrese and Alvin Swanson, he saw an angel come into the room, holding Golden Plates. Brother Daniel said the plates were so bright he could not look at them.

QUORUM OF TWELVE COMMENTS: The Quorum feels that this experience confirms that the Angel Moroni went to Joseph Smith with the Golden Plates and it was a personal confirmation to Brother Daniel Livingston and to the Church in India.

GENERAL CHURCH COMMENTS: Brother Joseph Calabrese related that during a testimony meeting in India, a newly-baptized brother arose and related a vision in which he saw Christ walk into the meeting in a white robe, accompanied by His Twelve Apostles. Brother Dan Livingston then related the above vision, of seeing the angel with the Golden Plates. Both Brothers Calabrese and Swanson felt

that God had revealed to the new members in India that the Church in the days of Christ and the Restoration is one and the same. Brother V. J. Lovalvo expressed his thanks to God that The Church of Jesus Christ was established in India by the revelation of God.

At this juncture, Brother Dan Picciuto spoke in the gift of tongues. Brother Nathan Peterkin gave the interpretation: "God creates and establishes by the revelation of God."

"On a sudden, as from the midst of eternity, the voice of the Redeemer spake peace to us, while the veil was parted and the angel of God came down clothed with glory, and delivered the anxiously looked for message, and the keys of the gospel of repentance...Then his voice, though mild, pierced to the center, and his words, 'I am thy fellow-servant',...what joy filled our hearts, and with what surprise we must have bowed,...when we received under his hand the holy priesthood, as he said: 'Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer this priesthood and this authority, which shall remain upon earth, that the sons of Levi may yet offer an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.'" Letter of Oliver Cowdery to W.W. Phelps; A History of the Church of Jesus Christ (Page 17).

Recorded in Conference October 1985, Dream #1 from the Ohio District, October 2, 1984:

"I had a dream we were at our Ohio District Conference. In front of the church wall where the pulpit is, I saw the words written, 'JUDGMENT BEGINS AT THE HOUSE OF GOD.' I saw the Lord on the pulpit standing quietly, and His presence there was making some of our brothers and sisters feel guilty because of their feelings on the Book of Mormon and the Angel Moroni. These members started getting up and going forward to the pulpit where the Lord was. In their hands was a paper and on the paper was written 'Marriage License.' They were handing this paper to the Lord and then they walked out of the church.

QUORUM OF TWELVE'S COMMENTS: Members who have adverse feelings toward the Book of Mormon and who believe that the angel Moroni is not the angel of Revelation 14:6-7 will be revealed when the power of the Lord is manifested, as caused by the presence of the Lord on the pulpit. We interpret the appearance of the Lord as representing the power and authority of the ministry.

To all who are of the vine of the restoration and part of the cluster that contains the new wine, which God has declared through His prophets would result in a blessing, let us be diligent, bold, and true to the glorious restoration plan God has for the world. Let us never be ashamed of our beginnings, the work of God with Joseph Smith, or the angel Moroni that He sent to earth with the wonderful everlasting Gospel.

Editorial Viewpoint

Continued from Page 5

necessary before faith could grow, would any of us be here with a testimony? Our hearts were converted before our minds were satisfied. And years after we started our journey with the Lord, we still have many questions, looking through an opaque lens. Still, there is something no atheist nor scientist can smugly debunk, citing the letters after his name. It's the feeling of peace, grace, enlightenment and joy that flooded our hearts when the Holy Spirit entered, which also allows us to see with God's sight. *That's ours.* If we hold fast, it will sustain us until we join with the Lord, when He will impart His perfect understanding.

We can ponder the whys and wherefores of this universe. We can venture into its expanse. As far as we will search for answers, the most extraordinary of all creation's splendors is found within the heart: the critical domain of faith. Our Creator, God, has patiently waited there all along.

Children Blessed

Lita Marie Zelinsky, daughter of Clayton J. Zelinsky and Holly Ann Keeney, was blessed on April 27, 2008 at the Roscoe, Pennsylvania Branch.

Aden Joshua Wolfe, son of Arnold E. Kitzmiller and Hollie Marie Wolfe, was blessed on April 27, 2008 at the Roscoe, Pennsylvania Branch.

Baptisms and Reinstatements

Sister Dana (Nardoizzi) Israel was reinstated on May 18, 2008 at Lorain, Ohio Branch.

Ordinations

Brother Timothy Naro was ordained a teacher on March 4, 2008 at the Lorain, Ohio Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Tony Calabrese and he was ordained by Brother Mark Naro.

Brother Moroni Gonzalez was ordained a deacon on February 24, 2008 at the San Diego, California Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Jose Gonzalez and he was ordained by Brother Ysidro Gonzalez.

Address Change

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Branch or Mission _____

OBITUARIES

We wish to express our sympathy to those that mourn the loss of loved ones. May God bless and comfort you.

MARSHA A. WILLIAMS

Sister Marsha A. Williams of the Youngstown, Ohio Branch passed on to her reward on May 18, 2008. She is survived by her three sisters, Mary Bodnar, Nancy Conrad and Deanna Scandy as well as the LaCivita and Santilli families.

DIRECTORY UPDATE

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Sayavich, Lori Cardillo
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The Children's Corner

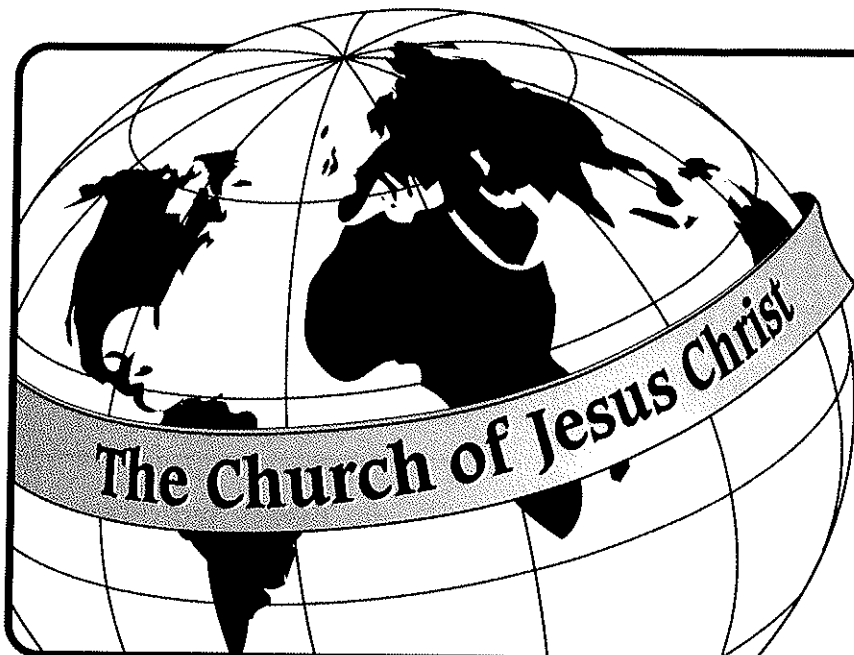
Continued from Page 6

double the amount he was going to pay them because the men threatened him saying, 'If you don't double the amount of money, we will kill you instead of this man whom we have been unable to harm!' "

Each time evil had threatened our Brother Ishmael, he had put his life in the hands of God by praying and trusting. Each time, the evil gang members failed to harm him. An angel, or heavenly messenger frightened them away and Brother Ishmael continued the great work of the Lord. God is the same yesterday, today and forever. As he promised us in Isaiah 54:17, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."

He will send an angel to save us if that is what is needed.

With love,
Sister Jan



The Gospel News

World Headquarters Monongahela, PA., USA.

August, 2008

Volume 64, No. 8

Miraculous Healing in The Democratic Republic of the Congo

By Evangelist Joseph Perri

We have reason to praise God for another miracle which recently occurred with one of the brothers of our Church in The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Africa.

On April 1st Brother Cipeng, our Church President in the D R Congo, notified me by e-mail that Brother Eugene Tshidimwenda Hegenluboya, an ordained Teacher, was taken to the hospital with a life-threatening skin disease. A picture of Brother Eugene sent to me showed the skin color of his face, arms and legs had turned very black. His face was swollen, and to look at the photo and see what had medically occurred to him brought a sense of sadness to me. Knowing Brother Eugene for the kind of person he is, always happy with a smile and easy with whom to strike up a conversation, like our brothers and sisters in the D R Congo, we became very concerned. He is a Congolese brother I could speak to and hold a conversation with in the Italian language.

Brother Cipeng informed me many people in the Congo have died from this disease and the Elders were very concerned as were his

wife, child and the brothers and sisters of the Katuba Branch. Brother Eugene has been an asset to the Church in the Congo and knows the faith of our Church and the Restoration message very well. He has been our interpreter when visiting with the church membership, during our preaching and the conducting of seminars.

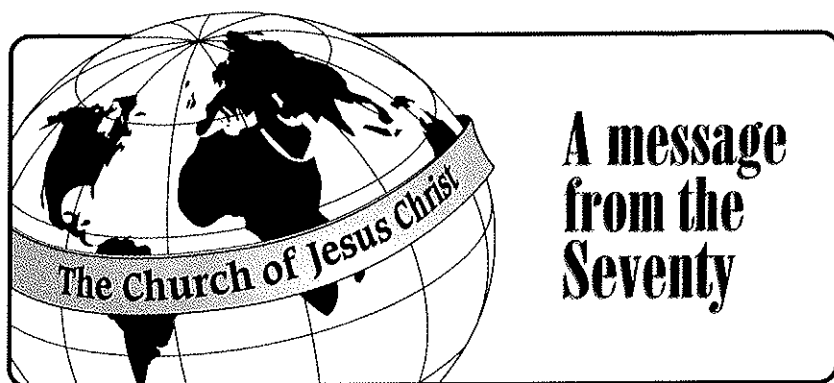
When this sad news reached me, immediately word was sent to our IMOC officers, Sector Mission Field Chairman soliciting prayer for Brother Eugene. A miracle was needed and God was the only one whom we could turn to for that blessing.

Let us remember the appeal of our Church President Brother Paul Palmieri at our General Church Conference requesting the Church worldwide come together into prayer and fasting for God's blessing upon The Church of Jesus Christ, for the growth of the Church abroad and domestically so we would see more miracles in our midst. The date was set for Saturday, May 3rd. Having a great love for our brothers and sisters and the missionary work of the Church in Africa, my request was to

each Field Chairman that they send out a message to the President of the Church in the country they are responsible to oversee, to have their entire membership join us in fasting and praying. It has been my responsibility to be in constant communication with the Priesthood of the D R Congo and Zambia, our newest established mission field. I requested that should there be an outpouring of God's healing and someone had an experience, inform me as soon as possible.

On May 3rd I received another e-mail from Brother Cipeng giving me an update on the medical condition of Brother Eugene. The report was not very good. His face had become swollen to the extent that it affected his eyes – both were completely closed and he could no longer see. A photo was sent to show the gravity of our brother's condition. Some of us who have been blessed to visit and spend time with Brother Eugene and the saints of the Church can attest to the fact that God is no respecter of persons. He has shown His power of healing a number of times among the Church membership in this country. We have heard of healings among the adults whom the doctors had given no hope for life, to the restoring of health and life to some of the children of the

(Continued on Page 11)



The Library-Learning Center of Nepal

By Brother Jeff Kattan

On October 24, 2007, four brothers from America started their three-day journey to Kathmandu, Nepal. Evangelists George Kovacic, John Genaro, Nephi D'Mercurio, and Brother Jeff Kattan, all started out with some initial difficulties with weather and the airlines but God provided the opportunity to travel together and experience the Kingdom of Nepal. The mission of the trip was twofold: visit the saints of Kathmandu and investigate the process of starting a Library-Learning Center. One thing is for sure, the love of God we have in America is the same love of God you will find in Nepal.

Our work started by gathering information concerning the Library-Learning Center. Brother Madan, who is the elder-in-charge in Kathmandu, had already registered the Humanitarian Organization with the government. On Monday, we spent the day touring the University Library in Kathmandu. While at the library, we had the opportunity to meet the head librarian. In speaking with him, it was confirmed Nepal needs a Library-Learning Center. This individual told us how most of the current libraries were strictly geared towards adult learners, and child-based libraries were in need to help the children learn to read and begin to understand English. The trip opened our eyes to how much the children of Kathmandu and Nepal would benefit from such a center.

In Nepal society, a caste system still exists. Most of our members

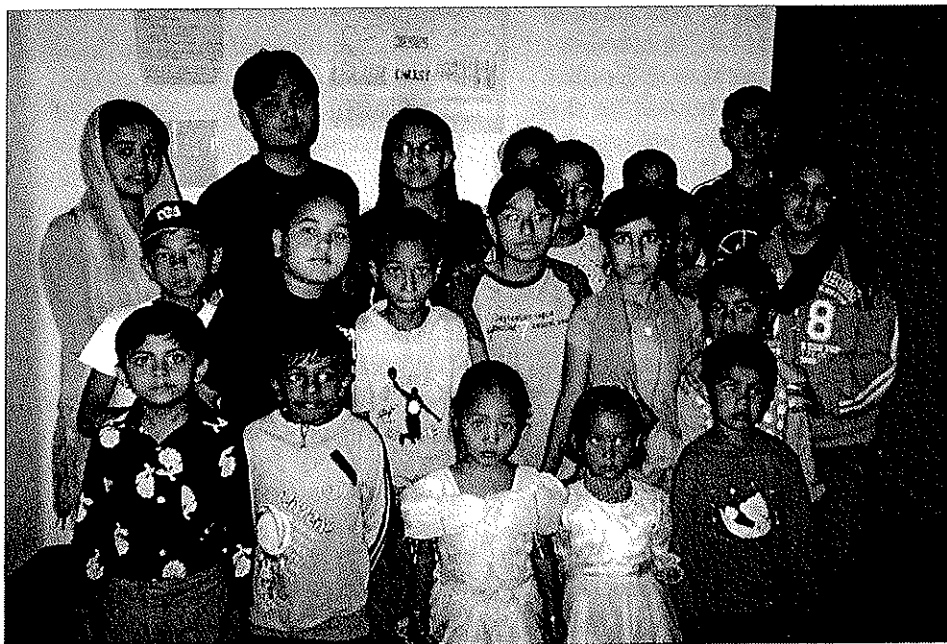
belong to the low caste of this system. These individuals are very, very poor. These children are not entitled to the same educational opportunities as others in the country. The hope of the committee is that the library will provide for extra opportunities for the children of this caste and provide them with the assistance they need in improving their education. The availability of books, computers, and trained tutors will not only help improve their every day knowledge but will also increase their understanding of English. Our focus became clearer while in Nepal: the children of Nepal need our help.

They do not have a voice of their own, are denied the basic education all should receive, as well as the opportunity to fulfill their own dreams and goals. We, as The Church of Jesus Christ, have the opportunity to help these young people become healthy, happy servants of God. We must help the children of the brothers

"...the library will provide... them [the children] with the assistance they need in improving their education."

and sisters of Kathmandu.

Upon returning from Kathmandu, the committee has been investigating ways to fundraise money with the intention of generating donations and grants to help fund the costs. The committee requests your prayers as we endeavor to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Kingdom of Nepal and provide a needed Library-Learning Center to these beautiful children. The committee also asks that anyone that feels compelled by God's Spirit to help in this worthy humanitarian effort should contact a member of the Nepal Committee or Asian Sector.



The Children of the Church in Nepal

Grazie a Dio!

By Brother Alex Gentile

The weekend of April 25 to 27, 2008 had been set aside as the time to rededicate the newly-renovated church building in San Demetrio, Italy. Brothers and sisters from the states along with those in Italy met in San Demetrio. Many of us were seeing the renovated building for the first time and were so happy to see how beautiful it was.

Saturday, April 26 we met at the church for a sacrament and feet washing service. Because of the renovations, they had not had a feet washing service for some time. Apostle Paul Benyola was asked to read scripture and speak on the ordinance of sacrament. He and Evangelist Rosario passed the sacrament to the saints. Evangelist Jim Sgro was asked to read scripture and speak on the ordinance of feet washing. When he walked on the rostrum, he testified God had told him he was going to be asked to speak on feet washing.

We then washed each other's feet and had a wonderful time. However, we had some sorrow because the only one that did not partake was Lucia—she was not baptized. We had each been praying for her conversion and we continued to do so.

Lucia had been praying also. Lucia had testified that the September conference in Fregene-Rome was a turning point for her. She started to see her life taking a different path. When her sister Chiara was baptized in December 2007 Lucia began to fast and pray. She started to read the scriptures and God began to bless her even more.

After a beautiful service, we recessed for lunch and visited for a long time. We were going to our rooms for repose and Brother Rosario came to tell us Lucia had talked to her mother and grandmother by phone and told them she wanted to be baptized. They encouraged her not to wait but to go ahead. Needless to say, we were all ecstatic and so

grateful to God. We were going to the Adriatic Sea!

It was a beautiful afternoon. We met at the beach and Evangelist John DiBattista took Lucia into the water and waited for a large wave to come so he could immerse her in the water.

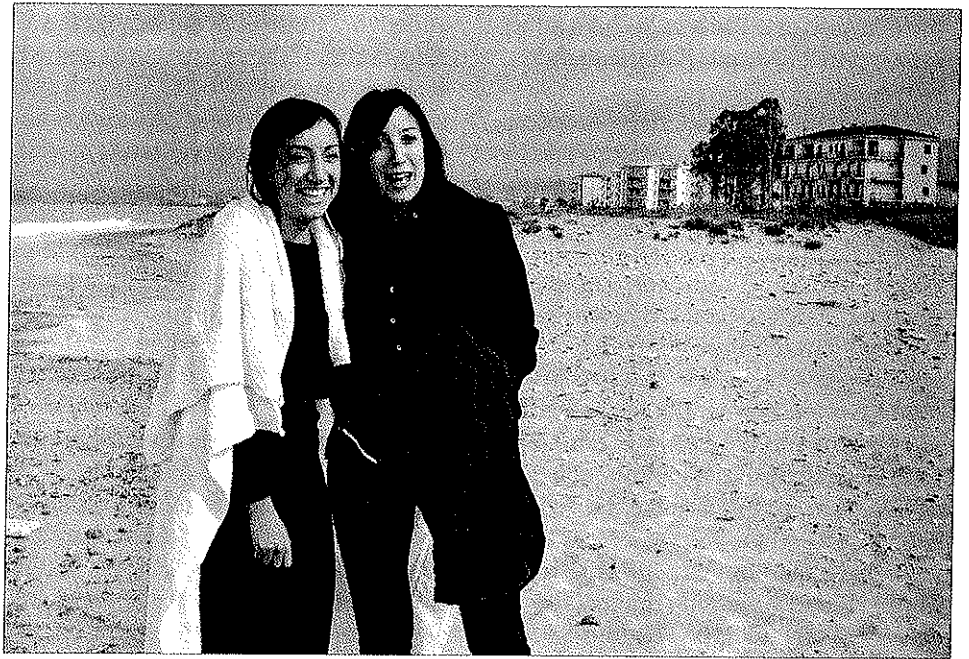
Returning to the church building for the confirmation and our evening meeting, Sister Lucia was called forward; the brothers formed a circle

around her and prayed that God would be with them in the confirmation. Brother Paul Benyola confirmed the Holy Spirit on Sister Lucia.

The brothers passed sacrament to all again. They wanted Sister Lucia to have the experience of partaking with us all.

Sister Lucia offered a beautiful

(Continued on Page 11)



Sisters Lucia and Chiara



Brothers and Sisters at the seashore

Israel's Advocate: New Region Assignments, Comments by an Apostle

By Brother Peter Benyola

The importance of the *Divine Commission* of The Church of Jesus Christ, which is to share the Lord's Gospel with the Native Americans, was reinforced at General Church Conference. Brother Paul Palmieri, the General Church President, encouraged the Church, at all levels, to take a more active part in Native American outreach.

The Native American Outreach Committee and all interested members met at the World Conference Center early on April 25, 2008 to discuss the role of the Regions in performing Native American outreach. During the meeting, Apostle Paul Palmieri, General Church President, also resolved that the Regions will report by October Conference the progress they are making. In the evening, during an executive committee meeting, NAOC materials were prepared and distributed for the Region Presidents, which included a plan to share information about Native American organizations and locations with the Regions and require their Missionary Operating Committees to develop plans to geographically assign teams. The Region Missionary Operating Committees have until summertime to prepare their plans and submit them to the NAOC and then until October to start reporting their activity.

"The general NAOC has been established to encourage missionary works among the Native American," said Brother John Griffith, Quorum of Twelve Liaison to the NAOC. "Of course, we look to the priesthood and membership to carry this responsibility given us. The task of spreading the seed is something we all have to look at as our job. It's almost like, if you want the pay, you have to do the work. During these latter-day times, we anticipate and look forward to greater blessings as we involve ourselves in our missionary endeavors, especially with Joseph (Native Americans)."

"Because of the extreme impor-

tance of this work, the Presidency and the Quorum of Twelve wish to monitor, in particular, the importance of the work of the NAOC. This is a reflection of our many discussions on the subject ... We pray that everyone will find their place in that missionary endeavor. Joseph is the key to the restoration of the entire world and will serve as a blessing to the Church in its missionary endeavors throughout the world ... every soul is important to the Lord. It has always been preached by apostles of old that the work among Joseph is necessary for our success ... There always seems to be an added blessing or a particular blessing given when we see Joseph receiving the Gospel. It's all for the fulfilling of God's will."

The Quorum's great support of the Native American Outreach, a domestic effort, should not be interpreted as *disinterest* in the Church's foreign missionary endeavors. Rather, it is an *acknowledgment* of its place as part of a broader process, which process has been explained in the Scriptures. By detailing the sequence of events in God's plan, the Book of Mormon gives valuable structure and shape to the Great Commission assigned by Jesus Christ.

"I think in fairness to all missionary works, we wouldn't suggest that one soul is more important [than] another," Brother John said. "Scriptures indicate clearly that the original apostles were told to take the Gospel to all kindred, tongues and nations, and we hope to do that as a Church. With the advent of the Book of Mormon coming onto the scene ... as was prophesied, it has brought to light and has redefined God's love for His covenant people, Israel — not forgetting His original promise to Abraham, that through his seed, all nations would be blessed. We have seen that unfold through the birth of Christ and the highlighting of the re-gathering of Israel to the fold of Christ. In addition

to that, the Book of Mormon defines God's plan for salvation that Israel might come back, or be reclaimed. The first step is through the Seed of Joseph, or the Native American, as we know them today. With the allowance of the inheritance given the Gentiles of the Gospel, we see that all rights and privileges given Israel are equally rewarded to all of mankind who accept Christ. In other words, they are adopted in. The Church, being primarily Gentile, has been given the responsibility as pronounced through the Book of Mormon, that the Gospel must go back to Israel, beginning with Joseph."

Many members have a yearning or drive to get involved with some kind of missionary work, and have prayed that the Lord would guide them to a particular area. In lieu of a precise answer through experience, a saint of God with this desire is Scripturally directed — by default — to what we call the *Divine Commission*. To this point, Brother John said, "It's definitely a wonderful start. Through His plan, He has ensured that all will come to Him — but He does have a plan, and we should respect that ... we have had numerous experiences given to the Church relative to the work among Joseph, just as we have had experiences to go in foreign fields. It's hard to evaluate the Lord's plan. We're not following our priorities, we're following God's priorities."

Passages from the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and Church history that thoroughly verify Brother John Griffith's respective points are as follows: Psalm 128; Jacob 5:75, 6:2,3; James 5:7; Isaiah 49:5,6; Romans 11:11-15; Isaiah 42:6-7; Alma 29:1-2; Jacob 5:18; Matthew 28:16-20; The Book of Mormon Title Page; Genesis 22:15-18; Acts 3:25; Matthew 10:5,6; II Nephi 3:5, 11-13; Zechariah 2:10-12; 8:23; III Nephi 21:22-24; Jacob 5:61-63, 74; Romans 14:11; *Religious Experiences and Expectations*, Wm. Cadman, pages 22-24; *A History of the Church of Jesus Christ*, W.H. Cadman, page 32; *The Church's Divine Commission*, Bob Watson, pages 4, 7, 17, 36.



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Editorial Viewpoint ...

By Brother Peter Benyola

"The LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. Wherefore, the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near to me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid" (Isaiah 29:10-14).

Nearly millennia ago, a solid foundation of righteousness, justice and divine love gave rise to a Spirit-saturated and immensely blessed church worthy of the name of the Son of God. However over time, grievous wolves found their way into the fold, deceiving the very elect with divers doctrines. Through this silent onslaught, the great edifice of a chaste Gospel was reduced to reprobate rubble. Oh, not all at once — and not instantly, to be sure. In a long, steady descent, what seemed to be impossible — and which many doggedly deny even to this day — happened: The Lord withdrew His name and looked away from the perversion. Apostasy.

For so many years, the Lord's faithful were left in a spiritual famine, desperately feeding on the ashes of what once was — Psalms 102:9. How could it have come to this? But beneath the remains, that foundation stayed. It was out of reach and not visible — but unsullied.

From the midst of all the blackness and hypocrisy teeming from the world's corrupt political and spiritual leaders, the Lord had a plan to return to that original foundation — one cannot reform what is already pure and perfect. Through an unlearned but spiritually thirsty and sincere young man, the Lord miraculously brought forth a record sealed to earthly eyes. Not coincidentally, around the same time and on the same land, an explosion in scientific discovery, literature, the arts and humanities, printing, and the development of technology realized a period unparalleled in world history. Individual liberty and knowledge blossomed. Despite these clear blessings raining down from on high, the souls of humanity continued to grow cold to the ways of God, more and more distancing themselves from the testimony of the recorded Gospel of Jesus Christ. They turned instead to salvation through dreams of governmental utopias and the idea of man-made peace without the "constraints" of God's standard.

Nevertheless, a chosen few never denied their testimonies of the work that began on a hill in upstate New York, 22 September 1827. That night a voice cried forth from the dust that had long since settled, bringing again what was once lost — initiating the calling, nurturing and gathering of God's people once more before the end. This passage in Isaiah's prophecy refers, of course, to the advent of the Book of Mormon.

Satan's scheme to draw the Truth out of the world and let it deteriorate in darkness might have succeeded for a time — but ultimately it failed because the promise of Jesus Christ carried through, *"Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* As if anyone should ever have doubted it. Sprouting once again from that ancient foundation, His revealed Word of Truth allowed the opening of many deaf ears and the healing of hardened, dead hearts. The Lord's marvelous work and wonder — too grand to see with only natural eyes — made possible the redemption of all our lives, setting our course and changing us forever. A single, beautiful word is epithetical to this incredible story of latter-day glory. It truly is The Greatest Story Ever Told.

RESTORATION.

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork



An Angel Brings a Heavenly Message

(Judges 13)

Dear Girls and Boys,

When we read about the work that angels do, there are many surprising things that happen. In this story an angel appears twice to bring wonderful news and leaves by stepping into a blazing fire built on an altar to God.

This happened to a good man named Manoah and his faithful wife. They lived in Israel during a time when the country was under constant war with a nation called the Philistines. Manoah and his wife were very sad because they could not have any children. They constantly prayed to God about having a baby.

One day as the wife was alone, an amazing stranger appeared to her and told her, "Now you can't have children, but soon you will have a son. Do not drink any wine or strong drink, or eat any unclean foods, for this child is special. As a sign that he is special, you must never cut his hair. He shall begin to deliver this nation of Israel from their enemies, the Philistines." (That meant he was to be a leader in their country when he grew up.)

When she told her husband about this amazing message, she said, "A man of God came to me, and his face was like the face of an angel of God, very terrible: but I asked him not who he was, and he did not tell me his name."

