

The Gospel News

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Seizing and Utilizing Opportunities

By Brother David DeLuca

This New Year provides us the opportunity to reflect on our service and to analyze whether we accomplished our designated goals. Hopefully, we achieved the goals of increasing our spiritual development and growth in the Church. This is an ongoing process that will provide numerous blessings from Jesus Christ and the joy of serving our Lord and the Church.

King Solomon states, *"That all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God, and that there is none else"* (I Kings 8:60). The Lord is our primary focus and we strive to serve Him each and every day of our lives. We seek Him during our times of need, we ask Him for direction and guidance and we praise Him for the unwarranted blessings that we receive in our lives. We can never sufficiently praise the Lord for His mercy and love.

The Lord told Abraham, *"And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect"* (Genesis 17:1). The challenge was placed before Abraham to draw closer to

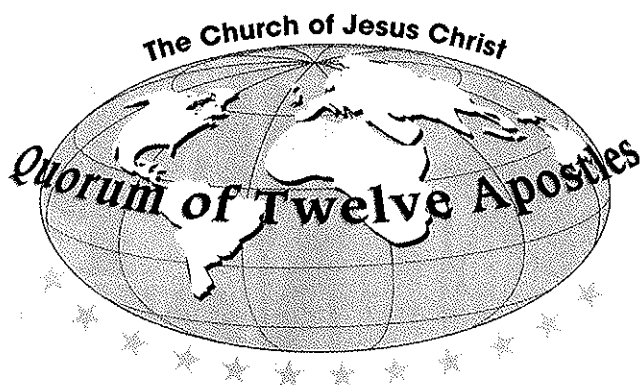
the Lord and seek more of the blessings in his life. Abraham was a spiritual pillar during this period of time. We look at his life and we admire the consistent service to the Lord. He obeyed the Lord and approximately one (1) year later, Sarah gave birth to Isaac. The Lord promised that to Abraham, *"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shall be a blessing"* (Genesis 12:2). He adhered to the commandments of God and his life was filled with the blessings of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Abraham achieved the goal of being a blessing to the people of God, his family and his fellow neighbors.

The members of The Church of Jesus Christ share the common goal of working out our soul's salvation and bringing souls to Christ. We are an extremely diverse and unique people, sometimes a peculiar people. Praise God!! The Apostle Paul states that, *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many"* (I Corinthians 12:13-14). We

are all important to the Church and to the Lord. All of us can be used by God to help establish His kingdom. It does not matter about our background, gender, color of skin, occupation or age. The Lord died upon the cross for all of mankind. We are different in various physical characteristics and unique personalities; however, we strive to become a united and focused congregation. Alma instructed and baptized the people and he had these words of advice, *"And he commanded them that there should be no contention one with another, but that they should look forward with one eye, having one faith and one baptism, having their hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another"* (Mosiah 18:21).

We are encouraged and strengthened by the Scriptures in the Bible and The Book of Mormon. Throughout the written word of God, He teaches us to serve Him by serving the brothers and sisters of the Church. King Benjamin provides a wonderful lesson about service. He gave everything to assist and help out the people. He states that, *"And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of*

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Apostle Joseph Calabrese Passes on to His Eternal Reward

Apostle Joseph Calabrese passed away on December 5, 2008 having served the Lord with great determination from the day of his baptism on February 18, 1945 at 27 years of age. For the 63 years that followed, he was a tireless laborer for the Church. In answer to the question that some would pose to him, "When did you become a missionary?" he would always say, "On the



Apostle Joseph Calabrese

day of my baptism!" And indeed, he was passionately involved in the missionary endeavors of the Church, both in the United States and in foreign countries. He made extensive efforts to visit every branch and mission in the United States and

Canada, and in 1981, he and Brother Alvin Swanson organized the Church in India. Since that time Brother Calabrese had made 12 missionary trips to India. He was highly respected and loved by the members of the congregations in India. Truly he was a man of God exhibiting the characteristics of Christ in fulfilling his duties before man and God.

He was born in Monessen, Pennsylvania on January 10, 1918 to Brother Antonio and Sister Theresa Calabrese. The family moved to Lorain, Ohio in 1930 where they came in contact with The Church of Jesus Christ. His parents were baptized and became dedicated members thereafter. He married Sister Victoria Calabrese in 1937 and had been married for 69 years before her passing in 2006. They faced many tough times together, including the death of their infant son, Kenneth, but they persevered.

He is survived by his children, Bonnie Smith and her husband Isaac, Dennis Calabrese and his wife Anne, Cheryl Smith and her husband Harry, Candice Genaro and her husband Peter, Joel Calabrese and his wife Edna, 19 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren, and 1 great-great-grandchild.

In 1945, Brother Joseph became gravely ill with appendicitis. He was not yet baptized, and had resisted becoming a member of the Church, but he called upon the elders of the Church to anoint him. A month later,

once out of the hospital, even though the doctors worried for his condition, he went into the waters of baptism on a cold day, February 18, 1945. His life from that time forward became a vessel of the Lord by which he served God and His church with unfaltering faith, zeal, and dedication expressing his love for Jesus Christ to all that would hear.

In 1955, he was ordained into the ministry of the Church as an Elder, in 1958 as an Evangelist, and in 1989 as an Apostle. His service to the Lord never wavered. His service to the Church, whether as a trustee, Sunday School teacher, GMBA Vice President, Presiding Elder, Ohio Region President, Quorum of Seventy Vice President, Quorum of Twelve President, Foreign Missions Chairman, India Coordinator, General Church Correspondent, Elder, Evangelist, or Apostle was given the same intensity of dedication.

"We're not playing marbles in the backyard anymore," was one of his sayings that will long be remembered regarding the seriousness of serving the Lord. Brother Joseph Calabrese was many things to many people throughout his life and he made an enormous impact on hundreds, if not thousands, of people worldwide. All know of the goodness and Christ-like nature of this beloved man of God. We are blessed and thankful to have had his love, devotion to Jesus Christ, and perseverance in spite of many of life's obstacles, as an example for all of us to follow.

He will be greatly missed by the Quorum of 12 and by all of the brothers, sisters and friends of The Church of Jesus Christ. Brother Joseph Calabrese has left a legacy for all of us to follow, and part of that legacy is written in publications that he authored: *Divine Continuity*, *Questions and Answers*, and his autobiography, *Missionary Endeavors at Home and Abroad*.

(Additional biographical information may be found in *A History of The Church of Jesus Christ: Volume 2*, pp.600-606 or at www.thechurchofjesuschrist.org.)

Spiritual Gathering in Anaheim

By Sister Vicki VanDeWeghe

With a theme of "Jesus, My Wonderful Friend," the saints gathered on June 29, 2008 from far and wide for fellowship, praise, singing and worship, filling the Anaheim, California Branch to capacity. As part of the Domestic Outreach Program, we were blessed with ministry visiting from the branches of Mount Laurel, New Jersey and Lorain, Ohio, as well as the Nashville, Tennessee mission.

Apostle Paul Benyola spoke of his visit to Kenya and the scripture in John 15:15, "...but I have called you friends..." You can go to the Lord for all your cares of life and He raises you up; we have a problem and He can solve it. Brother Paul continued speaking from Matthew 8:26 where Jesus rebuked the wind and there was great calm. In Matthew 9:18-22, he spoke of Jesus coming to the aid of a certain ruler whose daughter was pronounced dead and wanted Him to lay His hands on her to resurrect her. On the way to the ruler's home, a woman with an issue of blood for twelve years came behind Him and touched His garment. Jesus turned around and when He saw her He said, "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole." And the woman was made whole from that hour. Brother Paul spoke of a boy who was recently in the hospital and all the Church was praying for him. His mother had a vision where she saw all the prayers and the boy was healed. The devil is out there working too; but God is working to deliver us and be our friend.

A DOC member, Brother Ken Staley moved to Nashville, TN – the Bible Belt – where there are many wonderful Christians. They have eleven baptized members in their mission. Brother Ken spoke on Jesus' cleansing of the leper in Matthew 8:1-3. We all need cleansing from something in our lives. A young man in Nashville applied for a

job as a college professor. He wanted to get closer to church and his family; the brothers and sisters were praying that he would get the job. The first and second choices declined the job, so it was his. It was all in God's plan. A woman was having nightmares and the Church prayed for her and she stopped having them. A man on drugs was coming to church and interrupting the meeting and went out to have a cigarette. Everyone got down on their knees and prayed for him and he is now clean from drugs. He has had experiences about surrendering his life, but has not yet surrendered. Brother Ken appealed to all to try Jesus and receive God's blessings.

Brother Joe Benyola referred to the scripture at the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:2 where there were 120 gathered together in one accord. He observed that there were also about 120 gathered together in Anaheim this day, resembling the same environment as at Pentecost when the Spirit of God was as a mighty rushing wind and approximately 3000 were baptized. Brother Joe recalled when Brother Joe Lovalvo spoke and a mighty rushing wind swept throughout the congregation.

Brother Joel Calabrese gave his testimony and talked about a campout at age 15 where they were actually camping out in tents in the National Forest. They found a clearing to play football and Brother Joel found a 1974 penny that was the same year and thought it was unusual. That is when God started working with him and he started praying to God to reveal Himself. Later, he had hands laid on him and God brought back all that God had done for him. He realized how much God had been working in his life since that campout. He realized then there was nothing left but to surrender his life to God.

The Spanish choir from Bell and Anaheim sang one song, *Coritos* (Ninos De Anaheim), accompanied by three young guitarists led by Brother Simone.

God blessed us abundantly on this glorious day, inspiring our visiting elders to feed the flock in this part of the vineyard.

Great Lakes Region Conference

By Sister Carolynn O'Connor

Brother Frank Natoli, Region President, began our fall Region Conference by sharing a few thoughts in hopes to prepare us for the blessings to come.

Brother Jim Lambert Jr. opened the meeting. He started by asking us to sing the chorus of *Holy Spirit*. He then began his sermon sharing the words of Christ, "I am the way the truth and the life." He continued, "What does that mean to us? Christ explained it in a few words. Who do we say that He is? Let Christ be EVERYTHING to you in your life. I believe when you were singing you invited Him here today. We have the benefit of the before and after story, and by the Spirit of God we believe it."

He read from John 11, "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" He continued, "Do I believe this? Thank God I have the scriptures to tell me what it was and my heart tells me who I am today. If I believe it I have to prove it. It is more than words on the page. It is my daily living. There are so many negative things going on in this world. Don't let the world get you down or rob your assurance that Jesus Christ arose from the grave and lives today. If you make him everything you can make an impact in the world. To the unbaptized, don't wait. To those who are baptized, if you believe in the truth, don't wait to show the world what you have. Remember the day you allowed Christ and you understood who He was."

Brother Jim closed by saying "He is the truth, Christ is the way, Christ is my life, so daily when I exist I need to ask myself this question, 'What is Christ to me today?'"

Brother Perry Vitto who was newly ordained into the priesthood followed. "It is so good to be here." He said it with such conviction that it

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Great Lakes Region

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was a reminder that we too should feel this grateful for the opportunity. Brother Perry mentioned that this Church was his heritage, that he like his grandparents was born into it and that he had taken it for granted for so many years. He was now overjoyed that the scales fell off of his eyes.

Brother Perry spoke of Alma and the sons of Mosiah and how they were separated for 14 years before they stumbled upon each other. He read from Alma 17:2, "...therefore Alma did rejoice exceedingly to see his brethren; and what added more to his joy, they were still his brethren in the Lord..." Brother Perry said that when he looked out at the congregation, he felt that joy. "There is so much going on in this world and we can't trust man, we can't trust the world. We must trust in the Lord. If we are fixed and know the scripture and know that He loves us we will not be affected by this world. If we are blessed enough to be here today, then we are chosen to hear this word. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is perfect. The four sons of Mosiah were the vilest of sinners. I was the vilest of sinners. If we are not happy, we don't know enough."

Brother Tom Everett shared a few thoughts with us as well. "Abinadi says we have an intercessor that stands between us and justice and the lack of a job and our health and, and..." He shared that the literal translation in Hebrew of "the Lord will provide" is "more than enough." Brother Tom closed by saying that the Lord is everything and He is more than enough.

Brother Frank also shared some of his thoughts on the state of our country and how we as members should have faith and make Him everything to us. "You have been given the pearl not to be selfish with it but to share it with others. Is it everything to us?"

Following a medley sung by the members of Branch #1, Brother Frank shared that 50 years ago this day at Branch #1, ten souls came into the Church and that three of them were

with us that day. He asked Brother Lou Pietrangelo, Brother Dave DiBattista, and Sister Sara LaPlena to give a word of testimony and then opened the meeting to the congregation for anyone who felt to testify. This was not typical of our Region Conference, but the Lord had directed the brothers to include testimony as part of the service.

Many others came forward and gave God glory for all that He had done in their lives including Steven Dulisse from Branch #2 who shared that he had been fasting and praying for God's presence in his life. He had many experiences in the days preceding the conference and declared that he wanted to become a member of The Church of Jesus Christ.

After sharing in the Lord's Supper, Brother Alex Gentile took a moment to share that when he arrived at the conference and greeted Steven, God revealed to him that Steven would ask for his baptism that day.

Sister Diane Stigleman then stood and said that earlier when she saw the faces of the ministry, they were illuminated.

Brother Peter Scolaro took a few moments to bring our meeting to a close by sharing a few words and encouraging us to take seriously the message that was shared throughout the day – not to let ANYTHING get in the way of making Him EVERYTHING.

It was a blessing to gather as a region and a great reminder that God's blessings are available to us if we make him EVERYTHING in our lives.

Seizing and Utilizing Opportunities

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your God" (Mosiah 2:17). One of the greatest joys in life is helping out our fellow brothers and sisters. The Good Samaritan crossed the highway and assisted an individual in need. He bound his wounds, carried him to the inn and handled the financial obliga-

tions. He did not seek any personal glory or satisfaction. I am sure the Lord rewarded him for his effort just as He blesses us each and every day of our lives.

The Lord desires us to seek Him on a daily basis. Alma told the people, "*Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God; and if ye do these things, ye shall be lifted up at the last day*" (Alma 37:2). We seek His advice in all facets of our lives.

It is a great challenge presented before the people of God. The Lord asks us to draw closer to Him and He will pour a blessing that we will not be able to contain. The Lord is waiting for us to seek Him and rely upon Him. He desires us to seek His ways.

The Lord is waiting to bless The Church of Jesus Christ. He wants us to draw closer to Him. He will shower us with the blessings of God if we seek Him every day of our lives. Throughout the year, we encourage you to be a blessing to the Church, the brothers and sisters and our friends. Listed below are goals that we might seek in the upcoming year:

- (1) Support the Church leadership by **keeping the commandments of God** and supporting the goals of the Church.
- (2) Fast and pray that the Church might grow and souls might be brought to Christ. Ask the Lord to bless the work of the Church, such as:
 - a. Seed of Joseph
 - b. Foreign Missionary Fields
 - c. Domestic Church
- (3) Love the brothers and sisters.
- (4) Love, teach, support, encourage and be good examples to the young people.
- (5) Attend all of the branch meetings, such as: Sunday school, Sunday Services, MBA, Fast and Prayer meeting and all of the Church auxiliaries.

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Editorial Viewpoint . . .

"Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4:13-15).

Recently my mom was suddenly called home after having a car accident. As tragic as that may sound, God granted her wish to die quickly, without years of being afflicted, which she viewed as a burden to her family. My dad passed away a few years ago, also as a result of an accident. A van he was repairing suddenly went into reverse and caused injuries that he did not survive. My mom always said she hoped that God would call her home in a similar way that He did my dad. God granted her wish. For those that do not know the Lord, they are not sure what to say to me, since they view these tragic events as something that would send me into deep depression. Those that know the Lord understand that God never makes a mistake. He gives life and He takes it away, and His timing is never the wrong timing. The night before my mom died, I was speaking with her on the phone about general things, planning for Christmas gifts for my children and getting together for the holidays. Neither of us knew that the next day would be her last.

Life is like a vapour. A person exists and no one ever really thinks of what would happen if they were not there anymore. And yet, just as a vapour of smoke from a candle quickly dissipates after the flame is blown out, so does a person who passes away. The phone calls you would get from them are silenced, and you no longer see them. Our lives can seem so vibrant and active, and yet in an instant, we disappear from this life forever. People plan for the next day, week, month, year, or even years the activities they will be doing. We spend so much energy in planning a future we may never see. No one knows the time they will leave this life. Some are very young, some are middle-aged, some live to be very old, but no one can say they know when their life will be over. The things we plan to do in the future should always include the disclaimer, "If it be God's will."

Knowing this should make us step back and examine our lives. If God were to call me home this instant, what would my life reflect? If there was a movie of my entire life; all the things I did and said, would I be able to watch it, and God see me as worthy to inherit the mansions of glory and rest in paradise with my Savior? Nothing unclean can enter the portals of heaven, it is impossible. I know it is often said, but we should live every day as if it were our last....because it can be. I also lost my brother suddenly not too long ago. He was 52 years old. These events in my family have caused me to look at being alive as much less of a guarantee, but instead a gift. A gift that if used properly can lead to a reward of everlasting happiness in the immortal life to come. At the same time, our life can be a curse to us if we misuse it. So many people push forward through life, never even thinking of what would happen if they would die. They see the here and the now, and they put incredible energy into securing their future. The decline of our economy and unemployment rates at an all time high have forced some people to slow down and put more emphasis on just getting through the day, not planning their retirement. This is how we should live our days, making each moment count and making each moment pleasing to the Lord.

If sudden death hasn't affected your family, the depth of these words might not be as impactful, but for those who have experienced this, I'm sure would agree that it is profound. Let's live every day as if it were our last, really. Let's try to please the Lord in every way. Let us put others before ourselves, and extend love to everyone around us. Let us overlook the petty distractions of life and focus our attention on the prize that awaits us. Let's make 2009 our best spiritual year ever.

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork

Those That Wait Upon the Lord

(Isaiah 40:31)

Dear Friends,

The Bible and Book of Mormon are full of stories of many great people who made mistakes and then started over. Faithful Abraham once was afraid to protect his wife and marriage from a powerful king who wanted the beautiful woman. There was nothing he could do. He waited on the Lord. God had to send plagues against the king to make the ruler give him back his wife (Genesis 12:10). Moses was afraid to speak in front of the Pharaoh and the people so God sent his brother, Aaron, to go with him and talk for him (Exodus 4:10-17). Peter was afraid of Pilate's soldiers and lied and said he did not know Jesus. Jesus had told him he would make this terrible mistake. Peter had said it could never happen. He failed but Jesus saved him and forgave him.

Esther was an ordinary Jewish girl chosen to be the new queen of the land. She had to learn who to trust and how to act like a queen. There were many laws separating her from her husband. But, when an enemy planned to kill all Jews, she fasted for three days and waited upon the Lord for guidance. Then she had the courage to ask the king to save her people (the book of Esther).

Have you ever wished you could understand something or try and learn something new but have been afraid you would fail? Have you ever done something that made you feel sorry or bad inside and been angry at yourself



and wished you could change? Well, this year, you can. Today you can change just like the people mentioned above changed.

It all starts with awareness and talking to God. Go to a quiet place where no one will bother you for awhile. Hold still and picture yourself climbing into the lap of a loving Jesus, just as children in the scriptures came to Him. Let the safety of His arms surround you while you talk to Him in your heart. Tell him you are sorry for the things you have done wrong. Ask Him to forgive you and help you be wiser, stronger, kinder, and braver.

Stay there for a time and tell Jesus what is scaring you, worrying you, and making you feel afraid or useless. Ask him to protect you, and help, or change the people who are causing you trouble. Tell him to teach you how to know what to do and what to say. Ask Jesus to take away your bad feelings, then thank him for helping you.

Show Him you love Him as you slide out of His lap and go your way this day. Feel your peace. Feel His love and hope. Trust Jesus who blesses us and wait to see Him work things out for you. You can change. You can do things that you have dreamed of. You can change and be an instrument in God's hands. You can be successful and have many interesting experiences with the Lord. Your life can be so much better once we pray and trust and wait upon the Lord.

We are promised by the ancient prophet Isaiah (40:31), "...they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not

faint." This can be the year you change and be who you want to be.

With love,
Sister Jan

WORD SEARCH

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From the Editor: This month's *Gospel News* is shorter than usual. This is a result of a lack of material to fill the entire issue. I apologize for this, but hope that writers will be inspired to submit articles through their branch Editors to the *Gospel News* in the future. May God bless you.

Brother Carl Huttenberger



Blessings in Rochester

By Sister Bette Panfile

Psalm 91:12 "...lest thou dash thy foot against a stone...."

Sunday, August 31, was a special day for the saints in Rochester, NY. Along with Brother Leonard and Sister Jean Benyola, we all gathered with much joy and anticipation at the Lyons Nursing Home in Lyons, NY, (about 40 miles East of the Rochester church) to have a church service with Brother Andrew Locci, our Presiding Elder. Brother Andrew has been confined, first to a hospital and is now receiving physical therapy at the nursing home. This would be the first time he would be present for a church service since he entered the hospital in February, 2008. We also had a visitor, Tom, who has been occasionally visiting our church.

Our meeting was held in one of the activity rooms, and it made us happy to see Brother Andrew sitting next to Brother Leonard at the lectern. Before our service was opened, we sang several hymns, beginning with *Amazing Grace* followed by *In the Garden*. During this time an elderly female wheeled herself into the room in her wheelchair and positioned herself next to Sister Bette Panfile. While we were singing, we all noticed that she was very softly mouthing the words, so we continued to sing a few more hymns, including *What a Friend We Have in Jesus* and *More Like the Master*.

Brother Leonard then led us in prayer, thanking God for His mercy and blessings for Brother Andrew and guiding him through this long recovery and giving us the opportunity to gather together.

For his text, Brother Leonard read the entire 91st Psalm and reminded us of God's undying Love for us and that through our darkest hour,

we need only to petition the Lord. He is only a prayer away. Wherever we are, we need only to bow our head and speak to our Father and He hears us.

He also quoted from the beautiful poem that is familiar to all of us *Footprints in the Sand*. "...During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you...." How true it is – how many times have each one of us been carried by our Savior through our darkest hour.

Our meeting continued glorifying God with beautiful testimonies from each one of the brothers and sisters testifying to His goodness and His love for us. Brother Andrew was overcome with emotion as he testified and thanked God and praised Him for sparing his life and granting him strength to endure his trial. He also expressed gratitude for his loving wife, Sister Teresa, who has unfailingly, been with him every day. During her testimony, Sister Jeanette Clinkscales related a dream she had and Sister Celestina Drobeck also testified of a dream she recently had.

After our testimonies, we continued with sacrament. The last time Brother Andrew received sacrament was in February, 2008, so this was a special blessing for him and a much anticipated one. However, we were all a little anxious, since he is still on a trach and a feeding tube, but he was able to swallow the bread and wine. Praise God!

God willing, we look forward to meeting here once again at the end of the month.

We humbly ask you to keep Brother Andrew and all of us here in your prayers, that the Lord would move His hand on this little mission and keep us strong and unified, while we wait for Brother Andrew to recover and be able to return to his place in leading this little flock. During our past meetings, Brother Andrew would always encourage us to be strong and support one another and stressed the importance of the spirit of unity for our members.

Brother Andrew expresses his gratitude for all of your prayers on his behalf and for your encouragement

and the many cards he has received.

He also wants to thank Brother Leonard Benyola for his continued support in visiting this mission to conduct services and Brother Hank Cardillo for his help with Sunday School, church services and looking after the church building in Brother Andrew's absence. Both brothers leave their own branches and travel long distances to be in Rochester and also for going to the nursing home to anoint Brother Andrew. May the Lord bless them both and grant them strength and health to continue to do His work.

May God Bless and be with each of you!

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- (6) Be financially generous to the Church.
- (7) Volunteer for an office.
- (8) Seek the Lord's guidance in our lives by desiring His blessings.

It is the sincere desire that the Church might enjoy the blessings of the Lord in every branch, mission, auxiliary organization and missionary field. "*Adam fell that man might be; and men are, that they might have joy*" (II Nephi 2:25). It is everyone's goal to improve in our service to the Lord and to experience the joy in our hearts. The Gospel needs to be preached and witnessed throughout the world. There is work for every member of The Church of Jesus Christ. There is no greater joy than witnessing a sinner come to Christ. Let us rise to the challenge this year that we might witness the following scripture, "*Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it*" (Malachi 3:10).

*** WEDDINGS ***

Brother Jonathan Nath and Sister Anna Sauro were united in holy matrimony at the Monongahela, Pennsylvania Branch on October 4, 2008.

Sister Jamie Nicklow and Nick Fedorchak were united in holy matrimony at the Monongahela, Pennsylvania Branch on October 25, 2008.

Sister Karen Mellor and David Kulivan, Jr., were united in holy matrimony in Mount Vernon, Virginia on November 22, 2008.

Correction

Jonathan Eric Eiler and Kelly Ann Bradburn were united in holy matrimony in the Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Branch on September 27, 2008.

Ordinations

Brother Robert (Adam) Matthews was ordained a deacon on August 24, 2008 at the Monongahela, Pennsylvania Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Robert Golling and he was ordained by Brother Richard Scaglione, Sr.

Brother John Bilsky was ordained a teacher on October 26, 2008 at the McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania Branch. His feet were washed by Brother James L. Speck and he was ordained by Brother James Abbott.

Children Blessed

Olivia Mae Baez, daughter of Brother Eric and Sister Linda Baez, was blessed on March 2, 2008 at the Detroit, Michigan Inner City Branch.

Sanage Halthon, daughter of Rachel Adams and Sanchez Halthon, was blessed on August 14, 2008 at Detroit, Michigan Branch #2.

Isabella Nina McCoy, daughter of Greg and Sister Lisa McCoy, was blessed on November 16, 2008 at Detroit, Michigan Branch #2.

Nolan Tyler Gross, son of Brother James and Sister Carolyn Gross, was blessed on November 30, 2008 at Detroit, Michigan Branch #2.

Zoey Marie Devore, daughter of Sister Lisa (Italiano) and Brother David Devore was blessed in the Youngstown, Ohio Branch.

Ethan Benjamin Seighman, son of Dan and Crissy Seighman was blessed on November 23, 2008 at the Herndon, Virginia Branch.

George Henry Phillips IV, son of George and Karen (Willforth) Phillips was blessed on November 23, 2008 at the Liberty, Ohio Branch.

OBITUARIES

MARY AZZINARO

Sister Mary Azzinaro of the Lockport, New York Mission, passed on to her reward on August 18, 2008. She was preceded in death by her husband, Salvatore Azzinaro; one daughter, Connie Craft; and one son, Daniel. She is survived by five sons, Brother Sal Azzinaro, Perry, David, Timothy and Peter; one daughter, Annie Payne; nine grandchildren; two sisters, Sister Grace D'Amico and Sister Antoinette Giansante; and two sisters-in-law, Sister Josie Jasmin and Sister Betty Azzinaro.

NANCY SPECK

Sister Nancy Speck of the Forest Hills, Florida Branch passed on to her reward on September 19, 2008. She was preceded in death by her husband, Brother James Gavin Speck III. She is survived by her son, Brother James L. Speck and wife Sister Kellie; daughter, Sister Susan Windman and husband Michael; five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

EMORY COGAR

Brother Emory Cogar, originally of the Leesburg, Virginia Mission, passed on to his reward on November 20, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Sister Verna, along with seven children.

MARIE HUTTENBERGER

Sister Marie Huttenberger of the Freehold, New Jersey Branch passed on to her reward on December 12, 2008. She was preceded in death by her husband, Brother Carl Huttenberger Sr. and son, Brother John Huttenberger. She is survived by her sons, Brother Jim Huttenberger and wife Sister Lynette, Randy Huttenberger and wife Amaya, and Brother Carl Huttenberger Jr. and wife Sister Suzette; six grandchildren, and a sister, Sister Marge Calabro.

AddressChange

Name _____

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Phone _____

Branch or Mission _____



THE CHURCH OF Jesus Christ

International Headquarters in
Monongahela, Pennsylvania

February, 2009

Volume 65, No. 2



THE TWELVE APOSTLES OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

Front row left to right: Isaac D. Smith, Paul N. Liberto, Paul Benyola, Thomas M. Liberto, Paul Palmieri, Joseph Calabrese
Back row left to right: Peter A. Scolaro, Philip R. Jackson, John R. Griffith, Leonard A. Lovalvo, Richard T. Christman,
James L. Crudup



Quorum of Twelve Apostles

The photo of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles on page 1 was taken in January 2008. Last month in the January 2009 issue of the *Gospel News*, we reported with great sorrow that on December 5, 2008 Brother Joseph Calabrese passed on to his eternal reward. Since 2004, four other brothers of the Quorum of Twelve have also passed away: V. James Lovalvo, Russell Cadman, Dominic Thomas, and Joseph Lovalvo. The Quorum of Twelve and all of The Church of Jesus Christ priesthood mourn their passing and consider it a privilege to have personally known and labored with them. They served the Church faithfully and diligently for many years. Truly we will always remember them as inspirational men who were filled with the love of God and dedicated to the promulgation of the Restored Gospel.

Over the past five years, other brothers have been called and ordained as apostles in their stead, and it is without question that those that have been ordained regard the valiant men who preceded them with great respect and admiration. Each of them is quite aware of the weight of their calling and feels very humbled to be in this very responsible position. The biographies of each of the current apostles can be found on The Church of Jesus Christ website at www.thechurchofjesuschrist.org.

Listed below are the current apostles and their dates of ordination:

James L. Crudup – October 14, 2007
Leonard A. Lovalvo – April 22, 2007

Paul N. Liberto – April 17, 2005
Philip R. Jackson – April 17, 2005
John R. Griffith – October 12, 2003
Richard T. Christman – October 12, 2003
Peter A. Scolaro – October 12, 1997
Isaac D. Smith – October 12, 1997
Thomas M. Liberto – October 15, 1995
Paul Benyola – April 23, 1989
Paul Palmieri – October 12, 1986

There are many duties and assignments that the apostles have relative to their position as leaders of the Church. The Law and Order of The Church of Jesus Christ, pp.2-5, is cited in the following paragraphs delineating their specific functions as apostles.

“The scriptures indicate that the Saviour chose twelve men in Palestine as witnesses of His life and resurrection, whom He called apostles. Also, when He established His Church on this land of America He chose twelve as His witnesses, whom He called disciples. We believe it to be the will of God that twelve should be chosen in this last dispensation of time as living witnesses of His Church on the earth. They are to bear testimony throughout the world to the everlasting Gospel being restored and that the Church is adorned with the divine gifts and blessings of God.

“The Twelve have power to officiate in all the ordinances of the Gospel in the name of the Lord Jesus and are to regulate the spiritual affairs of the Church throughout the world.

“As spiritual leaders, they should travel throughout the Church endeavor-

ing to encourage the saints to live righteously before God and man. Their acts in teaching and preaching and officiating in the ordinances should conform strictly with the original Twelve.

“...The Twelve should review the spiritual status of the Church and make recommendations to conference for the welfare and betterment of the Church.

“In order to oversee the spiritual welfare of the Church, apostles have been appointed to serve as spiritual counselors in each region of the Church.

“The Quorum of Twelve shall accept assignments given them by the General Priesthood regarding matters that relate to the Faith and Doctrine of the Church, appeals, and controversies which have not been resolved at other levels of the Church.

“Members of the Twelve may serve as consultants on General Church committees and/or boards.

“Only apostles are eligible to be elected to the Presidency of the Church.

“Currently and historically, Church policy and practices involve the Twelve in all levels of Church governmental functions, during and between conferences.

“In summary, the quorum can, does, and should perform a variety of functions: selecting and training elders, doing missionary work, investigating and settling problems, counseling, advising and guiding regions, committees and boards, formulating programs and proposals to advance the Church, leading the Church spiritually, preaching and writing about the Gospel, monitoring and evaluating Church progress toward our restoration goals, organizing, coordinating and directing its quorum, presiding over the Church, executing the orders and decisions of the Priesthood, and laboring for the general upbuilding of the Church. The quorum’s functions are manifold and varied, but the essence of the quorum’s functions is to serve the Priesthood and the membership of the Church.”

Listed are some of the individual positions and assignments of the Quorum of Twelve:

(Continued on Page 4)



Spiritual Growth Experienced in Zambia, South Central Africa

By Evangelist J. Joseph Perri

The year was 2006 when a group of missionaries from our Church embarked on a trip to the country of Zambia, which is located in South Central Africa. We had received an invitation from a man, Mr. Albert Kawama, (who later became Brother Kawama) to visit and bring the message of the Restored Gospel to his country. He had been invited by Brother Cipeng A' Kapend, our current Church President in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to visit the Congo, where he would hear about the faith of The Church of Jesus Christ. He became very interested by what he witnessed and the message he received about the Church. Upon returning back to his home in Zambia, he began to gather people and share with them what he had heard about the Restoration message.

Because of internal problems and not being satisfied with the faith they were attending, he along with his family members and a few friends, began to pray that God would bless them with a church where they would be happy to attend. It is worthy to note Brother Cipeng knew Mr. Kawama for a number of years, being associated with him in the previous church they both attended. Brother Cipeng was an evangelist in that faith and often visited Zambia.

Some months had passed since we were introduced to Brother Kawama, and during that time

Brother Albert was explaining to the group what he had observed and was taught while in the DR Congo.

Several experiences were received among the people in Zambia relating God was pleased with the information Brother Albert presented. God was also revealing His will that this group should invite The Church of Jesus Christ missionaries to Zambia, asking them to bring the message of the Restoration of the Gospel to their country.

During our first visit to the city of Chingola, we were introduced to a number of people who later became our spiritual family. Among them was a man named Malama Chalwe (who became Brother Chalwe). He was invited by Brother Albert to come and listen for himself the message of the Restored Gospel. Brother Chalwe traveled by public transportation over one hour from his hometown of Chililabombwe to come to the city of Chingola on the morning the brothers arrived from the United States. He observed and listened very intently to what the missionaries were saying.

Finally, when the brothers had completed their introduction of The Church of Jesus Christ, Brother Chalwe mentioned to us that Brother Albert had been informing them about the faith of our Church and he knew in his heart it was true. He related an experience in which he felt God was calling him for some time to do a work for Him, but he did not know where

or how to go about it or become involved. Brother Chalwe requested us to come to his town where he had a small group of people with whom he was holding Bible study and wanted them to hear the same message he had heard.

The towns of Chingola and Chililabombwe are mining towns about an hour's drive from each other and are located in the copper belt of Zambia, considered to be one of the largest copper fields in the world.

Our itinerary included a visit to Chililabombwe. God blessed us with good liberty in teaching the faith of the Church and preaching the Restored Gospel message to the people we met. In a few days a number of requests for baptism were received. A standard of the Gospel Restored was being raised in both the cities of Chingola and Chililabombwe. It is important to especially inform *Gospel News* readers about the young people of the Chililabombwe Branch and their excitement in serving the Lord and the growth of this branch.

Since it was established, this branch has grown to a large membership, and a good number of them are young people. They are very excited about their new life with Christ and have been assisting their Presiding Elder, Brother Chalwe, in evangelizing the Gospel, visiting homes, helping those who are ill, and inviting their friends and neighbors to attend worship services with them.

Our brothers and sisters have been meeting in a rented school classroom which has become too small to accommodate their congregation. They have outgrown the classroom and there are no larger classrooms to rent, causing many of the brothers, sisters and visitors who attend worship services to stand outside of the room to hear the preaching. They often express to us that they are looking forward to the day when we can assist them in constructing their own church building.

On August 22, 2008 a group of 30 men and women surrendered their lives to the Lord and were baptized

(Continued on Page 4)

Quorum of Twelve Apostles

Continued from Page 2

Isaac D. Smith:

Quorum President; Liaison to the Q70/IMOC Central America Sector Committee and to the Southwest Region; Law and Order Project.

John R. Griffith:

Quorum Vice-President; Liaison to the Penn Mid-Atlantic and Southeast (Chm) Regions, the NAOC, the GMBA, GLUC; and Chairman of 3 committees: Ordained Officers Training, Proposal: Analysis of Book of Dreams, and Ministerial Standards; Law and Order Project.

Peter A. Scolaro:

Quorum Secretary; GC Second Counselor; Liaison to Great Lakes (Chm) and Southeast Regions; Liaison to OSC/Ministerial Training and Music Subcommittee; Liaison to the Print House; Q12 Editor; Ordained Officers' Training Committee; Law and Order Project.

Paul Palmieri:

GC President; Liaison to the Penn Mid-Atlantic (Chm) and Midwest Regions; Liaison to the Q70; Ordained Officer's Training and Ministerial Standards Committees; Law and Order Project.

Thomas M. Liberto:

GC First Counselor; Quorum Asst. Sec./Fin. Sec.; Liaison to Atlantic Coast and Pacific Regions; Liaison to the GC Finance Committee; Liaison to the HFF; Law and Order Project.

Paul Benyola:

Liaison to Atlantic (Chm) and Southeast Regions; Liaison to the Q70/IMOC (Chm) and the (Q70/IMOC) Europe Sector Committee; Liaison to the DOC and to the GC Historian; Chairman of the Law and Order Project.

Richard T. Christman:

Liaison to the Midwest and Southwest (Chm) Regions; Liaison to Q70/IMOC New Works Committee and South America Sector; Liaison to the Gospel

News; Ordained Officers' Training Committee; Law and Order Project.

Philip R. Jackson:

Liaison to the Midwest (Chm) and Penn Mid-Atlantic Regions; Liaison to the GC Trustees, WCC, and Ontario Corp; Q12 Ministerial Newsletter Development and Ministerial Standards Committees; Law and Order Project.

Paul N. Liberto:

OSC Chairman; Quorum Ass't Sec.-Corresp.; Liaison to the Great Lakes and Pacific (Chm) Regions; Liaison to the IMOC; Q12 Historian (Chm); Law and Order Project.

Leonard A. Lovalvo:

OSC Vice Chairman; Liaison to the Great Lakes Region; Liaison to Q70/IMOC Asia Sector; Q12 Editor(Chm); Law and Order Project.

James L. Crudup:

Liaison to the Atlantic Coast Region; Liaison to Q70/IMOC Africa Sector; Law and Order Project.

The Quorum of Twelve meets four and sometimes five times a year to discuss and complete items that fall under the purview of the Quorum, and generally, each of these sessions are scheduled for two or three days. In addition, the Quorum is in continual contact with each other throughout the year to keep current on issues as they occur. It is their desire that every soul on the earth will be presented with the Restored Gospel and have the opportunity to experience the joy of salvation. They ask for your continual prayers that they will be led by the Spirit of the Lord to do His will and to be productive and effective leaders of His Church.

Spiritual Growth in Zambia

Continued from Page 3

into the Church, increasing the number of their members to 170. Because the local river has become polluted by the many copper mines, Brother Chalwe

said he and those who requested baptism had to walk a distance of five km, which converts to a little more than three miles one way, to find suitable water to baptize. A large contingent of our brothers and sisters accompanied the converts and sang hymns expressing their joy to the Lord in song as they walked towards the waters of baptism.

There are other cities where the message of the Restored Gospel and the faith of our Church has been received. We have been invited by a number of people who have asked us to bring the Gospel to their cities; however, we have delayed in doing so because of placing our efforts in trying to build a good strong foundation within these two cities before moving on to other areas. Furthermore, Brother Albert Kawama is the only pastor in the city of Chingola, and Brother Malama Chalwe is the only pastor in the city of Chililabombwe. There is an urgent need for dedicated and knowledgeable brothers to be ordained into the Priesthood. Until then, brothers Albert and Chalwe are utilizing young brothers to assist them in conducting worship services and Bible study.

Our brothers and sisters have seen the power of God through healing. Their lives have been changed from sadness and disappointment to joy and happiness in serving the Lord. They now have hope through Jesus Christ and the covenant they made with Him the day of their baptism to receive the gift of eternal life. Some of the saints have mentioned God has provided them with better living quarters. He has provided some of the members with jobs so they are able to have food to eat and a place to live. Since being baptized into the Church, their lives have been transformed and our brothers and sisters have been greatly blessed by the Lord with spiritual growth. He has also fulfilled their daily needs for survival.

My request to all who read this article is to keep these, our beloved brothers and sisters, in your daily devotional prayers so they can continue to experience God's abundant love. They each face daily challenges which test their faith.

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Editorial Viewpoint . . .

"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. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:12-15).

Temptation to commit sin has been an inherent characteristic of mankind since the Garden of Eden. Temptation does not come from God, it never did and it never will. Since God Himself cannot be tempted with evil, then it is impossible for him to cause any man to be tempted. Temptation actually comes from within a person; the flesh. Satan can present us with many opportunities in which we might give in to our fleshly desires and be tempted. I've noticed in these last days, technology, although in some cases is used for good, has in many cases been used for evil. Internet access to any type of sin can tempt anyone very easily. Things that were difficult or impossible to be presented with as temptations, are now readily available to any man, woman and even child. Satan, I'm sure, is pleased with how quickly humankind is prone to run to mischief since it is so available today. Let's face it, it is much easier to be tempted, and we can be tempted more frequently now than in any other time in history. This is not a mistake, but it is a fact of living in the last days. We know perilous times are here, and more are to come. Temptation to commit sin is becoming a greater and greater threat to those who love and serve God.

James, however, says that we are blessed when we ENDURE temptation. It is almost like a test you would get in school. You either pass or fail. With temptation, you have two choices, you either give in to it, or you resist it. The scripture says if we resist the devil he will flee from us. Resisting temptation is easier said than done, however. Satan knows our weakest points, and will put situations in our path that will cause us the greatest difficulty in overcoming. But we have to learn to endure this temptation, and not give in. Then we'll receive a crown of life. A natural example we all can relate to is when we go grocery shopping. We all know that if we go grocery shopping when we are hungry, we are bound to buy much more food than we normally would have. We probably will go down the cake aisle or the candy aisle, even though we clearly don't need cake or candy. But if we just ate a big meal, we won't have as much of a desire to buy food unnecessarily. It is the same way spiritually. We should be able to look ahead to the day, and anticipate what things will come in our path to tempt us to do evil, and prepare for it. If we prepare, we will be better equipped to endure the temptations that come our way. It's hard to give spiritual examples of what this would mean, since there are divers ways to commit sin, and what tempts one person may not tempt another. You have to think about yourself and the things that tempt you personally, and decide what you can do to avert being too weak to resist those things that will lead you to sin. One thing is for sure, places we go, people we associate with, and the things we look at can all be doors to sin. By simply avoiding those things we know will mean trouble, we don't even allow ourselves to be faced with that temptation. Probably the greatest prevention of temptation is prayer. When we prepare ourselves through prayer, God will give us added strength and discernment to resist temptation.

There is a saying that you need to "nip it in the bud." That means to tackle any problem early on, before it gets out of hand. Temptation is like a bud, which unless it is destroyed, will bloom and come forth as the fruit of sin. By this time, we are on the road to death (spiritual death), since if sin runs its course in our lives, in the end it leads to everlasting spiritual death. Preparation is "nipping it in the bud."

I felt the need to write this Editorial since it is my feeling that temptation amongst God's people is increasing at an alarming rate. It is to be expected. We are living in the last days. So, our level of preparation must increase at an equally alarming rate. The more we overcome, the more we are blessed. Let us pass the test of temptation, and receive that crown of life that awaits us.

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork

Why We Practice the Law of Offense

(3 Nephi 12:22-24)

Can you think of the last time a friend hurt your feelings or did something that made you feel unloved, or unimportant? Maybe they did not want to spend time with you, or even started to avoid being around you. A friend of mine in middle school told me how a group of her old friends started pulling away from her and leaving her out. She was busy and happy and was interested in making new friends, but she still cared about her old friends too. This girl believes in God and decided to pray about what to do. In a way, she was afraid to talk to her old best friend. She worried maybe they would act like she was weird and still be mean to her. I reminded her that the Bible tells us to be loving and not afraid. In 2 Timothy 2:7 we are taught, "For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

That Saturday, she called her old friend. This girl told her, "I heard that you told our other friend that you did not think we were popular so you didn't want to be with us anymore." It was a perfect example of one troublemaker gossiping and lying about someone else and causing problems. Once my friend started talking, she apologized if she had hurt anyone's feelings or offended them, and everything worked out.

Along the same time I started thinking about someone I used to spend a lot of time with who had quit returning my calls or coming around. I didn't think I had done anything wrong



and I was very busy, so I just let it go. We had done so many interesting things together and she had helped me many times when I was down. It hurt me that we had lost each other. I tried to forget about her. But it still bothered me.

Then I started praying about the sad way I missed her and the mad way I felt about her dumping me! The Book of Mormon and the Bible talk very strongly about us being people of peace and love. They tell us to work things out when someone else is hurt by us. I thought about what Jesus taught. He said in 3 Nephi 12:23, "Therefore, if you shall come unto me, or shall desire to come unto me [which I do every time I go to the Lord and pray about problems, or hopes and dreams], if you remember that your brother [or friend] has something against you, go to your brother, first be reconciled [make up with him] and then come unto me with full purpose of heart and I will receive you."

It was clear what I must do. I must overcome my fear and worry about being rejected and call and apologize to my friend. I must practice the first part of the "Law of Offense." I had to show love and find out if I had somehow hurt her. I tried not worrying that maybe she would reject me. I prayed about my friend and my fears some more. Then one evening when I was home alone, I picked up the phone and called her. I told her I was sorry if I had done something wrong. I told her that I missed her and wished we could still be friends. Immediately I was feeling better!

She was surprised to hear from me. We talked a little and I realized that just a bunch of little things had

added up into a big mess that made her think I did not care either. Now that was not true! I am so glad she forgave me and we are friends once again. I also can freely go to Jesus and know He is open to me. I am not hiding bad feelings in my heart that come between me and Jesus.

That is one of the most amazing things about serving God. If we are honest with Him and pray in the name of Jesus, He will help solve our problems and take away bad feelings of guilt or sadness. This gift from the Lord is called peace. Lovely, happy peace – no worries, no fears, just loving the Lord and others and feeling His joy and peace. Remember, the one above who knows the secrets of your heart will also help you face your fears and feel clean inside. If there is someone that has hard feelings about you, pray and Jesus will help you make peace with them too.

With love,
Sister Jan

WORD SEARCH

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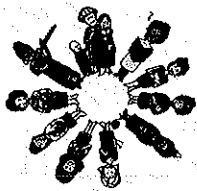
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General Ladies' Uplift Circle Conference

By Sister Terri Bravo

The sisters gathered at the Greensburg Chapel on Saturday, October 11, 2008 for a meeting of the General Ladies' Uplift Circle. The meeting is a time to present reports on the efforts of the Local and Area Circles in promoting the studying of scriptures, fostering good works and raising funds for the missionary work of The Church of Jesus Christ. It is a time to review the efforts of the past six months, to plan for future endeavors and disburse funds for the spreading of the Gospel.

Sister Karen Progar opened the meeting and expressed that this is a day to feel the joy that we have in serving God. Our Vice President, Sister Lorraine DeMercurio, led the sisters in a scripture reading from John 15:7-15, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." She spoke of her joyful years in the Gospel and how this scripture is a testimony of her walk with the Lord.

The Atlantic Coast Area was responsible for the day's devotions. Area President, Sister Maria Peterkin, presented a commemorative CD that was created for a luncheon celebrating the 40th year of the organizing of the Atlantic Coast Area Ladies' Uplift Circle, held on June 4, 2008 at the Hedelrich Hotel in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Our sisters shared in our memories and enjoyed seeing the faces of those sisters who have gone on to their spiritual rewards.

Sister Lorraine reported on the planning of a history of the Ladies' Circle for the World Conference that is to be held on June 25 to July 1, 2011 at the Nazarene University in Illinois.

Sister Angela Yoder reported on the 2010 fellowship weekend that will

be held on April 28 to May 2 in Nashville, Tennessee. Our sisters sang a song to encourage us to begin saving for this event. We all had to laugh at their creativity. This is what makes our meetings such a delight to attend!

Sister Tonia Monaghan reported on the efforts of the Sacrament Cloth Committee to create sacrament cloths for the needs of domestic and foreign missions. While the sisters are able to produce the travel sets, the large sets are becoming more difficult to provide due to the need for more workers to participate in these efforts. Monies were given to the committee for this purpose. A plea was made that the Locals would contribute funds to purchase the cloths for the larger communion sets. Please contact your Area Circle President for details.

In the afternoon session there was an urgent prayer request for Sister Cathy Gentile and the Kattan triplets, Leah, Rachael and Samuel. A prayer was offered for them and for those in need of God's help. We trust that our prayers will be answered. To borrow a slogan from the Penn Mid-Atlantic Area, "Every Prayer Counts."

After twenty-three years of service as General Circle Vice President, Sister Lorraine DeMercurio expressed a desire to relinquish her responsibilities due to term limits and health issues. In her quiet, sweet manner that is so typical of our sister she said, "I step down with a lot of joy and memories in my heart of twenty years of service." We rose in respect to her leadership and support of her efforts to serve God in this wonderful organization.

During our election of officers, Sister Lisa Champine was voted in as our new General Circle Vice President. We all offer her full support and know that she will place the same efforts and talents that she used to make the General Circle website a success. Our new Web Sister will be Sister Sherri Wasik. May God continue to bless all those who are serving as officers in the General and Area Ladies' Uplift Circle.

The highlight of our meeting is the disbursement of funds that have

willingly been raised. To the foreign missions we contributed \$3,000.00 to the Saved by Grace Orphanage and \$2,800.00 to building improvements for the church in San Demetrio. For the domestic missions we voted on supporting the 2009 Vacation Bible Schools, contributing \$750.00 each to Muncey, Six Nations, San Carlos and Tse Bonito missions. In addition, we contributed the remaining \$410.00 to the NAOC for its needs. Our upcoming special project is raising money for the translation of the Book of Mormon. The IMOC has requested \$5,000.00, which is just a small portion of what is needed. We are praying that our locals get behind this effort.

We had a season of testimony and closed our meeting knowing that God was with us in our business session and we trust that He will continue to support our efforts to further His Gospel.

Why Not Today?

At the Atlantic Coast Area Ladies' Uplift Circle Business Meeting held on September 13, 2008 at the Metuchen Branch, our Sister Geneva Dell presented an inspiration that she was given of the Lord. We all were very touched and would like to share her writing with the readers of *The Gospel News*.

"Oh, why not tonight?

Oh, why not tonight?

For tomorrow the sun may never shine
Oh, why not tonight?"

Do you remember that hymn? We sang it almost every Wednesday night (a chorus of Hymn #233, *Saints Hymnal* – Red Book).

I felt a strong desire to relate to you the thought that came to my mind after my morning prayer, of the sisters' desire to work for the benefit of the Church and the love extended to all.

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Faces

By Brother Don Ross

It was time to pass the royal mantle of leadership to another. Why? The man was old and weary. He fought the enemies of righteousness with the Sword of Laban and brought peace to the land. Mormon wrote that he was a man who ruled justly. His name — King Benjamin.

His ruling days over, he was prompted by the Spirit of God to address the Nephite people, a people for whom he had labored with his own hands. King Benjamin's obedient son, Mosiah, assembled the people at the temple. The congregation was too numerous, so he erected a tower and preached to them from it. Not everyone could hear; therefore, he directed his words be written and circulated and kept for posterity. King Benjamin's oration is the only formal speech recorded in the Book of Mormon.

The words of King Benjamin were inspired. His teachings, outlined in his remarkable speech, are worthy of emulation by all. The words are simple, sincere, warm and dignified. They are forceful and persuasive. King Benjamin taught three (3) themes. They were:

1. "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God."

2. That an angel appeared to him with "tidings of great joy," which he instructed to share with the people. The message concerned Jesus Christ, His coming to earth, His ultimate death, resurrection, and the effects of the Infinite Atonement.

3. He gave a testimony of the Saviour, along with counsel to be obedient, to believe in God, His power, greatness, goodness, and wisdom. Though unsolicited, practical advice was given to parents to care for their children, to instruct them to "walk in the ways of truth and soberness," and to love and serve one another.

King Benjamin reminded the people to remember the poor and the beggar; for all are beggars and poor

before the Lord. He told them to be diligent, and to continue in faith. The sermon was so forceful that the people fell down in awe and humility, and cried for God's mercy. They sought forgiveness through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ who was not even born! King Benjamin told the congregation to make a covenant with Christ and remain true to that covenant. A roll was made of those who "listened" and "there was not one soul...but who had entered into the covenant and taken upon them the name of Christ."

At the conclusion of his sermon, King Benjamin consecrated his son, Mosiah, to be king and ruler over the people and appointed priests to teach the people, "to stir them up in remembrance of the oath which they had made..."

This holy man of God, King Benjamin, lived three (3) more years, revered and loved by his people. Thank God for this marvelous testimony and example.

Why Not Today?

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An experience was given to the six sisters when the circle was organized in Stelton, New Jersey many years ago. A young girl appeared to my grandfather with a bouquet of flowers for the sisters. He asked her "Where is mine?" She replied, "This is for the sisters."

A feeling came over me yesterday morning and I remembered the bouquet of flowers for the sisters, as I was there. Then a strong thought came to my mind—that bouquet of flowers was and is extended to the Circle today, and the following words came to me:

"Continue my sisters making the love baskets for the ill, the widows, the sisters in nursing homes and the hungry. The Lord is pleased when we consider those that are ill, lonely, hungry and whatever the need may be."

A bouquet of blessings with the love of God—talents, skills, abilities,

insight and wisdom. God has given you all of this. He adds a blessing of humility to honor, develop and use your gifts to enhance your own life and the lives of others. We praise God, the giver of every good gift, for all the blessings He has given us and chosen us to give.

A beautiful experience: One day last spring when I arrived home from shopping, a package was at my door. When I read the return address, it was from the sewing group that meets in McKees Rock, Pennsylvania — a large box containing seven smaller boxes of different sizes. A letter with instructions was included; open one box each day (one for each day of the week).

I cannot explain in humble words to you of the love of God I felt. A beautiful blessing in each box, one from each sister. Each box contained a verse of love, plus a special gift. This I will always remember and I still treasure the little gifts of love. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

If you want to send a box of love or any token of love to the widowed, the ill or a lonely person, send it now. The addresses are available, especially those sisters in Missouri and out of our immediate area.

Remember that hymn, the love our Lord inspires you to do, consider doing it now, for tomorrow may be too late.

"Oh, Why not today?"

Oh, Why not today?

For tomorrow the sun may never shine
Oh, Why not today?"

Note: The morning when I received this inspiration, I thought to myself that I am going to put this in writing and send it to the Ladies' Uplift Circle. Then I began singing the hymn, *Oh, Why Not Tonight?* a hymn that I had not sung in many, many years. It continued over and over in my mind and then I realized, it was a message from the Lord.

My love to all my sisters of the Ladies' Uplift Circle.

Sister Geneva Dell



Branch and Mission News

Visiting Blessings in Lockport, NY

By Sister Antoinette Giansante

Sister Sharon D'Amico, of Simi Valley, California, and Brother Paul Benyola of Mount Laurel, New Jersey organized a beautiful reunion on August 10, 2008. Sixty visitors gathered to the mission from New Jersey, Florida, Ohio, Canada, and Rochester.

There were seven ministers on the rostrum. They all spoke of God's work and the blessings of God past, present, and future, being united at all times. It was wonderful to hear them and it was like the good old days when we had many visiting brothers and sisters and enjoyed God's blessings. Today, we have only six members in Lockport. Many passed on to their reward and some moved to other locations. Please pray for us that God will always lead us and guide us.

After the meeting, we united for lunch. We enjoyed the weekend and look forward to many more visiting brothers and sisters in Lockport, NY.

Reaching Out

By Sister Carolynn O'Connor

We had a busy and eventful summer in 2008 at Detroit, Michigan Branch #2, filled with the opportunity to share our blessings and fellowship with members, neighbors and friends.

We kicked it off in the heat of the early summer with a trip to Hill Cumorah and a visit to the Rochester Mission in July, which you may remember reading about in a previous *Gospel News*.

In August we held our annual Bible School. Branch #2 is blessed to have over 20 children under the age of 12 who attend regularly and with the inclusion of visitors from other branches and approximately 15 children from the neighborhood, we averaged between 45-50 children each night! The theme of the week was "Choose Jesus," and at the close of the week a presentation was given by the children including songs they had learned throughout the week. What more can we give our children than this precious time away from the world where they can focus on the blessings of God and learn more about His word!

As summer was coming to a close, the members and friends of Branch #2 took the opportunity to send

it off with a revival style weekend. The weekend started on Saturday afternoon as we gathered at the branch for a barbecue and fellowship. We shared a meal, played games and strengthened our relationships as we enjoyed our time together. A large tent had been erected to provide shade and cover in the event of the rain that was said to be coming.

As we lit the fires and began to hum a few songs, we were excited to see a few of the neighbors wander over to say hello. One of them has lived next door for 15 years but had never visited. It was a wonderful opportunity to talk to her about the Gospel.

The following morning, we held our Sunday service outside. It was a beautiful day as the brothers and sisters and friends of the members gathered under the tent and sang hymns of praise accompanied by a keyboard and a few guitars. The music sounded beautiful to us and was hopefully enjoyed by the neighbors as well.

As we prepared for the Lord's Supper, Brother Dino DiMelis, Presiding Elder, reminded us that the purpose of this weekend was to share what we have with the neighborhood. As we knelt in the soft grass, we were cognizant of those who drove by and witnessed this large group kneeling united in prayer and then partaking in sacrament. We felt humbled to be able to share this with the neighbors and surrounding area.

As we closed our meeting, strengthened in our duties to serve the Lord and reminded of the commission to share the Gospel with those around us, we were thankful for the chance to be revived in His Spirit. The Lord also blessed us with beautiful weather, as the rain did not come as predicted!

It was back to school for the children but we had one more branch activity to hold us until the Christmas holiday. As the air began to cool and the changing leaves signaled autumn, we gathered at Jody and Sister Carolynn O'Connor's home for a hot dog roast and bonfire. With over 100 in attendance, including friends of the members, we fellowshiped and sang



Reunion at Lockport, New York

songs around the fire with the accompaniment of guitars. God blessed us once again as we set aside time to unite and draw closer.

God has blessed our branch in so many ways. It was a privilege to share our time and fellowship with the Rochester Mission on our visit, the children in the area during Bible school, the neighbors during our revival weekend and friends at the bonfire. May God bless each of you and your efforts to unite your branches and missions and share the Gospel with those around you.

Happy New Year from Leesburg, FL

By Sister Lorraine Rose

As we attended our last Sunday meeting of 2008, we were reminded of the blessings granted us throughout the year. The Lord is alive in our Mission in Leesburg, Florida. Several topics were covered throughout the year including:

FAITH: *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"* (Heb. 11:1).

PRAYER: When we pray with real intent, our Lord will manifest himself to us. Enos wrestled with God in prayer. *"...I did still raise my voice high to reach the heavens....and there came a voice unto me saying, Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee and thou shalt be blessed...."* (Enos 1:1-4).

BAPTISM: *"....all men, everywhere to repent and believe in me. And whoso believeth in me and is baptized, the same shall inherit the Kingdom of God"* (III Nephi 21-33).

MIRACLES: Miracles are still in Church today as were in olden days. *"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 3:6)

HOLY GHOST: *"...He that is baptized in my name, to him will the Father give the Holy Ghost like unto me...."* (II Nephi 31:1-14).

UNITY: Paul stressed how to be united, *"...with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love...."* (Ephesians 4:2).

Several blessings were fulfilled and several prayers were answered through the grace of God. I would like to express two of the many experiences received by the brothers and sisters of the Mission.

About six weeks or so ago, Alec Anderson (2 years old – son of Sister Jan and Brother David) had been feeling ill. When taken to the doctor, it was expressed that the symptoms showed a diagnosis of cystic fibrosis. Tests had to be taken. Sister Jan asked to have Alec anointed that the Lord have His hand in the matter. As hands were laid on Alec, Brother Daniel Stone saw the hands of God upon Alec. This was a confirmation that the Lord had taken charge. Alec had a few good days without any ailments. After testing, the diagnosis of cystic fibrosis came back negative. THANK GOD! Alec was still feeling ill, but with additional testing and much prayer, he has been diagnosed with intolerance to dairy products. Sister Jan and Brother David are thankful to know what had been upsetting Alec. They were able to correct it and he has been doing exceptionally well. We praise the Lord for His love and intervention.

In closing out the year 2008, I wish to express an experience had by Brother David Anderson. He had been living and working in Chicago for the past 1st years and found it very difficult keeping close to his family. The Lord provided him the strength to do what he had to do. At the job, his boss asked if anyone would volunteer to work Christmas and Brother David did, allowing others to go home to their families. With this in mind, his boss approached him and mentioned that at this time there were no new contracts, and since he volunteered to work

thinking of others, he wanted him to go home and he would pay him until the end of the month. We pray for our brother to find work possibly closer to home, but we know the Lord answers prayers.

Our brother packed his things and with a trailer attached to his vehicle, started for Florida. It was below zero as he left Chicago heading home. On the way our brother encountered a problem with the car. It shut down and would not start again. He pulled into one of the stops and approached a woman, asking if she would be able to give him a boost. She was nervous about it and left him. Brother David was at the stop, hood up with booster cables nearby pondering what to do when a truck pulled up by him. The driver got out and looked over the situation, got a booster cable, and started Brother David's vehicle again. Brother David was in awe that out of nowhere this man stopped to help him. He offered to pay him for his help and all the man said to him was, "Merry Christmas." Can we say this was a coincidence or an answer to prayers for Brother David's safe return home. The Lord knows all things and we are thankful we can receive His love when we beseech Him in prayer.

Our cups have been filled many times over this past year. We pray for the many sick and afflicted throughout the Church and among families and friends. May God grant us the privilege to welcome another year that we may become even more righteous in our service to Him.

Note of Thanks

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone throughout the Church for the immense outpouring of love and concern over the passing of our mother, Sister Marie Huttenberger. Thank you for your cards, phone calls, prayers and love. We love you all.

The Huttenberger Family

Children Blessed

Isabella Beth Ortega, daughter of Brother Onexus and Sister Sara Ortega, was blessed on December 21, 2008 at the Lake Worth, Florida Branch.

Madison Victoria Dyer, daughter of Brother Anthony (AJ) and Sister Bethany (Smith) Dyer, was blessed on January 4, 2009 at the Mesa, Arizona Branch.

Reagan Mae Kert, daughter of Brian and Sister Rebecca Kert, was blessed on November 9, 2008 in the Sterling Heights, Michigan Branch.