Then Manoah went and begged God in prayer to let him meet this

heavenly messenger and learn also what they should do in raising the baby that would be born. And God listened to his prayers and sent the angel again.

The angel came when his wife was sitting outside in the field. She quickly hurried and called her husband. Manoah asked the messenger, "Are you the man of God that spoke to my wife?"

The angel replied, "I am."

And Manoah spoke saying, "Let everything you said happen. Tell us, how shall we raise Him?"

And the angel of the Lord replied, "Have your wife be careful. She may not eat of anything that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, not eat any unclean thing. All that I commanded her let her observe."

Manoah answered, "Please, will you wait while we take a kid [young goat] kill it as an offering and say prayers, too?"

The angel told Manoah, "Though you want me to stay, I will not eat your bread, and if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it not to me, but to the Lord."

Since Manoah did not know he was talking to an actual angel, he said, "What is your name so that when these things happen, we can praise you?"

The angel's answer must have puzzled them, because he said, "Why are you asking my name which is secret?"

Manoah never answered, but took the meat offering and placed it on a rock in the fire while he prayed to God. To the shock of both husband and wife, when the fire flamed high

towards heaven, the angel stepped into the blaze and rose to the heavens out of sight!

Both Manoah and his wife fell on their faces to the ground. Manoah exclaimed in fear, "We shall surely die because we've seen God!"

"No!" said his wife. "If we were going to die, God wouldn't have accepted our burnt offering or showed us this angel or told us these things." She was right.

They never saw the angel again,

(Continued on Page 11)

WORD SEARCH

MANOAH	HAIR
WIFE	AS
WAS	A
TOLD	MAN
BY	HE
AN	LED
ANGEL	WILL
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H	M	N	O	S	W	A	S	H	G
E	P	A	L	L	E	G	N	A	P



Branch and Mission News

Treasure Coast Branch

By Sister Lori Checchi

At the Treasure Coast Branch, our May and June meetings resounded with the invitation to make a choice. The ministry was inspired to repeatedly ask the congregation this question: "Where do you want to spend eternity?" First one, then another, and then two more at the water's edge accepted the invitation.

On May 19, 2008, our meeting was opened by Brother Ron Carradi using Hebrew 11:15 as his text. Brother Ron reminded the congregation that this verse speaks of being able to endure against opposition because of **vision**. "Where is your vision – on today's struggles or God's promise of eternal life? The faith we have in God keeps our vision strong, but the first step is baptism. Living this life with Christ is not our ultimate goal, it is a benefit. If we take our eyes off the mark, we could be caught up in today's struggles and dim our vision of Heaven's reward. If you knew that Zion was going to take place next week, would your life change this week? Have you made your travel arrangements? We have to live each day as if it is our last. This is the time to act and be responsible for your own salvation."

Brother John D'Orazio followed after singing *How Happy Are They*. "With all these fiery trials, are you happy in the service of the Lord? Do you have that hope and vision for tomorrow that helps you to get up and face each day? God gives us the strength to go through our problems. If we didn't have problems, we wouldn't need God. When the sun is shining we should be closer to God than ever before so that when trials come, God is quick to remember us and to come to our aid."

On May 25, 2008, we remembered those who fought for our

freedom with a moment of silence on Memorial Day. Our meeting was then opened by Brother Rocco Benyola asking the congregation to think of the preparation the soldiers of our nation go through before a battle. "There are also preparations the members of the Gospel Restored must go through in preparation for their battle for truth. The first step is baptism. Then, we must discipline ourselves to take action and work for the Lord. For every action, there is a reaction. For us to receive blessings and miracles, we have to be seeking them. If you don't like your life now, begin by changing your behaviors and habits." Using as his text II Corinthians 9:6, he reminded us that if we sow sparingly, we will reap sparingly. "We must give of ourselves and have a yearning desire to work for the Lord." Brother Ron Carradi followed by encouraging enthusiasm for the Lord, not the things of this world. "Steer toward spiritual preparation by following the words spoken in the 5th chapter of Alma, including being stripped of pride and envy." He continued by describing the preparations the members can make in their service to God. "Fasting is part of spiritual preparation to approach God in a humble manner. After you pray, get up and go out and use your

efforts to further the Gospel, don't sit back and wait for God to bless you." During our testimony meeting, Alan Strong, a friend who had been attending for several months, made known his desire to work for the Lord and his baptism date was set for June 8, 2008.

On June 1, 2008, our meeting was opened by Brother John D'Orazio, using Alma 7:14 as his text. He reminded the congregation that there is a way that we enter into the kingdom of Heaven and that we must follow Christ's example by being baptized. "Where do you want to spend eternity?" Visiting teacher, Brother Jim Miller, was invited to speak and used III Nephi 11:23 and the 6th chapter of Moroni as his text. He described the mode of baptism, as well as the prerequisites, coming forth with a contrite spirit, and having a fixed determination to serve Him until the end. He related his personal experience of a stumbling block to baptism, thinking that he was not good enough to belong to the Church. He was able to overcome this after many years of waiting and described how a new member must first learn to crawl, then walk, then run. Brother Ron Carradi then reminded the members that there is

(Continued on Page 8)



Sister Donna Holmes, Sister Linda Evans, Brother Brian Brown, and Brother Alan Strong

Treasure Coast Branch

Continued from Page 7

nothing too hard for God to help you overcome in your life. "All God wants is our sincere desire and a broken heart and He'll do the rest." Two elders were then inspired to stand and relate experiences about procrastinating the day of their baptism and extended the invitation to the congregation. During our testimony meeting, Brian Brown made his request known to join Brother Al next week at the water's edge.

On June 8, 2008, the members, along with many friends and visitors gathered at the water's edge to witness the baptisms. Alan Strong was baptized by Brother Ron Carradi and Brian Brown was baptized by Brother David Checchi. After the baptisms, Linda (Rogolino) Evans stepped forward and stated she wore old clothes today so that she could also be baptized. Many in the congregation remembered that for many years her mother, Sister Juanita Rogolino, would bring old clothes to every baptism in the hope that her daughter would accept the invitation. While Linda was being baptized by Brother David Checchi, another friend who had been visiting the church for many months stepped forward. Brian's sister, Donna Holmes, was baptized by Brother Ron Carradi.

Afterwards, we met back at the church building where our new members had hands laid on for the reception of the Holy Ghost. Our feet washing service was a wonderful sight to behold with two new sisters and two new brothers to participate. We then enjoyed great food and fellowship afterwards.

A Message from the Lord in Mesa, Arizona

By Brother Ronald Mazzeo

A brother in our branch received notice that his position in the company that he worked for was being elimi-

nated. This caused great concern and many of us went into mighty prayer on his behalf, as we didn't want our dear brother to have to move away to find work. One of our brothers was inspired to get out of bed and pray about this matter. While in fervent prayer in the early hours of the morning, a vision appeared to him after saying, "Lord, send our brother a message showing him what to do about his job." This is the vision that he saw. A scroll appeared in his bedroom with writing on it. It was suspended in air. It began flying in midair as the ceiling opened and the scroll flew out of the room and into the sky and out of sight. Still on his knees, the Spirit of God came over him and he began singing these words: "I believe the answers on the way. I believe the Lord has heard me pray." He was filled with the Spirit, and the joy of the Lord overwhelmed him.

He never told anyone the vision until one day shortly after this he was having dinner at the brother's home whose job was being eliminated. After dinner, the host said this to all at his table: "I have some good news about my position at work. One of our sisters came up to me after the meeting and said, 'I have a message for you from the Lord. You are to stay with the company you're at in a different position that they will offer you and it will be sufficient for your needs.'" She also told him things about his life that she would have no possible way of knowing except by the Spirit of God. The brother who had the vision asked "Were those her exact words, 'I have a message for you from the Lord?'" The host said, "Yes, they were."

He began to weep and wasn't able to speak for a time, then he told all there his experience about the scroll and the message being sent. What a beautiful confirmation of God working as a team, answering the prayers of His people!!

It is this writer's belief that the more we rely on our God instead of our own human understanding, the more we will please the Lord and be truly blessed indeed!

"Trust in the Lord with all thine

heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Dedication of The Church of Jesus Christ, Liberty, Ohio Branch

"...It's a beautiful morning, It's a wonderful day..." Sister Karen Progar just sang our opening hymn, *It's a Jubilee Morning*, and it truly is a beautiful morning and a wonderful day for the dedication of the Liberty Branch's new building.

It's been 10 years since Brother Brian Martorana, a Niles Branch trustee, found property at the corner of Keefer and Naylor Lloyd road. There was great opposition in securing the purchase, but a day came and a way was provided and we had our property. Over the next few years the Niles and Warren branches decided to merge. A merger sealed with a promise to be united, no longer this or that branch but a new congregation with a new location and a new name in Liberty. When we merged we were completely dedicated in love, hard work, faithfulness and great determination. Doesn't just saying the location have a beautiful ring to it...Liberty.

Well, let's fast forward back to the meeting, many brothers and sisters have come to share this day with us and we are so honored. Our meeting was opened by Brother Paul Palmieri, and his scripture was Isaiah 66th chapter. Presiding Elder, Brother Wayne Martorana, told us a week before the meeting a man came to him, not knowing whether it was a vision or dream, and handed him a sheet of paper and on it was written Isaiah 66. Brother Paul then continued with Mosiah 15:8-10 asking who shall be that seed that will bring the good tidings of salvation through Jesus Christ, and when we do, how beautiful upon the mountain are the feet of those who bring good tidings. He concluded saying, that the day we are living in here in America, is getting

tougher each day, and God is knocking on our minds and saying to our nation, wake up, I have greatly blessed you and I am disappointed in your conduct!

The preschool class then sang a very joyous rendition of, *Sing Glory*, with solos by some of the children on the verses. Brother Phil Jackson continued by relating several miracles from our Church history and reminding us that God is the same today and forever. He then offered the dedication prayer. While praying he said, *The Church of Jesus Christ*, at which time a vision was seen of bright lights coming from the letters mounted on the wall. Then the Word of the Lord came saying, "Thus saith the Lord, MY Priesthood and brothers and sisters, I have blessed this branch and I will continue as long as my people love and serve me. I shall continue to be with them. Pray, pray without ceasing, dark days are coming. We have had dark days, but I will send more upon this earth. I shall clean and clean. Thus saith the Lord"

Brother Brian Martorana continued by saying, "We cannot dedicate a building to God unless we first dedicate ourselves, also, a seed must die before it can bring forth fruit and then we can truly, *Sing Glory, Sing Glory, Sing Glory, Our God has done wonderful things!*" Brother Isaac Smith, Jr. beautifully sang, *We Shall Sing on the Mountain of the Lord*

Brother Tony Picciuto asked us, "Who is your Creator? Everything we have comes from resources from our God. Every element in this building was provided by our God, every element of our bodies was provided by God, now let us dedicate them both to Him." He concluded saying, "No matter how great a building man can build, with just one touch from God's hand and it will come down, not one stone left upon another."

Our Region President, Brother Tony Calabrese, then declared he had good news and bad news for the branch. Good news: You will have some of the happiest moments of your lives here. Bad news: You will also have some of your saddest. He admonished us that if the charity of Christ prevails in this congregation you

will never fall apart or be divided. You can carry one another through anything.

Brother Wayne Martorana told us many years ago when Warren and Niles split their congregation, a brother had a dream where he saw a stream flowing and then he saw it divide and further down come back together. Today we see this dream fulfilled. We then received the flag from the General Church Trustees and Brother Richard Lawson told of how pleased he was with the building and how beautiful it was. We then acknowledged all the hard work of our Branch Trustees, Presiding Elder and also our architect and his wife.

The Liberty Branch then hosted all its visitors to a delicious homemade pasta dinner.

Ordinations in Aliquippa

By Brother Pete Oestreicher

May 4, 2008 was a beautiful sunny Sunday morning in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, as four brothers were ordained into the office of their calling. Brother Carl McCartney was ordained into the office of a teacher, and Brothers Paul Gibson, Ray Intrieri and Aaron Palmieri were ordained deacons. This morning's opening hymn was *In the Army of the True and Living God*.

Brothers, sisters and friends from Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania, were in attendance for this blessed event. Brother Larry Ali from the Greensburg Branch, offered the opening prayer, and Apostle Phil Jackson from Kinsman, Ohio, opened the meeting with the message, "Arise, Shine; for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" (Isaiah 60:1). Isaiah is speaking about The Church of Jesus Christ in our time. He predicted the apostasy (removal of light) as little by little the Gospel was changed, and the restoration (re-establishment of the light) with its brightness based on truth and righteousness. Brother Phil let it be

known that those being ordained today will not be working only for the Aliquippa Branch, but will be helping the whole Church. Brother Dan Covalesky, from Greensburg, reported seeing a white glow around Brother Phil when he was relating his last experience.

Evangelist Tony Ricci from McKees Rocks ordered those being ordained to serve with energy and power. "The Church of Jesus Christ was given this power, and it is up to its ordained officers to serve with this power." Brother Tony, who is also President of the Penn Mid-Atlantic Region, thanked the Aliquippa Branch for recognizing the need to ordain these brothers and acting quickly.

Brother John Mark D'Antonio, Presiding Elder, told everyone we must pray for these brothers so they may carry out the duties of their new office. We then sang *To the Work*. Evangelist Paul Aaron Palmieri, from Aliquippa, read the duties of a teacher: to be a peacemaker; to be in harmony with the ministry; instruct new members; visit brothers and sisters; and conduct meetings in the absence of an Elder. Brother Paul Aaron related an experience had several weeks ago when Brother Carl was called upon to pray. The Spirit of God that came upon him was noticed by several elders, and they knew he was ready for ordination to the office of a Teacher. Brother Carl's feet were washed by his grandson, Brother Ben Hemmings from Fredonia.

Brother David DeLuca read the duties of a deacon, which include: looking after the temporal and spiritual needs of the branch; assist in feet washing; visit the sick; and be polite and courteous at all times. He discussed the importance of this office, told those being ordained that they should be proud of their new position, and read from Acts 6:1-8, where the Church grew with the ordination of deacons. Brother Robbie Bradwell from McKees Rocks washed Brother Aaron's feet, Brother Brandon Hunt from Aliquippa washed Brother Ray's feet, and Brother Dan Covalesky from

(Continued on Page 10)

Ordinations in Aliquippa

Continued from Page 9

Greensburg washed Brother Paul's feet.

Apostle Paul Palmieri, President of the Church, reminded everyone that ordained offices are ones of service, and not reward. Teachers serve the congregation in order that they may be unified, while deacons take care of the buildings and the natural needs of the membership. Apostle Paul went on to talk about the callings of our four candidates. He recently saw Brother Carl at a wedding, and knew it was only a matter of time before he would be called. Brother Ray, who was recently baptized, attended as a non-member for quite a while. His enthusiasm, both before and after his conversion, indicated that his calling was inevitable. Apostle Paul went on to say that he had noticed a difference in Brother Paul Gibson this past year, and he knew the Lord had touched him and called him, and when he looks upon Brother Aaron, he sees him as a grandson, and that others were witness to his calling.

The ministry then formed a circle around the candidates, and Brother John Mark D'Antonio offered the prayer. Brother Alvin Gehly from Fredonia ordained Brother Carl, Brother Paul Aaron Palmieri ordained Brother Aaron, Brother Larry Ali ordained Brother Ray, and Brother Brett Gibson from Detroit Branch #1, ordained Brother Paul, after which everyone sang the hymn *Ready to Go*.

Brother Carl let everyone know how thankful he was to be here today. He let everyone know that for a while "I did my own thing," and even though he forsook God, God did not forsake him. When he needed a liver transplant, God gave him a liver. Last year he was diagnosed with cancer, and is presently going through treatments. He thanked his children and grandchildren for attending; thanked Brother Alvin for the special friendship they have had since childhood; and thanked his wife, Sister Joan, for the love and care she gives him.

Brother Aaron thanked God for looking after him his entire life, and let everyone know he loves them: his

family, friends, and the family of God. He stated he has been praying about being used by the Lord to work for His Church, and confessed that he has always looked up to Brother Tony D'Antonio, who has been head deacon in Aliquippa for over fifty years.

Brother Ray thanked God, and testified how good He has been to him. He told about an auto accident where his car was totaled, and he came out without a scratch. He relayed how his son was also in an accident, received a brain injury, and is now graduating from high school and participating in school activities. Brother Ray also stated he looks up to Brother Tony D'Antonio and is thankful for his Church family.

Finally, Brother Paul also thanked God for his calling, and confessed he doesn't feel worthy of this position. He informed everyone how the enemy of his soul was working overtime during the last trip he made for the Church, and Brother Paul thanked his wife, Sister Janet, for setting a good example for his children, their mates, and grandchildren. Brother Paul thanked everyone for attending and for their support, and he prays he will do a good job in his new office.

Brother Don Ross asked everyone to look at the disparity of age of the recently ordained officers, from 18 to 70. He went on to say age is not important, what is important is a commitment to serve The Church of Jesus Christ.

Communion was passed. Brother John Mark thanked everyone for attending. *Sing Glory* was sung, and Brother Joel Ondik closed in prayer. Everyone was invited to stay for the delicious meal that was prepared in honor of our recently ordained officers.

Blessings at Roscoe, PA Branch

The Glassport and Roscoe Branches enjoyed a joint meeting on June 8, 2008. Brother Pete and Sister Janet Oestreicher also visited from Aliquippa, Pennsylvania. Brother Ed

Donkin opened using I Nephi 8:1-18. He testified of how God worked in his life. Brother Lou Hutsko read from III Nephi 23:1-9. Brother Pete Oestreicher read Psalms 1:1-6, and gave his personal testimony. Many testimonies were given and blessings flowed.

June 29, 2008 found the saints at the water's edge for the baptisms of Brother Elmer and Sister Fran Devore. Brother Chip Smith from the Herndon, Virginia Branch was visiting and assisted with the baptisms. God's blessings were felt as the rain abated and the sun shone for the baptisms.

Blessings in Imperial

By Sister Jacqui King

Many saints gathered at Imperial, Pennsylvania Branch on April 20, 2008 after the General Church Conference meeting. Blessings included angels seen, tongues spoken, the Three Nephites appearing and the words of the Lord Spoken.

Brother Albelardo Granados opened using Revelations 15:3. He said the Doctrine of God is perfect; don't let your position waver. Brother Luis Marroquin followed by saying to focus on Jesus Christ each day, and support one another with the love of Christ. Brothers John Genaro and Paul Liberto followed and continued with the theme of serving God.

The meeting truly was spirit-filled and uplifting.

Notice

The Church's Divine Commission is again available at the Print House. To order contact the Print House at:

8282 Boettner Rd.
Bridgewater, MI 48158
734-429-5080
printhouse1@aol.com

Healing in the Congo

Continued from Page 1

saints who were at death's door. God's love and the manifestation of His power have been seen many times.

A greater effort was needed in the exercising of faith so God would hear the prayers, cries and the pleas of His People. God has never disappointed us.

The words of Jesus come to mind as I type this message. Matthew 7:7-8, *"Ask and it shall be given you, Seek and ye shall find, Knock and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh, receiveth, and he that seeketh, findeth and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."*

For us to receive these blessings from the Lord, it is necessary and important to exercise **FAITH**.

On the 6th of June word came to me by e-mail from Brother Cipeng – the **miracle** for which we had been praying became a reality. Brother Eugene was completely healed and had begun to attend church services several times in his branch of Katuba. Can we give praise to our loving God? YES, we can with all of our heart.

When I read the news of Brother Cipeng's e-mail, I could not contain myself and immediately called and spoke to him by phone asking whether it was as he had informed me. His reply was, "Brother Eugene is healed."

The chorus of a song Sister Esther Dyer wrote came to me:

*Hallelujah! the Gospel is restored,
To all those who love and serve the
Lord!*

*To young Joseph He did give
The pattern we should live
Hallelujah, yes the Gospel is
Restored.*

Many of our brothers and sisters in different countries throughout the world have embraced the Restored Gospel, and because of this they are enjoying the same blessings we are.

God bless one and all.

Grazie a Dio

Continued from Page 3

testimony of how God had blessed her. Her sister Chiara interpreted for her. Both Lucia and Chiara are beautiful women but the spirit of God has made them even more beautiful. We could visibly see the spirit of peace on their faces. It was wonderful to see how happy the brothers and sisters in San Demetrio were. There are no young people in San Demetrio and they welcomed Lucia with love. Sister Carmelina, baptized less than two years, brought her a bouquet of flowers.

Chiara and Lucia live approximately two hours driving time from the nearest elder. In an email Lucia sent days after her baptism she said, "I came back to Marostica yesterday. Now I am in the office but with a different spirit. Now I know I have been making the right decision. I feel really happy. I just miss God's wonderful family."

Please remember them in prayer. They are young in age and young in the Gospel but they are praying and working toward a maturity of the spirit.

The Children's Corner

Continued from Page 6

and all went well. After a time, Manoah's wife became pregnant, and she was careful to do all the things the angel had instructed her to do. They called their beautiful baby boy, Samson.

As he grew, his family kept his hair uncut as a sign he was set aside by God. At times the spirit of God moved in him. As he grew, people were astounded by the awesome strength he possessed, a strength God planned to use in His own time to free the nation of Israel from their enemies, the Philistines. Everything that the angel told them came true!

Love,
Sister Jan

The Church of Jesus Christ

In my dreams each night,
I see upon a hill
A beautiful church, which God brought
forth He made so firm like steel.

The ways of this little church
are spreading far and wide;
And someday it will be known
all over the countryside.

For God gave Joseph Smith
a record of His plan;
And Joseph Smith interpreted it
throughout many a land.

Though Joseph Smith was killed
by men who knew no good,
God made the church rise up
again to stand as once it stood;

And now it stands alone,
apart from all the others
It is The Church of Jesus Christ
where we become sisters and
brothers.

Though this church be scorned
by people of the world;
We the brother and the sister
look upon it as a pearl;

For God thought us good enough
to bring into His loving place
And this is where we'll worship Him
in prayer; that someday we may see
His face.

By Sister Sylvia Curry

* WEDDINGS *

Sister Rachel Natoli and Brother Jason Monaghan were united in holy matrimony at Detroit, Michigan Branch #1 on June 7, 2008.

Sister Heather Everett and Kris Shovan were united in holy matrimony at Detroit, Michigan, Branch #1 on June 20, 2008.

Children Blessed

Vincent Anthony Carter, son of Nick and Sister Holly Carter, was blessed on February 3, 2008 at Detroit, Michigan, Branch #1.

Chase Preston Hunt, son of Brian and Jennifer Hunt, was blessed on May 25, 2008 at Detroit, Michigan, Branch #2.

Sophia Maria Stevens, daughter of Shane and Danielle Stevens, was blessed on June 8, 2008 at Detroit, Michigan, Branch #2.

Jayden Alexanderlee Korotney, son of CJ Copland and Sister Chiara Korotney, was blessed on June 8, 2008 at Detroit, Michigan Branch #2.

Isaiah Manuel Gonzales, son of Sister Vivian Gonzales, was blessed on May 25, 2008 at the Yucaipa, California Branch.

Lilah Halil Zamora, daughter of Brother Victor Zamora and Kuka Roberts, was blessed on May 25, 2008 at the Yucaipa, California Branch.

Baptisms and Reinstatements

Sister Cheryl LaVella was reinstated on June 8, 2008 at the Yucaipa, California Branch.

Address Change

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Branch or Mission _____

Ordinations

Brother Ryan McDonnell was ordained a teacher on April 6, 2008 at the Bell, California Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Steve Kerby and he was ordained by Brother Stacey Light.

OBITUARIES

We wish to express our sympathy to those that mourn the loss of loved ones. May God bless and comfort you.

HAROLD R. BATALUCCO

Brother Harold Batalucco of the San Diego, California Branch, passed on to his reward on May 2, 2008. Brother Harold was an ordained teacher in The Church of Jesus Christ. He is survived by his wife, Sister Rosanne Batalucco; his children, Deana Pate and her husband David, Sister Renee Ostrander and her husband Craig; Greg Batalucco and his wife Jenni; four grandchildren, and three sisters.

RONALD RABOLD

Brother Ronald Rabold of the Lorain, Ohio Branch, passed on to his reward on June 17, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Sister Fran (Altomare) Rabold; one son, Trevor and his wife Vicki, and two grandchildren, Faith and Brandon Rabold.

LUTHER LANG

Brother Luther Lang of the Lorain, Ohio Branch passed on to his reward on May 3, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Sister Marilyn (Tisler) Lang; three sons, Karl, Scott and Luke; stepson, Brother Troy Tate; stepdaughter, Sister Michelle Bowens, and six grandchildren.

Spiritual Anniversaries

Brother Matthew Cotellesse of Detroit, Michigan Branch #2, celebrated his 50th anniversary as a member of The Church of Jesus Christ.

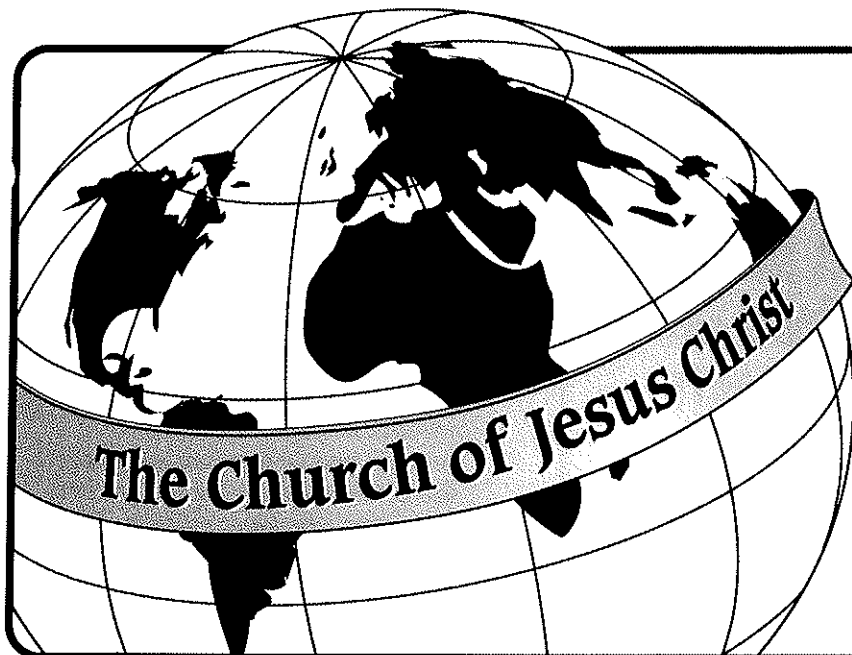
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The Gospel News

World Headquarters Monongahela, PA, USA

September, 2008

Volume 64, No. 9

GMBA Campout 2008 — Saints Shift Perspective, Focus on Joy of Salvation

By Sister Michelle Watson

The scripture that inspired the theme for GMBA Campout 2008 is all about how Jesus gently shifts our perspective so that we can more fully understand what is most important to Him. The scripture, Luke 10:17-20, describes the seventy Evangelists returning from two years of missionary work ecstatic over the powerful miracles they performed in the name of Jesus—who, when he heard their excitement, reminded them that our joy should be rooted in our salvation rather than miracles. With only a few words, Jesus prompted His followers to keep in perspective the all-importance of salvation.

Those who attended the camp were reminded of the same thing. Asked many times to rehearse the day of their conversion, the saints remembered the great change that took place in their lives—and the great sacrifice that made it possible. Although we sometimes can be distracted by all the other joyful things about being a Christian, Jesus wants us to remember that salvation is the core, the hub, the vine from which all of our joy should grow.

Shifting perspective is easy to talk about, but it is difficult to perform in our daily lives. If we can, with the help of God, accomplish it, oh, what joy is ours! At camp, the saints spent an entire week learning how to live life while keeping the joy of salvation always before their eyes and at the top of their hearts.