Baptisms and Reinstatements

Sister Teresa Elbersson was baptized on May 18, 2008 at the Levittown, Pennsylvania Branch. She was baptized by Brother Jerry Valenti and confirmed by Brother Nick Boruch.

Brother Richard Perrine was baptized on May 18, 2008 at the Levittown, Pennsylvania Branch. He was baptized by Brother Nick Boruch and confirmed by Brother Mark King.

Sister Nicole Rios was baptized on October 5, 2008 at the Levittown, Pennsylvania Branch. She was baptized by Brother Jerry Valenti and confirmed by Brother Nick Boruch.

Brother Joe Lacommaré was reinstated into The Church of Jesus Christ on December 21, 2008 at the Modesto, California Branch.

Sister Shirley Lacommaré was reinstated into The Church of Jesus Christ on December 21, 2008 at the Modesto, California Branch.

Sister Sharon Sloane was reinstated into The Church of Jesus Christ on December 28, 2008 in the Atlanta, Georgia Branch.

Ordinations

Brother Luis Tenorio was ordained a deacon on December 14, 2008 at the Edison, New Jersey Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Angelo Zaino and he was ordained by Brother Phil Arcuri.

Sister Lydia Young was ordained a deaconess on December 14, 2008 at the Edison, New Jersey Branch. Her feet were washed by Sister Terri Bravo and she was ordained by Brother Jonathan Olexa.

Sister Phyllis Miller of the Sterling Heights, MI Branch celebrated 50 years in The Church of Jesus Christ.

Sister Irene Perry of the Sterling Heights, MI Branch celebrated 50 years in The Church of Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Anniversaries

Brother Louis Vitto of the Sterling Heights, MI Branch celebrated 50 years in The Church of Jesus Christ.

Brother David DiBattista of the Sterling Heights, MI Branch celebrated 50 years in The Church of Jesus Christ.

Sister Sarah LaPlena of the Sterling Heights, MI Branch celebrated 50 years in The Church of Jesus Christ.

Sister Grace Visconti of the Sterling Heights, MI Branch celebrated 50 years in The Church of Jesus Christ.

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THE CHURCH OF Jesus Christ

International Headquarters in
Monongahela, Pennsylvania

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Volume 65, No. 3

The Reality of the Resurrection

By Brother Jason Monaghan

What is the primary message behind the Four Gospels? If there is any purpose found in the New Testament, it is to convince the reader that the resurrection of Jesus Christ was a reality! When you go through 3 Nephi, you will get yet another witness that Christ indeed resurrected on the third day. The scriptures teach us that, "if Christ be not raised, then your faith is vain" (1 Corinthians 15:17). The scriptures give us hope, a hope that goes beyond the grave because of Christ. He won the victory! "The resurrection of Jesus Christ was and is hailed as the greatest miracle of all time and ages." Without it, there would be no hope, no salvation, no Church of Jesus Christ, no *Gospel News*. Let us now look to the "pleasing word of God."

(Luke 1:1-4): "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write

*unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the **certainty** of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed."*

Now, please...go back and re-read the above verses and replace the name Theophilus with **your name**! It is quite profound that Luke was laying out before us the reason for his entire letter. He basically was saying, I want **you** to **know** what I **know**! When you are finished with his letter, he wants there to be a conviction given through the Holy Ghost. He was depending on "divine inspiration" on both sides of the parchment. Apostle Luke was also credited with writing the Acts of the Apostles. Clearly, he understood the importance of the resurrection. It changed everything and everything hinged on it. Those who were against the teachings of Christ wanted to be sure that the tomb was secure to insure that the followers of Jesus would not come and steal away His body. Whether by way of miracle or deceit, this would have created a fire they knew they would be unable to extinguish. You see, they knew that they could not refute the doctrine of Christ if He had risen from the dead "as He said!" Praise God! Even though the

tomb was made sure, God indeed raised up Jesus to be "a Prince and a Savior" (Acts 5:31).

As we look at the word of God (post resurrection), the cause of the enemy was to discredit the resurrection. Just the polar opposite was true for the Church! Let us look at what went on among God's people the days following His resurrection both in Jerusalem and in America. As we will see, God wanted to be sure that the Church and more specifically the leadership of the Church KNEW that Christ had "risen indeed." How could the saints have moved on with joy unless they knew the cross was not a finish line? How could the Gospel have moved forward if the leadership was not **100% confident** in what they were to teach? If they were not certain then definitely their followers would not be certain! The resurrection **had to be** a reality!

Post Resurrection Jerusalem – (34 AD):

It was critical to the progress of the Church in Jerusalem that there were eyewitnesses to the resurrection. There were a little over 500 people accounted for in the New Testament that beheld the resurrected Christ. Did you know that He showed himself to a crowd of 500 people at one time

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April 2009 General Church Conference Elder and Teacher Seminar

On Friday of the April 2009 General Church Conference, the Quorum of Twelve is presenting a seminar for the Elders and Teachers specifically intended to be relevant and applicable in today's branch and mission operation. We will examine our role in a branch or mission setting. The establishment of this seminar is in part a response to requests that have been made that we give some concentration on the work of the Lord in our branches and missions.

The objectives of this seminar are to consider various situations and operational procedures that we have in common and formulate resolutions as we consider our responsibilities as Elders and Teachers. This problem

solving approach promises to stimulate the interest and participation of each of the brothers who attend the Conference. Coming together as a cross section of peers from across the Church presents an opportunity to deliberate on issues that affect us all and to share and gain insight as to the processes and procedures that have been successful and those that have possibilities. It is our hope that together we can answer the questions as to how we can accomplish personal improvement, increased spirituality, unity, and increased membership.

The Elders and Teachers will meet separately in small groups with the Apostles acting as group discussion leaders. We anticipate that there

will be eight Elder groups and one Teacher group meeting in separate locations in the World Conference Center. In this informal way, everyone will be enriched and inspired from the benefit of small group interaction. Individually, you will be caused to reflect on the special acknowledgment by the Lord to do His work and to appreciate the opportunity to do your part as a ministerial member of a team at your Branch/Mission.

The outline for the Teachers and the Elders will each cover similar topics. The Teachers' session will concentrate on four major areas: the calling of a teacher, qualities and characteristics of the teacher, the preparation of the teacher, and the teacher's responsibilities. The Elders' session will concentrate on five major areas: the calling of a minister, the preparation of a minister, ministerial duties, qualities and characteristics of a minister, and ministerial responsibilities.

It is anticipated that we will be strengthened and encouraged by our attendance at the Conference. Please make every effort to attend and share in the blessings of the Lord that await us. We trust that the Lord will richly bless you as you minister to the brothers, sisters, children, and friends of the Church.

The Quorum of Twelve Apostles

Reality of the Resurrection

Continued from Page 1

(1 Corinthians 15:6)? I am confident that there were many more instances that we do not read of. Some were just able to behold an empty tomb, but some were allowed to behold the glorified and resurrected Christ! What a PRIVILEGE! Could you imagine when their families got together years later and the little ones would say, "Grandpa, tell us again about the day you saw Jesus!" That testimony lived on for many generations I am sure (Matthew 28, Mark 16, John 20 and 21, Acts 1 and 1 Corinthians 15).

One critical action that needed to take place shortly after the resurrection was the filling of the Quorum of

12. There was a vacancy due to the loss of Judas. The 11 were directed to fill his "bishoprick" and this Apostleship was not to be given to just any disciple. There were certain criteria that needed to be met. If you read Acts 1:21-26, the criteria was that this man had to have been with them from the baptism of John to the same day Christ was taken up into heaven. He had to be a **witness of the resurrected Christ!** There were two men that the 11 felt fit the mold. Of the two, God's calling fell upon Matthias. As you can see, this assurance needed to be strong in the leadership of the Church and even among the flock of God. Without eyewitnesses, the gospel story would have seemed as just "idle tales."

Christ even showed much patience with the Apostle Thomas. He took a little more work than the others to be persuaded (John 20:24-28). Thomas missed seeing the Lord with his brethren, however eight days later Christ returned for the purpose of delivering him his dose of 100% conviction. He needed this if he wanted to be effective in converting others! Jesus was patiently setting the Church up for success!

Post Resurrection – Jerusalem (34 AD):

According to the Prophet Zenos, **all** of the House of Israel would be given a sign regarding the death of

(Continued on Page 4)



Baptisms in Rukira, Rwanda

By Evangelist Joseph Perri

In 2005, high on a mountaintop in Rwanda, Africa, 5,734 feet above sea level, we were blessed to visit the village of Rukira. Rukira is a province of Kibungo with a population of 60,300.

When we reached the highest part of the mountain, we drove through miles of many plantain and banana plantations until we reached a small church building made of tree branches, mud walls, and a rusted tin roof. Bananas and plantain crops are the main source of income for the people of the villages and beautiful to see; but our main interest was to meet the people who were waiting for our arrival, some inquisitive to see who we were and others to hear the message of the Restored Gospel.

From our first visit until the present, Brother Damascene Twizeyimana, our Church Pastor, and Sister Jeanine, his wife, an ordained Deaconess, are committed to servicing this small mission. Even though tragedy struck their family two years ago when their daughter was killed by a car, they still remain faithful to the Lord and His Church, fulfilling the work they both have been called to do. The distance from where they live in Kibungo to meet with our Church membership on the top of the mountain is about 12 miles, and often times Brother Damascene must walk because of the lack of transportation to the Rukira village.

There are 38 members of the Church in Rukira. The small church

building where we first met in 2005 is no longer being used because of safety reasons. The elements have taken a toll on this structure. The village council and their attorney donated a parcel of land to our Church to develop and we recently completed the construction of a brick church building and are looking forward to dedicating it the last week of May this year. The church building also serves as a school classroom for some of the young children who live in the vicinity. They have a registered teacher on the premises.

A wonderful experience was received by a young boy who became very seriously ill and was taken to the hospital. Many of the villagers were saying that our Church was strange, that it was the Damascene Church with his own personal faith, and having heard this illness occurred to this child began passing the word along that God was punishing them because the child's mother and father had embraced another religion – The Church of Jesus Christ – and were baptized. This caused somewhat of a stir and a concern to those who began attending our worship services and were still unbaptized. They began to be afraid thinking something serious might happen to them also.

However, after being hospitalized for a few days, the young lad showed no signs of improvement so the parents of the child began to exercise their faith in the God they had come to know, trust and serve.

They began to realize the importance of that faith coupled with prayer. After a few days had passed with no improvement in their child's health, the parents of the child went to the hospital and signed him out against the orders and advice of the doctors. They sent word to and requested the brothers and sisters to meet together with them at their church building for prayer. Many of the saints, along with Brother Damascene, and those who were able to meet in their humble church building made with branches of trees, mud walls and rusted steel sheets came together to pray for the child. After Brother Damascene anointed the child, miraculously there was an immediate change with the child's appearance, and he began to speak and move about as though he was not ill.

News of what occurred began to make its way throughout the villages, and those who were curious and spoke badly against the Church, Brother Damascene and the parents of the child, began to wonder what had taken place. Soon they began to attend our Church worship services. By attending, they learned our brothers and sisters were not the kind of people their leaders portrayed them to be. Although there are not many baptized members in this village, many attend our worship services and slowly this mission is beginning to grow.

Another experience in the Rukira Mission recently shows the power of God and faith exercised on the part of our Church membership. There are many months during the year when it does not rain in Rwanda, as is the case in many African countries. A day was scheduled to take those who requested, desired and wanted to become members of the Church to the waters of baptism. The candidates and Ministry together had to walk a great distance to a small stream at the base of the mountain where they hoped there would be sufficient water with a depth to baptize. It had not rained for months but the water was sufficient

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Reality of the Resurrection

Continued from Page 2

Christ, no matter where they were located (1 Nephi 19:10). The consistency of God would only lead us to conclude that they **all** would be given the same benefit to know of His resurrection in the same manner Christ conveyed it on this land in 3 Nephi! This is also echoed by the words of Jesus Himself (John 10:16 and 3 Nephi 16:1-3). What a blessing to think that God did not choose any other means to deliver the resurrection message. He used angels from time to time to carry His tidings. He did not just rely upon signs and wonders from above. Jesus Christ **Himself** descended with the introduction of His Father, "Behold My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He then presented Himself by saying, "Behold, I am Jesus Christ"! **Before** He taught them His doctrine, **before** He gave them His power, **before** He blessed their children, **before** any other order of business, He made His resurrection a **reality** to each of them personally! Christ said, "Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, **that ye may know** that I am the God of Israel" (3 Nephi 11:14). The reality of the resurrection was placed within their hearts. They were now fully prepared to go forward with His Kingdom on earth.

It was priority #1 that Christ was to make all of Israel's house know and bear witness that He indeed arose from the dead! Here in America, the 12 "Disciples" of Christ were also all chosen from those who beheld the resurrected Christ, just like He did with the Apostles in Jerusalem! While Jesus showed himself to a little over 500 in Palestine, the number here in America was much greater. About 2,500 beheld the resurrected Christ (3 Nephi 17:25)! Not only were they eyewitnesses, but they did all go forward "one by one" and "witnessed for themselves" that "it was He of whom it was written by the prophets" and they touched Him! The number of witnesses even grew much greater

than 2,500 when Jesus returned the next day (3 Nephi 19:1-5)! This conviction in the resurrection again was critical to the furtherance of the Church in this land many years ago.

Today – 2009

As we can see, this event was of the utmost priority to the Almighty. Should it be any different for us today? Was the importance lost through the years? Absolutely, positively, not! Although we live in a different dispensation of time, we also must have the same conviction today! We must have faith! Jesus said, "...blessed are they that have not seen [me], and yet have believed...these things are written...that ye might believe..." (John 20:29, 31). Have the Four Gospels done their job? Do you believe the report? Do you "know the certainty" of the things written by Luke? When we came into the Church, we were buried in baptism and raised up in the likeness of Christ's resurrection. We were then given the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying-on-of-hands. This precious gift bears witness within us of the resurrected Christ. Some of the last words spoken by Jesus to His disciples were, "...ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me...unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

When we walk in the light of Christ, we reflect the life-changing power of His resurrection. If the dead bones of the Prophet Elisha can bring a man back to life, then we that are alive today must surely have the same opportunity. We can bring life to others if we reflect the **joy** of our risen Lord! Let us never forget the importance of this event. Let us be **sure**! Even as the early church continually reminded each other of this very reality by stating in their greeting, "He is risen," and the response was, "He is risen **indeed**!"

Just as it was critical to the furtherance of the Church many years ago, this same conviction is paramount to The Church of Jesus Christ and its progress today! We must be sure so that others may be sure! May you with great power give witness of the resurrection of Christ and may great grace be upon you all (Acts 4:33).

Happy Easter and may the resurrection be a **reality** to you today and always.

Baptisms in Rukira, Rwanda

Continued from Page 3

to perform the baptisms. As the saints gathered, Brother Alexander Rudatsikira, our Church President there, offered prayer for God's blessings to rest upon the candidates so they would know beyond any doubt the commitment and promise they were making that day with the Lord, and would He show it was acceptable by giving some kind of a sign. He also mentioned in his prayer that the Lord would begin to send rain so their crops would be watered and not dry up. After calling the first candidate and preparing for the baptism, he took the candidate by the hand and as his foot touched the water to baptize the candidate, the heavens opened and it began to rain very heavily. The candidates and the witnesses who came to experience the baptisms were amazed and began to praise God for what they had just experienced. They did not mind being soaked but began to say one to the other, "When they want and need rain to perform baptisms, the rain comes." The entire group was being blessed and sprinkled with water sent from the throne of God. Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

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Editorial Viewpoint . . .

"Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's" (Psalm 103:1-5).

Our Lord is full of mercy and lovingkindness. The benefits of committing yourself to His service, and doing your best to keep His commandments in fear and trembling, are greater than any benefit earth can offer you. When we fall into sin and iniquity, and repent, He is quick to forgive us. When diseases come upon our body, if it be His will, He will heal all our diseases and afflictions. When our lives are on the path to spiritual destruction, and we turn to Him, He is quick to save us and to crown us with His love and mercy. This is why David said confidently that he wanted to bless the Lord with all his soul, to bless His holy name. David goes on in this chapter to use Israel, under Moses' leadership, as an awesome example of God's love and mercy. How often did they turn from God in the wilderness, yet God continually forgave them and provided for them.

"For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him" (Psalm 103:11).

His mercy is beyond our comprehension. In this world, people show mercy under many conditions. It is usually not enough for someone to say they are sorry to be fully forgiven. Usually the person must do something more to prove their regret, or it may take years and years for them to be forgiven. Even then, many people say, "I'll forgive, but I'll never forget." God's mercy and forgiveness for us is so beyond what we can comprehend. It is compared to the distance between earth and heaven. That is because as soon as we feel a godly sorrow for what we've done, and with a sincere heart apologize to God, He forgives and forgets immediately. We don't have to perform certain acts to prove we are sorry for what we have done. It doesn't take years before God will decide to forgive us. He forgives instantly. Isaiah said that though our sins be as scarlet, He'll make them white as snow.

"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust" (Psalm 103:12-15).

When God forgives, He forgives completely. It is erased forever. He remembers that we are just the dust of the earth, helpless without Him. A father will have pity and mercy on his children when he sees they fear and respect him. How much more our God will love and have mercy on us when He sees we truly want to please Him and live righteously. Unfortunately in the flesh, we sin and fall short many times. So much so that Paul even said he needed to "die daily" in order to retain the remission of his sins. Just as His eye is on the sparrow, how much more is His eye upon us when we fall, and when we find ourselves in trouble. He is always there to deliver us as long as we want Him to. He said that anything we ask in His name He will give to us. What a loving Savior we serve! What a shelter in the time of storm! What a loving father and friend who will never leave or forsake us! What would we do if we didn't know the Lord? Who could we turn to for help in this life?

Let us bless the Lord by striving to live each day as He would want. Let's never forget that when we fall, He will pick us up. Let us never leave His loving arms, ever. Let us put our lives in His hands, and He will carry us through whatever we have to face in this life. "Bless the Lord, O my soul..."

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork



The Long Journeys

Dear Boys and Girls,

If you knew that danger was coming and God had a plan for you and your family to leave, what would you do? Would you worry about what to carry with you? How would you get ready? There are three major stories in the scriptures that tell us of ancient families who moved and were saved by God. In the Bible there is the story of the Israelite slaves that Moses led across the deserts to freedom from Pharaoh. In the Book of Mormon after the Tower of Babel days, God led Jared and his family and friends through the wilderness, and across the wild seas in barges. They landed in Central America by the Yucatan Peninsula. Later, in the days of Jeremiah the prophet, Lehi's family and friends fled Jerusalem and also journeyed through wild land. They crossed the oceans in a ship they built and landed in South America near the country of Peru.

When it was time for Moses to take thousands of God's people tromping through the desert, they were very afraid. Can you imagine how scared they were when they realized they did not know which direction to go and they were hungry or thirsty and did not have enough to eat? Do you remember how God heard their cries? He sent a huge pillar of a cloud to lead them by day and night and he fed them with manna from heaven, water from a rock and quails from the sky for meat? They survived for years in those deserts, wandering for forty years until all of the original people

over twenty years old died. They became warriors and servants of God. Only two wonderful old leaders, Joshua and Caleb, were left to lead a new nation of true believers to their new "Promised Land." The book of Judges 2:7 informs us that "the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel." God truly provided for them.

In the days of the Tower of Babel (see Ether chapters 2 and 3 and Genesis 11), God changed everyone's language and scattered them all over the earth. But, the brother of Jared prayed that God would let his little group of family and friends stay together and take them to a wonderful new land. God agreed. He had them gather flocks and birds, containers of fish, bees and seeds of every kind. As He led them through the wilderness He taught them how to build light-weight barges to cross huge rivers. When they finally got to the ocean, they relaxed their service to God and forgot Him for four years! God forgave them and helped them get ready to cross the huge sea.

They were scared because the barges were small and dark inside. There could be no windows because the ocean waves would break them and sink the barges. Their little barges were airtight with holes at the top and bottom, which could be opened for air if they were on top of the water. The brother of Jared asked God to touch sixteen small stones that he made from melted rock. The Lord made them shine in the darkness so they could see. God also sent a furious wind to blow the barges across the ocean

(Ether chapter 6). They were tossed on the waves, buried deep in the ocean and bumped by whales! They cried unto God, prayed and sang God's praises constantly. The wind pushed the eight small barges across the ocean for three hundred forty-four days before they landed in the area of Yucatan and started building homes in their "Promised Land."

God warned the prophet Lehi that Jerusalem was going to be attacked and destroyed. He told them to leave their gold and wealth behind, take their tents, food, family and a few friends and leave for the wilderness. He told them he was going to take them to a new place, a land of promise, choice above all other lands! (They landed in South America by the country of Peru.) They traveled for eight years

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WORD SEARCH

GOD	JOURNEYS
WILL	HE
LOVE	GUIDED
AND	PROTECTED
PREPARE	GAVE
HIS	THEM
PEOPLE	STRENGTH
ON	WATER
THREE	LIGHT
LONG	FOOD

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



General Ladies' Uplift Circle Fundraiser

**Help support the World Conference Center Beautification Project
while enjoying the fellowship of the Saints!**

On Saturday, April 18th, 2009, 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, fresh fruit and dessert items will also be included.

Chocolate fondue will also be available at an additional cost.

Please place your order by contacting Sister Angela Yoder at **724-695-7898** or
at **angelaandericyoder@hotmail.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.

You will receive e-mail or verbal confirmation that your order was received.

Deadline for placing orders will be midnight Monday, April, 13, 2009.
**Payment for lunches may be made after the Friday GLUC meeting and
between 9:00 and 11:00 AM on Saturday.**



In the Service of the King

By Sister Sally Curtin

We received a special gift at the General Ladies' Uplift Circle Conference held in April of 2008. As part of the devotions offered to the Lord, the sisters of each Area Circle were asked to prepare their thoughts and inspirations on what it means to serve the Lord and the gift of His glorious Church. With each message it felt as though we received a little flower. By the end of the presentations we each had a broad floral bouquet of heaven-scented delights. Each flower was carefully picked from the *great garden of scripture*, the *greenhouse of the Holy Spirit*, and the *nursery of grateful hearts*. The sisters found it difficult to choose from their many thoughts and feelings towards the overwhelming depths of what it meant to them to serve the Lord. The descriptions of how and even why we serve the Lord ran deep and wide. There was no doubt left in anyone there that voids and gaps have any place in the universe of serving the Lord and His people.

Our first flowers were presented by our sister from the Great Lakes Area Circle. She picked two flowers, from the *greenhouse of the Holy Spirit* and from the *great garden of scripture* (Matthew 6:3-4), "When thou doest alms [charitable deeds and services], let not the left hand know what the right hand doeth: That thine alms may be done in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly." These blessed words of our Lord, Jesus Christ, presented by our sister give honor to our Heavenly Father. She gave personal meaning to these words, and testified of the blessing she receives knowing that this and all scriptures give a surety that God sees all that she does and is

always blessing her. Our sister gave a recent example of an opportunity she had to serve God. She had worked late one evening and was hoping to get home sooner than later. Her lateness was compounded when she realized the car gas tank was in need of a refill. As she was pumping the gas and feeling the pressures of all that comes with running late, the Holy Spirit gently prompted her to look beyond herself and her own needs. As she glanced over to the next gas pump she saw an older woman having difficulty filling her gas tank. She engaged this woman in conversation and the woman expressed her level of distress to our sister. Setting aside the anxiety of being late, she finished up with her car and then proceeded to assist this stranger of the night with her fueling. The woman was so grateful to have the help, and our sister could see the sense of relief and peace which fell upon the onetime stranger. This is an account we all can relate to – how a natural need to fill up with fuel resulted in a spiritual blessing, and it certainly illustrates our need to keep our lamps filled up with spiritual fuel ever ready in the service of the Lord.

Next our sister from the Penn Mid-Atlantic Area drew her flowers from the *nursery of grateful hearts* and the *great garden of scripture* in the book of Mosiah 2:17: "Behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God." She presented these inspired words of King Benjamin, which served to remind us of why we are called to the duty of service in the house of the Lord. Our sister testified of the joy she received when helping with the Muncey Mission Vacation Bible School. She told of how they were in a financial bind for supplies, and out of the blue she received a financial donation. How good the Lord is, ever watching over the details of His great plan and our every need. Our amazement at how the Lord can unfold one layer at a time, keeping us ever at His feet in request of His love and assistance. Our sister emphasized how in this instance, her efforts of

service where enhanced by another's readiness to give of their substance, in turn helping one another and receiving so much more in return.

With our floral array ever sweeter with the addition of these two flowers of obedience and gratefulness we are further drawn to duty-filled service knowing that the Lord is pleased and honored when we follow His precepts. Trust that God has all of the details arranged before you even see the beginning of His plan. Be of a cheerful heart when in the service of God's Church and He will provide all that is needed, plus many bonuses such as other ready supporters.

Our sister from the Atlantic Coast Area gave us flowers that were the product of heirloom seeds that had been sown over a generation ago. The flowers came from the *nursery of grateful hearts* and the *great garden of scripture*. She expanded on the words of King Benjamin and brought us further in the Book of Mosiah to chapter 2:16-17: "Behold, I say unto you that because I said unto you that I had spent my days in your service, I do not desire to boast, for I have *only* been in the service of God. And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are *only* in the service of your God." Our sister reflected on the course of her life, how it is a joy to be of service to the Lord and to be a help to the Church. She recounted how recently she heard of a great need of our brothers and sisters in Mexico. Their church building had deteriorated and the conditions were deplorable. Her heart was heavy with this news. She presented this need before the sisters and together they were able to raise funds to assist the needs of the Church and show how the love of God can work to the saints in Mexico. Our sister attributed her sensitivity to the needs of others and her readiness to bring the sisters together to serve in this cause, and to her family's tradition of service to the Church.

We then heard from our sister of the Pacific Coast Area. She presented

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YIA Program Brings Blessings to Greensburg

*"Give of your best to the Master;
Give of the strength of your youth..."*

These words were certainly demonstrated by our two young brothers that "joined" our branch through the "Youth In Action Program." Brother Kaleb Picciuto and Brother Marcus Natoli arrived on June 15, 2008 and spent eight weeks canvassing the surrounding areas, planting the seed of the Gospel to many families. (Our brothers visited approximately 3000 homes within this short time frame!) Because of their efforts, several visitors did attend our Sunday services. Although our two brothers wanted to see more representation of their efforts, we know that the "seed" was planted, and we wait patiently knowing that in God's perfect timing the sowing of those seeds will come forth.

In addition to their labors in the community, Kaleb and Marcus brought such zeal and excitement into our own branch services. They spent much time teaching and interacting with our young people; their great examples of true love, spirit, joy and faith in the Lord proved to be the greatest teacher of all! During their eight-week visit, we were blessed to have one baptism. Our Sister Tammy Welsh was baptized on July 6, 2008. (As a further result of their hard work with our young people, we were blessed again on September 14, 2008 with the baptism of Sister Lauren Urana. Although Kaleb and Marcus were not able to attend, we're sure they rejoiced with us as another young soul rendered her obedience to the Lord.)

It was a bittersweet weekend of August 9-10, 2008, as we prepared to say our goodbyes to Kaleb and Marcus. On August 9, 2008, Brother Kevin Coppa (Plumbrook Branch) blessed us immensely by traveling to Greensburg

for his presentation of "Noah's Ark." The people in attendance were awed by Brother Kevin's knowledge and ability to provide such interesting and informative facts, pictures, replicas, etc. of the Ark! Then, on Sunday, August 10, we had a beautiful service with many testimonies praising and thanking God for allowing us the privilege of having Brothers Kaleb and Marcus with us for the summer and for allowing us to see Brother Kevin's presentation. Following the meeting, a delicious luncheon was served.

We, the Greensburg Branch, thank our young brothers for their time and great efforts, and for giving us a summer filled with blessings that will long be remembered. Truly, they have given their best to the Master.

MidwestArea MBASkis Winter Blues Away

By Sister Natalie Pezzenti

Statistics say that the winter months are most popular for individuals to fall into depression. Perhaps it is the bitter cold or perhaps the gloomy skies. But for members of the Midwest Region, the cold weekend of January 17-19, 2009, was anything but depressing or gloomy. That's because 15 members from around the region, as well as the members of the Cincinnati-Morrow Branch, met at Perfect North Ski Slopes in Lawrenceburg, Indiana, for a "Ski Your Blues Away Weekend."

On Saturday, members (young and not-so-young) could be seen snowboarding, skiing, and tubing down the slopes, while others fellowshiped in the main lodge next to the fire. Following the day spent at Perfect North, the Maddox family invited everyone to their home for dinner and more time to fellowship. The group

surprised Brother Henry and Sister Sandy Cardillo from the Youngstown, Ohio Branch with a cake to celebrate their 41st wedding anniversary.

The Lord truly was in the Sunday service the next day from the moment the opening hymn, *Sing Glory*, was sung. Brother Bob Batson, Midwest Region Chaplain, welcomed everyone and said it was particularly great to see the enthusiasm of the young people throughout the weekend.

Brother Dan McNamara from the Kinsman, Ohio Branch opened the service. He spoke about often feeling alone when he is away from the saints of God, but how the moment he is reunited with them, he instantly feels the love. Brother Dan spoke from 2 Chronicles 13, about a group of people that was led away from the Lord. "Standing up to the devil is a challenge we face daily," Brother Dan said, "and we challenge him as we stand for Christ and as we shine our light." Brother Dan told the congregation in attendance that we must be proud of who we stand for and proclaim that we are members of the Lord's army. "If you want to stand up against the devil, you have to be serving God every second, every minute of every day," he said.

Brother Henry Cardillo followed by saying that in the Lord's army, He doesn't expect us to carry a rifle—but instead He expects us to carry the Spirit of the Lord. "We are in a tremendous army; there is a lot of strife in the world. It doesn't understand that God is upon His throne and



He's waiting to open His cornucopia of blessings to us," Brother Henry said. "He is the commander-in-chief of this army. We don't have to worry about serving another lieutenant or sergeant."

Brother Henry continued by saying that our promotion won't be general or lieutenant, but a saint of the most high God.

Brother Ken Staley from the Middle Tennessee Mission asked the congregation if we knew who we were standing up for when we take that stance. "Standing up for Jesus Christ, the son of God, is the best life. When I let Him do His thing, I feel like I'm in the army of the true and living God," he said. Brother Ken said that while we will be tempted and tried throughout our lives, we have to remember who is always there for us and who we should focus on: "I say unto you, I would that ye should remember to retain the name written always in your hearts, that ye are not found on the left hand of God, but that ye hear and know the voice by which ye shall be called, and also, the name by which he shall call you" (Mosiah 5:12).

Brother Paul Pezzenti reminded the congregation of the famous words of President John F. Kennedy when he said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country." Brother Paul said we must do the same with the Lord: "Ask not what the Lord can do for you, but what you can do for the Lord."

It was apparent at the end of the meeting that the winter blues had turned to winter joys for the Midwest Area MBA. God blessed the weekend immensely and proved that once again, when two or three are gathered together in His name, there He will be.

us, that while we did live upon raw meat in the wilderness, our women did give plenty of suck for their children, and were strong, yea, even like unto the men; and they began to bear their journeying without murmurings."

Nephi goes on to explain in verse 3, "...We can see the commandments of God must be fulfilled. And if it so be that the children of men keep the commandments of God, he does nourish them, and strengthen them, and provide a way whereby they can accomplish the thing which he has commanded them."

That is why we should never be afraid of the future if we serve God. We should never worry about any journeys, destructions, or natural catastrophes of the future. We know what to bring if we must leave our homes—bring our faith. Get ready by praying in your heart. Trust in our God, the Creator. He can feed you, lead you and protect you. He is your Lord. Just as He delivered the Israelite nations across the hot deserts, He will lead us. Just as He brought the Jaredite people to a safe place after the Tower of Babel and taught them how to build barges and pack food, He will teach us. Just as the Lord saved the people with Lehi from destruction in Jerusalem and made them strong for their journey, He will guide and lead us! Everyday listen to the voice of the Lord and be the best person you can be. Do not forget the Lord. When the time comes, our wonderful Lord will not forget us.

With love,
Sister Jan

reasonable service she further shared that "spiritual gifts are special abilities given through the bestowal of the Holy Ghost and are to be used by the saints of God for His purposes. These gifts are meant to be used as part of our service in the name of Jesus Christ, to glorify God and to edify the Church." So, how do you define your good and reasonable service? Does it lead to the use of your spiritual gifts for God's purposes? How has it equipped you to be of service to God and His Gospel?

We next were uplifted with a heartfelt testimony from our sister of the Southeast Area. She provided us with two new flowers, one from the *nursery of grateful hearts* and the other from the *great garden of scripture* found in 2 Peter 4:8-11: "Above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Having a selfless attitude and a desire to serve God continues to be her prayer for all aspects of service.

Last and certainly not least, we heard from our sister of the Ohio Midwest Area. She offered to us flowers from the *nursery of grateful hearts* and the *greenhouse of the Holy Spirit*. Our sister testified as to how she was lead to prepare for this message of service. She expressed that we, as saints serving God, are truly at the heart of keeping both the Gospel and the body of Christ pure and holy. It is important to remember our service is solely for the honor and glory of God. True service goes hand in hand with our relationship with God.

We left the meeting carrying our new bouquets. We were not armed with the flowers, but were tempered with new tools and inspirations to enhance and renew our service before the Lord!

In the Service of the King

Continued from Page 8

to us some hybrid flowers, especially cultivated from the *greenhouse of the Holy Spirit* and the *great garden of scripture*. She led us to read in Romans 12:1: "...present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Expanding on the aspect of

The Children's Corner

Continued from Page 6

across deserts, jungles and wild country. When the traveling became very difficult, God made them all strong (1 Nephi 17), "and so great were the blessings of the Lord upon

Spiritual Anniversaries

Sister Rose Randazzo of the Simi Valley, California Branch celebrated 65 years in The Church of Jesus Christ on May 23, 2008.

Sister Vicky D'Antonio of the Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Branch celebrated 70 years in The Church of Jesus Christ.

Sister Janet (Ross) Gibson of the Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Branch celebrated 50 years in The Church of Jesus Christ on December 28, 2008.

Sister Madeline Loughren of Detroit, Michigan Branch #1 celebrated 70 years in The Church of Jesus Christ.

Baptisms and Reinstatements

Brother Omar Morales was reinstated into The Church of Jesus Christ on November 2, 2008 at the Spartanburg, South Carolina Branch.

Sister Elizabeth Sacramento was baptized on February 15, 2009 at the Freehold, New Jersey Branch. She was baptized by Brother Carl Huttenberger and confirmed by Brother Jim Crudup.

Address Change

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Branch or Mission _____

OBITUARIES

ERIK MICHAEL WINGLE

Erik Michael Wingle of Detroit, Michigan Branch #2, passed on to his reward on August 5, 2008. He is survived by his mother, Sister Tammy Mendenhall and stepfather Brother Alfred Mendenhall, and his siblings, Tiffany and Steven Wingle.

ROSALIE "ROSE" PEARL PEZZENTI

Sister Rosalie "Rose" Pearl Pezzenti of the Youngstown, Ohio Branch passed on to her reward on January 25, 2009. She is survived by her mother, Sister Florence Pezzenti; brother, Brother Paul (Sister Karen) Pezzenti; sisters, Jan (John) DePasquale and Denise Pasquale; nieces, Sister Natalie Pezzenti and Renee Boston; and nephews, Dennis Dota and Anthony Pasquale.

CORRECTION

EMORY COGAR

Brother Emory Cogar, of the Gastonia, North Carolina Branch passed on to his reward on November 20, 2008. He was preceded in death by a daughter, Sister Debbie Cogar. He is survived by his wife, Sister Verna along with seven children, Sister Lorraine Perrine, Sister Elaine Cogar, Sister Teresa Camden, Allen, Emory, Jr., James and Brother Steven.

Children Blessed

Dominic Raymond and Julianna Rose Corrado, son and daughter of Jason and Kimberly Corrado, were blessed on March 22, 2008 at the Imperial, Pennsylvania Branch.

Chloe Bee Ciccati, daughter of Ben and Michelle Ciccati, was blessed on August 31, 2008 at the Sterling Heights, Michigan Branch.

Nathan Daniel Buffington, son of Brother Nathan and Sister Tammy Buffington, was blessed on November 28, 2008 at the Imperial, Pennsylvania Branch.

Elijah James Matthew, son of Brother James and Sister Patricia Matthew, was blessed on December 14, 2008 in the Windsor, Ontario Branch.

Alivia Rose Frentzos, daughter of Andreas and Sister Michelle Frentzos, was blessed in the Middle Tennessee Mission on December 26, 2008.

Vincent Christos Frentzos, son of Chris and Sister Jan Frentzos, was blessed on December 26, 2008 in the Middle Tennessee Mission.

Benjamin Adam Miller, son of Brother Brandon and Sister Christina Miller, was blessed on January 4, 2009 in the Kinsman, Ohio Branch.

Aiden Christopher Paxon, son of Brother Justin and Sister Christina Paxon, was blessed on January 11, 2009 in the Bell, California Branch.

Angel Xavier Reyes, son of Brother Miguel and Sister Miriam Reyes was blessed on February 22, 2009 in the Freehold, NJ Branch.



THE CHURCH OF Jesus Christ

International Headquarters in
Monongahela, Pennsylvania

April, 2009

Volume 65, No. 4

The “Saints of the Caribbean”

By Evangelist Anthony Ricci

“And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding” (Jeremiah 3:15).

In the City of Maracaibo in the country of Venezuela, Brother Daniel Mora, Brother Duane Lovalvo and this writer witnessed this scripture come to life. From February 18th to February 23rd we enjoyed the tremendous blessings of the Restored Gospel in this South American city by the Caribbean Sea!

For Brother Duane and me, this would be the first time in Maracaibo. What we found was wonderful Caribbean weather in a very modern metropolis, but even more, wonderful saints! I will say some of the greatest blessings in doing missionary work occur when the saints are able to meet you at the airport after landing in a city for the first time. This was one of those times. Upon landing we met Brother Jose and Brother Angel for the first time. Immediately there was a connection. We have the same baptism, the same confirmation, the same redemption in the Restored Gospel. It amazes me—whether in Nepal, in Sikkim, in Ecuador, in Columbia, from California to Maine, or whatever land the

saints are in—it’s the same love and the same spirit! Truly we are brothers and sisters in the FAMILY OF GOD!

In Maracaibo, you have wonderful brothers and sisters. There is a tremendous little group that loves and serves the Lord. These “Saints of the Caribbean” have been taught and nourished through the visits of our brothers and through phone and e-mail communications. But, they

hungered and desired for a minister to be able to give them communion and anoint and pray for them when they were sick. This is something the Venezuela Committee has fasted and prayed about. Experiences came forth and a confirming Spirit was felt to ordain Brother Jose as an Elder in The Church of Jesus Christ! It was truly wonderful to know that the Priesthood Authority would be restored again to this part of Venezuela since the Nephites of old!

We had the wonderful opportu-

(Continued on Page 2)



Some of the El Palo group with Brother Jose and Brother Angel.

Saints of the Caribbean

Continued from page 1

nity to visit the little village of El Palo. What a wonderful contrast to the city of Maracaibo. This was one of those villages that when you walk into it, is like stepping back into time. To just sit underneath a tree with a family and talk about this wonderful Gospel is one of those blessings which is truly priceless. This is a group which has been visited before and has wonderful interest in the Church. What liberty and power we felt to let them know—it is now different. There will be a minister ordained in this part of the country who will be able to preach to them, to teach them, to pray for them—what a wonderful Spirit we felt come into this little gathering. Please remember to pray for this group and this village. They may have little means, but the Gospel has found its way to this little place.

A wonderful trait of the saints in Maracaibo is that they are not shy to present this Gospel to their friends and neighbors. We had opportunities to present this Gospel in the homes and even on an outdoor porch of a local coffee house! What a blessing to speak to people who have so many questions and are searching for truth. At one visit, and I wish I could explain the Spirit that was felt, Sister Carolina and Brother Daniel Mora sang 100

Sheep in Spanish, a cappella! Little wonderful things such as this are the many gems of missionary work. To be in that home, in that land, listening to that song...WOW!!

At last, it was the Sunday service and the ordination of our beloved brother. In a little apartment with a small group, Brother Duane washed our brother's feet and Brother Daniel ordained Brother Jose an Elder in The Church of Jesus Christ! It amazes me—now in this city there is a man with the authority to take a person into the waters of regeneration and raise his right hand and say those powerful words, "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. Amen." A man now has the authority to pass communion in remembrance of the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ. A man now has authority to pray for and anoint our people. This is no small thing! PRAISE GOD! Truly the Lord has given a pastor to feed HIS flock!

My dear friends, what a tremendous thing these eyes were able to witness. We see this in our missions and branches and sometimes, I speak for myself, we fail to really appreciate what is happening. But in places like this, where the people hunger and thirst to have a minister, the full impact really is made known. To

hear a neighbor stand in testimony and say, "I know this apartment will be better, I know this city will be better, and I know this country will be better, because a minister has been ordained in The Church of Jesus Christ!" How overwhelming!

Once again, I had the tremendous privilege to travel with such wonderful brothers. I can truly say the Lord blessed us with tremendous unity and love one towards another. How great the Spirit of God works when there is such harmony.

I ask a simple request of each and every reader—remember these "Saints of the Caribbean" and remember Brother Jose as their shepherd. As always, my beloved family in Christ—TO THE WORK!!



Brothers Javier, Jose, Duane and Angel

Youth In Action 2009

The GMBA is sponsoring the following YIA tours for the summer of 2009:

Kinsman, Ohio

Tour Coordinator, Brother Zac Jackson, July 17 through August 9.

San Carlos, Arizona

Tour Coordinator, Brother Jonathan Scolaro, July 18 through July 25.

San Diego, California

Tour Coordinator, Brother Daniel Hemmings, July 31 through August 9.

Mt. Laurel, New Jersey

Tour Coordinator, Brother Jim Sgro, August 15 through August 23.

Please encourage all young people to consider participating in one or more of these activities.

Native American Outreach Resources

A number of publications and tracts will be helpful in our efforts to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to Native Americans. (Shipping not included in price.)

Available:

- Pocket-size flyer with the message of The Church of Jesus Christ to Native American and First Nations People. Presents the fundamentals of our faith briefly in a relevant way, and with selected Scripture passages. Cost: Four for \$1; 100 for \$20.
- *The Book of Mormon* – missionary edition to be handed to Native Americans. Cost: \$10 each.
- Back issues of the *First Voices Journal* — a four-page journal of articles to share with Native Americans and First Nations Peoples that seeks to draw similarities between God's Word and long-held traditions, beliefs, histories and stories. Cost: \$1 each; two past issues available.
- *American Indian Moses* — a dissertation by Brother Timothy Dom Bucci of prophecies and latter-day work pertaining to the remnant of Israel, written with Native Americans as the target audience. Cost: \$6 each.
- *NAOC Handbook for Missionaries* — a comprehensive resource for those who seek to understand Native American cultures and worldviews, as well as tips for approaching and establishing relationships. Cost \$7.50 each.
- www.first-voices.org. You can share the NAOC's special First Voices Website with any interested parties.

Faces

By Brother Don Ross

This prophet was a mighty preacher. His gifts were numerous and his brother captured several of his sermons in great length. He provides us his commentary on Isaiah's writings. He taught many subjects in a few chapters. For example: Christ's death and resurrection, the infinite atonement, polygamy is forbidden, how to handle wealth, and the tame olive tree – a parable that is almost incomparable. His name – Jacob.

Jacob could not be shaken from his faith in Jesus Christ. He encountered a man named Sherem, an apostate Nephite who was a clever speaker. Sherem was the first person in the Book of Mormon to deny that Jesus Christ would come to redeem mankind. For Sherem, it would have been better if he never met Jacob. He tried to shake Jacob from his faith and righteousness. But Jacob could not be swayed in his testimony of the Savior: "...for I truly had seen angels, and they had ministered unto me. And also, I had heard the voice of the Lord speaking unto me in very word, from time to time; wherefore, I could not be shaken." Sherem demanded a sign. He got one. Sherem was struck down. Soon after, Sherem acknowledged his wrong and died.

A direct result of Jacob's demonstration of the power of God was the Nephites repented of their wicked and evil ways. And "peace and the love of God was restored again among the people, and they searched the scriptures, and hearkened no more to the words of this wicked man."

Jacob quotes at length from the prophet Isaiah. For various reasons it is an important sermon. It proves that the latter part of Isaiah, which some scholars like to consider as the work of a "second" Isaiah, was accepted as genuine at the time of Jacob, as it was in the days of our Lord. It shows and proves the Nephites held meetings for worship and instruction, as

we do, and that they based their addresses on the Holy Scriptures, as we do.

Charged by Nephi at his death to be the spiritual leader of the people, Jacob was sober and humble. He shrank from testifying to the people about their wickedness, because he might offend the ears of the righteous. Jacob was full of love and compassion. Consider his statement on the proper use of wealth and the attitude we should have towards the less fortunate: "Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you. But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God."

We are indebted to Jacob for many outstanding teachings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jacob was valiant in his testimony of the Gospel. He was a powerful spiritual character, sincere and diligent in teaching the truth. He was worthy of his forefather's name (Jacob) to whom God gave this wonderful land, the promised land (America) where he preached. And Jacob, the son of Lehi, was a "mighty preacher."

* * * * *

She is one of the few women mentioned in the Book of Mormon. By name, she is identified five times and the only woman about whom enough is recorded to draw a description. Her descendants became a multitude of nations in the midst of the earth. Her name – Sariah.

Sariah is a beautiful Hebrew name. The root is Sara, meaning a princess, and Jah, or Iah, for Jehovah. The "Jah" suffix often appears as "iah" and was frequently used by the Hebrews to refer to the name of God. The name Sariah is parallel to such biblical names as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zedekiah. Thus, "this princess of Jehovah," a significant name, because like Eve, she became a mother of nations. Sariah was the mother of six sons and some daughters.

(Continued on Page 10)



A New Young Soul at Branch #2

By Sister Carolyn O'Connor

On Sunday November 2, 2008, we met at the water's shore to witness the baptism of Brother Steven Dulisse. Brother Steven had asked for his baptism the week prior at the Great Lakes Region Conference.

Brother Jim Lambert Jr. brought Steven into the water and baptized him in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. It was a wonderful morning and those present rejoiced in the beauty of the moment.

When we returned to the branch, Brother Steven came forward and the brothers knelt and encircled him as Brother Larry Henderson offered a prayer. Brother Duane Lovalvo then entered the circle to bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost on Brother Steven. Brother Steven then testified. "It all started back in July when my brother, Brandon got baptized. When he came out of the water he said, 'Don't walk through life alone,' and gave me a big hug. They asked if anyone else wanted to be baptized, and I felt my heart pounding." Brother Steven contemplated asking for his baptism and decided that his time was another day.

The Lord continued to work on his heart and on Wednesday, a few days prior to asking for his baptism, Brother Steven was on the phone with his mother, Sister Valerie. "I don't like my life right now. I do not like what I could do on the weekends or what college has to offer," Brother Steven shared with his mother. Talking to her, he knew that one of the things that was on her heart was that they were so far from the church. They drive two hours to get there and whenever it came up that they wanted to move closer, he would become very angry because he did not want to leave his friends. During the call, he told her

that he realized what was important and that he was okay with moving. He knelt down and prayed with her. On Friday he fasted and prayed for God's direction in his life.

When he came home on Saturday to go to church on Sunday, his father Brother Chuck, told him that there was not a meeting at Branch #2 because it was Region Conference and instead of two hours, it would take three to get there. Steven remarked that he could wait until GMBA to go to church, which was in a few weeks. He went to bed, and in a passage in one of the scriptures that he was reading it said that someone needed to know what God wanted from them, so they went outside and knelt on the earth to pray. Brother Steven followed this example and went outside to pray. Following, he had an overwhelming feeling that he needed to be at church the next day. At midnight, he woke his parents to tell them and on Sunday morning, they made the three-hour drive to Region Conference.

Brother Jim Lambert Jr. opened the meeting. During his sermon, he read the exact chapter that Brother Steven read the night prior. Brother Steven was excited but still not convinced. He asked the Lord that if it was his time let the hymn, *He's All the World to Me*, be sung. He had only heard it sung a few times in recent years.

As was God's plan, today was to be Steven's day and the hymn was sung. When the meeting was opened for testimony, something that is not typical at a Region Conference but directed by God this day, Brother Steven asked for his baptism. The brothers told him afterward that they were looking for a song to sing. One of them leaned over and said that they needed to sing #89, which was the song Brother Steven had asked God for.

At the end of the meeting, Brother Alex Gentile testified that he had an experience that morning that Steven would ask for his baptism. Also, after the meeting Sister Mary Bertolo shared that while Brother Steven was asking for his baptism, she saw two personages standing beside him.

Brother Steven stretched forth his hand in faith when he began to fast and pray for God's intercession in his life, and the Lord came through with a clear and powerful message for Brother Steven that it was time to change his life and give himself as a servant to the Lord.

We thank God for our new young brother and ask that you pray for him and all of the other young people, brave enough to give their lives to Christ.

An Experience

(Mesa, Arizona, February 1, 2009)

We were enjoying a beautiful sacrament service during which one of the Elders commented (while pouring the wine) on how the blood of Christ was shed for us. We continued singing the hymn, *Near the Cross*. As the wine was being passed during the singing of the hymn, I was carried away in the Spirit and found myself at Mt. Calvary, standing at the foot of the cross. I was extremely close to the cross; perhaps only an inch or two and could see the Lord suffering upon it. I could also see the women standing off to my right. They were dressed in typical Jewish attire and were very brokenhearted. I noticed that their faces were downward in sorrow.

While standing there, it was as though my hearing was allowed to become supersensitive and I could actually hear the blood falling to the ground. One of the drops of blood fell on me. I then found myself back in my seat on the pulpit and began weeping as I thought about what I had just experienced. I knew that just like the brother who was pouring the wine had said, the blood of Christ was shed for our generation as well as those back then; for I was touched by the blood as the drop fell on me. I knew that He looked ahead in time and knew us and that He was dying for all of us. His precious blood reached through time and saved us by His grace.

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Editorial Viewpoint . . .

"And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee" (Joshua 3:7).

Joshua took over as the leader of Israel when Moses died. Joshua took a new generation from the wilderness where their parents wandered for years and then died, and was about to bring them to the land of Caanan. It would be a bountiful land, and all the inhabitants there would be destroyed by Israel. Finally, Israel would be delivered. Once again, they faced a body of water which they needed to cross (the Jordan River). This time, Israel didn't murmur or complain. This time, Israel obeyed the words of Joshua, who the Lord was directing and said He would magnify in the sight of all Israel.

"And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you" (Joshua 3:5).

They were instructed to wait until the Levite priests would walk by bearing the ark of the covenant, and then they were to get up and follow. Israel obeyed. The priests stepped into the water, and as soon as they did, the Jordan River was cut off and stood and rose up upon a heap leaving a dry pathway for Israel to cross. Just like when their parents crossed the Red Sea, they were now crossing a body of water on dry ground. But this time true deliverance awaited them on the other side.

"And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan" (Joshua 3:17).

We have watched generations before us searching for God's kingdom to be built upon the earth. Many of our forefathers labored heavily in spreading the Gospel, working hard among the seed of Joseph, doing whatever they could to bring about a new day of peace upon the earth. Many of them have passed away, and are passing away as we speak. God is now speaking to this newest generation, letting us know that He will do wonders among us. It will be this generation of "Joshua's" who will continue to follow God's voice as our forefathers did, except that when we cross that final obstacle, the day we have dreamed of will be on the other side. The Restoration of the Gospel could be likened unto God's people crossing the Red Sea. People had an opportunity for deliverance from false doctrines and lies, and the Church Jesus set up returned to earth. People found deliverance. But Israel continued to wander in the wilderness. The Church still wanders upon this earth, where sin abounds, preaching and teaching the pure Gospel in truth, looking forward to a final deliverance from sin. God will part the Jordan River spiritually speaking for His Gospel very soon. What seems impossible to mankind, will be possible with God. Just like Israel followed the ark of the covenant, we will follow Jesus Christ and His precious Word. I'm sure the same anxious feelings and questions like, "Can this be it? Can we overcome what lies in our path? Is this actually possible?" will all be answered with a resounding yes when the waters recede and we walk on dry ground to a land flowing with milk and honey. Oh how precious are God's promises to His people, and we know all His promises will be fulfilled. We are waiting at the banks of the River Jordan for God to take this generation of Joshua's to the Promised Land. Let us stay together and not look for another way. There is no other way except God destroying the wicked (like He did the Caananites), and giving back to His people a land free from sin. Rejoice Joshua generation! Tomorrow God will do wonders among you.

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork



Fear Not; Find Joy in the Lord

Dear Friends,

In this world today, there is a good force that brings us joy, happiness, love and hope called God the Creator and His son, Jesus. We can trust them for everything. Then there is a bad force called Satan. That old devil is trying hard to make people be like him. In the beginning he was a beautiful angel. Then he tried and tried to get power away from God and started a war against heaven, which he lost of course. He also threw away his chance of being good and happy when he rebelled against God and was forced out of heaven. His goal is to make everyone as angry and lost as he is. He wants us to feel afraid and full of fear. We will not do this! The scriptures teach us how to act to fight off all the bad thoughts and temptations!

Since the beginning of time, as we know it, good men, women, and children have successfully fought off the power of that devil. We are taught in the Bible, in James 4:7, 8, & 10, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you [run away from you]. Draw nigh [near] to God and he will draw nigh to you...Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." (That means when we act all-important and get puffed up thinking we are so great, we are not being humble.) Instead, we must be humble and talk to the Lord and admit our mistakes and be honest about our wrong and weak thoughts and behaviors.

We owe everything to God

anyway. If you are a fast runner or look nice, be thankful for your healthy body. If you are good at spelling, or doing math, or playing an instrument or singing, be grateful God gave you the kind of brain that can do these things. Thank God for your abilities and His help in times of need. Think back about how many times God has heard your prayers and blessed you and others.

These days there is a lot of fear among adults. Many people are losing their jobs, losing their homes, and worrying about what the future will be in their country. In North America, that old devil has slyly brought in all sorts of old evils that are bothering good people. Gambling is everywhere—millions of people buy and waste their money on lottery tickets or betting. Many families are frantic about money. The old devil has got a hold of their family and they must pray God will free them. They forget to call on God to save them and guide them.

In the Book of Mormon, about seventy-five years before Jesus was born, the Nephite people had great fear about their enemies, the Lamanite nations. They were trying to destroy them, enslave them and take everything they had. A great fear came over the Nephites, but their ministers, led by Alma preached to them to trust in God.

A young soldier named Moroni organized the Nephites into armies. He had strong shields — shields to protect their arms, thick clothing and helmets made for each soldier (Alma 43-45). Their enemies, who outnumbered them two to one, only wore skins and had no armour. But the best thing Moroni did was to send messen-

gers to Alma the leader of the church. He asked Alma to pray to God for direction in what they should do.

The word of the Lord came to Alma and the Lord revealed that the armies of the Lamanites were marching around in the wilderness to attack a part of the land with fewer soldiers and weaker people. Immediately Moroni took part of the army and rushed to that place, gathering all the people that lived there too. He hid his army in a valley alongside the huge river Sidon and set spies to watch for the approaching armies.

(Continued on Page 10)

WORD SEARCH

MORONI'S	THEM
PEOPLE	THEY
DID	DID
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MADE	FASTED
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Matt. 18:1-5
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Branch and Mission News

Continued from Page 4

Ordinations in Imperial, PA

Brother Robert Buffington, Sr. welcomed everyone to the Imperial Branch to enjoy God's blessings and to witness several ordinations. Nathan Daniel Buffington II was brought forward by his parents and was blessed by his grandfather, Brother Daniel Buffington. Little Nathan is the fifth generation in The Church of Jesus Christ.

Brother Paul Palmieri offered opening remarks: "This is not a celebration of prominence; this is a calling of service and work; to be a servant all the day long – not like your job where you go to work, come home, and your work for that day is done; it's 24 hours a day. Jesus came as a servant."

Brother Phil Jackson continued using Ephesians 5:25 & 32, *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church... This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."* Brother Phil likened this beautiful Church to that of a beautiful bride saying that God loves nothing greater than His Church – His Son gave His life for it, and He wants people to come and enjoy the movement of His Spirit. It's a glorious church without blemish.

(Isaiah 54:11-12) *"...I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones."* Brother Phil continued, "That's what Christ sees when He looks upon the Church! Overseeing the Church, He called men, spiritual leaders, ambassadors, comforters, ordained to administer to that beautiful church and oversee the needs." Brother Phil admonished our brothers to take serious the work of the Church. "Dedicate your life and God will bless you all the days of your life. Offer unto the Lord an offering of righteousness." He said that to receive authority is a powerful thing. The same authority that Joseph

Smith received, you will receive, to go out and speak with power, and by your words they will exclaim, 'What shall we do?' Whatsoever things ye bind on earth will be bound in heaven. That's the power that you receive today. Exercise that power; don't abuse it, but use it for the glory of God; for the beautiful church with its beautiful foundation!"

Brother Paul Ciotti followed using Joshua 1:5, *"There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."* Brother Paul said, "God will give you strength to preach. He will never give you a commandment save He give you strength to fulfill it."

Brother Bob Buffington, Sr. read the duties of a teacher. Brother Jeff Buffington's feet were washed by Brother Jim Speck and he was ordained by Brother Paul Gehly. Brother Eric Yoder's feet were washed by Brother Jim Draskovich and he was ordained by Brother Jim Calabro.

Brother Tony Ricci read the duties of an Elder. He continued speaking more about the beautiful bride of Christ. "Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon a throne and his train filled the temple. God called apostles, evangelists, elders, teachers, deacons, deaconesses – you are the train, the glory of God is the train." Brother Tony said, "When I was baptized God taught me a lesson. I didn't know very much, yet, I thought I should be an elder. I began to be upset that the brothers did not see this in me. God gave me an experience and told me, 'When you have love and compassion for my people, then I will use you.'"

Brother Carl Frammolino washed the feet of Brother Robert Buffington, Jr. and Apostle Paul Palmieri ordained him into the ministry. Brother Paul A. Palmieri washed the feet of Brother Nathan Buffington and Brother Dan Buffington ordained him into the ministry. The newly ordained were given an opportunity to express themselves and a lunch followed. It was a beautiful day for which we are eternally grateful.

What Does It All Mean?

By Sister Karen L. Progar

Brother Mark Naro from Lorain, Ohio visited the Aliquippa Branch the first Sunday in January and opened the service talking about a nation long lifted in pride being humbled. That surely describes the United States today. He encouraged the congregation with the comment that we, as a people, can still prosper spiritually.

Using Mosiah 16:9 as his text, Brother Mark reminded us that, "He is the light and the life of the world; yea, a light that is endless..." Brother Mark stated that if we are in tune with God, He will show us how to proceed. In a time of adversity it is the time to reveal your genius, and Brother Mark believes that we are entering a time when we will have the opportunity to reveal our values and people will be drawn to us. Material things are subject to loss. The only thing that can't be touched is our foundation in Christ.

Brother John D'Antonio continued stating that it is not hard to depend on God. Small means showed marvelous works to the people, when they showed their faith. We need to be dedicated to showing the light of Christ in us and put our trust in Him a little more.

The next week, Brother Patrick Monaghan visited from McKees Rocks and talked about a time when Alma was discouraged and Amulek took him into his home and encouraged and strengthened him. Brother Patrick encouraged us to uplift and strengthen one another and shared some experiences of encouragement.

On January 18, Brother Brett Gibson from Detroit Branch 1 visited the branch, and spoke to the saints about service to God. Brother Brett chose Mosiah 2:17 where King Benjamin admonishes the people in the famous scripture where he states, "...I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God." Brother Brett concluded by talking about the rewards of service and the importance of loving one another.

So far, the Lord provided three messages to our Branch; revealing our values in tough times, strengthening one another, and serving each other.

Later in the month Brother John D'Antonio spoke to us regarding rest to our souls. Using the scripture in Matthew 11:28-30, Brother John reminded us that when we take the yoke of Jesus upon us our burden will be light. Brother John asked if we would change places with anyone else in the world. He doubted that we would because no matter what they have, we have so much more.

Based on what we've heard and what we continue to hear, I believe that God is telling us what He expects of us and how He will guide us through tough times. I will close with the thought given us by Brother David DeLuca who said that God wants us to be a benefit to one another. I know I'll be thinking what I might do. So what does it all mean to you?

A Message of Divine Grace and Mercy

By Sister Diana Stigleman

On a delightful, near balmy February 1, 2009, Brother Jason Monaghan; his wife, Sister Rachel; and his mother, Sister Carol, supplied our Sunday service with blessings equally as lovely. Traveling from Pennsylvania and arriving at Detroit Branch 1, our brother brought with him a message of divine grace and mercy.

Brother Jason stated, "The title I'm going to give my sermon this morning is 'Smiling like a Butcher's Dog.' We're going to talk about the grace of God that places us in a position of salvation — and we do not deserve it. And that's why we smile like a butcher's dog! Sitting at the table to be able to eat the blessings of God, and we smile and understand that 'I don't deserve to be here,' " became the heart of our brother's sermon.

His text, taken from II Samuel 9, entailed the story of King David and a young man named Mephibosheth. Brother Jason began his sermon by

exploring the background leading up to this story of love. He asked us to remember the promise of God to David, "The sword shall never leave your house." Following this quote he said, "David was constantly battling forth and pushing his enemies away, trying to make sure he could make peace to those in Israel that he was in charge of." Even with this thought, our brother reminded us, David out of love for his friend kept a promise to show mercy unto the House of Saul for Jonathan's sake.

As the story progressed, David found a survivor. His name was Mephibosheth, the lame son of Jonathan. Our brother asked us to look into the mind of Mephibosheth. He was hiding in a desolate place and now called to stand before a new king who could in fact execute him. Brother Jason indicated, it was then Mephibosheth bowed before King David, pleading for his life. "Instead of death," our brother said, "King David offered him a place at his table as one of the king's own sons." Our Brother exclaimed, "This was good! He was granted unmerited grace and there was no way to pay it back."

As he detailed each step of the upcoming scenes, Brother Jason inserted us into the picture, by requesting we replace the name of Mephibosheth with our own. During his sermon, our brother showed us how before coming to Christ, we are in a sense lame, living in a desolate land while hiding, and totally unworthy of salvation. In paralleling the life of Mephibosheth with our own, Brother Jason said, "You see how this is all coming together to understand the grace of God in our lives." His opening thoughts of unmerited grace and mercy, stitched our brother's sermon from beginning to end, as Brother Jason asked, "Are you eating at the table of the King today?" Then he added, "We must partake of the fullness of Christ."

Brother Larry Champine, then followed in speaking. He declared that one day there is an awakening. We realize there is nothing we can do to deserve salvation. He paraphrased the words of Jesus in describing the only way to receive this gift. "Go down to

the water, be baptized and you'll come out this new creature... You will be clean and I can place within you my Spirit." Further, Brother Larry stated, "Now even though you still don't deserve it, at least you have received the grace process, and it is all about receiving it." In some of his final words our brother questioned, "What can we say when going before God's presence, if we have not accepted and received grace?" Indeed, I too wonder.

Just before closing the morning service, the Monaghan family came up front to sing, *Never to be Apart*. Their melodious voices surely reached the throne of God, even as they reached our hearts. Peace reigned as we closed our meeting in prayer.

Note of Thanks

The family of Sister Lydia Cavallaro would like to thank you for all the support, prayers, cards, e-mails and calls during her illness. You will never know how much your support meant to all of us. We truly felt the evidence of your love. She was a great example to all of us and will truly be missed; but we find great comfort in knowing that she is now in the presence of God.

Love in Christ,
The DeCaro and Cavallaro Family

* * * * *

Thank God for His faithfulness. I went to the surgeon this afternoon, and after another consultation they have decided that there is no cancer and surgery is not necessary at this time. I go back for more tests in September to see if the tumor has grown, and a decision will be made at that time concerning further treatment.

I would like to thank all the brothers and sisters for their prayers and the many e-mails, cards, and letters I have received from all over the country, many from people I do not know.

Brother Lyle Criscuolo

(Continued on Page 10)

DIRECTORY UPDATE

Bologna, Querino (Reno)
116 Brecon Dr.
Saline, MI 48176
734-316-2639

Cavil, Tom and Alaina
1252 Bevan Dr.
Sebastian, FL 32958
772-589-4926

Cogar, Verna
303 Dairy Rd.
Village Garden Apartments
Apt. #6
Clayton, NC 27520

Gully, Patricia
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Manteca, CA 95336-9244
209-825-8068

Huttenberger, Jim and Lynette
222 Whispering Trail
Irvine, CA 92602
714-352-5325

Huttenberger, Ryan
209 Palmetto Dr.
Alhambra, CA 91801
949-233-5486

Thompson, Doris
512 N. Lewis Run Rd. - #134
West Mifflin, PA 15122-3060
412-466-2499

Note of Thanks

Continued from Page 9

Sisters Donna and Denise Fleming of the Vanderbilt, Pennsylvania Branch wish to thank everyone for their prayers, cards and phone calls during their recent surgeries. They thank God that He was with them.

Faces

Continued from Page 3

ters, the exact number is not known. Nothing is recorded about her birth, lineage or death.

Her husband was the prophet Lehi, "a visionary man." She followed her husband, leaving behind every valuable possession. The record shows Sariah murmured or complained on one occasion. This was a mother's normal reaction, a mother who was concerned about the safety and security of her family. Their four sons, Laman, Lemuel, Nephi, and Sam had returned to Jerusalem to secure the Brass Plates. She felt that they faced probable death. Sariah was comforted by her husband Lehi who told her, "I know that the Lord will deliver my sons... and bring them down again unto us in the wilderness."

When her sons returned, Nephi said, "my mother was comforted." Sariah's faith in the Lord was reassured. Her testimony was now a certainty that the Lord had commanded Lehi "to flee into the wilderness - yea, and I know of a surety that the Lord hath protected my sons and delivered them..."

Nephi in a final reference to his mother writes that while at sea, his parents were "upon their sick beds." No doubt this was a possible result of their age, sorrow, and grief they had suffered. However, Sariah lived to reach the Promised Land. She must have been an exemplary mother and faithful daughter of Israel. This conclusion comes from the first sentence of the Book of Mormon, "I Nephi, having been born of goodly parents..." Sariah, a true "princess of Jehovah."

The Children's Corner

Continued from Page 6

Then Moroni separated the armies even more, setting some up behind a hill on the south and some on the west and hundreds of others hiding along the river on the far side. When the hordes of their enemies appeared, the armies of Nephites surrounded them and a terrible battle occurred.

The battle was fierce and the Nephites were far outnumbered. But their leader, Moroni, reminded them that they were fighting not for power and greed, but for their liberty, their lands, and freedom from being made slaves! His people began crying unto the Lord and began standing against the Lamanites with great power. The same hour that they began crying unto the Lord, the Lamanites began to turn and run away from the battle.

When the Lamanites realized they were surrounded they were filled with terror. When Moroni saw their terror, he commanded his soldiers to stop shedding their blood. He told them, "We do not desire to be men of blood. You are in our hands, but we do not desire to kill you. The Lord is with us and has delivered you into our hands because of our religion and our faith. You see that God will support, and keep, and preserve us, so long as we are faithful unto Him, and unto our faith and our religion. Never will the Lord let us be destroyed unless we should fall into transgression and deny our faith."

He offered freedom for all who would give up their weapons and promise not to fight against them anymore. Hundreds of the Lamanites gave up and went home in peace.

The Nephites were full of joy because the Lord had again delivered them out of the hands of their enemies. They did "resist the devil" and he did flee from them. They did "draw near to God" and He saved them. They gave thanks unto the Lord their God; and they did fast and pray much and they did worship God with exceeding great joy. They did humble themselves before the Lord and He was with them.

This is the same God that we

Notice

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serve today. Remember, the old devil wants to destroy our happiness. Since he is miserable; he wants each of us to be too. He is the father of all fear; he wants everyone to be greedy, scared of sharing, and full of hate and fear. But remember, he fears us and will run away when we do good. He fears us when we refuse to fight or sin. He fears us when we start praying, talking to the Lord and trusting in God, because then he loses all of his power.

Every day we have a choice. We can wake up, listen to the whispers of that old devil and feel afraid, worried sick over the future and hateful towards others. Or, we can talk to God – fight the devil by not being like him and have a joyful life that day whatever good or bad thing happens. I know which way I would rather feel.

Your friend in love and joy,
Sister Jan

* WEDDINGS *

Angel Brisco and Daniel Blackburn were united in holy matrimony on January 25, 2009 in the Mid-Georgia Mission.

Children Blessed

Ava Grace Yoder, daughter of Brother Dan and Sister Julie Yoder, was blessed in the Hollywood, Florida Branch.

Grace Elizabeth Kunkel, daughter of Sam Jr., and Julia Kunkel, was blessed in the Atlanta, Georgia Branch.

George Michael Jungk was blessed in the Lake Worth, Florida Branch.

Jessica Lynn Jungk was blessed in the Lake Worth, Florida Branch.

Ronald Alexander Jungk was blessed in the Lake Worth, Florida Branch.

Jeremiah James Rossi, son of Sister Leslie and Brother Teco Littlejohn, was blessed in the Spartanburg, South Carolina Branch.

Nefi Reyes, son of Jose and Marisela Reyes, was blessed on July 27, 2008 at the Bell, California Branch.

Genesis Faith Toscano, daughter of Ivan and Naomi Toscano, was blessed on August 3, 2008 at the Bell, California Branch.

Samai Mirian Martinez, daughter of Brother Carlos and Sister Natali Martinez, was blessed on December 14, 2008 at the Bell, California Branch.

Sarai Annett Soto, daughter of Luis and Verenis Soto, was blessed in the Bell, California Branch.

Alyson Rosemary Quintanilla, daughter of Brother Orlando Garcia and Ingrid Quintanilla, was blessed in the Bell, California Branch.

Victoria Marie Kerby, daughter of Brother Steve and Sister Lissette Kerby, was blessed in the Anaheim, California Branch.

Baptisms

Sister Denise (DiFalco) Dickson was reinstated on February 1, 2009 in Detroit, Michigan Branch #1.

Sister Linda Blackwell was baptized on August 3, 2008 in the Lorain, Ohio Branch. She was baptized by Brother Mark Naro and confirmed by Brother Joel Calabrese.

Sister Marcia Ann Rogolino was reinstated on February 22, 2009 in the Treasure Coast, Florida Branch.

Sister Sandra Morse was reinstated on February 22, 2009 in the Treasure Coast, Florida Branch.

Sister Rosio Espinosa was baptized on February 22, 2009 at the Anaheim, California Branch. She was

baptized by Brother Rudy Meo and confirmed by Brother David Arreola.

Sister Guillermina Garcia was baptized on February 22, 2009 at the Anaheim, California Branch. She was baptized by Brother Rudy Meo and confirmed by Brother Jim Huttenberger.

Brother Ricco Notarnicola was baptized in the Forest Hills, Florida Branch. He was baptized by Brother Sam Risola and confirmed by Brother Phil Benyola.

Brother Eric Schuete was baptized in the Forest Hills, Florida Branch. He was baptized by Brother Kevin Murphy and confirmed by Brother Bryan Griffith.

Brother Onexcis Ortega was reinstated in the Lake Worth, Florida Branch.

Brother Harry McGuire was reinstated in the Lake Worth, Florida Branch.

Spiritual Anniversaries

(Correction) Sister Rose Randazzo of the Modesto, California Branch celebrated 65 years in The Church of Jesus Christ on May 23, 2008.

Sister Vera Naro of the Lorain, Ohio Branch celebrated 70 years in The Church of Jesus Christ on November 20, 2008.

Sister Jennie Herstek of the Lorain, Ohio Branch celebrated 60 years in The Church of Jesus Christ on December 26, 2008.

Sister Elizabeth Spisak of the Roscoe, Pennsylvania Branch celebrated 60 years in The Church of Jesus Christ.

Sister Ella Mae Abbott of the Roscoe, Pennsylvania Branch celebrated 50 years in The Church of Jesus Christ.

Ordinations

(Corrections)

Brother John Bilsky was ordained a teacher on October 26, 2008 at the Roscoe, Pennsylvania Branch. His feet were washed by Brother James L. Speck and he was ordained by Brother James Abbott.

Sister Linda Young was ordained a deaconess on December 14, 2008 at the Edison, New Jersey Branch. Her feet were washed by Sister Terri Bravo and she was ordained by Brother Jonathan Olexa.

OBITUARIES

BETTY JUNE DUCKWORTH

Sister Betty June Duckworth, of the Vanderbilt, Pennsylvania Branch passed on to her reward on April 26, 2008. She is survived by her daughters, Sister Lorraine DeMercurio and husband Brother Nephi; Beverly Eberhart and husband, Rodney; and Billy Jo Murphy; also, five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

EMERSON LOWERY

Brother Emerson Lowery of the Vanderbilt, Pennsylvania Branch passed on to his reward. He is survived by his wife, Sister Viola Lint Lowery and a sister-in-law, Sister Beatrice Hall, along with many nieces and nephews.

Address Change

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Branch or Mission _____

ERNEST J. BORK

Brother Ernest J. Bork of the Redford, Michigan Mission passed on to his reward on July 26, 2008. He was preceded in death by his son, Robin Bork. He is survived by his wife, Sister Blanche; daughter, Sister Bonita and husband Robert Glime; son, Brother James and wife Sister Jan; and son, Jeffrey; two granddaughters, Christina Bork and Sister Leah DeMercurio; and three grandsons, Andy, Nick and Jessie Bork.

PENNY CARNEVAL

Sister Penny Carneval of the Lindsay, California Branch passed on to her reward on August 26, 2008. She was preceded in death by her husband, Brother Del; her daughter, Lisa; and her mother and father, Sister Mary and Brother V. James Lovalvo. She is survived by her daughter, Beth Eckhardt and her husband Timm; a son, Scott Carneval and his wife Carol; a brother, Leonard James Lovalvo and his wife Vera; and four grandchildren.

HELEN STEWART

Sister Helen Stewart, of the Lorain, Ohio Branch passed on to her reward on December 24, 2008. She is survived by her two sons, Victor Pennell and Brother Joe (Sister Denise) Pennell; five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

LARRY CONRAD

Brother Larry Conrad of the Vanderbilt, Pennsylvania Branch passed on to his reward on December 25, 2008. He is survived by his mother, Cheryl Comaire; his father, Lawrence Conrad; a son, Zachary Conrad; a stepdaughter, Ashley Smith; a stepson, Brandon Wergin; and three brothers, Scott, Aaron and Christopher Conrad.

JOHN RICHARD THOMAS

Brother John Richard Thomas of the Vanderbilt, Pennsylvania Branch, passed on to his reward on January 8,

2009. He is survived by his wife, Darlene Thomas; daughter, Cindy Thomas; and sons John, Timothy and his wife Jennifer, and Eric Thomas.

LYDIA CAVALLARO

Sister Lydia Cavallaro of the Lindsay, California Branch passed on to her reward on February 6, 2009. She was an ordained deaconess in The Church of Jesus Christ. She was preceded in death by her husband Alex Cavallaro and her son Alvin Cavallaro. She is survived by her daughter, Sister Lucy DeCaro and her husband Brother Anthony DeCaro; granddaughter, Sister Andrea DeCaro and her husband Christopher; grandson, Aaron Cavallaro and his wife Mary; and two great-grandsons, Aiden and Hunter Cavallaro.

VIRGINIA LAKTASH

Sister Virginia Laktash of the Roscoe, Pennsylvania Branch passed on to her reward on February 25, 2009. She is survived by a daughter, Sister Carol Rao; a son, Wayne and his wife Diane; three grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; and a brother, Orville Waltz.



THE CHURCH OF Jesus Christ

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The Effect of a Faithful Mother

By Brother Patrick Monaghan

"As a young boy I would come down our staircase each morning in preparation for school, and each time at the bottom of the staircase I would find my mother kneeling in prayer on the third step. One day as I passed her on the steps I asked God, 'Why does my mother pray so often? Lord, do you hear her prayers? She prays so often?' That night the Lord responded to me in a dream. In this dream I found myself standing in a field near my home. I looked around and everything was charred and burnt to a crisp. The trees, the mountains, and the meadows were all burned as I stood and surveyed the scene around me. I then felt a gentle hand take mine. It was the Lord Jesus Christ. He then pointed to my home, and likewise the entire house was burned down. The Lord spoke and said unto me, 'Behold! Your mother prays.' As I looked closer I noticed my mother bowed in prayer on the third step of our staircase. The only thing left standing of our home was that staircase where she prayed which ascended into heaven." (*Testimony of Brother Joseph Draskovich – Greensburg, Pennsylvania Branch*)

This experience is one of many examples which portray how the Lord recognizes and responds to the supplications of a mother on behalf of her children. Outside of the love of Christ, truly there is no stronger bond than the love a mother has on behalf of her children. Where would many of us be today had it not been for the love and faithfulness of our mothers? May we be bold enough to say there has been no greater influence in the development of a young child than that of his or her mother. May we say that the greatest and most important "mission field" a mother will ever experience is not in a foreign land across the world, but among her children as they develop into adulthood. Why is this? Because the effect she has on her children will not only impact her children's lives directly, but everyone her children will associate with indirectly, as well as many future generations to come. Through the scriptures we find many such examples where mothers (and grandmothers) play a vital role and affect not only the lives of their children, but have an effect on future generations as well. In this article we will site but a few,

Timothy (2 Timothy 1:3-5)

The Apostle Paul writes to Timothy, "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, *which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice*; and I am persuaded that in thee also." What is Paul the Apostle acknowledging here? He had undoubtedly recognized the gift of God in young Timothy. He recognized his faith and his potential as a minister of the Gospel. And just as important, he recognized the role he would soon fill in defending the teachings of the Gospel when he (Paul) would depart. However, when we read the above passage, we cannot help but believe that Paul found added comfort and confidence in Timothy's ministry as a result of what he personally witnessed in the household of young Timothy. He had observed the faith of his mother and grandmother. The faith and diligence found in these women impacted their son (and grandson) Timothy and his early spiritual development. As a result of their faithfulness to God, not only was Timothy's life greatly impacted, but future generations have been strengthened in the faith as well.

The 2,000 Stripling Soldiers (Alma chapters 53 through 57)

"And they were all young men, and they were exceedingly *valiant* for

(Continued on Page 2)

Effect of a Faithful Mother

Continued from Page 1

courage, and also for *strength* and activity; but behold, this was not all – they were men who were *true at all times* in whatsoever thing they were entrusted. Yea, they were men of *truth* and *soberness*, for they had been taught to keep the commandments of God and to walk uprightly before him” (Alma 54:20-21).

This is the inspirational account of 2,000 young soldiers on this land of America who came to the aid of their country. These 2,000 young men, many of which appeared to be boys in age (Alma 56:46), were *miraculously* used by the hand of God to deliver their people from their enemies. After several battles under the command of Helaman, though two hundred of them had been badly wounded, not one of them perished. NOT ONE! (Alma 56:56; 57:25).

The following scriptures shed additional light on these young men and the effect of their faithful mothers:

“Now they never had fought, yet they did not fear death; and they did think more upon the liberty of their fathers than they did upon their lives; yea, *they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them. And they rehearsed unto me the words of their mothers, saying: We do not doubt our mothers knew it*” (Alma 56:47-48).

“And as the remainder of our army were about to give way before the Lamanites, behold, those two thousand and sixty were *firm* and *undaunted*. Yea, and they did *obey* and *observe* to *perform* every word of command *with exactness*; yea, and even according to *their faith* it was done unto them; and I did remember the words which they said unto me that *their mothers had taught them.*” (Alma 57:20-22)

“And now, their preservation was astonishing to our whole army, yea, that they should be spared while there was a thousand of our brethren who were slain. And we do justly ascribe it to the miraculous power of God, because of their *exceeding*

faith in that which they had been taught to believe – that there was a just God, and whosoever did not doubt, that they should be preserved by his miraculous power” (Alma 57:26).

When we read these words, we cannot help but ponder the stories and testimonies of our brothers and sisters when their sons went to battle on behalf of our country during the World Wars. The prayers that were offered for God’s protection on behalf of their sons sustained them in many miraculous ways. Our God changes not!

Now, as we consider these stripling soldiers, it is understood that their fathers certainly played a vital role in their upbringing as well. However, in this account it is important to note that it is their *mothers* who are primarily recognized by Helaman as instilling in these boys a basis of faith and dependence in their God. Wow!! What a great example of the sheer importance mothers play in the development (both naturally and spiritually) of their children.

When we read this account, it is natural for us to focus on the faithfulness, dedication, and unwavering obedience of these 2,000 young men. However, it must not be overlooked that *none of this would have ever happened had not their mothers taught them to love, fear, and serve God*. Their mothers did not intend to prepare their sons to be men of war, but rather to be men of God – to be men of truth, and men that looked to God for deliverance in all circumstances. And as a result, not only were these young men established in the faith, they also became their people’s strongest aid and defense.

The Church of Jesus Christ

What can we liken unto our “spiritual” mother? We have experienced firsthand that The Church of Jesus Christ is a mother in many ways unto us as well. The Church (comprised of the saints of God and the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ) is that vehicle which cares for the children of God and all those who desire to come into the family and fold of God. The Church is that place

where we are taught the word of God, and the example we see in the lives of the redeemed saints of God teaches us how to pattern our lives to live righteously. The Church is where we find spiritual nourishment for our souls. It is our modern day “city of refuge” we can run to in time of trouble, and the place where we find solace and comfort in the love of God. Nowhere else can we go to find this. In Moroni 6:4-6 we read, “And after they had been received unto baptism, and were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost, they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ; and their names were taken that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way, to keep them continually watchful unto prayer, relying alone upon the merits of Christ, who was the author and finisher of their faith. And the church did meet together oft, to fast and to pray, and to speak one with another concerning the welfare of their souls. And they did meet together oft to partake of the bread and wine, in remembrance of the Lord Jesus.”

I recall several years ago a young boy and his father came to the Church after their family had been devastated by drugs and other unfortunate circumstances of life. The boy’s mother had left him and his father, and for a period of time this boy and his father had nothing but the van they lived out of. The time came that the Church was introduced to this man and his son, and the father was baptized and became a member of the family of God. During this time, the father asked that his son be blessed in the Church. As one of the ministers was praying, he pleaded to God that He would somehow fill the void in this boy’s life in the absence of his natural mother. At this very moment another minister spoke under the inspiration of the spirit saying, “The Church of Jesus Christ will be his mother!” That young boy has now grown into a wonderful young man who is serving along side his father as a deacon in The Church of Jesus Christ. Every

(Continued on Page 10)



Missionary Trip to Ghana West Africa

By Evangelist Joseph Perri

February 2009

I remember as a very young boy growing up in the Church like the young man Enos that we read about in the Book of Mormon, "...I had often heard my Father speak concerning eternal life and the joy of the saints." His words have sunk deep into my heart and through the soon to be 59 years of my baptism, my joy has been meeting with the saints of God whenever the opportunity is given to me.

During the month of February, Evangelists Frank Natoli, Philip Arcuri and I had the wonderful privilege of making a missionary trip to Ghana, West Africa. Not being able to visit with the saints of our Church in Ghana for the past eight years, to be part of this missionary trip with the above-named brothers was a wonderful experience for me. The unity of God's Spirit we experienced was with us wherever we traveled, and seeing the faces of those I have known for many years, was indeed a trip to long be remembered. Brothers Frank and Philip had never visited the Church in Ghana before, so it was an equally double blessing for them.

Evangelist Ford Boadu planned for our arrival by busing a number of brothers and sisters from the three branches to our meeting place in the Apromasi Branch. The building was filled to capacity with an estimated overflow crowd of approximately 100 or so in attendance. The children

were not in the church's main auditorium but were outside under a tree where the brothers were holding a Sunday School class. The preaching was inspirational, followed by a season of testimony. We heard four outstanding testimonies which will be shared with the *Gospel News* readers in this article.

Visiting four of the five branches with a group of saints attending in each gave my brothers and me the opportunity to encourage our brothers and sisters to hold fast to the promise they made on the day of their baptisms for the reward of life eternal which is assured to each of them if we remain faithful to the end of our lives.

Knowing of the misfortunes Brother Ford Boadu, our Church President, has had with illness and injury for the last four years, it was a season of joy we experienced being with him. He has made a remarkable recovery for which we praise God; and if we did not know he was ill and injured, looking upon his stature, the strength and the way he traveled with us showed no signs he was afflicted.

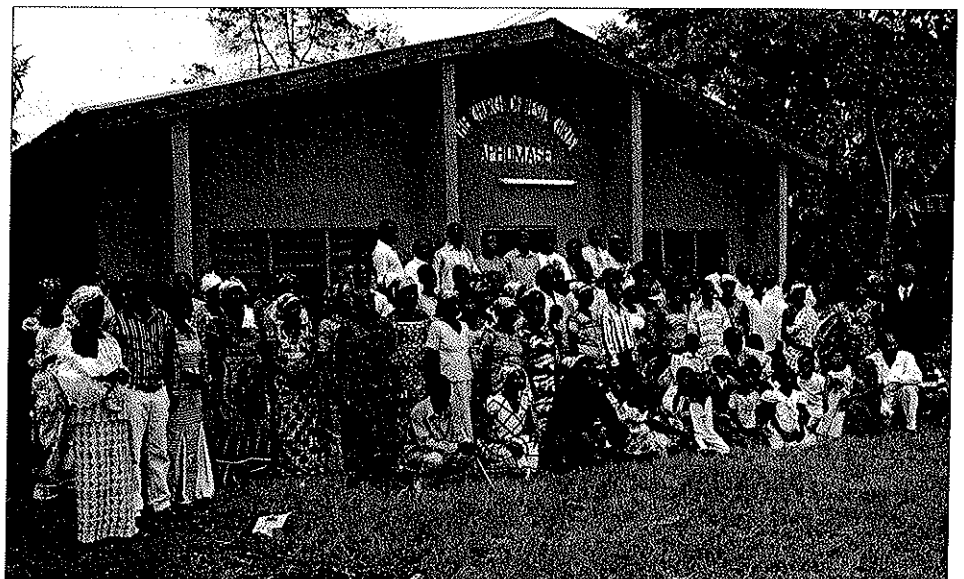
Following are four experiences we heard during our visit with the saints in Ghana which we want to share to show the power of God in healing and also His protection.

Experience #1

Jesus is our source of inspiration and refuge. My name is Evangelist Ford Kankam Boadu, President of The Church of Jesus Christ in the nation of Ghana, West Africa. In the year of 2004 after I had returned home from a missionary trip to Nigeria with Brothers Joseph Perri and Frank Natoli in the month of November, I was not feeling well and requested one of our hospital doctors to examine me. His diagnosis was my blood pressure was very low and he advised me to have an echocardiogram and chest X-ray.

They both revealed that I have had an enlarged and an abnormal

(Continued on Page 10)



Group of brothers, sisters, and children at the Apromasi Branch.



Elder's and Teacher's Seminars Held at April 2009 General Church Conference

By Apostles John Griffith and Leonard A. Lovalvo

The General Church's April 2009 Ministerial Conference hosted a seminar for our Church's ordained Ministers and Teachers with approximately 170 in attendance.

Divided into smaller groups, the Priesthood was led by the General Church Apostles into a variety of Branch/Mission scenarios depicting a normal day-to-day church operation. This grass roots approach allowed for the Ministry to see and hear of a variety of situations occurring throughout the Church membership. We are so pleased to comfortably state our Ministry is called of God with a holy calling. They are not paid and are under direct supervision and authority of the Church and its Apostles who oversee all aspects of the Church.

The Priesthood rehearsed personally their individual callings given of God, being reminded they are chosen vessels used to encourage the development of God's kingdom here on earth. They recognized their responsibilities to God, the Church, and the membership, not forgetting their direct responsibilities to their personal families.

They as Isaiah of old (Isaiah 6:1-8) have witnessed the holiness of God, recognized the sinfulness and need of mankind, and have placed themselves in a position to allow God's use of them in saving souls through Christ Jesus. Recognizing the high calling upon them, our Church's Priesthood has recognized their high calling, the prepared-

ness necessary to be an effective Elder, and the example needed to represent this great Church Kingdom designed by our Lord Jesus Christ.

All members of The Church of Jesus Christ are called into the body of Christ, His Church (Romans 1:1-6). We all are "Saints," meaning set apart to be "Holy" examples of His love upon us. The Apostle Paul recognized as do our Ministry that they are called with authority to administer the Gospel of Jesus Christ as brought to earth for God's creation. Romans 8:28 states, "...we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Minister effectiveness is reached by following the leading of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33). They read, study, and meditate upon the Word of God. Philippians, Chapters 1 and 2 suggests to our Elders to be servants of Christ Jesus, operating as Christ has called them to do.

We thank our Lord; our ministerial members are those who set a spiritual example. They understand and teach the Restored Gospel as Christ taught it. They lead us into the path of spiritual truth through administering the Lord's Holy Communion and other ordinances such as Christ's example taught through Feet Washing.

The teacher's seminar covered the calling, qualities and characteris-

tics, preparation, and responsibilities of the ordained teacher. The group was divided into six subgroups providing the teachers greater opportunity for input, discussion, and participation. Scriptural study, situational scenarios, definitions, questions, explanations, and instruction were the varied presentation techniques employed to create interest and to provoke thought.

The following scriptures that speak to the role and responsibility of the ordained teacher were referenced at different times in the seminar: Ephesians 4:11-13; Alma 23:16-19; Jacob 1:19; Jarom 1:11; Alma 37:32-34; Mosiah 23:14; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; Colossians 1:9-13; 2 Timothy 2:15.

After the teachers discussed the qualities and characteristics of the teacher, they quickly reported the following attributes:

United with everyone, trustworthy, approachable, respectful, humble, peacemaker, available, faithful, displays fairness, ability to show love and the joy of the Gospel, values every soul, lives righteously, supportive household, prayerful, attends all services, supports the auxiliaries, keeps confidences, does not gossip, is an example.

The study of scripture and church literature, prayer and fasting, meditation, and allowing the Spirit of God to lead and direct them were the responses they gave to the question as to what actions they take to prepare themselves to fulfill their responsibility.

In assessing the teacher's major responsibility, it is to teach the congregational members all of the facets of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: the ordinances, the Church's beliefs, and the members' duties. This is generally accomplished by the teachers visiting the members in their homes, if possible, and by participating in church services. Called of God, the teachers are a valuable segment of the Ministry. They have a vital role in educating the members regarding their spiritual development and maintaining a righteous lifestyle.

The Church in this latter-day time is blessed with priesthood unity and we

(Continued on page 11)

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Editorial Viewpoint . . .

"For whoso eateth and drinketh my flesh and blood unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to his soul; therefore if ye know that a man is unworthy to eat and drink of my flesh and blood ye shall forbid him. Nevertheless, ye shall not cast him out from among you, but ye shall minister unto him and shall pray for him unto the Father, in my name; and if it so be that he repenteth and is baptized in my name, then shall ye receive him, and shall minister unto him of my flesh and blood" (3 Nephi 18:29-30).

Partaking of communion is a witness to God that we are willing to keep His commandments, and a witness that we will always remember Him in everything we do, say or think. When we do this, we will always have His spirit to be with us. There are no magical powers in the bread or wine itself, but it represents the body and blood of Jesus Christ that was slain upon the cross, and it has given us grace and pardon for every sin we've ever committed, and even every sin we will ever commit in the future. When we pray before partaking of the bread and wine, it is our last opportunity to ask the Lord to make us worthy to partake of His body and blood, and forgive us of any sins we have committed, knowing that all these sins have already been paid for on the cross. We don't have to perform any special ritual or sacrifice any animal to receive forgiveness, we just need to have a humble repentant spirit so that we can retain a remission of our sins that we received in the waters of baptism. How refreshing it is within our soul to partake of His body and blood, and understand the power that is in it. How fulfilling it is to partake of communion worthily and always know that His spirit will be with us wherever we go.

We must understand that partaking of communion each week is not only a commandment of Jesus Christ, but sustains our spiritual life. Some feel that refraining from taking communion for each and every mistake we make is the right thing to do. But in reality, we are starving our spirit, and as verse 13 says in this same chapter, *"But whoso among you shall do more or less than these are not built upon my rock, but are built upon a sandy foundation; and when the rain descends, and the floods come, and the winds blow, and beat upon them, they shall fall, and the gates of hell are ready open to receive them."* Jesus instructed the ministry that those who are not baptized and have not repented of their sins should not receive communion. That is why in the Church, the ministry does not pass communion to those who are not baptized in the Church. But sometimes those that ARE baptized and HAVE repented of their sins, but are making mistakes or struggling spiritually, refrain from taking communion. This is like exposing ourselves to the stormy winds, without a solid spiritual footing. We will be blown over. We must retain a remission of our sins every day of our lives. It is as easy as praying humbly to the Lord each and every day to forgive us of our mistakes we made that day. Paul said that he "died daily." This is a normal part of a Christian life. Our daily mistakes and shortcomings should not dictate when we take communion and when we refrain. Of course there are times when situations arise in our lives that are very serious. We must counsel with the ministry, and sometimes we may be asked to refrain from taking communion until the situation has been resolved. But I have seen some in the Church not take communion frequently, not understanding that they are unnecessarily starving their spirit.

Let's live a sanctified life each and every day. Not that we will do everything exactly right, that would be impossible. We are still in the flesh. Let's prepare ourselves each time to partake of His body and blood, and stand on His amazing grace that will save us in the end. Our works cannot save us, but the body and blood of Jesus will. Partake of His body and blood, and energize your soul knowing that He died just for you. What love!

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork

What the Ten Plagues Proved

(Exodus Chapters 4-14)

Dear Friends,

Have you ever wondered how you could tell someone about the true power of God and have them believe? Well, you are not the first person to have that problem. Moses was sent by God to lead the Hebrew nations out of slavery in Egypt. By the time he was talking to them, they had been living in Egypt for four hundred years and were controlled by Pharaoh's armies and treated like slaves. They were also surrounded by people who worshipped the Pharaoh as a god, and who served many false gods. In Sunday school, one of our elders, Brother Mike Pandone, explained to us how God convinced the Israelite people, and many of the Egyptians, that the statues they prayed to were those of false gods without any true power. One by one, God sent a plague that these so-called gods could not stand against. One by one, He showed them their idols were powerless.

When Moses came to Pharaoh and told him, God says, "Let my people go..." the Pharaoh refused. Moses warned him that if he did not obey God, that the water of the rivers would be turned into blood. Egypt depended on water, transportation and rich soil after each flooding of the powerful Nile River. The God of the Nile was called Hapi and there were constant ceremonies worshipping this river. God turned the river water and all of the water in ponds and storage containers into blood. The Pharaoh's



magicians copied this plague, but the fish in the water died, there was blood all throughout Egypt and their god, Hapi, could not stop it (Exodus 7th chapter). They saw the power of the one, true God.

Again, the Lord sent Moses and his brother, Aaron, to the Pharaoh to tell him, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. If you refuse, I will send millions of frogs across the land. They will be in your houses, your food, your beds and everywhere you walk!" It happened. Horrible crawling, jumping frogs were everywhere. For the first time, Pharaoh admitted the power of God when he called to Moses and said, "Ask the Lord to take away the frogs from me, and my people and I will let the Israelite people go that they may worship God." In Egypt, there was a frog goddess, Heket. It was against the law to even kill a frog. Now they were being smashed and trod upon. When they died, their stinking bodies were heaped up and burned. Where was the power of Heket? Now everyone could see this god had no power and was false also! (Exodus 8th chapter).

As soon as the frogs died, Pharaoh again hardened his heart. This time God sent a plague of itching, miserable lice. The priests of Egypt were required to shave all their hair off every day and wore a single tunic (robe) for cleanliness. Imagine their powerlessness when the lice covered their bodies. This plague could not be copied by the Egyptian magicians (Exodus 8:19). But Pharaoh would not let the Israelite slaves go.

So the Lord told Moses, tell Pharaoh, "If you will not let my people go, I will send swarms of flies upon

you, your people and into your homes and also on the ground. But, in the land of Goshen, where my people live, no swarms of flies will be there. And you will know I am the Lord." It happened and the people saw that the great Egyptian god of beetles and flies, called Kheper, had no power! Pharaoh agreed to let the Israelites leave to go worship God, if Moses would ask God to remove the swarms of flies! And then he hardened his heart again and would not let them go!

The Lord sent Moses to say, "Let my people go that they may serve me. If you refuse, a terrible murrain (disease) will happen to your cattle,

(Continued on Page 11)

WORD SEARCH

THE	FLIES
LORD	BOILS
SENT	FIRE
TEN	HAIL
PLAGUES	MURRAIN
TO	LOCUSTS
THE	DARKNESS
EGYPTIAN	DEATH
LAND	OF
WATER	FIRST
TO	BORN
BLOOD	LET
FROGS	US
LICE	GO

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

Church Education News

Perhaps the wealth of lessons and knowledge available at your fingertips on the internet may be a well-kept secret to many in The Church of Jesus Christ. We are speaking about nearly 100 lessons and other learning/teaching resources developed by the Church Education Lesson Writing Project participants, past and present, specifically for and about the Church. Everyone is invited and encouraged to utilize these valuable resources.

These lessons and resources are located on the Church's website, www.thechurchofjesuschrist.org, and contain lesson plans for the Bible, Book of Mormon, and topics unique to the Restoration and to The Church of Jesus Christ. Lessons have been developed for preschoolers thru adults, and include: scriptural references; illustrations; activities; coloring sheets; and PowerPoint presentations. These lessons may be accessed two ways: 1) click "Church Education" on the left side of the Church website, or 2) simply go to www.churchlessons.org.

These lessons may be utilized by MBA, Sunday School or Ladies' Uplift Circle teachers, or by anyone who has an interest in the Church. Topics include but are not limited to: History/Structure of the Church; Faith and Doctrine; Divine Gifts; Ordinances; Apostles' Messages; Life Lessons and Commandments; Life of Jesus; Scripture Stories and Characters. As a reminder, the General Church Priesthood assembly reaffirmed that only the authorized King James Version of the Holy Bible is to be used in teaching and preaching in our branches and missions.

New lessons are continuously being published. In 2008, the following lessons were published:

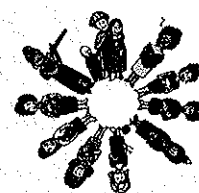
- Faith (as demonstrated by the Brother of Jared), grades Preschool-9;
- The Jaredites Travel to the Promised Land, grades 10-Adult;
- A Firm Foundation - The Building Blocks of The Church of Jesus Christ, grades Preschool-6 and 10-A;
- Divine Revelation/Revealing Things that Are Hidden, grades Preschool-

Kindergarten;

- Divine Revelation/Joseph's Dreams, grades 1-3;
- Divine Revelation/Saul, grades 4-6;
- Divine Revelation/God's Plan Revealed to Christopher Columbus, grades 7-9;
- Divine Revelation/Upon this Rock, grades 10-Adult;
- Family Honor, grades 7-Adult;
- The Fruit of the Spirit - Love, grades Preschool-6 and 10-Adult;
- The Fruit of the Spirit - Joy, grades Preschool-3;
- The Fruit of the Spirit - Peace, grades Preschool-Adult;
- The Fruit of the Spirit - Long-suffering, grades Preschool-Adult;
- The Plan of Redemption - The Tree of Life, grades Preschool-6;
- Obedience is Better Than Sacrifice, grades Preschool-9;
- Ordinances of God, grades Preschool-Adult;
- Zeniff is Overzealous and Slow to Remember the Lord, grades 4-6;
- Abinadi Teaches the Ten Commandments, grades 1-3;
- Alma Holds the People of God Accountable for Their Sins, grades 7-9;
- King Mosiah Liberates His People, grades 4-6;
- Are Your Garments White or Spotted? Grades 7-9.

You can join the many volunteers from the ministry and membership to contribute to this important Church project. Contact your Region Education Coordinator and attend a Lesson Writing Session. Lesson Writers/Reviewers along with everyone with artistic talent are essential to continued success.

Do yourself a favor and review these lessons for yourself. You will be surprised at the wealth of knowledge they contain. Utilize them for your own personal growth and understanding of the Church, and use them to educate others, so they too may understand what makes The Church of Jesus unique and the true Church. Let's **not** keep these lessons a well-kept secret anywhere. Please share this information freely to all in your branches and missions.



Announcement

Pacific and Southwest Area
Ladies' Uplift Circle
Joint Fellowship Weekend,
June 5, 6 & 7, 2009
Phoenix, Arizona

Contact Sister Debbie
Kyriakakos@djkyriakakos@yahoo.com
or 619-392-3794 (cell)
or 925-344-4334 (home)
for registration forms

Youth In Action 2009 Announcement

The GMBA is sponsoring the following YIA tours for the summer of 2009:

Kinsman, Ohio

Tour Coordinator, Brother Zac Jackson, July 17 through July 26, 2009.

San Carlos, Arizona

Tour Coordinator, Brother Jonathan Scolaro, July 18 through July 25, 2009.

San Diego, California

Tour Coordinator, Brother Daniel Hemmings, July 31 through August 9, 2009.

Mt. Laurel, New Jersey

Tour Coordinator, Brother Jim Sgro, August 15 through August 23, 2009.

Please encourage all young people to consider participating in one or more of these activities.

Y.I.A.

Youth In Action

Where will the Lord take you this summer?

Be a Blessing

Praise His Name

Spread His Love

Visit...
www.thechurchofjesuschrist-gmba.org
and sign up today!

Share Your Testimony

Impact a Life

Make New Friends

Meet the Saints

Experience His Power

Work for God

2009 Tours:

Kinsman, OH July 17-26

San Carlos, AZ July 18-25

San Diego, CA July 31-August 9

Mt. Laurel, NJ August 15-23

Questions? Please contact Bro. Mario Zaccagnini at mario.g.zaccagnini@gm.com



A Historical Weekend in Houston, TX

By Sister Karen Watford

On November 1, 2008, history was made in the Houston, Texas work—feet washing was held there for the very first time. In the past, the saints had to travel three to four hours to the Ft. Worth Branch for feet washing. Brother Rich Nath, ordained teacher, Sister Karen Watford, ordained deaconess, and Sisters Brigetta Craft-Muehlenweg, Karen Bonaduce-Scott, Angela Sgro and Maria Madriffi received a blessed visit by Brother Ken Jones and his wife, Sister Bennie, and Sister Gertie Van De Weghe, along with Brother Bill Buffa, Brother Jerry and Sister Linda Morle, and Brother Adrian Vasquez, all of the Ft. Worth Branch.

Saturday afternoon, the brothers and sisters from Ft. Worth met with Sister Karen Watford to travel the hour's distance to Sister Brigetta Craft-Muehlenweg's home where Brother Rich Nath would meet us. Brigetta's husband, Bill, requested to be anointed by Brother Ken because a CAT scan showed a spot on his lung. The doctors were very concerned because all of the symptoms leaned towards a tumor. As Brother Ken anointed him, tears filled Bill's eyes, and everyone felt a wonderful spirit.

Too soon, we had to continue on our journey onto Sister Maria's home in Beaumont—a one-hour trip.

Sister Maria met us all outside the door with tears of joy. Brother Jerry played the *Songs of Zion*, and Brother Ken spoke on the hope that we have of Zion. Brother Bill spoke of the love of God and of the love we have one for another. Brother Jerry spoke of the Samaritan woman to whom Jesus gave the living water that would never run dry. Brother Rich followed by speaking of the commandment to love others "as I have loved you."

Brother Ken asked Sister Maria to tell about herself and how she came to the Church. She told us of the hardships she suffered in Italy as a young girl during WWII, how she came to be married to an Italian man in the United States, how she met the Church, was baptized and attended the Lorain, Ohio Branch, her husband's death, her remarriage and relocation to Beaumont, Texas, and her reinstatement in November 2001. As Sister Maria was giving her testimony, Sister Bennie saw an angel standing beside her with the angel's hand resting on Sister Maria's shoulder. Each one present gave their testimony of God's blessings upon them in their lives and how He brought each of us to this part of the vineyard. Our Father is exceedingly loving, kind and gracious.

Communion was served. Oh, how sweet the bread and wine that represent Christ's body and blood given for us! As we proceeded on to the feet washing portion of the service, Sister Maria remarked that she hasn't been able to participate in feet washing for 39 years. She was overcome with joy to be able to participate once more. The Spirit of God was on us so greatly this evening and filled our hearts and souls with thanksgiving and joy. How can we ever sufficiently praise His name?

All awoke to a breathtakingly beautiful Sunday morning. Brother Ken had different brothers read Revelation 12:1-8, 2 Thessalonians 2nd Chapter, and Matthew 28th Chapter. He explained how they prophesy of the apostasy and the restoration of the Gospel and the restoration of the House of Israel. After a wonderful season of testimony, communion was served. Then we proceeded on to the feet washing portion of our service. As Brother Jerry was washing Brother Bill's feet, Brother Bill felt a presence pass between him and Brother Jerry. Sister Bennie had a deep desire to wash Sister Linda's feet since she moved to the Ft. Worth area, and today was the day she was granted her deep desire. Sister Karen proclaimed that she had never felt the Spirit of God so strongly in a feet washing service as she did when she

and Sister Gertie washed each other's feet. After a time spent in rejoicing with each other, the time came for us to depart from one another until we are able to all meet again in another season of rejoicing and praise to our Lord.

The doctors have since repeated all of Bill's tests, and all tests returned showing no evidence of cancer. All of his symptoms are gone, and he is back to normal. What a merciful, awesome, loving Father! We praise His name!

An Experience

*And he said, "God is good."
And they answered, "All the time."*

On Wednesday, March 11, 2009, my grandson, Aaron Olexa, can certainly repeat the above line.

Aaron and two of his friends had been riding their motorcycles all day. As Aaron was coming home to go to church for the Wednesday night meeting, a car ran a stop sign across two lanes of traffic and drove directly in front of him. He had to make a decision immediately; either hit the car and harm the driver, or swerve and lock up the bike. He swerved and the bike locked up. The bike slid 30 feet in one direction and he went flying and rolled about seven times the other way. As he was lying there, he covered his head, fearing that the oncoming cars would hit him, but his partners were off their bikes and stopping traffic.

Aaron was not badly hurt (thank God), but the bike was damaged. He was dazed, but managed to get up. By the time he got up the car that had cut him off was gone. He had bad road rash on his right leg, some cuts and bruises and a very sore shoulder, but that was nothing compared to how this accident could have ended fatally.

As Aaron related this experience in his branch (Metuchen, NJ), we were all able to say with him, "God is good." And they answered, "All the time."

Sister Betty D'Orazio

Effect of a Faithful Mother

Continued from Page 2

Sunday we now rejoice with them as they praise God saying, "From a van, to the house of the King!" Praise God for our spiritual mother, The Church of Jesus Christ!

Thank You Mom!

On a personal note, I can truly echo the words of Nephi as he expressed his thankfulness of being born of goodly parents (1 Nephi 1:1). I know of a surety that I would not have the many blessings in my life had it not been for the efforts, love, and teachings of my own mother. I recall many times as young boys my mother would take my brother and I with her as she would visit our older brothers and sisters in their homes while encouraging them with her love and fellowship. I remember one time in particular when we went to visit one of our sisters who was in a nursing home at the time, and had lost one of her legs due to amputation. I was so humbled by the way my mother reached out to our sister, and these types of experiences affected us deeply as young boys. We learned very early in life to love, respect, and appreciate our older brothers and sisters. We went to their homes and felt like we were drinking at the fountain of blessing. These visits in the homes of the saints helped to place me on the plain road as Nephi says (2 Nephi 4:32). I would not have had these blessings and memories had not my mother set this example. I could give many other examples on behalf of my own mother, and I am sure you could as well. In summary, I just want to say "thank you" to my natural mother who I love with all my heart. Thank you Mom for all you have done and continue to do. And to my "spiritual" mother, The Church of Jesus Christ, I am ever grateful for all of you as well.

**Happy Mother's Day
to all our mothers.**

Missionary Trip to Ghana

Continued from Page 3

heart and the main artery was completely blocked. The doctor said to me that I would die before morning. While the nurse was consoling me I told her, "I shall not die because I have not finished my duties as a minister of the Restored Gospel." I made my way home and informed my family what the test reports were and what the attending physician told me. Hearing the news they were afraid, but I encouraged them and said, "I shall not die."

At 10:45 p.m. on December 23, 2004, I suffered a severe heart attack and I was thrown out of the bed onto the floor. My sons were standing by my bed, and when they saw what had occurred they held me in their arms. My eyes were open but I could not remember anything of what had happened to me until I came to myself some moments later.

Brothers of the Priesthood were called, prayer was offered and looking upon my condition they took me to see the physician at the hospital. Seeing the reaction of my physical, he knowing of my condition said, "I do not understand why you are still living." I was taken into the intensive care unit for special observation and treatment. The staff on duty took another echocardiogram and set of chest X-rays. This time the tests revealed that with the main artery blocked, there were 2 small veins that were carrying blood to the heart. I remained in the hospital for a short while and was released. Praise God, because of my **FAITH**, I am still alive four years later, God healed and mended my heart and has preserved my life. My work for the Lord and His Church is not yet finished.

Experience #2

While I, Evangelist Ford K. Boadu, was recovering from my recent heart attack, there were no Elders of the Church available to anoint and pray for one of our Church members who became critically ill. I was called to the village of Odumasi where we have a branch of our

Church to pray for the brother who was very sick.

Though I could not walk briskly, I was able to find a taxi close by and rode to the village of Odumasi, 52 kilometers from my home. It was a 75 minute drive and my strength was almost gone.

When I arrived at the hospital, I was notified that I was going to have to pray for a brother who was in a deep coma and almost dead. The doctors were trying to revive him, but to no avail.

Though I was very feeble and my body was not strong, God knew my faith and I was strong in the Spirit. I know very well the God that we worship and serve. I anointed our brother with oil and offered a prayer of revival and healing, and to the amazement of all who were present even the physician who was attending to him, God would show His power of healing and raise him up and deliver him from his affliction. After prayer I called him by name and he responded immediately to the call and he sat up in bed.

My Comments JP: This brother was at our meeting in the Apromasi Branch of the Church the Sunday we were privileged to worship with the saints in Ghana. He bore testimony to this experience in the Twi language.

Experience #3

In the month of June 2008 I had another miraculous encounter with God. While working on my farm I accidentally tripped, lost my balance, and fell into a big hole. The way that I had fallen caused me to have a broken back. The pain that followed because of the injury was unbearable and I was unable to walk. I was carried to the hospital where X-rays showed the back was broken, and the attending physicians declared me useless.

The doctors advised me if they would operate and try to repair the damage that was done, in all probability I would never walk again. I would have to be confined to a wheel chair for the rest of my life. Knowing the God I have served for so many years, having seen and experienced His miraculous hand of healing many times in my life as well in the lives of our

brothers and sisters, I knew where I would have to turn for help. My immediate reply to the doctor was, "I believe in divine healing and the God I worship and serve will heal me."

Seeing the condition of my body and knowing the severe injury I sustained and the pain I was experiencing, the doctor admitted me to the hospital for medical treatment. I requested an Elder be called to come and anoint me. My full faith and complete confidence was in the Lord, knowing that He would not forsake or leave me and overlook the accident that occurred to me. "Praise to our God, because in 3 weeks I was completely healed of the broken back and without surgery." Is our God alive and does He perform miracles as He has done in all ages of time? Yes, He is a God that is alive today who is the same as He was in days past because in Him there is neither variableness nor shadow of changing.

Experience #4

One of our aged sisters, an ordained Deaconess and among the first to accept the Restored Gospel and The Church of Jesus Christ in the Apromasi Branch, related an experience of God's miraculous hand of protection in her life. She was sitting in her living room and heard a voice tell her to go into the kitchen area. As she entered into the kitchen, a powerful storm arose with high winds and heavy rain that caused the roof of her home to cave in, and the debris fell in the living room where she had been sitting. She related that the Lord spoke to her in an audible voice to move into the kitchen and had she not listened and remained where she was sitting, there was no question she would have been severely injured or even experienced a loss of her life.

All we can add to these powerful and glorious experiences is "Praise be to our wonderful God."

My appeal to each of you who may read this article is to remember our brothers and sisters of the Church throughout the various mission fields in prayer for God's providence and protection because of the many challenges they are confronted with on a daily basis.

Elders and Teachers Seminars

Continued from Page 4

are thankful our Church allows us the assurance and comfort to understand what will take place in our day and age. We as The Church of Jesus Christ are thankful for all of the sincere of heart believers and look forward to our Lord's plan for His family. God be with our ordained leaders as they lead us on His paths of righteousness.

The Children's Corner

Continued from Page 6

horses, camels, oxen and sheep. But nothing will happen to the animals that belong to the children of Israel." This was a great insult to many, many of the false gods worshipped by the Egyptians who were in the form of cats, cows, dogs, and bulls. Thousands and thousands of animals sickened and died. These statues had no power over the one true God; but Pharaoh still would not let them go.

The Lord told Moses and his brother, Aaron, "Take dust out of the ashes of the furnace and sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of the Pharaoh. It shall become like dust in all the land and shall be boils (terrible, painful blisters) upon man and beasts of the Egyptians. Instead of asking the one, true God for help when they were sick, they called on statues of Imhotep and Sekhmet, physician gods and Thoth, god for magic and healing. These false gods failed them and all were in hideous pain.

God warned Pharaoh (Exodus 9:13-35), "I will send all my plagues ... That you will know there is none like me in all the earth... Tomorrow I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, like there has never been in Egypt. Send and gather in your cattle, and servants and bring them inside." The next day a horrible storm with hail, rain, and lightening that sent fire along the ground, killed anyone and anything outside. The huge crops of flax and barley were ruined. Only the wheat and rye lived. The Egyptian sky god

Nut, and Seth, the god of crops did not save anyone. But in the land of Goshen where God's people the Israelites lived, none were harmed.

Pharaoh again called for Moses and said he would release the slaves. When the storms stopped, he changed his mind. The Lord said to Moses, "I have hardened his heart so I might show these my signs before him. And you may tell your children's children what happened in Egypt so you will know I am God."

Moses warned Pharaoh, "If you will not let us go, God will send locusts to cover the face of the earth and eat any crops that escaped the hail. They will fill your houses and land!" When Pharaoh refused, God sent a wind from the east that carried millions of locusts. The Egyptian god of crops, Seth, could not protect them. They ate every green thing.

Pharaoh repented and God sent a west wind that blew the insects away. Again he changed his mind. And God told Moses, "Stretch forth your hand towards the heavens so that there may be darkness which can be felt." And there was such thick darkness for three days that people were afraid to raise up and move. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. The famous sun god Horus or Tem, god of sunset did not help the Egyptians. Pharaoh told Moses, "You may go. Just leave your flocks and herd" (theirs were dead from hail and diseases).

Moses replied, "No. We need our animals to sacrifice and worship God." So Pharaoh was angry and would not let them go. God told Moses, "I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh. Afterward he will let you go. Speak now to the people and have everyone borrow gold and silver from their Egyptian neighbors. About midnight I will go out into the land of Egypt. All of the firstborn of animals and people will die, from Pharaoh to his servants... Pharaoh will not listen to you so that my wonders will be multiplied in the land of Egypt." God told the Israelites to mark the outside of their doorway with blood from a sacrificed lamb and

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Children Blessed

Peyton Keith Jankowski, son of Brother Andy and Carla Jankowski was blessed on August 31, 2008 at the Fort Worth, Texas Branch.

Mia Savannah DiFede, daughter of Brother Carmen and Sister Lori DiFede was blessed on March 29, 2009 in the Lake Worth, Florida Branch.

Macaiah Hippolyte, was blessed in the Treasure Coast, Florida Branch.

Savannah Marie Williams, daughter of Sister Nina and James Williams was blessed on April 5, 2009 in the Spartanburg, South Carolina Branch.

Gianna Elizabeth McClelland, daughter of Fred and Kimberly McClelland was blessed on April 5, 2009 at the Brunswick, Maine Branch.

Paisley Skye Hood, daughter of Brother Chad and Sister Tawnya Hood was blessed on April 12, 2009 at the Mesa, Arizona Branch.

Amelia Blue Crafts, daughter of Kevin and Tabitha Onorato Crafts was blessed on April 20, 2008 at the Brunswick, Maine Branch.

Spiritual Anniversaries

Sister Virginia Rose celebrated 50 years in The Church of Jesus Christ on May 11, 2008.

Address Change

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Branch or Mission _____

Baptisms and Reinstatements

Brother Kevin Mashburn was reinstated on March 8, 2009 at the Fort Worth, Texas Branch.

Brother Joshua Barnes was baptized on April 5, 2009 at the Liberty, Ohio Branch. He was baptized by Brother Wayne Martorana and confirmed by Brother Ralph Cartino, Sr.

Ordinations

Brother Andre Francione was ordained an elder on April 12, 2009 at the Liberty, Ohio Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Frank Giovannone and he was ordained by Brother Ralph Cartino.

Brother Lucas Martorana was ordained a teacher on April 12, 2009 at the Liberty, Ohio Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Ron Giovannone and he was ordained by Brother Wayne Martorana.

OBITUARIES

MARCUS VALLEJO

Brother Marcus Vallejo of the Fort Worth, Texas Branch, passed on to his reward on December 21, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Sister Margaret Vallejo; sons, daughters, grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

MANUEL S. CASILLAS

Brother Manuel S. Casillas of the Fort Worth, Texas Branch, passed on to his reward on January 8, 2009. He is survived by his wife, Sister Mary Casillas; one son, Brother Tommy Casillas; one daughter, Sister Donna Casillas; three grandchildren, Kevin Turner, Brother David Casillas and Sister Stephanie Casillas; one great-granddaughter and one sister.

The Children's Corner

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to stay inside so the Angel of death would pass over them. They listened. All their firstborn were saved. A horrible cry went over the land that night as there was not a house where there was not one dead (Exodus 12:12 & 13). "...and against all the gods of Egypt, I [the Lord] will execute judgement." The Pharaoh, who was worshipped as a god, even after death, could not protect the Egyptians. None of the false gods could help or fight against the one true God. Pharaoh set the Israelites free.

A new nation was being formed during this time. In the old days, when the Egyptians had power, they could force the Israelite people to show respect for their statues and godless holidays. Now they were free! After four hundred years of being in Egypt, the people of God were being shown the power of the one true God. This is the God over all, whom we serve today, the one true God and His beloved son, Jesus. This is the God who can convince nations He is true. Let Him guide you and lead you too.

With love,
Sister Jan



THE CHURCH OF Jesus Christ

International Headquarters in
Monongahela, Pennsylvania

June, 2009

Volume 65, No. 6

Graduation and Commencement

By Brother Richard Scaglione, Sr.

Graduation is usually considered to be an “ending event,” marking the completion of your high school or college education. Students from both levels will line up, proudly walk across a stage, and accept a diploma or have a degree conferred upon them. This indicates you have completed a vital period in your lives and have earned the right to toss your cap high into the air and shout, “I made it!” As you accept your well-deserved token of success, will you take time to reflect on the years of hard work, effort, and determination that have brought you this far? Certainly this is a time to remember your achievements and, at the same time, recall specific memories which possibly produced frustrations and concerns. Perhaps you will think, “I am finally finished; no more teachers and no more books! I have graduated!”

Now you are faced with the second related part of your graduation—commencement. You may have listened to the guest speaker who attempts to prepare you for what lies ahead and how to be successful. Maybe the stark, unexpected reality will suddenly hit you like a bolt of lightning. Your sheltered environment of the class-

room, surrounded by your friends, has ended. Now you must embark on the next phase of your life—the application of your education and skills. Doubts, and perhaps fears, emerge as you anticipate what may lie ahead.

It is notable that many of our graduating students are baptized members of The Church of Jesus Christ. Your testimonies bear evidence that God has helped you through your difficult times, and He has brought you this far. Regardless of your future plans, you must allow the Lord to guide your decisions and open the doors to your future. The best advice one can offer are the words of Alma to his son Helaman (Alma 37:37). Part of this verse reads, “Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good...”

Finally, wherever you go or whatever you do, let the light of Jesus Christ be reflected in your life. Others around you will quickly see that you are different. Use your knowledge and skills to God’s honor and glory, and you will be a success in all you do. The words of Christ are most appropriate for you to consider: “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid” (Matthew 5:14).

Blessings at April 2009 General Church Spiritual Conference

Attendees at the April 2009 General Church Spiritual Conference at the World Conference Center April 17-19 had come prepared for the Lord’s blessings and they were rewarded by basking in the glory of the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ.

From the first services on Friday when the Elders and Teachers gathered until the final prayer at the Sunday service, there were many manifestations of the Spirit of God, with revelations, participation in the Lord’s ordinances, and inspiring preaching and singing of hymns filling the glorious time together.

On Friday morning, the Elders and Teachers partook of the ordinances of the Lord’s Supper and feet-washing. The center rows of the auditorium were filled with the brothers in anticipation of both ordinances, and a reverent spirit was prevalent. The feet washing period lasted more than an 1 1/2 hours. Many prayers were uttered by the brothers, as they were able to wash the feet of brothers they may not have known prior to this service. Two rows came forward at a time and one row washed feet and

(Continued on Page 4)

Get Connected. Stay Connected.

Sister Carolynn O'Connor

On March 1, 2009 the brothers, sisters, and friends of the Great Lakes Region gathered at Burton Hall in Livonia Michigan for the Spring Region Conference. This meeting was the finale to a weekend of worship following our Region business meeting on the previous day.

The meeting was opened by Brother Jeff Giannetti. "We are part of The Church of Jesus Christ and the family of God and there is no distinction of what branch we are from, we are all saints of the living God."

"Behold how good and pleasant it is when the brethren are in unity. I had that feeling the day before at the business meeting." Brother Jeff shared with us the thoughts of the ministry as they met, "They want you to know as their flock, how much they love you, and how seriously they take your welfare. They are willing to labor and toil that your soul may be saved in the kingdom. As ministry we are concerned that you would be victorious every day. That not one, not one single soul would be lost. This group," Brother Jeff said as he spread his arms to refer to the ministry, "is committed to that."

Brother Jeff continued, "My theme today is an invitation to get connected. Whether a member or not I invite you today to connect yourself to Jesus Christ. I assure you today that we serve a God who is victory and not defeat. Are you connected in him today?"

Brother Jeff read from John 11:38-44 where Jesus raises Lazarus four days following his death. Jesus asked them to remove the stone that covered the cave where Lazarus lay. "What He did, He did for their benefit that they might know that victory comes through Jesus Christ. I thought about how important it is that we are connected to the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe that you are here today to strengthen that connection. There is not a better day for that. There is an

enemy of our soul that seeks to take victory away from you and break the connection that you have with the Lord. If we start to think that we can do it on our own, we are wrong. We are only as strong as our connection to the Lord."

Brother Jeff referred back to the story of Lazarus. "When Jesus said 'Take ye away the stone,' Why did He need the stone to be removed? After He was crucified, He walked through the stone when He resurrected. This was concerning to me so I made it a matter of prayer and the thought came to me that the stone had to be removed for Him to work in our life; we need to have direct connection with Him. We must remove the barriers. What is our stone today?"

"The connection never breaks, it is always on, and is never interrupted on His side. Our connection has a switch that we choose to turn on or off. When it is on, what a glorious place it is. Flowing from the connection is His Spirit, His wisdom, His glory and we have every tool we need to never lose it if we have our switch on. With His Holy Spirit it gives us power to overcome. We cannot be defeated! In my life, God has never disconnected from me."

Brother Jeff closed by asking us again, "Are you connected today?" Tongues were spoken and the interpretation was, "Take heed, take heed to the words of my servant. Though he is not perfect, I have perfected him by my words saith the Lord."

Brother David Lovalvo spoke next. "Our intention is that you would go home feeling blessed and that your lives would be changed. That you would find something that would alter your thinking, touch your heart, that you would be motivated to live a spirit rich life."

Brother David continued the theme Brother Jeff had brought forward and added that the connection requires action on our part. He compared the connection to a water tap that is always there but you need to turn it on for water to flow from it. He spoke about the Brother of Jared and how they built barges but had no

light to get across the water. "The Brother of Jared went to the Lord to ask how they would make it without light. On his own he went to get the stones and asked the Lord to touch them to make light. The Lord wants to connect us though our own actions and determination. He wants us to use our own efforts to reach him. He wants us to have the faith and confidence and trust. Isn't it beautiful that all we have to do is try?"