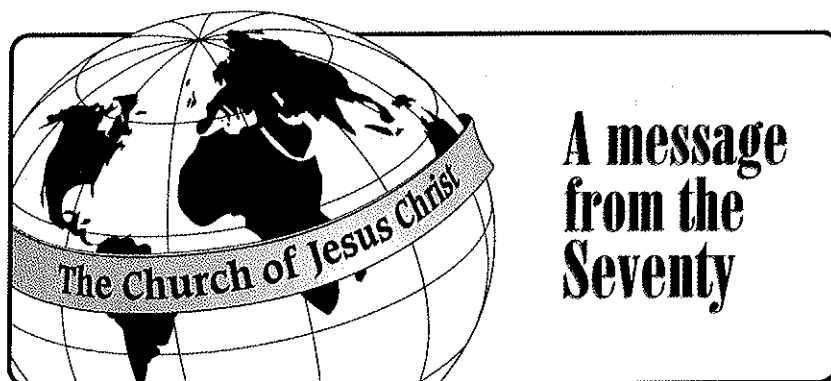
The principal perspective-shift that we discussed at camp was setting the joy of salvation above all other joys—doing what Jesus asked His followers to do in Luke 10. The saints learned that although we witness external events that we can see and hear—such as miracles, etc.—we must be a witness of the internal events that are so important to Jesus such as repentance, faith, charity, forgiveness and commitment. Assuming that we would—of course—rejoice in those external things, Christ begs us to expand our joy to the internal realm as well—indeed, His desire is that we would *center* our joy in the internal rather than the external.

Our God is also infinitely compassionate—although He wants us to center our joy on the internal, He realizes that we need to see the

external things as well. Even baptism, the starting point of a person's salvation, has an important external element to it—the actual immersing of the candidate in an open body of water. The saints certainly experienced joy witnessing the four baptism requests made at camp—Brandon Dulisse, Alyssa Giannetti, Sara Ficara, and Jonathan Pennell—but their joy is even greater because of the important inner journey that has begun with an outward display, or witness, of their choice.

Another perspective-shift that the saints were challenged to make is the way in which they view life's challenges and struggles. Christ asks us to engage these struggles, not avoid them or yield to what is easiest, because when we triumph over these trials with Christ, the joy that results is exquisite. We must look at our trials differently—we must remember that whatever happens to us externally, our salvation can never be taken away from us. If we can maintain this perspective through difficulties, we can continue to praise God no matter what comes our way—we can glorify God through our trials and stand as a witness that His joy cannot be extinguished by circumstances. On Sunday evening, Brother Ike Smith broke his heart before the congregation for those who have fallen away from God and lost the joy of

(Continued on Page 11)



God Gives the Increase in Ecuador

By Evangelist Paul A. Palmieri

The scriptures state that "some plant, some water but God gives the increase." Truly this was evident during the 2nd quarter 2008 trip to Ecuador that was memorable for many reasons which this article will cover. The trip began with departures from the USA on May 17th and the trip concluded with safe arrivals back in USA on June 2nd. The trip participants included Evangelists John DiBattista and Anthony Ricci and Brother Daniel Mora, in addition to the writer. The trip also featured the first sister to make a missionary journey to Ecuador, Caryl DiBattista, who bonded very well with the sisters and women of Ecuador.

God knew the needs of the congregation before we arrived on this trip as well as in the years before The Church of Jesus Christ ever arrived in Ecuador. To state God was in the matter planning the work among His ancient, covenant people in South America is not only the truth but it reinforces the scriptures that the work has already begun to gather home the dispersed tribes of Israel. As an example, one of our new brothers in Christ was spared of a brain illness, when the doctors had basically given him up. Another friend of the Church has a scar on his neck where God spared him and, as a reminder he was spared death. The scar is visible and close to the main arteries in his throat.

Our trip was a busy one with the ability to flex different brothers into

the trip as only Brother Mora stayed the entire time and the others were able to insure the trip had three consecutive weekends of services. The ability of the extended trip allowed a great level of fellowship and closeness to develop between the brothers and sisters of Ecuador and the USA and also a deepening of the relations between the members and friends in Ecuador.

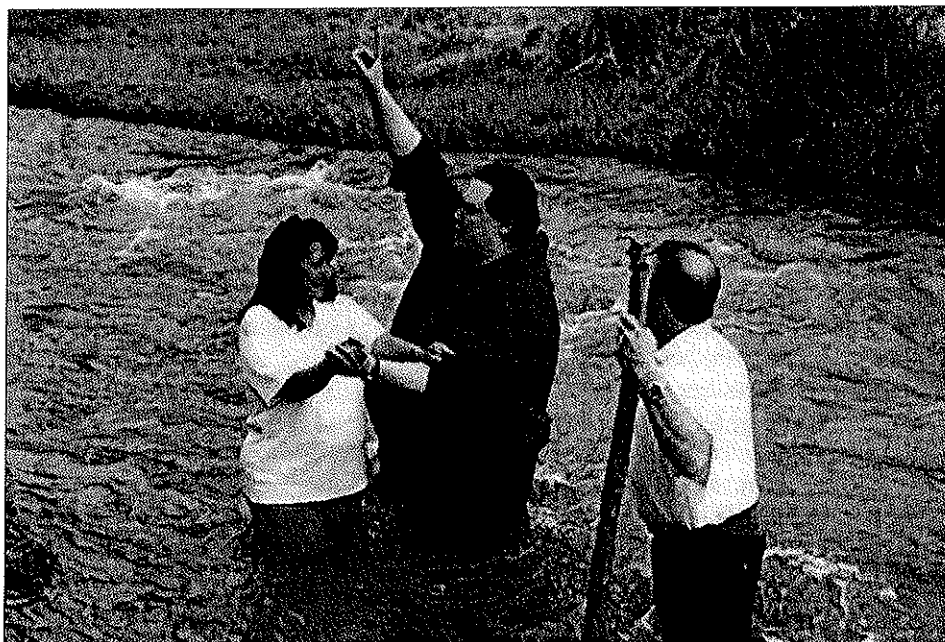
Some of the highlights of the trip included, a) three additional sisters baptized the second weekend, b) the first two brothers of The Church of Jesus Christ baptized in Ecuador the last weekend, c) miracles in the

healing of the body and sparing of the body, d) the healing of marriages in addition to the five new souls to Christ, and e) more contacts for future trips in the base city of Quito and also many contacts around the country of Ecuador.

The love of Jesus is no respecter of persons as you all know; but the manner in which the Son of God brought people together and made them whole astounded the brothers and sister who were visiting. We want to give sufficient praise to God because He mended broken lives and families. To see the hope in the eyes of the people who had no hope was a humbling reminder of the omnipotent attribute of God.

We were able to spend much time in the homes of the brothers and sisters and friends of the Church, sharing the good word of God and good food of Ecuador. We were able to hold numerous mid-week services and can state the crowds of people almost always filled the homes to overflowing. We also now have established locations to stay for our lodging, as well as where to meet for Sunday services which have been a blessing to the work.

Our sisters in Ecuador were able to bond with Sister Caryl DiBattista. It was a blessing to see her guide them



Brother Tony baptizing Mariana.

in their duties as sisters in the Church and to help at the water shores. The sisters of Ecuador are a very open and loving people and we pray additional sisters can continue the goods works which have begun.

As two examples of the mysteries of the work of God, one day we lost our cell phone, actually the writer did, and we needed to spend time at two of our sister's homes trying to locate the phone. We never did get the phone back, we got another; but one of our new brothers came into the home and began to converse with the brothers. The spirit and power of God came in our midst and he asked for his baptism.

The second unique item occurred when one of the candidates was struggling before their baptism and their cab and the cab of our brothers ended up behind one another

a dozen young children who love the brothers and sisters. We are hopeful to make two more trips to Ecuador in God's time this year and would ask each of you to pray that Jesus continues to nurture and grow His flock in Ecuador.

The enemy of God tries to discourage all of God's people and we request your loving prayers for these and all of our brothers and sisters of

The Church of Jesus Christ around the world. As we always have told our brothers and sisters in Ecuador, we are one church and they have brothers and sisters worldwide who love them. We can happily say to each of you the brothers and sisters in Ecuador return the love. May God bless you for your prayers and donations to the Great Work of the Lord!

"...the manner in which the Son of God brought people together and made them whole astounded the brothers and sister who were visiting.

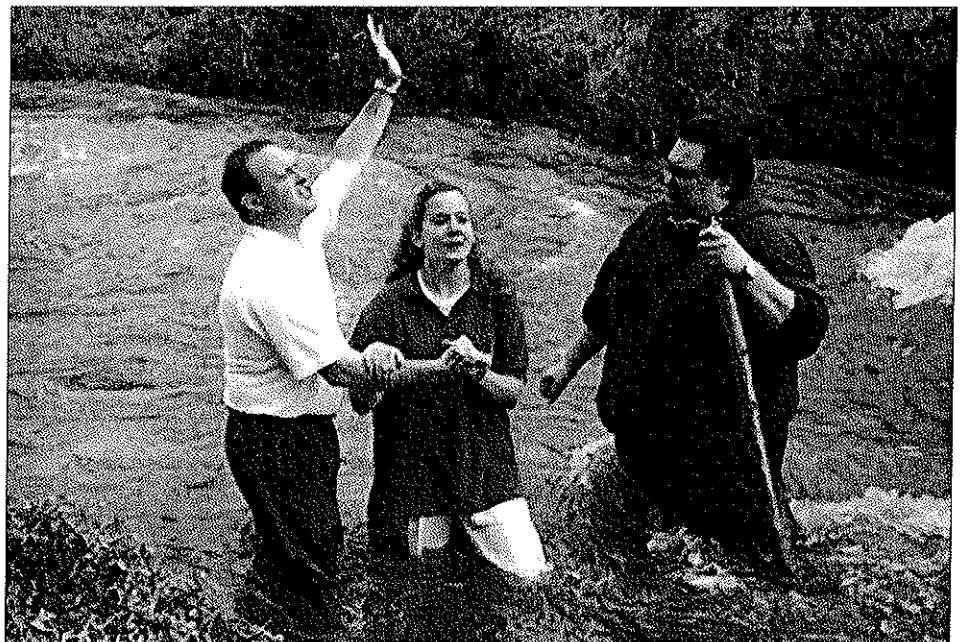
We want to give sufficient praise to God because He mended broken lives and families. To see the hope in the eyes of the people who had no hope was a humbling reminder of the omnipotent attribute of God."

as they were exiting. Keep in mind, the brothers from the USA had no idea of this candidate's need nor of the whereabouts of this person. What chance is there of this happening, with three people meeting out of over 5,000,000 in this city?

As we look forward in Ecuador, we would like to state that, through the calling of God, The Church of Jesus Christ has six members in Quito, Ecuador, over 15 other adult friends of the Church and at least half



Sister Caryl greeting Mariana.



Brother Paul baptizing Dayli.

A Brief History of The Church of Jesus Christ Before, During, and After Nauvoo

By Brother Thomas Ross

The Church of Jesus Christ firmly believes that the primitive church as established by our Lord, gradually drifted into a complete and general apostasy or falling away. The Church also believes in a Restoration of the Gospel back to earth through the instrumentality of Joseph Smith, Jr.

Joseph Smith and a few other adherents were organized as a church in the year 1830 in New York State. In this year also, The Book of Mormon was published in book form, after having been translated by the gift and power of God from the ancient record or plates which had been delivered to Joseph Smith by an angel of God. Sometime after this, they gathered at Kirtland, Ohio, and during their stay there, erected a temple. It is still intact and is an historical attraction to many believers in the Restoration as well as other interested and inquiring visitors. Finally, due to persecution, the Church migrated as a body to the state of Missouri.

Persecution seemed to follow them, like the people of God in all ages. Eventually they were forced to flee from the state of Missouri in the year 1839. About 5000 Latter-Day Saints settled in western Illinois and founded a city that Joseph Smith decided to call "Nauvoo," a Hebrew word conveying the idea of "beauty and repose." It is situated on the east bank of the Mississippi River in Hancock County, about 190 miles up the river from St. Louis and nearly the same distance from Chicago, towards the west.

From the summer of 1839 until his death in June 1844, Joseph Smith urged the gathering of the saints to Nauvoo as a religious duty. A plan to build a temple was advanced also. The excavation was begun in the fall of 1840, the cornerstones were laid in April 1841, and construction continued more or less steadily until five years later, when the temple was dedicated in April 1846, two years after the

death of Joseph Smith, though the interior was never finished.

The Kirtland temple was a frame structure finished with stucco and smaller, whereas the Nauvoo temple was of masonry, measuring 128 feet long, 88 feet wide and 165 feet from the ground to the top of the tower. The walls were made of solid blocks of cut limestone and from four to six feet thick. Temple stones still to be seen in Nauvoo reveal that the workmanship was indeed excellent.

In the pre-dawn night of October 9, 1848, this great structure, in which enormous toll and sacrifice had been invested, was destroyed in a pillar of fire—it's all wood interior reportedly fired by the torch of an arsonist.

Nauvoo, beginning in 1839 as a sprawling refugee camp, soon became a populous city. In 1845, with a population of 11,036, it was the largest city in Illinois.

During the eighteen thirties and forties, England was a fertile soil for the Restored Gospel. In 1837 the Church sent missionaries there and as a result of their evangelistic labors some 17,000 persons, mostly English, were baptized during the decade 1837-1847. Of these, more than 4000 gathered primarily in Nauvoo.

In 1841, Apostle Parley P. Pratt, as head of the British Mission in England, took the liberty to write a lengthy letter to Queen Victoria of Great Britain. Quoting from Daniel, Isaiah and First Nephi, he warned that all the kingdoms of the world, including that of Her Majesty, could soon fall and that these future events were nigh, even at the door. He declared that if the rulers, clergy and the people of England would hearken and repent, they would have part in the glorious kingdom (of God); but if they would not hearken to the words of the prophets and apostles, they would be overthrown with the wicked and perish from the earth.

On a number of occasions, Joseph Smith voiced dire predictions of the fate that would befall those who persecuted the saints. In May 1843, he also told Stephen A. Douglas, who was a guest at his table that if the United States would not redress the wrongs committed upon the saints that in a few years the government would be overthrown and wasted. He further prophesied that Douglas would one day aspire to the Presidency, "and if ever you turn your hand against me or the Latter-Day Saints, you will feel the hand of the Almighty upon you." Indeed, it is common knowledge that some years later, Abraham Lincoln defeated Stephen A. Douglas for the Presidency of the United States.

On June 27, 1844, Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were shot to death in nearby Carthage by a mob of lawless and disguised men. This eventually proved to be the beginning of the end for Nauvoo and also incited confusion among the saints.

The Church failed to recognize Sidney Rigdon as rightful successor to Joseph Smith and instead the reins of leadership passed into Brigham Young's hands. Due to a rising tide of persecution and depredation, Brigham Young finally announced in September 1845, that the city would be abandoned in the following spring.

During the winter of 1845-1846, preparations were made to move to the West. The evacuation continued all through the spring and summer of 1846 and when autumn came, what had been the most populous city of Illinois was all but deserted. Joseph Smith, the founder of Nauvoo, "The City Beautiful," was left buried in a secret, unmarked grave to prevent desecration of his body.

Meanwhile, Sidney Rigdon had returned to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and continued preaching the Gospel. There were others also who refused to join the bulk of the saints in the migration to the Great Salt Lake Valley. A number of factions sprang up, while still later, The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was formed.

(Continued on Page 11)



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Editorial Viewpoint...

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

This verse from the Bible is one of the most well known of all scriptures, and popular because of its unarguable truth. There is no question that if a child is taught from the time they are born how to behave, and how to "go," that this will mold them into the man and woman they become. All of our morals, opinions and mannerisms are formed at a very early age. Parents today must understand the importance of their job in raising their children. Every action and even every word spoken by a parent has a powerful effect on our children. For those of you reading who have children, I'm sure many times you were amazed at how your children would repeat things you have said, when you thought they weren't even listening! Even our ways become their "ways." I'm a bit of a neat freak and like things in their place. The other day, I was surprised when my 7-year-old son came running downstairs crying hysterically because someone "messed up" his room. I didn't realize how powerful my being a neat freak rubbed off on him! I don't really think parents realize how powerful an effect they have on who their children become. Children who have a mother or father or both who are unaffectionate and distant, grow up craving that kind of affection, and unfortunately seek it out in the wrong people, or in a wrong lifestyle. Even the prodigal son, although he rebelled and lived a life not at all the way he was raised, remembered how he was taught as a child the "way he should go," and returned to his thankful father.

All throughout scripture we read of children that are who they are as a result of their parent's teachings. Just look at Abraham, Isaac and Jacob! Of course, many will point to Laman and Lemuel, the sons of Lehi who were disobedient, while their brothers were spiritually minded and obeyed their father and mother. But when we really read the account of Laman and Lemuel, we see many times when they repented of their sins, because deep down they knew the truth and the way they were supposed to go. Because of Nephi's righteousness, it is possible that Lehi and Sarah favored Nephi, causing jealousy of Laman and Lemuel. I'm sure much of their disobedience was due to their jealousy of Nephi, not because they weren't raised in the right way. The same would be true of Joseph and his brothers. Joseph's brothers were jealous because their father favored Joseph over them, and rebelled... not because they didn't know the "way" but because they, like all children, want their parents to be pleased with them. This is an important lesson for parents today. We should try not to alienate one child over another. And how beautiful was it when Joseph was reunited with his brothers in Egypt when they were in need, and Joseph helped them. What an act of forgiveness and love! These boys truly were raised in the way they should go!

Even in the world today, people are realizing they need to be more involved in their children's lives. Work places are embracing a "work-life" balance which is not a corporate idea, but it is rooted in the word of God. We need to spend time raising good, ethical, respectful men and women. It cannot be left for the schools to do. Especially those of us who know the Lord, it is important we teach them the truths of living a successful life, which is only accomplished by teaching them to be like Jesus Christ. When I sometimes visit my son's school, I can't help myself but notice how the children behave, and see a direct result of the kind of parenting they are receiving. We are stewards over our children, and I believe the greatest missionary work we can do is with our own children. More importantly than us giving them life, let's teach them how to obtain eternal life with our Savior.

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork



King Hezekiah Needs Guidance

(II Kings Chapters 18 & 19)

Every king, president and most famous people do not make decisions by themselves. They choose, or find very smart experts to help give them advice before they decide what to do. Strong leaders take the facts and think them over. Weak leaders allow someone else to make the decisions for them. In the Bible, there was an amazing strong king of Judah named Hezekiah. He listened to God's prophet, Isaiah.

When Hezekiah became king, the country was full of mixed up people who were not serving God. They were worshipping many statues, believing in wizards and witchcraft and even serving religions that killed babies. God was not pleased. Most of the people of Israel had forgotten God.

Their relatives in the country north of them, called Israel, also turned away from God. Those people were conquered by a mighty soldier king from the country of Assyria. Since the people had turned away from God, they had no protection. Their false gods were not able to save them. Hezekiah agreed to give them a huge amount of gold and silver and they agreed to leave his country alone.

He also began to prepare for an attack. During five years, he built a wide wall to surround the hill of his city, Jerusalem. He also solved the problem of drinking water by an amazing plan. He found engineers who figured out how to build an

underground tunnel from the lower part of the city to the spring where it came from. This hidden tunnel winds around for about 1700 feet. It brought wonderful fresh water to his city. (If you want to see a picture of the ancient, secret tunnel ask your teacher to go on Internet to www.google.com and type in Hezekiah's tunnel.) What a great idea! Now the people could stay locked behind walls and be safe with water.

King Hezekiah was not confused. He talked with God's prophet, Isaiah, and he continued to clean his land of false religions. He had the places where people worshipped idols torn down. He cleaned up the temple and invited the other tribes of Israel to come worship God with him. He made it against the law to worship false gods that burned babies as sacrifices. He made a friend of God's prophet named Isaiah and he prayed constantly asking God what to do.

When the fierce king of the Assyrian nation sailed his warships along the coast and returned, attacking and conquering one city after another in Judah, King Hezekiah waited and prayed. The northern kingdom called Israel, had been destroyed by them ten years earlier and the people taken away as slaves. Now their enemies were back, marching to attack King Hezekiah and the city of Jerusalem.

The brutal king of the Assyrians sent many messengers telling Hezekiah to just give up. They mocked the power of God and told him they deserved to be destroyed. Day after day passed while a huge army surrounded the city outside the walls. Many people feared greatly.

Hezekiah immediately sent

messengers to God's prophet, a great man named Isaiah. Isaiah warned him not to fear or try to hire other soldiers to fight for him (II Kings 19th chapter). Isaiah told him, "Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words which you hear or the things that the king of Assyria says against me. I will send a blast upon him, and he will return to his own land, and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land."

This is the time that God finally sent an angel of death. Overnight one hundred eighty-five thousand of the enemy soldiers died. The evil king of Assyria returned in defeat to his country and later was murdered by his own sons. The city of Jerusalem was spared. Hezekiah, the king who turned to God and looked for advice from God's prophet, was spared and his city was protected.

(Continued on Page 11)

WORD SEARCH

GOD	HIS
HAS	NAME
MERCY	KING
KINDNESS	HEZEKIAH
FOR	WAS
US	BLESSED
IF	THE
WE	LAND
REPENT	OF
AND	JUDAH
PRAISE	PROTECTED

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



General Ladies' Uplift Circle Fundraiser

**Help support the World Conference Center Beautification Project
while enjoying the fellowship of the Saints!**

On Saturday, October 11, 2008, during the General Church Conference,
we will be sponsoring a boxed lunch fundraiser.

Time: 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

Price: \$10.00

Lunch choices are as follows:

Ham and Swiss Sandwich, coleslaw
Ham and Swiss Sandwich, pasta salad
Turkey and Swiss Sandwich, coleslaw
Turkey and Swiss Sandwich, pasta salad
Bottled water and a variety of snacks will also be included.

Please place your order by contacting Sis. Jacqui King at **412- 477- 2756** or at
jacquiking1@yahoo.com subject line: luncheon

Be sure to include your **first and last name** and **meal choice**. We are only
accepting individual orders for the lunches; no committee orders.

Deadline for placing orders will be midnight Monday, October 6th, 2008.
Payment for lunches can be made between 9:00 & 11:00 AM on Saturday.



Aliquippa Ladies' Uplift Circle 85th Anniversary Celebration

By Brother Pete Oestreicher

(Note – It is delightful to have one of our brothers reporting on a Ladies' Uplift Circle activity. We hope you enjoy his recap. – Sister Karen Progar)

"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies....Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates" (Proverbs 31:10-31).

The Aliquippa Ladies' Uplift Circle observed its 85th Anniversary with a celebration during the Sunday, June 22, 2008 morning meeting at the Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Branch. Twelve out of the twenty-two members were present, as Sister Joyceann Jumper, Vice President, introduced the program. In gratitude of our great and promised nation, and in honor of all the service men and women the Circle has been praying for, everyone sang the Star Spangled Banner, and recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. The Circle sisters then recited the Ladies' Circle Pledge.

Sister Donna Bogle recited the poem read by Sister Violet Sarver at the General Circle's 30th Anniversary. This poem is as applicable today as it was then. Sister Janet Oestreicher, President, introduced the hymn, *To the Work*, which symbolizes what the Circle does and is required to do. Sister Janet then presented the following history of the Aliquippa Circle:

"As we all know, the Aliquippa

Branch was organized in 1922. The saints in Aliquippa have always been willing and quick to support the auxiliaries of The Church of Jesus Christ. On May 20, 1923, in the home of Sister Filomena DiGiacomantonio (Jackman), Sisters Skillen and Dentino, representing the General Circle, organized the Aliquippa Circle. Three days later, our predecessors held their first regular meeting and studied from St. Matthew. They began their circle with ten sisters meeting in the homes of the saints and in the church building. It is interesting to note that in the published history of The Church of Jesus Christ, that shortly after our circle was organized, Brother Jackman requested permission to donate \$100 to be used for the American Indian Work. Our branch members have always been quick to support and provide for whatever need exists. In 1923, can you imagine how many weeks' wages \$100 would be?

"The sisters met faithfully, and by 1933 had a membership of 33. This consisted of nearly every sister and young woman who attended the Aliquippa Branch. Throughout the years, the sisters dedicated themselves to supporting whatever the need was – from purchasing a flag for use at the building, to donating to the needs of other branches and to helping the MBA. Throughout the years, I think we can say, that if someone mentions a need, the sisters will figure a way to meet that need."

Sister Janet continued to say she truly believes the sisters have always done what they could to give of their best to the Master. The hymn, *Give of Your Best to the Master* was sung.

After the sisters shared another poem written by Brother Sarver, Sister Sue Breschayko placed a rose in memory of those sisters who passed away during the past five years: Sisters Joan Gibson, Janice Foxall, and Erma Rossi.

The Circle sisters then sang *The Last Mile of the Road*, after which Sister Juliet Bogle read a poem written by a young sister nearly 30 years ago regarding her observations on Ladies' Circle. Sisters Dora Rossi, Theresa DeVincentis, Karen Progar, and Sue

Breschayko then articulated what Ladies' Circle means to them, and expressed their most memorable recollections and experiences.

Sisters Marty Jumper and Janet Gibson then rehearsed the *Aims* of the Ladies' Uplift Circle, which members strive to achieve:

1. To assist The Church of Jesus Christ in its missionary work, especially among God's Covenant People, the Native American, and also among the Gentiles;

2. To promote a close fellowship among sisters and friends throughout the Church by praying and sharing their problems and joys with one another;

3. To attract non-members to the Church;

4. To provide wholesome, beneficial study of God's Word and opportunities for meaningful service.

Sister Karen Progar, teacher, and General Ladies' Uplift Circle President offered the closing remarks and introduced the closing hymn, *Too Small for Great Things*, which embodies the service of the Aliquippa Ladies' Uplift Circle.

As an addendum, during the past five years, the Aliquippa Ladies' Uplift Circle has donated almost \$12,000 to the following: General Ladies' Uplift Circle, Penn Mid-Atlantic Ladies' Uplift Circle, World Conference Center, Aliquippa Branch, Aliquippa brothers and sisters in the mission fields, and local organizations. The Circle also supports the following activities: *Meals on Wheels*, along with others, providing desserts twice a year, to shut-ins in the community; *Flower Fund*, supporting the mailing of greeting cards, flowers and/or gifts to the sick and shut-ins; *Joy Bags*, containing approximately 10 individually wrapped items, each item with a label quoting a scriptural verse of encouragement given to the sick; and *Layettes*, for the Native American people.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Circle treated the Branch to a luncheon in honor of the anniversary celebration.

We're Back — The Simi Valley Ladies' Uplift Circle

By Sister Bernadette King

Simi Valley was without a Ladies' Circle for a few years, but there was a growing desire among our sisters to begin anew. On October 17, 2007, the Simi Valley Ladies' Circle was reorganized at the home of Sister Berni King. The 11 sisters who assembled felt an air of excitement and an anticipation of blessings in our fellowship to become an active Ladies' Circle again. Sister Pearl Nester, one of the founding members of the San Fernando Valley's Ladies' Circle opened our meeting in prayer. At this inaugural meeting, officers' duties were reviewed, various sisters volunteered to become officers, meetings and events were scheduled and missionary needs were identified, along

with prayer needs.

Meeting once a month, our Circle's lessons are being taught on a rotating teacher basis, giving several the opportunity to participate. Sister Kristen Azzinaro led the first lesson on "A Bowl of Spiritual Fruit." As brought forth through scripture and discussion, love, joy, and peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, and faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are the bountiful, beautiful spiritual fruits that God desires to see displayed in the fruit bowl of our lives. When we exhibit these fruits, our lives become a reflection of God's own character, instilled in us by His Spirit, and He is pleased, honored and glorified.