Brother David then shared a personal experience where he felt connected to the Lord after he lost his job. In this experience the Lord used the story of the Brother of Jared by telling Brother David to "get the stones" and to remind Brother David to put the effort in to connect with the Lord so that He could help him.

Brother Lyle Criscolo followed by speaking about what the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 8:35, 38 & 39, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword? For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come...shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Brother Lyle encouraged us to get rid of anything in our lives (remove the stones) that separate us from the connection with the Lord. "The only one that has control of the switch is us. What is too big for my God? No matter what you are facing, it is not too big for my God."

Brother Duane Lovalvo, recently returning from a missionary trip to Venezuela followed. He spoke from the 5th chapter of Matthew regarding removing the stone that stands between us and God in our lives. "You may be thinking today, what is that stone for me? Jesus said that if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee. He also says to put it far from your life so you can't get it back."

Brother Duane spoke about his recent trip with Brother Daniel Mora and some of the challenges that they

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Pacific Region Conference

By Brother Anthony Cardinale

The Pacific Region convened in Bell, California on March 7 and 8, 2009 for its annual business conference and spiritual gathering. We were so blessed during the whole weekend to see, hear and feel the Spirit of God moving in many different ways, as we were united in the purpose of conducting the business of the region.

God orchestrated and tied a couple of themes throughout the conference. The two central points that God kept bringing forth were that we are to "Trust in the Lord" and that "We Are His People to Build His Kingdom on Earth."

The conference officially started on Saturday, March 7, when our region President, Brother Stacey Light, welcomed the Church's ordained officers to the closed morning session of the conference. He encouraged everyone there to work together, even though we have different management and leadership styles. It was emphasized that we must work together to motivate our young people, even pairing up with them as mentors.

Region Apostles Thomas Liberto and Paul Liberto reinforced that although we have limited resources (financial and human resources), we still must do all we can for the honor and glory of God. We cannot rely on our natural human primitive tools (abilities) to accomplish the building of the kingdom. We have to use the Lord's spiritual tools of fasting and prayer, studying the Scriptures, as well as the tools of loving, embracing and caring for one another. We personally do not have all wisdom and need to work together with everyone's individual talents and gifts for the welfare of the Church.

Brother Jim Huttenberger, the chairman of the DOC (Domestic Outreach Committee), spoke about the exciting work the committee is doing domestically. The PowerPoint presentation that he provided excited

us about the spiritual and numerical growth we anticipate through the DOC's endeavors. Brother Jim said the "high octane" brothers on the committee are very committed to the work, but that in reality all members of The Church of Jesus Christ are members of the DOC in this commission to spread the Gospel.

To be reunited with the members of the family of God from whom we have been separated since the last region conference filled our souls with extreme joy. Many have their battle scars since we last met, but they remain steadfast in the hope of salvation and the future of the Church. Many beautiful songs rang out in praise to God throughout the service. The last congregational song we had sung prior to the preaching was *Sound the Battle Cry*. Hearing the people of God raise their voices in harmony was awesome!

In Brother Tony Picciuto's thought-provoking, high impact style of preaching, he raised the question, "In whom do we trust?" He read from Psalm 118:8-9, "*It is better to trust in the Lord than put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.*" He spoke of the battles we are in, i.e. spiritual, financial, and family, etc. and how we must trust in the Lord during the difficult time in which we are living. There is an enemy to our souls and we must encourage people to go on. Many mind-stimulating questions were asked, such as, "What is our role in the army of God?" and "Who do we trust in—Democrats, Republicans, congressmen, President Bush, President Obama or others?" In these difficult times, we must remember that God is the same yesterday, today and will be forever. God is stable, secure and absolute while everything we see around us changes and is insecure (money values, our job security, etc.), including our physical bodies. However, we cannot afford to change spiritually, but we must be renewed through the Lord's Spirit and be filled with faith, hope and charity to lead us. He related the sure promise of Christ, when he said, "*Seek ye*

first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness and all these things [food, drink, clothing, etc.] shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). He also spoke many other marvelous things and gave a personal experience regarding the Lord's faithfulness.

Brother Thomas P. Liberto followed by speaking of the faithfulness of Ammon recorded in Alma 17. He related how he had focus, patience and determination working with an angry and fierce society, just as we encounter today. Ammon even became a faithful servant to the king and set forth a good example. Along with the right positive attitude and all these attributes, and most of all by the Spirit of God, the king and his people were converted unto the Lord. His life, as our life should be, was a testimony to everyone around him.

On Sunday morning, Bell Branch Presiding Elder Justin Paxon gave a gracious welcome to everyone at the church. Again, the songs of praise filled the building coming in many different ways, from many different people, but the same singular Spirit of God accompanied them all.

Brother Sal Azzinaro was the opening preacher Sunday morning and continued the themes to "Trust in the Lord" and "We Are His People to Build His Kingdom." Initially, he referenced Luke 12:32, "*Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom,*" and Exodus 19:5-6, "*...If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation...*" He spoke of the tremendous love God has towards us, His Church, to the extent that He sent his Son who was sacrificed for us. He spoke of the difficult problems that we encounter in our lives and symbolically related them to the great tempest in the sea that the disciples encountered, fearing for their lives, before Jesus

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Blessings at Conference

Continued from Page 1

then they reversed the order to make it possible for everyone to share in this blessing. The Deacons who officiated at the service also washed each other's feet at the end of that ordinance. The speaking in tongues and the interpretation that "He [Jesus] walks with us," were experienced.

Seminars were held on Friday afternoon for Elders and Teachers, respectively. The Quorum of Twelve Apostles conducted these sessions.

The conference was opened to everyone for the Saturday and Sunday meetings.

Prior to communion being passed on Saturday morning, a brother arose in the Spirit saying, "Thus saith the Lord. Hear my word. I am the light and life of the world. I have drunk of the bitter cup. All this I have done that you may partake this morning."

During the passing of communion, an experience was received in which three (3) images were seen walking among the congregation. At the Sunday morning service, a sister arose and spoke in the Spirit, "Thus saith the Lord, This is my Church. I have chosen you to take this Gospel to the dying souls of men and women, Thus saith the Lord."

Besides the many beautiful sermons which were preached, many musical selections were presented and many expressions of gratitude to the Lord were proclaimed to His honor and glory. This could be exclaimed as being a time of withdrawal from the cares and concerns of the world and be aptly described as a time for devoting oneself solely to the love of God and His many manifestations in our lives. How else can one feel the joy, peace, and comfort of the Holy Spirit? The desired unity of being one in the Spirit was fulfilled.

After the Sunday Spiritual Conference service, a young man came forth and asked to be baptized. It did indeed furnish the fitting touch to a glorious time together.

(Article compiled and written by the General Church Executive Secretarial Staff.)

Get Connected, Stay Connected

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faced. They went with the purpose of ordaining Brother Jose Chavez into the ministry. Brother Jose was given a Book of Mormon by an acquaintance. He felt the truth as he read it and began searching for the Lord's Church. He came across the Church website and began communicating with us. Brother Duane shared how Brother Jose is one man in a city of four million people, and he decided that this was the Church for him. He moved everything out of the way to find the Church. He moved every stone and is now a minister. Brother Duane encouraged us to remove the stone even if it feels like you are cutting off your hand.

Brother Frank Natoli, Region President, took a few moments to share some thoughts. "You cannot get rid of the stones on your own; you need Jesus to help you." He encouraged us to remember the message of being connected throughout the coming days. "There has to be more than a good feeling and a blessing today. The message needs to stay with us. We have to believe it, practice it and put it in our lives. Let our love be our motivation. Take today's message and apply it, connect to the Lord."

After communion was served, Brother Peter Scolaro closed our meeting by continuing the theme that the other brothers brought forth. He shared several experiences where he felt connected to the Lord often through prayer after trying to accomplish something on his own.

He spoke of the man mentioned in II Kings 2:13 who had died in battle and was quickly buried in the tomb of the Prophet Elisha. When the man's body touched the bones of Elisha, the man came back to life. "Do you think you know when you have been touched?" Brother Peter closed by saying, "Recognize when the Spirit of the Lord is present, allow it to touch you, and have the sense to react that He may bless you."

God's richest blessings were felt as we ended our service and prepared to face the world again renewed in His Spirit and feeling connected to His will.

Pacific Region Conference

Continued from Page 3

said, "Peace be still," and the wind ceased and there was a great calm. During this tempest the Lord said, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" (Matthew 8:23-27). If we exercise faith and keep our eyes on Christ, we can walk on water even as Peter did in the Scriptures (Matthew 14:24-33), until he lost focus and became afraid by looking at the boisterous tempest and began to sink. Afterwards Jesus stretched forth his hand to save him and said, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" The Lord will provide for us as He miraculously provided for the disciples when they had fished all night and caught nothing. Christ said, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find," and they caught a huge multitude of fish (John 21:1-7). After Brother Sal related other examples of faith and lack thereof, as well as personal experiences, he asked us if we are needlessly fearful and have little faith or do we really "trust in the Lord?"

Brother Sal continued preaching and asked, "What are we doing for the Lord?" One time in the Scriptures the disciples asked Jesus if He had any meat, because they hadn't seen anyone bring food unto Him, and Christ responded and said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:32-34). We were prodded to put the work of the Lord's kingdom as our priority, and it was reinforced that everyone has a work to do from the youngest to the oldest. He spoke of the great desire we have as members of The Church of Jesus Christ, just as Alma in the Book of Mormon had as he exclaimed, "O that I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart, that I might go forth and speak with the trump of God, with a voice to shake the earth, and cry repentance unto every people!" (Alma 29:1). Brother Sal summarized his preaching and said, "It is time to go forward," and he personally recom-

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Editorial Viewpoint . . .

"Therefore the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence; and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses (Matthew 18:23-35).

There is a popular saying in today's secular world called "paying it forward." Whenever someone does something kind or good for someone else, they say that they will "pay it forward," or pass on the good that was done to them to someone else. Although many people who do not even believe in God use this saying, it is rooted in this scripture from the Bible. This is an example of where a servant owed his lord ten thousand talents. In today's money system, this would equal millions of dollars. As soon as the servant fell down and begged forgiveness of the debt, the lord was moved with compassion and forgave him the debt. Yet, only a short time later, the servant confronted someone who owed him an hundred pence (this is about ten dollars). The servant would not forgive this debtor of the small amount but cast him into prison! Imagine after the forgiveness granted unto this man, that he could not forgive someone else for a much smaller debt owed to him! The end of the story is that the lord found out about the servant's unforgiveness and punished him by delivering him to tormentors who tormented him until his debt was paid. This servant did not "pay it forward."

We were forgiven by our Heavenly Father of all our sins when we accepted Him as our Savior through baptism. The sins we committed and all the sins we will ever commit, if a dollar amount were to be placed on it, would amount to numbers beyond our imagination. God forgave us of all of that debt. Imagine that. In this life, how could we possibly not forgive someone for anything, no matter how great or small, after God granted us pardon for things that would be impossible for us to make retribution for. Being unforgiving and not having compassion not only doesn't "pay it forward," but Jesus then classifies us as "wicked." Instead, we should "pay it forward." Whenever we can show compassion and mercy towards another we should do it. As "forgiven" saints, we should spend our entire life giving to others more than they expect. We should go out of our way to help those in need. We should forgive those who offend us quickly and lovingly, without holding a grudge for years and years. This is what Jesus expects of us, since His forgiveness for us is beyond measure or comprehension. In this world, there is little forgiveness. Let us rise above the world, by setting the example and doing for others what the Lord so freely did for us. Let us always "pay it forward."

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork



The Laborer Is Worthy His Hire

Dear Girls and Boys,

Last week when we were praying during the feet washing ceremony, the sister who washed my feet prayed that I would have a chance to tell more people about the Lord.

I was pleased to hear these words. I agree that I want to tell people about Jesus. Monday, I talked to a lady cleaning the Recreation Center where I swim about faith in God and how to get more faith.

Wednesday, in my water color painting class, an older Jewish woman started talking about good and evil. She does not believe in the devil. I told her I do and I trust God to keep me safe. Yesterday a secretary asked me where my church was.

Today I was talking with one of my favorite students who is a tall, nice, smart forth grader whose parents came from China. I have taught him about computers for several years and he always helps me, fixing computers and talking with me. On Saturdays and Sundays, his family takes him to Chinese language school, tennis lessons, piano lessons, and of course, they pay close attention to all of his homework. He told me his parents aren't mean, they just want him to study, learn, and do good. Almost every moment of the weekend is spent in hard work. His family knows that in China, only the hardest working students are allowed to go to training schools or college. He cannot afford to be anything except the best.

I do not tell him to feel sorry for himself because other kids in America are watching television, playing, or biking outside. I listen. I also have been praying that I can talk to him about the Lord. I asked him today if he believes in God or the Bible. He replied, "I don't know. I have never read the Bible, Mrs. Bork." Even though he is very young, he is smart and is trying to figure things out.

I realize that his family is only in this country because they, too, are bright and very hard working. They want their son to always do his best. You could say that their religion is actually a belief in hard work and education. But, I want to tell my student how wonderful God is. I have been praying. I realize that I may be the only person who loves Jesus who will ever talk to him.

So, today, after he had helped me pass out papers, I asked him if he believed in God or the Bible. When he said he didn't know, I told him gently, "Well, I really do." I know he respects me, and I may be the first believer that he trusts. Then I told him, "The Bible says there is a way to treat someone who works for you. He waited politely and I smiled and finished telling him, "The Bible says that the laborer is worthy his hire. That means when someone does a work for you, they deserve to be paid" (see Luke 10:7). And I handed him a small pack of candy for his help. He laughed and went back to work. But I planted a seed in this nice boy's mind about God's fairness.

Nowadays, the old devil has made people afraid to talk about God. But we must not be afraid. In society, people can talk about all kinds of bad

things like fake magic, witchcraft, gambling in the lottery, movie stars and athletes who do bad things and act cool. But, we are not supposed to talk about God and Jesus. This world is full of people with loneliness, anger and deep problems. They need to hear God's simple plan to be happy and follow God's laws. They need to know the power of prayer. They need for you to speak up and tell them there is a plan from the time of creation.

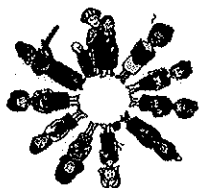
You may be the only person to tell someone how Jesus has helped you. You may be the only person who has seen a healing or known how God watches over us each and every day. It is so important to tell other people of all ages that you will pray for them.

(Continued on Page 11)

WORD SEARCH

IN	REMEMBER
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Knowing that God Is in the Matter

By Sister Karen L. Progar

God is in the matter and He is in the matter in all things. On Friday, April 17, 2009, the sisters of the General Ladies' Uplift Circle met. Before we even began our marvelous conference, Sister Jacqui King led a great warm-up activity in which the sisters had to identify other sisters based on the clues provided by Sister Jacqui. The sisters showed how competitive they can be, but they did it in a loving manner and we all learned some very interesting and enlightening facts, not well-known, about our sisters.

Sister Lisa Champine, General Ladies' Uplift Circle Vice President, chose II Timothy 1:6 as her scripture, reminding us to "stir up the gift of God, which is in us." Her scripture choice and shared personal experience set a beautiful tone for the day.

Sister Karen Progar, President, shared the biography of former vice president, Sister Lorraine DeMercurio and presented her with a pendant from the Circle. Sister Lorraine then shared a few words of gratitude and rehearsed some of her history in the Circle.

A touching presentation on the work being done at the Desire Day Care in India followed. It was clear that the sisters were enthusiastic about the work being done and anxious to help in any way they can. Sister Tracey Cuerrier told the congregation that the annual cost to run the day care for the 46 children in attendance was \$4,700. It is amazing to hear that helpers could be paid, food purchased, uniforms bought and a building maintained for such a nominal fee. The \$4,700 doesn't include any extras and Sister Tracey wasn't sure when the day care center would be able to accept any of the children on the waiting list. The DVD we viewed

showed us the children who are among the very poor. Sister Tracey stated that even though they are toddlers, the parents would leave the little ones at home with older siblings while they went to work to try to make a meager living for their families. This means that the older children would not be able to go to school. The day care is actually responsible for saving all the children of these families since the older children are now free to attend school. The other blessings are, that the children are kept clean, put in uniforms and taught during the day. Many families have come to The Church of Jesus Christ because of the work being done in the day care.

We had the opportunity to hear about the plans being made for our 2010 Fellowship Weekend, which will be in Nashville, Tennessee. Sister Marian Yoder spoke to the sisters about early costs for the event, scheduled to begin on Wednesday, April 28, 2010 and concluding on Sunday, May 2, 2010. In addition to the many spiritual activities planned, the committee has designated shopping and touring time for the attendees. Each sister was given an invitation for the event, detailing the schedule and listing the workshop titles; "Working on the Crown", "Running the Race", "The Virtue of Consistency" and "Inspiring Others to Serve." Saving envelopes for the event were also available for those who wanted to start saving for the weekend's expenses. In addition to the normal content of the Fellowship Weekend, the Saturday evening banquet will celebrate our history since 2010 is the 90th Anniversary of the General Ladies' Uplift Circle.

After our lunch break, the membership was pleased to hear devotions on "Walking with God" presented by the Penn Mid-Atlantic Area Ladies' Uplift Circle. We also had the joy of receiving a dream from one of the sisters. (To read that dream, check out the President's May letter on the Circle website, which you can access through the General Church website.)

We heard the activities of our areas from the Area Presidents, ideas to engage and enthuse our young from Sister Mitzi Calabro (one of our Youth

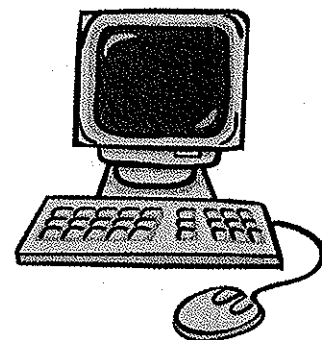
Enhancement Officers) and provided the following donations:

- \$5,000 to the IMOC to assist with the proofreading of the Book of Mormon in the Malawi language of Chichewa.
- \$4,500 donated to the Desire Day Care.
- \$3,000 for this year's Vacation Bible School in Muncey, Ontario, Canada.

The new special project is raising funds for the 2011 World Conference to be held in Illinois on June 25 through July 1, 2011.

We flew through the business and had time to enjoy a tour of the Ladies' Circle Blog and enjoy hearing the testimonies of many of our sisters. We thank God that He did walk with us today and allow us to experience many wonderful blessings in the conference. As Sister Sharon Staley offered prayer to close the conference, my prayer was that God would bless all our sisters and their home circles until we come together on Saturday, October 10th for our next meeting. Actually our conference was more like a celebration than a business meeting and for that we are grateful too!

We also want to thank all of those who supported the Ladies' Circle fundraiser luncheon on Saturday, which is helping to pay off our debt for the beautiful landscaping at the World Conference Center.



Visit the GMBA website to find camp forms and watch our 2 New GMBA Camp Commercials!

<http://thechurchofjesuschrist-gmba.org>



Growth and Blessings in Mid Georgia

Easter Sunday – April 12th 2009: It was a beautiful Sunday morning to meet at the water's edge for the blessing of a baptism. There were many visitors present for this blessed day: Brother Skip Swanson, Sister Leda Sheffler, Brother Ron and Sister Marilyn Carradi, Brother Kevin and Sister Stacy Murphy and Sister Anne Moore.

Soon to be Sister Stasha Chairs was both eager and nervous but ready to turn her life over to the Lord. She was taken into the water by Brother Kevin Murphy and a beautiful spirit was felt by all.

Afterwards we all met back at the Mission with anticipation of the upcoming confirmation, along with two reinstatements and a baby blessing. But to our surprise we were heading back to the water's edge because soon to be Sister Jessica Nowels had asked for her baptism also. She had a wonderful experience when Sister Stasha was walking into the water—she saw herself walking into the water with Brother Kevin in place of Sister Stasha, so she knew she was being called and it was her time.

It too was a lovely baptism, and Sister Marilyn later relayed the experience of seeing Sister Ruth's face (Jessica's Grandmother) while she was being baptized. Just like her vision she walked into the water with Brother Kevin and came out walking with Christ for the rest of her days.

The Lord's Spirit was surely felt for the rest of the day. The Spirit fell upon Brother Skip to confirm Sister Stasha and Brother Ron to confirm Sister Jessica. Soon after, the Priesthood reinstated Brother Danny and Sister Betty Nowles (father and mother of our new Sister Jessica).

Brother Kevin spoke shortly about our belief in the blessing of babies, reading scripture from Moroni

Chapter 8:8-13, then Brother Ron came forth to bless Carmen Leeann Ford.

During the testimony portion of the meeting Brother Ken told of a dream he had prior to that morning—he saw stairs descending from Heaven and sitting along the stairs were children. After the baptism they all stood and clapped. Sister Jessica also told of her healing—after being told twice that her test showed she had cancer, she was anointed and a repeat of the same test showed no cancer at all.

Milestone Anniversary Celebration Promotes Outreach

When Brother Emmett Hood of the Mesa, Arizona Branch felt inspired to organize a celebration honoring all of the saints who have served the Lord for 50 years or more, he didn't realize that he would be organizing one of the best outreach events that the Mesa Branch had ever seen.

The members in Mesa knew their branch was blessed with many seasoned saints, but when Brother Emmett double-checked the dates of their spiritual birthdays, his tally showed that the Phoenix/Mesa area contained 29 saints who had been baptized for 50 years or more! Realizing the importance of showing appreciation for those who have preserved the Gospel for the next generation, Brother Emmett led a group of volunteers in planning an awards ceremony to thank these 29 soldiers for their years of faithful service.

Several weeks before the ceremony, which was held on March 29, 2009, all of the honorees received a formal invitation in the mail inviting them to participate and their extended families to attend. The honorees were also given a bit of homework—a seven page questionnaire designed to get the details about their individual walk with the Lord. They were asked questions like, "When did you first feel God's Spirit?", "How did your decision to serve Christ change you?" and "If you

could give any advice to a young person of the Church, what would it be?" After each honoree completed the questionnaire, it was given to another brother or sister in the branch who had the task of briefly recapping the person's service to God during the awards ceremony.

The celebration itself was patterned after a "Lifetime Achievement" award ceremony. As each of the honorees entered the building, they stopped outside the doors to get a portrait taken. Just outside the sanctuary, a giant bulletin board displayed pictures of each of the honorees when they were young, and the brothers and sisters enjoyed trying to guess who was who. Dinner was served first, giving everyone a chance to fellowship before the celebration began in the sanctuary.

The presenters introduced the honorees to the crowd, sharing how long they had been in the Gospel, how they asked for their baptisms, and other funny or touching stories gleaned from the questionnaires. This resulted in an extremely personal recognition of each saint. The presenters then gave the honorees a special booklet lovingly handmade by the sisters of the branch. Displayed in gold on the outside was the number of years they had been baptized. Inside was their childhood picture, the picture they had taken as they entered the building, and later that night another picture of the entire group of 29 honorees was also added. Such a special memento! The ceremony was interspersed with songs, trivia, and brief speakers. While the honorees were recognized in love, the ultimate honor and glory went to Jesus Christ. At the end of the ceremony, Sister Sarah Watson, chosen because she had the most years (75) in the Gospel, addressed the crowd on behalf of all the honorees.

The most amazing thing about the celebration was the outstanding support the honorees got from their extended families—some belonged to the Church, some were once members of the Church, and some did not know Christ. What a wonderful opportunity for those who do not know (or may have forgotten) about the power of

God to hear 29 stories of how the Lord blessed, guided, and preserved the lives of these faithful brothers and sisters. Many expressed that they were touched by the love and the spirit conveyed throughout the celebration. Members were able to reconnect with people they hadn't seen in years. Although the original intention was to recognize the saints with lifetime service, the result was an effective and spirit-filled outreach.

That Blessed Assurance

By Sister Diana Stigleman

On February 15, 2009 after Brother Larry Champine invited us to "draw upon the well," we had the privilege of welcoming Brother Ken Staley from the Middle Tennessee Mission. This day, he would deliver to our own Detroit Branch #1 a message of God's promise to His children. His request that we stand while singing *Blessed Assurance*, would end up being symbolic of the energy and lesson which our brother was about to bring forth.

For those present, who did not know him, Brother Ken gave an account of his life's travels. This was not an account of distance. It was a journey of growth in the Lord. Through his many life experiences, Brother Ken continually grew in developing faith, trust, and yes, the assurance that God's promise never fails. While opening his sermon, Brother Ken mentioned by name, several of the brothers and sisters from Michigan who have implanted fond memories within him. "Our histories are rich because of The Church of Jesus Christ," he stated. Brother Ken said over the years he has learned something that is priceless. He declared, "The assurance of Jesus Christ in my life is greater than anything." Then our brother went on to tell us, how he learned about this assurance. Brother Staley expressed that while working as a banker for many years, his jobs brought him to and through several states. Still the first

major turning point in understanding God's assurance came about four years ago when he was caught in the middle of a law suit. If the suit was pursued, he would be forced to file for bankruptcy. As a banker this was not acceptable. This business dragged on for over three years. Then ten days before going to trial, Brother Ken, his wife Sister Sharon and son Cameron lost their jobs, due to the pending court case. They all worked for the same client.

After returning home, they formed a circle in their living room. For the first time in his life, our brother felt a need to know what God's assurance was all about. Of the many prayers uttered that day, Brother Ken offered one very profound prayer. He said, "Lord, I feel like we just parachuted out of a plane, and I don't know if we even have parachutes; and I need your assurance." The next day he received a call. The legal matter had been resolved. Brother Ken asked the caller, "Why?" and added, "They're likely to get a judgment and win." Our Brother was informed by the caller that they had heard a rumor that he, his wife and son, had lost their jobs. "With that in mind there's nothing to go after."

Brother Staley told the Lord, "Wow! You knew it all the time, didn't you?" Then speaking directly to us he said, "That's God's assurance. His assurance is, I've got your back, your front and your sides."

Over the process of time, our brother has reached a new calmness that even his wife, Sharon, and friends cannot believe. In some of his final thoughts, Brother Ken said, "If the only hope I have today is eternal life, then I'm okay."

Brother Sam DiFalco, visiting from the Sterling Heights Branch in Michigan followed in speaking. His own experiences were added to our list of blessings. Brother Sam loves to hear and lives by experiences. His testimonies of how God has helped him each step of the way, his wife's conversion and the sudden passing of his son, touched all of our hearts.

I can assure you that the well of God's blessings ran very deep and refreshed all present today.

Two Ordained as Teachers

By Sister Cindy Henderson

At first glance, one might have thought that Detroit Branch #2 was hosting a regional conference on Sunday, March 8, 2009. The building filled rapidly, especially by the afternoon meeting to include many visiting brothers, sisters, children and 13 additional elders who had decided to join us for the ordinations of Brother Jim Bork and Brother Phil Buffa to the office of teacher.

Brother Lyle Criscuolo introduced our afternoon service by sharing how teachers can sometimes be put in harm's way. He described how in the book of Alma, Nehor was going about preaching false doctrines, trying to sway many of the believers of the church. When he confronted Gideon, a faithful teacher of the church, Gideon withstood him and admonished Nehor with the words of God. Gideon, an elderly man and instrument of God, didn't waiver. Nehor became very angry with him and slew him with his sword. Sadly, Gideon being up in years, was unable to withstand the blows of the sword.

Brother Lyle continued by sharing with us that many times we read in the scriptures how Jesus was tempted and confronted by evil men who taught contrary to the word of God. In every case, Christ answered with the word of God. He offered that knowing the scriptures is the only way one can truly fight battles in life. Situations demand that we be able to quickly extract the scriptures when we need them. "Just as Gideon was sure of the foundation upon which he was built, Helaman also reminded his sons to keep God's commandments and remember to build their foundation upon the rock of our Redeemer. No matter what mighty winds the devil sends forth upon us, it shall have no power over us if we build upon a sure foundation. Men can't fail when they build on God's foundation!" Brother Lyle shared how after 20

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Two Ordained as Teachers

Continued from Page 9

years of running, he finally turned his life around and decided to build his foundation upon the rock. Despite the fact that he'd forgotten a promise made many years earlier to serve God, God did not abandon our brother. Our brother continued to exhort us to look into the scriptures as they are a mirror for our lives, constantly reminding us of what we need to do to change. He assured us that our continual reliance on Christ alone will save us in troublesome times.

Brother Leonard A. Lovalvo then read from Ephesians 4:11-13, outlining the offices represented in the Church given for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry and edifying of the body of Christ. He expressed how the teachers support us in getting closer to Christ, especially when confronted with challenging situations. "Our brothers possess the love of God and will share that love and joy of salvation to the children, friends and saints they will visit. They'll teach us about the gospel, faith, repentance, baptism, the ordinances, bestowal and workings of the Holy Ghost, apostasy, restoration and future events. As members, we are asked to open our hearts and minds to them so that one day we will all be in that great eternal home," and invited us to set up visits with the teachers.

Following a moving medley of songs on piano and viola by Sister Carolyn and Brother James Gross, our brothers' feet were washed. Brother Joe Vargo washed Brother Phil's feet and Brother Joe Cotellesse washed Brother Jim's feet. Brother John Buffa ordained Brother Phil and Brother Alex Gentile ordained Brother Jim.

After being greeted by the circle of brothers, our new teachers both shared testimonies of God's goodness in their lives. Brother Phil related that God gave him an experience to know that just as Moses had God fully supporting him, God would be with our brother in this work. Brother Jim expressed how glad he was to be a part of a church where workers are needed. He was also grateful for the

support of his wife and the continued prayers of our brothers and sisters.

To God Be the Glory was sung by Brother Cameron Staley and the congregation joined in singing *To the Work*. We were thankful that God's Spirit had resided with us since the start of our day and without a doubt, we knew that all had been revived when we left that day.

A Day for Celebration

By Sister Karen L. Progar

Visitors from Ohio and Michigan were in attendance on Sunday, March 22nd at the Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Branch as we celebrated Sister Janet Gibson's 50th spiritual anniversary.

Brother Brandon Miller from Kinsman opened the meeting, sharing some of his history and how he met the saints of The Church of Jesus Christ. Brother Brandon stated that he was raised in the fear of God and through a military association, met his wife while seeking God. Within a few weeks of attending church, Brother Brandon asked for his baptism. Brother Brandon spoke of the compassion of Christ, who knows and understands the things we endure in this life. He chose the parable of the Good Samaritan as his reference (Luke 10:25-34). He reminded the congregation that the story is even more impressive because of the relationship the Jews had with the Samaritans. In conclusion Brother Brandon reinforced how Christ understands what we go through because of His compassion.

Sister Janet Gibson in her testimony stated that the examples of her parents, Brother Tom and Sister Josephine Ross, as well as those of her grandparents drew her to Christ. Among the items that she considered most important were being raised in the Church and seeing her children and their spouses become members of the Church. She thanked God for fifty years in The Church of Jesus Christ.

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Pacific Region Conference

Continued from Page 4

mended Christ and His Church to everyone present.

Brother Paul Liberto preached next and motivated everyone to consider his or her reason for coming out to the church that day. In Matthew 11:7-9 Christ said, speaking of John the Baptist, "... *What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.*" In other words, what is the reason that prompted us to go to the church, and what do we expect to find at church? He encouraged everyone to not just see the church, but rather to be part of the work of the Lord in building His kingdom. He reminded us to rejoice

that our names are written in heaven, if we are faithful. Brother Paul noted that the Scriptures relate that even John the Baptist was discouraged, noting his human fragility. However Christ had great regard for John the Baptist and said, *"Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he"* (Matthew 11:11). It was said we could be considered *"the least in the kingdom of heaven"* spoken of in that Scripture; nevertheless, we can be filled with purpose and power to do God's work today, as John the Baptist had been during his time.

Brother Santos Zamora followed in a powerful way and related how we must be like the prophet Jeremiah in these the last days when preaching the gospel, in spite of people not liking our message. King Zedekiah had Jeremiah put into prison for speaking truth, for Jeremiah had conveyed the Lord's prophecy that the people should become servants to the future invading Chaldeans (Babylonians), instead of fighting against them. The king and the people wanted to hear another message. Jeremiah tried to comfort the people and spoke of their future return to Jerusalem and encouraged them to be patient and subject themselves to the Chaldeans. Later, because of their resistance to hearing truth, the Chaldeans burned the king's house and the houses of the people with fire, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem. Also King Zedekiah's eyes were put out, and he was bound in chains and taken captive to Babylon, whereas Jeremiah was taken out of prison and given the opportunity to live amongst his people. Brother Santos lovingly exhorted us to be strong, trust in the Lord, and not to be like King Zedekiah who was afraid to follow the prophet's words for fear of rejection from his people, and lack of confidence in the Lord's providence.

Brother Thomas M. Liberto supported the previous preaching by reiterating the Scriptures that were quoted earlier. He also emphasized that today is the day to work for the

Lord, not tomorrow, and don't procrastinate with the Lord. He said let us go forward trusting in the Lord.

Likewise Brother Jim Huttenberger reinforced the exhortations and encouragements of the prior preaching, making the point that we should live our lives so that we don't have any regrets. He gave a personal experience of a window of opportunity he had during an airport layover and had to make a decision whether or not to stop and visit his mother. He chose to see his mother and took the freeway onramp to see her instead of returning to the airport to wait for the airplane departure. The few minutes that he had spent were the last he had with his mother, because subsequently, the Lord took her home a short time later. Our brother reminded us of how life is fleeting and that we should cherish one another.

Region President, Stacey Light, made some encouraging closing comments and reminded us in so many ways to "Trust in the Lord" and that "We Are His People to Build His Kingdom on Earth."

The Children's Corner

Continued from Page 6

Then do it! You also can pray silently over a problem while someone is talking to you, as I was praying when my student was talking to me. You can pray silently at recess or a game when you see people getting upset at a distance. You can pray over a problem in your family or neighborhood or school. You have great power through being a believer in Jesus Christ.

And when you work for the Lord, He rewards you too. He protects and blesses you. He helps you solve the problems that surround us each in life. When you work to tell others of Jesus, then you are the laborer and you are "worthy of your hire," and God will reward you. Jesus says in Matthew 6:6, "...when you pray, enter into your closet and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father [God] in secret; and your Father which seeth in

secret shall reward you openly." That means don't be praying just to get attention or brag to others, but quietly talk to God and He will reward you.

I have started with my student simply by being fair and kind to him for years and now telling him that I truly believe in the Lord. Now he knows that at least one adult who likes him also loves the Lord. I will keep on praying. Who knows who is watching you? Pray that you can tell others about Jesus. It works! God answered the prayers of a sister who prayed for me during feet washing. He will answer you too.

With love,
Sister Jan

Ordinations

Brother Matthew Gehly was ordained an elder on April 5, 2009 at the Kinsman, Ohio Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Paul Gehly and he was ordained by Brother Timothy Gehly.

Brother John Yeager was ordained a deacon on April 5, 2009 at the Kinsman, Ohio Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Howard Jackson and he was ordained by Brother Leonard Nardoizzi.

Brother Eric Darr was ordained a deacon on May 10, 2009 at the Herndon, Virginia Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Chatman Young II, and he was ordained by Brother Pete Darr.

Brother Saladin Foy was ordained a deacon on May 10, 2009 at the Freehold, New Jersey Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Luis Carillo and he was ordained by Brother Jim Crudup.

Brother Isaac Reyes was ordained a deacon on May 17, 2009 at the New Brunswick, New Jersey Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Salvador Reyes and he was ordained by Brother Joe Benyola.

Children Blessed

Angelica Rose Risola, daughter of Brother Dan and Sister Sunshine Risola, was blessed on July 27, 2008 in the Forest Hills, Florida Branch.

Kaled Ilan Garcia, son of Brother Lalo and Sister Megan Garcia, was blessed on April 5, 2009 in the Kinsman, Ohio Branch.

Austin Lee Huitron, son of Hose Louis and Leta Huitron, was blessed on April 29, 2009 at the Freehold, New Jersey Branch.

Luis Joseph Huitron, son of Hose Louis and Leta Huitron, was blessed on April 29, 2009 at the Freehold, New Jersey Branch.

Kelsey Marie Huitron, daughter of Hose Louis and Leta Huitron, was blessed on April 29, 2009 at the Freehold, New Jersey Branch.

Hailey Amber Huitron, daughter of Hose Louis and Leta Huitron, was blessed on April 29, 2009 at the Freehold, New Jersey Branch.

Joleen Lynn Huitron, daughter of Hose Louis and Leta Huitron, was blessed on April 29, 2009 at the Freehold, New Jersey Branch.

Saul Hernandez, son of Baltazar and Sister Ana Hernandez, was blessed on May 3, 2009 at the Bell, California Branch.

Baptisms and Reinstatements

Brother Erik Rooney was reinstated into The Church of Jesus Christ on April 26, 2009 at the Spartanburg, South Carolina Branch.

Sister Brenda Lee Maurer was baptized on April 26, 2009 at the New Brunswick, New Jersey Branch. She was baptized by Brother Rick Calabro and confirmed by Brother Robert Pizzaia.

Sister Marlene Ciccatti was reinstated into The Church of Jesus Christ on May 3, 2009 at the San Diego, California Branch.

Sister Lydia Dulisse was reinstated into The Church of Jesus Christ on May 3, 2009 at the Modesto, California Branch.

Brother Roy Baldwin was baptized on May 10, 2009 at the Lake Worth, Florida Branch. He was baptized by Brother Chuck Maddox and confirmed by Brother Eugene Perri.

Brother Luis Miguel Soto was baptized on May 10, 2009 at the Bell, California Branch. He was baptized by Brother David Arreola and confirmed by Brother Justin Paxson.

Carolyn Rouleau; 11 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his brothers, Brother Otto and Brother Lloyd Henderson.

EDITH (ARCURI) BLAZER

Sister Edith (Arcuri) Blazer of the Metuchen, New Jersey Branch, passed on to her reward on March 21, 2009. She was preceded in death by her husband, Richard Blazer, Sr. She is survived by her son, Richard E. Blazer, Jr.; two daughters, Donna Dukes and Denise Peterson; seven grandchildren; two brothers, Brother Phillip Arcuri and Leo Arcuri; and three sisters, Sister Theresa Vadasz, Sister Jenny Schmitt, and Sister Stella Benyola.

JOSEPH D. FARAGASO

Brother Joseph D. Faragaso of the Quincy, Florida Branch (formerly of the Hopelawn, New Jersey Branch), passed on to his reward on March 24, 2009. He is survived by his wife, Sister Mary; son and daughter-in-law, Joe and Laura Beth Faragaso; daughter, Donna Faragaso Belenski; granddaughters, Judy and Mary Beth Faragaso; and his sister, Darlene Ross.

OBITUARIES

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

DOUGLAS ALLEN HENDERSON

Brother Douglas Allen Henderson of the Windsor, Ontario Branch, passed on to his reward on February 23, 2009. He is survived by his wife, Sister Ethel; sons Allen, Brian, Donald and Kenneth; daughter,

Address Change

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Branch or Mission _____



THE CHURCH OF Jesus Christ

International Headquarters in
Monongahela, Pennsylvania

July, 2009

Volume 65, No. 7

Baptism and Ordination in Venezuela

By Evangelist Richard Scaglione, Sr.

"Go ye therefore and teach [make disciples of] all nations..." (Matthew 28:14). As I looked at the current missionary trip list, it is obvious that The Church of Jesus Christ is fulfilling Christ's final exhortation to His Disciples. I am thankful for the opportunity to be a small part of the Church's missionary efforts.

I had the privilege to travel with Brother Frank Palacios to Valle Guanape in Venezuela. We later met Brother Rich Nath in Maracaibo to complete our 12-day trip (May 7th to the 18th). I want to thank all of the brothers and sisters who have previously carried the Gospel to Venezuela and laid the ground work upon which we can build. Words cannot convey the love and acceptance I felt as I met those whom I have read about and viewed their photographs. We certainly are part of the family of God! The Bicelis' home provided love, comfort, and the delicious cooking of Sister Alicia. It became our home away from home.

The highlight in Valle Guanape was the baptism of Daniel Quiaro, a young man 21 years old. He had previously asked for his baptism, but he wanted to wait for the missionar-

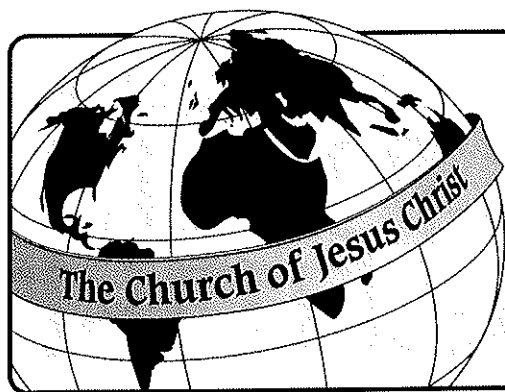
ies to come. His mother has raised him and testified he has always been a good boy and a great help to her. It is not easy to find a baptismal site in this area. The nearby lakes are either polluted or contain the deadly piranha (cannibal fish) or snakes.

On Saturday, May 9th, we headed for the mountains to find a suitable place for the baptism. A van was rented to take us and some members of the Mission. However, more showed up than was expected, so Brother Raul had to use his car to take some of us. Because of the lack of rain for a long time, the mountain streams were dry. After traveling on several mountain roads and trails, we finally found a good spot with knee-deep water. Prayer was offered and the two important questions produced the expected affirmative answers from Daniel. He quickly made his way down the steep embankment and into the water where Brother Bicelis was waiting. Although the words, *"Having authority given me of Jesus Christ"* were in Spanish, the spirit they produced is universal. Daniel was then immersed in the shallow water, and a time of rejoicing and singing followed before we headed

back. Daniel rode in the car with us both ways, so we were able to counsel him before and after his baptism. Daniel's mother was touched and shed some tears. She said she is praying that God will call her to be baptized, perhaps in the near future.

Our Sunday service saw an attendance of 22 adults (11 are baptized members and five others attended for the first time) and 31 children of all ages. Brother Bicelis was helped by Franklin Diaz in picking up everyone for the meeting. We opened with some singing, and the mood was set for God's blessings. I read Moroni's words on the bestowal of the Holy Ghost. Brother Bicelis then bestowed the gift of the Holy Ghost upon our new brother. I continued on the importance of baptism, using Christ's words to Nicodemus, *"Ye must be born of the water and the Spirit."* This was followed with the discussion of the two questions asked by Alma, *"Have you spiritually been born of God?"* and *"Can you feel so now?"* Brother Palacios spoke on Mother's Day, explaining that through baptism, the Church becomes our spiritual mother and provides the nourishment for our souls. Brothers Bicelis and Esnel Calcurian followed on the same subjects. The many testimonies reflected God's blessings and the joy of

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A message from the Seventy

Atlantic Coast RMOC

The Atlantic Coast RMOC is an active group of brothers, sisters and young people, who meet on a regular basis to discuss the missionary work in the Atlantic Coast Region, and actively support the numerous efforts. The Region spans from as far north as Montreal, Canada and Dedham, Massachusetts, to Cottageville, South Carolina.

Brother Timothy Mott and his family moved to Montreal, Canada on business not long ago. He was moved with his company to that city. But God had another work for him to do there. The work is beginning to flourish, with some who already know the Church, and many others who are learning about The Church of Jesus Christ. Some speak French, and so translating Church materials into the French language is important in teaching the visitors about the Restored Gospel. The Atlantic Coast RMOC supports this work by making trips to support our brother, and an upcoming trip this summer is planned with numerous young people from New Jersey anxious to go there and evangelize the Gospel.

Dedham, Massachusetts is a work that has been progressing for years now. Brother Sam Sgro and his family, along with many other brothers and sisters, have made numerous trips from New Jersey and Maine to this location, outside of Boston. Members and visitors from throughout New England make the journey to meet once a month in a rented hotel conference room. Brother Michael McGuire and his wife are extremely active with the Native Americans in

this Region and very involved in the NAOC of the Church in this region. They teach at Native American schools and are involved in numerous humanitarian activities with them.

Cottageville, South Carolina is a work that was established years ago by the late Brother Joseph Arcuri. This work continues today through the efforts of Evangelist Phillip Arcuri and many others over the years who have made numerous trips there to a trailer owned by the Church where meetings are held. There is a high concentration of Native Americans in this area as well to whom the Church evangelizes. Many seeds have been planted in this area, and we know someday the fruit of those seeds will come forth.

Most of the branches in our Region are located in New Jersey. In this area, numerous efforts are undergoing. Evangelist Matthew Rogolino makes weekly visits to the Bowery in New York City, an area where many of New York's homeless live. For many years, he has preached the Gospel to them, and provided support for their needs. In addition, he has been invited to speak weekly at a prison in Freehold, New Jersey. He has an opportunity to preach about the love and mercy of Jesus to men who are imprisoned (some with life sentences) for committing various crimes. The branch in Brooklyn, New York is under the care of the Region RMOC. Recently a plan to revitalize the work was established in which two brothers and their families committed to support Brooklyn for a three-month period. This time included much outreach to the community. Many seeds were

planted from this effort, and we know someday the fruit of these seeds will come forth as well.

In southern New Jersey, the town of Bridgeton is home to a large concentration of Native Americans. Years ago, our Region made numerous trips there, holding meetings with the natives. We are in the process of reestablishing connections there. We have been invited to visit their Indian Center and participate in their activities. A trip this summer of young people is planned to visit with them in this area.

The RMOC in our Region has established a young people's visiting committee which is quite active. Every few months, young people from throughout our Region gather at a branch to uplift and bring excitement to that branch. A recent trip to Hopelawn, New Jersey proved very uplifting for the saints there. The next trip is scheduled to the Bronx, New York City. Typically the young people will spend the Saturday before handing out flyers and speaking to neighbors about the Church and inviting them to the Sunday meeting, which includes a Sunday School for their children and a luncheon.

Our Region Evangelists and other brothers are quite active as well. Evangelist Joe Perri is African Sector Chairman. Evangelist Jim Sgro is the European Sector Chairman. Evangelist Jerry Valenti is the Central America Sector Chairman, and Field Committee Chairmen include Evangelist Phil Arcuri in charge of the work in DR Congo, Brother Tom Curtin in charge of the work in Dominica and Evangelist Carl Huttenberger in charge of the work in Guatemala. Many other brothers are active in works in Mexico, South America, and in the Asia works. Our Region Evangelists try hard to support the Region, and also do what they can to spread the Gospel throughout the world. We thank God for all the dedicated brothers and sisters who are committed to doing the great work of the Lord. Their efforts are not in vain, and God has truly blessed our Region with workers, willing and able to bring the Gospel to the four corners of the earth.

A Message of Love Given to the Saints

By Apostle John Griffith

I wish to share with you a small experience I had on Tuesday, May 19, 2009. During my evening travel home my mind was taken to a high mountain where I met our beloved, recently departed Sister Vestalia Bicelis. As I saw her as a younger and vibrant person, I realized I was allowed to see her in a familiar way whereby I would recognize her. (Her natural body rests yet a little while until she is reunited with her soul and becomes a glorified body as we know will be so through the power of the First Resurrection.)

What I visualized was such a radiance about our sister and her countenance was of a deep spiritual beauty. Her joy was overwhelming. Although we were permitted to communicate with each other, yet not a word was spoken. It was as though we knew each other's thoughts.

There was no possibility of a natural language barrier. She expressed how joyful she was and the great peace she was experiencing. She referred to her great happiness in fellowshiping with loved ones and so many saints who were with her. Our sister could not explain the spiritual splendor, the deep love and unspeakable joy that were there; as though our human minds cannot comprehend the greatness and beauty of eternal life anew beginning in Paradise.

This small experience impressed my mind with the strength and greatness of love, even as it is shared here on Earth. This has caused me to better appreciate the extended power in shared love during our earthly lives. It is as a type and shadow of God's great love to be shared in the new Heaven and Earth.

My mind was made to recall the scriptures where we are taught concerning the everlasting characteristic of charity, that pure love of God (Christ). When we are with Christ, faith is no longer needed because we are in His presence. Our Hope has

been satisfied through His promises fulfilled; but that pure **LOVE** is abounding and alive. It is the core of post earthly existence. This Godly **love** becomes strengthened and magnified. A **love** connection as I feel remains with us although we are physically separated from our loved ones whom the Lord has received. You see, they remain part with us through shared **love**. **Love** is as a fabric weaved within the soul and feeds the soul with such great joy and peace. Ah, to trust in the completeness of God's promises.

I pray God's blessing upon those who have experienced similar losses of loved ones. As this message applies to all, may the promises of Eternal Life and the pure **love** we share enrich our being as we **love** and serve a living and **loving** God through His son Jesus Christ, our Salvation. May the Holy Spirit continue to teach us of wonderful promises to come. A familiar song lyric reads, "...Until we meet at Jesus' feet, 'til we meet, 'til we meet, God be with you 'til we meet again."

"And Ye Shall Know the Truth, and the Truth Shall Make You Free"

By Evangelist Art Gehly, Sr.

Tuesday morning, April 28th, 2009, as I was waiting at the hotel in Davao City, Mindanao for Brothers Rick Scaglione Jr. and Chip Smith Jr. to join me for breakfast, I was contemplating our trip to the new region in Western Mindanao. The glorious presence of the Holy Spirit overcame me and I knew without a doubt that it was God's will to go to meet the family of Edison Abraham, and God would do all that was needed to be done.

Edison (Ed) Abraham had been a member of a large restoration church for many years and in the last few years had been questioning the truthfulness of their doctrines.

Two years ago he began a search on the internet to find a church of the restoration that believed in the pure Gospel. His search revealed over 250 sites of which the vast majority were similar to the church he was once a member. He was directed toward The Church of Jesus Christ and sent an e-mail to the General Church address. We began correspondence in January, 2009. As he became more aware of our doctrine and beliefs, he shared the following experience:

Many months prior to our correspondence Ed was confiding to his wife, Naida, the loss of his testimony regarding the truthfulness of his former church. His eldest grand-

child, Gillian, 6 years old, overheard it and asked him this question.

"Tatay [meaning Dad], if what you are saying is true, where shall we go now? To what church must we belong?" He was caught speechless for a while but then answered, "Right now sweetheart, I am searching for the true church. When I find the true church, I will tell you. This will be our small secret." From time to time, especially when she goes absent from her primary class in church, she will ask me, "Tatay, have you found it yet?" To which I would always answer, "Almost, sweetheart, almost." On March 21, 2009, he said, "The time is very near, when I could tell my granddaughter the good news: I have found it. Make ready for it."

On March 25, 2009, Ed wrote these words to me: "I was reading

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Truth Shall Make You Free

Continued from Page 3

the Bible and I came over this passage, *Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free*. I think I know the truth now and it feels good to be free." After several more e-mails about questions concerning the Church and our beliefs, Brother Ed wrote and asked these questions on April 2, 2009: "How do I get baptized and possibly when? How many people do I have to prepare in order that authorized ministers could come and the Church be established/organized here in Pagadian City?" It was then that we realized we needed to change our travel plans and meet with Brother Ed and his family.

Traveling from Davao to the western section of Mindanao, we met Brother Ed Abraham and his son, Brother Marvin, at the airport and traveled to their home, about a two-hour drive. That evening we met with six members of the Abraham family and also one other interested woman. We began telling them about the true church Jesus set up and how it fell away, explaining to them how God restored the true doctrine with the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the establishment of His Church. We explained to them the spiritual officers and duties of the Church, how it was set up exactly as Jesus set it up in His day, i.e., Apostles, Evangelists, Pastors (Elders), Teachers, Deacons and Deaconesses.

We told them how God moved upon Brother William Bickerton to preserve the true doctrine and that allowed our church to have the name The Church of Jesus Christ as shown in the 27th Chapter of III Nephi. After answering their questions regarding the Church and baptism, I asked who wanted to be baptized? Brother Marvin, Ed's son, quickly answered, "all of us." We discussed when, and it was decided that four would be baptized Thursday morning and two would be baptized Friday morning because of their work schedules. Brother Ed asked how the Church would progress in Pagadian City. Who would baptize and minister to them?

I told Brother Ed that I had been concerned about this question also and that God had shown me that we needed to have a local elder, teacher and deaconess. I asked how he felt about being called into the office of Elder. He said he was willing to work for the Lord. I told him to pray and ask God if He would reveal His calling to him.

Brother Ed and I had planned to walk together early the following morning. As we met, he immediately told me about the experience he had during the night. Brother Ed prayed that God would forgive all his sins. Brother Ed opened up his heart and asked God if it was He who was calling him and if it was He, to let him know for sure in his heart. During the night Brother Ed had this recurring dream. The dream kept repeating itself until morning. "I was shown a symbol which felt familiar but somehow I could not understand nor remember. It was being shown to me over and over and the impression was that it meant the number 469." Upon awakening very early, he prayed to God and inquired what the dream meant. The inspiration came to him to go to page 469 of The Church of Jesus Christ Book of Mormon which he quickly did. This is the 27th chapter of III Nephi and on page 469 verse 6: "*And whoso taketh upon him my name, and endureth to the end, the same shall be saved at the last day.*" On page 468, Brother Ed was directed to verse 9: "*And when they shall have received this, which is expedient that they should have first, to try their faith, and if it shall so be that they shall believe those things than shall the greater things be manifest unto them.*" Brother Ed said, "All doubts from my mind fled and I sat there, tears welling down from my eyes. I knew right then in my heart, it was the Lord's call."

An e-mail was sent to the Asian sector leaders containing this experience and our feelings about his calling and requested permission to ordain Brother Ed as an elder. After some dialog, the Quorum of Twelve Apostles approved the request. We met with Brother Ed, Brother Marvin and Sister Naida during the day and

continued discussions on the doctrine of the Church and also the great differences we have with the doctrine of the former restoration church. A meeting was held that evening and Brother Rick spoke on the scripture of the woman at the well. Brother Chip followed and the blessings of the Spirit were very great. We blessed the feet washing and communion cloths and utensils, and ended the day by having dinner together and continuing to exchange experiences about the Gospel of Christ.

Thursday morning we arrived very early at the sea for the baptisms. Brother Ed, Sister Naida, Brother Marvin and Sister Jolibee, Marvin's wife, were baptized. It was a very blessed morning as our new brothers and sisters made their covenant with the Lord. Brother Ed told us that during the night he prayed and asked the Lord how they would spread the Gospel. He will build a pavilion on the property they own to be used as their church building. He used the phrase the "Gospel in Action." We spent the late morning and early afternoon discussing the duties of the offices of elder, teacher and deaconess. Also, we discussed feet washing and the method of serving Holy Communion.

The evening meeting began with singing some songs from our *Saints Hymnal* as they desired to know the songs we used. The four brothers and sisters received the baptism of the Holy Ghost by the Laying on of Hands from the ministry. We spoke of the great blessings we have in knowing the true Christ and the power of His Spirit. We continued with the ordinations—Brother Ed was ordained an Elder, Brother Marvin was ordained a Teacher and Sister Naida was ordained a Deaconess. There was a wonderful outpouring of God's Spirit as these ordinations took place. One experience was that as Sister Jolibee was washing Sister Naida's feet, she did not say an audible prayer but Brother Rick was given the words she was saying in English. Praise God. Communion was served to the new converts and Brother Ed testified that he had never

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Editorial Viewpoint . . .

As the United States celebrates yet another year of independence this July 4th, we in the Church can thank God for the promised land, where we can serve God without opposition and we can enjoy the prosperity that is attainable by anyone who desires it. Our missionaries who travel abroad can attest to the fact that we live upon a blessed land, and many say when they return home, they are so relieved to be back in a land with so many comforts and conveniences of life. Many say they are so blessed when they return to their branches, where the saints of God understand their purpose in God's Restored Gospel, and where even the missionaries can be "refueled" spiritually by their spiritual mothers and fathers in the United States. The Gospel was restored upon this land of America, and it will someday be the land of Zion as well. The scriptures tell us that no one comes to this land, unless God allows it. How blessed we are, and how thankful we should be that we have been chosen to be here.

There is a scripture that is disturbing, however. In such a blessed land, we see the following conditions all around us: pride, deceit, murder, wickedness, mischief, lies, and those that cause discord. These are the fruits of sin that have caused this nation to weaken to a point where we are not the ensign of truth and strength around the world like we once were. More importantly, how does God look upon our nation as a whole, after all the incredible bounty and blessings He has bestowed upon us?

"These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among bretheren" (Proverbs 6:16-19).

Pride, or class distinction permeates every aspect of our society. There is a clear line between the "have's and the have-not's." Lies abound as people try to cover up their sins. Our courtrooms are filled every day with people lying about things they have done. Murder is heard on the news every day in almost every place. People who have wicked imaginations are constantly thinking up new ways to entice people to commit sin, in ways we never thought imaginable. People seem to be slow to go to church on a Sunday, but have feet quick to run to a party or a bar where they can "misbehave." Then there are those that gossip about others and cause people to turn against one another, sowing discord. This results in a culture of hatred, and conditional love.

Jesus spoke against all of these things often. In the Book of Mormon, we read how whole societies were destroyed upon the land of America for committing these types of sins. It says the people became lifted up in pride, wearing costly apparel, and looking down on others. Unfortunately, we live in a day that is hauntingly similar to the past. We know what God did in the past to correct the situation, and so we know what God will do in the future. He is an unchanging God.

We have a responsibility to set the example to others. We should strip ourselves of pride, and treat everyone equally, regardless of their stature in life, or their race, ethnicity, or anything that makes them different from ourselves. We should always be truthful, keeping our mind set upon things that are pure and of a good report. Our feet should be quick to run to Church activities and to help our brothers and sisters in need; visiting the sick and afflicted. Extremely important is not to gossip, or talk badly about anyone. God hates this. If anything, we should talk about the good in one another, and lift one another up in love. There is always something good we can find in every person. Let's focus on that, and be an example of Christ. We are His ambassadors, chosen to be on this land for a reason. We are not here just to pass the time uselessly, but should labor to bring about God's kingdom, so that someday we will see His kingdom across the entire, blessed land of America.

Let's thank God we live upon such a blessed land not just by saying "thank God," but by the life we live.

The Children's Corner

By Sister Janet Bork



A Great Battle by God's People

(Alma 2)

Dear Friends,

About five hundred years after Lehi had come to the Promised Land, the people of Nephi, who served God, set up a government where they were ruled by judges. In their old days, kings had ruled and bad things had sometimes happened because not all kings were good. When power belongs to one bad person, that person (the king) can change the laws and hurt the good people.

Now in the fifth year of the judges, an evil man named Amlici began to talk against the people of God and the judges. Amlici formed a political group with himself as the leader. He wanted to be the boss of the whole country; he wanted to be a king.

The governor of the land was Alma. Alma was also the head of the Church, a man who served God faithfully. Across the country, the people began dividing into two groups. Alma arranged an election according to the laws of the land so the people could decide whether to have a king or to be ruled by judges.

The friends and followers of the wicked Amlici lost! More people chose to keep their freedom and be ruled by judges. Immediately Amlici formed an army to attack the people of God. He called his followers Amlicites. They gathered swords and knives and spears, and all weapons of war.

But Alma quickly realized their danger and formed his people, the Nephites, into an army also. When the fighting started many men were killed from both sides, but Alma cried unto the Lord to strengthen the people of God, and God heard him. The Nephites began to beat back their enemies. The Amlicites turned and ran away.

Alma sent spies to watch them, and they returned with terrible news! A huge army of their ancient enemies, the Lamanites, was approaching their borders and marching towards their unprotected cities. The Amlicites had joined them, and now they greatly outnumbered God's followers.

The people began to cry out to God to save them, and the Lord heard their cries and strengthened them. The next day the Nephites began battling thousands of the Lamanites, who fell before them.

Finally, the Lamanite and Amlicite armies turned and fled into the wilderness. There, the wild jungle animals killed many and the buzzards in the sky feasted on the dead. Piles of bones were all that was left of the enemies of God's people.

This is the same God that we love and serve. When we become spiritually weak or too proud to serve God, sometimes we must suffer things (problems) that wake us up to return to God and rejoice in His love. Scriptures tell us that God is the same yesterday, today and forever. As He was there to hear the children of Nephi, He will be there to hear us. Our battles will be God's battles.

Sincerely,
Sister Jan

WORD SEARCH

Find the words listed:

AMLICITES	BATTLE
ALMA	BIRD
PEOPLE	OF
ELECT	AIR
ENEMIES	WILD
TO	ANIMALS
GOD	PRAY
FOLLOWERS	WEAPONS
SAVED	WAR
JOY	

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

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"God Has Everything in Control"

By Evangelist Thomas P. Liberto

Because of heavy media coverage over the past few months about the US/Mexico Border, one might believe the city of Tijuana, Mexico is rapidly becoming a very dangerous city. In these ever-changing times there are constant reports of police corruption, violence and other horrible crimes taking place just a few miles south of the border from San Diego, California. Although these situations, activities of the local drug cartel and the Swine Flu outbreak are nothing to be taken lightly, it is clear that the Lord is in control and He has a group of saints in that city that are determined to serve Him.

On Sunday, April 26, Evangelists John DiBattista and Thomas P. Liberto walked across the US/Mexico Border from San Diego into Tijuana to visit the saints in that mission and to worship with them. They were met by a deacon, Brother Eddie Oseguera, from the mission at the south side of the San Ysidro International Border Crossing and driven to the church building which sits on a hillside about five miles from downtown Tijuana. Typically, brothers from the US who are familiar with Tijuana and the mission drive across the border and to the mission on their own, but with all of the unsafe reports and travel warning issues it was decided to travel with a local brother to the mission. It was wonderful to hear his reports during the drive of how the Lord has blessed the mission even in the midst of all of the violence occurring in the city on a daily basis. These blessings include many visitors from the neighborhood attending the services and five baptisms in the past two months.

The brothers arrived at the mission and were greeted by many brothers, sisters and visitors arriving for the Sunday service which was scheduled to begin at 10:00 a.m. Congregational singing began as the Ministry met in a side room to greet each other, discuss the order of the day and to hold prayer together, asking for God's power and

blessing upon those in attendance. Once entering the sanctuary it was wonderful to see that well over 100 people had gathered for the service and their singing of hymns filled the room. It was beautiful to hear the brothers, sisters and visitors sing for the next 45 minutes to the honor and glory of God in the Spanish language.

The meeting was opened in prayer and Brother John introduced the service using Ether 13. Through a translator, Brother Juan Rivas who is the first counselor of the Church in Mexico, Brother John explained that those in attendance are of the House of Israel and he further explained the lineage to Joseph. He continued to explain that those in attendance are of the Seed of Joseph who was used to save his brothers from starvation during the great famine and that a promise

"...it is always wonderful to hear how God is faithful to those who serve Him..."

was made to his seed that a promised land would be provided them. Brother John also explained part of the inheritance of receiving this blessed land would be to experience the blessings of God in their lives, and that promise still holds true today. He continued by sharing numerous experiences in the Church across the world of how God is the same yesterday, today and forever because of the promise He made to Abraham.

Brother Tom followed by stating it is always wonderful to hear how God is faithful to those who serve Him and how His power is evident in our lives and the lives of our families. He continued with Luke 10 and explained that, just like the original seventy, we should not marvel in the blessings God grants us, but that our names are written in Heaven. This is the greatest inheritance of all and the one that makes all of the other blessings possible. He then shared Alma 5:58 and explained the great inheritance will only be granted to those who are baptized and give their life to Christ. He ended

with an invitation to all who had not given their life to Christ to do so and to accept the inheritance God promised them.

The service was opened for testimony and a visitor stood in tears. She explained the Spirit she felt and expressed she wanted to accept the inheritance that was promised her by giving her life to Christ. She asked to be baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ. Many tears flowed as the testimonies continued and one after another stood to thank God for His wonderful blessings in their life. As the Spirit continued to flow from vessel to vessel many others began to stand and thank God for coming in contact with the Church. They thanked God for the message that was shared and before long another had asked to join the fold of Jesus Christ. The Spirit of calling continued and finally, as the Lord's Supper was being prepared, a deacon approached the pulpit and shared with the Ministry that yet another person had requested to be baptized. Praise God for His goodness and mercy, and for His faithfulness in keeping His promise yesterday, today and forever!

The congregation enjoyed Communion together, and there was a wonderful spirit felt by all. Two babies were blessed and there was much more singing to the honor and glory of God. The service was eventually brought to a close and everyone greeted one another in the Spirit of Christ, praising God for His blessings on this wonderful day when three new souls came to Christ. The Ministry ate lunch together while discussing some natural affairs of the mission before the visiting brothers were returned to the border.

It was a truly wonderful day where not even for a moment did the "risks" of this dangerous city enter into their minds. As promised, He has given us power to "tread on serpents" and nothing shall hurt us as we do His will. We continue to thank God for His blessings, yesterday, today and forever, and we look forward to hearing how He will continue to bless His work, in Tijuana, and the entire world, as His inheritance is freely given to those who will serve Him.

Ecuador Missionary Trip March 2009

By Brother Ron Mazzeo and
Brother Scott Griffith

Forming a Spiritual Family in Ecuador

"Hear ye the word of the Lord. If you hearken unto these words, I will bless you and form you into a family in Me."

This was a powerful message to the members of the Quito, Ecuador Mission. On a recent trip by Evangelist Nephi DeMercurio Sr. and Brothers Ron Mazzeo, and Jose Gonzalez, the members of the Church in Ecuador were gathered together discussing the importance of meeting together often and thus becoming a close knit group; the gift of tongues was spoken with the (above) interpretation, that God would unite His people and form them into a family through His Spirit.

Throughout our 10-day stay, we met with many people, sharing the Gospel of Christ. We shared time with Sister Xiomara teaching Mark's Gospel. Brother Nephi had told her, the day before, to read the first two chapters of Mark. She had read seven (7) chapters. She showed a great desire to study the scriptures, and Brother Nephi wanted to give her a panoramic view of the Gospel and felt to begin with Mark. Several other saints and friends arrived soon after for an informal meeting as we continued to teach them of how to implement the lessons learned, even after our American brothers would depart. We spoke on many topics throughout the week, including the love of God, the pearl of great price, atonement, and the Church's identity and mission. The members were very intent on the words brought forth, and many were blessed in testimony and prayer.

Our Sister Mariana told how merciful God was to her husband who was given up to die by the doctors. Yet, he came out of the coma he was in and now is actually back to work as a taxi driver (a job which the Lord

provided for him in answer to her prayers). Another young couple was present whose baby had recently died. They asked for prayer, and we prayed for God to comfort them in their sorrow. As the ministry was anointing another in attendance named Helena, the word of the Lord came forth and spoke these words: "If you exercise faith I will grant the things that you've asked for, according to your faith." The Lord was certainly touching the people and meeting their individual needs. As well, a man named Luis Chuchimbe expressed a desire to be baptized in the future. He also mentioned that he played professionally as a musician (keyboard/piano) in a group, and would be willing to help the saints learn some church music. This, of course, was encouraging music to our ears.

We were very prayerful all week that the Lord would inspire our messages to touch the hearts of the people. Upon praying one morning, Brother Ron Mazzeo heard a voice say "Fear not. I will be in your midst." During the Sunday service that same day, Brother Nephi made a remark under the influence of the Spirit, saying "The physical presence of God is in our midst." It was beautiful to see how in concert these two experiences were!

Another tribute to God's reas-

urance came while the brothers were on their knees (in their hotel room) in mighty prayer because of some of the problems discerned among the saints; the Spirit raised Brother Ron to his feet and he spoke in tongues. The interpretation was, "Receive the strength of the Lord and continue in the work for I am aware of these things." We were so blessed that the Lord was in direct communication with us throughout the week, guiding us and answering each request.

As we departed, we were very touched to see the sad reaction from our brothers and sisters to our leaving. The children wept a great deal. The saints and friends also displayed sadness at our trip's end. If it is God's will, we hope to return soon and continue the "marvelous work and wonder" as spoken of in the Book of Mormon and see the roots of the Restored Gospel go down deep in Ecuador's fertile ground. There is a great deal of potential in this work. We must patiently show them the love of God and allow God to gradually open their hearts in His own due time. We are confident that the Lord will bless this work if we allow Him to do His work at His own pace. He will form the spiritual family of God in Ecuador! Please pray for the work to flourish to His honor and glory.



Brother Ron and Brother Jose with the Family of God in Ecuador.

Israel's Advocate: Doing the Lord's Work

Sometimes God has a unique way of getting us to do His work. At the 1967 November GMBA Conference, in Monongahela, Pennsylvania, several young people requested baptism. Among them was Michael McGuire of Lorain, Ohio. He was baptized by Brother Joseph Calabrese of Lorain, Ohio and confirmed by Brother Timothy Dom Bucci of Youngstown, Ohio. Most members know Brother Calabrese and some may recall Brother Bucci. Both brothers were strong participants and supporters of Native American outreach.

Fast forward to March 2009: Sister JoAnn McGuire, who is a Wampanoag/Blackfeet Native American and the wife of Brother Michael, was asked to join the board of directors of the Nuweetooun Indian School in Rhode Island. She and her husband had been strong supporters of the school.

Coincidence? Not in The Church of Jesus Christ. Jacob said, "All things are done in the wisdom of Him who knows all things" (2 Nephi 2:24). That knowledge is not limited in time or place. God sees all days as one day (Alma 40:8). Maybe it was God's plan to have the GMBA in Mononga-

hela that date, to have Brother Bucci visiting from Youngstown and to have Brother Michael visiting from Lorain. And just maybe, God inspired Brother Bucci to include in his prayer a special blessing on Brother Michael to have a love for the Native Americans, who are descendants of Joseph, son of Israel. We would echo the words of Jacob in 2 Nephi 9. "O the wisdom of God." And, "O how great the plan of our God." (This theme is repeated a number of times as are the woes extended to those who are disobedient.)

What have Brother Michael and Sister JoAnn done? Many little things here and there. Sister JoAnn has taught a sewing class and assisted in a quilting class at the school. She provides crafts, chokers, and blankets, ribbon shirts and dresses. Brother Michael provides walking sticks and canes. Both Brother Michael and Sister JoAnn assist at the Tomaquag Indian Memorial Museum which is associated with the Nuweetooun Indian School and support an indigenous rights organization. They attend numerous pow wows and feasts to be involved and close to the Native Americans and their programs. They also were the contacts for the blanket project to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota this past winter (an activity supported by the Atlantic Coast Region). Brother Michael noted, "these

little things are what the Native Americans are looking for. In doing so a trust will grow between us that will be lasting and forever."

I will conclude with Jacob's third theme in that same chapter, "O, my beloved brethren, give ear to my words." The Church of Jesus Christ is moving forward with its Native American outreach throughout North and South America. The efforts and gains may appear small at this time, but as the Scriptures state, "by small means the Lord can bring about great things" (1 Nephi 16:29; see also Alma 37:6, 7, 41). Let us each do our small part so that the Lord's work will continue to roll forward and He will be glorified through His Son, Jesus Christ, that these words may be fulfilled, "For if the casting away of them [Israel] be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" (Romans 11:15). Who would not want to be a part of such a glorious event? If you would like to assist, ask God for opportunities to share the message and contact your Region Native American Outreach Committee (or RMOC) – today! Also, visit the General Church web site www.thechurchofjesuschrist.org for a copy of the NAOC Handbook to help you get started and provide you with the tools to do some of the Lord's work.



Branch and Mission News

Blessings in Levittown

By Brother Michael Fraschilla

The past few months in the Levittown, PA branch have been ones of spiritual and personal growth for the members. At the beginning of the year, the Presiding Elder, Brother Jerry Valenti came up with a list of Growth Objectives for our branch. Presented at a luncheon after one of our Sunday

meetings, Brother Jerry outlined each of the tasks and then asked each of the members to choose one task to focus on for the next 6 months. Along with choosing a task, a number of the members were chosen to be accountability partners and would discuss another member's chosen task with them to record their progress and help give them support. Our members could choose between such things as reading more, teaching lessons, fasting and prayer, etc.

Since the start of our Growth Objectives we have seen glorious things happen. Our Brother Timothy Cervone has been called to become a deacon; we have had growth in the

form of transferring members; we have had people in the community come inside and join in our meetings; we have seen past members walk through our doors that we have not seen in years. We thank God for His grace and mercy even as He has helped the members in our branch with everything from school work to helping with financial situations in this difficult time. God has been blessing our branch.

The messages brought forth through the month of May have been messages of angels protecting our children, relying on the Lord for our daily

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Blessings in Levittown

Continued from Page 9

bread, and coming to the Lord with all our problems. On Sunday May 24, 2009, the Lord saw fit to show His blessings and power in an overabundance, filling all of our cups to overflowing. It was a day for the blessing of Brother Noah and Sister Chasity Bright's newborn son, Noah.

Brother Jerry opened the meeting with Mark 10:13-16 and recalled the disciples sending away the children, with Jesus then chastising the disciples. Jesus told them to "Suffer the little children to come unto me." Jesus also instructed that one must be as a little child to enter the kingdom of Heaven. Following this, Brother Jerry went into 3rd Nephi chapter 17 verses 19 to 24. He told the story of Jesus in America, and blessing the little children one by one. He told of the angels descending and the ring of fire that formed around the children, and what a blessing it must have been to bear witness to that event.

Finally, Brother Jerry ended with Moroni 8:8-10, instructing us that there is no repentance needed for children. Jesus preached that only adults and parents need repentance. After this, Brother Mark King spoke and elaborated, going on to verse number 11 and talking about what an absurdity it is to ask a little child to be baptized for the sin they do not have.

Before we went into our break, Brother Jerry asked Brother Joshua Boruch to sing the song *The Eagle's Flight*. As we prepared to begin our break, Brother Nick Boruch walked to the pulpit with tears in his eyes pro-claiming that as Brother Josh was singing, he saw the Three Nephites standing in the back.

As we broke and fellowshiped for about 15 minutes, we all talked about what a blessing the meeting had already been. Brother Tim Cervone went to the front and called the hymn, *Wave the Flags of Zion*. During the song, Christina Rios made her decision to be baptized. The Lord was pouring out His blessings this day.

After the break, Sister Laura Gibson requested that her own children

who had never been blessed, Kyle and Chris Gibson, be blessed. Brother Jerry Valenti blessed Chris Gibson and Brother Nick Boruch blessed Kyle Gibson. Then Sister Chasity and Brother Jared Bright's son, Noah, was blessed by his grandfather, Brother Mark King. Following this was a beautiful testimony session in which the saints talked about the many blessings that had been received.

After we had communion an announcement was made that Brother Kevin Perri would be ordained a Teacher in the coming month. Our meeting was then brought to a close.

What a blessed Sunday! Three children blessed, two branch members to soon be ordained, and one young person requesting her baptism after a long struggle with the decision. Blessed be the name of the Lord! All honor and glory to God!

Baptism and Ordination in Venezuela

Continued from Page 1

His Spirit in this part of the vineyard. Before departing for their homes, everyone enjoyed a treat provided by Sister Alicia.

During our five-day stay in Valle Guanape, we spent much time counseling and encouraging Brothers Raul and Esnel, as well as discussing various Scriptures with them. We also felt our brothers should teach and prepare Daniel to be used to teach the children in songs and Bible stories in a "junior church" atmosphere. On Wednesday, both brothers accompanied us to the airport in Barcelona where we would board a plane for the two-hour flight to Maracaibo and the second half of our trip.

Maracaibo proved to be quite a contrast to the quiet rural atmosphere of Valle Guanape. On our arrival there, we were greeted by Brothers Jose and Angel Chavez, and Rich Nath who had arrived on an earlier flight from Miami to join us. Two taxis took us and our luggage to our hotel, our home for the next five days. Our agen-

da included further counseling with Brother Jose who was ordained into the Ministry in February. We stressed the fact that the Priesthood of The Church of Jesus Christ has God's authority to minister all of the ordinances of the Gospel as taught by Christ. Basic items relative to the Ministry were reviewed and reinforced, including using the Bible and Book of Mormon together when preaching, our responsibilities as ministers and members of the Church, and various Scripture subjects. We also questioned Brother Angel concerning ordination to the office of Teacher and reviewed the responsibilities of the office. We all were impressed with his humility and love for the Church as he responded to our questions. He was encouraged to pray about this and follow God's Spirit. The next day we met and continued our discussion with Brother Angel. He related an experience he recently had. In a dream, he heard a voice telling him to go to a certain place. There was a large tree nearby, and he began to speak to a group of people. There was also a large body of water there. When we asked him if he was ready to accept God's calling, he humbly agreed. The ordination would take place in our Sunday meeting. I felt prompted to ask Brother Nath to wash Brother Angel's feet. Brother Nath said he felt we would ask him to do this, a confirmation of God's Spirit.

On Friday we visited with Brother Jose's family at their apartment. It was immediately obvious this lovely family is thankful for God's blessings, and they sincerely love the Lord. Jose's mother said she has been praying for God's calling into the Church. We also discussed the role and duties of a minister's wife with Sister Carolina, Brother Jose's wife. A time of fellowship followed. We were also treated with a delicious dinner.

The next day we traveled out of the city to hold a meeting with the small group in the village of El Palo. To our dismay, the only ones there were the two elderly sisters. We spent some time with them sharing God's love. While in El Palo, we visited Jose and Angel's uncle and his family. Their backyard is a stone's throw

from Lake Maracaibo. Here we found it to be suitable for baptisms, and it is much closer than the other site previously used.

Nine of us were in attendance at Sunday's meeting, held in the Chavez family apartment. Brother Nath had volunteered to lead the Sunday School meeting. He used 1 Nephi 8, reviewing Nephi's vision of the straight and narrow path that leads to the tree of life and related it to Christ's words

of the straight gate and narrow path (Matthew 7:13-14). We were asked to evaluate where we are along this path. In the service that followed, the duties of a Teacher were read from the Minister's Manual. Brother Nath washed Brother Angel's feet and I ordained him.

I continued on the theme of the straight gate and narrow path, and how we must remain focused on reaching the tree of life. Brothers Frank and

Jose followed on the same subject. We spent some time anointing and praying for those with various needs. After the meeting, we shared a time of fellowship. We were encouraged with the desire everyone expressed to work together in love and harmony. This will certainly bring many more blessings to this small but sincere congregation.

Although we didn't accomplish all of our intended goals, we left Venezuela on Monday feeling that we did our best. However, as with all missionary work, we left part of us there with our new spiritual family and the desire to return in God's due time. Please continue to pray for the "Saints of the Caribbean." In the words of a Gospel song, *"Little is much when God is in it."*

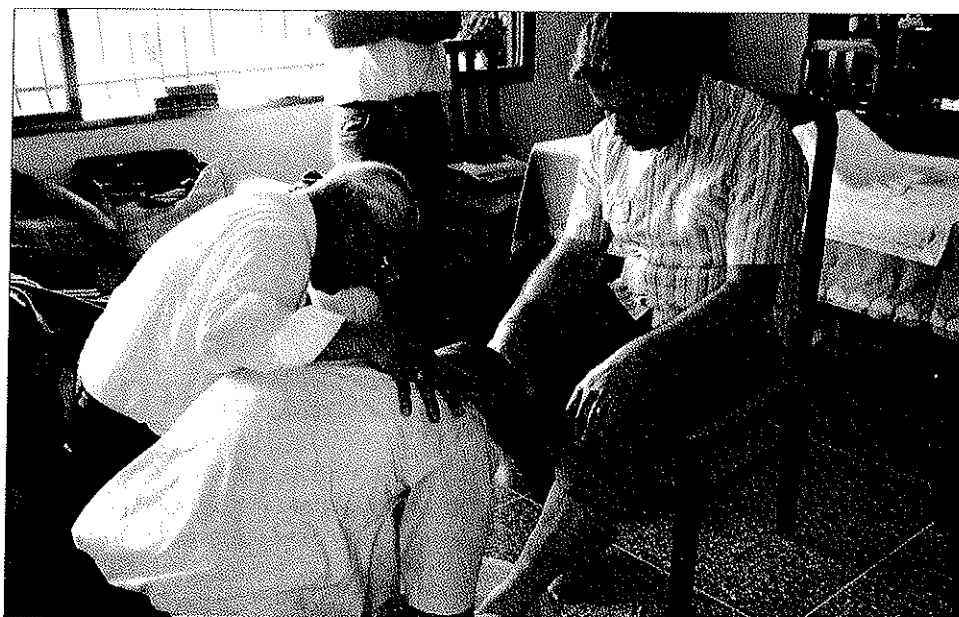
Truth Shall Make You Free

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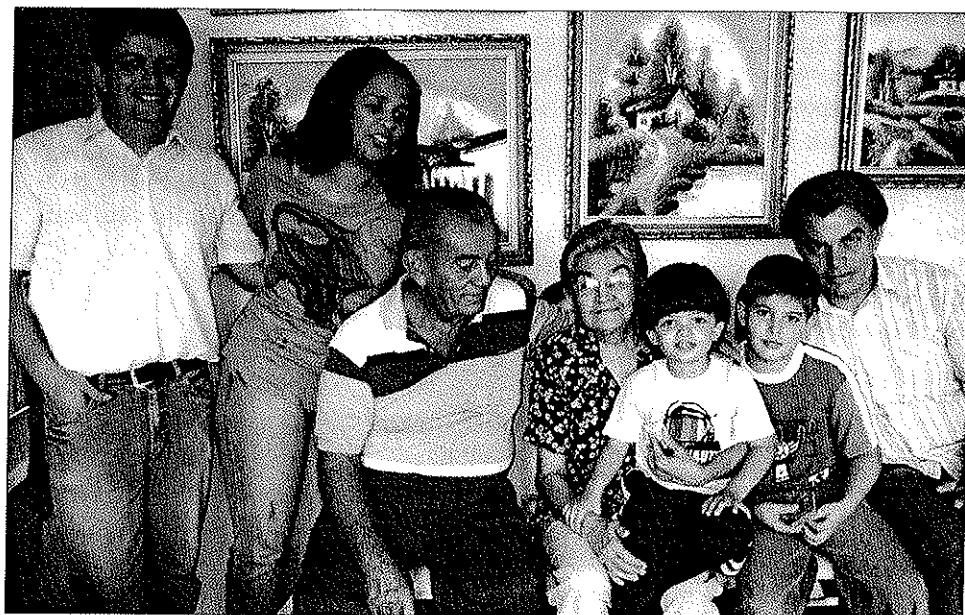
had as wonderful a blessing before in his life.

Friday morning we went to the waters and Brother Ed baptized Sister Jennifer Abraham and Sister Felicidad Oculares and all were greatly blessed. In the afternoon, we had a meeting and confirmed the two sisters. Brother Art spoke on Alma 7, where we are encouraged to be faithful to the Lord and have the attributes of the Spirit. Both of the newly-baptized sisters gave their testimony. Sister Felicidad spoke with such humbleness, and as her tears fell from her cheeks we were all overcome with the Spirit. Brother Ed testified with tears in his eyes that he had been a member of a restoration church for 38 years but this was the first time he had felt the Spirit of God. Sister Naida told us that she was so very happy.

Brother Ed was very blessed as he served communion. We concluded the meeting with a feet washing service. As I washed Brother Ed's feet I felt I was on a cloud. What a beautiful day and time we had with our new saints at Pagadian City. Please pray that God will continue to bless our brothers and sisters in this part of the Philippines.



Brother Rich Nath washing the feet of Brother Angel Chavez.



The Chavez family in Maracaibo: Brother Jose, Sister Carolina, Angel, Daysi, the Chavez boys, and Brother Angel Chavez.

* WEDDINGS *

Scott Michael Sims and Michelle Benyola were united in holy matrimony on February 13, 2009 at Detroit, Michigan Branch #1.

Brother Jason Genaro and Sister Adrianna Phillips were united in holy matrimony on May 23, 2009 in the Forest Hills, Florida Branch.

Children Blessed

Brandon Richard Covig, son of Emily Markel and Brandon Colvig, was blessed on February 15, 2009 at the Lorain, Ohio Branch.

Ava Marie Lesperance, daughter of Ryan and Gina Lesperance, was blessed on April 19, 2009 at Detroit, Michigan Branch #1.

Anna Maria Mott, daughter of Brother Timothy and Sister Jimena Mott, was blessed on May 9, 2009 at the Montreal, Quebec Mission.

Dalton Blake Barnett, son of Melissa and Christopher Barnett, was blessed on May 10, 2009 at the Treasure Coast, Florida Branch.

Hannah Havilah, daughter of Brother Kelly and Na'alie Humphrey, was blessed on May 24, 2009 at the Forest Hills, Florida Branch.

Ashley Marie Rogallo, daughter of Brother John and Amy Rogalla, was blessed on May 31, 2009 at the Hollywood, Florida Branch.

Baptisms

Brother John Patrick Houlihan was baptized on April 19, 2009 at the Detroit, Michigan Branch #1. He was baptized by Brother Brett Gibson and confirmed by Brother Larry Champine.

Brother John David Cote Jr. was baptized on May 31, 2009 at the Lake Worth, Florida Branch. He was baptized by Brother Chuck Maddox and confirmed by Brother Kevin Jasmin.

Brother Phillip Brickhouse was baptized on May 10, 2009 at the Cape Coral, Florida Branch.

Brother Ricco Notarnicola was reinstated into The Church of Jesus Christ on May 24, 2009 at the Forest Hills, Florida Branch.

Sister Wilma Carr Osterwise was reinstated into The Church of Jesus Christ on April 26, 2009 at the Greensburg, Pennsylvania Branch.

Sister Roseanne Mulla was baptized at the Plumbrook, Michigan Branch. She was baptized by Brother Michael Capone and confirmed by Brother Mark Palmieri.

Brother Jeremy Peshl was baptized at the Plumbrook, Michigan Branch. He was baptized by Brother Nephi DeMercurio Sr., and confirmed by Brother Michael Capone.

Ordinations

Brother Brian Brown was ordained a deacon on May 24, 2009 at the Treasure Coast, Florida Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Clint Cason and he was ordained by Brother David Checchi.

OBITUARIES

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

BARTALOMEIO "BEN" DIPRONIO

Brother Bartalomeo "Ben" DiPronio of Detroit, Michigan Branch #1, passed on to his reward on March 30, 2009. He was preceded in death by his parents, Brother Rocco and Sister Lucia DePronio; and two sisters, Mary Karjeski and Angeline Disantis. He is survived by his wife, Sister Rosalie; son, Rocco; daughter, Sabrina (Leo) Haudek; granddaughter, Bianca; and one sister, Grace Bergen.

DIRECTORY UPDATE

Riina, Josephine
1982 Indian Lake Road
National City, MI 48748

Vargo, Jennie
14565 Angelique
Allen Park, MI 48101

Address Change

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Branch or Mission _____



THE CHURCH OF Jesus Christ

International Headquarters in
Monongahela, Pennsylvania

August, 2009

Volume 65, No. 8

Freedom Fighters

By Brother Doug O'Bradovich

Independence Day! The 4th of July! What other holiday has the audacity to simply be identified by its date? I'm sure you have all heard the same joke: Does England have "The 4th of July"? Of course they do, they just don't celebrate it!

What an intriguing concept that an entire country, without apology, would set aside an entire day each year to celebrate their freedom. Making such a confident statement annually is especially bold in light of more than half of the world being inhabited by countries not able to enjoy such liberties. It is approximated that 103 (43 are considered "not free" and 60 are considered "partly free") of the 195 countries in the world are at least limited in their freedoms. This year the United States will experience the freedom of choice for the 233rd year, reminding all that on July 4, 1776, she claimed her independence from any and all other authorities. Every American-born citizen reading this article inherited their liberated status, realizing this joy as a blessed birth-right.

Independence, an adjective, is defined as, "*not subject to control by others: being self-governed:*

not requiring or relying on something else; not contingent upon or bound by." As often is the case, the single dimensional definition of a word doesn't quite capture its full essence. Anyone who has ever experienced true independence would attest to it being so much more significant. It might be even more powerful to get the testimonial of someone who has transitioned from captivity to independence, as they undoubtedly would express more enthusiasm in explaining the affects of such liberty versus this simple definition.

Most Americans grew up learning the names of traditional historical figures such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln as Freedom Fighters and appropriately so. I submit that there are many more names to be added to this list of great Americans. Where is the name of that great American, Sister Betty Alessio of Mesa, Arizona? Why is Brother Anthony D'Antonio of Aliquippa, Pennsylvania absent from this list of great freedom fighters in American history? I have searched the history books and have yet to uncover the name of Sister Susan Moroco of Hollywood, Florida. Like each of you, I'm thankful to have been taught the aforementioned names of great Americans who struggled for the cause of freedom; however, I am

troubled by the obvious omission of other great Americans of equal greatness. The struggle for American liberty should include an expanded list that might include names like Catone, Lovalvo, Garcia, Scaglione, Heaps, Calabro, Martinez, Picciuto and Smith (to name but a few).

II Nephi 1:9 states, "...*inasmuch as those whom the Lord God shall bring out of the land of Jerusalem shall keep his commandments, they shall prosper upon the face of this land and they shall be kept from all other nations, that they may possess this land unto themselves. And if it so be that they shall keep his commandments they shall be blessed upon the face of this land, and there shall be none to molest them, nor to take away the land of their inheritance; and they shall dwell safely forever.*"

I understand this verse to clearly empower the first inhabitants of this land to become actively involved in the fight for freedom. It has been said that "no man is an island," which implies that we are never independent of each other; in fact, quite the contrary. Clearly the verse above speaks of this interconnection as the safety of an entire land is contingent upon the behavior of a few, one individual at a time. It further clarifies

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The Church of Jesus Christ

Notice of available positions at the WORLD OPERATIONS CENTER Job Requirement Profile

Job Title: TYPESET, LAYOUT AND EDIT MINUTES AND PRINTED MATERIAL

Reports To: The General Church Presidency

Location: World Operations Center – Greensburg, PA

I) General Function: Perform various layout, edit, and secretarial functions.

II) Job Duties and Responsibilities:

1. Layout, edit and proofread the Gospel News with material sent from Editor.
2. Prepare new and existing literature for reprint: edit, typeset, and proofread.
3. Preparing (sorting and bundling) Humanitarian Foundation Fund newsletter and *First Voices* for 3rd class mailing.
4. Supervise printing of items that come in camera ready.
5. Layout General Church Minutes and Agenda.
6. Edit and proofread everything we print.
7. Work with printers on all items (everything we print).

III) Office Functions and Responsibilities:

1. Sort paper and e-mails.
2. Record all Accounts Receivable.
3. Make copies of payable, send originals to Central Treasury.
4. Invoice orders/make copies for Central Treasury.
5. Maintain General Church membership, Branch and Mission Elders, NAOC (separate mailings) *Voices* Database.
6. Answer phone calls.
7. Monthly distribute 1st class *Gospel News*/Foreign and Canada.
8. Prepare Humanitarian Foundation Fund newsletter for distribution, 1st and 3rd class, and deliver to Post Office.
9. Collate, trim, and staple newly printed pamphlets.
10. Add new items to inventory.
11. Distribute and invoice GMBA literature, posters, flyers, and registration forms.

IV) Relations with others:

Frequent internal and external contact with Church associates and individuals making inquiries, and provide or obtain information. MUST have ability to interact with people in a tactful professional manner and provide an atmosphere of friendly service when interacting with all individuals.

V) Knowledge and Skill Requirements:

Necessary Skills

Strong typing skills
Mathematics and simple statistical skills
Office computer skills
Knowledge of MS Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint etc.
Effective communication skills
Effective organizational skills

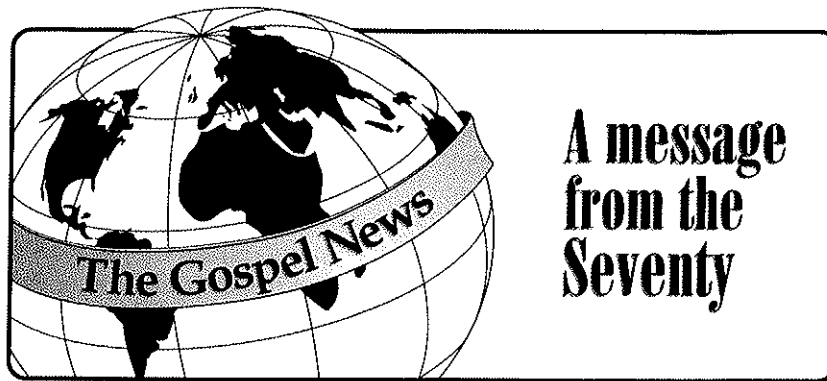
Job Experience

3-5 years office experience or equivalent

Education

High School degree or equivalent with office skills/business training background or formal post high school courses including computer skills, office practices.

Interested applicants should send a resume to: Paul Palmieri
319 Pine Drive
Aliquippa, PA 15001
e-mail ppalmieri1@msn.com



Evangelistic Trip to Italy November 2008

By Brother Anthony J. Micale

Several weeks before Evangelists Alex Gentile, John DiBattista and I left for this trip, Brother John DiBattista e-mailed me a request that we should start to pray for God to bless us on our upcoming trip to Italy. In his e-mail he wrote the words of the hymn *Blessed Assurance* in Italian.

1. Lieta certezza: – e' mio Gesu'
Quale dolcezza: – ho il ciel quaggiu.
Gia son rinato – redento son,
Dio m'ha comprato – ho il Suo
perdon;

CORO.

Questa e' mia storia; questa e'
mia fe'
Tutta ha la Gloria Cristo mio re;

2. Gesu' mi guida – anise non ho,
Satan mi sfida – ma vincerò;
Gli angeli intanto – recan dal ciel
L'amore santo – del Divo agnel.
Coro.
3. Son Sottomesso – Sempre al
Signor
Godo l'amplesso – del Salvator;
Pieno d'amore – guardo a Gesu',
Sento nel core – la Sua vertu'.
Coro.

Yes, this is my story; this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long. As I read, I could not hold back the tears. We look forward to each trip with great anticipation of God's blessings. I missed the last trip in

September due to an unexpected operation. I was so disappointed that I missed the conference in Sardegna; but when you're part of the family of God you are never forgotten or alone. The brothers and sisters called me every day while I was in the hospital and gave me a full report of the day's blessing. The love and prayers of the saints helped me through my ordeal. I thank God for my full recovery and that I was able to make this trip. I have been so blessed in the Lord's service.

We all arrived safely in Milan, Italy on the 14th of November, 2008. One of the goals of this trip was to see what could be done about establishing a mission of the Church in Milan. We fasted and prayed before this trip that God would be with us, and that we would feel His spirit and power. All the members of the Italian Committee are thankful to God for the progress that has been made in Italy up to now. But the work is just beginning.

The frequent trips we have made are very beneficial in helping the Church in Italy grow and in the uplifting of the Italian saints. The consistency of visits is giving us a strong foundation for growing and supporting the work. We can see the love of the saints grow and their faith improve each time we come. We have had many blessings and experiences given us by God each time we visit. As in any missionary field we have many threats and challenges.

But we trust that God will continue to see us through the opposition we face if we prove faithful to His will.

That evening we all met at a local restaurant and had dinner with the saints. There were sixteen of us all together. It was a wonderful reunion. During one of the many trips to the airport to pick up arriving saints, one of the brothers had an experience. After waiting a long time for a brother to arrive, he was about to leave the station feeling that he was not coming. As he was about to leave he saw someone that looked like the brother. This person walked out and started to talk to him, and then he actually saw the brother and the other person disappeared. The Lord sent His angel to delay our brother from leaving. One thing is sure, God is faithful to fill our every need.

It was Saturday night and we were all excited about meeting tomorrow for the Sunday service. We had an incredible time at our Sunday service. God is answering all of our prayers to lift up and stir up the saints and visitors here in Italy. We had eighteen people at our meeting at the hotel. Four were not baptized. We were very blessed by the turnout of people. The power of God was present and two members saw visions verifying the wonderful spirit that was present. One of our new sisters, who was baptized at the Sardegna Conference last September, saw a bright light around one of the American brothers while he was speaking. Another sister later saw a half moon shape light and two personages behind the ministry while another brother was speaking. The brother was telling an experience he had that involved the saints in Italy. We anointed several people and the power of God was felt by all. The Ministry was in wonderful harmony and all spoke on the same subject. The meeting went almost three hours and not an Italian budged, which in itself is a miracle.

After the service we all met at a restaurant for lunch. Building relationships with family and friends is very important. As the Lord has said,

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Message from the Seventy

Continued from Page 3

they will know you by the love you show one another. It was an added pleasure that a brother and sister from Germany were with us. That evening we went to one of the saint's homes and there the spirit continued to move. One of our young sisters asked us to bless her two young children. We prayed for several of the young people at this time, as well. The tears were flowing in response to the Spirit of God that was present. The family was very uplifted. We had a wonderful conversation about the things of God and the Church.

We had prayed for an opening to visit our new sister and her husband at their home in Bergamo to meet their family. As we had hoped they asked us to come visit them. God is good. When Brother Alex first visited them three years ago the husband was very cold to them. Now since our sister has been baptized he is a changed man. He is very close to being baptized. God is able to soften a heart of stone. Isn't the love of Jesus something wonderful? They have a beautiful home with a big garden. As I walked into the garden, I thought of the garden that Jesus prayed in at the last part of His ministry – the pain He must have felt. I felt God's Spirit as I thought of these things in this garden. It was a blessing. They prepared a six-course meal. We met their daughter and spent the next four hours talking about the Lord and the many experiences we have all had. Her granddaughter, who is sixteen years old, asked for prayer. She suffers from headaches and swollen eyes. We will continue to pray for her that God will show His power. We know that in this way we can show that this is the true Church of Jesus Christ.

Based on the great attendance at the Sunday service in Milan, we are encouraged to move forward with looking into a meeting place. We said goodbye to the saints in Milan and started our journey to San Demetrio. It is a long trip, about 800 miles or 1200 kilometers. Brother Rosario joined us on the long drive. It was a two-day

drive, which takes about 12 hours. Thank God we arrived safely in San Demetrio on Wednesday afternoon. The first stop always is at the home of a faithful couple. We were so happy to see each other. They are strong in the faith. Our sister has not been feeling well. Brother Alex prayed for her, and we retired for the evening.

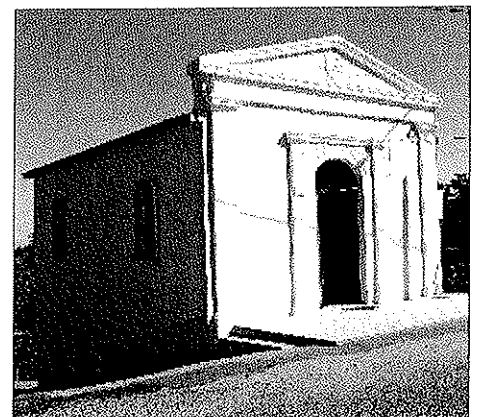
The next morning we started out at the church for prayer. It was our desire that the Lord would lead us with His Spirit during this visit. Brother Rosario prayed first as we held hands. Next Brother John DiBattista gave a powerful prayer filled with God's Spirit. The prayer was for the Church in Italy and the needs of the saints there and our families at home. Brother Alex and I followed in prayer. We really felt God's Spirit – what a wonderful way to start the missionary trip in San Demetrio. We have several family members of the saints that are struggling with joining the Church. They are having trouble with their families over the decision to join the Church. We made many stops to visit the saints in this area of Italy, and many of them asked us to pray for them and their families. There are strong superstitions in Italy. One sister said that there is an evil spirit in her home. This has been an ongoing problem for a long time. The brothers have prayed for this problem over a ten-year period. Brother Alex gave a powerful prayer that God would remove this fear from her. We spent many hours telling experiences of the Lord and discussing the Church. Brother John showed slides on his computer from past Church events over the years. We will keep praying that someday the children and the families of the saints will come to The Church of Jesus Christ.

The next day, Friday, we started the day again in prayer and song at the church. It was very cold and windy. A young woman that the brothers had been talking to for some time about the Church, seemed to be close to baptism. However, she e-mailed us last month that she was an atheist and did not believe in God. How quickly the enemy of our soul can enter in. The young woman's mother wants to join

the Church – her children are very much against it. She asked last May to be baptized but wanted to wait a year due to mourning her husband's death. We spent several hours talking to them, but to no avail. Before we left we held hands and offered prayer for the family. Since we returned from Italy we heard from Brother Rosario that the young woman we were praying for was arrested with three of her young friends. Now we understood better the change that came over her heart. You cannot serve God and the devil.

The next day, Saturday, we again met at the church for prayer. We spent most of the morning working on the new three-year plan. As part of the new plan we hope to increase our visits to eight times a year for ten to fourteen days at a time. It is very important that we receive input from Brother Rosario and the saints in Italy. We wrote a preliminary financial plan also. We made good progress on the plan. We continued in visiting many of the family members of the Church. The son of one of the spiritual pillars in Italy requested a Book of Mormon, which we delivered to him. We were glad to see him in church on Sunday. We have three prospects for new membership in San Demetrio.

The next day was Sunday. There were about eight of us, two of them visitors. It was a wonderful service, with God's Spirit and blessings felt. We said goodbye to the brothers and sisters and started the long drive back to Rome for our flight home. Thank God we all arrived home safely.



Church building in San Demetrio, Italy

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Editorial Viewpoint . . .

The Jaredites were a people who God brought to the Promised Land of America thousands of years ago. They were the first recorded people to be brought from the Old World to the New World. He instructed them to build barges to cross the ocean, and gave them stones that would give them light within their barges.

"And it came to pass that the Lord God caused that there should be a furious wind blow upon the face of the waters, towards the promised land; and thus they were tossed upon the waves of the sea before the wind. And it came to pass that they were many times buried in the depths of the sea, because of the mountain waves which broke upon them, and also the great and terrible tempests which were caused by the fierceness of the wind. And it came to pass that when they were buried in the deep there was not water that could hurt them, their vessels being tight like unto a dish and also they were tight like unto the ark of Noah; therefore when they were encompassed about by many waters they did cry unto the Lord, and he did bring them forth again upon the top of the waters. And it came to pass that the wind did never cease to blow towards the promised land while they were upon the waters; and thus they were driven forth before the wind" (Ether 6:5-8).

God had a purpose for the Jaredites, and His purpose was going to be accomplished no matter what. He was going to bring them to the Promised Land. He gave them the know-how to build barges that could withstand a stormy sea, provided them light, and caused a great storm to push the barges by a wind that never ceased to blow towards the Promised Land. There was no way the Jaredites were NOT going to make it there. God's will was done. When they arrived, they cried tears of joy for the mercies of God towards them.

God has a purpose in our lives today. He desires to use us in a way and in things that we may not even have thought about before. When He decides that we need to reach a destination or fulfill His will in our lives, He will blow a wind pushing us continuously in that direction. The Holy Ghost will lean upon our hearts and minds constantly until we accomplish what it is that God wants us to accomplish. Perhaps it is that God wants you involved in His missionary work. Perhaps it is that you will hold an office in the Church where you can serve the brothers and sisters to a greater degree. Perhaps He wants you to use your talents for His honor and glory, and not the worlds. An example I can think of is people who are talented musically. They may grow up taking lessons and play in a band, but if God decides He wants to use this talent for His honor and glory, then the wind will never cease to blow you in that direction, until you use your musical talents in the Church.

In trying to accomplish something for God, the devil will try to stop and destroy us. The boats that the Jaredites were in were swallowed up in the sea like submarines, and yet it says that no water could enter into their boats and drown them. No matter how bad the storm was (and I'm sure it must have been terrifying for them), they still knew that God was in control, and His will was going to be accomplished no matter what. When the devil tries to prevent us from working for the Lord, we don't have to allow him to deter us or stop us. If we understand God's will in our lives, then God will put a hedge around us, keeping the enemy away and allowing us to reach our spiritual destination where we can be a great benefit to Christ's kingdom on earth. Sometimes when it feels like we are going to drown in the depths of the sea, let us remember that God has a purpose for our lives. His purpose is not that we would lose our way or be destroyed. His purpose is that the talents and abilities He has given us will be used for His honor and glory. His purpose is that we will constantly move towards the destination He has made for us. Let's not be discouraged when the storms are around us. They are taking us onward to our goal, where we will be all God wants us to be in this life. Praise His name!

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork

Jesus Gives Us a Message about Sharing

Dear Girls and Boys,

When you start learning about living a life the way Jesus teaches, there are many interesting things to learn and experiments to try. For example, Jesus is very clear about the unusual way He wants us to share. (We know what He wants because He tells us the same thing in the Bible, and in The Book of Mormon.) First of all, we are told by Jesus in Matthew 6:1-4 that God wants us to give in secret. He said that if we give in secret, God would reward us openly. If we tell everyone, then we've already gotten our reward. Which would you rather have, a few minutes of everyone thinking you are nice and generous, or God's big reward when He knows you need it? I think I'd rather wait and see what God wants me to have as my reward. In fact, we should feel so calm about giving that we do not worry one bit about it. Jesus tells us that our left hand should not know what the right hand is doing.

We are taught in 2 Corinthians 9:7 that God loves a cheerful giver. There was a couple in the early days of the Church, when Peter and the disciples lived. They were not cheerful givers, and they also lied to God. Their names were Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). In those days the church people lived and shared what they had. No one owned more or thought they were better because they were richer. People were not forced



to do this; they chose to out of love. Ananias and his wife sold a piece of property. Then they decided to pretend to be giving everything, but secretly lie and keep part of the money, and pretend they'd given it all.

When Ananias came before Peter the Spirit of God knew about the lie. Peter asked him, "Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost and keep back part of the price of the land? Wasn't it [the land] yours before and after you sold it [the money was yours]? Why have you made up this lie in your heart? You decided to lie not unto men, but unto God."

When Ananias heard these words, he fell down dead, and a great fear came on all them that heard these things. Three hours later, his wife, not knowing what had gone on, came in. Peter asked her whether she had sold the land for the amount her husband had lied about. She had every chance to tell the truth, but instead, she agreed with her husband's lie.

Then Peter said unto her, "How is it you have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord. Behold, the men that just buried your husband for lying to the Lord are here and shall carry you out."

Then she fell down dead and was carried out and buried. And a great fear of the power of God came upon all of the Church. This is the same God that we serve today. He knows our hearts. He knows our worries and our problems about money. Isn't God, our great creator, the one in charge of every single thing? That means He gives us our talents so we can get a job. He gives us work. He teaches us how to use our money properly, and gives us what we need. God also

heals us when we are sick and that is why we are even able to work!

God wants us to give freely, without worrying and worrying about it. In fact, when Jesus came to the Americas after the great destruction, one of His important messages was about giving money to the Church. In The Book of Mormon in 3 Nephi 24:8, Jesus quoted the book of Malachi 3:8-12 from the Old Testament of the Bible. Jesus said, "Will a man rob

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WORD SEARCH

GIVE	HEAVEN
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TO	POUR
GOD	OUT
PROVE	BLESSINGS
ME	THERE
SAYS	SHALL
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PROJECT HISWay

By Sister Kristen McLennan

What makes up a virtuous woman? While society's present "standard" of a woman has fallen from what the Lord originally intended, how do we, the women of The Church of Jesus Christ, measure up? Can we, in today's setting and terms, exhibit the qualities of the virtuous woman of old? These were the questions that the Great Lakes Area Ladies' Circle tried to answer with a seminar entitled "PROJECT HISWay: A Modern Day Guide To Being A Virtuous Woman."

Over 130 ladies—ages 5 and up—gathered at Detroit Branch #1 for a delicious dinner and season of fellowship. Many brought their friends and family, some attending the Church for the very first time. Then it was time for our seminar—the 5-10 year olds and Middle School and High School ladies had their own classes following the theme. For the rest of us, the night started out with a skit modeled after the popular TV show, "Project Runway."

There were three fashion designers, each with their own model, and three judges. The designers were assigned the task of creating an outfit that would perfectly portray a virtuous woman on her journey through life. The fashions ranged from head to toe coverage, to organic, plain and "natural" material (hippie-like), to the modern day career woman in business suit and briefcase. But, none of these designs captured what makes a virtuous woman virtuous. The judges pointed out that, rather than settle for someone's interpretation of virtue, why not go to God, our Master Creator and the Original Designer, who has set forth a pattern of virtue in the Bible and Book of Mormon? These two books give us all the information we need to know and live by. His "virtue" complements every body type and age,

and is appropriate in every season! It is never "out of style"!

The goal for the rest of the seminar was to study the pattern. I Samuel 16:7 states, "*for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.*" God wants us to have a broken heart and contrite spirit. With repentance and baptism, we are given a white robe and are then entrusted with the Holy Ghost—the mind of the Father and the Son. The Holy Ghost can be compared to a woman's purse because, without it, a woman is lost. We carry the Holy Ghost with us wherever we go to help us on our journey through life. Each of us is also endowed with some form of spiritual "bling": The individual talents that the Lord has blessed us with—our unique personalities that allow us to "sparkle" in this world. Some sisters are blessed with the gift of song, others with the gift of teaching, and some still with the gift of listening. In Greek, the word for "virtue" is *Arete*, which translated is "living to one's full potential, excellence, and being pleasing to God." By using the gifts that God has given, we can be "virtuous."

While God may only look onto a woman's heart, people judge by the outward appearance. Since "...*Christ liveth in me...*" (Galatians 2:20), we must always look and act in ways that represent and please Him. Our body is His temple, and it must be a clean, pure place for Him to reside—it must be free of sin. The beautiful thing about having Christ within us is that He is always there and that with Him, all things are possible: "*I can do all things through Christ...*" (Philippians 4:13). By allowing God's spirit to shine through us, we can project the image of Christ to the world. It is HIS virtue that they see, and any praise or glory we may receive belongs to Him: "*I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made...*" (Psalms 139:14).

We took some time to study Proverbs 31:10-31 which was the basis for the evening's theme. "*Strength and honour are her clothing...*" A virtuous woman "wears" the qualities of kindness, meekness, patience, love,

humility, etc., and is faithful, productive, caring, and diligent. These traits are not specific to any age or period of time, but can apply to women of every generation.

The sisters also addressed the "fashion ruts" that we might find ourselves in. Among several highlighted, there was *Sister Stuck-in-the-Past*. This sister is unable to get over the past. With God's help, she can overcome her fear and move forward to fulfill the potential the Lord sees in her. She can embrace the beauty and promise of today. Next was *Sister My Role/Relationship Defines Me*, who is completely caught up in the demands of the day and wastes her time and talents because she allows her circumstances to rule her. This sister must remember that she is first and foremost a child of God. The Lord can help her define her life and focus on her unique identity in Him. Finally, a favorite sister of this evening was introduced: *Sister Hoochie Mama*. This sister dresses in a way that does NOT project Christ. In fact, without practicing moderation and modesty as encouraged by the scriptures (though her intentions may be good), her appearance serves as a stumbling block and distraction. When people see her, they don't associate her with Christ and virtue. We were, in good humor, gently encouraged to be careful and spiritually wise in our choices that we may be women who reflect Christ! All of our "fashion ruts" can be overcome if we pray, seek the Lord's direction, and follow the pattern!

One of our last exercises was to trade shoes with our neighbor. We were asked if they fit. Could we walk in them? Maybe you HAVE walked in someone's shoes: Perhaps you do know what it is like to endure an affliction or loss and can help someone go through a similar trial. But maybe the answer is no. Each sister has a unique walk with the Lord. Her shoes have been different places, and have different wear patterns. But, through each trial and tribulation, she was and will be accompanied by the Lord—sometimes even carried. He is our

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PROJECT HISWay

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Savior and He *never* leaves us. It is important that we support and encourage one another as we walk through life. Our prayers can make the difference!

The evening ended with a relay race to demonstrate the power that comes when virtuous women work **TOGETHER**, much like the women of the Ladies' Circle. Four teams of women competed against each other in accomplishing familiar daily tasks. It was a very light way to make a point and end the evening.

All in all, we were informed, encouraged, and blessed. Inasmuch as we allow God's spirit to dwell within us and follow the pattern He has perfectly laid out, we can be virtuous women: *"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body"* (II Corinthians 4:10). Praise God!

* * * * *

Hi! My name is Sister Esther and I live on the General circle website (www.generalcircle.org). For many months now I have been patiently waiting for some young lady to ask me a question. To date, you haven't written so I decided to reach out to you with an occasional "Two Minute Tale," but first I want you to know a little something about me. [We have chosen the *Gospel News* to share the first one, but upcoming Tales will be posted on the Circle website.]

I was named after famous Queen Esther who saved her people, the Jews. I have always loved the Ladies' Circle and have wanted to do something to share that love with the young women in the Church, those of you who are preteens. Two Minute Tales are lessons that I've learned in my life – so here we go!

"How important is a prayer?"

Queen Esther knew how important her family and friends were. There was a big problem in her kingdom when someone was trying to kill all her people, the Jews. Her husband, King

Ahasuerus could resolve it, but the Queen knew she had to ask him to save the Jews. She also knew that if the king didn't like her request, the king would have her put to death. Queen Esther told all the Jewish people and all the people who served her to pray and fast for three days before she went to speak to the king. When Queen Esther made her request of the king, she was confident that no matter what happened God was in the matter. Because they fasted and prayed together, they were close to God and God, through the king, spared the Jewish people in the land.

When you pray the Lord is pleased and He will draw close to you. Queen Esther saved her people with the wonderful tool of prayer. Make sure you always have this tool ready for use.

Esther 5:3, *"Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? And what is thy request? It shall be given thee to the half of the kingdom."*



**Branch and
Mission News**

God Moves in Mysterious Ways

By Sister Rocio Tostado

God moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform! Sister Guillermina Magana of the Yucaipa Branch had an experience, the relevance of which was then unclear, but was revealed more fully in God's perfect time. Her experience, as translated by Sister Rocio Tostado, follows:

"That day we had a wonderful meeting performing the ordinance of feet washing, so when we proceeded to wash feet, the spirit of God touched my heart with a song that says:

" 'We come to you Lord with sincere hearts, full of worship and

adoration, because you are King of Kings, Lord of Lords. You are worthy of everyone's praise.' "

"My Sister Rocio Tostado was washing my feet and my eyes did not stop crying. When my turn came to wash the feet of my Sister Rocio, I started to pray to God in the name of Jesus to bless her steps and her family. I had closed my eyes and sincerely asked, and in a moment [in a vision] I could see a lot of people coming down from a mountain, from different mountains. I recognized them to be Native Americans. I saw other people descending from mountains farther away. There were trees, but they were not pines. These were mountains with very little vegetation. I would say a bit deserted."

At the time, Sister Guillermina did not understand the significance of her experience, but conveyed that it was of great importance to her. Several weeks later, Sister Rocio Tostado and her husband, Brother Arturo, attended the 27th Annual Powwow and Native

American Festival in Indio, California. Sister Rocio relays the events that unfolded and how she was led to give her testimony, then extend an invitation to attend our Church:

"I knew my husband was tired, so I suggested he wait for me while I went outside to buy some Indian fried bread. On my way out, I had noticed a couple of Native Americans sitting in the lobby. When I returned, my husband was talking with the man and woman whose names were James and Nancy. They had given him a pamphlet of their religious beliefs about Jesus Christ. I told the Native American man that I was glad to know that he believed in Jesus Christ and shared with him that I was a believer too. I also told him about the *Songs of Zion* and asked him if he would like to have a copy of the book. He responded positively, so we went back the next day and gave him the *Songs of Zion* along with information concerning our

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Saints "Prove" Themselves to the Lord at Midwest Area Camp

By Sister Natalie Pezzenti

Brothers and sisters from the Midwest Area met at Atwood Lake Resort March 20–22, 2009 to learn about "Proof" (2 Corinthians 6:4–6) and how we can apply it to our spiritual lives. The weekend was filled with God's blessings and His proof that He is still on His throne.

Friday evening Brother Chuck Maddox Jr., Camp Director and Area President, welcomed everyone to the weekend and introduced the theme. The evening concluded with the annual men's bakeoff, and perhaps the youngest winner in the history of the event was Joshua DeRamus from the Columbus Mission. His dessert was a tasty treat that everyone enjoyed.

Saturday morning Area Chaplain Brother Bob Batson opened the meeting with the question, "What is our proof that we are servants to God?" He used Mosiah 2:16–17 and said that God wants us to serve one another; our service is part of the proof that we are God's children. Following Brother Bob's comments, the congregation split into seminars by age group to discuss the theme. The afternoon activities included playing board games, hiking on outdoor trails, and fellowshiping.

During the evening service, Brother Bob and two of his daughters, Sister Mallory and Sister Courtney, sang *The God of the Mountain*. Brother Andre Francione opened the meeting with the question, "How do we prove ourselves to the Lord and how does He prove Himself to us?" Examples of scriptural men who went through trials and proved themselves to the Lord include Job, Meshach, Shadrach, and Abendigo, Stephen, and Nephi.

Brother Dan McNamara, new

Area Chaplain, spoke about how thumbprints are usually called up as evidence in a trial. "God put His fingerprint on those He chose," he said. Brother Dan continued by saying God chose the three Hebrew children because they were different from the rest. The Hebrew children had unwavering faith—and in Hebrews it speaks about faith being the evidence of things not seen.

After a season of testimony and prayer for the young people of the area, the attendees at camp participated in the annual auction of donated goods and services from brothers and sisters. This year the auction raised more than \$600 for the area. In addition to the annual auction, the tradition of handing out the attendance award continued: this year's winner was the Columbus Mission.

Brother Zac Jackson opened Sunday morning's service with the question, "Do I realize I am purchased by the blood of the Lamb?" Brother Zac said that this purchase is proof that each of us has been touched by His hand. "Three things we must do in order to prove ourselves for God include telling others about Him; sacrifice our time, money, and energy for the Lord; and be ready to serve," he said.

Brother Mike Italiano followed Brother Zac and added that God proved himself to Israel that He was God. "God worked through the senses and they needed physical proof; even today people need physical proof. God feeds our senses and He gave us a sixth sense, faith, which we must hone," he said.

Apostle Phil Jackson offered a special prayer on behalf of Brother John Genaro who is currently in the hospital. He then exhorted the congregation to pray for their own personal experiences as this is our foundation and our proof. "Your testimony can never be taken from you. You have proof in your life and this is evidence of God's power in your life," he said.

The saints shared in communion and the meeting was closed. One final blessing came after the meeting ended: Josh Barnes from the Liberty Branch asked for his baptism.

He Touched Me

Sunday, June 14, 2009 was a day of great personal and spiritual excitement in the Youngstown Branch. We were blessed to have the Area MBA, visiting brothers and sisters, and our families feel the power of God through His word.

MBA President, Brother Chuck Maddox, Jr., greeted everyone and thanked them for supporting the various activities of the auxiliary. He announced that a three-hour canoe trip was being planned in Cincinnati during the month of August and encouraged all to attend because there are always blessings and beautiful experiences when the saints of God make the effort to be together. He then turned the meeting over to the priesthood.

Brother Chuck Maddox, Sr. asked if we were to apply the song, *He Touched Me*, to our personal lives, we would all say that our lives have never been the same. We go at such a fast pace in our daily lives that there are times when we don't even recognize the 'touch' that He gives to us. As young children, we seek stable pieces of furniture to give us support. As we grow a little older, we look to the touch of our parents, and as grownups, we look for the touch of God.

Referencing the books of Luke and Leviticus, he spoke of how the leper was considered an outcast and isolated from his home, his family, and all manner of daily activities. We too are lepers when we don't have Christ in our lives. We often question our value in society from time to time. Our sins and circumstances should never put us in a place where we can't ask God for help. He personally could never imagine that. Brother Chuck said that he needs God every minute of every day in his life. The Evil One loves when we are in this torturous state. We, like the leper, can be healed by God's touch.

He related a true story of a person wanting to take his own life because he felt that his life had lost its value. We all have value to God. He

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Freedom Fighters

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the maintaining of this independence when it says, "...they shall be kept from all other nations, that they may possess this land [America] unto themselves." It goes on to reinforce the longevity of this promise with, "they shall be blessed upon the face of this land, and there shall be none to molest them, nor to take away the land of their inheritance; and they shall dwell safely forever." It is in this last portion of the verse that every member of The Church of Jesus Christ must comprehend and accept their rightful responsibility to be standard bearers for this nation. Said more directly, each member is called to be a "Freedom Fighter."

The succinct requirement for this promised protection is to "keep His commandments." In no way do I wish to diminish the courage of the men and women of this great country who have fought (and some even sacrificed unto death) upon foreign lands in defense of our country. However, I do wish to add a few names of other heroes who have also sacrificed and given their lives for the cause of independence. These heroes who, rather than taking up arms in lands like Germany, Korea or Afghanistan, have taken upon them the name of Christ. In doing so, they have made the conscientious decision to sacrifice carnal pleasures, choices and lifestyles that might otherwise jeopardize such liberty. Mosiah 2:31 further supports this message with, "As ye have kept my commandments, and also the commandments of my father, and have prospered, and have been kept from falling into the hands of your enemies, even so if ye shall keep the commandments of my son, or the commandments of God which shall be delivered unto you by him, ye shall prosper in the land, and your enemies shall have no power over you." The righteousness of the saints has always helped to keep this land from "falling into the hands of enemies," assuring these same enemies would "have no power over" our country.

When Jesus Christ arrived upon

this land, as documented in III Nephi 9:19-20, said, "...ye shall offer up unto me no more the shedding of blood; yea, your sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away, for I will accept none of your sacrifices and your burnt offerings. And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost..." Jesus gave distinct direction that sacrifice would be a necessity. He released mankind from the specific requirements related to sacrificing as defined within the Law of Moses, guiding His followers to reach a deeper understanding of servitude. Jesus said He would no longer seek the physical completion of such activities (ex: "burnt offerings") but instead instituted a new measurement: to test the motive of the individual. In short form, "Don't just do it, but do it with a righteous intent." His requirement would now involve a mental, emotional, spiritual and physical sacrifice. And who else had earned such authority to place such a stringent set of standards upon us but the one who sacrificed everything for us, both in life and death?

Lastly, we the Freedom Fighters, although heirs to a national independence, have all experienced the personal transition from captivity to freedom. We are they who were held prisoners to sin and now enjoy the "peace that passes all understanding." As a reminder to myself (and any others who will accept responsibility) I refer to Galatians 5:1: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." While we make this stand for our country, we also make this stand for Jesus Christ, for His Church, for our own salvation and for the salvation of others. I pray you each enjoy the peace and contentment that true freedom brings, as only Jesus Christ can grant. Happy 4th of July — and may you celebrate the other 364 days of liberty granted to the saints each and every year.

Notice

Brothers, Sisters and Friends,

The Church Education, Curriculum Development Committee, is developing a Church Education e-mail listing for anyone interested in receiving information regarding Church Education. This information may include: lessons, lesson materials, teaching tips, general information and news from Church Education.

Anyone wishing to be included on this e-mail listing to receive future mailings and information, are requested to send their e-mail addresses to Brother Pete Oestreich, Church Education Secretary (pjo1@verizon.net).

The Children's Corner

Continued from Page 6

God? Yet, you have robbed me. But you say, how have we robbed you? [You have robbed me] in tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse: for you have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring you all the tithes unto the storehouse [the Church] that there may be meat in mine house, [money to help others]. And prove me now, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing. That there shall not be room enough to receive it.

"And I will rebuke [fight] the devourer [the devil] for your sakes and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed, for you shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts."

The interesting part of this command from Jesus is that He tells us to "prove" Him. That means follow

His orders and watch and see how the windows of heaven will open and we will be blessed!

So now we have a plan. This is your interesting experiment to try. Give help and money to others. Do it in secret. Don't let yourself worry about it. Whenever you make money, share some of it with The Church of Jesus Christ. If you babysit, give some of your money to help the poor. If you cut lawns or get paid for doing chores, give the Lord some of your money to help our brothers and sisters and missionaries around the world. Be cheerful. Give what you can and don't lie to God about it. He knows everything we do anyway. And finally, pray and watch how God will reward you and take care of your life and your family and your needs. And when He opens those windows of heaven, thank Him and keep sharing. He has promised to bless you greatly.

With love,
Your friend,
Sister Jan

God Moves in Mysterious Ways

Continued from Page 8

faith and doctrine.

"Three weeks passed and my daughter and I attended another powwow. I expressed to her that I wanted to look for the two Native Americans that I had met previously. She felt that if this was from God, I would encounter them again through His will, and it happened exactly that way.

"We discussed the things of God and invited James and Nancy to join us at church in the Yucaipa Branch the next day. We rejoiced when they came! James played the flute for us and to the honor and glory of God. It was a wonderful day of fellowship, singing, preaching, testimony and prayer, enjoying the powerful blessings of God. We were especially blessed when James shared that he felt the

spirit of God in our midst and that he thought we have the priesthood authority. Praise God!"