Sister Sharon Church conducted our next lesson on Zion, introducing the definition from our Faith and Doctrine:

"We believe in the fulfillment and ultimate establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, while men are still in the flesh. We refer to this period of time as the Peaceful Reign, which shall precede the Millennium, or

Thousand Years with Christ."

Sister Sharon went on to identify scriptural references to Zion, conditions preceding Zion, God dwelling in our midst and the gathering of the House of Israel while teaching us several new *Songs of Zion* that correlated with these themes. We have been truly edified by these lessons.

Some of our recent projects have been collecting blankets for the needy and collecting shoes for those in the city of Vincente Guererro, Mexico. We anticipate being further used by God to uphold the Ladies' Circle pledge:

"We pledge ourselves to read and search the Scriptures and ask God to direct and bless our Ladies' Uplift Circle in every way. We will do our duty in visiting the sick; we will neither find fault nor offend in word or deed, but will be a help to each other and help others to the best of our ability."

Please remember our Circle in your prayers, that all we do may be for the honor and glory of God.

New Man

By Brother Arthur Gehly, Sr.

Put On the New Man (Woman)

(Colossians 3:1-17)

"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in the knowledge after the image of **him** that created **him**: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but **Christ is all, and in all**" (verses 10 & 11).

"If ye then be **risen with Christ**, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, **not on things on the earth**. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (verses 1-4).

OLD MAN (WOMAN)

The person you once were before your faith, repentance, baptism and receiving of the Holy Spirit has been buried with Christ in the likeness of His death. You are now risen with Christ in the likeness of His resurrection. **The old man (woman) is no longer in charge of your life.** You no longer are ruled by the evil power, and you stop doing anything that is against God's will. You no longer commit the sins of adultery, fornication, uncleanness, evil desire, covetousness, which is idolatry: for which sake the wrath of God cometh upon the disobedient.

"In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these: **anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds**" (verses 7-9).

These old attributes of the devil

are taken away by the power of salvation through Jesus Christ our lord. His blood was spilled for us and washed our sins away. Praise God! We can no longer return to the sins and vices that we once had, but with the help of Jesus we are cleansed from these awful vices and sins. We no longer lie to one another; we no longer deceive one another; we no longer are enticed by the devil to sin and yield to his lusts and vices. The Apostle Paul states that we "**put off the old man...and put on the new man**" (verses 9 & 10).

NEW MAN (WOMAN)

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of **mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ**

(Continued on Page 10)

New Man

Continued from Page 9

*forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on **charity**, which is the bond of perfectness*" (verses 12-14).

When we have put on this new person as a saint of the most high God, we become the elect of God. This comes as a gift from God through Jesus Christ, His son. It changes us and lifts us up to a higher level of belief, understanding and action. We as His elect put on the attributes of the Lord as defined above. We are then able to become more like Him. We can **love** one another, forgive one another and work with each other to build the kingdom of God.

"And let the peace of God rule

in your hearts, to which also ye are called in one body; and be ye, thankful" (verse 15).

The wonderful blessing that we receive as we seek to do God's will is the wonderful **peace of God** that rules in our hearts. Praise God for all His goodness! For this blessed peace we are thankful because no matter what we have or don't have in this natural life, **we have His peace.**

*"Let the word of Christ dwell in you **richly** in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in **psalms and hymns and spiritual songs**, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, **do all in the name of the Lord Jesus**, giving thanks to God and the Father by him"* (verses 16 & 17).

The Apostle Peter in II Peter Chapter 3 verse 11 says: *"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?"*

Jesus Christ answers that question himself in the Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi Chapter 27 verse 27: *"... Verily I say unto you, even as I am."*

Brothers and sisters, we have **put on Jesus Christ** and become a **new person**. We have His Spirit to help us and guide us. We can not **fail** if we continually abide in His love.

May His blessings bring peace in your life and through your humbleness and keeping His commandments, He will prosper you both naturally and spiritually in your life in Him.

Join Us For The

Native American Outreach Committee Meeting General Church Historian/Editors Education Writing Workshop

December 6, 2008 at the
Forest Hills, Florida Branch

Native American Outreach Committee Meeting

This committee serves the Church by providing guidance, resources and coordination assistance to further the presentation of the Gospel Restored message to all Native Americans.

Historian/Editors and Education Writing Institute

Writing to inspire, encourage and educate the soul. Help develop the skills necessary to record past and present events of the Church for the purpose of informing and educating members and non-members in the present and in the future.

Participate in work sessions to develop lessons to teach children, young people and adults the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

Notice

Effective immediately, the new address for the MFC/HFF is:

HFF
P.O. Box 956
Mount Laurel, NJ 08054

Brother Joe Benyola
HFF Chairman

Note of Thanks

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I want to thank you for all your thoughts, prayers, cards and phone calls. Thank God, my eye surgery was a success, but I am still dealing with some pain and discomfort and, therefore, can't sleep.

Last Thursday evening prior to bed, I asked God to remove the pain and allow me to sleep. I also wanted to see His throne. Before my prayer was over, I was able to see His throne. On the way to the throne I saw angels singing praises to the God of heaven and earth. The angels were glowing and the light was just beaming off of them. It is hard to explain in words.

God bless you,
Brother Chip Smith

GMBA Campout 2008

Continued from Page 1

salvation. As he spoke, the Word of the Lord was given saying, "Thus saith the Lord, keep your focus on Me, and I will redeem them and bring them back into the fold." While we rejoice in the beautiful manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the Word of the Lord, we must rejoice more in the hope of the

message we were given—someday those lost souls will regain salvation! The saints were also challenged to find joy in loving Jesus for the salvation He offers. If we simply felt good about salvation and did nothing that Christ asked of us, we would have shallow happiness rather than true joy. The saints were asked to fall in love with Jesus. Place no other gods before Him. Serve Him with a commitment inspired by love rather than duty. Back up your love with actions—keep His commandments the best that you can. Recommit to Him when you fall or lose your way. Do all of these things because you stand in awe at the marvelous salvation He has extended to you, not because you have seen His miracles—Satan also has seen Christ's miracles. We must love Him with all our hearts and love our neighbors likewise.

We are so thankful for the joyful message that was given to us through the inspired theme of the Camp!

A Brief History

Continued from Page 4

William Bickerton was baptized into Rigdon's following in 1845 and later was ordained into the Priesthood. However, this organization, after enduring a few years, became disorganized. When in 1852, William Bickerton found himself alone, he was given a divine experience that encouraged him in the preaching of the Gospel. In 1857, the membership numbered 93, including 16 officers and Presiding Elder, William Bickerton.

Finally in 1862, The Church of Jesus Christ was organized at Greenock, Pennsylvania, claiming a divine succession of Authority and Priesthood as restored in 1829.

Today, The Church of Jesus Christ has missions and branches scattered throughout the world. Present headquarters of the Church is in Monongahela, Pennsylvania.

(Editor's Note: This is a reprint of the article written by the late Brother Tom Ross.)

The Children's Corner

Continued from Page 6

We serve the same God today. He wants to help us, protect us and guide us. Go to him with your worries and heartaches. Repent for the lazy or wrong things you think and do. Ask God to show you the right decision in all things. He guided King Hezekiah; he will guide us too.

With love,
Sister Jan

OBITUARIES

We wish to express our sympathy to those that mourn the loss of loved ones. May God bless and comfort you.

SANTA (RAPISARDI) SCALA

Sister Santa (Rapisardi) Scala of the New Brunswick, New Jersey Branch, passed on to her reward on July 17, 2008. She was preceded in death by her parents, Brother Giovanni (John) and Sister Rose Rapisardi and a sister, Sister Elizabeth Silvano. She is survived by her sister, Sister Sally Hettler and brother-in-law, Bill Hettler along with many nieces and nephews.

HERMEN G. SECHEZ

Brother Hermen G. Sechez of the Erie, Pennsylvania Branch passed on to his reward on January 20, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Sister Elaine Sechez; four children, five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

CAROL JEAN LUNT

Sister Carol Jean Lunt of the Roscoe, Pennsylvania Branch passed on to her reward on May 26, 2008. She is survived by her son, David Lunt and two sisters.

* WEDDINGS *

Brother Robert Nicklow, Sr. and Sister Pamela King were united in holy matrimony at the Monongahela, Pennsylvania Branch on May 31, 2008.

Brother Christopher Steel Gehly and Sister Jennifer Erin Consolo were united in holy matrimony in Beaver, Pennsylvania on June 28, 2008.

Brother Anthony Paternoster and Sister Julia Schroeder were united in holy matrimony at the Simi Valley, California Branch on June 14, 2008.

Children Blessed

Tyler David Spaulding, son of Lisa Spaulding was blessed on July 27, 2008 at the Miami-Dade, Florida Mission.

Genesis Grace Watson, daughter of Timothy Watson and Beth Lee Goeddert was blessed on June 21, 2008 at the Miami-Dade, Florida Mission.

Kaylee Rae King, daughter of Kristen King and Douglas Lochart was blessed on July 27, 2008 at the Vanderbilt, Pennsylvania Branch.

Address Change

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Branch or Mission _____

Baptisms and Reinstatements

Brother Alan Strong was baptized on June 8, 2008 at the Treasure Coast, Florida Branch. He was baptized by Brother Ron Carradi and confirmed by Brother John D'Orazio.

Brother Brian Brown was baptized on June 8, 2008 at the Treasure Coast, Florida Branch. He was baptized by Brother David Checchi and confirmed by Brother John D'Orazio.

Sister Linda (Rogolino) Evans was baptized on June 8, 2008 at the Treasure Coast, Florida Branch. She was baptized by Brother David Checchi and confirmed by Brother Frank Rogolino.

Sister Donna Holmes was baptized on June 8, 2008 at the Treasure Coast, Florida Branch. She was baptized by Brother Ron Carradi and confirmed by Brother Rocco Benyola. Sister Darla Carrillo was baptized on August 3, 2008 at the Yucaipa, California Branch. She was baptized by Brother Rudy Carrillo and confirmed by Brother Randy Lee.

Brother Elmer Devore was baptized on June 29, 2008 at the Roscoe, Pennsylvania Branch. He was baptized by Brother Lawrence King and confirmed by Brother James Abbott.

Sister Fran Devore was baptized on June 29, 2008 at the Roscoe, Pennsylvania Branch. She was baptized by Brother Lawrence King and confirmed by Brother Chip Smith.

Sister Sharon Syron was reinstated on June 29, 2008 at the Vanderbilt, Pennsylvania Branch.

Sister Tammy Welsh was baptized on July 6, 2008 at the Greensburg, Pennsylvania Branch. She was baptized by Brother Larry Ali and confirmed by Brother Christopher Gehly.

Sister Alyssa Giannetti was baptized on July 10, 2008 at Detroit, Michigan Branch #1. She was baptized by Brother Jeff Giannetti and confirmed by Brother Larry Champine.

Sister Sarah Ficara was baptized on July 13, 2008 at Detroit, Michigan Branch #1. She was baptized by Brother Keith Lesperance and confirmed by Brother Mike LaSalla.

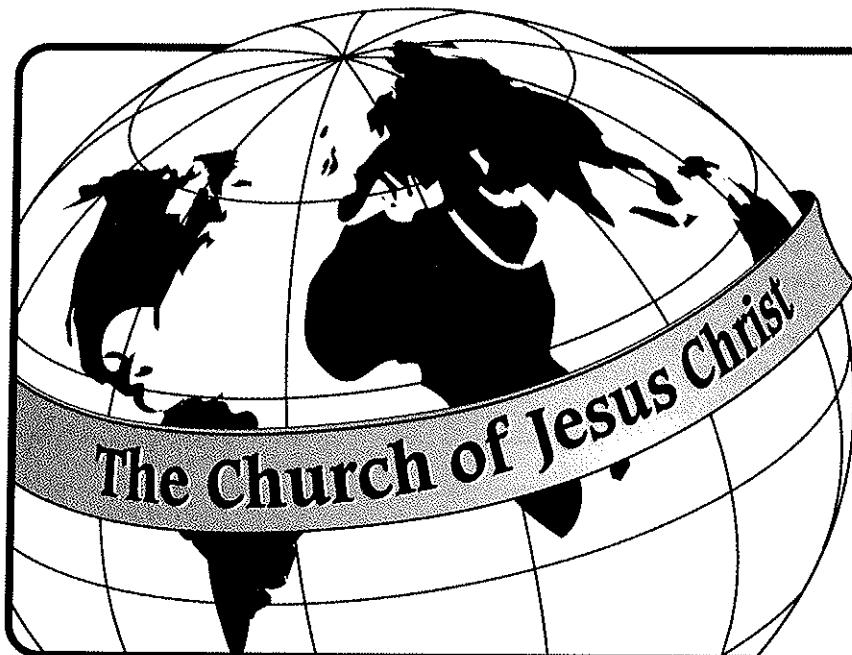
Brother Marcos Carrillo was reinstated on August 3, 2008 at the Yucaipa, California Branch.

Spiritual Anniversaries

Sister Divida Kocuba of the Butler, Pennsylvania Mission celebrated her 50th spiritual anniversary in The Church of Jesus Christ on January 19, 2008.

DIRECTORY UPDATE

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The Gospel News

World Headquarters Monongahela, PA, USA.

October, 2008

Volume 64, No. 10

The Doctrine of Christ

*From the Writings of
Apostle Joseph Calabrese*

PART I

What is a doctrine? One definition given in the dictionary is "something taught." From the beginning of time, God has taught His creation to love Him, to obey Him, and to trust in Him for all things temporal and spiritual. In return He has promised His blessings, His protection, and His abundant provision to those who would submit to His lordship. Yet while this message has remained unchanged through the ages of time, the manner in which it was given, and the manner in which it was received, has differed according to God's perfect plan, and according to the hearts and minds of the people to whom He has revealed Himself.

Keeping vigil by his wife's bedside during the last months of her life, Apostle Joseph Calabrese had much time to meditate on the things of God. He found a succession of scriptural passages coming to mind, and brought them together in a collection that portray these various administrations of Christ's doctrine to mankind in different times and

places. In hindsight, we can see clearly how the Lord not only taught, through the Word, but also affirmed and reinforced, through deeds, His divine doctrine.

This series of four articles was written based on Brother Joe's compilation of scriptures to treat four different times and places in history—as found in the *Bible* and *Book of Mormon*—where the Lord delivered His message of salvation through obedience and grace to mankind. See if you can identify with the different approaches the Lord took in delivering His doctrine. In the various stages of your own spiritual walk, the Lord in His mercy might have used one or more of these tactics to plant the seeds of His goodness in your heart.

OLD TESTAMENT, OLD WORLD

In the course of God's relationship with mankind, 430 years after God had first covenanted with Abraham and his seed, He found it necessary to add the Law of Moses (Galatians 3:17,19). His doctrine at that time needed to be spelled out and enforced by this strict schoolmaster (v. 24). Under the Law, Christ's doctrine required an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot, etc. (Exodus 21:24), and included the Ten Commandments,

with their mandatory "Thou shalt nots:"

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore

(Continued on Page 2)

The Doctrine of Christ

Continued from Page 1

the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

"And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not" (Exodus 20:3-20).

These are the commandments of God. They are an expression, albeit an imperfect one, of His doctrine. He required His children to keep them at the time they were given, and He requires His children to keep them today. But along with the law, to those who learned from this schoolmaster, to those who came to understand the difference between the spirit and the letter of the law (Romans 2:29), the Lord also offered a greater guide: spiritual wisdom. Solomon, a principal author of wisdom, wrote, *"Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law" (Proverbs 4:1, 2).*

Elucidating on this idea of wisdom coming from the Lord, Isaiah was caused to proclaim, *"Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned*

from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little. . . . Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste" (Isaiah 28:9-10, 14-16).

Clearly, this Wisdom is not available to those who are not seeking it. The weaning from the milk, and the 'little by little' approach, indicate a process of gradual, continuous growth. But what, or Who, is this Foundation, this Stone that the Lord is referring to? Tried, precious, and sure, the doctrine given by God opened the way for His people to live in righteousness, not by merely abiding under the teaching of the law, but by believing (v. 16), that is, by exercising faith. One of the two occurrences of the word "faith" in the Old Testament states, *"[T]he just shall live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4).* The other occurrence (Deuteronomy 32:20) tells the sad tale of the unbelieving generation, *"children in whom is no faith,"* to whom the Lord originally delivered the Law. The writer of Hebrews said it best (4:2), *"but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."* The very people whom God desired to call His sons and daughters chose to live instead as strangers and foreigners.

But it was not so from the beginning. In stark contrast to the above, the scripture states repeatedly (Romans 4:3, Galatians 3:6, James 2:23) that Abraham, who received the covenant generations earlier, "be-

lieved God," and it was counted unto him for righteousness. So, without diminishing the importance of keeping His commandments, the Lord teaches us that *"without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).*

PART II

The scriptures in the first article of this series underscored the need to abide under the law of Moses until the advent of the Precious Stone spoken of in Isaiah 28. Writing to the Ephesians (2:19-20), the Apostle Paul identifies this foundation stone, and explains how He restored the relationship established by God the Father in the original covenant: *"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."*

The heavenly citizenship that Paul is talking about here, the familial relationship with the Deity, the spiritual connectedness, having direct communion with a divine Cornerstone, does not come merely by being descended from a certain bloodline, nor by adhering to a set of stern rules. God desired and still desires a people whom He can call His sons and daughters. In His own due time, God sent His Son Jesus Christ to more fully establish His Kingdom here on earth, beginning with His baptism by John and the divine witness of the Spirit. The framework established by the Law was now being filled in, and a beautiful edifice began to take shape.

NEW TESTAMENT, OLD WORLD

The doctrine of Christ foreshadowed in the Old Testament was being fully revealed in the New. The Gospel according to St. Mark commences with the following: *"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; As it is*

written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. . . .

"And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost. And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1:1-5; 7-11).

With the voice of the Father publicly establishing His divinity, Jesus was now ready to preach His doctrine in words that had never before been heard. The Law, the doctrine given under Moses, was concluded but not totally eliminated. The focus was shifted from mere performance to the need for purity in the intent of the heart and mind. In response to a lawyer's question as to "Which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus did not answer out of the ten commandments, but rather used Deuteronomy 6:5, "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments,*" He stated, "*hang all the law and the prophets*" (Matthew 22:37-40).

But Jesus never advocated forsaking the commandments of God.

Earlier, He told the people, "*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven*" (Matthew 5:17-19).

Having fulfilled the scripture when He came out of the wilderness to be baptized, and His Father being "well pleased" in His setting the example for all men to follow, Jesus was now ready to teach sound doctrine, in the same manner that the Apostle Paul later instructed Titus (2:1), "*But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine*". "*And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them*" (Matthew 4:23-24). Here the demonstration of the power of God accompanied the teaching of the Gospel. Can this power be commanded by one whose heart is not pure? Can God be revealed through the charlatan who does not live righteously but makes a great effort to appear righteous?

While Jesus was teaching a doctrine of Word and Deed, His doctrine extended beyond words and deeds: In imparting His Gospel, Jesus taught us to allow His Light to shine into the hidden thoughts and intents of our heart. The rituals of cleansing and purification under the law took on new meaning: This is a doctrine of purity and love. Continuing in the

teaching of His doctrine, Jesus stated to the multitude, "*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" (Matthew 5:43-46).*

This is a doctrine which requires good deeds to be backed by good motives. Jesus warned against doing good for appearances' sake: "*Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. . . . But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly*" (Matthew 6:1, 3-4).

This is a doctrine which requires our prayers to come forth from a pure heart. Jesus warned against vain repetition and praying for appearances' sake: "*And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.*"

(Continued on Page 4)

The Doctrine of Christ

Continued from Page 3

This is a doctrine which demands that we forgive everyone, even those who have deliberately wronged us: *"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"* (Matthew 6:5-15).

This is a doctrine which requires us to forsake our adoration of and dependence on material goods, and to rely, by faith, solely on God's provision: *"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"* (Matthew 6:19-21). *"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon"* (Matthew 6:24). *"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you"* (Matthew 6:31-33).

This is a doctrine which forbids harsh or unjust treatment of others: *"Judge not, that ye be not judged.... Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do*

ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:1, 12-14).

Most importantly, this is a doctrine which requires the possession and exercise of the Divine Wisdom that Solomon extolled: *"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. . . . Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. . . . And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. . . . And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes"* (Matthew 7:15, 21, 25, 28-29). In His teaching, Jesus wielded a sharp sword with two edges (Hebrews 4:12), discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. God's followers were (and are) required to be genuine; Jesus exhorted them to build their house on a solid rock, and warned them of what would happen if they did otherwise.

Jesus continued to astonish the people, performing many more miracles and giving instruction as *"he went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. . . . Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest"* (Matthew 9:35, 37-38). Jesus was now preparing His apostles for that Great Work of the Lord. The time was fast approaching that He would not be able

to instruct them in person, for He was about to be betrayed by Judas Iscariot, and crucified. To bring about His eternal purposes, the season of time for the Son of God to dwell on the earth had to be cut short. From that point forward, the spreading of Jesus' doctrine would be continued by the apostles, and those whom they taught to be disciples of Christ. *"And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits. . . . And they went out, and preached that men should repent"* (Mark 6:7, 12).

Jesus' apostles were greatly encouraged by the success of their labors. When they returned from their journey, *"the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately"* (Mark 6:30-32). Their leisure, however, did not last long; *"the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him"* (Mark 6:33).

These passages point out how Christ's name was glorified as the twelve went forth in the power Jesus gave to them. The intervening verses tell of the fame and wonder that surrounded Jesus as His apostles went forth and exercised the authority He had given them. Wherever Jesus went, the news of His presence drew multitudes out of the cities to see Him. While Jesus allowed for His apostles' need for rest and sustenance; however, through the pressing needs of the crowd He taught them a doctrine of unrelenting toil. Christ's disciples were made to understand how *"No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God"* (Luke 9:62).

Continuing His instruction to the

(Continued on Page 8)

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Editorial Viewpoint . . .

By the time you read this Editorial, the election of our nation's next President will have already taken place. The United States has been governed by a President since its founding, and in our early years the President was also considered the spiritual leader. He would depend on God for direction, speak of God often, and God's laws would dictate how this nation was run, and how laws were decided upon. However, in the latter part of the last century, and in this century, God is rarely mentioned, and His laws are not considered when enacting the laws of the land. It was 30 years before Christ when upon this land of America, a similar spiritual decline in the government had occurred.

"And it came to pass that in this same year, behold, Nephi delivered up the judgment-seat to a man whose name was Cezoram. For as their laws and their governments were established by the voice of the people, and they who chose evil were more numerous than they who chose good, therefore they were ripening for destruction, for the laws had become corrupted. Yea, and this was not all; they were a stiffnecked people, insomuch that they could not be governed by the law nor justice, save it were to their destruction" (Helaman 5:1-3).

While this is still a nation where the laws are decided by the voice of the people, a similar situation has developed today. We now have laws and judicial edicts that permit what was once considered evil only a short time ago. And, the laws that do try to maintain order and decency are being violated constantly, because we, too, have become a "stiffnecked" people.

Nephi, who was a judge in those days, decided that enough was enough. He gave up his seat to Cezoram, and took his brother Lehi with him to preach to the people, and work towards turning things around. In a similar way, are we ready to take a stand like Nephi and Lehi did? Are we ready to say "enough is enough" and spend our time preaching, testifying and calling upon the power of God to convince people to turn from their ways?

Helaman was Nephi and Lehi's father, and he gave them their names so they would remember their parents who came out of Jerusalem to the land of America. They were escaping the destruction of Jerusalem and were brought to this promised land to find spiritual freedom. Helaman wanted his sons to remember Lehi and his son Nephi's mission and unwavering faith. Helaman told his sons to take responsibility to preach the word and maintain peace in the land, not so they could boast, but so they would secure their eternal future in heaven. It says that Nephi and Lehi preached with "great power," and they did "confound" the people who had left the Church. They had a "convincing" spirit, and preached with "authority," and ended up baptizing 8,000!

To top it off, when Nephi and Lehi were thrown into prison, and about ready to be killed, God encircled them with a pillar of fire where they could not be touched. God shook the prison with a great earthquake, and spoke to the people with His small still voice. The people then saw Nephi and Lehi conversing with angels who were descending out of heaven. This marvelous scene was witnessed by 300 people, who repented of their sins, and went and preached the word of God to the people. Nephi and Lehi had immediately increased the size of their ministry by 300! The people were convinced and laid down their weapons of war, laid down their hatred, and laid down the traditions of their fathers.

Are you and I ready to do the same as Nephi and Lehi? Are we ready to call upon the Lord to give us that convincing, and confounding spirit? Are we ready to be part of God's great plan to shake this nation and in the end, see thousands if not many more converted because of the undeniable power they will witness? Let us not be ashamed to disagree with the laws that disagree with God's laws. Let us not be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the power of God unto salvation. Though the declining morals and laws that support them are discouraging, let's be encouraged to know, even with this example in The Book of Mormon, of how God can turn things completely around, one soul at a time!

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork



I Don't Want To Be Swallowed By A Giant Fish

Dear Girls and Boys,

People who serve the Lord and choose to be obedient by following God's laws have very interesting lives. Instead of just staying the same all the time, they pray and try new things. When we serve God, we try to help others. We don't just say, "I'm too shy," or "I don't know how to do that, so I won't try." Instead we pray and ask God how to be braver, smarter, kinder, and stronger so we can be someone that Jesus can work with. We learn to listen to others, and pray for them and care.

There are three forces, or spirits, in this world that also try to influence us as we go about our day. They are the spirit of God, the spirit of the Devil, and the spirit of Man (our human side). Which one of these spirits do you think you can trust the most? Not the spirit of the old devil who whispers, "It's okay to sin. Just be selfish, or lazy. Nobody will find out if you do wrong."

Many times the spirit of man fails us too. It tells us, "I can't do that. I'm afraid or I'm too shy, I'll look stupid in front of others, or those people deserve the bad things that happen to them. Why should I help?" That spirit is all about me, me, me.

Then the spirit of God teaches us, "Be obedient to God's word. Trust God and pray for a miracle. Jesus will hear you and help you know what to do." The spirit of God promises us in

the Bible in the book Philippians, 4th chapter, 13th verse, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." That spirit commands us to do God's will and stop hiding, because God will help us. We are supposed to do good, obey God's commandments, treat our enemies with love and not be lazy in our service to God.

In the Bible there is an interesting story about a preacher named Jonah who had a problem. God had commanded him to travel to the city of Nineveh where the people did not know right from wrong, and teach them to stop sinning and hurting each other. The spirit of man told him, "You hate those horrible Ninevite people. They don't deserve to be forgiven. Hide from God."

The spirit of the devil worked on his hate and fear and gave him the idea to, "Just get on a boat and go the other direction! Go out of the presence of God! God won't see you!"

Of course God saw everything and understood Jonah's heart. He knew Jonah did not want to obey His commandments. God sent a huge violent storm. When the sailors realized someone had done something wrong, Jonah confessed to them that he was the person going against what God had taught him. He told them, "Throw me overboard into the sea, or you all will die." They were worried but they listened to him and threw him into the deep dark waves.

God, who knows everything that has happened or that will happen in this world, had prepared a huge fish for this day. It swam up and swallowed Jonah, the man who disobeyed his God. Three horrible days and nights Jonah was gasping for air in the

belly of that dark, cold fish. The weeds were wrapped around his head as Jonah choked in the slime and prayed to God for forgiveness.

How horrible it is to turn our backs away from God. How far away and desperate we each feel when we are guilty like Jonah of not doing the right thing. Can you think of a time when you listened to the wrong spirit and suffered for it? Maybe you lied, or stole something. Maybe you were sneaky and talked about someone behind their backs.

(Continued on Page 11)

WORD SEARCH

WHEN	IF
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THE CHURCH OF Jesus Christ

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Saturday, December 6, 2008
The Forest Hills, Florida Branch

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Branch and Auxiliary Historians & Editors

Church Education Lesson Writers

Native American Outreach Committee Meeting

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writers; editors; technology skilled.

All are encouraged to participate. No one is too young or too old.

Place this on your calendar (more information will follow).

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

The Doctrine of Christ

Continued from Page 4

apostles, Jesus showed forth many signs of His work, while time permitted, in the days leading up to His crucifixion. *"Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first"* (Mark 10:28-31). Peter, who was known at times to speak hastily, desired to point out to Jesus the sacrifices the apostles had made in following Him. But in His remarkable ability to turn every conversation into an opportunity to teach, Jesus imparted unto His disciples the understanding that they would be provided with human relationships and creature necessities that exceeded anything they might think they had sacrificed, to go along with the persecutions that they could also expect. But the real doctrine taught by Jesus in this episode was the overarching promise of eternal life, which serves to place all that went before—both the good and the bad—into perspective: *"... [T]he sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us"* (Romans 8:18).

"And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him, Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: And they shall mock him, and shall

scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again" (Mark 10:32-34).

Having just reminded His followers of the promise of eternal life in the world to come, Jesus—referring to Himself in the third person—now lays out before His apostles what He is to suffer in the coming days: His capture, mock trial, scourging, and death, as well as His resurrection. They were amazed and afraid, but the scriptures teach us that they still did not fully understand at that moment what they were about to witness.

"When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor" (Matthew 27:1-2).

"And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest. And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly" (Matthew 27:11-14). Jesus had now been taken from His disciples. Would this mark the end of His doctrine?

In the intervening period between Jesus' capture and His crucifixion, we have the impression that the apostles kept track—at arm's length—of Jesus' whereabouts. Perhaps Peter was not alone in feeling he had betrayed the Lord on that dark night. Separated from their Lord, the apostles continued to learn who Jesus was—and who they were as well. Separated from His apostles, Jesus now had an opportunity to impart a facet of His doctrine to the Roman governor. He said almost nothing, yet His demeanor and His lack of protest caused Pilate to marvel greatly.

Notwithstanding Pilate's impression of Him, the time had arrived for Jesus to be crucified. Nothing he could say in defense of Jesus, whom

he believed to be innocent, could convince the multitude to release Him. Lacking the Wisdom imparted through Christ's doctrine, they had permitted blind guides to make up their minds for them (Matthew 23). *"The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate said unto them, What shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified"* (Matthew 27:21-22). Truly the scriptures were fulfilled, the Stone that the builders refused was the head Stone of the corner (Psalm 118:23). Because of their spiritual blindness, those who called for His crucifixion did not recognize the Son of God standing before them. But as Jesus stated to Pilate, this was the end to which He was born (John 18:37).

"Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!" (Matthew 27:26-29).

Fueled by love for mankind, and sustained by communion with the Father, Christ endured spitefulness, rejection, and injustice at the hands of a rebellious humanity, as foretold in Isaiah 53:3. Nor was He exempted from feeling alone in a time of need. The One who had taught in His doctrine, *"[H]e that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me"* (Matthew 10:38) was about to willingly set the ultimate example. Earlier Jesus had commanded, *"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you"* (Matthew 5:44). Contained within Christ's need, His willingness, and His ability to live up to

His teachings is the power to transform those who would embrace His doctrine, into the sons and daughters of God (John 1:12).

Each of Christ's disciples has a cross to bear. While understanding His own suffering can provide grace and strength to endure, His followers can stand on God's promises as well. Isaiah, among others, foretells Christ's victory as well as His suffering: "*The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel*" (Isaiah 60:14). In His darkest hours, perhaps it was Christ's ability to focus on the joy that was set before Him (Hebrews 12:2) that enabled Him to endure the cross, despising the shame.

"*And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost*" (Luke 23:44-46). Even while hanging on the cross of Calvary, even in the act of dying, Christ was imparting His doctrine unto His disciples. Whether or not they fully realized it, He was demonstrating His love for them and for the world, and teaching them to be faithful, consistent, and enduring of all things—even death—for our Heavenly Father's sake.

Beyond the teaching, though, there was Power in the blood of this infinite, eternal Sacrifice to atone for the sins of the entire human family. Though Christ had given up the ghost, He had made a lasting impression on those who believed in Him: "*When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a*

clean linen cloth, And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher, and departed" (Matthew 27:57-60). Even after His death, the enduring power of Christ's doctrine—and the transforming power of His atonement—led one Joseph of Arimathea, "*a good man . . . who also himself waited for the kingdom of God*" (Luke 23:50-51), to make Jesus' grave with the rich (Isaiah 53:9), because He had done no violence, because He was the Son of God. Though Jesus had died in dishonor among common thieves, a believer laid Him to rest, rather conspicuously, among Judea's most prominent citizens.

"*Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here; but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words*" (Luke 24:1-8). We are told that Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them (v. 10) had come to the sepulcher to perform the customary anointing or embalming of their beloved dead. Upon finding the grave empty, they were perplexed, not unlike the amazement His disciples expressed when Jesus had first foretold His death and resurrection. Christ's immortality—and our own—is something we need to be reminded of constantly. The concept is foreign to our carnal senses, and bears repeating in order for us to maintain a grasp of it. Only after

being reminded of what He had told them in Galilee did this group of women remember His words. As we perhaps take our focus momentarily off Our Risen Savior from time to time, we can be encouraged in knowing that even those who had seen Christ and had been with Him were required to exercise faith in order for His life, death, and resurrection—and His doctrine—to have meaning in their lives.

At the Last Supper Jesus had told His disciples: "*But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee*" (Matthew 26:32); He instructed the women visiting His tomb to remind them of the appointment (Matthew 28:10). "*Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted*" (vv.16-17). On another occasion, appearing to His disciples at Jerusalem, Jesus said unto them, "*Why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them. And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem*" (Luke 24:38-48).

For the women at the tomb, for

(Continued on Page 10)

The Doctrine of Christ

Continued from Page 9

the disciples at Galilee and in Jerusalem, and for two who were traveling to Emmaus, seeing and speaking with the risen Christ was not enough, in and of itself, to make them fully understand and believe. But in His ever gentle, loving manner, the Lord Jesus was still imparting His doctrine, and opening the understanding of even those who had known Him best, who had been with Him during His ministry, so that they could comprehend the eternal nature of the Son of God, and the change that was wrought in their relationship with God as a result of His life, death, and resurrection. Three years alongside Jesus had not been enough to fully convert them. Isaiah had said it best, as quoted earlier, *"precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line;*

here a little, and there a little (Isaiah 28:10). The process of spiritual growth cannot be hurried. Our spiritual enlightenment is as much about the journey as it is the destination. The One Who had given Isaiah those words, Who *"looketh on the heart"* (1 Samuel 16:7), is a God *"full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth"* (Psalm 86:15).

Despite numerous visits by the resurrected Christ (see above and John Ch. 20), Peter and six others went back to their fishing. They labored in vain until Jesus once again appeared unto them and miraculously filled their nets (John 21:1-11). This time, rather than asking them for something to eat, He bade them come ashore and dine, and once again, gently and lovingly, imparted another facet of His doctrine to them: *"[L]ovest thou me more than these? . . . Feed my*

lambs. . . . Feed my sheep. . . . Feed my sheep (vv. 15-17). Having established His Church, it was now time for Jesus' disciples to continue the work that He had begun.

Whatever His followers might have lacked at the time of Jesus' departure, the Holy Ghost would supply as they continued to wait upon the Lord. Peter, who went "a fishing" in John 21, would later write: *"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind"* (1 Peter 5:2). Peter's eventual total conversion to Christ led him to acquire God's Wisdom through faith, made evident not only by these words, but by his deeds as recorded in the Book of Acts, and his eventual martyrdom for the cause of Christ.

(To Be Continued)

Repentance

By Apostle Isaac Smith

According to the dictionary, the word repent means to feel pain or sorrow on account of something done or sorrow on account of something done or left undone, especially for sin committed; change from past evil; to feel penitence or regret. Repentance is contrition and sorrow for sin.

The Book of Mormon in the Book of Jarom, Jarom the son of Enos wrote one chapter. In the 2nd verse he wrote: *"For what could I write more than my Fathers have written? For have not they revealed the plan of salvation?"* I thought what else is there to say that has not already been said.

My thoughts went to John the Baptist, St. Matthew 3:1-2, *"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* In Matthew 4:17, Jesus began to preach, and to say, *"Repent: for the kingdom of*

heaven is at hand." In 3 Nephi 11:37-38, Jesus spoke saying: *"And again I say unto you, ye must repent, and become as a little child, and be baptized in my name, or ye can in nowise receive these things. And again I say unto you, ye must repent, and be baptized in my name, and become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God."*

In the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, as they were preaching to thousands, verse 37 states, *"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"* The Apostle Peter responds in Acts 2:38, *"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."* Faith, repentance, and baptism are the doorway into the Kingdom of God.

What a wonderful blessing when we are in the presence of someone repenting of their sins, with a broken

heart and a contrite spirit. Jesus said in Luke 15:7, *"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth..."*

Standing at the waters of baptism, the candidate is asked, "Do you repent of your sins and promise to serve God, to the best of your ability, the rest of your life?" We all can remember that day and the joy we felt coming out of the water, knowing that our sins were washed away.

"And again I say unto you, ye must repent, and be baptized in my name, and become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God"
(3 Nephi 11:38).

While taking the Gospel to the indigenous people on the Island of Dominica with Brothers Paul Aaron Palmieri, Isaac Joseph Smith and Paul Ciotti, Sr., a member of the Carib Tribe came to me with a horn. The

horn is called a shofar. On a trip to the Island of Antigua, to purchase goods for her motel, a person approached her and said, "I have this horn for you to take to your people. I am a Jew from the Inupiaq (Eskimo) tribe in Alaska. When you blow this shofar, it will sound as a call to repentance." The woman wanted to know what to do with the horn, or if I wanted it. I told her I didn't know what to do with the horn, but we were offering them the call of repentance. As Jesus said, all must repent of their sins and be baptized, to be a part of the Kingdom of God. No one can come through the doors of salvation without repentance. We must take the call to repentance wherever the opportunity comes.

I am reminded of the 2nd chapter of Joel. He says, *"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain, let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh; for it is nigh at hand."*

We in the Ministry must always sound the call to repentance in our branches and missions and within our communities.

One of the reasons we enjoy the gatherings and campouts of the young people, is our anticipation of the spirit of repentance being prevalent. I remember well standing at the shore of the Mississippi River in Nauvoo, Illinois when Brother Joseph Calabrese had the privilege of questioning twenty-one young people before they entered the waters of baptism. We seem to remember each gathering by those that repented and were baptized.

We look forward to Israel's return. It is our job to sound the call for repentance to all, especially to Joseph. Some day, their ears will be opened that they may hear and their eyes will be opened that they may see.

I will close by quoting Mormon 8:22, *"For the eternal purposes of the Lord shall roll on, until all his promises shall be fulfilled."* Each Elder must take our calling so serious that it becomes the most important thing in our life. Let us each do all we can to further the cause of Christ and His Kingdom. The world depends on us.

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The Children's Corner

Continued from Page 6

When we are guilty of listening to the wrong spirit, we can do as Jonah did. He prayed and was sorry; God rescued him and had the fish vomit him out on land. Then he had to follow God's commandments and go back to the city of people he hated. These people heard his preaching and they repented and quit being bad. But Jonah still fought against listening to the wrong spirit. He was angry to see them happy and forgiven.

God worked with Jonah to explain how He loves even the sinners. We are like Jonah so many times. We fight against listening only to the spirit of God. Our human side and the old devil side want us to be selfish, full of pride, resentment and jealousy. But every day we have a chance to be better than we are, or we can disobey God and not follow His spirit and commandments. It is our choice.

Who wants to be swallowed by a fish for going away from God? Not me. I want to do what the spirit of God tells me to do. Is there a job, or a kindness that you are hiding from doing? Do you really want to listen to the wrong spirits? What a waste of time and happiness! I want to see you in Nineveh doing our jobs!

With love,
Sister Jan

Publication Notice

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Ordinations

Brother Jerry Chambers was ordained an elder on April 27, 2008 at the Sterling Heights, Michigan Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Carl Romano and he was ordained by Brother John Buffa.

Brother Dan Bertolo was ordained a deacon August 17, 2008 at Detroit, Michigan Branch #1. His feet were washed by Brother Ryan Lesperance and he was ordained by Brother Jeff Giannetti.

* WEDDINGS *

Brother Onexus Ortega and Sister Sara Beth Davis were united in holy matrimony at the Lake Worth, Florida Branch on August 23, 2008.

Brother Victor Zamora and Ms. Kuka Roberts were united in holy matrimony at the Yucaipa, California Branch on August 30, 2008.

Children Blessed

Trey Darius Love, son of Courtney Johnson was blessed on August 3, 2008 at the Treasure Coast, Florida Branch.

Dominic Leon Holmes, son of Brother Daniel and Felisha Holmes was blessed on August 3, 2008 at the Treasure Coast, Florida Branch.

Baptisms and Reinstatements

Sister Samantha Lee Seighman was baptized on August 3, 2008 at the Herndon, Virginia Branch. She was baptized by Brother Richard Scaglione, Jr. and confirmed by Brother Arthur Gehly, Jr.

Brother Seth Barnes was baptized on August 24, 2008 at the Liberty, Ohio Branch. He was baptized by Brother Wayne Martorana and confirmed by Brother Ron Giovannone.

Sister Holly Lavalley was reinstated on April 13, 2008 at the Sterling Heights, Michigan Branch.

Brother Dave Johannes was baptized on April 27, 2008 at the Sterling Heights, Michigan Branch. He was baptized by Brother Sam Cuomo and confirmed by Brother John Buffa.

Brother Brandon Everett was baptized on May 28, 2008 at the Sterling Heights, Michigan Branch. He was baptized by Brother Jerry Chambers and confirmed by Brother Lou Vitto.

Sister Nicole Everett was baptized on May 28, 2008 at the Sterling Heights, Michigan Branch. She was baptized by Brother John Straccia and confirmed by Brother Sam Cuomo.

Brother Daniel Eugene Holmes was baptized on August 3, 2008 at the Treasure Coast, Florida Branch. He was baptized by Brother Ron Carradi and confirmed by Brother David Cheechi.

children, Sister Barbara and Brother John Straccia, Brother Jerry and Sister Joann Chambers, Sister Shirley and Brother Malcolm Paxon, Sister Shelby and Brother Paul Stallard and Steven and Loretta Chambers; 12 grandchildren; 12 great grandchildren; one brother and two sisters.

YOLANDA SPADA

Sister Yolanda Spada of the Sterling Heights, Michigan Branch passed on to her reward on January 25, 2008. She is survived by her husband, Armand; daughters, Victoria Krotzer and Carmella Barczak, one sister; three grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

JOSEPHINE RODRIGUEZ

Sister Josephine Rodriguez of the Tijuana, Mexico Branch passed on to her reward on August 14, 2008. She is survived by 11 children, 30 grandchildren and many great-grandchildren.

OBITUARIES

We wish to express our sympathy to those that mourn the loss of loved ones. May God bless and comfort you.

FLOSSIE CHAMBERS

Sister Flossie Chambers of the Sterling Heights, Michigan Branch, passed on to her reward on August 21, 2008. She was preceded in death by her husband, Brother Marchel (Jack) Chambers. She is survived by her

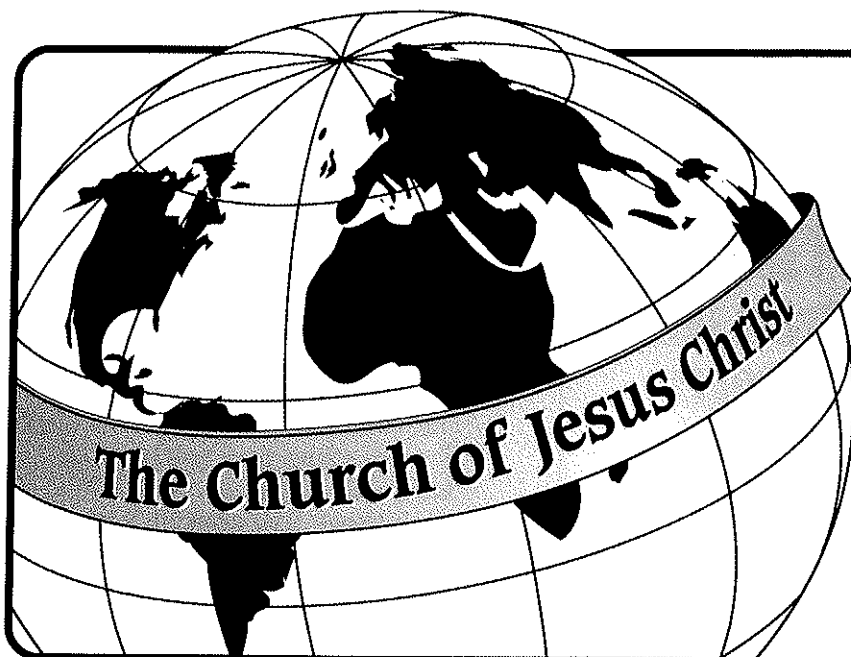
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The Gospel News

World Headquarters Monongahela, PA., USA.

November, 2008

Volume 64, No. 11

A Glorious Experience of Healing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

By Evangelist J. Joseph Perri

I want to share a glorious experience with each of you, our *Gospel News* readers, that was received on September 29 from Brother Cipeng our Church President in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. After reading his e-mail message, I placed a phone call to him wanting to hear his voice explaining to me in his own words what he had written concerning his testimony of healing. As he related the experience his voice was strong and sounded very excited because of what recently occurred to him.

He mentioned one morning as he awoke from his sleep he felt a large lump or a *button*, as he referred to it, in his throat. When I spoke to him by phone the afternoon of receiving his experience, he confirmed it was some kind of a tumor. This tumor was near the palate touching his tongue. Brother Cipeng is a practicing attorney, and at work that morning, the tumor affected his speaking as he appeared in court to try a case.

As he tried to speak, his words were not understood by the person he was addressing. Brother Cipeng

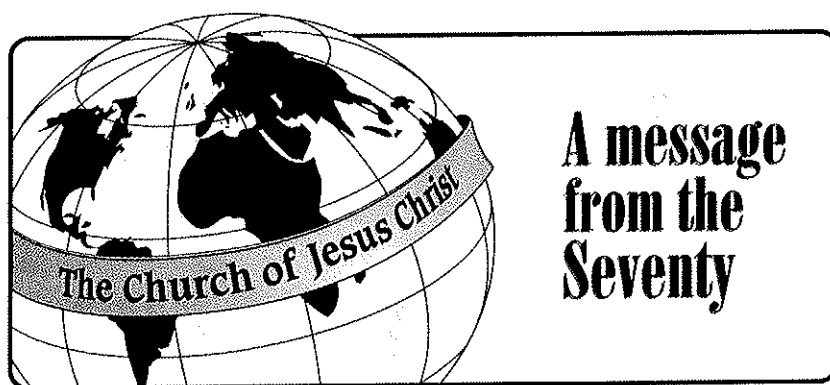
saw the look on this person's face and knew something was wrong because his words were not being understood. He said he was very worried because this tumor would not move. He experienced no pain but his speech was impaired and he had difficulty speaking and swallowing.

On Saturday, September 27, he was thinking about going to see a doctor for this problem, but hesitated. He was to give a sermon on Sunday the 28th at a joint gathering of the Katuba and Rwashi IMBA, but he knew he could not and was concerned because of his problem in speaking. He thought of calling on Brother Joel, a brother being recommended for ordination as an Elder, to take his place in preaching, but he said he did not know why he failed to call him or to make his problem known. He turned his heart to the Lord in prayer, and as he prayed he said, "I required [requested] of the Lord to remove this tumor that I considered very dangerous." What courage and exercising of amazing faith on the part of Brother Cipeng to "require [request]" the Lord to remove the tumor.

That evening he offered his routine prayer before going to bed. Brother Cipeng realized this tumor would prevent him from preaching on Sunday, and also it would affect and cause a problem with his career as an attorney. He mentioned the need to depend on the use of his tongue in order to speak to the prosecutors and judges in court. He went to sleep that night with this physical ailment on his mind not knowing what the outcome would be. When he awoke in the morning Brother Cipeng recognized that his voice was well, better than it was the night before when he went to bed. This he noticed after finishing his morning prayer, realizing he was able to talk better. Was this what he had prayed for and wanted from the Lord?

Please read on. Being inquisitive, he used his tongue to feel the area around his palate for the tumor—he did not feel it. He used his tongue to move within the area of his mouth thinking perhaps the tumor might have moved, he felt nothing. He thought maybe the tumor moved itself under the tongue but again he felt nothing! Brother Cipeng's words were, "The button [tumor] was lost." We would use the expression saying the tumor was gone. He said, "It left no wound, I felt no pain, the tumor disappeared. It completely disappeared. Praise God!"

(Continued on Page 4)



Joy in Italy

By Evangelist Paul Thomas Pezzenti

September is hot in Italy and this trip the temperature was no different. But who's interested in the weather while on missionary work? The Italy Conference held September 4-7, 2008, in Cala Gonone, Sardinia, Italy, was not about the external environment but rather the internal soul searching and movement of God's hand upon those searching for peace, love, joy, and happiness. Team Italy (Saints Paul and Dotti Benyola, John Buffa, John and Caryl DiBattista, Alex and Cathy Gentile, and Paul Pezzenti) left the United States from four different states with one purpose in mind: to bring the love of the U.S. saints to Italy and share in our mutual joy. Nothing was going to deter us. Some team members came via an initial visit to The Church of Jesus Christ in San Demetrio meeting with others coming directly to Cala Gonone with the final members also arriving a few days later. God provided safe travel to all.

We had the opportunity to meet our Italian brothers and sisters in Cala Gonone prior to the conference to plan the weekend event and reconnect with loved ones. Conference officially began on September 4 with 12 new visitors throughout the weekend from the members' invitations to their friends living on the mainland and in this quaint seaport. What a joy to see new faces, eyes, and ears wide open and receptive to the refreshing words of eternal life. New hymn books were presented and the songs of praise

began that would fill the weekend.

The theme of the conference was "The Joy of the Saints." A lesson had been prepared by Brother Tony Micale but unfortunately he became ill and at the last moment neither he nor his wife, Sister Lydia, could make the trip pending his possible surgery. Our spirits could have been discouraged but we knew the joy of the saints was in God's hands. However, we recalled that the Lord has told us if we would only follow His commandments we would prosper; He would take care of us no matter what. The lesson plan commenced and the joy of the saints was evident. Many questions were asked and the answers provided. The joy was felt between the saints and the visitors.

Singing and praising the Lord led us to Saturday's feet washing service. Later as the brothers were kneeling in prayer for one that came forward, a personage was felt walking between the brothers. One of the visitors confirmed the personage's presence by sight and his light on the ministry praying. God is good. His plan was in motion. At the end of the service Giovanna Maffioletti proclaimed that she wanted to be baptized. Her husband, Franco Fratti Cerea, is also researching our beliefs. We made the necessary plans and headed to the seaside for the baptism. In the midst of the sun bathers enjoying the beach, Giovanna was baptized by Evangelist Rosario Scraglieri and another soul entered into her journey to eternal life. And that is how it is in Italy—one very precious soul at a time. Sister Giovanna learned of The Church of Jesus

Christ from prior team visits, attending meetings, and falling in love with the saints, especially Sister Immacolata Romano who has been with the Church in Cala Gonone from its inception. How could we sufficiently thank Him?

The Sunday service was opened by Apostle Paul Benyola who stated there is a time to live and a time to die. Who knows the date of our birth? Someone must have told us. Who knows the date of our death? We don't know. The question is what do we do with the time in between these dates? Speaking from Matthew 20 about the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, Brother Paul expounded on the Lord's message to work in the vineyard, some from morning to night, and stressed that all would get the same pay (reward) no matter what time of the day they entered the field to work (or age of the individual coming to work). Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions...I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). Brother Paul gave many examples of how the Lord has blessed the saints and their families and friends through the prayers of the righteous when their faith is turned to the Lord.

At the testimony meeting one of the visitors, Firruccio Checchi, an owner of five Italian hotels, one in Cala Gonone, testified he had been taken captive and was held in a cave for financial ransom. His wife, Gilda, went to her cousin, Sister Rossana Scraglieri, and asked the little Church in Italy to pray for his safe release. Firruccio stated that after 170 days held in captivity it was the prayers of the Church that had saved his life by leading to his release and rescue. As the saints went into prayer on his behalf his captors left him. He crawled out of the cave to a helicopter flying by that saw him and took him to safety. Firruccio was subsequently interviewed by a local news station whereby he proclaimed to the nation he was saved by the prayers of The Church of Jesus Christ. He wanted to thank the saints for their prayers and God for intervening in his life. His generosity towards

(Continued on Page 10)

Israel's Advocate: NAO Briefs

Edited by Brother Peter Benyola

Trip to North Dakota, Minnesota

By Brother Joshua Gehly and Evangelist Joel Gehly

FORT BERTHOLD INDIAN RESERVATION, N.D. – On a trip from August 7 to 11, 2008 Brothers Joel and Joshua Gehly arrived in Minneapolis, then drove 12 hours to the home of Brother Bob and Sister Jody Briek on the reservation and visited with a very large assembly of Sister Jody's family, who were visiting for the week. A powwow was to take place during the weekend.

On Friday, the Gehlys and some other brothers and sisters from Inner City Branch also visited, and a service took place on the back deck of the Briek home. The group started singing with a couple guitars, and Brother Josh read some Scripture and shared some thoughts. The Spirit of God reportedly was strong, and many shared feelings and Scripture about coming together for the weekend. Sister Faith Lobzun was given the message from the Lord to read the book of Moroni. Many tears were shed as the Spirit of the Lord moved from person to person. Two young girls were blessed, Sister Leslie Hammerberg's foster daughters – Courtney and Imani. The group sang until late in the evening, feeling directed at the end of the evening to have feet washing on Sunday.

Saturday evening was spent in town at the Powwow. Church took place Sunday on the back deck, with 27 in attendance. At the beginning of the service, a couple people asked to be anointed, and a man from the area who attended asked for prayer. Brothers Rick Lobzun and Josh Gehly shared Scripture and spoke briefly on the subject of the Kingdom of God. Brother Joel concluded the speaking, relating the way to enter the Kingdom of God. All the young people in

attendance received the basic Gospel message and an invitation. Fifteen saints were served the Lord's Supper.

"Words cannot express the blessing that everyone received with the feet washing service," said Brother Josh, who added that the service lasted more than three hours. Numerous experiences were received from the Lord during the service. Brother Bob was overcome with the opportunity to have feet washing again after missing it for more than six years.

Brothers Joel and Josh drove to Park Rapids, Minnesota, and Monday they concentrated on visiting with three saints, Sister Diane Diserens and Brothers Dan and Inez Cotellesse. They enjoyed studying Scripture together on Monday afternoon in the home of Sister Diane. "She has much to learn and is like a dry sponge soaking up water when she has the chance to be with the saints," said Brother Josh. Later, Brothers Joel, Josh, Sister Diane and Brother Dan and Sister Inez met and talked about spiritual things. Brother Joel offered prayer for Brother Dan and Sister Diane. They read the passage in the Book of Mormon concerning the Lord's Supper and then partook of that communion.