The blessings continued to flow following lunch after the service when Brother John Vela had this experience:

"...We were speaking with James. Some questions were about the Book of Mormon and many other things. After about 45 minutes of talking with him, I felt a strong desire to hold hands in a circle and say a prayer, so I said a prayer and the spirit of the Lord was there. After the prayer, James raised his hands and said with excitement, 'Did you feel the warmth?' He was crying. I hugged him and said in his ear, 'You are my brother and I love you very much in Jesus' name.' We both cried on each other's shoulders. I felt the same way Joseph of Egypt must have felt when he was reunited with his brothers and told them, 'I am your brother.' I told him I hoped to see him again sometime and he said he would come back."

In God's perfect time, the meaning of Sister Guillermina's vision crystallized and was beginning to be fulfilled in a beautiful way. God is using sisters and brothers throughout the vineyard to bring Native Americans, who are of the seed of Joseph, to the Gospel. In this case, Sister Guillermina's prayer during feet washing for the Lord to bless Sister Rocio's steps led her to meet James and Nancy, share her testimony and invite them to the church. The mountainous terrain Sister Guillermina saw in her vision was like the area where Sister Rocio and Brother Arturo live. The Native Americans our sister saw in her vision, like James and Nancy, are representative of the descendants of Joseph of Egypt. One of the Church's commissions is to bring the Gospel to them. Our prayer is that the Lord will continue to inspire us to have opportunities to present the Gospel to others. The Lord's powerful spirit prevailed in the Yucaipa Branch throughout James' and Nancy's visit. James' heart was genuinely touched. As the seeds of the Gospel are planted, may God bring the increase. Praise God for the blessings He has bestowed upon the Yucaipa Branch!

He Touched Me

Continued from Page 9

challenged us to not only understand the true power of God, but how we need it to survive spiritually. He exhorted us to go and tell people that life is worth the living, that the hope is there, and that Jesus Christ is there waiting for each of us with open arms. Moreover, he reminded us to keep our focus on Christ; God knows who you are and where you are. Have patience and don't be discouraged when change doesn't happen immediately. We are on God's timetable, and there is no heart that God cannot change. Don't doubt, justify, or rationalize about your situation because God's touch will take care of all of our needs.

Regarding his recent surgery, Apostle Phil Jackson happily remarked that he was glad to stand before the congregation on his new knees. He felt that today's message was very personal. Reflecting on his own past made him extremely sad. He was bound by Satan and had gone against every principle with which he had been raised. He found himself a true prisoner of sin. He knew better because he was raised by beautiful God-loving parents, yet he rebelled. The Master worked slowly with his soul, and he too felt the touch and was baptized. He asked, "Has it been a while since you were touched? God wants to touch you and touch you and touch you." Since he received the touch, he has been witnessing great miracles in his life and having beautiful experiences. There is joy now where once there was sadness and hope where it was hopeless.

Brother Brandon Miller then closed our preaching service by relating that though he was not raised in the Church, his life was changed eight years ago and he hungers to have his family in this Gospel. All it takes is one touching another, touching another, and so on. It doesn't matter how low you are in life, God can reach you and raise you up. God's love was so strong that He was crucified for us. Each one of us can have our lives touched if we just let Him into our hearts.

A luncheon was served, and we then enjoyed a time of fellowship.

* WEDDINGS *

Sister Kerri Beth King and Lewis Mackley were united in holy matrimony on May 2, 2009 in the Vanderbilt, Pennsylvania Branch.

Sister Desiree Renee Palmieri and William Paul Robbins were united in holy matrimony on May 29, 2009 at the Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Branch.

Ordinations

Brother Timothy Cervone was ordained a deacon on June 14, 2009 at the Levittown, Pennsylvania Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Kevin Perri and he was ordained by Brother Gerald Benyola.

Brother James Matthew was ordained a deacon on June 14, 2009 at the Windsor, Ontario Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Charles Matthew, and he was ordained by Brother Perry Vitto.

Children Blessed

George Henry Phillips IV, son of George and Karen Phillips was blessed on November 23, 2008 at the Liberty, Ohio Branch.

Alexis Rose Guerrero, daughter of Jennifer Rose Guerrero and Justin Redmond, was blessed on May 31, 2009 at the Liberty, Ohio Branch.

Zachary Ryan Denim, son of Sean and Sister Cindy (Duval) Denim, was blessed on May 11, 2009 at the Anaheim, California Branch.

James Michael Crow, son of Sister Shelly and Mark Crow, was blessed on June 21, 2009 at the Anaheim, California Branch.

Baptisms

Brother Dan Wiktorowiz was baptized on September 25, 2008 at the Anaheim, California Branch. He was baptized by Brother Otto Henderson and confirmed by Brother Rudy Meo.

Brother Edward Ramey was baptized on July 8, 2009 at the Freehold, New Jersey Branch. He was baptized by Brother Jim Crudup and confirmed by Brother Matthew Rogolino.

Brother Jacob Bradley was baptized on May 17, 2009 at the Greensburg, Pennsylvania Branch. He was baptized by Brother Christopher Gehly and confirmed by Brother Timothy Gehly.

OBITUARIES

VICTORIA R. (VICKY) D'ANTONIO

Sister Victoria R. (Vicky) D'Antonio of the Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Branch passed on to her reward on June 10, 2009. She was preceded in death by her husband, Fred D'Antonio and a brother, Joseph Parrone. She is survived by sons, Fred D'Antonio Jr., Brother John Mark D'Antonio and his wife, Sister Joyce, Matt D'Antonio and his wife, Debbie; two grandsons; three sisters, Sister Jeanette Clinkscale and her husband, Dick; Sister Joanne Clinkscale and her husband, Roy; and Joyce Bennage and her husband, Frank.

SARAH MADELINE "ETHEL" HENDERSON

Sister Sarah Madeline "Ethel" Henderson of the Windsor, Ontario Branch passed on to her reward on May 19, 2009. She was preceded in death by her husband, Brother Douglas Allen Henderson. She is survived by her sons Allen, Brian, Donald and Kenneth; and daughter Carolyn Rouleau; 11 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

Note of Thanks

Thank you for all your prayers and concern for my mother, LaVerne Mowry, and most especially for my sister, Carol Mowry. Carol, due to a fall, had emergency brain surgery to remove a clot and to stop the bleeding on her brain. After thirteen days, Carol is awake and asking to eat. Prayers have never meant more to my family than now. May God bless you.

Sister Frances Devore
Roscoe, Pennsylvania Branch

Address Change

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Branch or Mission _____



THE CHURCH OF Jesus Christ

International Headquarters in
Monongahela, Pennsylvania

September, 2009

Volume 65, No. 9

God's Blessings on the Church in Italy

By Evangelist John DiBattista, Chairman of the IMOC

I would like to share two beautiful expressions of God's love toward the Church and His missionaries that we experienced this past June while in Calabria, Southern Italy. I also want to thank each of you for all your prayers on behalf of all the missionaries that go throughout the world to preach the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The lady who cleans the church for us in San Demetrio, Calabria Italy lives directly across the street from the Church. Her name is Franca and she is about thirty-five years old. She has two boys, and while talking to her we found out she and her family had lived in Toronto, Canada for fourteen years, and as a result, she speaks English fairly well. Her husband wanted to move back home to San Demetrio so they did. Franca is a wonderful, personable and open person and is constantly smiling.

One day Sister Caryl began giving Franca her personal testimony and Franca was not showing any signs of resistance. When Caryl had finished Franca said, "I know God is in this Church. Every time that I open these doors and come in to clean I feel His presence. The feeling is with me the whole time that I am here."

Sister Caryl then took the opportunity to invite her to attend our services and told her that this church is the Lord's Church restored in the latter days. I then told her some experiences that have been had in this little building on top of the mountains of southern Italy. She was overwhelmed.

This was an answer to Brother Tony Micale's morning prayer where he had the inspiration to ask God to allow us to speak to someone new each day about the Church while here.

Also while in Calabria, we had another very powerful experience and are extremely grateful to God for His mercy.

We had just finished our lunch and Brother Tony left the dining room to go out to call his wife, Sister Lydia. As he was excitedly talking to her and sharing all the wonderful things God was doing on our trip, Tonya the hotel owner, brought out a small bottle of cleaning fluid and laid it on the counter for Tony and me to use to get the red sauce spots out of our shirts. Tony, not paying attention and still talking to Sister Lydia, opened the bottle and drank from it thinking it to be tonic water. **It was poison!** He spit it out and drank some water, then we

anointed him and prayed. He had swallowed a mouthful.

About four hours later, we were all sitting having a coffee praising God for His goodness and mercy. After all He said, "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.*"

God's promises are as true today as they were back then. This incident could have stopped or at least shortened our trip. Brother Tony could have spent several days in a hospital but he didn't.

Thank you again for all of your prayers when we are in the field. We feel His Spirit falling upon us in our times of need and we are recipients of God's grace through His Son and our Savior Jesus Christ.



Southeast Region Quorum of Seventy

By Evangelist Sam Risola, Jr., Southeast Region Q-70 Chair

The Southeast Region Quorum of Seventy Evangelists, in conjunction with the Region Mission Operating Committee, has been actively involved with visitations to all of the locations within the Region.

The Region enjoyed a visit from Evangelist Nephi DeMercurio of the Great Lakes Region from November 6, 2008 to November 17, 2008. During that time, he spent several days with Evangelist Dennis Moraco, visiting locations on the east coast of Florida, showing a PowerPoint pre-sentation of some of his IMOC trips. He also spent time with Brother Skip Swanson and Evangelist Sam Risola, Jr., visiting shut-ins on the west coast and ending with a Saturday evening service at the Forest Hills Branch showcasing Brother DeMercurio's residence while in Africa.

Several brothers in the Region actively involved in foreign missionary works include Evangelist Miguel Bicelis, Peru Field Committee Chairman; Brother Scott Griffith, Columbia Field Committee Chairman; and Brother Bryan Griffith, Venezuela Field Committee Chairman.

The Region Native American Outreach Committee has identified many of the Native American tribes and organizations within the boundaries of our Region. Several visits have been made to leave literature at these locations with the hope someone might be interested enough to contact our General Church website.

We also participated in a Region

Native American Outreach Activity held at Che-Hew Park in Albany, Georgia. This outreach effort was coordinated jointly by the Quincy Branch and the Mid-Georgia Mission. Those who attended were blessed by the effort made by our brothers and sisters in organizing a picnic for Saturday, followed by a Sunday service at the Native American Center in Albany, Georgia. Those who attended were broken down into groups to canvass the area and distribute flyers to all who were interested. After lunch, a seminar presentation was given by Sister Linda Snake Orr, who comes from the Muncey, Ontario, Canada Indian Reservation, on the preferred approach to Native Americans, along with sharing some of her personal experiences.

Everyone felt God's Spirit in our midst on Sunday. We heard many experiences from our brethren relating to the direction which was given to meet in this place. Even though we only had one visitor, it was a good experience for young and old alike. We were not discouraged since we knew we were following God's direction.

On December 6-7, 2008, the Region hosted Historian, NAOC, and Educational Lesson Plan Workshops at the Forest Hills Branch. The seminars were informative and the Sunday service was also very inspired. Both were enjoyed by all in attendance.

Florida Evangelist Trip

By Brother John DiBattista

During the General Church Conference, Brother Joel Gehly and I felt the spiritual excitement to begin traveling throughout the Church to share the slides of the international missionary work that is going on throughout the world. The Lord spoke to Brother Joel and directed him to Forest Hills, Florida. After we discussed our intentions with the branch ministry and felt their warm welcome, we felt to make a call to Brother Tony Micale who has a home in Sarasota. He said that he and Sister Lydia would be there and would be glad to host us.

As we continued to plan for the trip, Brother Tony and Sister Lydia were inspired to open their home to friends and family on Thursday evening to view the photos of the missionary work as well. As it happened, several months earlier, Brother Tony and Sister Lydia put together a warm list of 22 people in the Sarasota area, and they were going to extend invitations to all of them.

All was set. Thursday evening we would show the photos to Brother Tony and Sister Lydia's friends. Saturday evening, we would show them to the Forest Hills Branch. Then we would split up for Sunday, one of us attending Forest Hills and the other attending Cape Coral. Although the enemy tried to discourage us with late take-offs and bad weather, our prayers prevailed and Brother Joel with Sister Ruth and Sister Caryl and I arrived in Tampa within minutes of each other. Upon arriving at Brother Tony's, we had some technical difficulties, but after much prayer we were able to begin our presentation.

We started with a few songs and a prayer then showed some photos of our saints in six of our international works. The spirit witnessed to the truth of the Gospel, and several were touched by the photos and experiences. Brother Tony closed by thanking everyone for coming and invited

everyone to stay for refreshments and fellowship. Several testified that they were touched by the presentation, and Sister Lydia's brother, Phil, was so moved that he needed to discuss his feelings with his sister and the ministry. By the end of the evening, we had made arrangements to meet with Phil the next evening. During our visit, Phil shared an experience he had. He was so distraught with the events of his life that he said he knelt on the floor of his apartment and raised his hands toward heaven and begged the Lord for forgiveness for all of the terrible things he had done in his life. After a season of repentance, he went to the door of his home where he found a tract that someone had left at his door. He opened it and found it to be a picture of Jesus and on it was written "Do this in remembrance of me."

During our discussion, Phil asked how he could be like the people of the Church. What did he have to do? Since we felt the spirit of repentance and knew that he believed that Jesus was the Christ, all that was left for him to do was to be baptized under the hands of the ministry of The Church of Jesus Christ. Phil said that was what he wanted – to be baptized. Calls were made to the Region and Branch and everything was put in perfect order. Phil would become Brother Phil on Sunday evening in the bay behind Brother Tony's home.

Brothers and sisters traveled from the Cape Coral and Forest Hills Branches to be there. The deacon, Brother Ike D. Smith, prepared all that was needed for baptism. Brother Skip Swanson presided and the two visiting Evangelists performed the ordinances of baptism and confirmation. Two additional elders, Brothers Sam Cuomo and Dee Eutsey, assisted in the service, including serving our new brother the Lord's Supper. Songs were sung and Brother Phil's mother, Sister Coleen, stood and testified that this was the best Mother's Day gift she could have received.

We all agreed and gave God all of the glory for the blessings received over the past four days.

"I Am Your Brother" Christmas in Vicente Guerrero, Mexico

By Sister Erin Light

Christmas came early this year for the Mexican mission of Vicente Guerrero, as a caravan of cars drove down the coast of Baja California to bring joy and presents and the gift of love to a small mission. Brothers and sisters of the Church in the US packed bags of donated shoes, clothes, toys and food into their vehicles and made the long trip to visit their spiritual family. Many branches spanning California, Arizona, and even the Midwest Ladies' Circle donated money, socks, shoes, toys, and hand-knitted scarves and caps for the saints and visitors in Vicente Guerrero.

The group arrived at the small church property on Saturday afternoon, and the blessings began at once. Brother Abelardo Granados, President of the Church in Mexico, came with many of the saints from Tijuana, bringing toys and games for the children. Unpacking the clothes and food, everyone watched as little children gathered around the cars, excitedly waiting to see what had been brought. Everyone took part. Shoes were placed on the hard cement floor in rows and given to both young and old. The brothers bagged food items; everything from flour to rice and beans, cookies and oil were distributed to both the saints and the neighbors in this poor community. Sisters wrapped gifts, and the faces of the little children were painted in festive designs. While the young people from Tijuana brought out two large piñatas for the kids, sisters from the mission began to cook on the outdoor fire pit.

The fellowship continued throughout Saturday, passing out gifts, measuring small feet for their new pair of shoes, and cutting up cake for a long line of happy children. The brothers and sisters welcomed the warm scarves and hats knitted by the sisters in the US. No language barrier

could stop the fellowship with the brothers and sisters, as smiles appeared that day on everyone's face. Saturday night, a service was held for the congregation. Brother Ryan McDonnell opened the meeting speaking from Mark 4 about the power Jesus had to calm the seas. Brother Sam Hemmings followed on the subject and everyone enjoyed a good spirit of peace.

On Sunday, the congregation overflowed the capacity of the church building and many hymns were sung in both English and Spanish. The saints from Vicente Guerrero had recently been taught one of the newest *Songs of Zion*, *I Am Your Brother*, and were assisted by a five-year-old girl who helped translate the song from Spanish to Mixteco, the native Oaxacan language. They sang the song first in Mixteco and then all joined in Spanish. At that time, everyone felt a strong, uniting spirit come into the meeting. After testimony, Brother Abelardo spoke, inspired by the Spirit of God saying, "Does it matter where we come from? What language we speak? What color our skin is? Like the song says, 'I am your Brother.' We are all brothers; these are our sisters. When our people were conquered by the Spaniards, we thought the Lord had forgotten us. But through the Lord's blessings, we have been brought the Gospel through our Gentile brothers and now have we not reason to rejoice?" Brother Sam then stood up and spoke under inspiration in Spanish saying, "Escuchan a las palabras de Dios!" which translates, "Listen to the Word of God!" A powerful, beautiful spirit of rejoicing and unity came over the congregation. The entire family of God was blessed during communion, and it was requested the song well-remembered by many from the past World Missionary Conference called, "America," be sung. The congregation stood up, held hands and sang praises to the Lord.

At the end of the song, Brother Stacey Light, Mexico Field Committee Vice Chairman, rose to his feet

(Continued on Page 9)

Oklahoma Native American Outreach 2009

By Evangelists George A. Kovacic and Mark Kovacic

"Intriguing, very intriguing."

So were the words of the principal chief of the Sac & Fox Nation in Stroud, Oklahoma when presented with the message of The Church of Jesus Christ. Our words would be "blessed, very blessed."

Back in the 1950's in Girard, Ohio, Evangelist Timothy Dom Bucci met Tecumseh Morgan, whose father was a Cherokee Chief. He told Brother Bucci about the American Indian Exposition which was held annually in Anadarko, Oklahoma. In 1957 Brother Bucci made a scouting trip, visiting various tribal towns seeing where he could do some missionary work. He returned in 1959 to specifically visit Anadarko, and he eventually made a total of seven trips to Oklahoma. In April 1987, Brother Bucci said, "I hope and pray that sometime in the near future the Lord will extend the message to those in that area of Oklahoma."

With over a quarter million Native Americans living in Oklahoma and over 50 tribal organizations, the opportunities to spread the latter day message, as part of the Divine Com-

mission of the Church, are enormous. Evangelists George Kovacic and Mark Kovacic felt to labor in the same field as their grandfather, so they made plans to visit the organizations that the church collected in its *First Voices Journal* data base by Sisters Ruth Rogolino and Carrie Giovonnone.

Prior to our final plans, Brother George wrote the following: "I did have a dream the other evening [June 23, 2009] that you and I were sitting on a bench at a bus stop in Oklahoma and I said to you, 'I had a dream the other evening that we were sitting here on a bench just like this waiting for a bus.' Then I awoke." Our interpretation: We have been waiting too long to get going on this missionary journey, which had been only a dream.

Since there are over 50 Native American organizations scattered throughout Oklahoma, we decided to select some for visitation based on whether we had contact names and where they were located. Our primary purpose would be to introduce the message to the leaders of these organizations and provide them material to read and review. The materials included the book *American Indian Moses*, NAOC flyers, copies of the *First Voices Journal* and *Books of Mormon*. One of the added blessings was having the presence and fellowship of Brother John Andrews, formerly of the Herndon, Virginia Branch and now a resident of Eufaula, Oklahoma.

Brother John laid some groundwork for us. We were interested in attending a church service on Sunday, July 12, 2009 at a church populated by Native Americans. Brother John contacted the Creek Indian Center in Eufaula and got a list from the receptionist. Saturday evening we reviewed the list, but did not make any decision; instead, we

Guy's Night Out

By Evangelist Thomas Everett

Joshua 24:15, "As for me and my house we will serve the LORD."

An experience given to Evangelist Louis Vitto, Chairman of the Great Lakes Region Quorum of Seventy Evangelists regarding "leadership," resulted in an evening of fellowship for over 240 men.

Brother Vitto's Experience: "Being aware many of our brothers and sisters were traveling as missionaries to various parts of the world to win souls for Christ, I anguished over what we could do as Evangelists to promote the Gospel in our Region.

"Much prayer preceded the Lord revealing to me we needed to have a gathering of men promoting the theme of 'leadership.' The theme of leadership was revealed to me **three** different times. He also revealed those who were to take part in this great outreach event.

"I was further encouraged when I read these words:

They will not seek, they must be sought.

They will not come, they must be brought.

They will not learn, they must be taught."

Approximately 160 brothers of the Great Lakes Region, along with approximately 80 friends, family members and co-workers, gathered at Penna's Restaurant in Sterling Heights, Michigan for an evening of fellowship and good food on April 3, 2009.

Brother Lou welcomed everyone in attendance, and our Region President, Evangelist Frank Natoli, offered the opening prayer.

Some of our young men from Detroit Branch #1 sang *Build An Ark* which speaks of all the ills of our world and asks "Where are all the good guys," and says to "build an ark to save your sons and your daughters."

Evangelist Paul Ciotti, Sr., from



Four members of the Artussee Church in Eufaula, Oklahoma

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Editorial Viewpoint . . .

When my second son Jacob was born, my wife and I were thrilled to have two beautiful boys. Our hopes and dreams of having two sons who would learn of the Lord, and become workers and missionaries in His kingdom was a wonderful thought and something we prayed about. After Jacob was a year and a half old, we noticed something was wrong. He wasn't speaking (not even "mama" or "dada"), he made no eye contact and would bang his head uncontrollably. The thought that something could be wrong never entered our minds of course. We were sure he would just grow out of it, but he didn't. Reluctantly we took him to be evaluated by doctors, psychiatrists and other experts in this area. Our hearts sank into the pits of our stomachs when we were told Jacob had autism. The feelings of denial, anger, hurt and despair consumed us. How could God allow this to happen? We experienced several miscarriages prior to our first son being born, and were so thankful that we could even have children, and now this?!

We looked to our brothers and sisters in our branch for prayer, not sure if we should broadcast this to the whole Church, or just keep it quiet (still feeling a sense of denial). We just kept it amongst the brothers and sisters in our branch. Jacob would pace up and down the center aisle in Church "lining up" the pews with his eyes (a trait of autistic children). He often would run out the front door, giving our deacons a good workout each Sunday. But one Sunday, something amazing happened. Jacob walked up front by himself, unprompted (at 3 years old), and sat in the chair to be anointed. He didn't move a muscle but sat quietly. Not sure what to do, we as elders prayed for him. When the prayer concluded a sister stood crying and said she had a vision. She looked up and saw Jacob as a 20-year-old in a shirt and tie holding a Bible teaching young people in a class. Of course our hopes soared for that moment, but quickly after the meeting, as we observed the same autistic behaviors, we felt discouragement again. Several months later, we were listening to *I Left It There* (#165 in *The Songs of Zion*) and singing along with our older son in our home. As we were singing, we heard another voice singing that we didn't recognize. When we looked, Jacob was singing the words of the chorus perfectly! Mind you, he never even said "mama" or "dada" up to this point, and now he was singing all the words of this song. I ran to get my video camera because I wasn't sure if anyone would believe us (thinking it was just a onetime thing). From that day forward, Jacob changed. The head banging stopped. The pacing up and down the aisles at Church stopped. His vocabulary increased dramatically.

When Jacob was 4 1/2 years old, we had him reevaluated by several doctors. I'll never forget after the final 3 hour evaluation receiving a call from the psychiatrist telling me he can't really explain this, but Jacob is no longer autistic. He no longer demonstrated the characteristics of autism. It took a day or two for it to sink in, but we realized he had been healed! We didn't need to use any special diets or any magical medicines, the God of all the universe had compassion on our little boy and healed him. The vision our sister had came back to us, and we realized this was always in God's plan to show His power and love to us. This September he is starting school....a public school with his older brother. What an awesome God we serve! I share this with you to encourage you that there isn't anything that Jesus cannot do. We must never underestimate His power and His ability to do the impossible.

It also reminds me of a time about 10 years ago in our branch when a woman who had the HIV virus in an advanced stage was prayed for. That Tuesday she went to the doctor and the HIV virus had completely disappeared from her body! Sometimes we forget who it is we serve. But these kinds of miracles remind us. Our God is an awesome God!

"Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in" (Isaiah 40:21-22).

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork



How Jesus Takes the Fear Out of Changing

Dear Friends,

Life is always changing. Do you remember when you were small and learned to ride a bike without falling off? Then you learned to ride with only one hand! You keep growing and changing. That makes life change too. Some changes are exciting and fun.

Some changes are scary. We wish we could hide or stay at home in fear. Do you remember being afraid to walk into a new school building, classroom, or business place? Do you remember hoping you would get a kind teacher, or meet nice kids? In The Church of Jesus Christ, we pray all the time for the safety and protection of our children, friends and families. From the time you are blessed until you get baptized, and on, we pray and trust that God will take care of you and guide you. He does. Later, you get so used to that new school, or place, that you are happy to run inside quickly and see what new thing you are going to learn.

Each day we pray for courage and God's protection. If you are going to work with a new teacher, students, or boss, pray to Jesus and God to help you. Then you will be changed from feeling anxious or nervous to being comfortable and happy to be there. Life is full of changes, and Jesus, our friend and Lord, teaches us how to stop being afraid of life.

First, He tells us not to worry about bad things ahead of us so much. Jesus teaches in the Bible in the book

of Matthew 6:34, "Take...no thought for the morrow [tomorrow]: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself [don't worry so far ahead]. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof [or, each day it is enough to worry just about that day]." So many times we waste energy and feel worried sick over something that does not even end up happening! We waste perfectly good days and weeks worrying with fear instead of praying, asking God for peace and guidance and doing our best.

It's interesting having Jesus as our friend, teacher, and leader. When we follow His commandments, our lives get so much better. We can try new things. We can be braver and meet new people. When we are nervous and worried we won't know what to say, we can pray and ask for more courage. When someone is mean to us, we can ask for patience or wisdom to figure out how to handle it. God can help us change the ways we react to others and learn new ways that work. He teaches us in Matthew 7:9-11 to pray and trust God will help us. Jesus said, "What man is there of you, whom if his son asks for bread, will he give him a stone?...If ye then...know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

That's what I remind myself when I am feeling scared or lonely and start praying to God. I know God loves me even more than any human person does. I tell Him I am worried and ask Him to help me in every new situation. He does. Jesus actually cares whether we are safe and happy

and have a good life! He promises us that if we go to Him and pray and talk to Him, that He will work out our problems in life. In John 10:10 He says, "...I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly!" Abundant means lots of something, so that means Jesus will help us through all the changes of life and give us greater lives, more love, more wisdom, more courage and all of the help we need to get through the good and the bad changes that life brings to us!

Talk to Jesus. Tell Him your fears and ask Him to give you power to change, grow and be the best person with a blessed, wonderful, and interesting life! Remember the verse in II Timothy 1:7, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind [a calm, good brain]." Believe it, pray about it, live it and enjoy the changes you will go through!

With love,
Your friend (who sometimes fears changes),
Sister Jan

WORD SEARCH

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TIMOTHY	GIVEN	OF
ONE	US	POWER
SEVEN	THE	LOVE
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GMBA Conference May 16-17, 2009

By Sister Leah Nath

The saints were welcomed Friday night to Anaheim, California with a friendly game of bowling at a local college. Even though many of the young people were up late, a group of young people arrived a half hour before the GMBA officers Saturday morning. They were able to enjoy a delicious home-cooked breakfast courtesy of the Anaheim Branch kitchen committee. Once the brothers and sisters arrived to begin our conference, the GMBA Chaplain, Brother Larry Champine, opened asking a few questions. What is our focus? – God First. How important is that? What did Jesus do for me? What can I do to make sure I reflect Him in everything in my life? The idea this weekend is that we will walk away with a greater understanding and willingness to put God first in our lives. God is able to look at us equally and put us all first. We can always better ourselves. This weekend we hope to better ourselves in putting God first.

During the course of the morning conference, it was noted that the GMBA was asked to host two nights at the upcoming 2011 World Conference. The theme is “Restoration Story.” The first night will be a stirring reenactment of the Restoration Story beginning with Joseph Smith and the establishment of The Church of Jesus Christ. Brother Mark Kovacic is leading this project. He is looking for volunteers that would like to help write, direct, produce and act out selected restoration scenes. The second night is a continuation of how the Restoration has impacted the lives of men and women in our modern day. Brother Larry Champine is leading this project. They are creating a video for presentation on that night. In both cases, the

presentations will be mingled with choral music from the World Conference choir under the direction of Brother Pete Giannetti. Anyone interested in helping may contact these brothers for more information. The GMBA made a motion to accept the recommendation of \$250 per local per 6 months, to be raised for the 2011 World Conference. The General Church has requested the GMBA contribute \$25,000 to the World Conference effort.

Brother Jason Monaghan gave a presentation on looking back at the origin of the MBA and its vision to aid the Church and promote the youth. Are we following the vision given to Brother Alexander Cherry? We are so blessed to see the effects and activities of the GMBA and how it is impacting the lives of our young people. The MBA is for them and we should be giving them the opportunity to be active in taking on roles and offices. He stressed the importance of the local, because sometimes we tend to only focus on GMBA programs like YIA, GMBA Campout, etc. While these are wonderful events, if we lose sight of the local MBA, we can be missing the boat! Are the teachers making MBA worth coming to? Are our lessons prepared or thrown together when we get to church? We need to create and maintain an environment that our young people will thrive in and be inspired to attend.

After lunch, the saints were split into seminars according to age. Brother Pete Giannetti, Jr. led a seminar titled “God 1st.” All the involved brothers did an amazing job and the saints were truly blessed. To summarize the seminar is not easy, but with God’s help I hope you receive the same blessing as if you were there in person. Brother Pete split the presentation into 3 parts: God first in Service, God first in Relationships, and God first in Marriage. Putting God first in Service entails God being your best friend, including Him in every detail of your life, loving Him as much as He loves us, and growing through temptation. The second part of the seminar was about putting God 1st in Relationships. If you can’t love each other in the

Church, then you can’t love the world. We must avoid pride and be filled with the Love of God. The third part of the seminar was God 1st in marriage. We make a covenant and union. The union is two becoming one, the covenant is the promise between the couple. Both must be grounded in the love of God. Brother Tom D’Orazio closed stating, if God is 1st there has to be a 2nd – us. That is the struggle in our walk with Christ, putting ourselves second.

After dinner and fellowship, the saints gathered for an evening of God’s richest blessings. Brother Patrick Giannetti opened in prayer and Brother Jason Monaghan opened the meeting by stating the purpose of us being here is to move forward in the GMBA. The goal of the GMBA is to place the young people in the position like Samuel and look unto Christ first. The Pacific Coast Choir sang a selection of songs, directed by Sister Christina Paxon, followed by a Spanish selection sung by a group of our Mexican brothers and sisters.

Brother Jeff Giannetti spoke and encouraged the saints to love your local as much as the GMBA. Love your office and do it to the honor and glory of God. Psalm 23, “The Lord is my Shepherd...” We have been given so much. Will we take advantage of it? Can you rehearse these words in your life? Is the Lord your gentle Saviour? Is it our desire to dwell in the house of the Lord forever? Is God first in our lives? How beautiful it is when we find ourselves in that “spot” and we can answer yes to those questions! We have a treasure! If we have a relationship with Christ, you will not be alone. Psalm 55:22, Cast your burdens upon me... Have you been in that spot where you know that you have that relationship with God? David knew he couldn’t fight Goliath without God’s help. Even David messed up. The challenge is to recognize that you messed up and God wants you to realize that. David fell on his face before God after he realized he messed up. God forgave him and David was back in that spot. The enemy of our soul wants us to surren-

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Soul Spa; Finding True Worth in Christ

By Sister Carolyn Light

On June 6th, nearly 100 sisters from the throughout the Church met in Phoenix, Arizona for the Southwest and Pacific Regions' Ladies' Circle Fellowship Weekend. The theme of our weekend was "Finding True Worth in Jesus Christ." The backdrop idea for the weekend was a "Soul Spa." Our hope was to unite and draw close to Christ by understanding His love and caring in our lives. As sisters, we must be able to rise above the messages that rob us of our worth, remembering that Christ's purpose was to enable us to be able to enter into God's presence.

Sisters gathered from Arizona, California, Texas, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Colorado and Michigan on Friday afternoon and began an introspective exercise to prepare themselves to look at the "inner woman" to see who Christ enables her to be. Making collages about their true self allowed the sisters to begin thinking about their inner, spiritual design.

After a wonderful period of fellowship during dinner, the sisters were welcomed by their coordinators, Sisters Rachel Cotellesse, Debbie Kyriakos, Jody Greger, and Michelle Watson. The scripture in Ephesians 5:29-30 was presented as a highlighted scripture for the weekend: "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." The coordinators explained that this theme became important when they noticed how having a poor self-worth inhibits our service to God. We are not worthy of ourselves but with Christ bestowing His blessings, talents and abilities on us we can be used of God and are of great worth. It is easy for us to place our worth on

things that are less than spiritual.

Knowing this, it is important that we recognize our reason for being and our value lies in our spiritual being; all else is second to that.

On Friday evening, we participated in the "O-Holy-Tonight Show" during which our coordinators differentiated between what women see when we look in the mirror and what God focuses on in our hearts. Even though women everywhere desire natural makeovers, God sees the best in us, beyond our appearance, and loves us as we are. All in attendance were then treated to "prizes" as our spiritual beauty technicians were introduced. These sisters, who would be leading seminars the following day, gave us a brief glimpse of what was in store. After our show ended, we all gathered for fellowship and cookie tasting before retiring.

Throughout the weekend fundraiser items were sold in a boutique of handmade items as well as "God sees a Glamour Shot" photos. Both of these ideas were a huge success and a great deal of fun for all.

The following day, the sisters were greeted by the Soul Spa Concierge, Sister Carolyn Light, who delivered the keynote address. She introduced the sisters to this "Sanctuary for Spiritual Restoration." Unlike other spas, the effects of *this* spa could last for eternity. She encouraged sisters to look to the Word of God to learn about our real value, because the messages we receive from society are far from accurate. Those messages encourage us to find value in beauty, popularity, wealth and other roles or titles. Many of these aspirations are subject to change and instability. Sister Carolyn cited Job and his trials to punctuate that our value cannot lie in what we possess or what we do, it must lie in being called a "Daughter of God." She used the first chapter of Ephesians and the first chapter of Genesis to entertain the topics of God's perfect creation, as well as being chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and sealed by the Spirit. We are valuable in spite of our flaws; all were encouraged to place importance on things that are

eternal.

Sister Carolyn then introduced the Spiritual Beauty Technicians who would be attending to our various soul spa needs. Each technician would focus on various body parts for our spiritual makeover. First, Sister Tawnya Hood encouraged us to participate in a spiritual workout daily to be healthy and happy. She also roused us to look to Christ, our personal trainer, and to employ our "team" of sisters, the body of Christ, in our daily effort. In being a positive example, sharing our testimony, and being nourished in the Word of God we can be well prepared for our daily walk.

Sister Wendy Heinz helped us appreciate that Godly words proceed from Godly mouths and lips. She encouraged us to utilize words that build each other up and rejoice in our spiritual family. We were then asked to consider what words we use when we interact with our spiritual and natural families, as well as the words we use when we interact with God in prayer. Sister Vicky Meo stressed that we must try to look through spiritual eyes when we see each other. Our eyes can find beauty or find fault, and it is always better to look for the positive in each other. We were also encouraged to look toward the Light of Christ provided for us.

Sister Debbie McDonnell emphasized, "Just as our fingerprints are used to identify us, spiritual hands that work for God will always have a story to tell. Our hands can be used to accentuate natural and spiritual talents and we were encouraged to develop those talents and help other sisters to develop theirs.

Finally, Sisters Jody Greger and Debbie Kyriakos assisted us to makeover our feet to walk away from sin. They encouraged us to consider where our feet take us and the direction of our travel in the Lord.

Sister Kristen Elzby met with the teenage girls to consider their spiritual makeover during the morning hours. Later that day, this group of young girls performed a wonderfully-enacted skit which described our inner beauty as more important to God than our physical beauty.

At the conclusion of our seminars

and lunch, there was time for sisters to fellowship, participate in crafts or excursions and enjoy free time until dinner. After dinner we were treated to a fun and enjoyable evening, hosted by Sister Danielle Giannetti, who strengthened us to enjoy and consider the wonderful sisters who surround us. We reminisced and humorously enjoyed each others' gifts and talents.

Sunday morning worship service was opened by Brother Michael Watson who continued with the theme of the weekend. In talking about worth, Brother Michael differentiated between worth that comes from the world, such as wealth and power, and worth that comes from God: gifts, talents and forgiveness. He reiterated that our worth is not found in our roles. He cited I John 3:1, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God..." to emphasize God's love for us. Brother Michael used the fifth chapter of Romans to highlight that God vested worth in us through Christ and His sacrifice. He then shared touching experiences which illustrated that we can become self-critical about our outer beauty but that God created us and has a perfect plan for us just the way we are.

After Communion was passed, we were addressed by Sister Lisa Champine, General Ladies' Circle Vice President. Sister Lisa expressed her thanksgiving to God for this blessed weekend. She encouraged us to utilize our gifts and talents and give our best to the Lord. She also encouraged us as members of the Ladies' Circle to become involved and share as we have this weekend for the benefit of the body of sisters. Sister Karen Progar, General Ladies' Circle President, then shared an experience in which the Lord has prompted her to visit the sisters throughout the Church and encourage them. Her presentation, which included a history of the Ladies' Circle, gave us not only historical information but also defined the importance of the sisters in the Church. She referred to sisters from past and present, speaking about our roots and spiritual growth. She also

encouraged us to frequent activities which support missionary work throughout the world.

Sisters were then encouraged to testify and share God's blessings with each other. Many sisters and women who were visiting with us spoke about the glory of God and expressed thankfulness in having our Savior in their lives. There were numerous testimonies about experiences, visions and healings in our midst. It was with hearts full of joy, love, and restoration of the Spirit that we reluctantly bade farewell to each other, looking forward to the next gathering of sisters in the fellowship of Jesus Christ.

I Am Your Brother

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and proclaimed, "If there be any among you who desire to come into the fold, today is a good day to be baptized." A young man who accompanied the youth from Tijuana said, "I desire to be baptized," and the family of God rejoiced! Brother Jacinto, a Teacher in the mission, then translated Brother Stacey's message into Mixteco, his native tongue. Brother Jacinto's cousin, Bonafacio, who has been attending the Church for eight years and whose wife was recently baptized, spoke up loudly in Mixteco. The congregation watched as tears poured down Brother Jacinto's face as he translated Brother Bonafacio's desire to become part of the family of God. Brother Jacinto then relayed a dream that Brother Bonafacio had confirming the authenticity of the Church.

The weekend was concluded with a Sunday lunch. Those present did not see the dark skin or light skin, only a family sitting down together to share blessings and a meal together on the Lord's holy day. We give thanks for this blessed occasion, and for every opportunity to reunite with our brothers and our sisters. "Yo soy tu hermano."

"I am your brother, I'm hiding my tears. Rejoicing to see you from so many years. The land lies before you, a beautiful sight. My brothers are home now, don't cry it's all right."

OK Native American Outreach

Continued from page 4

decided to pray about it. Sunday morning when Brother John came to get us, we still had not decided but prayed again. We waited a moment and then chose Artussee Baptist Church. Driving out of town and down some lonely roads (our instructions were to go until the road ended and turn right and continue until you see the church), we found the church nestled among some trees. The pastor arrived from Okmulgee, Oklahoma, about fifty miles away. We learned that they meet only once a month (the Lord brought us on the right day). After a few minutes, the pastor invited us to participate in the service and asked Brother George to preach a sermon after he opened the meeting. We learned that the members were all Creek (Muscogee) Nation people. Their church has been there since 1875.

We were invited onto the pulpit and after singing a few hymns in Creek, the pastor shared some scripture and related thoughts. Brother George was asked to speak next, but before he started he asked if the three visiting brothers could sing a song. Brother George selected *I Love to Tell the Story*. He then used Matthew 11:25-30 as his text and expounded the importance of continuing our belief in Jesus Christ as the son of God, especially in today's environment. He included his own testimony of how many times in his life he had to rely on Jesus during difficult situations.

The pastor provided time for "announcements and testimonies" and specifically asked Brothers Mark and John to share their testimonies. Brother Mark noted the purpose of their visit and how God has blessed them with a message that they want to share with Native Americans. Brother John explained how he worked with Piscataway Indians in Maryland and that he wants to help these here. We could see that many were touched by Brother John's sincere and heartfelt offer.

A few more announcements and

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OK Native American Outreach

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testimonies were shared and the meeting was closed by singing another hymn in the Creek language. We then had the opportunity to speak to several of the members. We explained our purpose for being in Oklahoma and what we intended to do during the next couple of days. We asked the pastor if we could meet him in Okmulgee when we headed over that way. He willingly gave us his home address and phone number and said he would like a visit. We asked whether we could take their picture and they were happy to pose.

As we headed to the car, the pastor walked with us and asked whether he could offer a prayer on our behalf. He told the Lord that he did not know why God brought these three men to him today, but he was very thankful and asked God to watch over us and bless us in our mission. We were very touched by his love and concern for us. What a wonderful start to our outreach effort.

Over the next five days we would meet and have discussions with nine chairmen, principal chiefs or other officials, all from different tribes or nations. In total, we spoke and delivered materials to 14 different ones.

Another visit that stands out is one to the Kialagee tribal town office in Wetumka. The director of the environmental outreach of the tribe welcomed us in and we then shared an enlightening conversation. As we chatted, he asked whether we were from another church. We explained we were from The Church of Jesus Christ in Monongahela, Pennsylvania, and we also explained the difference in how we believe about Native Americans. He then stated he believed they were from Israel and he knew which tribe. He asked us if we knew and we said Joseph. He said he believed they were from Mannassah! We had some additional discussion and he explained his belief about the great changes which would occur upon the land in the near future. We explained the Choice Seer and how he would do God's work in unifying the tribes and nations. He asked

whether we had any other questions and we asked him if he would accept two books from us? He agreed and we presented him a Book of Mormon and American Indian Moses. He graciously accepted both and promised to read them, as he was open to our message.

At Stroud, Oklahoma, we met the chairman of the Sak & Fox Nation. Here, patience paid off, as he was on the phone with someone who had wanted to speak to him for months. We waited for a half hour or so and then were invited into his office. We explained our purpose and the materials we were giving him. He said our message was "intriguing, very intriguing." He then spoke about his position and heritage, noting his Sak name as "thunder over head," also that the nation was now up to 3600 members. Before leaving he thanked us for

"...He told the Lord that he did not know why God brought these three men to him today, but he was very thankful and asked God to watch over us and bless us in our mission."

coming and again said the message sounded very intriguing.

In Anadarko, we met the Apache Tribe of Oklahoma vice chair. She received us warmly, discussed our message, and accepted our package of materials. After lunch we stopped at the Delaware Nation and fortunately the nation president was walking by the receptionist coming back from lunch. He said he would be glad to meet with us and we provided him the package of material and explained the message we had. He was very cordial and said he would pass the material on to their library after he read it. He also mentioned he would like to visit one of our congregations when he is visiting Pennsylvania this fall.

We continued to the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma in the town of Binger. The chair was not available, but her executive assistant, who first

met us in the lobby, welcomed us into her office to hear our message, which she said fascinated her. We gave her the package of materials. She said she would read through the material and pass it on to the chairman, too.

From Binger we drove to Carnegie to meet the tribal chair of the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma. We were shown his office and when we introduced ourselves to the secretary, the chairman was sitting with his back to us. He turned, introduced himself as the chairman, and invited us into his office, where we had a lengthy discussion about our message and his beliefs. He was very interested in the book, *American Indian Moses*, and that he would share our message with his business committee.

Our final day of visiting was capped with going to the home of the Artussee pastor. They warmly received us and we spent over two hours discussing scriptures, church practices, the Book of Mormon, and how our Church is different from certain other restoration churches. Both were quite open and receptive to our message. The pastor noted he had received a Book of Mormon from another group sometime ago, but he admitted that he tried to understand with his mind, and not by prayer. We concluded with prayer offered by him. In his prayer he thanked God for bringing us his way and for listening to him and sharing our message with him.

Sometimes it is hard to gauge success of discussions, except to note a number of tribal leaders had sufficient opportunity to avoid us or 'brush us off,' but did not. Instead they took the time to hear us out, ask questions and exchange thoughts and ideas about the topics. Besides giving individuals copies of our materials, we were also able to leave four copies of the *American Indian Moses* at public and tribal libraries, explaining to the librarians the background and message of the book. All were quite appreciative of the donation.

Driving over 2600 miles and visiting 15 towns, 17 tribal offices or nations, and speaking to a number of officials and Native Americans, we can truly say that God opened many doors.

Guy's Night Out

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McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania, was then introduced as the guest speaker for the evening.

Brother Paul opened with Psalm 1, emphasizing verse 3, that if we as men put the Lord first and keep His commandments, all that we do will prosper. To do this, he pointed out we must be disciplined and be positive influences to those around us. In essence, we must be shepherds to the Church and to our families.

He stated a good shepherd leads, feeds, directs, comforts, protects and corrects the sheep, and also leads by example. Brother Paul related how his father was a positive leader and example to him in his life.

Joshua was an apprentice or disciple of Moses and learned to be a leader from watching him. We need to respect and learn from our natural and spiritual fathers and brothers.

We are commanded to love God and seek first His kingdom, and love our neighbor, upon which hangs all the law and prophets.

Brother Paul then challenged all of us to be 3-D men: men of Desire, Dedication, and Determination. Jesus was the greatest leader of all times, yet He was obedient to His Father, and emptied Himself of "self." We need to be obedient to God and empty ourselves of "self."

Brother Panfilo DiCenzo, also of the McKees Rocks Branch, followed with the testimony of how Jesus completely changed his life when he finally surrendered to Him and obeyed the Gospel; and what a difference the Lord has made in his life, providing him with a new purpose, and a wonderful wife and son. He then sang a beautiful rendition of *My Tribute, To God Be the Glory* by Andre' Crouch.

Brother Dan Griesbaum from Detroit Branch #1, a high school teacher and coach, shared how important it is for young people to have role models in their lives. He endeavors to be a leader, role model and example by teaching life skills in the classroom and on the field. He stated having the Lord in his life has made a

huge difference for him and his family. We must continue to be a positive influence to our young people. They need someone whom they can look to when they need direction or have problems in their lives. Brother Dan also gave the Lord thanks for the important role He has played in his life.

Brother Jim Lambert, Jr. of Detroit Branch #2 thanked God for the role models in his life: his father, the brothers in Church, and our late Brother Frank Morle, who told him "Jim you will never be a man until you commit your life to the Lord," before he went on to his reward. Brother Jim stressed the importance of being a leader in our homes to our children and families.

A group of young men from our region played a beautiful instrumental rendition of *Wave the Flags*.

Evangelist Jeff Giannetti, our Region Quorum of 70 Vice Chairman, thanked everyone for coming, and after some closing remarks led all 240 of us in a moving rendition of *Amazing Grace*.

The inspirational and heart-warming evening was closed in prayer by Apostle Peter Scolaro.

GMBA Conference

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der. But Satan is more subtle than that. He will make you question, doubt, look for faults, etc. Will you give up tonight, or will you be like Alma and Amulek and cry out to God for help? We need to pray for our families and those that have left the Church. Job's wife said to curse God and die, but Job said "no." He was on the spot! It's a battle to stay on that spot. You have to trust in the Lord and you can stay on that spot. I am thankful for the MBA and my parents that guided me to that spot, living in the will of God. If you find yourself wandering off, come back and the Lord will be waiting there for you. Sister Jennifer, Brother Brian Champine and Alyssa Giannetti sang *What Could Be Better*, and the young people gathered up front and sang *To*

See the Morning Light, gave testimonies, and then sang *Keeping Step*. The congregation closed singing *The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning*, and Brother Jordan Giannetti closed in prayer.

Just hours later, our Sunday service began with the Scolaro family singing *Lovest Thou Me*. Then a group of 12 sang *Just For Me*, while Sister Elizabeth Simpson (in the hospital) listened via cell phone. The meeting was opened by singing *Dwelling in Beulah Land* and Brother Tom Liberto opened in prayer. Sister Erin Light and Sister Carolyn Light sang *Above All Else I Believe*. Brother Tom D'Orazio opened by stating the most important thing this morning is that Christ speaks to us. He spoke out of Matthew 21:18-19, "Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it 'Let no fruit grow on these henceforward for ever.' And presently the fig tree withered away." Brother Tom thought on the flight here, why in the world would Jesus be so upset at a tree? The reason is because it gave its fruit to someone else first. When Christ came, there was nothing left. It had put Him second. Christ saw many trees but they bore no fruit. Just before this event, Jesus met many people that looked like fruitful trees, but in the end, they bore little fruit. At the end of the chapter, verse 43 tells us what He's looking for, "Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." You can fool yourself, but you can't bare fruit until you have God in your heart. We are obligated to give our best to Christ. He gave us His best. The pure love of God and Tree of Life is our destiny. Believe that whatsoever you ask in prayer and He will answer that prayer. By the Spirit of God, things that are impossible become possible in a moment. Because of His mercy, while we have life, it is never too late with Christ. We are called to live and are no longer cursed to die.

(Continued on Page 12)

GMBA Conference 2009

Continued from Page 11

Brother Jason Monaghan followed by remembering his grandfather. Is your candle burning brightly today? He was working in the mill when he had to grease the gears and lost his footing. All of a sudden a finger stopped his fall. It was the finger of God that stopped him. He's looking at the candle upon your soul, branches, missions, and marriages. God wants our fruits first, but He wants our problems first too. In Revelation 2:4, "...I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." God cares because we care. He walks among the candle sticks. Put God first and He will bless you in all that you do.

Brother Pete Giannetti Jr. followed and posed the question, "Who can tell the Love of God?" Unless you experience it, you can't describe it. It's a beautiful thing! If we give first to the Lord, the fruits that we have are enough to share with the world. Our fruit will feed the world. The Lord told His disciples to go out, there is still room at the table. A few years ago at conference, the message was to go out and compel them to come in. How do we compel? It's by the love of God that you will compel them to come in. Young people, it's time to take hold of the Gospel and be the example to those coming behind you.

Brother Larry Champine stated life is worth living if you serve the Lord and put Him first. Glory be to His name for the conviction in my heart and soul! We need to fully give

ourselves over to Him. God will reveal His arm if we put Him first. We are filled with testimonies of God's victories. We can turn our backs or harden our hearts to Him. We may fail Him, but He is so merciful. Just humble yourselves and He will forgive you. I am thankful for the opportunity to serve with the saints of God.

Brother Stacy Light thanked everyone for coming to the West Coast for GMBA Conference. Brother Tom D'Orazio thanked the Anaheim Branch for their hospitality, love and hard work all weekend. We closed our GMBA Conference singing *There's Not Anything Jesus Cannot Do*, and Brother Richard Deulus closed in prayer. On behalf of the GMBA, we thank the Pacific Coast Region for their hospitality to the GMBA. May God bless you all.

Spiritual Anniversaries

Sister Cathy Gentile of Detroit, Michigan Branch #2 celebrated 50 years in The Church of Jesus Christ on May 10, 2009.

Sister Irene Yonkee of the Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Branch celebrated 60 years in The Church of Jesus Christ on July 3, 2009.

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Children Blessed

Kia Hale, daughter of Justin and Kim Hale, was blessed on February 15, 2009 at the Clairton, Pennsylvania Mission.

CarolAnn Sunshine Sparks, daughter of Michael and Mindy Sparks, was blessed on June 7, 2009 at the Sterling Heights, Michigan Branch.

Evan David Gibson, son of Sister Dana and Brother David Gibson, was blessed on June 14, 2009 at the Imperial, Pennsylvania Branch.

Haley Ann Severino, daughter of Sister Jessie and Dan Severino, was blessed on June 14, 2009 at the Imperial, Pennsylvania Branch.

Kaynan Stephen Everett, son of Brother Brandon and Sister Nicole Everett, was blessed on July 19, 2009 at the Sterling Heights, Michigan Branch.

Aiyana Lynn Haley, daughter of Drew and Cortney Haley was blessed on August 2, 2009 at the Atlanta, Georgia Branch.

Address Change

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Branch or Mission _____



THE CHURCH OF Jesus Christ

International Headquarters in
Monongahela, Pennsylvania

October, 2009

Volume 65, No. 10



WORLD CONFERENCE • JUNE 25 – JULY 1, 2011

Brothers, Sisters and Friends,

This article is to personally invite you to the 2011 World Conference. The World Conference will be held at Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais, Illinois. The conference will start on Saturday June 25, 2011 and will conclude Friday July 1, 2011. The Lord has inspired the Church to use the theme of 'The Everlasting Gospel' taken from Revelations 14th Chapter 6th verse.

This will be the third World Conference The Church of Jesus Christ has held in the past 30 years, with the first Conference held in 1983 and the second Conference held in 1999. The 2011 World Conference will feature missionary presentations both from foreign lands as well as the blessings recounted in the spreading of the Gospel throughout the United States and Canada. In addition the GMBA will be assisting the General Church in presenting the story of the Restoration and the undeniable effects of the Gospel in the lives of people throughout the world since the Restoration. We also look forward to musical blessings we find in The Church of Jesus Christ as well as the fellowship of the saints we all love!

We will be providing additional details about the conference in the coming weeks and months. We will have the initial pricing information out to all before the end of this year and as stated in our updates at the General Church Conference, the pricing structure will be similar to the GMBA Campout pricing structure. We also plan to begin accepting registration in 2010 for those who wish to pay early. We look forward to seeing many if not all of you at the 2011 World Conference, and we will have quarterly updates in the *Gospel News* starting with the fourth quarter 2009 right up to the event itself. We ask each of you to begin remembering the 2011 World Conference for the blessings of God to move in and among His people.

God bless,

Brother Paul A. Palmieri
2011 WC Director

Brother Frank J. Natoli and Brother Zachary R. Jackson
2011 WC Assistant Directors



Why The Title "First Nations People?"

By Brother Mark Kovacic

Over the years, various names have been used to signify the aboriginal people of the Americas. *American Indians* is one of the most common, but as we all know, a complete misnomer by Christopher Columbus. Many still use the term today. Others have begun to use Native Americans, thinking that they were the "natives" of this land. Of course, America is a name derived from the mapmaker and sailor, Amerigo Vespucci. Even many of the "tribal" names we use are not of aboriginal origin, such as Mohawk, Chippewa or Iroquois (test your Internet skills and find out their true names). Most interesting is that many of the nations that were established in America at the time of the European invasion simply called themselves "the People." Today, we may mistakenly use one name over another. It is important for us to recognize that those whom we call American Indians come from their own nation. Even with the fifty years of the European Union, an Italian still wants to be known as an Italian. Take the time and find out the "nation" the Native American you are speaking to is from. This situation is especially true in Canada, where the aboriginal people neither use the title American Indian nor Native American, but call themselves First Nations People. A little respect goes a long way in opening the doors of communications; showing that respect by calling them by their name is a big step forward.

NAOC DVD Brings Weekend in New Orleans

Brothers Mark Kovacic, Dewayne Eutsey and Keith Eutsey traveled from Atlanta to New Orleans to spend Saturday evening working on the NAOC's missionary DVD with Andreas Frentzos, a professional and highly skilled videography editor. The activities included correcting some errors, adding some new graphics, including some "voice over" and adding additional references. Sunday morning we had Sunday School in Andreas and Sister Michele's home (along with their daughter, Alivia). Brother Dewayne taught from Daniel regarding the five kingdoms, with a lot of discussion about the "stone kingdom" and what the future is for it. Communion was served and a season of testimony followed. Brother Mark concluded the service by reading from the Gospel according to Luke about the two men on the road to Emmaus and how often we didn't recognize that Jesus was walking with us until sometime later, and we echo the words, "did not our hearts burn." Remember Sister Michele in prayer as she is the only member there and does not get fellowship or communion often. Her e-mail address is: michelefrentzos@yahoo.com

(As a side note, the NAOC's missionary DVD should be ready soon for your use in sharing the Church's message with Native

Americans. Watch for announcements.)

Preparing to Expand the Outreach Among Native Americans/First Nations People

On Friday, June 12, 2009, Brothers Mark Kovacic, Dewayne Eutsey, and Keith Eutsey, traveled to Bluefield, West Virginia to support the Penn Mid-Atlantic's Native American Outreach training and development program. Saints from Pennsylvania, Virginia and North and South Carolina gathered at a hotel for Saturday's events.

The morning began with Brother George Kovacic speaking about hope: for today and the future, especially for the Seed of Joseph. He was followed by Brother Robert Nicklow, Sr., who explained the organization of the Region for their outreach efforts. The NAOC Outreach Handbook was reviewed by Brothers Mark Kovacic and Robert Nicklow, Jr., noting the need for spiritual preparation and cultural understanding. The afternoon included reports from the geographic coordinators as to their activities and near term plans. In the late afternoon a Native American perspective was provided by Russell Simms, Seminole and executive director of the Three Rivers Council in Pittsburgh. The Church has had a relationship with Russell and the Council for over thirty years.

After dinner, Brother Rick Lobzun (Mohawk, Inner City Branch, Detroit) presented a workshop on cultural diversity, especially directed at understanding the trials and abuses the Native Americans/First Nations People have endured, as well as their cultural contribution to our modern society and much of their outlook on life. His wife, Sister Faith, added several important points.

Sunday morning we regathered in the hotel meeting hall for services. Brother Mark Kovacic was asked to preach. He used 2 Nephi 30 as his text and explained how many of the Native Americans/First Nations

(Continued on Page 4)

Penn Mid-Atlantic Evangelist Update: RNAOC Is Enhancing Structure to Implement Work Today

By Evangelist Robert Nicklow, Jr.

II Nephi 3:11— "But a seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins: and unto him will I give power to bring forth my word unto the seed of thy loins — and not to the bringing forth of my word only, saith the Lord but to the convincing them of my word, which shall have already gone forth among them."

The Penn Mid-Atlantic (PMA) Region Evangelists and the RMOC have been very active in supporting the enhancement of the Region Native American Outreach Committee (RNAOC). The goal of the enhancement is to develop structure and process optimally supporting outreach efforts in the PMA Region for all identified locations of Native American people by taking to them the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

On June 13 and 14, 2009 in Bluefield, West Virginia the officers of the RNAOC through support of the Region Evangelists conducted a weekend training session for all current and potential committee members of the RNAOC. The site was chosen as it represents the epicenter of the region from Northern to Southern borders. The RNAOC officers, including Chairperson, Evangelist Bob Nicklow, Sr. and Committee Secretary, Evangelist George Kovacic, along with Vice Chair, Evangelist Bob Nicklow, Jr., facilitated the event.

Many of the 30 plus attendees arrived Friday evening to be fully prepared for work to begin on Saturday morning. Those attending represented members from 10 branches in three regions and were supported overall by 10 members of the ministry including six Evangelists and four Elders. The gathering was additionally blessed with two guest speakers participating in the days activities including Brother Rick Lobzun of the the Great Lakes Region and Mr.

Russell Simms of the Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. We were also privileged to have representation from the General Ladies' Uplift Circle as the President, Sister Karen Progar, was a present and active participant of the event.

The day began on Saturday with prayer and a strong scriptural message of encouragement from Brother George Kovacic. Brother Bob Nicklow, Sr. framed the days anticipated events and introduced the agenda. He also described for all present the current structure of the RNAOC in the region by introducing each of the six subcommittee coordinators and the assigned area of the region they cover.

Evangelist Mark Kovacic, Chairman of the General NAOC, presented an overview of the Native American Outreach Handbook. This handbook defines the process for region committees to follow. In conclusion, a question and answer session followed so all present had a better insight into the committee's guidelines.

After lunch, the group moved from reflection on the process to implementation as we explored how "to bring forth" the word of the Lord to the native peoples of the region. Each coordinator gave a report on the status of their area of coverage and the state of the team they are developing. Open discussion ensued on opportunities and volunteers were sought from the attendees. Through each of the discussions a wonderful spirit of unity was felt as the potential of each area was considered. Target dates were established for coordinators to complete team development and provide ongoing status reports. Next, the group was addressed by Mr. Russell Simms, Executive

Director of the Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center (COTRAIC). Mr. Simms has over 30 years experience in working with Native Americans transitioning to and from Reservations to Urban Centers and the unique needs they have. Mr. Simms and members of COTRAIC have a deep and mutual friendship with many saints of the Region extending over 30 years. There was an open forum on the topic of how the relationship has developed and what points to consider when building new relationships with Native people in the urban areas of the region.

An evening presentation was conducted by Brother Rick Lobzun who addressed the group on historical and cultural concepts on the Native American and First Nation peoples. He related how these cultural issues should be understood for the impact they bare on the means and methods of approach to both Native Americans and First Nation peoples. This presentation created a tremendous flow of discussion as clarification was sought on the issues discussed. This concluded activities for the day; but, even after ending the final session, discussions and sharing continued in the excitement of moving the work forward.

The group gathered again on Sunday morning as we met in fellowship. Brother Mark Kovacic opened the service with a message of hope in the promises of God for the latter day work. In each of the speakers who followed an exhortation was given from the scriptures to trust the Lord to do His work. Following the administering of the Lord's Supper and a season of testimony, the weekend was concluded.

The officers of the RNAOC recognize this is not the end point. It is not even the beginning of the end. It is really just the end of the beginning. Great work lies ahead in taking forth the word and we trust God will provide the power and means to bring it about: even to raise up the one with power to convince those of the message we are taking forth today.

“...rejoice exceedingly...”

By Evangelist George Kovacic

“... therefore Alma did rejoice exceedingly to see his brethren: and what added more to his joy, they were still his brethren in the Lord...” (Alma 17:2). These words came to my mind as we flew home Monday, August 10, after our short but very spiritually rewarding trip to Guatemala.

Sometimes we set out with goals to benefit a mission work but it never fails how the Lord blesses us. What greater joy can we receive than to see our brothers and sisters still standing firm in their faith in the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ?

I was a little anxious about this trip. I had not been to Guatemala in five years. Some say, “you can’t go back home” (courtesy of Thomas Wolfe). We say “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (courtesy of the Apostle Paul). Our prayers were that the Lord would be able to use us wherever He deemed necessary.

I had a notion that things would not be the same after being gone for half a decade. But praise the Lord for His infinite wisdom and mercy, for I found many of the brothers and sisters still pressing forward to the mark of eternal perfection.