Saints Have Seminar; Canvass in Georgia

By Sister Kayla Campbell

ALBANY, GA. – On August 30, 2008 representatives from all parts of the Southeast Region, North Carolina, and Canada had the wonderful feeling of being with the saints of God doing His work. Gathering at Cheehaw Park, the saints enjoyed a picnic followed by Sister Linda Snake-Orr presenting an educational seminar about how to approach the Native American people. After the seminar, those who attended split into

different groups and began passing out flyers around the city.

The Sunday morning meeting took place at the Cheehaw Educational Center, with *Send Hunters and Fishers* sung by Sister Linda with her drum. Brother Art Campbell opened, stating how this was a different type of meeting, with its focus on learning more about the Native American people. Brother Horace Huggins continued, stating his family is from the Creek Indian descent, who endured many trials and hardships. He met the Church June 13, 1965, and it completely changed his life. He recounted a dream he had years ago about the Albany area, and that a joint meeting there between Quincy and Mid-Georgia would prosper. He told of his experience to leave south Florida and relocate to Blountstown, meeting the Quincy Branch, being ordained into the ministry at 62 and how he has a huge desire to present the Gospel to all with whom he comes in contact.

Brother John D'Orazio followed and spoke of the Church's Divine Commission, referring to the trial of faith in Ether 12:6. He cited the story of the four sons of Mosiah, and their dedication and success with God's help, in Alma 26:22 and 29:9.

Brother Charles Hester then spoke of the years that he has heard of the work of the Lord with the Native Americans and how "its pursuit should be now ... The effort that we put forth will determine how successful this work will be." After the meeting, a Native American man who worked at the facility joined the group for dinner.

MBA Challenge Met

By Evangelist Mark Kovacic

ATLANTA, GA – The local MBA decided to take on a challenge. After years of fundraisers to build a house to the Lord, which was accomplished last year, it was time to refocus efforts on fulfilling the Divine

(Continued on Page 10)

Church Education Update

By Brother Ron Brutz, Chairman

Church Education, or discipleship, is a central component of what is known as 'The Great Commission' of Jesus when he called upon his followers to 'make disciples' throughout the entire world. He was reaffirming the message to the new nation of Israel from the beginning 'to teach your children.' The Church of Jesus Christ embodies this effort as reflected in the active efforts over many years of its teachers in all organizations and events from Sunday Schools to MBA and Ladies' Circle as well as campout seminars and ministerial training programs.

The Church Education Committee now functions within the Operations Support Committee under the current Church organizational design. Four subcommittees form the overall comprehensive plan: Ministerial Training; Curriculum Design and Lesson Writing; Program Implementation; and Research and Development. Brothers Ron Brutz and Thomas P. Liberto serve as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively.

The purpose of the Church Education Program is to provide a system of learning and resources for all levels of our congregational membership. We continue to build upon the efforts of many individuals over the years.

The Ministerial Training component is led by Brother Larry Watson. The priority focus is to enhance the Ministerial Training Handbook. New formatting is in place to set the stage for new development of materials.

The Curriculum Design and Lesson Writing section follows the focus set by the Church's leadership with those areas directly related to our Church's beliefs as the current priorities – Faith and Doctrine related concepts; Book of Mormon lessons beginning with the Book of Ether; and the Messages of the Apostles. Lesson sets are developed with a plan for five grade level groupings from preschool through adult learners. Lesson Writing

sessions and teams are designed for implementation at the region levels with region education coordinators taking leadership with Executive Committee support. Sister Renee Scolaro leads the Lesson Writing effort with a growing cadre of volunteers from all regions of the Church joining this important project. Translation of lessons to Spanish and other languages is now beginning to take shape.

The Program Implementation team is designed to roll out products and training for use of materials and strategies for teaching and learning. As deliverable products reach completion, this sector will provide the avenues for implementation. Brother Jeff Kattan recently accepted the appointment to lead this dynamic unit.

In the Research and Development subcommittee, Brother Tom Jones coordinates this effort to provide a clearinghouse for articles of interest developed on various topics and to monitor the information on the Internet related to the Church.

Go to:

<http://www.thechurchofjesuschrist.com/> and select the 'Lessons' tab to access lessons and information to use in your branches and missions. The mission of this comprehensive committee is substantial and needs many, many volunteers to consider using their gifts and talents to make a contribution in lesson writing components which include music, art, in-class and take-home activities, graphics, Power Point presentations, seminar outlines to name just a few. Please contact one of the subcommittee coordinators to see how you can get involved. We are a volunteer army and as we sing, 'There is a place for everyone' in the Army of the Lord.

A major series of events was initiated in 2008 in conjunction with the Church Historians and Editors under the leadership of Brother Larry Watson, the General Church Historian. Over 100 members of all ages from teens to nineties, men and women, have attended excellent presentations to enhance our writing skills for Church history and editorial work such as for the *Gospel News* articles and to develop lessons for the Church Education programs. Events were hosted in Detroit, Michi-

gan Branch #1, San Diego, California Branch and the Liberty, Ohio Branch. The Forest Hills, Florida Branch will host the next event.

Again, please know that everyone can learn, contribute and receive a blessing from participating in some way in these important church projects. We want to express our sincere appreciation to all who have contributed to these efforts which have been a great blessing to the families of the saints throughout the Church. May God's abundant blessings be with each of you is our fervent prayer.

Healing in the Congo

Continued from Page 1

To hear him relate his experience on the phone would give one to understand he was in very good spirits and rightfully so. God had healed him of what could have been an end to his career as an attorney and more importantly being able to preach the Restored Gospel message to our brothers and sisters in his country as well as in Zambia.

On Sunday morning September 28, Brother Cipeng attended worship services. He said there were more than 50 people in attendance and delivered a sermon from the 11th Chapter of Hebrews on the subject of Faith. He mentioned Abraham when he was commanded by the Lord to sacrifice his son Isaac, he referred to Sarah, Noah, Moses and the many others who accomplished great things through the exercising of FAITH.

I will complete this writing using Brother Cipeng's own words which are more clearly understood in this part of his message:

"God cannot abandon His children; He did not abandon me with my button [tumor] in the middle of the palate. We have only to keep our faith such it is written in Hebrews 11:1-3; and I know that [quoting the words of Jesus], *Whatsoever thing you shall ask the Father in my*

(Continued on Page 10)

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Editorial Viewpoint . . .

"And again I say unto you as I have said before, that as ye have come to the knowledge of the glory of God, or if ye have known of his goodness and have tasted of his love, and have received a remission of your sins, which causeth such exceeding great joy in your souls, even so I would that ye should remember, and always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God, and your own nothingness, and his goodness and longsuffering towards you, unworthy creatures, and humble yourselves even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily, and standing steadfastly in the faith of that which is to come, which was spoken by the mouth of the angel" (Mosiah 4:11).

These beautiful words of King Benjamin put into perspective who we are in relation to our God. After tasting of the glory of God, and receiving a remission of our sins, we must always remember that we are still nothing. What can we give to God that He doesn't already have? What value do we really add to God's creation? If we were to die, the world would go on, with only a few loved ones mourning the loss. Don't confuse our "importance" with our being "loved" by our heavenly Father. He loves us more than we'll ever understand, but we are not important in terms of God's need for us. He doesn't need us, we need Him completely. We are completely unworthy of any goodness or joy that He gives us, yet, He sent His Son to pay the price for our sinful ways (a price we should really pay for). What love! This is why King Benjamin says that because of this, we should always be in the depths of humility, relying on Him for every breath we take, recognizing that our joy is a gift given to us, but not deserving. He goes on to say,

"And behold I say unto you that if ye do this ye shall always rejoice, and be filled with the love of God, and always retain a remission of your sins; and ye shall grow in the knowledge of the glory of him that created you, or in the knowledge of that which is just and true. And ye will not have a mind to injure one another, but to live peaceably, and to render to every man according to that which is his due" (Mosiah 4:12-13).

If we remain in the depths of humility, understanding where we stand in the "big picture," and recognize that all we have is such an incredible undeserved gift from God, then we will always retain a remission of our sins. We will continue to receive the gift of forgiveness for our unworthiness because we recognize our nothingness. Nephi called himself a wretched man. Paul called himself a wretched man too. These men were great spiritual examples. The only way they were able to be such great examples is because they understood that of themselves, they were nothing.

The verses above go on to say if we are in this mindset, we will not have a mind to injure one another. How often in life do we feel as if we need to get revenge on someone who may have hurt us? How often because of our pride, do we talk badly about others? Yet, we have no right to injure or hurt anyone, when we are all unworthy creatures, and all fall short of the glory of God. I read in the newspaper this morning of a 13-year-old girl in another country who was stoned to death in a stadium of people for committing adultery. Hard to believe that 2000 years after Jesus taught not to stone a sinner since we ourselves are full of sin, that this still happens. I wonder how many who stoned her have committed far worse sins and crimes than she?

God's gift of love to us is undeserved, yet still given to us. How we should always remember this. He will take us into a Peaceful Reign someday, undeserving as we are, to live in that beautiful city. He will receive our souls into Paradise when we die because of His love and forgiveness, undeserved as it may be. What love.

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork

Why The Church of Jesus Christ Does Not Pay Its Ministers

Would you do a lot of work, every day for someone who paid you but not with money? Would you spend time thinking about how to help others, and even share your money with them if you knew that you were going to be rewarded in a big way by God?

Well, that is what the Elders, or Ministers in The Church of Jesus Christ do every day. They are helped by their wives and even by their children who share their dads with others who need him. You may ask, "Why? Why would anyone ever want to do this?" You may even want to ask a friendly Elder in the Church why he wants to be a minister. If no one gives him money, then why does he want to give to others?

One answer is found in the Bible. Jesus teaches us in Matthew 7:12 to do unto others as you would have them do unto you. In other words, help others like you would like someone to help you. If they have a problem, listen and pray with them. If they are confused, be patient and show them love. Jesus commanded His ministers and said in Matthew 10:8, "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead...freely ye have received, freely give." In other words, do not expect money for ministering unto others.

Think about it, whenever we pray and ask God for help, God does not charge us or make us give Him money. He gives us help when we are scared or in trouble. He watches over us constantly and never charges us a penny. He gives us forgiveness when



we have made a mistake. We never pay God, and that is one reason we are supposed to share and care for others freely.

Then there is the example that Jesus gave us in His life. He was a carpenter. His Twelve Apostles also had jobs or trades. For example, Peter, James and John were fishermen. Luke was trained as a doctor. The Apostle Paul, who came after Jesus, was educated and was also a person who made tents.

In the Book of Mormon, Nephi, the leader of God's people, was a preacher and a prophet, but he also worked with his own hands. King Benjamin was a powerful preacher and leader over his nation, in the Book of Mormon. He wanted all leaders to work for their own living and not to tax the people or live off them.

In Alma 1:26, Alma was in charge of The Church of Jesus Christ in the Americas. He told us, "When the priests [elders] left their labor [jobs] to tell the word of God unto the people, the people also left their work to hear the preaching. When they were done, they all returned again to their work and the priest [minister] was no better than the hearer, neither was the teacher any better than the learner, and thus they were all equal, and they did all labor [work], every man according to his strength." So you see, no one was paid to be a minister in those days either.

And the last thought about paying our ministers is common sense; what would you do if somebody paying you in a job could get mad at you and fire you? Would you be willing to tell someone to quit sinning if they had the power to fire you? If they were doing

the wrong thing would you risk losing your job to counsel with them or pray for them? Can you see that since an Elder does not rely on the people for his money, he can freely talk with the people in church about problems? And each elder must rely on the Spirit of God to lead, guide and direct them. They must also answer to God for all of their actions. God knows if that man is listening, praying, fasting and changing to be the best servant possible. God pays that man with all of the important things in life like health, love, and protection.

No person can pay us like God does. Would you rather have a few dollars from people, or walk close to God and have all of His blessings? In The Church of Jesus Christ, no one

(Continued on Page 11)

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Trusting Always

By Sister Terri Bravo

The Atlantic Coast Area MBA Campout began on Friday, September 19, 2008 at Camp Haluwasa in the southern New Jersey community of Hamington; known as the blueberry capital of the world. This year camp director, Brother Chet Lombardo and camp assistant, Sister Tammy Valenti, worked very hard with their committees to see that the saints were accommodated both naturally and spiritually. Brother Chet told of how when he was reading Psalm 31:1, he was inspired to choose this scripture for the camp theme: Trusting Always.

The saints, when they gather for camp, anticipate a time when they can lay aside their responsibilities and enjoy the seminars, services and fellowship with one another. For many of us who were unable to attend the GMBA Campout, this retreat is our time to have a taste of the campout experience. It is a taste of the Kingdom of God on earth, and we revel in each moment!

At the opening of our Saturday morning chapel service, Brother Jim Sgro encouraged us to reach out to Jesus and put our faith and trust in Him. The seminars were diligently planned to allow discussion and foster a time to learn and to share with one another.

Our youngsters were excited as they participated in the seminar activities and a game prepared by Sister Cindy Bright. On the other end of the spectrum we heard of the continued passion for the Lord and the stimulating discussion that ensued from our seasoned brothers and sisters. Whether we attended the craft session, participated in sports or just sat and talked with a brother or sister, we had an opportunity to share in an unhurried manner, our walk with Jesus.

The Lord blessed us with picture

perfect weather. There was a treat for the children and for the child in each of us. We went on a train ride! We all piled into the train cars for a ride around the lake and through the wooded area of this beautiful camp. Brother Ken Lombardo and Brother Anthony Scolaro spoke with a gentleman who told them that the camp founder had built the train from scratch and that its maintenance was a labor of love. It was so much fun!

During our Saturday evening meeting many of our brothers and sisters testified of how God had seen them through difficult times. Sister Tammy Valenti told of her recent knee surgery and how her doctor feels that she should be in pain, yet she walks without any pain. Sister Terry Goode spoke of how God had blessed her son, Jacob, through a recent illness. We felt blessed when Jacob sang a song written by his father, Brother Tom. Brother Aaron Olexa testified that as he and a group of brothers traveled to camp, God protected them from a terrible accident with an 18 wheeled truck! This is just a sampling of the testimonies offered. To echo the words of our dearly passed elder, Brother Wilbur MacNiel, "Who wouldn't serve a God like that?"

Our blessings continued as we met in our Sunday services. Brother Jerry Valenti spoke about the 2,060 young warriors from Alma 57:19-21. The young men fought so valiantly and did not doubt the words they learned in their youth from mothers. The brothers caringly spoke to our young people and their parents. Brother David Catalano spoke of how a mother eagle teaches her young to fly by taking them up to the heavens and letting them go. If the baby bird does not fly, never fear, mother bird will catch the bird before he hits the ground. It is an exhilarating story that our brother used to show us how God will always be with those who trust in Him. We can all go forth in confidence when we trust in God.

Our youngest campers were also touched by the Spirit. I sat next to three-year-old Andrew Tenorio. Toward the end of the meeting he turned to me and exclaimed, "I like this Church!" It

is heart warming that people of all ages can gather together and be in one mind and one spirit. The brothers and sisters of the Atlantic Coast are learning that there is energy and an excitement that is growing on the domestic front and we can all fan the fire by our enthusiasm and support of our branches and the auxiliaries of the Church. As our love grows God will draw more people to the Church and that means more blessings for all.

Midwest Area MBA Teams Up With Columbus Mission at Labor Day Powwow

By Sister Natalie Pezzenti and Brother Peter Benyola

During the Labor Day holiday weekend, brothers and sisters from the Midwest Region met in Columbus, Ohio, to volunteer at a Native American powwow. The group helped with the opening day setup on Saturday by arranging and grounding center flag poles, and assembling tents, tables and chairs for drummers and chiefs. The region set up a concession stand as a fundraiser, making about \$500 from selling snow cones and \$500 from a lemonade and smoothie stand.

During the veteran ceremony, Brother Mike Nuzzi was invited and honored by being a flagbearer and participating in the ceremony. Brother Duane Werley participated throughout the day by volunteering his time as a member of the photo restriction committee.

After the powwow, the group, which included Brothers Mike and Duane, Seth Barnes, the Gomez family, Andrew McNamara, Dan McNamara and Peter Benyola enjoyed an open house and fellowship time Saturday evening at the Pennell home in Pickerington.

Event coordinator and Vice

(Continued on Page 11)

Stay Connected, Stay Strong

Theme of Conference Weekend in San Diego, CA

By Brother John Cihomsky

A spirit-filled Saturday morning feet washing service set the tone for the Pacific Region Conference, held August 23 and 24 in San Diego. The elders and teachers in attendance heeded Region President Brother Stacey Light's call to "break our hearts for one another and ask the Lord to bless our ministries." The brothers humbled themselves, washing feet and pleading with the Lord for more spiritual strength and love to stay focused on the mission of proclaiming the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ.

This outpouring of love and support for each other prompted Apostle Paul Liberto to relate a story about how when he was a young boy his family moved to a new neighborhood, but he did not worry about losing his old friends and having to make new ones. Brother Paul knew that he had a greater connection – a strong bond with his Church family through Christ, a bond that he would never lose.

Apostles Tom Liberto and Dick

Christman also spoke on the importance of staying connected to one another, and thus to Christ and His Church, especially in tough times. Brother Dick recounted how the saints rallied around him when he was involved in a severe auto accident many years ago, and how he later saw that same love when his son, Brother Joel Christman, underwent successful surgery for lung cancer.

An afternoon seminar focused on the challenges and temptations our young people, and all members, face online and in today's society in general. Brother Stacey encouraged the congregation to stay strong when we find ourselves confronted by temptation, by not only bringing our situation to the Lord, but also by reaching out to our friends, brothers and sisters and seek their support, love and prayers.

The message for the evening service centered on Romans 8:35: *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or*

distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? To relate the verse to today's spiritual obstacles, the congregation was urged to not let any of the things we encounter today – materialism, the Internet, movies, music, etc. – separate us from our love for Christ and our commitment to Him.

The theme carried over into the Sunday service as Brother David Areola related how a boat can drift far away, even on a calm sea, if it is not securely tied to a dock. He implored the congregation to stay tied to Christ and connected to each other and the Church. Brother Leonard Lovalvo followed and spoke about how in his youth he fought his desire to be connected to the saints, but was overjoyed when he did make his commitment to Christ and the family of God as a young man.

Other brothers followed, including Brother Rudy Meo, who expressed how much he missed his natural brother, who passed away several years ago. But Brother Rudy said he takes comfort in knowing that he will see his brother again one day because of their connection to Christ, which is the strongest connection any of us can have.



**Branch and
Mission News**

Called To Serve

By Brother Jeremy Nicklow

On August 24, 2008 the saints in Monongahela gathered for their Sunday meeting anticipating the special blessings of God. They were coming to witness the ordination of Brother Adam Matthews into the office of a deacon. The meeting was opened by Brother Tony Ricci. He spoke from the Book of Enos in the Book of Mormon. He outlined the steps Enos took in his approach to the Lord. Brother Tony exhorted the saints to

both desire and hunger for the spiritual food to feed our souls. As we desire and hunger for this, God will work to change our hearts when we seek Him. Our desire must not simply stay focused on ourselves; once Enos received salvation he turned his desire and concern for the welfare of his people. He said if we continually desire to see others come to Christ, God will help us to fight our battles and gain the victory.

Brother Pete Darr followed relating a dream that he had approximately fifteen years ago. He was ascending a tall pyramid, and he said it took him much effort and time to reach the top. He came to a certain point near the top, and being very tired he sat down on a ledge next to an individual who had been sitting there. About a week prior to the ordination

the dream came back to Brother Pete and he realized the individual he sat down next to was Brother Adam. He added that there is much work to do for the Lord, and with God on our side we can accomplish all things.

Brother Don Ross followed and said we are to give to others that which is spiritual and that we must understand that it is a great privilege to know Jesus Christ.

In the afternoon, Brother Karl Kirschner read from Acts 6 concerning the calling of the original deacons to minister in the Church. He stated that God's power was given to the deacon, Stephen, to do God's work. As we do God's work, He will give us the same power.

Brother Chuck Kogler read the duties of a deacon from the *Minister's Manual*.

Adam's feet were washed by Brother Robert Golling, and he was ordained by Brother Rich Scaglione Sr. During the ordination prayer, tongues were spoken and the interpretation was "Even as it was foretold, it has come to pass." At the end of the ordination prayer the word of the Lord was given, "Great is the calling that I have placed upon you. Abide in me and you shall find strength." Truly it was a blessed day as the saints witnessed the glory of God.

Branch #2 Road Trip

By Sister Carolynn O'Connor

After 45 hours of travel through two countries and two states, with 11 young children, visiting one Wonder of the World, taking five breaks and three wrong turns, and enjoying one spirit-filled meeting, and too much fast food to count, the members and families of Detroit Branch #2 arrived back at the branch from a fast-paced, fun and educational trip to visit Hill Cumorah in Palmyra, NY.

The weekend started at 6:30 a.m. on Saturday, July 19, as we gathered at the branch to board the bus that would take us on this journey. Anticipation was high for those returning to the Pageant after many years and for those who were anxious to experience it for the very first time. We began planning for this trip many months in advance and numerous e-mails had been sent out to ensure that the trip would go smoothly. God blessed our efforts and we were rewarded with a memorable experience.

On the way there, the children were presented with activity books with the Book of Mormon stories and an assignment to get to know the brothers and sisters of the branch by way of interviewing them. The interview included questions that would help the children to learn about how the members met the Church, when they were baptized, and their favorite songs and responsibilities in the Church. The children moved around the bus over the next two days taking

time to meet with the brothers and sisters and fulfill their assignment.

Also on the way there, Brother Duane Lovalvo and Brother Cameron Staley prepared us for the evening by recounting the history of the Book of Mormon and the Restored Gospel. This information set the tone and reminded us of the very important scenes that we were about to view during the Pageant.

After a few stops, including picking up a few of our brothers and sisters in Canada after we crossed the border, and a quick stop at the hotel to check in, we arrived at the grounds. We went first to the early home of Joseph Smith and saw where he lived with his family at the time when he went to the Lord in prayer asking what church he should join. We toured the grove where the Lord told him not to join any of the churches and the angel instructed him where to find the plates. We also visited the home where Joseph Smith lived once he obtained the plates and saw the hiding spots that he used to keep them safe while he worked on the translation.

Anticipation built as the evening wore on and the sun descended. The Pageant begins at sundown and after the morning's early departure, it started not a moment too soon. Even the children, barely able to keep their eyes open, sat in reverence as the cast of almost 600 people made their way onto the stage coming from the crowds after hours of greeting those in attendance. The Book of Mormon stories came alive as the actors took us from the story of Lehi all the way through to the time that Joseph Smith dug up the plates on the very hill that the pageant was currently taking place.

Following some much-needed sleep, we loaded the bus in the morning to visit the Rochester Mission. On the way there, Brother Dino, presiding elder of Branch #2, prepared us by sharing with us the excitement that the brothers and sisters of the mission had for our visit. He asked us to be prayerful for this small mission and told us that Brother Andrew Locchi, presiding elder of Rochester, had been in a hospital and now in a rehabilitation home for a very long time and that

Brother Hank Cardillo had been making the long journey to see to the needs of the mission.

When we arrived, we felt the love in the greetings from the brothers and sisters there. After enjoying a beautiful spirit of singing, the brother elders of Branch #2 each took a few moments to share a few thoughts with us.

Brother Leonard A. Lovalvo spoke about the love of Jesus Christ, and then read from Matthew 16:13-18. His theme was knowing the Lord and through this revelation, building His Church. He spoke about our love for one another and shared personal testimony relating to the Rochester Mission including the fact that many years ago, brothers from Branch #2 helped to build the building we were in.

Brother David Lovalvo continued with this theme sharing that this was the scripture that he planned to speak on and that God wanted us to hear this message. He also spoke about Moroni and how he was only one man. He asked us if we were charged with the same responsibility could we do it?

Brother Mike Pandone continued with Moroni and included that Joseph Smith was also one man and because of these two, we have the Book of Mormon today. He expressed that the trait that they had in common was faith and asked us what we were doing to step out on faith.

Brother Duane Lovalvo expressed excitement about being in the cradle of the restoration in this part of the country. Brother Duane asked the question, "Do we know Jesus Christ?" He encouraged us to stay close to the Lord and get to know Him better so that we could also be as strong in faith as Moroni and Joseph Smith were.

Brother Alex Gentile spoke about the experience of the Pageant and how we were just a few of the 8000 people there to watch. He told us not to be discouraged about our numbers and reminded us that when Jesus walked the earth He only had a few followers. He stated that we should be encouraged that we have sustained the Gospel.

(Continued on Page 10)

Branch #2 Road Trip

Continued from Page 9

Brother Larry Henderson reminded us of a sermon Brother Alex had once spoke on "We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us," and encouraged us to do more for the Lord. He shared an awesome dream where he was asked to work to restore the auditorium roof. In his dream he got out all of his new tools and went to work but could not make any progress. An older brother came to him and said, "You have to use the old tools." He did and was successful in repairing the roof. He interpreted this dream to mean that he should work with the tools and skills the Lord has given him to help strengthen the Church.

Brother Hank also shared a few experiences with us as well including the many ways the Lord has blessed him and his family. He encouraged us to always pray for one another and show love one to another.

The children sang a song and we adjourned to the basement to share a meal and some fellowship before beginning our journey home. We parted in love and in words of encouragement to hold the fort as the few brothers and sisters left at the mission work hard to keep the Church going in this part of the vineyard.

On our way home we visited Niagara Falls and the beauty of God's creation. Once back on the bus, each of the children had the opportunity to share interesting facts that they learned about the brothers and sisters when they interviewed them. They also picked one of the favorite songs from the interviews and we sang the chorus together.

God truly blessed us on this trip, from keeping us safe to blessing the children with great patience on the long journey, to blessing us with His Spirit in our meeting. We strengthened our bonds one with another both in the branch and with the members of the Rochester Mission and learned more about the restored Gospel. We returned somewhat weary but assuredly blessed.

Joy in Italy

Continued from Page 2

us was so great that he invited the entire congregation to his local hotel for dinner after the service.

Team Italy's mission is to let our light so shine that the Lord will bless the Church there. Our feeling of joy was extended as many of the visitors said they never heard such teachings nor saw such love towards one another. Pray for the Church in Italy that the Lord will continue to bring love, peace, joy, and happiness to the visitors and saints.

MBA Challenge Met

Continued from Page 3

Commission. To that end, the MBA – focusing on the word "missionary" – took on the task of raising funds to help pay for the printing and distribution of an issue of the Native American Outreach Committee's *First Voices Journal*.

This past year, the first issue was inaugurated with the printing and distribution of more than 1,000 journals to Native American organizations, centers, reserves, etc. To keep the work going, the General Ladies' Uplift Circle generously contributed \$2,000 in fall 2007, for which the NAOC is very grateful.

The Atlanta MBA wanted to do its part. The MBA gathered a huge variety of household goods, toys, clothes and more, as well as baked goods, and hosted a yard sale May 31 in Fayetteville town square. To help get the buyers, the MBA placed an ad in the local paper and signs on the street. Early in the morning, the members set up tables and spread out their wares. Assisting the Atlanta saints were Brother Tom and Sister Marcia Liberto from San Diego. Brother Reno Bologna from Detroit provided encouragement. To make sure no one got weak from hunger as they shopped, the members sold a lunch combo of hot dogs, chips and water. When it was finished, the remaining items were donated to a

local thrift shop. The final tally for the day's effort was more than \$700.

Additionally, church flyers were given to a number of customers asking about our Church. It was so nice for the Atlanta members to say their building was only a mile away and that they were welcome to come worship.

The members felt good about their desire and the work accomplished to assist the Church in its Divine Commission. Maybe other Local MBAs would like to take the same challenge – seize the opportunity to provide some assistance to the Great Work of the Lord.