Evangelist Jerry Valenti and I had a marvelous weekend from the moment we touched down in Guatemala City Airport. Friday afternoon we had some very productive time with our in-country minister, Brother Luis Marroquin. Friday evening we pushed full speed ahead with a visit to the Aldea Del Carmen area of the city where Brother Steve Kerby with the assistance of his wife, Sister Lisette, holds regular classes. He is there by request of the parents to teach the children English but he also fills in with some scripture study and singing. The evening we were there he had a special presentation on the history of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. Several of the brothers and sisters accompany them for support.

We spent most of Saturday

visiting in the homes of the members where we were graciously welcomed everywhere we went. This gave us time to get reacquainted and talk about the things of the Lord. We were asked about experiences when the Lord came to our aid; I had a chance to tell them the reason I believed I was there that day. I will not relate the story in detail but needless to say it gave an example of how the Lord can turn a tragedy in our life into a means of us advancing the Gospel.

An interesting footnote to this is that we also got to relate the story of Samuel the Prophet being commissioned by the Lord to anoint the second king of Israel. Samuel looked at Jesse’s sons and could see a lot of potential but was quickly corrected by the Lord, “...for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7). The example used in this scripture points out how each and every person born is important in the Lord’s eyes although it may not be apparent to those around us. We concluded that no man or woman born is not worthy of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Brother Jerry took that opportunity also to digitally record some of the members introducing themselves for use for the 2011 World Conference. We visited several homes and ended the day full of the spirit and many Guatemalan delicacies. We retired to our room and prayerfully asked the Lord if He would open our minds to what message was needed by the membership.

Sunday morning the lot fell on Brother Jerry to open the service with an insightful view of the 23rd Psalm. Brother Luis and I followed with some further thoughts on that piece of scripture.

We were then treated to some wonderful singing by the members. We got to hear a quartet and solo by some of the young sisters. I was amazed at how the Lord has blessed them over the years with learning English and getting employment. We enjoyed hearing each testimony offered. I did take the opportunity to share an insight that I had recently

concerning an experience given to Brother Virgil Link of San Carlos. He said he was awakened from sleep by hearing the saying, “Come unto me oh my people. It is time to build Zion.” He said he not only heard these words but felt it in his body. I explained that what struck me about the experience is that there are many yet who have not heard the Restored Gospel message and would not understand that statement if they heard it. We have a lot of work to do to get the word out among the Native People of the Americas. So I encouraged the membership that it is time to *get busy!*

After the meeting Brother Jerry got the remaining few members to record their name and location as he did on Saturday.

Later that day we went to a place outside of Guatemala City in the Lake Amatitlan area. This is where Brother Steve holds another English class. The family we were visiting is related to a sister in New Jersey. We offered a few words of testimony concerning the Book of Mormon and felt a wonderful spirit there.

Monday morning came too quickly. Brother Steve picked us up at the hotel and the next thing we knew we were back in the USA.

What wonderful new memories we have now of the great work of the Lord going on in the country of Guatemala.

Why the Title “First Nations People?”

Continued from Page 2

People call themselves “the People” in their own language. He then expounded the importance of being “The People of the Lord” through obedience to the commandments of God.

Brother Paul Aaron Palmieri followed, continuing in the same chapter, noting the importance of The Book of Mormon and how God restored His Son’s Church in America and the implications that has for all people.

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Editorial Viewpoint . . .

October is the month that the birth of Christopher Columbus is celebrated in our nation. He was the explorer who was given the honor of "discovering" the new world by arriving here in a ship from Spain on his way to what he thought was the land of India. When he arrived and discovered native people here, he called them "Indians" thinking he was in India. Turns out it was not India, but the land of America, and these natives were actually descendents of Joseph, one of the sons of Jacob, whose grandfather was Abraham. These people were actually part of the house of Israel, related to the Jews. Although Columbus didn't realize it at the time, God had brought him, and numerous other Gentiles after him to this land for a reason.

"And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles, who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters; and I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land. And it came to pass that I beheld the Spirit of God, that it wrought upon other Gentiles; and they went forth out of captivity, upon the many waters. And it came to pass that I beheld many multitudes of the Gentiles upon the land of promise; and I beheld the wrath of God, that it was upon the seed of my brethren; and they were scattered before the Gentiles and were smitten. And I beheld the Spirit of the Lord, that it was upon the Gentiles, and they did prosper and obtain the land for their inheritance; and I beheld that they were white and exceeding fair and beautiful, like unto my people before they were slain" (1 Nephi 13:12-15).

The wrath of God was upon the seed of Joseph or "Indians" upon this land because by this time, they had turned from God, believing in spirits; worshipping the earth instead of worshipping the one and only God. They had been cursed, and lived in a very backward way, and did not have any advances in science or technology. The Gentiles who arrived humbled themselves before God, and God blessed and prospered them exceedingly. The seed of Joseph were forced to live on reservations, as the Gentiles overtook the land. Even the parent nations of the Gentiles in Europe tried to destroy these Gentiles who came to America because they rebelled against the evil religions of Europe. They carried the Bible with them, and preached the word of God. God strengthened the Gentiles upon this land, and in the Revolutionary War, they defeated all other opponents. The progress and advances have not stopped even to this day. The United States in particular is the most powerful nation on earth, all because our forefathers were God fearing and humbled themselves before Him. God, however, made a promise to the House of Israel that they would not be destroyed and in the last days, He would gather them together, and if they would turn from their evil ways, and believe in the true and living God, He would raise them up. The scales are beginning to fall from the eyes of Israel as we speak. A promise and a curse are given to the Gentiles also. If they serve God, He will prosper them forever upon the Promised Land. If they turn from God, He will destroy them, and spare only the more righteous who will be adopted into the House of Israel whom God will raise up. The scriptures teach us that the main reason the Gentiles would fall is because of the sin and evil of a great and abominable church that exists today upon the earth. They will fight the humble followers of Christ, and because of their influence, the true followers of Christ will be few upon the earth. Brothers, sisters and friends, this is the day we are living in. There are few that will accept the truth. God's people are the minority and the outcast upon the earth. But He will pour out His power upon them, and upon the great and abominable church—the scripture says He will pour out His wrath. God's people will be delivered in Zion. What a wonderful hope we have. Thank God for His great plan to redeem and deliver His people.

"And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and power of the Holy Ghost..." (1 Nephi 13:37).

The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork

David Was Not A Quitter/Doubter

(1 Samuel 15-17)

Dear Friends,

At the beginning of the school year there are always so many interesting possibilities of things to try. At school there are new people to get to know; there are new activities and sports to figure out. As you spend each day, you will get ideas of things that you think are challenging or exciting. How will you talk yourself into trying new things, and developing new skills? Maybe a music teacher will ask you to sing in front of an audience, or speak at a program. Maybe a coach or someone will want you to start a game, or run alone down a field. Maybe there is someone new that you wished you could be friends with. What will you do when you are afraid to try or want to quit? How will you be stronger than your fears?

The Bible has an amazing story about the life of a boy who left his small country home and was chosen by God to be a king known around the world. He was asked to try new things and he constantly went to God, whom he loved. At home, he was the youngest of eight sons. He was under twenty years old, because he was not in the army like his brothers (see 1 Samuel 16:10-11). As the youngest son, his job was to walk miles each day taking the family's sheep to find clean water and good grass to eat. He was alone in the day and in the dark. He had to protect the sheep from anything that could harm them. That



means thunderstorms and any wild animals like wolves, bears, and lions that would try to stalk and kill the sheep. He could not quit; the sheep were his family's food and business. So, David learned how to use a fast slingshot. There were no cell phones, cars, bicycles, or guns invented yet. There was no one to call for help; he was just one young man with hundreds of sheep, all alone in the deserted land with a big scary job to do. He used his slingshot as a weapon of protection.

You can imagine how hard it would be to stay alert. You can also think how worried you would feel if you saw a big animal sneaking near! Who could help David? Only God could help him. He had to look deep inside of himself for courage. He had to take time to practice and practice using the right smooth rocks in his slingshot. He needed to be able to hit his target quickly with power, or he would be attacked too.

What would you do if you spent so many hours alone? David learned to play the harp. He made up songs about his fears and how God saved him. He loved singing about the greatness of God (read the book of Psalms in the Bible). When a wild lion attacked his sheep, David did not quit and run away! He ended up fighting, and killed it. The same thing happened when a bear attacked his sheep (1 Samuel 17:34-35). So David the shepherd became a young man who did not quit when things were scary. He knew God would deliver him (save him and give him courage and strength to fight danger).

The king of the land was named Saul. Now King Saul had made a big mistake against God's commands. In

a battle against enemies, he was told to totally destroy everything. But his soldiers wanted to keep the thousands of herds and flocks. Saul went against God when he feared the people instead of following God's directions (1 Samuel 15:24). When Saul decided to keep back all the riches, the huge herds of animals, God decided to pick a new king.

He told the prophet Samuel, "...Go to the house of Jesse. I have provided a new king from among his sons" (1 Samuel 16:1). Samuel went there and the Lord told him David was the boy to be chosen. Samuel anointed him with oil and God blessed David and poured His holy spirit on him. Can you imagine how confused and amazed David and the whole family felt?

(Continued on Page 10)

WORD SEARCH

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How Great Thou Art

The theme of the meeting at the Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Branch on Sunday morning, June 7, 2009, was "How Great Thou Art," which was developed by Evangelist Jim Huttenberger from the Anaheim, California Branch and Chairman of the Domestic Operating Committee (DOC). Visiting today were members of the DOC and the Penn Mid-Atlantic Region. The DOC met the day before at the Greensburg, Pennsylvania Branch and had a spirit-filled day conducting business, fellowshiping and receiving blessings. For the purpose of cohesiveness, spirituality and camaraderie, the Penn Mid-Atlantic Region asked all branches and missions in the southern part of the region to meet at the Monongahela Branch, and those in the north to meet in Aliquippa.

After an inspiring prayer offered by Evangelist Paul Ciotti from the McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania Branch, and a touching rendition of *His Blood Still Sets Men Free* by Brother Patrick Monaghan, also from McKees Rocks, Brother Jim Huttenberger opened the meeting by discussing the events of the previous day, the importance of the DOC, and how well the committee works together. It was at this point that Brother Jim announced the theme of his message, by stating that God is great because He took the time to change us. He used Philippians 2:9-11 to demonstrate how great God is by sending his Son and raising him to the highest place above, and gave Him the name that is greater than any other name. In honor of the name of Jesus Christ, every knee shall bend, and every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord. Other examples of how great the Lord is include: raising Lazarus from the dead, saving Brother Jim's leg from amputation, and saving his son's life.

Evangelist Pete Giannetti, Jr. from the Mesa, Arizona Branch and co-vice chairman of the DOC, stated that Jesus Christ is great because He is the Tree of Life, and that the world today needs His sweetness (not bitterness). Brother Pete then related how his son Patrick was involved in a

head-on collision and came out of it unscathed, because God is great and sent an angel to protect Brother Patrick.

Before Brother Panfilo DiCenzo from the McKees Rocks Branch sang *How Great Thou Art*, he testified that many people (friends of the Church), including Mrs. DeLallo (owner of DeLallo Authentic Italian Foods), rely on the Church to pray for their loved ones.

Apostle Isaac Smith from the Mesa, Arizona Branch, who wasn't planning to attend the meeting this morning, relayed a dream he had where he was in the Aliquippa Branch, saw many elders on the rostrum, and the meeting was being conducted by a man he didn't recognize. Brother Isaac then asked, "Do you have a firm foundation? Is your foundation shaken?" He then used Psalm 11:3 to let us know that God is great, because if we are righteous, if our foundation is in Jesus Christ, we have nothing to fear.

Apostle Phil Jackson from the Kinsman, Ohio Branch recounted how he was in need of Jesus in his life, and once he found Him, Jesus helped him to build a firm foundation, because Christ is great and is our chief cornerstone. If your foundation is built on the world, you have a weak foundation. Pray that God reveals this to you.

Apostle Paul Palmieri, from Aliquippa, and President of The Church of Jesus Christ, asked for those who feel God's Spirit to come forward and ask for their baptism. He thanked everyone for their attendance, and declared to everyone that this morning's meeting was a bit of heaven. Evangelist Paul Aaron Palmieri, also from Aliquippa, continued with today's theme by reminding those in attendance that God is great because He provides His ministers with inspired messages to feed His people. In The Church of Jesus Christ, we do not use prepared speeches, but rely on God's divine inspiration.

After communion, Brother Tony Ricci from McKees Rocks and President of the Penn Mid-Atlantic Region, reiterated that God is great because He sent His son, Jesus Christ, whose atoning blood flows for everyone and allows our sins to disappear. He also advised us to build our lives on

a firm foundation. Brother Tony thanked the members of the DOC for taking time out of their busy schedule to worship with us, and thanked the Aliquippa Branch for hosting today's meeting.

Closing prayer was offered by Evangelist Carl Frammolino from the Butler, Pennsylvania Mission. A delicious lunch which offered a season of love and fellowship for all was served. On such a joyous day it can truly be said of our Lord Jesus Christ, *How Great Thou Art!*

Experiences

On Sunday morning, March 8, 2009, I awoke and got down on my knees to pray. I thanked the Father for His blessings, made a few requests for those afflicted and asked the Lord for guidance and direction. To my surprise, I heard a voice which said, "Praise Me." After I heard this voice I had a vision. I was standing in a room filled with angels praising God. Their faces were very beautiful. I felt blessed and now feel a new purpose in my life, "To Praise God."

Sister Mary Ann Pasko

* * * * *

On January 10, 2009, I experienced a headache with blurred vision, and after a short time, my speech became jumbled. My sister and brother-in-law, Brother Pete and Sister Janet Ostreicher, called an ambulance and I was taken to the hospital. Brother Paul Palmieri came and anointed me. The diagnosis was a slight stroke with impaired speech. Brother Paul told his wife, Sister Eleanor, he would pray for a miracle. My speech was restored in the middle of the night. A call went to Brother Paul and Sister Eleanor telling them of my healing. I can't thank God enough for the love and mercy He has shown me. I thank each of you for your cards, messages and prayers.

Sister Theresa DeVincentis
Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Branch



Memorial Day Weekend 2009 in Columbus, Ohio

By Brother Wayne Martorana

The brothers and sisters of the Columbus, Ohio Mission, led by Brothers Alan Metzler and Joe Pennell, have been involved with the Native Americans there for several years through an organization called Native American Indian Cultural Center of Ohio (NAICCO). Their consistent efforts and befriending several of the Native American people have resulted in some opportunities to provide NAICCO members with some additional exposure to The Church of Jesus Christ, our beliefs and future promises of God to the Native American people as found in the Holy Scriptures.

Specifically, this Memorial Day weekend, several brothers, sisters and young people from Columbus, Lorain, Liberty, OH, and Windsor, Ontario, attended and participated in the Native American Powwow in Columbus, supporting them in several events and activities. The Church of Jesus Christ was one of the "sponsors" of the powwow which enabled us to place an ad in the powwow brochure which was given to all attendees. We used the ad as an opportunity to make the Native American people aware of the Church, our beliefs, and future promises of God's work with their people, including the Choice Seer. The weekend effort began Friday with the setup of various concession stands and preparation of Saturday's events. This time also afforded several opportunities for discussion with the Native Americans attending the powwow. We also had Church literature available which was free of charge to all those interested.

On Sunday, the Church was afforded the opportunity to conduct our Sunday worship service on the grounds

of the powwow. To our knowledge, it was an historical event, marking the first time in our Region of the Church that we had such an opportunity. We were also provided a sound system to broadcast the service throughout the grounds. Brothers Mark Naro and Alan Metzler conducted the service. Brother Joe Pennell explained the origin of *The Songs of Zion* and then the group proceeded to sing several selections with themes specific to the Native American people. Brother Mark preached concerning the Choice Seer, a descendant of Joseph of Egypt, and the role he will play in God's work and how he will be used as an instrument of God among the Native Americans. He also elaborated on the time of Zion and the peaceful condition that God will create for His people. Brother Alan elaborated on Jacob's blessing of his sons in the Old Testament time, and also the blessing of the sons of Joseph of Egypt, stating that a portion of that blessing extends to the Native American people today and in future generations. The service concluded with testimony and prayer.

On the closing day of the powwow, while one of the Native American women was praying, one of the brothers was given a vision of a white light around her during the time of prayer. The blessings of Joseph remain! Afterwards, some of the Native Americans commented to Brother Alan that they were listening to the service over the PA system and that they enjoyed very much what was said and hoped we would return to the next powwow and hold another service. Isaiah spoke well when he prophesied of the words of The Book of Mormon and the effect that those words will have on the Seed of Joseph when they hear them and receive them with an open heart and mind:

"And thou shalt be brought down, and shall speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust" (Isaiah 29:4).

Those that acknowledged their enjoyment of the words they heard to

Brother Alan only further confirms that "familiar spirit" and reaffirms our belief that one day, when Joseph comes to gather his people, many, not just a few will recognize the words of life and truth contained in The Book of Mormon.

Shortly after the conclusion of the powwow, the Native American group in Columbus has already initiated contact with the Church, requesting our return for the Labor Day Powwow. They have requested assistance and have enabled us to hold another Sunday worship service on the powwow grounds. Please pray that God will nourish this small seed that has been planted, that it would bear that good spiritual fruit.

Blessings in Greensburg

Since our young brothers', Marcus Natoli and Caleb Picciuto, YIA visit last summer in Greensburg our branch has become energized and continues God's work, even though with all the homes visited, about a 1000 in total, only one family visited the branch from that missionary effort. But the branch has been blessed, especially our branch young people. YIA has energized our youth, and since last summer, we've had three baptisms, and others of the membership's young have been attending on a more regular basis. Our Wednesday evening MBA meetings have been well attended.

We have also been blessed with one reinstatement, Sister Wilma (Carr) Osterwise, who has been away from the Church for many, many years. Her testimony was, she desired the things of God again in her life and stated missing the Spirit of God and His interaction. Even though God did watch over her through the years, not partaking of communion and the absences of the brothers and sisters in her life left an emptiness in her soul. Recently, since her reinstatement, God has not only blessed her, but our entire congregation.

The enthusiasm of our new members has blessed all, and God

continues to reveal Himself unto us. God holds out His hand, all that is required of us is to reach out and grab hold.

On June 28, 2009 God truly revealed Himself unto us at Greensburg in preaching, testimony and anointings. Our meeting was opened by Brother Jason Monaghan preaching on the 12th chapter of Acts where Peter was imprisoned by King Herod after the King killed James and that act seemed to please the Jews. Brother Jason related how amazing God is. During Peter's imprisonment, prayer was made without ceasing by the members of the Church unto God. Peter was in prison for an extended period of time. He was guarded very closely, even 16 guards at one time with guards chained to him as he slept and a keeper at the gate. The hour of his execution was at hand and that next day he was scheduled to be brought to the people for his most likely execution. That night, an angel of the Lord came upon Peter and a light shined in the prison. He smote Peter on the side while he was asleep, and raised him up saying, "Arise up quickly," and his chains fell from his hands. Peter then dressed himself put on his sandals and the angel escorted Peter from the prison, out of the city and from the hands of King Herod. Peter even felt that he saw a vision, but when he came to himself He said, "for a surety...the Lord hath sent his angel and delivered me." God is amazing, and the prayers of the saints were heard as well. Peter then went to the house of Mary, where many were gathered together praying and Peter revealed himself to them, the deliverance of God. Praise God! Our brother spoke of how God has been amazing to many in our congregation through the years. Many times we hear of experiences where those in need are delivered at the same time a fasting and prayer meeting is being held, and likewise was the deliverance of Peter.

Brother Chris Gehly followed, stating how God sees our future, protects us from many dangers and delivers us in His time. He shared with us how God even delivered him

when he was a young boy in school. There was a terrible shooting at his school and God showed our brother that indeed He had given him His divine protection! God is truly amazing!

The Spirit of God continued into our testimony meeting as many stood up to relate God's blessings and deliverance in their lives. Even the young added their voices, stating a jealousy towards the brothers and sisters for the wonderful experiences they had and hoped one day, they too would have an experience of deliverance in their lives from God. We know some day, they will.

After testimony, there were those who came forward to be anointed and as each one was anointed, our sister Wilma heard the Lord speak, saying: **"I am here amongst you,"** and as each one was anointed she heard it again, even louder and louder as each prayer was said. Praise God for His deliverance from time to time and evidence that He is with us all the time. We truly were blessed that Sunday and reminded of God's pleasure as we meet together to praise Him. He never comes a day too late and carries us when we are in need. Don't ever forget the power of prayer. Someday you may be the one delivered by the prayers of the saints. The Greensburg Branch wishes you God's blessings in the love of Christ. God is truly amazing!

Vacation Bible School in Bell, California

By Brother Anthony Cardinale

The Bell Branch had its fourth annual Vacation Bible School (VBS) this summer, Monday, August 3 through Friday, August 7. This 2009 VBS was a great success with 65 children passing through the doors of The Church of Jesus Christ. In return for their attendance, we observed the Lord passing through the doors of their precious hearts as they participated in different activities. While many of the children in attendance had come to

previous VBS programs, many new smiling faces were also seen throughout the week. The Church is recognized by local residents as a place of love and heartfelt care for everyone because of its various outreach events to which they are invited and lovingly accepted. Many of the kids in attendance were children from within the church neighborhood.

The VBS theme was "Crocodile Dock—Where Fearless Kids Shine in God's Light." The Church was elaborately decorated in a bayou marshland atmosphere complete with a room that had walls that were painted with trees, with added fish nettings, string lighting, lanterns and marshy vegetative plants hanging from the ceiling for a swamp-like setting. The room also had a realistic looking "shack" of cardboard that said "Do Not Enter" and "Danger," because that is where "Jacques the Croc" could be. The main church had a huge cloth backdrop with a colorfully painted marshland and an authentic looking pier was added, which extended from the backdrop for a more live-looking setting. Shiny green-reflecting paper like swamp marsh and nets also extended from the pier. There was even a huge boat (of cardboard) that completed the backdrop.

Each day had a different theme as follows: Day One—"God is with Us," Day Two—"God is Powerful," Day Three—"God Does What He Says He'll Do," Day Four—"God Gives Us Life," and Day Five—"God Cares for Us." The children were divided into age groups from three years of age to young teens, and the "crews" were named "Fireflies," "Turtles," "Possums," and "Crocs." To emphasize the daily themes, crafts and foods were prepared by the children and their crew leaders, which were related to the daily themes to reinforce them. Every day a crew of the day was awarded with prizes, as well as an individual child was chosen and awarded based on good behavior. Fun games were also part of the daily schedule. The most anticipated and

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VBS in Bell, California

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enjoyed day every year is the carnival, when games, prizes, food (nachos, hotdogs, watermelon, popcorn, cotton candy, Popsicles, etc.) galore are free for all to enjoy, including the children's parents.

On the last day, the children's family and friends were invited to a dinner and presentation. After the gracious dinner, the program started with Sister Laura Elzby, the VBS Director, thanking the children for their participation and for their parents who brought and allowed them to participate in this year's VBS Program. Afterwards, the children sang inspiring songs with hand gestures, which they had worked on throughout the week. The songs were *I Will Not Be Afraid*, *I Get Down and He lifts Me Up*, *This Little Light of Mine*, *You Are My King*, and *Amazing Love*. There is always something very endearing about seeing children singing unto the Lord with full sincerity, using hand gestures, body movements, and sweet facial expressions. Upon conclusion Sister Laura, along with the crew leaders, gave out certificates of completion to every child who was involved in the VBS Program, while their family and everyone watched and applauded.

The small "crew" of Bell Branch members, from the very young to the oldest members, worked as a family to make the Lord's VBS a success. It was like watching a symphony of instruments working in harmony to create a beautiful melody. The Lord was undoubtedly pleased with this melody created by the children, their families and the Branch members who participated in this year's VBS. As the VBS Program plants the seeds of the Gospel in these children's tender hearts, evidence of the Lord's Spirit and impact of VBS came to light when seven local children who had attended VBS returned for a recent Sunday service at the Bell Branch. They came of their own accord, unaccompanied by their parents. Surely, these fearless kids shone in God's light!

Of Such Is the Kingdom of Heaven

By Sister Berni King

On August 9, 2009, as on any Sunday in the Simi Valley, California Branch, I took my three little pre-schoolers into Junior Church: Caden Azzinaro, Audrey Azzinaro and Summer Schweitzer. They always get pretty animated when we get inside. Talk talk talk. Today our lesson was about not worrying and asking God to help us with our worries, our fears. Caden spoke right up and said that he is scared of being in front of people and talking. We discussed that he should ask God to help him with his fear. Summer piped up and said she was going to ask God to help Caden right now!! So she bowed her head and asked God to help Caden not be afraid to be in front of people, sealed with an "Amen." Then Audrey said she wanted to pray. She bowed her head and prayed, affirmed by "Amen." Caden then said he wanted to pray, too. So he prayed. I am blessed that these precious little children had so much faith that they prayed for Caden right away and fully believed that God would help him. I am thankful for the many blessings God gives me each day.

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The Children's Corner

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Meanwhile, a bad spirit came and troubled King Saul after the spirit of God left him. Nothing could calm King Saul down like beautiful music. His servants asked around and found out that a shepherd boy named David played the harp. David was ordered to go to the palace of King Saul to play refreshing, calming music for the king so the evil spirit would leave him. Can you imagine how strange David felt going there and how fancy everyone else would look compared to a boy who watched sheep? Even the food and lunchtime manners would be something new to learn. But David loved the king and served him well.

He was learning his new life when war came to the kingdom. King Saul and his soldiers went to the Valley of Elah to meet the attacking armies of the Philistine nations. David went home to help his father and take care of the sheep. Time passed and David's father wanted to know how his three oldest sons were doing as soldiers. He packed up food and sent David to go to the battle site and find out how his brothers were.

When David got there, his older brother, Eliab was angry. He told

David, "Why don't you go home and take care of our sheep? I know you just came to see the battle." He wanted David to quit. Just then, the huge giant warrior, Goliath came walking to the front lines. He cursed King Saul and all of God's people. Goliath demanded they send someone out to fight him and said that if he lost, the Philistines would serve them. If he won, then they would be their slaves.

David asked, "Who is this man to defy [go against] the army of the living God?" He told King Saul, "The Lord that delivered [saved] me out of the paw of the lion and bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine enemy too! I will go and fight him!" No one else had the courage and faith to go. King Saul was also afraid to go and battle Goliath. The king tried to get David to put on his heavy metal armour, and carry his sword, and put a heavy helmet on his head. But David refused, he said he did not know how to use these weapons. He had faith that God would protect him.

When Goliath saw a youth coming to fight him instead of a warrior, he was furious. He yelled, "What am I? Do you think I am a dog you can chase away with sticks?" He looked at David, swore at him and said, "Come to me and I'll kill you and let the wild animals and birds eat your dead body!"

David replied, "You come at me with a sword, a spear and a shield. I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the army of Israel who you have defied [stood up against]. This day the Lord will deliver you unto my hand and I will kill you and take your head from you and the wild animals will eat your body! All the people of the earth will know that there is a God!" (1 Samuel 17:45-46).

When he saw the angry Goliath standing up and coming towards him, David did not quit or run away. David ran toward his enemy, placing a stone from in his slingshot and whirling it around and around his head. He let it fly and it struck the giant in the one unprotected place on his body, his forehead. Goliath fell down dead. David ran to the body and used Goliath's own sword to cut off his head. He held it up. All could see the power of

God against their enemies.

With a mighty shout, the armies of Israel chased down the Philistines who turned and ran. A great battle occurred and Israel won over their attackers. Afterwards, King Saul's son, Prince Jonathan, became a best friend to David, and soon David was made a captain over a thousand soldiers. Think what David had to learn then about soldiers, fighting and war plans. Think how hard he had to work to learn his new way of life. But, he did it. After many years and many, many battles, King Saul was killed in war and David, the shepherd boy who loved God was made king of Israel.

As you get older you will think about other things you would like to do. Everyone David knew was trying to discourage him. What did David do when he was faced with new things in life? He prayed. He loved God and sang beautiful songs about God. When he was scared, he prayed and acted. He was not a quitter. When people tried to tell him how he would fail, he told them everything that God had done for him. He reminded himself and them that we serve the one, almighty God.

That means when you are asked to try something new or challenging that you think might be good for you, pray. Remind yourself what God has done for you. Praise God. Send your love and gratefulness towards God and thank him. Then say, "Yes. I will try this." David had more than one battle, we will too. But we are not quitters. We also serve the one true God and He loves us each. Trust Him and don't quit trying.

With love,
Sister Jan

Note of Thanks

Brother John Fleming of the Vanderbilt, Pennsylvania Branch wishes to thank each one for their prayers, phone calls and cards during his convalescence from a broken ankle.

Spiritual Anniversary

Sister Alice Molisani of Detroit, Michigan Branch #1 celebrated 50 years in The Church of Jesus Christ.

* WEDDINGS *

Brother Jameson Tyler Staley and Sister Chelsea Lynn Giannetti were united in holy matrimony on January 3, 2009 in Gilbert, Arizona.

Brother John Patrick Houlihan and Sister Diana Stigleman were united in holy matrimony on June 20, 2009 at Detroit, Michigan Branch #1.

Brother Erik Rooney and Kelly Taylor were united in holy matrimony on August 8, 2009 at the Spartanburg South Carolina Branch.

Brother Micah Nathaniel Kunkel and Ashley Smith were united in holy matrimony on August 15, 2009 at the Atlanta, Georgia Branch.

Brother Thomas H. Staley Jr. and Sister Gelsa M. Zinzi were united in holy matrimony on August 22, 2009 at the Forest Hills, Florida Branch.

Children Blessed

Jeremiah Rossi, son of Sister Leslie Rossi and Brother Teco Littlejohn, was blessed on February 22, 2009 at the Spartanburg, South Carolina Branch.

Ashton Jay Keith son of Jason Matthew Keith and Tiffany Impastato Keith, was blessed on June 14, 2009 at the Detroit, Michigan Branch #1.

Sophia Elizabeth Renk, daughter of Brother Garek and Sister Raychel Renk, was blessed on July 12, 2009 at the Monongahela, Pennsylvania Branch.

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Children Blessed

Continued from Page 11

Josue Luis Soto, daughter of Brother Luis Miguel and Sister Verenis Soto, was bles-sed on July 12, 2009 at the Bell, California Branch.

Daken Charles Zaluski, son of Jenny and Chuck Zaluski, was blessed on July 19, 2009 at the Imperial, Pennsylvania Branch.

Sarah Janette Soto, daughter of Sonia and Joe Soto Jr., was blessed on August 2, 2009 at the Simi Valley, California Branch.

Ceceilia Joelle Murphy, daughter of Sister Shawna Murphy, was blessed on August 23, 2009 at the Forest Hills, Florida Branch.

Ordinations

Brother Jim Smith was ordained a deacon on August 16, 2009 at the Las Vegas, Nevada Mission. His feet were washed by Brother Stacey Light and he was ordained by Brother Bob McDonnell.

Brother Duane Werley was ordained a deacon on August 16, 2009 in the Liberty, Ohio Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Al Meyher and he was ordained by Brother Carl Frammolino.

Address Change

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Branch or Mission _____

Baptisms

Sister Gabriella Cihomsky was baptized on August 9, 2009, at the San Diego, California Branch. She was baptized and confirmed by Brother Walter Cihomsky.

Brother Brandon Coppa was baptized on August 9, 2009, at the San Diego, California Branch. He was baptized by Brother Mark Coppa and confirmed by Brother Tom M. Liberto.

Brother Austin Ciccatti of Minnesota was baptized on August 9, 2009, at the San Diego, California Branch. He is a member of the Irvine, California Branch. He was baptized by Brother Randy Ciccatti and confirmed by Brother Lou Ciccatti.

Sister Holly Hemmings was baptized on August 9, 2009, at the San Diego, California Branch. She was baptized by Brother Lou Ciccatti and confirmed by Brother Randy Ciccatti.

Sister Whitney Treich was baptized on August 9, 2009 at the Metuchen, New Jersey Branch. She was baptized by Brother Ken Lombardo and confirmed by Brother David Catalano.

Brother Joshua Benyola was baptized on August 9, 2009 at the Forest Hills, Florida Branch. He was baptized by Brother John D'Orazio and confirmed by Brother George Benyola.

Sister Sara Ann Morris was baptized on August 9, 2009 at the Forest Hills, Florida Branch. She was baptized by Brother Kevin Murphy and confirmed by Brother Phillip Benyola.

Correction to Baptism

Brother Jacob Bradley Mellor was baptized on May 17, 2009 at the Greensburg, Pennsylvania Branch. He was baptized by Brother Christopher Gehly and confirmed by Brother Timothy Gehly.

OBITUARIES

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

JAMES L. MALETTA (BEE BEE)

Brother James L. Maletta (Bee Bee) of the Clairton, Pennsylvania Branch passed on to his reward on June 14, 2009. He was preceded in death by his wife, Sister Norma Maletta. He is survived by his children, Sisters Tirann Udosen, Miriam Maletta, and Dorcas Rumble; brothers James, Michael and Andrew Maletta and Mark and Norman Maletta; along with seven grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

ROSE LOMBARDO

Sister Rose Lombardo of the San Diego, California Branch passed on to her reward on July 26, 2009. She was preceded in death by her son, Brother Ken Surdock. She is survived by her daughter-in-law, Sister Diane Surdock; brother, Brother Jim Alessio and Sister Betty Alessio (sister-in-law); a sister, Vera McVey; three grandchildren and their spouses; ten great-grandchildren, along with many nieces and nephews.



THE CHURCH OF Jesus Christ

International Headquarters in
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Volume 65, No. 11

Thanksgiving Means Giving Thanks to God

By Brother Jerry Valenti

At this time of the year, our thoughts turn to Thanksgiving, the traditional American holiday which commemorates a time when early American settlers gave thanks to God for His blessings. However, as followers of Christ, we should be actively giving thanks to God all year round. If we find that we are not giving thanks to God as much as we should, perhaps we need to develop a little more of an "attitude of gratitude."

How Much Gratitude?

The more gratitude you feel for something somebody does for you, the more you will want to give thanks. The following three scales can be used to measure the gratitude you are likely to feel for any single act:

1. How much value was provided to you by this act? Obviously, the higher the value to you, the more gratitude you will feel.

2. What was the cost of this act to the giver? The higher the cost to the giver, the more gratitude you will feel. Note how much apprecia-

tion Jesus showed for the widow casting her last two mites into the treasury (Mark 12:41-44, Luke 21:1-4). Conversely, less gratitude is felt for an act that costs the giver relatively little or nothing.

3. To what extent was the act intended to just help you (as compared to possible gains that might also be realized by the giver)? If the giver is also benefiting from the act, you will feel less gratitude than if it is being done purely to help you.

What do we thank God for?

Although we can each list many things for which we are thankful, the gift of salvation stands alone as the primary thing we should give thanks for and then everything else can be grouped together as secondary to that. Note how the gift of salvation scores the highest on the scales above.

"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Corinthians 9:15).

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

How do we give thanks to God?

Here are a few ways to give thanks to God for the gift of salvation and everything else He has done for us:

Testimony – If we truly have gratitude for what God has done for us, this should come spilling out when we have the opportunity to relate a testimony. Instead of thinking we have nothing to say, start by praising the Lord for suffering and dying on the cross for us to purchase our salvation and just go from there. A member who feels no gratitude toward God will typically either have nothing to say during testimony or will say things that have nothing to do with giving thanks to God. Hopefully, this doesn't describe you – be quick to give public thanks to God at every opportunity.

Prayer – If you were a parent and the only three times that your child talked to you were to ask you for something, to ask you for something and to ask you for something, all without ever saying thank you, how would you feel? In the model prayer (the Lord's Prayer), Jesus begins by praising the name of God. Our prayers should also begin in praise to the Lord before getting into all the

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Thanksgiving

Continued from Page 1

things we want to ask Him for. There are occasions in the scriptures (see Nehemiah 9, others) where the people gathered in fasting and prayer specifically to thank God and worship Him. It would be appropriate for us to spend time in fasting and prayer for this purpose as well, not just on the occasions that we want something from God.

Worship – Our time in church is time set aside to worship the Lord for who He is and what He has done for us. In order to properly give thanks to God during this time, our minds must be focused on Him while we are in church. Seek the Lord's message for you in every sermon. Sing the hymns in an attitude of praising the Lord. Offer your own silent prayer when someone is anointed. Try to keep distractions at bay. Especially beware of the enemy's latest tool that allows people from outside the church to reach in and distract you during a church service (commonly known as "text messaging"). If we can maintain our focus and make a connection with the Lord when we are in church, other factors (such as how many

people are in the meeting and how long the meeting lasts) become much less important as we can just enjoy the opportunity to worship our Savior and thank Him for what He has done for us.

Working for the Lord –

Another way of expressing gratitude to someone who has done something for you is to want to do something for them. This is the purpose of working for the Lord. We can't ever repay Him for what He has done but we can show our gratitude by doing things for Him. Attending church does not constitute working for the Lord. We don't attend church for God; we attend for ourselves. Working for the Lord can be any of the following:

- Doing jobs for the church (as opposed to just holding titles or offices)
- Spending time outside of church doing church business (missionary work, local activities, etc.)
- Helping people ("when ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God" – King Benjamin, Mosiah 2:17)

Sharing Christ with Others –

When we have an "attitude of

gratitude," we should be able to express our thanks for what God has done for us (our personal testimony) with people we know. If we truly know the Lord, we should be capable of introducing Him to someone else and sharing the basics of the gospel message. In a way, this is a combination of testimony (as our expressions of gratitude come spilling out) and working for the Lord (as we help build His kingdom).

In considering the concept of an "attitude of gratitude," recognize that different people have different "thresholds" of gratitude. Just as a whisper has to reach a certain decibel level before we hear it, goodness has to reach a certain level before we become grateful. And just as some of us are hard of hearing, some of us are "hard of thanking," requiring a gift of epic proportions to make us grateful. Hopefully, you don't find yourself in the latter category but if you want to increase your level of gratitude, think of everything God has done for you (count your blessings), beginning with the gift of salvation, and then give thanks to God for all things.

"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Wanted: Your Testimony

By Sister Michelle Watson

It was the Sunday before Thanksgiving, and I couldn't wait for Sister Lucy Hemp to stand up in church and give her testimony. I already knew what she would say. She told the same story every Thanksgiving. I never tired of hearing it.

Sister Lucy was just a child when an angel brought her family food so they could enjoy a Thanksgiving dinner when they were too poor to afford a holiday meal. I loved hearing her describe the man – the angel – who came to the house. He was wearing a crisp, clean suit, and he had slicked back hair. The new

shoes he wore shined like mirrors! The Thanksgiving season just wasn't complete without hearing Sister Lucy praise the Lord for this miracle.

In 2009, Sister Lucy Hemp passed away. With Thanksgiving approaching, I wonder if someone else will stand up during testimony and tell her story. How much will we remember correctly, and how much detail will be lost in our secondhand account?

Do you have a Sister Lucy in your branch or mission? Do you have experiences that need to be written down so that they are not forgotten? Sadly, most testimonies exist only in the memories of those who experienced them. When they are no longer with us, who will keep these testimonies alive? We need to

capture these stories before it is too late, and – what is more – we need to share them.

The General Church Historical Committee has begun an exciting new project, and you are invited to get involved. We will be publishing a book of testimonies and experiences. These won't just be bare-bones summaries. We hope to capture your imagination with stories rich in detail and deep in meaning. Preservation will go hand in hand with resurrection – we will not only accurately record the stories, our goal is to make them come alive.

Most people can agree that we do not lack for entertaining things to read. With thrilling novels, humorous

(Continued on Page 4)



Our First Church Building Dedicated in Rukira, Rwanda

By Evangelist Joseph Perri

Sunday, June 14, 2009 a beautiful Lord's day was sunny and crisp, as we traveled the roadway up to the mountains and the village of Rukira in Rwanda. It was a special day for the membership of The Church of Jesus Christ in this village and for us because many months had passed filled with anticipation looking for that day when we would be able to occupy our newly constructed building: it was completed and ready to be dedicated.

As we drove along the highway for 2 1/2 hours, our thoughts were turned to the Lord asking Him to bless our meeting, anticipating the day's activities and the number of Church members and visitors who would be in attendance. The words written in the 66th Chapter of the Book of Isaiah came to my mind, *"Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me and where is the place of my rest?"* We were on our way to attend the dedication of a church building provided by donations and where the members of the Church and visitors from this village would be able to walk a short distance and worship God.

Reaching the summit of the mountain, young children could hear the sound of the automobile and came running to see missionaries from the United States entering their village. They smiled and waved while some

were waiting for our arrival so they could meet with us in their new church building.

This would be our first visit to the village of Rukira since the new building was constructed. As we approached the site where the building stood, we would see members and visitors walking toward their new church building with a happy look on their faces. They waved as we passed them on the way. To view the handy work of the construction crew which was directed by Brother Alexander Rudatsikira, the Rwanda Church President, and Brother Theodore, the contractor, was a beautiful sight. It is a plain brick building with a metal roof, nothing fancy, but the men who labored to construct this church building must be commended for their design and workmanship. As we entered into the building, the spirit and peace of Christ could be felt in greeting the members, visitors and the many children who had assembled in honor to our God.

The building was completely filled with standing room only as we prepared for worship services to begin. Choir groups ranging from children up to the adults sang several songs for us, harmonizing with the accompaniment of a low sound from the drum.

To introduce our service, Apostle James Crudup's opening comments to those in attendance were to be humble and to be serious

with their commitment to the Lord. Brother Jim mentioned the newly constructed church building was made possible by donations from America and they should be a thankful people always honoring God. We have come to know the Lord as our Shepherd through our baptism. Brother Jim encouraged the congregation to be in communication with God, praying for their children because they are the future church, the need to pray for their daily bread and daily temporal needs because the Lord promised He would bless those who serve Him and lead them through green pastures. Though we may face many trials in life and perhaps face death, we should fear no evil for the Lord said He would be with us. Brother Crudup ended his sermon by reading 3 Nephi 18:15, emphasizing there was the need to watch and pray at home and at church, lest they be tempted by the devil and led away captive.

Brother Chatman Young, who has spent some time in Rwanda, followed, expressing his thoughts on the scripture which was read and the dedication of the church building.

Evangelist Robert McDonnell, the Acting Chairman of the Rwanda mission field, gave his feelings on the establishing of The Church of Jesus Christ in the Rukira village and the progress which has been made to date. He also gave his impression on the construction of the building and its appearance. He introduced the missionaries who were present, giving their respective offices and responsibilities in the Church.

The Rukira Branch Choir sang the dedication song in their native language and the words translated for us were that God would bless and accept their church building being dedicated today as He did the temple Solomon built in his day. The choir members arranged the words and music of the song in their own native Kinyarwanda language which is the national language of Rwanda.

Evangelist Joseph Perri offered the dedication prayer for God's

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Dedication in Rukira, Rwanda

Continued from Page 3

blessing to be present as the saints would assemble together and on whoever would enter the building so they would feel the presence of God.

After the dedication prayer, Brothers Damascene Twizeyimana and Brother Joe each gave highlights of how the work of establishing the Church in the Rukira Village was started and what brought about the construction of this church building. As a token of our love for the membership and to add to the dedication of this new church building, a wall clock was presented on behalf of the General Church.

Brother Damascene Twizeyimana is the Presiding Elder of this branch which is approximately 15 miles from the village of Kabongo where he lives and a 2 1/2 hour drive from the capital city of Kigali, where the Headquarters of the Church in Rwanda, Africa is located. He, his wife Sister Jeanine, a deaconess, and their children had been attending worship services in the village of Rukira several years before the Restored Gospel message was preached and The Church of Jesus Christ was introduced and established in the village.

Many times Brother Damascene travels alone by walking the 30 miles round trip to attend church services in Rukira on a Sunday, because there is little or no transportation to take the entire family to the village. Brother Damascene is in need of transportation, either a used automobile or motorcycle.

Time was reserved for the members to give their testimonies of the blessings of God they have received since the day they met the Church and were baptized. Several brothers and sisters testified of their love for the Lord and His Church and how their lives have changed from what they were because of the Gospel and the comfortable words of Christ. They also expressed their appreciation for their newly constructed church building.

Conducting worship services in this new church building is quite an

improvement from the previous meeting place made of mud walls and a metal roof which was deteriorated and ready to collapse. As a token of love to us as missionaries, the branch membership of Rukira presented a small gift to each of us as a token of their appreciation for bringing the Restored Gospel to their village and for constructing the church building.

After our dedication services, light refreshments were served. The saints of Rukira request our prayers so God will help them to remain faithful to the covenant made the day of their baptism and to overcome some of the trials and afflictions they experience daily.

Wanted: Your Testimony

Continued from Page 2

blogs and breaking news immediately available via the Internet, there is stiff competition for our attention. We hope that this will be the kind of book you will pick up when you need encouragement, when you need to relax, when you read together as a family, or when you want to start your day off right.

So how can you help? Send your stories! They do not need to be written in sterling, deathless prose. They do not need to be edited and polished. If you give us the basics, we will help spin the yarn. We are just looking for stories that will uplift our spirits and challenge us to grow closer to the Lord. Of course, we can't publish *all* the stories we receive, but we will file any unused material for future publications. And we must impose a deadline for submissions: March 31, 2010.

What kind of stories are we looking for? Testimonies of healing, comfort and preservation. Dreams, visions. Inspired gatherings or sermons. Accounts from the mission field. Experiences where God provided for your needs or inspired you with a song. And, of course, conversion stories. The possibilities are endless. Please send all materials to truestories@wowway.com, or mail them to:

True Stories

c/o Brother Gary Coppa

13126 Beresford

Sterling Heights, MI 48313

Need inspiration? Read "The Black Skirt" below. This is an example of the approach we are taking with this publication. We can't wait to share the beautiful accounts of how God has blessed you.

The Black Skirt

By Sister Michelle Watson

The culprit was a black skirt. Who would've thought that a simple black skirt could transform me from a perfectly rational human being into a cynical grump in mere seconds?

The answer: I am a woman, and the skirt didn't quite fit.

The skirt is one of my old faithfuls. It's very simple with flattering seams and a dainty ruffle at the bottom. It is one of those versatile garments that has a closet shelf life of approximately 10 years and is completely beloved despite having *dry clean only* imprinted on the tag.

The impressive longevity of such a garment is contingent upon one variable, however. That the owner doesn't gain weight. And I, apparently, had.

The last time I wore the skirt, I remembered having at least an inch of give around the waistline. This time, there wasn't anything that resembled give. My precious black skirt had, without warning, turned traitor.

Horried, I finished dressing in silence and tried to refocus my mind because it was Sunday morning, and I was headed to church. It would be silly to get bent out of shape over something so insignificant.

By the time my husband and I were driving to church, I thought I was over it. Sensing I was upset, he turned to me and asked, "What's wrong?"

I confessed everything. I knew my husband could never fully understand the emotional trauma of my

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Editorial Viewpoint . . .

Being thankful is something that has many different meanings for people throughout the world. Here in the United States, for the most part, we are thankful when we are working, our family is healthy, our cars are in good condition, and we have money in the bank for the future, as well as money to take vacations when we want. In some parts of the world, people are thankful that when they wake up in the morning, they are still alive. For others, they are thankful when they are able to find enough food for their family for that day. It is estimated that 1/6 of the world does not know where their next meal is coming from. For them, thankfulness is when they can avoid starving to death. Thanksgiving in our country is a holiday meant to give God thanks for the bounty and blessings He has bestowed upon us in our nation. Many families will eat a gluttonous meal as a way of thanking God for all the food we have in such great abundance. Meanwhile, I'm sure a mother in another part of the world would give anything to just have one plate of food from our Thanksgiving tables for her children. The Church of Jesus Christ currently has a majority of its members in Africa. In many third world countries, the Church is growing by leaps and bounds. Interestingly, unlike many humanitarian groups, The Church of Jesus Christ is not equipped to provide the natural needs of these people. They are coming in droves because of the promises of our Savior....that He would never leave the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. They are thankful, spiritually!

This leads me to my thoughts on what we in the Church in America should define as things we are thankful for. We usually first think of all the natural things of life that God has provided us, and yes, we should always thank God for these things. But how often are we truly thankful for all the spiritual things in our lives? A clear sign of an unthankful person is a complainer. Do we wake up in the morning, and the first thing we do is complain because of our aches and pains? Or do we complain that we have to go to work. Do we complain when there is traffic on the highway, or complain about the kind of work we are doing? Do we complain because we may not have everything we want? We should be thankful that although we have aches and pains, at least we are not confined to a wheelchair, or in a hospital bed. We should be thankful we have a job, and a car, and a roof over our head. But instead many people complain about these things, not realizing how much worse off a majority of the world around us is. But again, what about spiritually? Do we complain about things in the Church we don't like, or do we complain about the meetings we attend, or complain about our brothers or sisters? If we are, then this is a sign of an unthankful saint. A thankful saint on the other hand, will be most of all grateful each and every day for being chosen by God Almighty to be a member of His Church, and that our names are written in the Lambs Book of Life! A thankful saint will be grateful that we can inherit a mansion in glory someday if we endure to the end. A thankful saint will be grateful for every brother and sister in the Church who will always stand by their side when the world would walk away. A thankful saint will be happy to have ministers who can preach the word of God, and a thankful saint will always be able to find something in every meeting that will benefit their soul. A thankful saint will realize that although we are nothing, our Father in heaven has placed us at such a high place in His sight.

Instead of being a spiritual complainer, let's be full of thanks for everything the Lord has done for our soul. If we look at the thousands of Africans joining the Church, or in other remote countries, we will notice that they do not complain about the spiritual things, but are thankful for the precious Church that has been restored to save their souls. For us in America, there should never be a time when we complain about anything, natural and especially spiritual! We should be the happiest people on the face of the earth! Think about what our future holds in store if we cling to the Gospel! This Thanksgiving, let's make a resolution that we will be thankful for everything we have been given naturally, but more importantly, spiritually!

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The Children's Corner

By Sister Jan Bork

Forgive Others and Have Much Peace

Dear Boys and Girls,

During your lives, many people will make you mad. Sometimes, even family that we love hurt us on purpose or accidentally. Many times people that we care about will pull away or even leave us. In The Church of Jesus Christ, we look to The Book of Mormon and the Bible to help us know what to do.

Scriptures tell us there are many steps for dealing with this kind of hurt. First, we pray in the name of Jesus and ask God to handle the problem and show us what to do. We do not argue back. We are told by Jesus in Matthew 5:44-45, "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... That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven..." Anger and evil hatreds come from the devil, not from God. If we follow this simple, but hard advice from Jesus, we will get sweet peace and a great blessing in our hearts.

In another scripture (Romans 12:19-21), the apostle Paul tells us, "...avenge not yourselves [fight back and get even], but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil but overcome evil with good." That means we can put



worrying about those people out of our minds and let God take care of judging while we take care of living a good life.

When you do these things, you will change. Years ago when my first husband divorced and left me, I fought against hating him and his new girlfriend. I found myself thinking constantly about how to get our marriage back, and how to change his heart. When that didn't happen, I even prayed that mean things would happen to them so I would get revenge. None of my mean prayers worked out. However, I kept praying for God's help, and for wisdom. I went to church and was prayed on by our elders. I even fasted a few times (went without food and water) while I concentrated on praying with all my heart for my marriage to be put back together. But I could not change him or her.

They got married. My marriage was forever broken; my heart was broken and I did not know how to find peace and happiness. Time passed and I went back to college and started working on a new future for myself and my child. I wanted to quit hurting and thinking about what I had lost. Since I could not change them, I knew I had to change myself. Somehow, I decided to follow Jesus' directions. I began praying for everything good for them. I prayed they would be blessed, have health and happiness, even money. Just like the scriptures said. I returned good for evil. And what happened was that I changed. Peace came into my heart. I stopped being sad and angry. I quit even thinking about them or my loss. I got a new job with many people in our Church

praying for me, and I did well.

But most of all, when I prayed for those who spitefully used me, my pain went away. My broken heart healed. Years passed until I could see the man who hurt me and not feel sad or upset. My heart healed by forgiving and praying.

In The Book of Mormon, there is a powerful story of how a small group of young men who believed in God went among their enemies to preach and teach (Mosiah Chapter 27). These men, were raised in the church but had become wicked, vile sinners. Their fathers, King Mosiah and Alma, the leader of the Church, were strong

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WORD SEARCH

ALMA	FORGAVE
AND	LOVED
THE	THEIR
SONS	ENEMIES
OF	THOUSANDS
MOSIAH	WERE
SUFFERED	CONVERTED
IN	BELIEVED
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H	A	I	S	O	M	E	I	B



Branch and Mission News

Joy in the Camp!

By Sister Cheryl Cervone
and Sister Linda Reynolds

"There is Joy in the Camp" was the theme that reverberated through the halls of the Simi Valley, CA Branch and through the hearts of the saints as we gathered for the Pacific Region Spiritual Conference on August 1 and 2, 2009. Region President Brother Stacey Light pointed out, "All in the world experience joy, but we have something special." According to the dictionary's definition, joy is "a condition of high pleasure, source of pleasure or satisfaction; happiness, a pleasurable feeling." Spiritually, joy comes from knowing and trusting God. While happiness tends to be temporary and short-term, joy is deeper, long term and everlasting. Natural sources of joy include children, recreation and entertainment, gifts, money, career and recognition, possessions. Many of these represent what people accomplish and although they are enjoyed for a season, they can be fleeting.

As the saints of God, we have access to a whole different side of joy from a spiritual perspective. We know that it rains on the just and unjust, so we must find joy in *all* things and recognize the true source of our joy. Brother Stacey posed the question, "How do we as Christians, as followers of Jesus Christ, find joy?" Spiritual sources of joy include:

- Blessings/miracles – e.g., answered prayer
- Control/doing God's will – testimony
- Family/friends – love
- Salvation through Jesus Christ – hope
- Righteous living/overcoming sin
- Serving others
- God's creation

Our ultimate joy, as Brother Stacey brought forth, rests in salvation through Jesus Christ and knowing that Christ chose YOU. What is the price

Jesus paid for you? His life. Would He have given His life for something that was not worth it? Your life must be worth something because, again, Christ chose you and died for you; you therefore have value and meaning.

This concept is further summarized in Ephesians 1:5; it says, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." In other words, we have been adopted into Christ's family as He made the supreme sacrifice for us. Affirming salvation through Christ's sacrifice brings us everlasting joy and happiness.

Sister Karen Lee had previously taken the children into their own class while Brothers Ryan McDonnell and Chuck Maddox Jr. had taken the teens and young adults. After Brother Stacey's introduction, the remaining congregation divided into smaller groups to further study and discuss four of the sources of spiritual joy, and reconvened with these findings:

Blessings and Miracles

Brother Tom P. Liberto taught this group and Brother Joel Christman presented its discussion. Blessings and miracles joyfully demonstrate God's assurance that we are in a win/win situation, no matter what. "To live is gain, to die is gain" was the essence of what one sister shared in her dealing with cancer and to "count it all joy." Sister Sue Coppa perhaps said it best when she emphatically stated, "I don't even remember what that's like [not to have joy]." Through blessings and miracles, we also see that God makes impossible situations possible while strengthening our relationship and communication with Him. Blessings and miracles are often the result of the effectual prayers of our brothers and sisters, who display love and joy unique to the family of God by reaching out in support of one another. A sister who was threatened with losing her children and going to jail was spared this fate through the prayers of the saints.

Doing God's Will

Brother Justin Paxon taught this group and Sister Amy Buccellato

presented its findings. In order to do the Lord's will, we must be obedient and this ultimately brings joy. This is facilitated by: gathering with the saints/attending meetings, serving our fellow man, keeping the promises we made when baptized and to each other, communicating with God and feeling the benefits of being on track, finding joy in others' callings and not finding fault.

Righteous Living/Overcoming Sin

Brother Mark Coppa taught this group and Brother Randy Lee presented its conclusions. It is important to rekindle and draw upon that pure joy we are blessed with at campout and other "joyFULL strength" experiences. Joy is easily lost when we are weak, open to sin and stray from righteous living. To keep our joyFULL strength alive, we must overcome sin by focusing on: love and salvation through Christ, prayer, fellowship and service, counting our blessings, being grateful, reading the word of God and praising Him through song, perfecting, giving our burdens and worries to God and seeking support.

Serving Others

Brother Bob McDonnell taught and presented this group's findings. One example of joy in serving others comes from the 18th chapter of Mosiah when Alma preached repentance and baptized over 200 souls at the waters of Mormon. To paraphrase, he asked them if they were willing to serve by bearing one another's burdens, mourning with those who mourn and comforting those in need of comfort. They responded in the 11th verse: "And now when the people had heard these words, they clapped their hands for joy, and exclaimed: This is the desire of our hearts." Helping and serving others, both spiritually and naturally, brings us joy because we feel internally rewarded and selfless. When in the service of our fellow man, we're in the service of God, which is the essence of what King Benjamin said in Mosiah 2:17. Jesus said in Matthew 25:35-36: "For I was an hungered, and ye gave

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Joy in the Camp!

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me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.” When his disciples asked him when they had done this, he responded, “...Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (verse 40).

JOY in serving others is epitomized as:

J – Jesus first

O – Others second

Y – Yourself last

After the lively presentations of the various groups concerning our spiritual sources of joy, Brother Jim Huttenberger powerfully summarized that it is important to not only be joyful, but to transfer and communicate it to others who need the Lord. In the world, people try to find joy in things, places and other people. Inevitably, this type of joy is temporary and often leaves one feeling empty or disappointed. In contrast, finding joy of a heavenly or spiritual nature is eternal and everlasting; it never disappoints and always leaves one feeling full and content. Brother Jim related an experience had by Sister Ruth Coppa in which she asked the Lord in prayer, “Where is the joy of the saints? We have so much cancer, illness, trials, etc....” The Lord revealed to her that *the joy of the saints is in the hope of salvation*. Jesus Christ changed us from darkness to light and that is the real joy. He is the master of the universe who knows your name, chose you and died for you. So “count it all joy” when going through a major trial. Are you rejoicing in your trials? Remember, He’s perfecting you with the refiner’s fire and preparing you for Zion. You’ll emerge with greater faith and empathy so that you can help and encourage others.

Brother Jim read from John 15:4 and 11: “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” And “These things have I spoken unto

you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” Exhorting us again to transfer this joy to others, Brother Jim challenged us to bear some fruit, tell how God has blessed you and carried you through a trial. Share the fact that your soul has been redeemed and you’ve gone through the waters of redemption.

The joy discussed in our seminar was personified on the radiant faces of the little ones of Sister Karen Lee’s group, who sang *Joy, Joy, Joy... Down in My Heart*. A large group of young people came from coast-to-coast and as far as Canada to join in the blessings of conference, as well as San Diego Youth in Action and/or Vacation Bible School in Bell. Brother Stacey spoke for so many of us when he told them, “You have brought us a lot of joy not only because you’re our children, but because you love the Lord.” Brother Stacey extended the invitation to this inspiring group to share their testimonies.

The enthusiasm, sincerity and conviction expressed by the young people in their many soul-stirring testimonies pierced our hearts with joy and refreshed us.

On Sunday, August 2, the Simi Valley Branch was filled to capacity with 161 attending. Brother Stacey Light welcomed everyone.

Brother Mark Coppa, our first speaker, stated that the theme of the conference was “Joy in the Camp” and can indicate where we are spiritually. The joy of the Lord is our strength. Usually, we are not joyful at all times. He spoke to each of us as to where we are individually in our service to the Lord. We have so many barriers that keep us from moving forward. Today we have a greater source in Jesus Christ to help us get over our barriers. Human nature, character traits, sin, pride, apathy are examples of possible barriers. We must ask the Lord to help us to be spiritually productive.

Brother Mark spoke from Joshua, Chapter 6 regarding the city of Jericho. The Lord told the children of Israel that they were to conquer the city. The city of Jericho was sealed so well that no one could get in. Very thick walls protected the city. The

people in the city thought they were safe. Human nature made them think they were safe and human nature made the children of Israel feel that they could not conquer the city. Our own lives are the same way. Before baptism we believe we can straighten things out ourselves, but after baptism we go to the Lord to tear down our walls.

In Joshua 6, the Lord had a plan. He told Joshua His plan. Joshua was not sure and thought that it didn’t appear to be possible. The walls were sealed. Our own lives are the same. Our God can do the impossible whatever our issues are. God told Joshua to circle the city once a day for six days and on the seventh day the priests should blow their trumpets with a long blast and they should all shout in one voice as they encircled the city. Joshua wondered why the Lord would have them do that. It is because He was desiring obedience. The Lord could have knocked down the wall in an instant. The march around the city and carrying the Arc of the Covenant showed obedience. Walking for six days showed faith and the shouting showed unity. It was all done for a reason and the message is the same today as it was then: He wants us to be obedient.

We need to be bold in the Spirit of God. Knock down the walls in our lives. Know that the Lord wants more of us. Spend time with the Lord. He is the same God today as Joshua’s God. He wants us to break down the barriers in our lives. Say to the Lord, “Lord, here am I, use me. I’ll do whatever you want me to do.” The Lord is speaking to us today. Our Church is a Holy Kingdom. Have a conversation with the Lord. He wants us to talk to Him about our barriers. He wants us to approach Him in boldness. What can we do to build His kingdom? The barriers will soon disappear as we draw closer to the Lord. We will become people we didn’t know we could be.

Brother Lou Cicatti followed the theme of barriers by saying he was stationed in Germany while in the service and saw the Berlin Wall. Sadly, it was built to keep people in. Presi-

dent Ronald Reagan told Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, to "Tear down this wall, Mr. Gorbachev." It was the people of Germany who actually tore down the wall. At the grave of Jesus, the people asked who would roll the stone away. They didn't think any of them could do that. They had "barriers." In the Bible, the rich man asked the Lord, "What must I do to have eternal life?" He wanted to know what "wall" he should tear down. The Lord told him to sell everything he had and give to the poor and follow Him. The rich man could not do that.

Another rich ruler, King Lamoni, also asked the same question. Ammon told him to kneel down and ask God. The king laid prostrate on the ground asking the Lord to hear his plea. He humbled himself before the Lord and wanted his wall to be torn down. Just as in the city of Jericho the walls came down and he was converted on the spot. Just to give some perspective on the immensity of the walls of Jericho, Brother Lou imparted that the width of the wall at the top was six chariots abreast! Whatever the barriers are, God can tear them down.

Brother Paul Liberto also followed the same theme asking, "What is the bottom line?" It is this: What would we give to have joy, peace and eternal life? It doesn't cost anything, Jesus paid it all.