Healing in the Congo

Continued from Page 4

Name, which is good, in faith believing that he shall receive, behold, it shall be done unto you. At this time, when I am writing to you, I test again with my tongue the palate to feel if the button [tumor] is there or if there is a wound. Nothing! I thank the Lord and I finish saying to all who can read this testimony, like Mormon ending his book: *And may the Lord Jesus Christ grant that their [ours, yours, and mine] prayers may be answered according to their [our] faith; and may God the Father remember the covenant which he hath made with the house of Israel [also with you and me]; and may he bless them [and us] forever, through faith on the name of Jesus Christ. Amen* (Mormon 9:37).

This is a glorious testimony we can share with our brothers and sisters of the Church in our branches and also with our friends of God's healing power to our beloved Brother Cipeng A' Kapend of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I trust as each of you read this wonderful testimony of Brother Cipeng, you will have experienced the same spirit of joy I felt knowing God is no respecter of persons, regardless of color, race, culture or ethnicity. He is the same yesterday, today and forever without variableness or changing. His **Love**, his **Mercy** and **Grace** are being

extended to all mankind through the exercising of Faith. As one Africa Sector mission field congregation would say, "God is good all the time."

The Children's Corner

Continued from Page 6

becomes an elder or minister unless God calls them. There are dreams or experiences selecting them to be fearless and willing to sacrifice their time to love and guide others. God will work with them to do great miracles for His people, you and me. God pays all of His servants, every day here and for all eternity in heaven.

Which paycheck would you rather have? I know which one I would want.

With love,
Your friend,
Sister Jan

Labor Day Powwow

Continued from Page 7

President of the Midwest Region MBA, Brother Lucas Martorana, said the group had a wonderful time and was extremely inspired and blessed working alongside other volunteers and the Native American people. "The Native leaders expressed their gratitude deeply several times, and expressed how many times groups don't follow up or are no shows," he said. "We were commended for our aid and told that without us this event would have really been a strain for those participating."

Because of the efforts of the group, members of the Native American Indian Center of Central Ohio invited The Church of Jesus Christ to their events again on Memorial Day and Labor Day in the future. In addition, because of Brother A. Joe Pennell's consistent contact with the leader of the organization, an offer

was extended to have a designated section for holding a church or informational meeting or service during the organization's meeting in the future. Following the powwow, in his testimony in the Columbus Mission, he commented that he enjoyed a conversation with Native American acquaintances about their spiritual beliefs.

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Baptisms and Reinstatements

Brother Jason Lavalley was baptized on June 29, 2008 at the Sterling Heights, Michigan Branch. He was baptized by Brother Carl Romano and confirmed by Brother John Straccia.

Brother Daniel Eugene Holmes was baptized on August 3, 2008 at the Treasure Coast, Florida Branch. He was baptized by Brother Ron Carradi and confirmed by Brother David Checchi.

Sister Shakirah Alise Smith was baptized on August 20, 2008 at the Las Vegas, Nevada Mission. She was baptized by Brother Bob McDonnell and confirmed by Brother Jim Huttenberger.

Sister Lauren Urana was baptized on September 14, 2008 at the Greensburg, Pennsylvania Branch. She was baptized by Brother Christopher Gehly and confirmed by Brother Joseph Fallavollitti.

Brother Nick Geremia was baptized on September 21, 2008 at the Freehold, New Jersey Branch. He was baptized by Brother Jim Crudup and confirmed by Brother Matthew Rogolino.

Sister Laura Bertolo was baptized on October 5, 2008 at Detroit, Michigan Branch #1. She was baptized by Brother Larry Champine and confirmed by Brother Keith Lesperance.

Brother Thomas F. Banyacski, Jr. was baptized at the Hopelawn, New Jersey Branch. He was baptized by Brother Jim Calabro and confirmed by Brother Leonard Benyola.

Sister Rosa Mercado was baptized on October 12, 2008 at the Miami-Dade, Florida Mission. She was baptized by Brother Justin Severson and confirmed by Brother Miguel Bicelis.

Sister Maria Ponce was baptized on October 12, 2008 at the Miami-Dade, Florida Mission. She was baptized by Brother Justin Severson and confirmed by Brother Miguel Bicelis.

Sister Calletana Martinez was baptized on October 12, 2008 at the Miami-Dade, Florida Mission. She was baptized by Brother Miguel Bicelis and confirmed by Brother Justin Severson.

Sister Elizabeth Mercado was baptized on October 12, 2008 at the Miami-Dade, Florida Mission. She was baptized by Brother Miguel Bicelis and confirmed by Brother Justin Severson.

Sister Alexis Jane Hulings was baptized on October 19, 2008 at the Fredonia, Pennsylvania Branch. She was baptized by Brother Alvin Gehly and confirmed by Brother Arthur Gehly, Sr.

* WEDDINGS *

Jonathan Eric Eilder and Kely Ann Bradburn were united in holy matrimony at the Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Branch on September 27, 2008.

Children Blessed

Grace Elizabeth Kunkel, daughter of Sam, Jr. and Julia Kunkel was blessed on February 10, 2008 at the Atlanta, Georgia Branch.

Gavin Todd Hess, son of Michael and Stacy Hess was blessed on August 24, 2008 at the Greensburg, Pennsylvania Branch.

Charles Edward Pankratz, III, son of Chuck and Gloria Pankratz was blessed on September 21, 2008 at Detroit, Michigan Branch #1.

Elise Corinne Graff, daughter of Ryan and Julianna Graff was blessed on October 19, 2008 at the Greensburg, Pennsylvania Branch.

Ordinations

Brother Joseph Fallavollitti was ordained an elder April 13, 2008 at the Greensburg, Pennsylvania Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Joseph Draskovich and he was ordained by Brother Paul Gehly.

Address Change

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Branch or Mission _____

Spiritual Anniversaries

Sister Patricia Pianko of Detroit, Michigan Branch #1 celebrated her 50th spiritual anniversary in The Church of Jesus Christ.

Brother Louis Pietrangelo of Detroit, Michigan Branch #1 celebrated his 50th spiritual anniversary in The Church of Jesus Christ.

Sister Victoria D'Antonio of the Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Branch celebrated her 50th spiritual anniversary in The Church of Jesus Christ on October 9, 2008.

OBITUARIES

We wish to express our sympathy to those that mourn the loss of loved ones. May God bless and comfort you.

FRANK KIBAT

Brother Frank Kibat of Detroit, Michigan Branch #1, passed on to his reward on December 2, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Sister Mary Kibat; children, Nancy (Tom) Lombardo, and Robert (Sandy) Kibat; grandchildren Alicen, Anthony, Aubrey, Kristy and two great-grandchildren.

JOHN SOAVE

Brother John Soave of Detroit, Michigan Branch #1, passed on to his reward on December 4, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Sister Mary Jane Soave; children, Angela (Dennis) Colpitts, Mary Jo (Bruce) Jones and Sister Johnna (Brother Keith) Lesperance; grandchildren Brandon, Brother Ryan, Sister Jamy, Paula, Brittany, Dennis and Vickie, as well as four great-grandchildren.

WILLIAM R. KUNKEL

Brother William R. Kunkel of the Atlanta, Georgia Branch passed on to his reward on January 28, 2008. He is

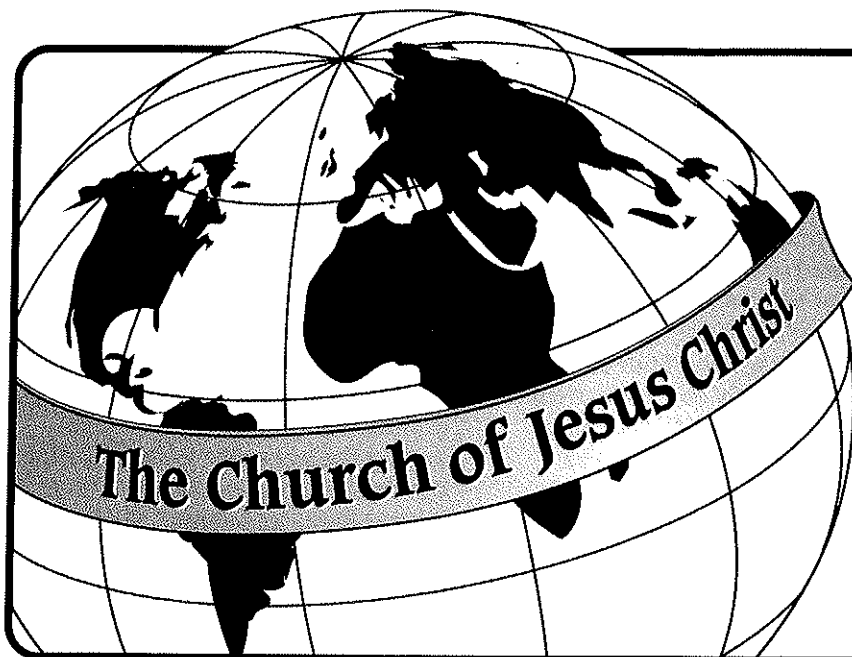
survived by his wife, Sister Bonnie Kunkel; one son, Brother Sam Kunkel; and three daughters, Sister Karen Watford, Marilyn (Bradley) Grossman and Beverly Allen; five grandsons, one granddaughter, three great-grandsons and two great-granddaughters.

ALBERT C. SCUOTTO, JR.

Brother Albert C. Scuotto, Jr. of the Hopelawn, New Jersey Branch, passed on to his reward on May 21, 2008. He was preceded in death by his wife, Sister Pegi (Margaret Fantzaier) Scuotto. He is survived by his son, Brother Albert B. Scuotto; daughters, Tamie Kulpa (Kevin), Traci Thompson (Donald), and Beth; honorary daughter Tracy Bender; and two granddaughters, Megan and Mary Thompson.

Note of Thanks

The family of Brother Bill Kunkel wishes to thank everyone for all the cards, telephone calls and especially all the prayers in the recent passing of Brother Bill. Each and every one is appreciated. God bless each of you.



The Gospel News

World Headquarters Monongahela, PA, USA

December, 2008

Volume 64, No. 12

Christmas – True or False?

By Brother Jerry Valenti

How much do you know about Christmas? As you reflect upon the birth of our Savior as we normally do at this time of the year, try testing your knowledge of this great occasion with the following short True-False quiz I've assembled based on random facts from scripture and historical writings about Christmas. I'll list the 10 questions first so you can try answering them before reading the explanation that goes with each.

For each of the following statements, answer True or False:

1. Jesus was born on December 25.
2. None of the gifts listed in the song *The 12 Days of Christmas* are mentioned in the scriptural account of the birth of Jesus.
3. The name of Santa Claus came from a name for the baby Jesus.
4. Three wise men came to visit the baby Jesus.
5. Jesus spoke while He was in Mary's womb.
6. Jesus was born in a manger.
7. The word "Christmas" comes from the term Christ's Mass.
8. In one part of the world, the exact day of Jesus' birth was

identified in advance by people who did not believe in Christ.

9. The scene around the manger included angels, shepherds and wise men.

10. The term "Xmas" came about as a way of excluding the word "Christ" from Christmas.

If you have your answers ready, read on.

1. False. It is generally recognized that the early church chose December 25 as a day to celebrate the birth of Christ because it was considered at the time to be the winter solstice (the time of the year when the days begin to get longer again, sometimes referred to as the "rebirth" of the sun). However, we can also use scripture to show that December 25 could not have been the date of Christ's birth. In III Nephi, the Nephites received signs of His birth (Chapter 1) and His death (Chapter 8). They reckoned their time from the sign of His birth (2:8) and then recorded that the sign of His death was given "in the thirty and fourth year, in the first month, on the fourth day of the month" (8:5). This means that Jesus was crucified four days after His birthday. The

New Testament tells us that the crucifixion occurred during the Pass-over season which has always been in the March/April time frame so we know that Christ was actually born at that time of the year as well.

2. False. See Luke 2:24 – "a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves." In the Old Testament, two turtledoves were used as an offering to atone for sin (see Leviticus 5:7) so their appearance in the account of the birth of Christ is appropriate since Jesus was to be the final atonement for the sins of mankind.

3. True. About 200 years ago in Europe, an attempt to relate an imaginary gift-bringer to the Christ child resulted in the German word "Christkindlein" (meaning Christ child) eventually becoming the term "Kris Kringle," the common name of Santa Claus.

4. False. Perhaps there were three wise men but in all the places that the wise men are mentioned in Matthew 2, the number three is never mentioned. It is generally assumed that there were three wise men because they brought three gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh (Matthew 2:11), but there could have been any number of wise men in the group.

5. True. Jesus spoke to Nephi the

(Continued on Page 2)

Spiritual Opening of the October 2008 General Church Conference

(October 10, 2008)

(A request was made at the October 2008 General Church Conference for the Secretarial Staff to write an article on the opening of the spiritually moving Friday morning service, which is presented below.)

The opening remarks were offered by Apostle Paul Palmieri, General Church President. Brother Palmieri previewed the business for the Conference and then began to speak on world conditions and the

effects of the financial situation in the United States and compounding affects throughout the world. He stated we must be fixed in our goal of being united in the advancement of the Gospel and how we must work together in unity. In succeeding statements, he spoke of our need to be positive and rely on God's strength. He reminded the Conference that God is in charge and He has the ultimate control over the financial conditions of the USA and over every aspect of our lives.

Brother Palmieri spoke from I Nephi 14:7-17. He spoke of how the Angel saw our day, and the day is coming when only two (2) churches will exist and how The Church of Jesus Christ must be spread everywhere across the face of the earth.

He stressed the need for the brothers to have confidence in whom we serve.

As Brother Palmieri was speaking, Apostle Isaac Smith spoke in the Spirit and said, "Thus saith the Lord, All the Kingdoms of the earth will fail but My Kingdom will not fail."

Brother Palmieri stressed we must continue to be a righteous people, a holy people, full of love, setting the examples as leaders of the Church. He challenged us to do more both at home and abroad. He simply stated we should ask God to help us and try Him. While he was speaking this, Brother Ronald Mazzeo spoke in the Spirit stating, "Try me now, herewith, saith the Lord and see if I will not open the windows of heaven and bless you, My people, saith the Lord my Father."

Christmas True or False

Continued from Page 1

night before He was born. Among the words He spoke were, "on the morrow come I into the world, to show unto the world that I will fulfill all that which I have caused to be spoken by the mouth of my holy prophets" (III Nephi 1:13).

6. False. Jesus was born presumably in a stable after which his mother laid him in a manger (Luke 2:7). A manger is a feeding trough for animals that was used as the first cradle for the baby Jesus, a fitting humble beginning for the earthly life of the Son of God.

7. True. The word "Christmas" comes from "Cristes Maesse," an early English phrase that means "Mass of Christ" (or "Christ's Mass").

8. True. Weary of hearing about the coming sign of a day, a night and a day without darkness that would signify the birth of Christ, the unbelievers set apart a day on which the believers would be put to death unless that sign would appear (III Nephi 1:9). The sign appeared on that very day, saving the lives of the believers. Thus, the unbelievers had unwittingly

identified the very day of Christ's birth.

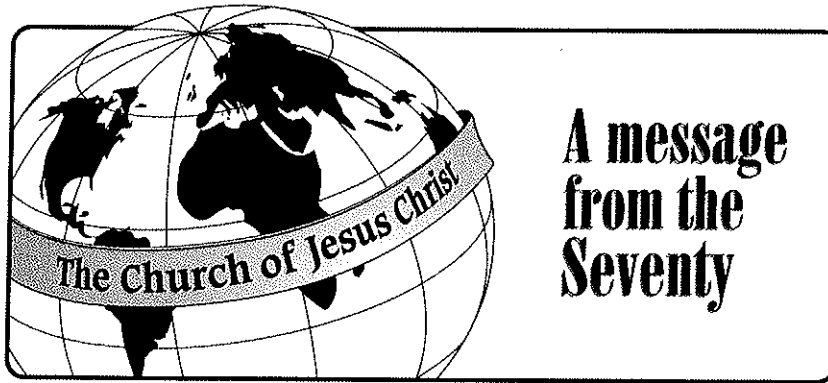
9. False. Although the traditional Nativity scenes are beautiful, they are not quite accurate, according to the scriptures. After the angel and the rest of the heavenly host delivered their message to the shepherds in the fields, they departed (Luke 2:15). The shepherds went themselves to see the baby Jesus lying in the manger. The wise men didn't arrive until some time later, after the family had taken up residence in a house (Matthew 2:11).

10. False. While it is true that there are many people who are on a mission to remove the mention of Christ from our society, the abbreviation "Xmas" did not originate as part of that mission. Actually, the first letter of the Greek word for Christ is the letter Chi which is generally represented by the letter X. So, the term Xmas should properly be viewed as simply an abbreviation (and even properly pronounced "Christmas") rather than as an attempt to take Christ out of Christmas.

I hope you enjoyed the random facts presented here but keep in mind that there are no winners or losers in

this quiz. Regardless of what day Christ was born, who was there at the time and how we spell the name of the holiday, the key fact to remember is that the birth of Christ was the beginning of God's condescension to mankind which occurred because of His great love for us. We are all winners if we are part of the Lord's family as we are then partakers of the great plan of salvation in which the Son of God was born in the flesh and then later gave His life for us and resurrected from the grave, making losers of Satan and his dominion. We thus have something to truly celebrate, not only at this time of the year but every day of our lives.

**Merry
Christmas**
to all our readers.



“...they were still his brethren”

By Evangelist Anthony Ricci

“...therefore Alma did rejoice exceedingly to see his brethren; and what added more to his joy, they were still his brethren in the Lord; yea, and they had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth; for they were men of a sound understanding and they had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God” (Alma 17:2).

Apostle Paul Liberto, Evangelist Paul Aaron Palmieri, Brother Juan Rivas, and this humble writer found these words to be true in the land of Ecuador from November 12 through November 17. We found our group of brothers and sisters to be strong in the knowledge of the truth! They were a group of sound understanding of what it means to be a member of The Church of Jesus Christ! They were a group hungering and thirsting for the fellowship of the Family of God!

I have found out through our travels that no missionary trip goes exactly as planned—and this one started out no different. After landing in Quito late at night and arriving at our hotel, we were promptly greeted with the phrase, “We have a little bit of a problem.” Unfortunately, “the little bit of a problem” meant they did not have our rooms for us. As always though, God protects us and provides for us. We were able to spend the night in a different location that provided a good night’s rest to prepare us for what was to become a very busy week.

The goal of every mission field is to visit our brothers and sisters as often as possible, especially in a new work. Unfortunately, sometimes our committees are short of funds and short of travelers and sometimes our mission fields are not visited as much as is needed. On our last trip to Ecuador we baptized five new members, and it was now five and a half months since we last visited. Imagine my dear brothers and sisters, if you were not able to receive communion, get hands laid on you when you are sick, or have the inspired preaching of the word of God. We know how much we would miss and desire these wonderful blessings that we have the opportunity to partake in every week! What we saw was a group wanting for these things! Crying for the fellowship! Desiring and needing communion! They were STILL our brothers and sisters!

I will speak for my brothers when I say our reaction in seeing their sincerity and love for the Church could be simply put in one word—WOW! Our Apostle Paul Liberto set the tone for the week. In every home, and in our Sunday service, he preached and taught about the unity of the Family of God! This was a theme that was resonated in every home that we walked into.

In our “miracle home” of Sister Xiorma, Brother Jose, and Sister Dayli (I won’t write about the miracle—I URGE you to take time to

speak to one of your Ecuadorian missionaries—ASK THEM!!), we heard them begging for a full time minister in Ecuador. They have such a wonderful desire to be ministered to on a regular basis—it truly brought tears to the brothers. This is a family we saw God do wonderful and miraculous things for, and to hear them have such a need and a want for the Restoration ignited our spirits! I lament that I do not have the skills in my writing ability to relay to you the Spirit of God that was felt in that home amongst this wonderful family.

In another home of our saints, we had a neighbor and his daughter-in-law come to the meeting. He testified he was asked to come a few weeks ago, but had said no (and forgot about it), and was actually dressed and walking to go to a party. He said as he was walking and he saw cars passing him—when one certain car passed him—he said he felt the Spirit of God tell him to go home. He said he came home and just waited. One member of our group came by his home and said he was asking him again to come to the meeting. He accepted—and when he came to the home, he saw that certain car—it was our car dropping us off. (Yes, we got a little lost—but now we know the reason why—he needed to see our car.—WITH GOD ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD!) The man from our group then testified he wanted his friend and neighbor to see the true love and authority of God. He

(Continued on Page 10)



Our “Miracle Couple”

Montréal, QC Mission

By Brother Timothy Mott

(The following is a brief account of the beginnings of The Church of Jesus Christ in Montréal, Québec, Canada.)

Perpetue Mukarugwiza grew up in Burundi, Africa blessed to have knowledge of Jesus Christ. Her parents taught her from her youth to believe in Christ and to depend upon Him for all things. She took this belief with her when she departed her homeland in Africa to establish a new home and a new life in Montreal, Canada. Perpetue studied to become a school teacher and began teaching middle school children in downtown Montreal. In 1994 she traveled to Burundi to assist her parents with moving back to their native Rwanda after the end of the genocide in that country. The first day they arrived in Rwanda the Interahamwe Militia brutally attacked the family. Perpetue and her mother survived the attack but her father was not as fortunate. Having lost her father due to hatred and ignorance, Perpetue returned to Canada feeling an overwhelming need to help her people. She turned this desire to the large immigrant community in Montreal, where she began an afterschool program to assist in the development of underprivileged children and their parents.

In 2007, Perpetue met Brother Aime' Rurinda, a deacon from The Church of Jesus Christ in Rwanda, who was studying in Montreal at the time. She listened to Aime's testimony of the beauty of the Restored Gospel and desired to know more for herself. God answered her prayers and Perpetue soon found herself back in Rwanda on a Quebec government outreach project. While there, she was able to visit the Kigali Mission of The Church of Jesus Christ, instantly falling in love. After returning to Canada, Perpetue began to write to several members of the ministry, asking that The Church of Jesus Christ be established in Montreal. Brother Lyle Criscuolo and Chatman Young

visited Montreal in November 2007 and met Perpetue along with fifteen of her friends and neighbors. The interest was definitely present, but our brothers wondered how could such a work be established so far from any other branch or mission?

At this point, I must bring you back to the United States in 2006. I married the woman of my dreams, Jimena, only to face incredible disappointment when she returned to her native Colombia after becoming overwhelmed by culture shock. My initial disbelief turned to sadness which quickly turned to depression; by January 2007 I found myself at the lowest point of my life. It was at this point that I had a dream that would forever change me. In the dream, I found myself walking in a field, counseling two young people on how to deal with the struggles that life presents to us. As we continued to walk and talk, I looked down and noticed my feet were suspended several inches above the ground. I immediately knew the Lord was lifting me up, and as my faith in this fact increased, He lifted me higher. I became so sure that God was lifting me that I soon found myself flying high above the field. I then heard the words, "Wait upon the Lord." We know that God has many wonders in store for us, but we must be patient to see His plan unfold.

With a new sense of purpose, I began to seek out God's will once again for my life, and I felt him directing me to Columbus, Ohio. Several days after making the decision to move, my wife called me for the first time after our split; we slowly began to reconcile. You see, God knew I had to be humbled down in order to be used by Him. I soon moved, and my new employer required that I travel frequently to Montreal to perform audits of a small company we had recently acquired there. As a result of the time I spent in Canada, the company offered me a newly-created position to be based out of Montreal. My wife rejoined me in February 2008 after requesting baptism in the Bogota,

NAOC Briefs

Edited by Brother Peter Benyola

The Lord Blesses a Journey to Red Lake Reservation

*By Evangelist Lyle Criscuolo
Great Lakes RMOC NAO coordinator*

RED LAKE RESERVATION, Minn. – From June 17 to 23, Evangelists Lyle Criscuolo and Joel Gehly began a missionary trip to the reservation. They arrived in Park Rapids, Minnesota within one hour of each other on Wednesday, then visited Sister Diane Diserens at her place of work. The following day, they traveled to Red Lake Reserve with Sister Diane and went to the home of Richard and Duffy Gibbs. Also present were Richard's father, Jim, and a good friend, Ron.

As they all began to converse, the missionaries found these people are Christian. They have a belief that they are part of Israel, having had many experiences causing them to believe their roots are from Israel. They began to show them from the Bible that they are truly the offspring of Joseph of Egypt. Then the brothers began to show them the record of their fathers, the Book of Mormon, explaining The Church of Jesus Christ and the Restoration of the Gospel. Albeit somewhat skeptical, they agreed to read the book and pray about it. They had many questions including, "Where have you been? Why haven't you come here a long time ago?" The brothers spent more than three and one-half hours with them, reporting that it was time well spent.

On Thursday evening, Brothers Lyle and Joel spent time teaching Sister Diane, who is a native Choctaw from the Fort Worth, Texas area, about the Church. She had met the Church through Sister Inez Cotellesse, who gave her the Book of Mormon 10 years ago. After reading it, Sister Diane attended the Fort Worth Branch

(Continued on Page 10)

(Continued on Page 11)

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Editorial Viewpoint . . .

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:11-14).

When Jesus was born, an angel and a heavenly host of others declared these words to shepherds watching over their flocks. The message was profound, and even today, not many understand the true meaning of what the angel was saying. Peace could not exist upon the earth unless Jesus Christ had been born. He taught us how to have peace with one another. Since that time, there have been occasions during which there was peace, and during these times, the people were practicing the teachings of Christ. In 4th Nephi, we read of a time of around 200 years of peace among the people. One thing they practiced was equality. They had all things in common, and no one had a mind to injure one another. How beautiful. When people do not follow the teachings of Christ, there cannot be peace. I always marvel at the hippie movement of the 1960's during which many young people wanted our nation to end a mindless war and have peace. However, instead of following the teachings of Christ, the devil influenced many into taking drugs and having "free love," and they were led to perverted lifestyles, which we are paying for today with diseases and rebellious attitudes towards the things of God. That war did end, but peace did not come to our nation. It has been turbulent ever since. True peace cannot come until we run our society like they did upon this land as described in 4th Nephi. Leaders of nations continue to sit at tables and discuss how they can end wars and have peace. They strategize, and really work hard at accomplishing this throughout the world. I'm sure many are very sincere and would want nothing else than to have peace. However, without Jesus Christ leading these efforts, peace will NEVER come to earth.

"Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children" (Isaiah 66:8).

Isaiah saw our day and time. He prophesied that the time would come when peace would come to the earth, swiftly and completely. He describes a nation being born all at once. But many will have questions and think such a thing is impossible. However, for us who know Jesus Christ, we realize this is not impossible, and following His teachings can lead any people swiftly to peace and safety. Just imagine if everyone turned to Christ and served him in truth and righteousness upon this land? Imagine how instantly the economic woes, sin and crime would be immediately eradicated! With God these things are possible, but until we all come together in unity of this faith, peace will never come to earth. The only way to end the wars and bring peace and equality about is through Jesus...no other way.

So, this Christmas, as many quote the scripture in Luke above, let us remind them that good will toward men and peace on earth is only possible because of the birth of our Savior. Any other attempt will fail. How we long for that day of peace promised to the people of God. Jesus is the greatest gift anyone can receive this Christmas.

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork

God's Plan for Moses Takes Many Years

Dear friends,

What would you do if you lived in a place where your people were hated and feared by those that ruled the country? What if they were enslaving and killing your friends and family and you could not leave that place? Can you imagine how much you would constantly be praying? This happened in ancient Egypt when the king, called Pharaoh, realized there were so many Hebrew people in his country of Egypt that they would soon outnumber the ruling Egyptians.

He made a murderous law that no boy babies would be allowed to live! Soldiers were sent to kill all newborn baby boys. This is what happened to a faithful couple named Jochebed and Amran. They already had a son named Aaron and little girl named Miriam and now Jochebed was going to have a new baby. Can you imagine how they probably prayed that the new baby would be born a girl? Can you imagine their joy and fear when the baby was born healthy but was a little boy?

Where would you hide a growing baby if you lived in a simple house made of clay bricks without any basement or sheds, or garages? For three months the family managed to hide their little baby that they named Moses. But babies make noises and soldiers searched houses. Jochebed had the idea to make a floating basket and hide her baby in the river surrounded by bulrush plants (like cattails).

All day long, Miriam, a young girl



by herself would also hide and watch over the baby. Can you imagine how she would have to sneak close to feed him and how terrified she felt when he fussed or cried? Think how much Miriam prayed as she hid and watched for soldiers or spies.

But God had a special plan for the little baby floating in a basket and for the Hebrew people who were being treated as slaves in Egypt. It happened one day when the Pharaoh's daughter came down to the water with her maidservants. She heard the cries of a baby and sent her servant to bring her the basket. When she saw baby Moses crying, it touched her heart. "This must be one of the Hebrew babies," she said. She wanted to keep him.

Brave Miriam was watching. She immediately stood up and asked the Princess, "Do you want me to find you a nurse for the baby?" The Pharaoh's daughter agreed and Miriam sped off to bring her mother to speak to the Princess. The Princess told Jochebed that she would pay her to keep Moses and care for the baby until he was able to eat solid food, and then bring him to the palace.

This meant the baby Moses would be protected and not killed! Can you imagine how many prayers of joy the family offered up every day? Can you think how hard it must have been to go out in public with the only little boy left alive, surrounded by broken-hearted friends who had seen their child murdered? Can you imagine how hard it must have been to pour love into a little one who was going to be taken from your family? Think how horrible you would feel to realize that your little baby was going to a place

where people worshipped statues of bulls, dogs, crocodiles and cats instead of the one true, living God! Wouldn't you worry every day and pray that somehow the baby would learn the truth about his family and his God?

When Moses was sent to his new adoptive mother, a Princess of the ruling class, everything was different. He was no longer wearing poor slave clothes, or eating simple foods. He learned a new language but never liked to speak in front of people even as a grown man. The boy would have to master complicated studies, like mathematics, and understand and appreciate all the different types of people who lived at court. He would learn how to lead men in warfare and rule a country.

What a change! But God had a

(Continued on Page 11)

WORD SEARCH

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Atlantic Area MBA Visits Brunswick, ME

By Sister Cynthia Marie Onorato

The Atlantic Area MBA, brothers, sisters and friends from New Jersey, New York, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Montreal Canada visited the Brunswick, Maine Branch on the weekend of October 25 & 26, 2008. They gave up their weekend, sleep and substance to partake of the goodness of God. We may ask what manner of action is this. As summed up in our service, the answer in one word, "Love."

As the weekend approached, God had in store for us a special blessing. We received a phone call from Brother Timothy Mott of Montreal Canada. There is a group of people of diverse nationalities who gather faithfully and strive to serve the Lord in Montreal. Their official language is French. They enthusiastically expressed a great desire to visit The Church of Jesus Christ in the United States of America. Among the group there are those who moved to Montreal from Rwanda and the Congo. They fondly spoke of their love and friendship that was kindled by our missionary brothers that acquainted them to The Church of Jesus Christ. That love continues to burn in their hearts. A van load of 12 people including six teenagers were able to make the journey. We cannot express the love and joy we felt in our new-found friendship with Gods people from Montreal Canada. We soon realized that there is no language barrier in Gods love.

LOVE IS A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

During our meetings, the group shared with us their love for music as they sang in French accompanied with

guitars, *Sing Glory, Chante la gloire and Keeping Step, Conservation de l'étape.*

On Saturday evening our singing echoed in the air as the bus approached welcoming our brothers and sisters in Christ. Brother Ken Lombardo expressed the singing was like a vapor and felt as if he was floating on it. Brother Tom Goode said that he had noticed how dark it was and that there are no street lights when they arrived at the building. The bus had to get turned around in darkness. When they re-approached the church, a bright light shone from the building signifying the light of Christ. A feeling of joy and warmth filled him as God's Spirit welcomed him.

Brother Richard Onorato Jr., Presiding Elder of the Maine Branch, welcomed all and spoke of our fellowship one with another in Christ. He stressed the importance of it and to walk in His light. Through His blood we are cleansed from all sin. He referred to 1 John 1:3-7, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin." The love of Christ is what keeps us together.

Brother Richard thanked the Area for their fellowship and thanked God for His undying love. Brother Kevin Perri, President of the Area MBA, thanked Sister Lydia Link for organizing the event and all those who participated. He spoke of the example of our older brothers and sisters, of their faithfulness and diligence in their calling. The young were asked to come forward and sing *The Standard of Liberty*. The elders sang, *None Can Bring This Kingdom Down*. After a short night's rest, we gathered

on Sunday welcoming God's Spirit singing with vigor *Sing Glory*, followed by *Love Lifted Me*.

Apostle James Crudup opened in asking the congregation, how many of us does that song fit? He stated each one of us will be recognized by the love we show to one another. "I was sinking deep in sin until Love lifted me."

1 John 3:1, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God?" How great is God's love? No words could express the full effect of God's love. He directed us to focus straight ahead on Jesus Christ and not to be as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Allow His Spirit to work within us. It tells us what to do; to love our enemies as ourself. Demonstrate that love through Jesus' Spirit. He makes our love binding. Is it wrapped around us? Do we feel it? Do you see it? This is The Church of Jesus Christ. Allow His Spirit to lead us into the Promised Land.

Brother Timothy Mott expressed his happiness to be with us. He felt as if they were super charged. He continued in saying, "Behold what manner of Love to be like Him." The Glory of God is beyond our comprehension.

The Montreal group receives teachings little by little as Jesus reveals Himself to us. We are just starting to learn. We will go forward in the right direction as long as we want to learn. God will keep blessing us. He spoke of how the young people, a group of six teenagers spoke very little English and they got along so well with the young in Brunswick, Maine. This was because of love. The invitation is open to all who desire to fellowship in Montreal Canada.

Brother Joe Perri spoke of love as an outward expression of an inward feeling. In John 15:13 Jesus spoke, "Greater love hath no man than this; that a man lay down his life for his friends." Brother Joe spoke of his love for his family and thought of Jesus' love, the agony and suffering he felt as he hung on the cross. Think

(Continued on Page 12)



News from Omaha-Bedford Mission

By Sisters Dorothy Miller and Janeen Wright

We held our Annual Mini-Conference the weekend of August 23, 2008. We began the Conference on Saturday morning with a Fast and Prayer Service asking God to bless our continuing efforts to spread the Gospel in the Omaha area to the many people who are serving God to the best of their knowledge, but know not that an angel has flown in the midst of Heaven restoring the pure Gospel. The Lord blessed us when family members of one of our sisters attended one of our meetings. We are always blessed when we get an opportunity to share the Gospel and our testimonies with our neighbors and friends.

During our Sunday morning service we had an added blessing—a new name was written down in glory when Janeen Dednam Wright arose in testimony asking for her baptism. She was taken into the waters of the Missouri River by Brother Clifton Wells. Following is her account in her own words of how God blessed her, which she desires to share with the Gospel News readers:

“I was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri, in a small community named Carondelet where I was first baptized in another church when I was nine years old. I was too young to know the true meaning of what I was doing. At the age of twelve, I asked Jesus Christ to be my Lord and Savior and I believe Jesus Christ became my Savior when I asked Him at this age. I began to faithfully study God’s Word in my early twenties to make sure that I applied it diligently to my life. I continued to study God’s Word for many years.

In 2005, I began to feel spiritually void at the church I had attended for

about 40 years. Although I learned much about serving God, something was missing. I began to worship at a very large non-denominational church in St. Louis. I continued my service to God and learned more about the importance of giving God the first portions of our tithes as an act of obedience. In May 2007, I asked the Lord to send me my husband and three days after I prayed that prayer, Brother Todd Wright and I became inseparable. Brother Todd introduced me to the Book of Mormon and initially, I did not know what to think about it. I was neutral to it while it sat unread, untouched for many months. Brother Todd and I were married in Hawaii on Sunday, April 27, 2008 and we covenanted with God and one another. I moved to La Vista, Nebraska (Omaha) and Brother Todd and I began our life

“As...I began to study the Book of Mormon from the beginning, the Lord showed me that it is the inspired word of God.”

together in our new home.

“I knew I would have to come to terms with exactly what the Book of Mormon actually is, whether I would accept it as the Word of God or reject it. One day, Brother Todd and I were watching a program on the History Channel that discussed lost books of the Bible. I knew this to be true of many books so I prayed and asked God to show me one way or another if the Book of Mormon is true or not. The Lord revealed to me that I should not reject the Book of Mormon and to have an open mind and receptive heart to His Word. As Brother Todd and I began to study the Book of Mormon from the beginning, the Lord showed me that it is the inspired Word of God. I was excited about our study lessons and would look for ways to see how it correlated with the Bible, and look at the maps of where their travels took them. I have studied so extensively over the years and there was nothing to disprove the Book of Mormon as it

is—the true inspired Word of God.

“As we approached our Mini-Conference this past weekend, the Lord revealed to me that it was now time for me to be obedient and ask for my baptism. I complied with His request of me and asked for my baptism on Sunday, August 24, 2008 in the “Land of Love,” the Omaha-Bedford Mission in Omaha, Nebraska during our testimony time at church because I wanted to be obedient to God’s commandment for my life. There were two experiences that I can recall prior to me getting baptized, one was that the sun got really bright over us and the second was that a monarch butterfly flew over us and rested gently on some rocks on the banks of the Missouri River. It did not lift off again until after my baptism and it flew over me again as we approached the car when we were leaving. We went back to church to finish our service, and Elder Clifton Wells laid hands upon me for the confirmation of the Holy Spirit. I was able to receive my first communion in celebration of Jesus Christ who sacrificed His body and blood for the redemption of my soul.”

Please remember our new sister in your prayers.

A Shepherd Is Called

By Sister Kathy Vitto

On October 5, 2008 Brother Perry Vitto was ordained into the priesthood of The Church of Jesus Christ. What unadulterated love, joy, and excitement filled the Windsor Branch as the congregation gathered to witness this special occasion! The rostrum could barely contain the fourteen elders there to support Brother Perry.

Brother Lou Vitto led the singing accompanied by Sister Leona Buffa on the piano as the congregation gathered in their seats. Brother Frank Vitto welcomed us saying, “If the mountain was smooth, you couldn’t climb it! Jesus Christ climbed that mountain and His hands bled so we could have what we have today...Oh, how pleasant it is

for brothers to dwell together in unity. The love of God and the spirit of unity will lead this Church through storms yet to come."

Brother Don Collison was inspired to open in prayer as the ministry and congregation joined hands. Afterward Brother Frank Vitto introduced Brother Don as a "Rock" in the Windsor Branch. Brother Don spoke on how one of our sons is taking up this beautiful cause in the priesthood that is everlasting. He then read from Alma 13 regarding this priesthood and said, "The Lord doesn't look at what we possess but He looks at the reins of the heart. We have seen this Spirit upon him for some time. Thank God that He builds His house; and gives one more of His servants to feed His lambs and His sheep."

Brother Frank asked that the water be made ready and invited whoever felt inspired to come forth and wash Brother Perry's feet. As Sister Leona Buffa softly played the piano, Brother Lou Vitto felt a strong desire to come forward. You could feel the spirit and love Brother Lou felt for his nephew as he humbly prayed.

Brother Peter Scolaro requested a circle to be formed around their brother. As they knelt Brother Frank Natoli was inspired to offer a prayer seeking God's direction. Brother Frank Vitto came forward. It was moving to hear the power of the Spirit of God upon Brother Frank as he cried out for the Lords love, protection, and authority to be with his son as he ordained him in the name of Jesus Christ. He also prayed for him to be a blessing upon all he comes in contact with. We all rejoiced in watching each of the priesthood warmly welcome the new elder.

Brother Anthony LaCivita, who has been Brother Perry's friend since childhood, came forward and pinned a white rose boutonniere upon Brother Perry's lapel and hugged him with great affection.

Brother Perry was given the opportunity to express himself. He told of how humbled he was to be called by God. He shared how he had had a peaceful week and felt the prayers on his behalf. The scripture

that came to his mind was "When I was a child I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things." He stated, "How easy it is to stay a child spiritually, you don't have to be too accountable. But, as you delve into the word of God, just start with the words written in red (Jesus' words), it will take you from a child to a man. You can't hide from the truth."

There were many experiences that confirmed God's desire, but Brother Perry had wanted an experience of his own. God gave him a beautiful dream confirming his calling. Brother Perry accepted the calling, almost two years before his ordination. There were times when he doubted and perhaps he thought it was not his time. The Lord gave him another dream where he was speaking with Brother Paul Palmieri on the phone. Brother Paul asked him about his ordination and Brother Perry said, "Perhaps it's not the right time." Brother Paul said, "Yes it is." Brother Perry then said, "I'm not sure Brother Paul." Again he heard Brother Paul say it was his time. The third time Brother Paul raised his voice and said, "YES! We are going to do it." This was a dream so convincing that he felt blessed and humbled to be another one of God's Shepherds.

Brother Leonard A. Lovalvo spoke and confirmed the scripture Brother Don used as Brother Leonard had also thought to use that very scripture. He recounted past memories of Brother Perry from the age of seven at his wedding, as his school counselor, and was very touched that he had come to visit him when he was lying in a hospital bed. He referred to the responsibilities of the Priesthood, and what a blessing it was to him to perform each ordinance for the first time. He assured him that God would be there to support him in his ministry.

Sister Kay Vitto expressed how blessed and thankful she feels that God had called her son to be His servant and how proud she is of him. We were honored to hear Sister Tracey Cuerrier play the piano and sing, *I Will Serve Thee*.

Brother Peter Scolaro expressed how wonderful it was to be here for this occasion and felt that God would bless Brother Perry and help him to be a blessing. He confirmed the blessings to be in the ministry. "The burden is when you see the eyes are still cold, the nods are small, you see the focus is not there, and you haven't reached the hearts of men. I know Brother Perry knows this, and that is why I have confidence in the humble servant that has been called. It is one thing to be called, it is another to be available."

Brother Alex Gentile referred to a meeting of Evangelists five years ago when he had a chance to anoint Brother Frank, "He didn't look like he was going to make it, but he gave thanks to God. Now he has the blessing to be here today and see his son ordained into the ministry." He then referred to King Benjamin's words, "...when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God." "That is the challenge of the ministry. A leader without any followers isn't much of a leader. Brother Perry referred to being a child...now that he is an Elder he will speak as an Elder." Brother Alex asked us to support and pray for Brother Perry.

Brother John Collison referred to how he had been raised in the Church and sometimes he would fall asleep. "After falling asleep and smacking my head on the pew I woke up, and I think I heard an Elder say, 'I think he's glazed over. I don't think he gets it.' But, I got it! Our vision of the ministry is that YOU GET IT! We want you to have what we have, feel what we feel! I wanted to know the truth. What am I here for, what am I good for? I feel if my eyes are glazed over then I am not being real with myself. I love the Lord, I love the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and I love to tell people about this when I have the opportunity. Life is about what is after death!"

Brother Frank Vitto brought the meeting to a close after thanking all for attending and making Brother Perry's day special. We dismissed only to continue a wonderful afternoon of lunch and fellowship. Praise God for this glorious day.

Still His Brethren

Continued from Page 3

wanted him to feel what he feels when we meet. We watched in amazement as our members testified of the change in their lives and heard them defend the Restoration and the authority of the Priesthood. They may not have full understanding in the history, or of the details—but they stand on the full conviction of these two points—CHRIST ROSE FROM THE DEAD AND THE GOSPEL HAS BEEN RESTORED!! For this writer—it doesn't get any better than that!

Another visit made had us dining on chicken liver, lung and heart soup followed by a hearty helping of grilled blood sausage (along with grilled chicken, grilled steak, and grilled pork sausages!). We listened again to the wonderful testimony of this family and how even before they knew the Church, God had preserved their lives. They praised our wonderful Savior, that even through trials, HE is their Salvation! They again rehearsed to us the miraculous way in which they met this Gospel.

I saw with my own eyes over the last three visits how God manifested Himself in this family. They were hired last year to drive a bus to take our people to the baptism of our first convert. When they saw the baptism—our (now) Sister Marianna said it was as if the sister was raised from the dead!—she had to know more! As she and her husband speak, you can see the Joy of Full Salvation with every word, every expression, and every tear. I saw our sister bounce with joy every time she was told she has brothers and sisters in Asia, Africa, Europe, Central America, Canada, Peru, Columbia, Venezuela, and the United States. She was overwhelmed she was part of such an amazing Family of God!

All these blessings and we still didn't even have our Sunday service yet!

Brother Juan started the service with a Sunday School class about the importance of baptism. Apostle Paul Liberto opened the preaching with a story, I am sure was rehearsed around every dinner table that night! I myself

have already told my wife and children at least three times in the two days I have been home! (Again, I won't write it—ask one of your missionaries or ask Brother Paul himself!). The story worked into the perfect subject of the week—Unity in the Family of God. As different as all of us are, we are unified in Christ. Brother Paul Aaron followed about the Love of God unifying us, using the example of the wonderful fruit found on the tree in Lehi's vision. Brother Anthony closed the preaching service expressing how much God loved each of us.

We rejoiced as two young women sang two songs for us, as we saw our saints partake of communion, as we prayed for people, and heard their testimonies! A wonderful season of fellowship followed as we said our long and very sad goodbyes to our wonderful people in Ecuador. Already we begin to look forward to the next trip to enjoy the love of the saints in this blessed and beautiful land! They were STILL our brothers and sisters.

My dear reader, I want to stress to you, I want to make it known to you—the things we see every week, the things we have the opportunity to partake in every week, the fellowship we have with one another—is so sought, so desired and so needed in fields like this! When people see, hear, and feel these things, it changes their lives!! Oh Blessed be the Name of Christ who called us into this Glorious Church!

I want to again say I thank God for the wonderful opportunity to visit and work in this field. Apostle Paul Liberto and Apostle Isaac Smith were on the first trip to Ecuador a few years ago. They went there along with Evangelist Paul Aaron Palmieri and Brother Daniel Mora with no contacts—just the inspiration of God. We have seen this grow from one introduction to a taxi driver to a Sunday group of over 30 people this last trip. I have been such a beneficiary of the foundation they, Apostle Richard Christman, Evangelist Bob Nicklow Jr., and Brother Juan Rivas have laid by their early visits. I am the better man, the better brother, and the better minister for being involved in such a

wonderful work

I never want to take for granted God's love and protection for the brothers who traveled and for the protection of the families we leave behind. I publicly want to thank my Savior for all His blessings on this wonderful trip and to thank my fellow brothers who labored together on this trip. We were blessed with such love, such fellowship, and such unity—truly our God is wonderful!

I pray that God continues to bless each and every one of you as we support our missions, our branches, our regions, our missionaries, our Church! Praise to our Risen Savior and as always—to the work!

Montreal, QC Mission

Continued from Page 4

Colombia Mission. Together, we prayed exhaustively about the decision before us. How could I take Jimena away from the body of the Church when she was so new to the Restored Gospel and was already dealing with one set of adjustments? How could I say goodbye to the Columbus Mission where I was working side by side with my brother Alan Metzler to promote the Gospel in Central Ohio? How could I leave my duties with the Midwest Area MBA where we were accomplishing so much with the young people and the Region Choir? As you can see, I was torn with the idea of leaving my beloved Ohio to venture to Quebec, a land of spiritual desolation. However, after continuing to pray diligently, Jimena and I strongly felt that God was telling us to make the move.

The week after accepting the transfer, I received the news that Perpetue and her friends were waiting for the Church to come to them. My wife and I said goodbye to Ohio and the saints whom I have loved since my youth and purchased a home here in the province of Quebec. We began to hold meetings in downtown Montreal in August 2008 and God has truly blessed us. We meet in the home of Perpetue each week and are working

with families from Rwanda, Congo, and Panama. In the short time we have been here, we have made friends with others from such places as Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, and Siberia. Those who have met the Church here have shown interest in knowing more, so we continue to invite, encourage and pray.

Jimena and I prayed that God would provide interpreters for our meetings since we are just beginning to learn French; He answered. We prayed that someone would come along to help me to begin to translate the *Songs of Zion* to French, and He answered yes once again. We prayed that God would provide musicians; He has entrusted us with the mentorship of young people who have a love for music and the talent needed to accompany that interest. The Lord has very purposefully placed us here in Montreal, yet the mission is in its infancy. Please pray for Sister Jimena and me that we can be good stewards of this work He has given us. Above all, please pray for the new souls we come in contact with that they may accept the Restored Gospel in all its beauty. God recently blessed the Montreal Mission with two beautiful dreams that give us hope that our labors will bear much fruit. Please join us in prayer, petitioning God that The Church of Jesus Christ may soon flourish here in the North Country.

NAOC Briefs

Continued from Page 4

a couple times and moved to Minnesota, where she was baptized in September 2007. The brothers left her with pamphlets to answer the many questions she had. On Friday, Brother Joel had to leave, but Brother Lyle remained to prepare for a Sunday meeting with the saints. He contacted Sister Kathy Reiner and her brother, Jerry Warden. All met at Brother Dan and Sister Inez's home for a spirit-filled meeting and the Lord's Supper. All present were anointed for afflictions and spiritual strength.

Outreach on the Cherokee Reservation

By Evangelist Anthony Ricci

CHEROKEE, N.C. – From July 24 to 27, almost 40 brothers and sisters from the Penn Mid-Atlantic Region NAOC conducted an outreach to the Cherokee Nation, with support from the Atlanta Branch and Mid-Georgia Mission. Prior to the weekend, brothers and sisters from Pennsylvania spent several days distributing flyers announcing this weekend's events.

On Friday, a meeting took place with a Native American as a guest speaker. He went through the history and worldview of the Cherokee people and his belief that they are descended from people from the Middle East. He offered his thoughts about the Cherokee in North Carolina, mentioning the Judaculla Rock, about 30 minutes from Cherokee, which contains images and writings that were unearthed, for which there are no known interpretations. Another visitor from the reservation attended.

On Saturday, the saints interacted and attended the many activities on the reservation. About 11 brothers took the trip to see the Judaculla Rock and found it very interesting, seeing it as more evidence of the Book of Mormon. Many other saints went to the Cherokee Museum or to the village to observe everyday life of the Cherokee. An impromptu chorus was assembled.

The Saturday evening meeting had two visitors from the reservation who were made aware of the weekend by the fliers that Evangelist Bob Nicklow Sr. distributed weeks prior. The meeting was opened by Apostle Paul Palmieri, who explained what The Church of Jesus Christ believes. A few brothers followed and the choir performed a few magnificent songs. A pizza social with the Native Americans followed.

Brother Anthony's personal observations: "I was very impressed in the trust that was given to Brother Bob Nicklow. The Cherokee gave him the keys to the civic center and let him have free reign of the weekend. He

was free to go and come in and out of all the buildings. Most important was to see 40-plus people excited about the Native American work. Sometimes we only get excited about the results and numbers of a work. But I have felt that for the Native work, it's important to be excited about DOING the work. For me, I was blessed and excited just to be doing, (and) let God handle the results."

Accomplishments: The group made a donation to a fund during an event taking place in honor of the first Cherokee State Trooper who was killed in the line of duty. The group made the Church more known on the reservation through contacts, events and fliers.

The Children's Corner

Continued from Page 6

plan; God was training a leader for the future who understood how to organize and rule a great nation. For forty years Moses lived and learned under the influence of the Egyptians. Then one day, he saw a soldier beating up a Hebrew man. Moses struck him and had to run away and hide immediately. He ended up far away in the desert country called Moab. Don't you think his sister and brother were confused to see him fail as an Egyptian? Can you imagine how they must have worried and prayed for him?

In the quiet deserts of Moab, he met and married a woman whose father, Jethro, was a priest that served God. Here Moses lived for the next forty years of his life, learning about God and living in the desert. After God appeared to him in a burning bush, Moses returned to Egypt and led his people out of slavery and into freedom. Many terrifying and amazing events passed before the ruling Pharaoh let them go.

It took an entire lifetime of learning, praying and patience before the whole plan of God came together. The people that Moses led out of hopelessness became a great nation,

(Continued on Page 12)

The Children's Corner

Continued from Page 11

beloved of God. They still follow the laws God gave to Moses. Jesus came from these people. All of Christianity developed because Moses served the one, true God.

Never stop praying. Never think that something is hopeless just because you can't see the reasons why for many years. God loves you. He has called you, too, for His own mysterious reasons. Lean on Him and trust Him to create beauty out of hopelessness and success from despair. He has a plan for you, too.

With love,
Sister Jan

Atlantic Area MBA

Continued from Page 7

about God's great love for us. He spoke of his missionary work in Africa and how his heart was deeply touched to see our visitors from Montreal, Rwanda and the Congo. He stressed to us to labor for God's people throughout the world. The day will come when the mountain of the Lord will be established. It doesn't matter where we come from when we will go up to the mountain of the Lord. The day will come when we will show love like we've never shown before. He ended in saying "We Love You!"

Apostle Paul Benyola continued saying; "Love is an emotion that

cannot be described." He spoke of the Scribes and Pharisees. They couldn't obey God's commandments. Jesus taught to love God with all your heart, mind and soul and to love your neighbor as yourself. "Who is our neighbor," he asked as he pointed to those sitting there from Montreal as an example.

Brother Joe Benyola, Atlantic Region Area President stated that He enjoyed this day and thanked Sister Lydia Link and Brother Kevin Perri for organizing and making preparations for this visit to be possible. We all have been uplifted. His prayer is that God would bless us, grow us and that we would be an example of the love of God.

Brother Jim Link shared his testimony with that familiar twinkle in his eyes. He shared examples of Love leading to the whole meaning of the matter that, "with God, we are all loved the same."

A beautiful season of testimony was shared as we spoke of God's love. Brother Richard Onorato Jr. thanked everyone for their fellowship in Christ, and we all stood up and sang *Oh Say Can You See It*.

The Ladies' Circle of the Maine Branch provided a luncheon before our family of God departed to their part of the vineyard of the Lord.

We Sing Glory, our joy is full because *L'amour m'a Souleve' (Love Lifted Me)*.

Children Blessed

Andrew Julian Soto son of Sury and Richard Soto was blessed on November 9, 2008 at the Simi Valley, California Branch.

Baptisms and Reinstatements

Sister Lori (Wright) Flowers was reinstated into The Church of Jesus Christ on August 24, 2008

OBITUARIES

CLARA CUERRIER

Sister Clara Cuerrier of the Windsor, Ontario, Canada Branch, passed on to her reward on October 20, 2008. She is survived by her children, Brother Fred and his wife Sister Maureen; daughter, Sister Sue Girard; grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren.

ROGER "BUTCH" SURRENA

Brother Roger "Butch" Surrena, passed on to his reward on November 7, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Sister Mary Kay (Klein) Surrena; son, David (Melissa) Surrena; daughter, Kimberly (Robert) Schafer; three grandchildren, David, Andrew and Sarah Schafer.

SUSAN M. WASKO

Susan M. Wasko of the Simi Valley, California Branch passed on to her reward on October 11, 2008. She is survived by her daughter, Alexandra Wasko, and a son, Derek Wasko; mother, Sister Mary Krasnasky; brother, Joe Krasnasky and sister-in-law, Joy Krasnasky.

Address Change

Name _____

Address _____

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Branch or Mission _____