Brother Jim Huttenberger said he would be remiss if at this point he did not extend an invitation to anyone who felt God calling them. What are our barriers that are keeping us from enjoying the blessings of God? How many who are already baptized are being kept from receiving the blessings of God and feel weak? Remember the joy of the saints before us, remember the joy of our parents and families, as Enos did. In the 3rd verse of Enos, he said, "Behold, I went to hunt beasts in the forests; and the words which I often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart." There are some who have come for years and still have not rendered obedience to the Lord.

Bear your testimony. Knock

down your barriers. The Lord will send people your way so that you may give your testimony to them. Have the desire in your heart to tell of the Lord and God will see that. Tell the world of the Latter Day Glory that we have in the Gospel.

Brother Tom P. Liberto then addressed us and marveled over how the Spirit of God works. His parents gave him the best inheritance there could be, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Enos remembered the joy of the saints. We all have problems. What is the biggest wall we have? It is to be separated from God and only through Jesus Christ can the wall come down. Lehi taught his sons as we should teach our children. Nothing has changed. The Lord took Lehi in a dream to a dark place. Lehi prayed and was led to a beautiful field and as he partook of the fruit, he had great joy and was not separated from God anymore. Lehi wanted his family to partake of the fruit also. Those that did also found joy. People in the world become devastated when problems arise. We, as God's children, don't even know what that feels like. We can go to the Lord to have our walls torn down. Which camp do we want to be in? Do we want the camp that tastes the fruit or the one that does not? Be in the camp of joy.

Brother Sal Azzinaro, who had been in the hospital the previous week, thanked everyone for their prayers. He then stated that many of us have obstacles that hold us back from having a relationship with God. The Lord is waiting to have a relationship with you. Don't hold back. Give your life to the Lord.

Brother Stacey Light said we started the meeting today with the two youngest singing a song and now he would like to end the service by having the oldest, Sister Goldie Jones, age 98, give her testimony. After Sister Goldie's testimony, there were more testimonies and singing.

Brother Stacey Light gave closing remarks and Brother David Arreola closed in prayer, followed by lunch for everyone and more loving fellowship. Praise God, there truly had been great joy in the camp at the Pacific Region Spiritual Conference!

The Release

By Sister Diana Stigleman

On Sunday, March 15, 2009 at Detroit, Branch #1, all those present were privileged to witness four young brothers complete their training period as elders in The Church of Jesus Christ; Brothers Mike Capone, Jim Lambert Jr., Michael Pandone, and David Lovalvo. Brother Larry Champine began the morning by turning the service over to our four visiting elders. Brother Larry encouraged our young brothers by telling them, "When you're nervous, your tendency is to rely a little more on the Spirit." Brother Mike Capone from the Plumbrook Branch, was the first of Christ's soldiers to speak. As Brother Mike reiterated Brother Larry's comment about depending on the Lord a little more when you are nervous, he added, "Well, I'm really counting on Him right now."

Brother Mike indicated that even though many of his family members were ministers in The Church of Jesus Christ, he put off being baptized for quite some time. On the day of his baptism, Brother Mike heard the voice of the Lord saying, "I have been calling you a long time. It's time to listen." Our brother stated, "I was hardening my heart, and if I had waited much longer I would not have been able to hear that voice."

A portion of his sermon was taken from II Kings 6:14-17. It was the story of Elisha and how a mighty multitude of the Syrian army had encircled the city at night. A young man that was with Elisha asked, "What are we going to do?" Elisha responded, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." Then Elisha prayed that God would open this young man's eyes. The young man suddenly saw that the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. Elisha saw with spiritual eyes, while the young man saw with natural eyes. Brother Mike told us, Elisha had a higher spiritual mind. He added, God speaks to us

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The Release

Continued from Page 9

daily, but are we listening. We fill our time and lives with those natural things to satisfy ourselves. His sermon most assuredly set the precedence for each brother who would follow.

Brother Jim Lambert from Branch #2, borrowing Brother Mike's thought of having a higher spiritual mind, gradually centered his sermon on the Apostle Paul's conversion. Paul was given the knowledge of who Christ was and his understanding was instant. Brother Jim continued with an exciting paraphrase of Christ's reaction to Paul's conversion by stating, "I've touched your mind in a way that you can't deny me. Now what are you waiting for? Take no time, no thought, take action and spread the Gospel. I have seen you...and know you can help me move the souls of men. Get up and effect lives!"

In some of his final thoughts, he desired that each of us would reach for a higher spiritual mind. Our brother asked us, "What motivates you? What ever motivates you, go for it!" All present could tell our brother's own desire was to have the mind of Christ and to utilize it daily. He sincerely pleaded for us to do the same.

Brother Michael Pandone, also from Branch #2, stood third in line and was equally spirit-filled. Brother Mike approached his sermon by way of a hymn; "Speak my Lord, and I'll be quick to answer thee." He said, there are times when you will sing a song for years, then suddenly God touches your heart, and that song takes on a whole new meaning. With that thought in mind, our brother declared, when the Lord speaks, we need to be quick to answer the call.

In using Chapter 11 from the book of Acts, our brother told us of the Apostle Peter's unwillingness to take the Gospel to the Gentiles. After Peter relented and did as he was told, God made Peter's mission a success. Brother Mike said, "The Lord is not going to tell us to do anything that He's not going to be there and [that] it's not going to be a success." He reminded us, we only need to answer the call

and God will do all the rest. At the close of his sermon, our brother left us with a notable piece of advice. We had better buckle our seat belts when we answer the call.

Our final guest speaker, Brother David Lovalvo stated, "This concept of a higher spiritual mind is not the easiest one to grasp is it?" He explained the seed that was planted on the day of our baptism needs to sprout. "Until the depth of that knowledge that somebody gave his life, died so we could live, nothing else can happen. You cannot love your wife, children, or serve the Lord the way you need to. You cannot spread the Gospel and justify its goodness, it's impossible, unless it is allowed to grow in your heart. The only way that will happen is if you allow it to penetrate you. And then, we can do what these brothers asked us to do; have a higher spiritual mind." Brother David found out, there was more to life than just entertaining himself. He injected, that there is nothing more important than to save your soul. While imploring us all to leave the things of this world behind he concluded, "Through us miracles can happen."

Following a season of testimony, Brother Peter Scolaro shared a few of his thoughts. He felt testimonies expressing thankfulness for disturbances intervened, were wonderful things and we should be thankful, but it is our salvation that we should be the most thankful for. Our salvation should be so great within us that we can endure the trials of life. Then Brother Peter explained the special purpose of this meeting today. He indicated, after the service our four young elders will gather in the back for another meeting. This will be to release our brothers from their training period. Then he asked, "Brothers do you feel released?" When they in one accord responded "No," Brother Peter indicated that he did not feel you are ever released. "The burden and the joy of doing the Lord's work is always upon you." He, along with the entire congregation, felt the young elders did a wonderful job in working as a team and delivering the message. He asked us to remember them in prayer as they continued their work for the Lord.

The Black Skirt

Continued from Page 4

skirt's mutiny, but I knew that he wouldn't patronize me for being a fool.

The truth was that for the past few weeks prior I had been obsessing quite a bit over my shortcomings. Whether they were physical, work-related, or emotional, I just couldn't get my mind off of the bad decisions I'd made, ways in which I'd failed, or the disappointments I'd faced. Why was I – a happy person, normally – being so negative?

My husband said a few words of comfort that I did my best to sluff off, leaving us both in silence, listening to our iPod play Christian music through the car stereo. At the particular moment when we became quiet, the iPod, which was set to randomly shuffle through the 450 songs we had downloaded, began playing a new song. It was Stephen Curtis Chapman's *Fingerprints of God*. The first bit of the song goes like this:

I can see the tears filling your eyes
And I know where they're coming from.
They're coming from a heart that's
broken in two
By what you don't see.
The person in the mirror
Doesn't look like the magazine.
Oh, but when I look at you,
it's clear to me that

I can see the fingerprints of God,
When I look at you,
I can see the fingerprints of God,
And I know it's true.
You're a masterpiece
That all creation quietly applauds,
And you're covered with the
Fingerprints of God.

I had heard this song many times before, and I confess that it wasn't one of my favorites because I thought it played on people's sentimentality. But this time, it was different. I felt the Spirit of God forcefully enter our vehicle. I felt the words of the song *apply* to me. I felt like the song had just been written and it was playing for the very first time with the express purpose of comforting *me* personally.

I began to cry.

After the song had been playing for several minutes, I looked over at my husband who, unbeknownst to me, had also been crying. For all his tenderness, my husband rarely sheds tears, and I had only seen him truly bawl a handful of times. But now, his face was twisted in emotion and he was weeping sincerely. He reached over and placed the palm of his hand on my cheek, and gently brushed my tears away with his thumb.

At that moment, I knew what it meant to be in the depths of humility. When my husband couldn't find the words to say, God supplied them. When I stubbornly refused to be comforted, God reduced me to mush. Seconds before, everything had been wrong in my world. With just a few nudges to the microscopic workings of our iPod, God had spoken a message that was crystal clear. I immediately stopped feeling sorry for myself. How could I, when the God of the universe had just visited me? To describe the comfort that I felt would require me to grasp at the very fringes of my verbal capacity, to spin in circles at the very edge of what my mind can comprehend.

If you read through this article and thought it was a little unusual, please read "Wanted: Your Testimony" on page 2.

After much fasting and praying, each young man went to a different part of the country. In some of the Lamanite kingdoms, thousands of people repented and were baptized. In other kingdoms the young men were imprisoned, falsely accused, beaten, and starved. Some of their followers were even killed by unbelievers. But they forgave their enemies and God brought them through the terrible times. For fourteen years they worked far from home, guided by God's spirit. They lived and taught forgiveness, prayer and faith in God's protection and wisdom. Others saw their example and learned how to have joyful, faithful, peaceful lives. They did it by praying for enemies. We can too.

When someone around us is hateful, we do not have to be hateful back. When they are mean, we do not have to be mean. When they are unfair, we can pray to God and ask Him to protect and guide us. We do not have to be full of fear and hate and try to get everyone to be against them too. Remember, God will repay them for all that they do. If we are kind back, it heaps coals of fire on their head. It also shows others not to fear them. It gives you power to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Try it and feel the peace and happiness in your life.

With love, Your friend
Sister Jan

27, 2009 at the Glassport, Pennsylvania Branch.

Kyle Thomas Brown, son of Lori Schuette Brown was blessed on October 4, 2009 at the Atlanta, Georgia Branch.

Mona Marie Campbell-Ogden daughter of Tyler Campbell and Lilly Ogden was blessed on July 12, 2009 at the Muncey, Ontario, Canada Branch.

Meadow Madayah Mariah French daughter of Kalin French and Amanda Albert was blessed on August 7, 2009 at the Muncey, Ontario, Canada Branch.

Soreyn Sinjun Snake Singh, daughter of Rey Singh and Sister Candice Snake was blessed on August 7, 2009 at the Muncey, Ontario, Canada Branch.

Corbin Colton Alexander Hendrick, son of Colton Dean Hendrick and Angel Britney Onderik-French was blessed on August 8, 2009 at the Muncey, Ontario, Canada Branch.

Desiree Montana Fisher, daughter of Brother Richard Shane Fisher and Sister Linda Jeanne Fisher was blessed on September 6, 2009 at the Muncey, Ontario, Canada Branch.

Sabrina Claire-Jean Fisher, daughter of Brother Richard Shane Fisher and Sister Linda Jeanne Fisher was blessed on September 6, 2009 at the Muncey, Ontario, Canada Branch.

Andie Lynn Albert, daughter of John and Carolyn Albert was blessed on September 6, 2009 at the Muncey, Ontario, Canada Branch.

Jennifer Lynn Kahentoretha Leitch, daughter of Glen Leitch and Jessica Cross was blessed on September 6, 2009 at the Muncey, Ontario, Canada Branch.

Jacob Serafino Martinez, son of Jason and Sister Adoni Martinez was blessed on May 31, 2009 at the Modesto, California Branch.

Spiritual Anniversaries

Sister Elizabeth (Suds) Staley of the Glassport, Pennsylvania Branch celebrated 70 years in The Church of Jesus Christ.

The Children's Corner

Continued from Page 6

followers of God. They prayed with great faith that God would convince their sons of the truth so they would stop harming the Church.

God sent an angel to shake the earth, and the young men were so shocked that they repented and turned from their evil ways. They became strong followers of God. The desire of their hearts was to go among their enemies, the Lamanites, and teach them about God. Mosiah prayed and God promised him that his sons would not die while working with their dreaded enemies.

Children Blessed

Brett Thomas Barrett son of Thomas and Gina Canova Barrett was blessed on August 29, 2009 at the Glassport, Pennsylvania Branch.

Lexie Grace Filippelli, daughter of Fred and Sister Aletea Warner Filippelli was blessed on August 29, 2009 at the Glassport, Pennsylvania Branch.

Lucca Anthony Filippelli, son of Fred and Sister Aletea Warner Filippelli was blessed on August 29, 2009 at the Glassport, Pennsylvania Branch.

Jake Ryan Buffington, son of Brother Jeffery and Sister Carey Buffington was blessed on September

Baptisms

Sister Sandra Bynum was baptized on October 18, 2009, at the Levittown, Pennsylvania Branch. She was baptized by Brother Mark King and confirmed by Brother Nick Boruch.

Sister Lois Dowd was baptized on October 18, 2009, at the Levittown, Pennsylvania Branch. She was baptized by Brother Nick Boruch and confirmed by Brother Jerry Valenti.

Sister Jennie Jaurequi Rodriguez was baptized on October 4, 2009 at the Mesa, Arizona Branch. She was baptized by Brother Ronald Mazzeo and confirmed by Brother Barry Mazzeo.

Brother Leon Daryl Brown was baptized on July 5, 2009 at the Mesa, Arizona Branch. He was baptized by Brother Tim Scolaro and confirmed by Brother Jordan Giannetti.

Brother Darryl Palermo was baptized on September 20, 2009 at the Mesa, Arizona Branch. He was baptized by Brother Tony Picciuto and confirmed by Brother Walt Jankowski.

Brother Dan Crise was baptized on September 20, 2009 at the Yucaipa, California Branch. He was baptized by Randy Lee and confirmed by Brother Rudy Carillo.

Sister Tammy Crise was baptized on September 20, 2009 at the Yucaipa, California Branch. She was baptized by Randy Lee and confirmed by Brother Frank Genaro.

Sister Alyssia Diana Gomez was baptized on August 7, 2009 at the Muncey, Ontario Canada Mission. She was baptized by Brother Gary Coppa and confirmed by Brother Peter Darr.

Brother Thomas Tyler King was baptized on August 7, 2009 at the Muncey, Ontario, Canada Mission. He was baptized by Brother Peter Darr and confirmed by Brother Jerry Benyola.

Brother Dennis Andrew Coppa was baptized on August 30, 2009 at the Muncey, Ontario, Canada Mission (attending Plumbrook, Michigan). He was baptized by Brother Gary Coppa and confirmed by Brother Paul Whitton.

Sister Linda Jeanne Fisher was baptized on September 6, 2009 at the Muncey, Ontario, Canada Mission. She was baptized by Brother Gary Coppa and confirmed by Brother Jerry Benyola.

Brother Richard "Shane" Fisher was baptized on September 6, 2009 at the Muncey, Ontario, Canada Mission. He was baptized and confirmed by Brother Gary Coppa.

Sister Glenda June Fisher was baptized on September 6, 2009 at the Muncey, Ontario, Canada Mission. She was baptized by Brother Lyle Criscuolo and confirmed by Brother Matt Collison.

Brother Frederick M. Keener was baptized on November 2, 2008 at the Spartanburg, South Carolina Branch. He was baptized by Brother Jonathan Molinatto and confirmed by Brother Art Campbell.

OBITUARIES

SANDRA GLADYS MORSE

Sister Sandra Gladys Morse passed on to her reward on July 7, 2009. She is survived by her daughters, Stephanie Foster, Kenah Nowek and Susanna Cortinas; sons, Mark Hatch, Clinton Hatach and Micah Hatch; brothers, Jack Moore and Harley Moore; sister, Carole Smith; former husband Kenneth Hatch; 17 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

FLORENCE CATENA

Sister Florence Catena of the Hollywood, Florida Branch passed on

to her reward in August, 2009. She is survived by one brother.

JENNIFER PAXON

Sister Jennifer Paxon of the Atlanta, Georgia Branch passed on to her reward on September 5, 2009. She is survived by her parents, Brother Malcolm and Sister Shirley Paxon; two brothers, Brother Jeff and his two daughters, and Brother Justin and his wife Sister Christina and their one son; and her grandmother, Sister Betty Wragg and many aunts, uncles and cousins.

DORCAS (DORA) ROSSI

Sister Dorcas (Dora) Rossi of the Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Branch passed on to her reward on September 15, 2009. She is survived by her sister, Sister Louise Donkin, and numerous nieces and nephews.

MARY VUCINICH

Sister Mary Vucinich of the Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Branch passed on to her reward on September 26, 2009. She is survived by her husband, George; a daughter, Michelle; a son, George; and five grandchildren.

Address Change

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Branch or Mission _____



THE CHURCH OF Jesus Christ

International Headquarters in
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Volume 65, No. 12

The Gift Givers

I've heard it said, "It is better to give than to receive," but in this season of gift-giving (or gift-getting from some perspectives), I find myself challenging this statement. Whenever asked, "What has been your favorite Christmas gift?" I always give the same answer, almost reflexively, even though I'm not even sure it still is #1. I tell of looking down over our banister the morning of December 25, 1969, filled with desperate hope. Could it be? Was that really it? Unable to contain my excitement, I sprinted down our stairs and there it stood, beckoning me to climb aboard. My very own silver Stingray bicycle, with curved banana seat, high handlebars (like two arms held up in victory) and shiny chrome ringer bell. I can still feel the pure elation screaming silently inside me as we faced each other. After asking for this gift for so long and finally receiving it, I felt happiness, relief and pure satisfaction wash over me. So, even though I'm told "it is better to give," on that day I could have made quite a convincing case for the joy of receiving.

I soon tested the "better to give" theory. After the wave of excitement passed, I felt my joy would not peak until I shared this gift with my friends. With anxious anticipation I

rode that sleek beauty furiously up and down the streets of my neighborhood in West Palm Beach, Florida sounding my ringer bell ("ba-ding, ba-ding, ba-ding") in an attempt to lure my friends out of their homes. How else could they witness my triumphant ride? While I wanted to share my gift, I restricted their experience with one dictate: "No rides!" I was willing to "give" them a look at my gift, but I was unwilling for them to fully "receive" it. After all, my Stingray was still so new and so shiny and so....so....so mine. Shouldn't I be the only one to ride my prized possession on the very first day? I felt justified in my conditional "gift-giving." So, off I rode in my self-absorbed happiness.

Many people have also desired gifts, but their wants proved to be much more thoughtful in nature than my own. 3 Nephi 1 tells that Nephi was faced with his impending death, along with the death of those followers of Christ, because they believed the great wall-climbing prophet, Samuel. 3 Nephi goes on to say the night before that first Christmas morning, Nephi "*cried mightily unto the Lord all that day*" and upon doing so, received his gift. In answer to his petitioning, Nephi heard the voice of the Lord reply, "*Lift up your head and be of good cheer, for behold, the time is at hand, and on this night shall the sign be given*

and on the morrow, I come unto the world." This gift promised Nephi that he and all of mankind received their stay. For Nephi and his contemporaries, it assured an extension to their natural lives. For the rest of us, it also affirmed the extension of our spiritual lives, making this stay eternal. Today we realize December 25th is not the accurate birth date of Jesus, so we understand Nephi's experience didn't come to him on December 24th. However, we can agree that Nephi was one of the first people to receive his most desired Christmas gift on Christmas Eve ("*on this night shall the sign be given and on the morrow, I come unto the world*").

Unlike me, Nephi's desire encompassed others. He wasn't simply asking for a gift for himself, but instead was also generously praying for his people. In contradiction to this, not only was my desire selfish, I then exhibited an unwillingness to share my gift with others. It's little wonder I was so readied to make a case for the joy of receiving, as that certainly embodied my single-faceted experience.

Maybe the joy of receiving is innate and if so, how then can any of us learn the true joy of giving? "The Creator," knowing His creation intimately, provided an avenue of

(Continued on Page 10)



Italy – Dreams and Experiences

By Evangelist Paul Thomas Pezzenti

Dio vi benedica... God Bless you. And now for the rest of the story of the Italy conference held September 17 – 20, 2009, in Cala Gonone, Sardinia, Italy. This conference was one of dreams and experiences as the theme "Holy Spirit" surely was manifested to all. Team Italy (Larry Ali, John DiBattista, Dan and Mary Bertola, Alex and Cathy Gentile, Jim and Lynette Huttenberger, Tony and Lydia Micale and Paul Pezzenti) left the United States with the anticipation of seeing the love of our Italian brothers and sisters. We were not disappointed. Some arrived with acute physical infirmities, some without luggage for a few days but all safely and undaunted.

Upon arrival and checking in we met with the hotel owners, Ferruccio and Gilda Checchi, who invited us for refreshments after our long journeys. They have both been very kind to us and now regularly attend our conferences. We reacquainted ourselves and did some initial planning for the weekend.

After dinner, our first visit was to the home of Sister Immacolata Romano by the sea shore. She met us at the door with her daughter Sister Marinella and her daughter, Martha. As we all squeezed into the small apartment, many talking at the same time, one could feel the joy-filled spirit building as the start of conference.

The Friday morning service was opened with fellowship, singing,

reacquainting ourselves and the conference plan of activities. The evening service was dedicated to feet washing. I was asked to open the service and used John 12:20-26 and 13:1-17. Apostle John records the words of Christ, "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be; if any man serve me, him will my Father honor." We can have much knowledge of the prophets from Abraham to Isaiah and even the Book of Mormon recordings of the coming of Zion, the Peaceful Reign, Joseph and New Jerusalem but until we use the scriptures, as an example related to feet washing, John 13, we conclude it is good to have knowledge of the scriptures but much better to be obedient to what the Lord has asked us to do. If we want the Lord to be happy with us then we must obey His commandments and follow the examples He set for us to do.

The Holy Spirit lesson was taught on Saturday, as we split into two groups the adults led by Brother Micale and the young adults by Evangelist Jim Huttenberger. A lively discussion was manifested in both groups and all expressed their views of what/how/where and when the Holy Spirit can and does work with us. The brothers expounded upon this wonderful expression of God's love for us.

Later at the evening testimony meeting, we heard these dreams and experiences. Evangelist Rosario

Scravaglieri, President of The Church of Jesus Christ in Italy, related a dream he had in regards to his health. He has lung cancer and had two operations within the past three years, considering himself a miracle that he is a living testimony and can still walk into the building. His dream was interpreted to be that the Lord will remove his condition without any pain. Let us continue to pray for his health and the evangelistic work to continue from the north to the south of Italy.

Evangelist John DiBattista received an experience during the meeting to check the gas in the kitchen behind the sanctuary, as he saw flames coming from the kitchen down the hallway into the sanctuary. A few brothers went to check the gas valve finding it shut off but the room was filled with gas. They opened the windows and it eventually dissipated. We can be directly assaulted from the front and the back but God is good to His faithful servants as we receive time and again.

Sister Stephania Romano and her mother, Sister Marisa, operate a hair salon near the seaport. One morning they went out for coffee and a roll in the nearby city of Dorgali, but the first place they stopped did not have any rolls so they went to another place. There they found a woman sitting alone reading a newspaper. Sister Stephania was prompted to ask the woman if she needed a job. After feeling awkward for awhile, she approached the woman who said, "Yes," and accepted the job before our sister could even tell her the job was in her hair salon in Cala Gonone. This Romanian woman's name is Aula. She has a son named Lorenzo. After working in their salon for ten months, Aula told Stephania her son, who is three years old, does not speak and the doctors cannot tell her why as he has no apparent medical condition. At the urging of Stephania she brought the child to church to be anointed. As we prayed a wonderful spirit was felt for Lorenzo and his mother. Let us continue to pray that we may see what work the Lord has for them.

The Sunday service was opened by Brother Larry Ali who used Acts

16, recordings of when Apostle Paul and Silas were about the Lord's business and found themselves falsely accused, beaten and placed in the innermost part of the prison under the watch of a guard. Other men may become discouraged but they sang songs of praise to the other prisoners who joined in the singing. An earthquake arose and the bands were loosed from the prisoners. The guard, fearing for his life, called for a light and came to Paul and Silas who assured him they were there. The guard was converted and asked what he needed to do to be saved. Larry asked who is really bonded? It was the guard himself who was bonded. Today it is the unbeliever who is bonded by sin, but the Lord can set him free the same as He did for this guard. The guard called for a natural light (a type and shadow of Christ) and he received his conversion, was baptized, and then cared for Paul and Silas' wounds and brought them to his own home and fed them with his family. We should not become discouraged because of the weight of this life. The Lord and the saints pray for our constant protection. Brother Ali summarized by giving an experience of his deceased father, Brother John Ali, who when he was four days old had died. His mother put him in a basket going on her way to the Elders for prayer. On the way she met other ladies who told her her son was dead. However, she was not discouraged and went to the Elders who prayed for John and he came back to life. From experiences like this the early Church began to grow in Glassport, PA spreading throughout PA. Let us not be discouraged but always reach for the light of Christ. He is looking for us, especially the young members, to tell others how the Lord has blessed them. Brother Rosario followed saying that men are living in a bottle and do not know God or His miracles. However, as the bottles are broken, men are coming to the knowledge of God. We must not delay coming to Him by making excuses for time. We seem to have time for everything except serving God. We must first have faith in

Christ that He can cure us. As an example we plant a seed and eventually see it grow.

The conference was concluded by saying one to another Dio vi benedica – God bless you – oggi e sempre – today and forever! Team Italy's desire is for the Lord to bless the Italian saints for all their efforts to fulfill His mission to the best of their ability. We all can attest that again we have received much more from the faithful Italian saints than we have given.

Saugeen Nation

By Brother Don Collison

Greetings brothers, sisters, and friends from the Saugeen Nation Number 29. Saugeen is part of the Ojibway Nation, which is of a multitude of nations spoken of by the prophet. It is situated on the shores of beautiful Lake Huron in Southwestern Ontario, Canada.

This mission was founded by Brother Matt Collison by a revelation given to his grandfather 70 years ago. Brother Matt and his wife, Sister Pat, have been at the Saugeen shores for 25 years and there have raised their family. They have built a beautiful mission house in which to worship our precious Lord. It is located in the beautiful maple woods on the property of Brother James and Sister Bernice Ritchie, on the Saugeen Reservation. This mission is part of the Windsor Branch with Brother Matt in charge.

We feel to rejoice with the angels of heaven that the Lord called another soul into His family. His name is Lorne Mandawaub (Ojibway) and he is 56. After searching out the Lord for five years, studying the Book of Mormon with Brother Matt, the calling Spirit of the Lord descended upon him. Feeling a great Godly sorrow and a tremendous desire to be baptized he entered the waters of repentance on Sunday August 16, 2009. It was a perfect summer day. Brother Matt took Lorne down into the waters of baptism to wash away

his sins and become a new person in the Lord.

Brother Lorne brought all of his children and grandchildren to witness his baptism and they filled the little mission house. The theme for the morning service was the reception of the Holy Ghost taken from Moroni 2:1-2. After the Lord's resurrection and continuing His ministry, "...which he spake unto his disciples, the twelve whom he had chosen, as he laid his hands upon them – And he called them by name, saying: Ye shall call on the Father in my name, in mighty prayer; and after ye have done this ye shall have power that to him upon whom ye shall lay your hands, ye shall give the Holy Ghost; and in my name shall ye give it, for thus do mine apostles."

How beautiful it was for Brother Lorne's family to see the purity of the Gospel in this day as it was then as Brother Don Collison laid hands upon him for the reception of the Holy Ghost.

Brother Lorne gave a beautiful testimony. Truly it was a special and wonderful day for our new brother's family to witness. Brother George Grosbeck closed our service in prayer. All were invited to a delicious lunch.

Baptism and Ordination in North Dakota

By Brother James Bork

Plans began to unfold when Evangelist Lyle Criscuolo arrived in Ann Arbor, Michigan on Wednesday August 5, 2009. There he picked up Josiah Adams, a young brother, and me, a teacher in the Church, both from Branch 2 in Detroit. We were on our way to visit with the saints at Fort Berthold, who are under the Great Lakes Region.

(Continued on Page 4)

Baptism and Ordination in ND

Continued from Page 3

Fort Berthold, where is that you might ask! It's in the northwest corner of North Dakota, 1,300 miles from Ann Arbor, Michigan. It's home to Brother Robert and Sister Jody Brieck. Our brother and sister have been on the Fort Berthold Reservation shining their light upon God's covenant people, the Seed of Joseph for seven years. Fort Berthold is home to three Native American tribes – the Mandan, Arikara, and Hidatsa tribes reside there.

Beautiful Trip to Fort Berthold Reservation, North Dakota

In The Church of Jesus Christ, there are many small towns with a few saints living far away from the main body of the Church. Evangelists Lyle Criscuolo, Joel Gehly, and John DiBattista have been concerned with the welfare of these souls and love to visit. It is my privilege and joy to go on many of these trips that often turn out to be interesting adventures as well.

Plans were made when Sister Jody Brieck called us with the exciting news we were going to be allowed to use tribal facilities at Fort Berthold, New Town, North Dakota, and hold a Sunday meeting. Our hope was to have an opportunity to meet new people and tell them the story of Jesus and The Church of Jesus Christ.

When Brother Criscuolo picked Brother Josiah and me up, we headed for the DiBattista home in Chicago in Brother Lyle's RV. When we reached Chicago, the brothers anointed Sister Caryl DiBattista, who was scheduled for hip surgery.

On my last trip across the prairies we prayed to stay ahead of the blizzards (which caught up with us in Michigan's upper peninsula). On this trip we enjoyed gorgeous weather. The land had so much rainfall the farmers were worried. This part of the bleak country is called the badlands, but it was in bloom. Brothers Joel and Josh Gehly flew into Minneapolis for a sales meeting, then rented a car and drove over ten hours to join

us at the Brieck's home. Also we met Brothers Mark Peltier, his wife, Sister Sophia and three children and his natural brother, Brother Gary Peltier and his wife, Sister Michelle, all from Windsor, Ontario, Canada. We were wall-to-wall people and filled every sleeping area in the Brieck's happy home and RV.

When we arrived at the Brieck's home, we sat outside on the spacious deck and fellowshiped throughout the day with the saints discussing the scriptures and comparing them with the current world situation. Matthew 18:20 reads, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." God's word was expounded upon and our minds were opened and illuminated. What a blessing studying the word of God together, sharing other's perspectives, and asking questions.

After some time spent in prayer, the Elders felt a strong conviction that the Lord was calling Brother Bob into the office of a Teacher. Brother Bob was then approached. They explained they felt he was being called to be ordained as a Teacher. Brother Bob asked to have some time to pray before he would give the brothers his answer. Meanwhile our brothers listened to experiences and conferred with each other looking for confirmation from the Lord as to what God's purpose of this trip might be. As much was happening behind the scenes, the culmination of the day's events confirmed the Elders would ordain Brother Bob Brieck a Teacher in The Church of Jesus Christ.

In the evening we went to the home of Theodora Starr, Sister Jody's aunt. She was anointed for afflictions. In spite of her poor health, all witnessed a peaceful spirit.

Saturday was a glorious day. Brother Bob met with the brothers, accepting the calling of a Teacher. Plans were then made to ordain him at the evening meeting. Throughout the day, Brother Joel was talking with Ashley Bivson, Sister Jody's daughter, concerning baptism. The Lord had been preparing Ashley for some time and her countenance reflected the Spirit convicting her. Brother Joel

made it known Ashley was ready to go down into the waters of baptism. Oh how the Spirit of the Lord works! Plans were now made to baptize Ashley on Sunday in the lake by the powwow.

We went over to the area to see the facilities available. There are historical reproductions of the Three Nations earth lodges where Sister Jody's friend, Pansy, worked explaining their culture. After she finished her talk, our brothers turned and left the earth lodge. As they walked out, the Lord told Brother John that Pansy was in need of prayer. John was outside already and said to the Lord, "Lord, you've got to do something." Meanwhile, Pansy said to Sister Jody, "I should have had these ministers pray for me!" The brothers were called back and Brother Joel anointed her for problems from a recent concussion. At this point she began sharing with us regarding the problems of her life. Brother John was given the message that she needed more prayer. The group surrounded her again and prayed to the Lord that her problems at home as a divorced mother with two children and all the problems of her life would be ministered to. She began to weep and cry. There was a powerful spirit filling the room.

We returned to the Brieck's home for dinner and preparation for the ordination of Brother Bob that night. We enjoyed a beautiful spirit of singing, fellowshiping, and preaching. I had the privilege of washing Brother Bob's feet, and Brother Lyle ordained him. Brother John spoke from Ezra 7 and Nehemiah.

Sunday morning, we drove to the baptism site on the huge reservoir. Sakakawea Lake is formed by the Missouri River. It was a beautiful site framed by the ancient Mandan earth lodges, surrounded by ponies racing on the rolling hills, and the huge sky overhead. Brother Josiah had a vision of light surrounding Brother Joel and Sister Ashley as he walked her into the clear waters of baptism.

Afterwards we walked from the

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Editorial Viewpoint . . .

"And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness of me also in Rome" (Acts 23:11).

Paul had finished his third and final missionary journey. He was taking an offering for the Church in Jerusalem, but along the way there, his friends in Ephesus, Tyre and Caesarea told him he should not continue, and that the Jews would try to destroy him. Paul simply replied to them, "God's will be done." Sure enough, Paul entered Jerusalem and was taken into prison. While in prison, the Lord spoke to Paul the words above. The enemies of Paul in Jerusalem vowed not to even eat or sleep until Paul was dead! Somehow, Paul was taken to another jail in Caesarea where he was imprisoned for over two years, but was safe. Finally, according to the Roman laws, Paul was released from prison, and immediately was on his way to Rome as the Lord had commanded him, two years after being commanded to go there.

Then on his way to Rome, Paul encountered a typhoon and experienced a shipwreck. Paul exclaimed to the men on the ship to have courage, for he had faith in God, and God would do just as He said He would. On the island where they were shipwrecked, a viper bit Paul's hand, but he shook it off, unharmed.

When Paul finally arrived in Rome, he was imprisoned again, but during this time began to fulfill God's direction, and he preached and taught of Jesus Christ for another two years while he awaited his court trial. After several years and obstacles that would make most men and women turn back, or give up, God's plan was fulfilled.

God can be trusted. When He says He will accomplish something, it will happen, no matter what. Even when delays and obstacles stand in our way, God will fulfill His will in our lives. Think about the story of Job, and how enormous afflictions came his way. He still never gave up, knowing that God had a plan that would be fulfilled once the storms of life have passed. Do we do the same today?

God can be trusted when we begin to doubt, or when things seem to be going in the opposite direction of where we think they should. God can be trusted even when the future is unknown. God didn't tell Paul he would be shipwrecked, or be imprisoned. All He said to Paul was to "be of good cheer," that he would testify of Jesus Christ in Rome like he did in Jerusalem. Do we trust God, even when the information God gives us is limited? Are we patient, knowing that God's time is not our time?

While in the Roman prison, Paul wrote Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon, some of the greatest words written in all of scripture for our Church today. Instead of Paul complaining while in jail, he bloomed where he was planted, and continued to work for God and fulfill his commission, despite his circumstances. Can we still press our way forward, fulfilling God's will for us, even when everything around us is falling apart? If we can, we will be mightily blessed!

God's promises to the Church today are exciting, but do we doubt when we do not see progress? Even more so, do we doubt when we see problems and obstacles that make it seem as if we are going in the opposite direction? If Paul had allowed his problems and obstacles to cause him to give up, or deny what God was going to do in his life, so much scripture would have been lost. Nations of people would have not heard the message of Christ. Likewise, today, let us not give up on the promises God has for His people, to build His kingdom upon the earth. Let us not give up hope of a Peaceful Reign that is coming. Let us not give up hope in our lives when trouble surrounds us realizing that it is always the darkest right before the dawn. God will deliver you, and make the morning break for us someday. God CAN be trusted!

The Children's Corner

By Sister Janet Bork

Dear Friends,

When you think about Jesus, do you ever think about His wonderful parents? Can you imagine what Mary and Joseph went through?

Mary was a young girl who had never had a husband yet. She was engaged to marry the carpenter, Joseph, when a most amazing thing happened to her. An angel of the Lord appeared to her and told her, "You are highly favored, the Lord is with you: blessed are you among women...Fear not, Mary, because you have found favor with the Lord. You will conceive and bring forth a son, and shall call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of his father David [the old time king of Judea] and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Mary answered the angel, saying, "How shall this be, seeing I have never had a husband?"

And the angel answered and said unto her, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore, also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. For nothing is impossible with God, and also, your cousin Elisabeth, who could never have children, is also six months pregnant now."

And Mary answered, "You see me, I am the handmaiden [servant] of God. Let what you have said come true."

Then Mary hurried and packed and went to see her cousin Elisabeth



who lived in the larger city of Juda. There, another amazing thing happened to the young woman, Mary. When Elisabeth heard the greetings of Mary, the baby leaped within her body and she was filled with the Holy Ghost. And Elisabeth spoke out with a loud voice, and said, "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And how is this, that the mother of the Lord, would come to see me?...and blessed are you for believing, for those things which were told you from the Lord, will happen."

And Mary stayed with her cousin before returning to Nazareth. When she told everything to Joseph, can you imagine his shock? The girl he planned on marrying was already pregnant and he wasn't the father. The Lord understood his fears, and he sent an angel to Joseph to tell him, "Do not fear to take Mary as a wife. The baby inside of her is from God, conceived of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

So Joseph married the young girl immediately, and a few months later, they were forced by the government to travel to far away Bethlehem and register to pay taxes. There were no cars or buses invented yet. Can you imagine being nine months pregnant or imagine helping your pregnant wife sit on a donkey and walking miles and miles along dusty roads, carrying your food and water, in the out-of-doors day after day? And then, in Bethlehem, there was no place to stay! Mary was ready to have her baby and there they were, looking for a place to stay in.

Finally, they were allowed to stay in the stables where the animals were.

And that night Mary had her beautiful new baby. She was so young, and they were so far from home. But angels sang in the heavens, and shepherds in the fields saw them and followed a bright star and came to find the little family. Do you wonder what Joseph and Mary thought when the shepherds bowed down and worshipped the baby?

And then later, along came three wise men from a far away country. They also had followed the star in the sky and came to worship the baby who would grow up to be the Savior of the world. They brought gifts of gold, and rare perfumes called frankincense and myrrh.

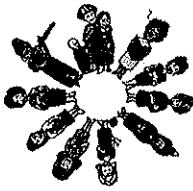
The little family was going to need these gifts and the gold to help them survive because the next unexpected thing was that they had to run in secret and hurry to leave the city of Bethlehem. An angel of the Lord

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WORD SEARCH

GOD	TRY
CHOSE	TO
JOSEPH	KILL
MARY	BABY
TO	JESUS
HAVE	LIVE
WONDROUS	IN
LIFE	EGYPT
HEROD	

E	F	I	L	I	V	E	S
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E	H	L	G	A	O	E	R
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H	S	N	I	N	H	H	Y
C	O	T	B	A	B	Y	G
W	J	E	S	U	S	K	E



To Be As Little Children

By Sister Terry Goode

Every year the Metuchen Branch Ladies' Uplift Circle gathers together to prepare baked goods for the Metuchen Country Fair. This is an event the Ladies' Circle has been involved in for over 40 years. Through the years our variety of baked goods has changed, from watching my grandmother, Sister Stella Arcuri, make homemade bread, to filling fresh cannolies, to frying dough for pizza-fritzas with Sister Rose Risola to our present display that we have used for more than the past 10 years or so of nut, poppy and prune rolls and homemade apple, pumpkin and cherry pies.

We as a branch, not just the sisters, gather together to prepare for this event several weeks before. The days preceding the fair are the most stressful and the busiest. We have to keep a close eye on the weather as this event takes place outside, and this year we had the added stress that there was a threat of rain for the day of the fair. During the week we were all praying that the Lord would change the weather to just a clear day. The three days before the fair, we gathered in our branch to make and roll out the homemade pie dough. Brother Len Benyola, Jr. is in charge of providing the apples we use for the apple pies, and on the Wednesday night before the fair he brought them to our branch. Then on Thursday night we gathered again to continue making the pie dough. When we were done we had to load our cars with everything we would need for the next day. We are fortunate that a local Elks Lodge lets us use their kitchen to bake our pies at no charge. So on this Thursday night I was carrying two of the baskets of apples in a plastic garbage bag when the bag broke and one of the baskets of apples went rolling through the

parking lot. It was dark outside and as comical as it was, I was frustrated. My daughter Madison and I ran through the parking lot gathering all the apples up. I saw her stop in a part of the parking lot. I wasn't sure what she was doing as we were laughing at what had just happened. She came running over to me and said the following, "Mom, do you see that dark corner in the parking lot?" I said, "Yes." She said, "When I ran over there to get the apples, God was speaking to me and He told me it wasn't going to rain on Saturday." I stood there in awe that my 7-year-old daughter would say this. How could I deny it, I know the power of the Lord.

So we continued that night, and on Friday morning we had an early start — we started our day at 9:00 a.m. We bake over 100 pies so we need an early start. Still with the weather report reporting rain for Saturday we still had to move ahead with the baking. We baked and peeled our apples all day. At 5:00 p.m. we made a call to the Chamber of Commerce for the town of Metuchen and heard a recording that said they had cancelled the fair due to the "threat" of inclement weather. Needless to say I was disheartened; I felt all our hard work was for nothing. My daughter still in her knowledge and innocence kept saying, "But mom, it's not going to rain, God told me so." So we finished our night trying to come up with a way that we would be able to sell all of these pies. There was no way we could hold these pies for the rain date, so we decided to meet in our branch the next day. We would make a few signs for the streets and a few calls to try and sell what we had.

When we woke Saturday morning, what do you think the weather was like outside? Of course there was no rain and the sun was breaking through the clouds. My daughter ran to me and said, "See, mom, God said it wouldn't rain and it isn't, we're going to the fair right?" What could I say to her, her faith never wavered that the Lord would make the day have good weather, but the world doesn't put their faith in God to do all things. So, we spent the day at our branch and

there was a little sprinkle of rain that lasted about five minutes, but for 90% of the day the weather was perfect.

The lesson we learned through this is that we should always be like children and trust in the Lord that He can hear every prayer whether big or small whether for sunshine or rain. The Lord blessed us and we were able to sell all but one pie. Praise God, He is so good to us.

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Cape Coral News

By Sister Leda Sheffler

Since Sister Colleen Brickhouse (Sister Lydia Micale's mother) is ill and cannot attend church, the Cape Coral Branch decided to take the church to her.

We met on Sunday, August 30, at the home of Brother Tony and Sister Lydia Micale in Sarasota. Brother Tony had invited numerous friends and neighbors, and long-time friends and teachers that Sister Colleen knew.

Also attending were Evangelist Sam Risola and Sister Arlene, along with Brother Phillip Benyola, Sister Linda and their son, Brother Peter. There were 52 present.

Teacher Tony Micale introduced the elders and welcomed all to his home. He stated that we had all gathered here for our Sunday service to our Lord and to celebrate the life of our Sister Colleen. Brother Sam Risola anointed our Sister Colleen who has been ill with cancer.

Brother Alvin (Skip) Swanson opened our meeting reading from Matthew 7, "Not everyone that sayeth Lord unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter in the Kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Enter ye in at the straight gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be which go in thereat." He also related two beautiful experiences that God had given him.

Brother Phillip Benyola followed along the same subject saying, "Everyone that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken unto a wise man which has built his house upon a rock."

Brother Sam Risola spoke next saying he had the exact same scripture in mind this morning. Basically, we have two ways that we can go in our lives – the broad way or the narrow way. Joshua said, "Choose ye this day

whom you will serve – but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Brother Sam Cuomo thanked God for the fellowship in this church and the wonderful storehouse of blessings He gives us.

Sister Colleen arose and gave her testimony. "Where else in the world would you find a church that would come to you when you are unable to go to it?" She thanked God for this and for her family and all of those that came today. She acknowledged her long-time friends and teacher friends who attended today.

Brother Tony Micale then concluded the service stating, "Love goes on to live eternally." He said that he and Sister Lydia had been going to Italy on missionary work and told of an experience he had the last time he was there when he accidentally drank cleaning fluid thinking it was a bottle of Coke. Immediately, the scripture came to him, "And if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them," (Mark 16:18). The cleaning fluid burned his throat and chest. After being anointed, he had no lasting effects from the cleaning fluid and was able to continue his trip. *Sing Glory* was then sung. God's wonderful spirit had prevailed throughout the meeting.

After closing prayer, a luncheon was enjoyed by all. Since it was sister Colleen's birthday, we sang *Happy Birthday* to her and everyone was served a piece of birthday cake. We had many favorable comments about the meeting from the friends that attended.

VBS and Baptisms in Muncey, Ontario

By Sister Angela Yoder and Sister Mona Ogden

On Sunday morning, August 2, 2009, we were blessed to have three elders present; Brothers Gary Coppa, Jerry Benyola and Pete Darr. Brother Pete opened in prayer and then related that while he was eating breakfast that

morning a vision of a Seminole woman, whom he had met in Florida, spoke to him and said, "Tell my people." That was it! Later on this morning while driving to church and crossing onto Indian land, the Lord spoke to him and said, "You are here!" Brother Pete spoke on the three Hebrew children in the furnace – how the Lord never left their side and how He never leaves our side.

Brother Jerry spoke next about how the world is turning their backs on the Lord of the Land. How sometimes the Lord puts obstacles in our pathway to test us, to see how we handle them, just like the three Hebrew children were tested. We serve the very same God that they served and He saved them.

This week was also our Vacation Bible School. On the first day, as the children were being dismissed for lunch, Brother Pete spoke in tongues, "My children, My children, My love and My Church is for you. I am the great Jehovah." The children asked many questions, as they had never heard tongues spoken before.

Flyers were sent home with the children inviting them, their parents, and the community to attend our Thursday evening service. The musicians from Inner City, Michigan were invited for a singspiration. In attendance were Sister Lisa Champine, Sister Laurie Whitton, Brother Jason Thomas, Brothers Claude, Gary and Jordan Champine. Shawn Snake also took part with his guitar. A beautiful Spirit filled the church.

Thursday evening, Evangelists Lou Vitto and Tom Everett also attended our meeting. In all we had six elders in attendance. Brother Tom opened the meeting reading excerpts from several archaeological history books, which parallel those writings of the Book of Mormon. As he was speaking, Sister Michelle Gomez was given a vision where she saw Jesus appear in the room.

After Brother Tom spoke, Brother Gary Coppa blessed baby Soreyn Snake. Following this, Brother Lou Vitto spoke on baptism.

As Brother Lou continued to

speak on baptism, Brother Pete Darr spoke in tongues. The interpretation given later was, "Freedom is through me. Freedom is my Church, Come to Me. I am Jehovah." Immediately after Brother Pete sat down, three sisters asked to be prayed on.

As we moved into our testimony meeting, Brother Nestor Gomez shared that he was given a vision where he saw many people linked together in love. This was the Vacation Bible School theme.

We sang *He Changed my Life Completely in a Moment*. Upon finishing the song, Tyler King aged 17 from Imperial stood up and emotionally announced that he wanted to be baptized. A few minutes later Alyssia Gomez, age 14, from South Bend asked for her baptism.

Two weeks previously, Brother George Grosbeck Jr. was prompted by the Lord to prepare the baptism site. So with the help of Shane Fisher, they spent an entire day cleaning away the weeds and brush beside the Thames River. Brother George Jr. took Brother Pete Darr to the site earlier today. While there the Lord spoke saying, "Someone will come here tomorrow; be diligent with My work and I will bless you."

On Friday after Vacation Bible School, we gathered at the river with Tyler and Alyssia, and sang their favorite songs. Tyler entered the water first. Brother Pete Darr performed his first baptism baptizing Tyler King. Alyssia Gomez entered the water next and was baptized by Brother Gary Coppa.

We later gathered at the Muncey Mission where Brother Jerry Benyola spoke directly to the newly baptized, Brother Tyler and Sister Alyssia. He likened life to a GPS, when you go the wrong way, that device will tell you to make a U-turn as soon as possible. It is the same way with our spiritual lives.

"God will never misdirect you. He will always lead you on the straight course. The reception of the Holy Ghost is a precious and powerful gift." Brother Tyler was confirmed by Brother Jerry Benyola and Sister Alyssia was confirmed by Brother

Pete Darr. Communion was then served, first to the newly-baptized.

Sister Alyssia then gave her testimony and was followed by Brother Tyler. While Brother Tyler was testifying two people in the congregation saw a white glow around Brother Tyler's body.

Before the meeting was closed we witnessed a second baby blessing. Two-year-old Meadow French was blessed by Brother Gary Coppa.

Many of the young people returned for our evening meeting of worship and fellowship.

Come Ye to the Waters

By Sister Kathy Vitto

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." On Sunday, October 4, 2009 Brother Perry Vitto opened his sermon with the preceding quote from Isaiah 55:1. He then continued to expound on the rest of the chapter, with the underlying theme in the Windsor Branch being "When we increase in loving the Lord we will increase our numbers."

Josh O'Neil, has not only felt the love of God but has searched the Scriptures to learn of Faith, Repentance, and Baptism. After the meeting was left open for testimony, Josh stood upon his feet and asked for his baptism. What a joy filled the branch. The brothers and sisters have dedicated themselves in prayer for those on our warm list, for those who have not yet committed themselves in service to our Lord, and those who have strayed from the Gospel to return.

Brother John Collison then spoke on the 'weight of the yoke' that will now be lifted from Josh. Quoted from Matthew 11:29-30, "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."

At the close of the meeting we were asked to form a circle and join hands in prayer. Josh's wife, Krystal (LaBute), stood upon her feet asking the brothers and sisters to forgive her of any wrong and repented of all her sins and requested to be reinstated. She stated that she wanted it to be right, that she and her husband would serve the Lord together.

We had prepared the preceding week to have lunch together after our meeting this day. Who knew it was going to be a celebration of two more names written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

The following Sunday, October 11, 2009, Brother Perry Vitto took his first candidate into the waters of regeneration and baptized Brother Josh O'Neil. Brother John Collison confirmed him with the reception of the Holy Ghost. Sister Krystal was called to sit next to her husband and was reinstated by Brother Perry Vitto.

Brother Matt Collison was visiting the Windsor Branch this day, unaware that we were having a baptism and a reinstatement. He spoke to us about Lehi and the tree of life, walking that straight and narrow path, and that we must read and learn of the word of God. He reminded us "there is only one way to enter into the kingdom of heaven and any other way would be like a thief and a robber. Even King Lamoni's father was willing to forsake his kingdom and give up all he had to find this eternal life." Brother Matt asked, "Are we there yet? Which road will we choose, one to eternal life with God or eternal damnation?"

Brother John Collison read from John 14:16, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." He followed with how the Comforter has played a special role in his marriage, and when you face struggles, hardships, and pain, through the refining you still have to want it. "It is your first love, we cannot lose our first love. You will never be comfortless if you look, if you are on your knees, if you have the truth. We have the truth in the Restored Gospel

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Come Ye to the Waters

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of Jesus Christ. Never let it go, and He will always comfort you.”

Brother Perry reminded us again about the love of Jesus – when we love with pureness of heart, the Lord will see our hearts for we cannot hide them and He will increase our numbers.

Testimony followed with wonderful expressions of gratitude to our Lord coming from our new brother and sister. After closing in prayer we gathered for an afternoon of fellowship and lunch.

My Experience

By Brother Anthony Azzinaro

It has been over a year since the day of the tragic Metrolink train wreck in Chatsworth, California. Over time the memory of the wreck and the events that occurred that day may be forgotten by some, but I will *never* forget what the Lord did for me and my family that day.

The day was Friday, September 12, 2008. It was the day that my brother, Chris, was to have his wedding rehearsal and dinner in the evening. Every day I take the train to work and on Fridays I get off work an hour earlier, so I take the earlier train home. The previous night, my wife, Sister Kristen, had asked me to drive to work in order to get home faster so that we could make the rehearsal on time. I reluctantly said yes because I like to sleep while riding on the train. I drove to work and at the end of the day drove home to pick up Kristen.

That Friday evening Kristen and I were on our way to the rehearsal when we heard on the radio that there had been a train wreck in Chatsworth between the number 3 train to Simi Valley and a freight train. Chills went up and down our bodies as we continued to listen intently to the radio. Reports were coming in describing the tragic

scene and how out of three cars and one engine of the number 3 train, the engine and the first car were completely torn apart. There were only a few survivors from the first car, one of them being a friend of mine with whom I would sit. After we heard a number of reports that came in, Kristen turned to me and said, “If you had not driven in, I could be a widow right now and the kids would have lost their father.” At that moment, I thanked my Heavenly Father for sparing my life.

Often when you look back at experiences, you can see the Lord’s mighty hand at work and that is true in this case. You see, I only work every other Friday and six months prior to the accident, my brother had booked his wedding facility for Friday, September 6, my Friday off weekend. However, the facility called him back and told him they had to give him the September 13th Friday instead. So, if it had not been changed, they would have been married a week earlier and I would have had no reason not to take the number 3 train on September 12th.

The Lord uses people many times and in this case, he used Sister Judy Salerno from the Sterling Heights, Michigan Branch. That morning she was driving to work and was prompted by the Lord to pray for my safety that day. I thank God for the miracles in my life and the blessings He bestows upon me and my family every day. God bless you all.

The Gift Givers

Continued from Page 1

understanding. Rather than simply dictating the process, God gives us opportunity to fully appreciate receiving. Matthew 7:11 quotes Jesus, “*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*” So, if my parents were able to supply this “good gift” to their son forty years ago, then God, who has been giving “good things” to mankind for as long as we have existed, can exceed our gift-giving in ways beyond our imagination.

There have been many others who have also wanted for gifts, but possibly none make the point stronger than those Native Americans who encountered the resurrected Christ 33 years after Nephi’s Christmas prayer was answered. III Nephi 19:9 records, “*And they did pray for that which they most desired; and they desired that the Holy Ghost should be given them.*” These were they who had observed so much in such an abbreviated time period. They saw firsthand the power of God manifested in both anger and love. They felt the earth shake and twist beneath them, the skies rain dark hot ash upon them, the storm winds flatten cities around them and landscapes take new shapes before them. Most difficult of all, they witnessed loved ones’ lives instantly snatched from them. These survivors understood this devastation was God’s agonizing over His son’s crucifixion. Just days later, this small group of eyewitnesses then heard God’s loving voice announce Jesus Christ as He descended among them. As testimony to their spiritual awakening, they were able to verbalize what “*they most desired,*” stating “*they desired that the Holy Ghost should be given them.*”

God had captured their attention, proven by their sincere focus in housing God’s spirit. Their reward came immediately after they were baptized as they “received” the Holy Ghost, just as we do today. In expressing His appreciation, III Nephi 19:20-21 records Jesus Christ’s prayer,

Merry
Christmas
to all our readers.

"Father, I thank thee that thou has given the Holy Ghost unto these whom I have chosen." Our savior remains as thankful today each time we "receive" this same Holy Spirit. He took this further with, *"Father, I pray thee that thou wilt give the Holy Ghost unto all them that shall believe in their words."* Like the classic Christmas hymn I ask, *"Do you see what I see? Do you hear what I hear?"* Do you see how Jesus acknowledged those He had "chosen" (that's you!) receiving the Holy Ghost? Do you hear how He then prayed for those who would "receive" (*"believe in their words"*) the truth through each of you?

He did not simply tell us, "It is better to give than to receive"; He teaches us to "give" because we first "received." The gift we receive is greater than any earthly gift (ex: silver Stingray bicycle) or even the gift of an extended natural life. The gift we receive is the greatest of all gifts, as it seals us His for eternity. It teaches, confirms, brings comfort and assures peace. And there is no reason to feel possessive with this gift, as I did with my bicycle. The Holy Ghost remains "shiny and new," never losing its luster. It is best shared with others because when we give it to others, it actually expands within us rather than diminishes. The Holy Spirit bears out that it is literally "better to give than to receive."

Like the message of encouragement Nephi heard on that first Christmas Eve, we are called to offer, *"Lift up your head and be of good cheer."* Like the message of courage the shepherds heard that first Christmas season, we are called to share, *"Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy."* Like the seasonal songs of good news, we are called to testify, *"Joy to the world, the Lord is come."* We are the "Gift Givers" because we were first the "Receivers of Riches." In this season of giving let's remember to "gift" to those in need all the riches we've "received." I, for one, have learned it truly is "better" that way.

So, what has been your favorite Christmas gift?

Baptism and Ordination in ND

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water to the open-air shelter where we had our outdoor meeting. The sounds of our guitars and singing rang in our ears and across the waters as the powwow wound down. One can only wonder what went on in the minds of others sharing our picnic meeting area. Brother John confirmed Ashley, Brother Joel spoke on II Nephi 31:17 and Brother Bob was called to testify. He remembered his baptism in the Monongahela River many years ago. Brother Lyle spoke from 2 Nephi 31:21.

We concluded our beautiful meeting and returned to the Brieck's home for a meal followed by Sunday evening service on the deck with Sacrament for our new Sister Ashley. Monday morning early, we all departed with fond farewells. Brother John and the Gehly's left at dawn for a long drive to catch air flights. We continued on, and after a night in a campground along the Missouri River, drove through South Dakota, Minnesota and into Wisconsin where we spent another night in a rest stop. In the morning we drove to South Bend, Indiana to meet with the saints for Wednesday night meeting.

Brothers Mitchell Edwards and Nestor Gomez met with the three of us in the home of Sisters Meredith Martin and Connie Smith who are the essence of hospitality. At the meeting Brother Josiah gave them a summary of our experiences, I gave my testimony of God's greatness, and Brother Lyle spoke on missionary work. We enjoyed an extremely spirit-filled meeting. Before we left the next day, Sisters Lisa Champine and Becky Tarback, who were enroute to visit old historical spots of The Church of Jesus Christ in Nauvoo, Illinois and other places joined us. Sister Meredith fed and entertained us all. When we left, we knew we had made more lifetime friends.

We had feasted on nine days of spirit-filled meetings, singing, praying and fellowship. It was a joy and a privilege to share with our brothers and sisters everywhere.

The Children's Corner

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appeared to Joseph in a dream and warned him that Herod, the ruler of the entire country, had met the wise men and heard of the prophecies. Herod was hunting them to kill the baby who was going to grow up and be the King of the Jews and all of mankind. Can you imagine their fears?

They fled the country as the soldiers surrounded Bethlehem and murdered every baby boy age two and under. Don't you think that they talked with each other and marveled at what they had gone through? There were no telephones or post offices in that day to go call worried relatives and tell them they were safe. And now God told them that they must go to a foreign land called Egypt to live. How would they have survived if God wouldn't have sent the wise men with gifts of gold? Can you imagine how hard it would be to be afraid that maybe Herod had spies who would track you down and kill your baby? And how would it be to be strangers in a strange land where people dressed different, spoke another language, and worshipped different statues that they called gods? What an amazing life Mary and Joseph had.

The Bible tells us that Mary heard every prophecy and every good thing that the angels, the wise men, and the shepherds told her and that she kept them in her heart. As the years passed, we know that the Bible says she and Joseph had other children. It mentions daughters and names four other sons: James, Joseph, Simon and Judas. So, she and Joseph had a busy full life.

Eventually, Jesus grew into a man, and began doing His miracles. He taught people how to love and allowed Himself to be crucified for our sins. We do not know when Joseph died, but Mary was there when Jesus began His ministry and she was there at the cross, too. This girl, most blessed among women, grew into a wonderful mother, and along with Joseph, has never been forgotten by mankind.

*** WEDDINGS ***

Sister Elizabeth Sacramento and Ricardo Watkis were united in holy matrimony on August 29, 2009 at the Freehold, New Jersey Branch.

Baptisms

Brother Miguel Angel Gomez was baptized on October 4, 2009 at the Bell, California Branch. He was baptized by Brother Bob McDonnell and confirmed by Brother Malcolm Paxon.

OBITUARIES

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

SIVERIO COPPA

Brother Silverio Coppa passed on to his reward on April 2, 2009. He is survived by his wife, Eva Ilene Coppa; two siblings, Alma Coppa and Eva Cain; two children, a son, Gary Coppa and his wife, Susan; a daughter, Susan Moraco and her husband, Dennis; and three grandchildren, Anthony Moraco, Chris Moraco and Kevin Coppa.

MARY J. SLICK

Sister Mary J. Slick of the Liberty, Ohio Branch passed on to her reward on October 18, 2009. She is survived by her two daughters, Sister Gloria (Ken) Keeley and Laura (Daniel) Winterbottom-Corrado, along with grandchildren and a great-grandchild.

Sister Taylor Surdock was baptized on October 18, 2009, at the Pacific Region MBA Campout in Idyllwild, California and is a member of the San Diego, California Branch. She was baptized by Brother Jim Huttenberger and confirmed by Brother Lou Ciccati.

Brother Paul Guerrero was baptized on October 18, 2009, at the Pacific Region MBA Campout in Idyllwild, California and is a member of the Modesto, California Branch. He was baptized by Brother Joe Ciarolla and confirmed by Brother Tom P. Liberto.

Brother Abner Mosqueda was baptized on October 18, 2009, at the Pacific Region MBA Campout in Idyllwild, California and is a member of the Modesto, California Branch. He was baptized by Brother Mark Coppa and confirmed by Brother Santos Zamora.

Note of Thanks

Sister Debbie Kyriakakos of the Modesto, California Branch would like to thank everyone for their outpouring of love, prayers, cards and phone calls during her recent ordeal with a broken leg and surgery. Thank God for each and every one of you.

DIRECTORY UPDATE

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Snake, Candice
259 Wild Rose St.
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Ordinations

Brother Kevin Perri was ordained a teacher on July 5, 2009 at the Levittown, Pennsylvania Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Michael Zaino, and he was ordained by Brother Joe Perri.

Brother Brian Smith was ordained a deacon on August 30, 2009 at the Monongahela, Pennsylvania Branch. His feet were washed by Brother Dan Covalessky, and he was ordained by Apostle Ike Smith.

Address Change

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Branch or Mission _____